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THE
OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF
AMERICAN LITERATURE

THE OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

CHOSEN AND EDITED BY

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

AND

NORMAN HOLMES PEARSON

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PREFACE

THE OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE *is an historical selection from the literary expression of the American people.*

A man may look at writing as he chooses. We have regarded it as literature. Undoubtedly by the introduction of a social approach, an interest in the history of American letters has been enormously stimulated. This has been occasioned partly by a general concern with social matters and social history; but it has been mostly seized on with a defensive enthusiasm for one quality when the presence of another, the purely literary, was not certain. While the endowment of a novel with proletarian significance, or the identification of an essay with the deistic movement, or the recognition of the spirit of democracy in a poem may form the basis of useful estimates, they leave unanswered the stubborn question of literary values.

The writing of prose and poetry is primarily a conscious art, and for this reason an attempt has been made to express the literary life of this country. The seventeenth century has been comprehensively represented in the variety of its creative efforts; what has been generally regarded as odd will now assume validity as an American adaptation of suitable literary forms. In the nineteenth century, when America's first purely literary figures began to appear, no significant development has been ignored, and an effort has been made to represent its chief writers generously enough to permit their study as stylists and experimenters. There has been no effort to be all-inclusive, and no timidity in adjusting selections to valuations now generally accepted. Nor has there been hesitation to place on literature of the present that emphasis which its excellence demands. We have tried not to be satisfied with a puzzled gesture in this direction. These are the works which have interested literary figures of our own time, and through them the reader may understand that literature is a versatile and ever-changing art. The intent of the annotation and the somewhat informal commentary has been to show the directions of this change, and, when possible, to let men speak for themselves.

In all cases we have attempted to make use of the most satisfactory texts. Most of the colonial selections have been modernized, lest literary merit be veiled in quaintness. In

such cases the change has been indicated. References have been made to the most accessible editions, though the texts do not always come from them. At the conclusion of each selection the dates of composition and of first appearance in book-form have, when known, been added.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT
NORMAN HOLMES PEARSON

New Haven,
August, 1938

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CONTENTS

John Smith (1580–1631)
A True Relation of Virginia
Settlement, 3

Richard Rich (*fl.*1610)
News from Virginia, 11

William Bradford (1590–1657)
Of Plymouth Plantation
Safe Arrival at Cape Cod, 13

Thomas Morton (*fl.*1622–1647)
New English Canaan
The Siege of Ma-re Mount, 16

Nathaniel Ward (*c.*1578–1652)
The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam
On Women's Fashions, 20
Errata at non Corrigenda, 23

Roger Williams (*c.*1603–1683)
The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody
A Dialogue Between Truth and Peace, 25
A Letter to the Town of Providence, 28

Philip Pain (? –*c.*1668)
Daily Meditations
9. Man's life is like a rose that in the spring, 29
10. Alas, what is the world? A sea of glass! 29
11. Had I as many days to live, as I, 29
12. I every day do see that here below, 29
44. Eternity! O soul-amazing thought, 29
56. The time will be when we shall be *No more*, 29

Anne Bradstreet (*c.*1612–1672)
Meditations Divine and Moral
Thirty-three Meditations, 30
The Prologue, 33
The Flesh and the Spirit, 33
Epitaph on a Patriot, 34
To My Dear and Loving Husband, 35
Before the Birth of One of Her Children, 35
Contemplations, 35
As Weary Pilgrim, Now at Rest, 39

John Josselyn (*fl.*1638–1675)
New England's Rarities Discovered
A Description of an Indian Squaw, 40

Mary Rowlandson (*c.*1635–*c.*1678)
A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson
Introduction, 40
Removes: I, III, VIII, XI, XX, 42

Michael Wigglesworth (1631–1705)
The Day of Doom
The Coming to Judgment, 48
The Trial of Hypocrites, 49
The Error of Good Works, 51
The Judgment, 52
The Satisfaction of the Elect, 52
God's Controversy with New England
The Warning of the Lord, 53

Benjamin Tompson (1642–1714)
New England's Crisis
The Prologue, 56
On a Fortification at Boston Begun by Women, 58
Epitaph for My Father, 58
A Neighbor's Tears, 58

Francis Pastorius (1651–*c.*1720)
Deliciae Hortenses, 59
Voluptates Apianae, 59

Edward Taylor (*c.*1644–1729)
God's Determinations Touching His Elect
Prologue, 60
Upon What Base was Fixed the Lath Wherein, 60
The Soul's Admiration Hereupon, 61
The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended, 61

Housewifery, 61
Meditations
1. What love is this of Thine, that cannot be, 62
3. Like to the marigold I blushing close, 62
38. Oh! What a thing is man? Lord, who am I? 63

Cotton Mather (1663–1728)
Winter Meditations
Introduction, 64
The Merciful Works of God, 66
Political Fables
The New Settlement of the Birds in New England, 70
Story of the Dogs and the Wolves, 71
Magnalia Christi Americana
A General Introduction, 72
Galeacius Secundus, 75
The Memorable Action at Wells, 79
Essays to do Good
An Essay for Gentlemen, 83
The Christian Philosopher
Of the Anatomy of Plants, 87
Manuductio Ad Ministerium
Of Poetry and of Style, 88

Benjamin Colman (1673–1747)
The Parable of the Ten Virgins
The Foolish and the Wise, 91

Samuel Sewall (1652–1730)
The Diary of Samuel Sewall
The Courtship of Madam Winthrop, 97

Sarah Kemble Knight (1666–1727)
The Journal of Madam Knight
To New London, 103

Mather Byles (1707–1788)
Joseph Green (1706–1780)
Hymnology, 107
Upon the Objects then in View, 108
Hymn Composed for Dr. B., 108
Hymn Composed for Mr. G., 109

William Dawson (1704–1752)
Hymn to the Morning, 110
Song, 110

William Byrd (1674–1744)
A Progress to the Mines
Neighbors, 111

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)
Sarah Pierrepont, 117
Nature, 117
Personal Narrative, 118
Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, 125

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)
A Query on Style, 134
The Autobiography
Boston and Philadelphia, 135
The Way to Wealth, 147
The Sale of the Hessians, 151
The Ephemera, 152
The Whistle, 154
Dialogue Between Franklin and the Gout, 155

John Woolman (1720–1772)
The Journal of John Woolman
Childhood and Education, 158

William Bartram (1739–1823)
Travels
Florida Scenes, 161

Hector St. Jean de Crèvecœur (1735–1813)
A Snow Storm as it Affects the American Farmer, 170
What is an American? 174

Thomas Hutchinson (1711–1780)
The History of Massachusetts-Bay
A Stamp-Act Riot, 187

Thomas Paine (1737–1809)
Common Sense
Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs, 190

Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)
The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America, 198

James Madison (1750–1836)
The Federalist
X. The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard, 200

Thomas Godfrey (1736–1763)
The Invitation, 204
A Dithyrambic on Wine, 205

Francis Hopkinson (1737–1791)
The Battle of the Kegs, 206
Song, 207

John Trumbull (1750–1831)
M'Fingal
The Liberty Pole, 208

Joel Barlow (1754–1812)
The Hasty Pudding, 214

Philip Freneau (1752–1832)
To the Memory of the Brave Americans, 220
The Northern Soldier, 220
The House of Night
A Vision, 221
Mars and Hymen
The turtle on yon' withered bough, 224
The Wild Honeysuckle, 224
The Indian Burying Ground, 224

Joseph Rodman Drake (1795–1820)
The Culprit Fay, 225

Fitz-Greene Halleck (1790–1867)
On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake, 232
Marco Bozzaris, 233
The Field of the Grounded Arms, 234

Washington Irving (1783–1859)
Knickerbocker's History of New York
To the Public, 235
Certain Chronicles of the Reign of William the Testy, 238
Westminster Abbey, 244
Rip Van Winkle, 250
Legend of the Rose of the Alhambra, 258

James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851)
The Pilot
Out to Sea, 265
Preface to The Leatherstocking Tales, 277
Deerslayer
Deerslayer's Captivity, 279

Augustus B. Longstreet (1790–1870)
The Horse-Swap, 308

William Gilmore Simms (1806–1870)
Woodcraft
Porgy and the Arm of the Law, 312
The Swamp Fox, 324

William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878)
On the Value and Uses of Poetry, 326
Thanatopsis, 330
Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood, 332
To a Waterfowl, 332
Summer Wind, 333
I broke the spell that held me long, 333
Monument Mountain, 334
Mutation, 336
The Death of the Flowers, 336
To the Fringed Gentian, 336
The Flood of Years, 337
The Poet, 339

James Gates Percival (1795–1856)
The Coral Grove, 340

Grenville Mellen (1799–1841)
Ode for The Celebration of the Battle of Bunker Hill
In vain—the trump hath blown, 340

Edward Coote Pinkney (1802–1828)
Serenade, 341
A Health, 341

Thomas Holley Chivers (1809–1858)
Avalon, 341
Sonnet,—To Isa Sleeping, 343

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849)
Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales
The Tale Proper, 344
Ligeia, 345
The Fall of the House of Usher, 353
The Cask of Amontillado, 363
The Purloined Letter, 366
The Tell-Tale Heart, 375
Letter to B—, 378
The Philosophy of Composition, 381
A Dream Within a Dream, 387
Sonnet—To Science, 388
Al Aaraaf
'Neath blue-bell or streamer, 388
Romance, 389
To Helen, 389
Israfel, 389
The City in the Sea, 390
The Sleeper, 391
Lenore, 391
The Valley of Unrest, 392
To One in Paradise, 392
Dream-Land, 392
The Raven, 393
Ulalume—A Ballad, 395
The Bells, 397
Eldorado, 398
For Annie, 398
To My Mother, 399
Annabel Lee, 399

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864)
The Old Manse, 400
The Gray Champion, 414
The Scarlet Letter
The Leech and His Patient, 418
Ethan Brand, 422
The House of the Seven Gables
The Penny Shop, 430

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)
Nature, 442
Self-Reliance, 461
The American Scholar, 474
The Poet, 483
Napoleon, 494
Good-bye, 504
Each and All, 504
The Problem, 505
Uriel, 506
The Sphinx, 506
Mithridates, 508
Destiny, 508
Hamatreya, 509
The Rhodora, 510
The Humble-bee, 510
The Snow-storm, 510
The Bohemian Hymn, 511
Fable, 511
Experience, 511
Character, 512
Friendship, 512
Compensation, 512
Forbearance, 512
The Park, 512
Give All to Love, 512
The Apology, 513
Bacchus, 513
Concord Hymn, 514
Brahma, 514
Fate, 514
Boston Hymn, 515
Voluntaries, 516
Letters, 517
The Romany Girl, 517
Days, 518
Two Rivers, 518
Waldeinsamkeit, 518
The Past, 519
Terminus, 519

Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)
Walden
Where I Lived, and What I Lived For, 519
Sounds, 527
Visitors, 534
The Ponds, 540
Baker Farm, 551
Conclusion, 554

Inspiration, 559
My life is like a stroll upon the beach, 561
Friendship, 561
The Summer Rain, 562
Haze, 562
Smoke in Winter, 562
Conscience, 563
Independence, 563

Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–1892)
Gnosis, 564
The Pines and the Sea, 564

William Ellery Channing (1818–1901)
The Earth Spirit
I Have Woven Shrouds of Air, 564
The Mountain
In This Sweet Solitude, the Mountain's Life, 565
And Here the Hermit Sat, and Told His Beads, 566
Flight of the Wild Geese
Rambling along the Marshes, 566

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)
Hymn to the Night, 566
A Psalm of Life, 567
The Skeleton in Armor, 567
The Spanish Student
Serenade, 569
Mezzo Cammin, 569
Tegnér's Drapa, 570
The Warden of the Cinque Ports, 570
The Song of Hiawatha
Hiawatha's Wooing, 571
My Lost Youth, 574
Sandalphon, 575
The Children's Hour, 576
Paul Revere's Ride, 576
The Saga of King Olaf
The Challenge of Thor, 578
King Olaf's Return, 578
King Olaf's War-Horns, 579
Einar Tamberskelter, 580
King Olaf's Death-Drink, 581
Hawthorne, 581
Divina Commedia
1. Oft have I seen at some cathedral door, 582
2. How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers! 582
3. I enter, and I see thee in the gloom, 582
4. With snow-white veil and garments as of flame, 583
5. I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze, 583
6. O star of morning and of liberty! 583

The Divine Comedy
Paolo and Francesca, 583
Belisarius, 584
Chaucer, 585
Milton, 585
A Dutch Picture, 585
Venice, 586
The Cross of Snow, 586
Jugurtha, 586
Helen of Tyre, 587
The Bells of San Blas, 587

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894)
The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table
Essay I, 588
Old Ironsides, 597
The Last Leaf, 598
The Height of the Ridiculous, 598
On Lending a Punch-Bowl, 599
The Moral Bully, 600
The Chambered Nautilus, 600
The Deacon's Masterpiece, 601
Dorothy Q., 602
At the Saturday Club, 603

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892)
Proem, 606
Massachusetts to Virginia, 606
Song of Slaves in the Desert, 608
Ichabod, 609
The Barefoot Boy, 609
For Righteousness' Sake, 610
Skipper Ireson's Ride, 611
Telling the Bees, 612

Barbara Frietchie, 613
Laus Deo! 614
The Eternal Goodness, 615
Snow-Bound, 616
Our Master, 623
The Pressed Gentian, 625
The Brewing of Soma
Dear Lord and Father of mankind, 625

James Russell Lowell (1819–1891)
On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners, 626
Rhœcus, 638
The Biglow Papers
Introduction, 640
A Letter, 642
What Mr. Robinson Thinks, 644
The Courtin', 647
Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line, 648
Beaver Roars Hoarse With Meltin' Snows, 653
Hebe, 654
The Vision of Sir Launfal
And what is so rare as a day in June? 654
A Fable for Critics
Literati, 655
After the Burial, 664
Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration, 665
A Foreboding, 671
Das Ewig-Weibliche, 671
Auspex, 672

Maria Lowell (1821–1853)
An Opium Fantasy, 672

William Prescott (1796–1859)
The Conquest of Mexico
The Foundation of Vera Cruz, 673

Francis Parkman (1823–1893)
The Oregon Trail
Scenes at Fort Laramie, 680

Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (1815–1882)
Two Years Before the Mast
The Flogging, 687

Herman Melville (1819–1891)
Typee
Typee Mortakee, 690
White-Jacket
Cadwallader Cuticle, M.D., 702
Mardi
The Philosophers Regale Themselves, 712
Pierre
The History of an Author, 715
Moby Dick
The Symphony, 724
The Chase—First Day, 726
The Chase—Second Day, 731
The Chase—Third Day, 735
The Song, 741
Ha, Ha, Gods and Kings, 741
Quack! Quack! Quack! 741
Sheridan at Cedar Creek, 742
In the Prison Pen, 742
Clarel
The Golden Age, 742
Of Monasteries, 743
What is Beauty? 743
Bridegroom Dick
Where's Commander All-a-Tanto? 744
The Haglets
There, peaked and gray, three haglets fly, 745
Monody, 745
In the Pauper's Turnip Field, 746
Art, 746

Thomas William Parsons (1819–1892)
Dirge, 746

Henry Howard Brownell (1820–1872)
The River Fight, 747

William Tuckey Meredith (1839– ?)
Farragut, 748

Thomas Buchanan Read (1822–1872)
Sheridan's Ride, 749

George Henry Boker (1823–1890)
Dirge for a Soldier, 750

William Henry Thompson (1848–1918)
The High Tide at Gettysburg, 751

George Parsons Lathrop (1851–1898)
Keenan's Charge, 752

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865)
The Gettysburg Address, 753

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)
A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads, 753
Specimen Days
Diary-Jottings, 762
One's-Self I Sing, 773
I Hear America Singing, 774
Song of Myself, 774
One Hour to Madness and Joy, 807
I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing, 808
I Hear It was Charged Against Me, 808
Crossing Brooklyn Ferry, 809
Song of the Broad-Axe
Weapon shapely, naked, wan, 812
Pioneers! O Pioneers! 812
France, 814
Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking, 815
To the Man-of-War-Bird, 819
On the Beach at Night, 820
Europe, 820
When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer, 821
Cavalry Crossing a Ford, 822
Come Up from the Fields Father, 822
A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest, and the Road Unknown, 823
A Sight in Camp in the Daybreak Gray and Dim, 823
The Wound-Dresser, 824
Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun, 825
Ethiopia Saluting the Colors, 826
Reconciliation, 827
When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd, 827
O Captain! My Captain! 832
There was a Child Went Forth, 833
The City Dead-House, 834
To a Common Prostitute, 834
Who Learns My Lesson Complete? 834
Italian Music in Dakota, 835
Passage to India, 836
Chanting the Square Deific, 841
A Noiseless Patient Spider, 843
The Last Invocation, 843
To a Locomotive in Winter, 843
Years of the Modern, 844
Mannahatta, 844
With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea! 845
After the Supper and Talk, 845
So Long! 846
As at Thy Portals also Death, 847
Good-bye My Fancy! 848

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)
Thirty-two Poems
1. The soul selects her own society, 848
2. My life closed twice before its close, 848
3. They say that 'time assuages', 848
4. Just lost when I was saved! 849
5. I taste a liquor never brewed, 849
6. I started early, took my dog, 849
7. If you were coming in the fall, 849
8. Because I could not stop for Death, 850
9. Our share of night to bear, 850
10. Alter? When the hills do, 850
11. I cannot live with you, 850
12. I'll tell you how the sun rose, 851
13. I never saw a moor, 851
14. I'm nobody! Who are you? 851
15. Surgeons must be very careful, 851
16. I found the phrase to every thought, 851
17. The last night that she lived, 851
18. I felt a funeral in my brain, 852
19. I like to see it lap the miles, 852
20. He ate and drank the precious words, 852
21. To fight aloud is very brave, 852
22. Much madness is divinest sense, 852
23. A death-blow is a life-blow to some, 852
24. It dropped so low in my regard, 852
25. He preached upon 'breadth' till it argued him narrow, 852
26. That such have died enables us, 853
27. To hear an oriole sing, 853
28. The sky is low, the clouds are mean, 853
29. A route of evanescence, 853

30. The thought beneath so slight a film, 853
31. Not with a club the heart is broken, 853
32. Pain has an element of blank, 853

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836–1907)
Fredericksburg, 854
Identity, 854
Heredity, 854
Memory, 854

Bayard Taylor (1825–1878)
Ariel in the Cloven Pine, 854
Bedouin Song, 855

Edmund Clarence Stedman (1833–1908)
How Old Brown took Harper's Ferry, 856
Kearny at Seven Pines, 858

Bret Harte (1836–1902)
The Outcasts of Poker Flat, 859
Plain Language from Truthful James, 864
Dickens in Camp, 865
'Jim', 866
What the Bullet Sang, 866

John Hay (1838–1905)
Jim Bludso, of the Prairie Belle, 867

Joaquin Miller (1839–1913)
Kit Carson's Ride, 868
Crossing the Plains, 869
Columbus, 870
Song of Creation
His triple star led on and on, 870

Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) (1835–1910)
The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, 872
Life on the Mississippi
Huck Finn on the Raft, 875
The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg, 881
Little Bessie Would Assist Providence, 905

Henry Timrod (1828–1867)
The Cotton Boll, 906
Charleston, 908

Paul Hamilton Hayne (1830–1886)
Aspects of the Pines, 909
The Mocking-Bird, 909

Sidney Lanier (1842–1881)
Tiger Lilies
The Story of Cain and Gorm Smallin, 910
The Science of English Verse
Verse a Phenomenon of Sound, 913
The Symphony, 916
Evening Song, 920
Song of the Chattahoochee, 920
The Revenge of Hamish, 921
Opposition, 923
A Ballad of Trees and the Master, 923
The Crystal, 923
Hymn of the Marshes
Sunrise, 925
The Marshes of Glynn, 928

George Washington Cable (1844–1925)
Belles Demoiselles Plantation, 930

Joel Chandler Harris (1848–1908)
Uncle Remus
Uncle Remus Initiates the Little Boy, 938
The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story, 939
How Mr. Rabbit was too Sharp for Mr. Fox, 940

Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904)
Chita
The Legend of L'Île Dernière, 941

Sarah Orne Jewett (1849–1909)
The Country of the Pointed Firs
Green Island, 952

William Dean Howells (1837–1920)
Criticism and Fiction
The Novel, 962

A Modern Instance
The Departure from Equity, 969

Frederick Goddard Tuckerman (1821–1873)
Six Sonnets
1. As one turned round on some high mountain top, 975
2. Long Island! Yes! When first my vision swept, 975
3. 'Young Silas Long, a carrier through these woods, 975
4. 'Yes, the dead pines and deersfoot on the ground, 976
5. And two I knew, an old man and a boy, 976
6. Hast thou seen reversed the prophet's miracle, 976

Edward Rowland Sill (1841–1887)
Truth at Last, 976
Five Lives, 977
The Fool's Prayer, 978
Opportunity, 978

John Banister Tabb (1845–1909)
Father Damien, 979
Evolution, 979
Blossom, 979
The Peak, 979
Prejudice, 979
Fame, 979
Expectancy, 979
Sundered, 979
Going Blind, 979

Richard Hovey (1864–1900)
The Wander-Lovers, 980
Comrades, 980
The Sea Gypsy, 981
A Stein Song, 981
Unmanifest Destiny, 981
At the Crossroads, 982

Louise Imogen Guiney (1861–1920)
The Wild Ride, 982
A Friend's Song for Simoisius, 983

Lizette Reese (1856–1936)
Immortality, 983
In Time of Grief, 983
Tears, 984
A Puritan Lady, 984

George Sterling (1869–1926)
The Night of Gods, 984
Aldebaran at Dusk, 984
The Black Vulture, 985
The Young Witch, 985

Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914?)
An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, 986
Philosophers Three, 991
Two Sons, 991
The Eligible Son-in-Law, 991
Moral Principle and Material Interest, 991
The Cynic's Word Book
Definitions, 992

Stephen Crane (1871–1900)
The Open Boat, 994
The Upturned Face, 1006
Ten Poems
1. In heaven, 1008
2. Places among the stars, 1008
3. A youth in apparel that glittered, 1008
4. Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind, 1008
5. A newspaper is a collection of half-injustices, 1009
6. The wayfarer, 1009
7. A slant of sun on dull brown walls, 1009
8. In the night, 1009
9. A man said to the universe, 1009
10. The trees in the garden rained flowers, 1010

Frank Norris (1870–1902)
The Octopus and *The Pit*
Wheat, 1010

Edwin Markham (1852–1940)
The Man with the Hoe, 1020

Charles Erskine Scott Wood (1852——)
First Snow, 1021
The Poet in the Desert
15. Behold silver-kirtled Dawn, the life-renewer, 1021
29. This is the pedigree of degradation, 1022
38. The desert murmurs to the sun a strange murmur, 1022
52. From my minaret the level desert widened, 1023

Trumbull Stickney (1874–1904)
A Dramatic Scene
In Campo Santo is a grave, 1024
Mt. Lykaion, 1024
The Soul of Time, 1024

William Vaughn Moody (1869–1910)
Gloucester Moors, 1025
The Menagerie, 1026

Henry Adams (1838–1918)
The Education of Henry Adams
Quincy (1838–1848), 1028
The Dynamo and the Virgin (1900), 1037

William Sydney Porter (O. Henry) (1862–1910)
A Municipal Report, 1042

Henry James (1843–1916)
The Art of Fiction, 1050
Crapy Cornelia, 1061
The Sense of Newport, 1075
Three Fragments
The Wings of the Dove
Sir Luke Strett, 1082
The Play of Friendship, 1083
The Golden Bowl
The Pagoda Arrangement, 1083

Edith Wharton (1862–1937)
The Other Two, 1084

Paul Elmer More (1864–1937)
Criticism, 1094

George Santayana (1863——)
Justification of Art, 1104
Society and Solitude, 1106
At Heaven's Gate, 1108
O World, Thou Choosest not the Better Part! 1110
On the Death of a Metaphysician, 1110
Of Thee the Northman by his Beachèd Galley, 1110
My Heart Rebels against My Generation, 1111
A Minuet, 1112

Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869–1935)
Cliff Klingenhagen, 1112
Richard Cory, 1113
How Annandale Went Out, 1113
Miniver Cheevy, 1113
For a Dead Lady, 1113
The Master, 1114
Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford, 1114
Flammonde, 1120
The Man against the Sky, 1121
John Gorham, 1124
Eros Turannos, 1125
The Gift of God, 1125
The Dark Hills, 1126
Mr. Flood's Party, 1126
The Sheaves, 1127
New England, 1127
Tristram
Tristram and Isolt of Ireland, 1127

William Ellery Leonard (1876——)
Tom Mooney, 1128
Two Lives
I, 8 One night when early winter had begun, 1129
From her own lips I learned the awful truth, 1130
From her own lips—yes, even as they smiled, 1130

9 We act in crises not as one who dons, 1130
13 Mid-morning of mid-June: Her sudden whim, 1130
II, 3 But I, grown fatuous in my love and lore, 1131
I found a paper on her chiffonier, 1131
11 That afternoon the Postman brought, among, 1131
Thereafter I found these Greek lines underscored, 1131
III, 29 Indian Summer, 1132

Robert Frost (1875——)
Mowing, 1133
The Tuft of Flowers, 1133
Mending Wall, 1134
The Death of the Hired Man, 1134
Home Burial, 1137
After Apple-Picking, 1138
The Road Not Taken, 1139
Birches, 1139
The Hill Wife
The Oft-Repeated Dream, 1140
'*Out, out—*', 1140
The Sound of the Trees, 1141
The Grindstone, 1141
Fire and Ice, 1142
Dust of Snow, 1142
The Runaway, 1142
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, 1143
To Earthward, 1143
Good-Bye and Keep Cold, 1143
Not to Keep, 1144
Acquainted with the Night, 1144
Canis Major, 1144
The Bear, 1144
Two Tramps in Mud Time, 1145
Neither Out Far Nor In Deep, 1146
A Lone Striker, 1146

Vachel Lindsay (1879–1931)
A Gospel of Beauty
On the Building of Springfield, 1147
Alexander Campbell
My Fathers Came from Kentucky, 1147
The Leaden-Eyed, 1148
The Eagle that is Forgotten, 1148
General William Booth Enters Into Heaven, 1149
The Congo, 1150
The Booker Washington Trilogy
I. Simon Legree—A Negro Sermon, 1153
The Ghost of the Buffaloes, 1154
The Broncho That Would Not Be Broken, 1155
The Chinese Nightingale, 1156

Edgar Lee Masters (1869——)
Spoon River Anthology
The Hill, 1159
Lucinda Matlock, 1160
Thomas Trevelyan, 1160
Fiddler Jones, 1160
Benjamin Pantier, 1161
Mrs. Benjamin Pantier, 1161
Reuben Pantier, 1161
Emily Sparks, 1161
Trainor, the Druggist, 1162
Daisy Fraser, 1162
Anne Rutledge, 1162
The Village Atheist, 1162
William and Emily, 1162
The New Spoon River
Robert Chain, 1163
Frances Cordell, 1163
Richard Harned, 1163
Henry Zoll, the Miller, 1163
Johnny Appleseed, 1164
Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the King Cobra, 1165

Carl Sandburg (1878——)
Chicago, 1171
To a Contemporary Bunkshooter, 1172
Fog, 1173
Joy, 1173
Nocturne in a Deserted Brickyard, 1173
Gone, 1173
I am the People, the Mob, 1174
Caboose Thoughts, 1174

Wilderness, 1175
Singing Nigger, 1175
Prayers of Steel, 1175
Cool Tombs, 1176
Shenandoah, 1176
Grass, 1176
Old Timers, 1176
Broken-Face Gargoyles, 1176
Shirt, 1177
Jazz Fantasia, 1177
Ossawatomie, 1177
Losers, 1178
Threes, 1178
Night Stuff, 1178
Upstream, 1179
The People, Yes
The People will live on, 1179

Theodore Dreiser (1871——)
An American Tragedy
An American Problem, 1180

James Branch Cabell (1879——)
The Demiurge, 1182

John Reed (1887–1920)
Ten Days that Shook the World
Moscow, 1190

Henry L. Mencken (1880——)
Bryan, 1197

Willa Cather (1876——)
Death Comes for the Archbishop
Missionary Journeys, 1200

Ole Rölvaag (1876–1931)
Giants in the Earth
Strangely Still the Days, 1209

Sinclair Lewis (1885——)
Main Street
Welcome to our City! 1214

Ring Lardner (1885–1933)
The Golden Honeymoon, 1232

Lola Ridge (1883–1941)
Faces, 1240
Sons of Belial, 1241
Reveille, 1241
Firehead
Light Song, 1242
Via Ignis
1. Thou, multi-one, whose contours none may mark, 1243
3. O lovely Light, look on thy ray perverse! 1244
7. O Light, forsake not thy adoring hills, 1244
8. For thee, the lion and the burning dove, 1244
9. Is not this April of our brief desire, 1244
13. To leap and having leapt touch privity, 1244

Sara Teasdale (1884–1933)
I Shall Not Care, 1245
The Answer, 1245
Morning, 1245
I Remembered, 1245
'Let it be Forgotten,' 1245
Arcturus in Autumn, 1245

Witter Bynner (1881——)
Grenstone River, 1246
Grieve Not for Beauty, 1246
A Tent Song, 1246
Passing Near, 1246
Tiles, 1247
The Old Men and the Young Men, 1247
A Dance for Rain, 1247

Elinor Wylie (1885–1928)
Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard
Sepulchral Moth, 1248
Beauty, 1250
The Eagle and the Mole, 1250
Wild Peaches, 1251
Escape, 1252
Velvet Shoes, 1252
Let No Charitable Hope, 1252
On a Singing Girl, 1252

Confession of Faith, 1252
True Vine, 1252
Peter and John, 1253
Address to my Soul, 1254
One Person
Although these words are false, none shall prevail, 1254
1. Now shall the long homesickness have an end, 1254
2. What other name had half expressed the whole, 1254
3. 'Children and dogs are subject to my power,' 1255
4. Now am I Orson to your Valentine, 1255
5. The little beauty that I was allowed, 1255
6. I have believed that I prefer to live, 1255
7. Would I might make subliminal my flesh, 1255
8. O love, how utterly am I bereaved, 1255
9. A subtle spirit has my path attended, 1256
10. When I perceive the sable of your hair, 1256
11. 'Before I die, let me be happy here,' 1256
12. In our content, before the autumn came, 1256
13. Oh, mine is Psyche's heavy doom reversed, 1256
14. My fairer body and perfected spirit, 1257
15. My honoured lord, forgive the unruly tongue, 1257
16. I hereby swear that to uphold your house, 1257
17. Upon your heart, which is the heart of all, 1257
18. Let us leave talking of angelic hosts, 1257
O Virtuous Light, 1257
Hymn to Earth, 1258
This Corruptible, 1259
Farewell, Sweet Dust, 1260
Birthday Sonnet, 1260

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892——)
When the Year Grows Old, 1260
I Shall Forget You Presently, My Dear, 1260
The Poet and His Book, 1261
And You as well Must Die, Beloved Dust, 1262
Lament, 1262
Memorial to D.C.
Elegy, 1262
Pity Me not Because the Light of Day, 1263
Euclid Alone Has Looked on Beauty Bare, 1263
Dirge Without Music, 1263
The Cameo, 1264
On Hearing a Symphony of Beethoven, 1264
Fatal Interview
16. I dreamed I moved among the Elysian fields, 1264
52. Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave, 1264
The Return, 1264
A Sonnet in Memory, 1265
Now Naked, How Without a Wall, 1265
Epitaph for the Race of Man
7. Only the diamond and the diamond's dust, 1265
18. Here lies, and none to mourn him but the sea, 1266

Ezra Pound (1885——)
A Retrospect, 1266
Sestina: Altaforte, 1270
For E. McC, 1271
Provincia Deserta, 1272
The Seafarer, 1273
The Return, 1274
Ballad of the Goodly Fere, 1274
Further Instructions, 1275
The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter, 1275
In a Station of the Metro, 1276
The Game of Chess, 1276
A Virginal, 1276
Villanelle: The Psychological Hour, 1277
Hugh Selwyn Mauberley
E. P. Ode Pour L'Election de Son Sepulchre, 1277
Yeux Glauques, 1279
'Siena Mi Fe; Disfecemi Maremma,' 1279
Brennbaum, 1279
Mr. Nixon, 1280
Envoi (1919), 1281

Mauberley, 1281
'The Age Demanded,' 1282
Medallion, 1283
Cantos
1. And then went down to the Ship, 1283
2. Hang it all, Robert Browning, 1285

Hilda Doolittle (H.D.) (1886——)
A Note on Poetry, 1287
Garden
O wind, rend open the heat, 1288
Orchard, 1289
Sea Gods, 1289
Oread, 1290
The Pool, 1290
Leda, 1290
The Islands, 1290
Sapphic Fragments
36. I know not what to do, 1291
113. Not honey, 1292
Song, 1293
Lethe, 1293
Lais, 1294
Helen, 1294
Hippolytus Temporizes
Where is the nightingale, 1294

John Gould Fletcher (1886——)
The Green Symphony, 1294
Down the Mississippi
1. Embarkation, 1296
2. Heat, 1296
3. Full Moon, 1297
4. The Moon's Orchestra, 1297
5. The Stevedores, 1297
6. Night Landing, 1297
7. The Silence, 1298
A Note on Polyphonic Prose, 1298
Clipper Ships, 1300
The Swan, 1302
Elegy on Tintern Abbey, 1302
Elegy on an Empty Skyscraper, 1304

Amy Lowell (1874–1925)
Fireworks, 1305
Patterns, 1306
Lilacs, 1307
The Cross-Roads, 1308
The Dinner-Party, 1310
1777
The City of Falling Leaves, 1311
Little Ivory Figures pulled with String, 1312
Meeting-House Hill, 1312
The On-Looker, 1313

William Carlos Williams (1883——)
A Note on Poetry, 1313
Peace on Earth, 1314
The Bull, 1314
The Red Wheelbarrow, 1314
The Sea-Elephant, 1314
Rain, 1315
The Botticellian Trees, 1316
Nantucket, 1317
The Red Lily, 1317
This is Just to Say, 1318
The Yachts, 1318
Fine Work with Pitch and Copper, 1318

Marianne Moore (1887——)
A Note on Poetry, 1319
The Jerboa
Abundance, 1319
No Swan So Fine, 1320
The Frigate Pelican, 1320
The Fish, 1322
Poetry, 1322
The Monkeys, 1323
A Grave, 1323
Is Your Town Nineveh? 1324
To a Snail, 1324
The Past is the Present, 1324
Silence, 1324

Wallace Stevens (1879——)
A Note on Poetry, 1325
The Worms at Heaven's Gate, 1325
The Emperor of Ice-Cream, 1325
Sunday Morning, 1325
The Bird with the Coppery, Keen Claws, 1327
To the One of Fictive Music, 1327
Peter Quince at the Clavier, 1327

Sea Surface Full of Clouds, 1328
The Idea of Order at Key West, 1330
A Postcard From the Volcano, 1330
Owl's Clover
Sombre Figuration, 1331
A Thought Revolved
III. Romanesque Affabulation, 1333

Conrad Aiken (1889——)
Discordants
Music I heard with you was more than music, 1333
The House of Dust
Well, as you say, we live for small horizons, 1333
Priapus and the Pool
When trout swim down Great Ormond Street, 1335
This is the shape of the leaf, and this of the flower, 1335
See, as the carver carves a rose, 1335
Sea Holly, 1336
The Room, 1336
Sound of Breaking, 1337
The Pomecitron Tree, 1337
Preludes for Memnon
The dead man spoke to me and begged a penny, 1339
Rimbaud and Verlaine, precious pair of poets, 1340
Time in the Rock
If man, that angel of bright consciousness, 1340
What without speech we knew and could not say, 1341
What face she put on it, we will not discuss, 1342

E. E. Cummings (1894——)
Fourteen Poems
1. All in green went my love riding, 1343
2. of evident invisibles, 1343
3. Buffalo Bill's, 1344
4. it is at moments after i have dreamed, 1344
5. Picasso, 1344
6. Humanity i love you, 1345
7. O Thou to whom the musical white spring, 1346
8. this is the garden: colours come and go, 1346
9. gee i like to think of dead, 1346
10. it really must, 1347
11. here's a little mouse) and, 1348
12. along the brittle treacherous bright streets, 1349
13. since feeling is first, 1349
14. somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond, 1349

Thornton Wilder (1897——)
The Woman of Andros
Aegean Moods, 1350

Robinson Jeffers (1887——)
The Tower Beyond Tragedy, 1354
Noon, 1378
Night, 1379
Tamar
Invocation, 1380
Ante Mortem, 1380
Tor House, 1380
Cawdor
The Death of the Eagle, 1381
Love the Wild Swan, 1382
Self Criticism in February, 1382

Eugene O'Neill (1888——)
Lazarus Laughed, 1383

Gertrude Stein (1874——)
How Writing is Written, 1446
The Life of Juan Gris, 1451
A Long Gay Book
When They are a Little Older, 1452

Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941)
Death in the Woods, 1453

Ernest Hemingway (1898——)
The Undefeated, 1460

John Dos Passos (1896——)
U.S.A.
Tin Lizzie, 1474

T. S. Eliot (1888——)
Tradition and the Individual Talent, 1478
Religion and Literature, 1483
The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, 1489
La Figlia che Piange, 1491
The Hippopotamus, 1491
Whispers of Immortality, 1492
Sweeney Among the Nightingales, 1492
Gerontion, 1493
Ash-Wednesday
1. Because I do not hope to turn again, 1494
2. Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree, 1495
3. At the first turning of the second stair, 1496
4. Who walked between the violet and the violet, 1496
5. If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent, 1497
6. Although I do not hope to turn again, 1497

Marina, 1498
Coriolan
Triumphal March, 1498
The Rock
O Light Invisible, we praise Thee! 1500

Archibald MacLeish (1892——)
Note by A. MacL., 1500
Ars Poetica, 1501
You, Andrew Marvell, 1501
'Not Marble nor the Gilded Monuments,' 1502
The End of the World, 1502
L'An trentiesme de Mon Eage, 1503
The Too-Late Born, 1503
Pony Rock, 1503
Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City
Landscape as a Nude, 1503
Wildwest, 1504
Burying Ground by the Ties, 1505
Empire Builders, 1505
Conquistador
Tenth Book, 1507
Speech to Those Who say Comrade, 1511
Pole Star for This Year, 1511

John Crowe Ransom (1888——)
Spectral Lovers, 1512
Old Man Playing with Children, 1513
Philomela, 1513

Allen Tate (1899——)
Elegy, 1514
Ode to the Confederate Dead, 1514
Mother and Son, 1516
To the Romantic Traditionists, 1517

Stephen Vincent Benét (1898——)
King David, 1517
The Mountain Whippoorwill, 1521
John Brown's Body
Invocation, 1523
The Hider's Song, 1525
Pickett's Charge, 1526
Litany for Dictatorships, 1527

Léonie Adams (1899——)
An Old Spell, 1529
Said of the Earth and the Moon, 1530
The River in the Meadows, 1530
Country Summer, 1530
The Mount, 1531
Word for Harvest, 1531

William Faulkner (1897——)
Dry September, 1531

Thomas Wolfe (1900–1938)
Of Time and the River
The Death of Stoneman Gant, 1537

Hart Crane (1899–1932)
General Aims and Theories, 1553
For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen, 1556
Black Tambourine, 1558
Praise for an Urn, 1558

Voyages
And yet this great wink of eternity, 1558
The Bridge
To Brooklyn Bridge, 1559
The Dance, 1559
Cutty Sark, 1561
The Tunnel, 1563

Horace Gregory (1898——)
A Note on Poetry, 1565
New York, Cassandra, 1565
Poem for My Daughter, 1567
Chorus for Survival
6. Under the stone I saw them flow, 1567
13. Through streets where crooked Wicklow flows, 1568
14. 'The voyage crossed, the firmament one star,' 1569
15. The meek shall disinherit the earth, 1572
It is Later than You Think, 1574

Biographical Commentaries 1577

Bibliography 1685

Index of First Lines 1689

Index of Titles 1699

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF AUTHORS

The figures in brackets indicate the page number of the commentary and bibliography.

Adams, Henry, 1028 [1639]
Adams, Léonie, 1529 [1680]
Aiken, Conrad, 1333 [1666]
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, 854 [1619]
Anderson, Sherwood, 1453 [1672]

Barlow, Joel, 214 [1597]
Bartram, William, 161 [1592]
Benét, Stephen Vincent, 1517 [1679]
Bierce, Ambrose, 986 [1634]
Boker, George Henry, 750 [1616]
Bradford, William, 13 [1578]
Bradstreet, Anne, 29 [1581]
Brownell, Henry Howard, 747 [1616]
Bryant, William Cullen, 326 [1602]
Byles, Mather, 107 [1589]
Bynner, Witter, 1246 [1657]
Byrd, William, 111 [1589]

Cabell, James Branch, 1182 [1650]
Cable, George Washington, 930 [1626]
Cather, Willa, 1200 [1653]
Channing, William Ellery, 565 [1609]
Chivers, Thomas Holley, 341 [1604]
Clemens, Samuel (Mark Twain), 872 [1623]
Colman, Benjamin, 91 [1587]
Cooper, James Fenimore, 265 [1600]
Cranch, Christopher Pearse, 564 [1608]
Crane, Hart, 1553 [1682]
Crane, Stephen, 994 [1635]
Crèvecœur, Hector St. Jean de, 170 [1593]
Cummings, E.E., 1342 [1667]

Dana, Richard Henry, Jr., 687 [1615]
Dawson, William, 110 [1589]
Dickinson, Emily, 848 [1618]
Doolittle, Hilda (H.D.), 1287 [1662]
Dos Passos, John, 1474 [1675]
Drake, Joseph Rodman, 225 [1598]
Dreiser, Theodore, 1180 [1649]

Edwards, Jonathan, 117 [1590]
Eliot, T.S., 1478 [1675]
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 442 [1606]

Faulkner, William, 1531 [1680]
Fletcher, John Gould, 1294 [1662]
Franklin, Benjamin, 134 [1591]
Freneau, Philip, 220 [1598]
Frost, Robert, 1133 [1645]

Godfrey, Thomas, 204 [1596]
Green, Joseph, 107 [1589]
Gregory, Horace, 1565 [1682]
Guiney, Louise Imogen, 982 [1632]

Halleck, Fitz-Greene, 232 [1599]
Harris, Joel Chandler, 938 [1627]
Harte, Bret, 859 [1621]
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 400 [1605]
Hay, John, 867 [1622]
Hayne, Paul Hamilton, 909 [1625]
Hearn, Lafcadio, 941 [1627]
Hemingway, Ernest, 1460 [1673]
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 588 [1610]
Hopkinson, Francis, 206 [1596]
Hovey, Richard, 980 [1631]
Howells, William Dean, 960 [1629]
Hutchinson, Thomas, 187 [1593]

Irving, Washington, 235 [1599]

James, Henry, 1050 [1641]
Jeffers, Robinson, 1354 [1669]
Jefferson, Thomas, 198 [1595]
Jewett, Sarah Orne, 952 [1628]
Josselyn, John, 40 [1582]

Knight, Sarah Kemble, 103 [1588]

Lanier, Sidney, 910 [1625]
Lardner, Ring, 1232 [1656]

Lathrop, George Parsons, 752 [1616]
Leonard, William Ellery, 1128 [1645]
Lewis, Sinclair, 1214 [1655]
Lincoln, Abraham, 753 [1617]
Lindsay, Vachel, 1147 [1646]
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 566 [1609]
Longstreet, Augustus B., 308 [1601]
Lowell, Amy, 1305 [1663]
Lowell, James Russell, 626 [1612]
Lowell, Maria, 672 [1613]

MacLeish, Archibald, 1500 [1677]
Madison, James, 200 [1595]
Markham, Edwin, 1020 [1636]
Masters, Edgar Lee, 1159 [1647]
Mather, Cotton, 64 [1586]
Mellen, Grenville, 340 [1603]
Melville, Herman, 690 [1615]
Mencken, Henry L., 1197 [1652]
Meredith, William Tuckey, 748 [1616]
Millay, Edna St. Vincent, 1260 [1659]
Miller, Joaquin, 868 [1622]
Moody, William Vaughn, 1025 [1638]
Moore, Marianne, 1319 [1665]
More, Paul Elmer, 1094 [1643]
Morton, Thomas, 16 [1579]

Norris, Frank, 1010 [1636]

O'Neill, Eugene, 1383 [1670]

Pain, Philip, 29 [1581]
Paine, Thomas, 190 [1594]
Parkman, Francis, 680 [1614]
Parsons, Thomas William, 746 [1616]
Pastorius, Francis, 59 [1585]
Percival, James Gates, 340 [1603]
Pinkney, Edward Coote, 341 [1603]
Poe, Edgar Allan, 344 [1604]
Porter, William Sydney (O.Henry), 1042 [1640]
Pound, Ezra, 1266 [1660]
Prescott, William Hickling, 673 [1613]

Ransom, John Crowe, 1512 [1678]
Read, Thomas Buchanan, 749 [1616]
Reed, John, 1190 [1651]
Reese, Lizette, 983 [1633]
Rich, Richard, 11 [1577]
Ridge, Lola, 1240 [1656]
Robinson, Edwin Arlington, 1112 [1644]
Rölvaag, Ole, 1210 [1654]
Rowlandson, Mary, 40 [1582]

Sandburg, Carl, 1171 [1648]
Santayana, George, 1104 [1643]
Sewall, Samuel, 97 [1588]
Sill, Edward Rowland, 976 [1630]
Simms, William Gilmore, 312 [1601]
Smith, John, 3 [1577]
Stedman, Edmund Clarence, 856 [1620]
Stein, Gertrude, 1446 [1671]
Sterling, George, 984 [1633]
Stevens, Wallace, 1325 [1666]
Stickney, Trumbull, 1024 [1637]

Tabb, John Banister, 979 [1631]
Tate, Allen, 1514 [1679]
Taylor, Bayard, 854 [1620]
Taylor, Edward, 60 [1585]
Teasdale, Sara, 1245 [1656]
Thompson, William Henry, 751 [1616]
Thoreau, Henry David, 579 [1607]
Timrod, Henry, 906 [1624]
Tompson, Benjamin, 56 [1584]
Trumbull, John, 208 [1596]
Tuckerman, Frederick Goddard, 975 [1629]

Ward, Nathaniel, 20 [1579]
Wharton, Edith, 1084 [1642]
Whitman, Walt, 753 [1617]
Whittier, John Greenleaf, 606 [1611]
Wigglesworth, Michael, 48 [1583]
Wilder, Thornton, 1350 [1668]
Williams, Roger, 25 [1580]
Williams, William Carlos, 1313 [1664]
Wolfe, Thomas, 1537 [1681]
Wood, Charles Erskine Scott, 1021 [1637]
Woolman, John, 158 [1592]
Wylie, Elinor, 1248 [1658]

THE OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

JOHN SMITH

1580–1631

FROM A TRUE RELATION OF SUCH OCCURRENCES AND ACCIDENTS OF NOTE AS HATH HAPPENED AT VIRGINIA

SETTLEMENT [1]

KIND Sir, commendations remembered, etc. You shall understand that after many crosses in the Downs by tempests, we arrived safely upon the southwest part of the great Canaries; within four or five days after, we set sail for Dominica, the twenty-sixth of April; the first land we made, we fell with Cape Henry, the very mouth of the Bay of Chesapeake, which at that present we little expected, having by a cruel storm been put to the northward.

Anchoring in this bay, twenty or thirty went ashore with the captain, and in coming aboard [on land], they were assaulted with certain Indians, which charged them within pistol shot; in which conflict Captain Archer and Mathew Morton were shot; whereupon Captain Newport, seconding them, made a shot at them, which the Indians little respected, but having spent their arrows retired without harm. And in that place was the box opened, wherein the council for Virginia was nominated; and arriving at the place where we are now seated, the council was sworn, and the president elected, which for that year was Mr. Edm. Maria Wingfield; where was made choice for our situation, a very fit place for the erecting of a great city, about which some contention passed betwixt Captain Wingfield and Captain Gosnold; notwithstanding, all our provision was brought ashore, and with as much speed as might be we went about our fortification.

The two-and-twenty day of April, Captain Newport and myself with divers others, to the number of twenty-two persons, set forward to discover the river some fifty or sixty miles, finding it in some places broader and in some narrower, the country (for the most part) on each side plain high ground, with many fresh springs, the people in all places kindly entreating us, dancing, and feasting us with strawberries, mulberries, bread, fish, and other of their country provisions, whereof we had plenty; for which Captain Newport kindly requited their least favors with bells, pins, needles, beads, or glasses, which so contented them that his liberality made them follow us from place to place, and ever kindly to respect us. In the midway staying to refresh ourselves in a little isle, four or five savages came unto us which described unto us the course of the river, and after in our journey they often met us, trading with us for such provision as we had; and arriving at Arrohattoc, he whom we supposed to be the chief king of all the rest most kindly entertained us, giving us in a guide to go with us up the river to Powhatan, of which place their great emperor taketh his name, where he that they honored for king used us kindly. But to finish this discovery, we passed on further, where within a mile we were intercepted with great craggy stones in the midst of the river, where the water falleth so rudely and with such a violence as not any boat can possibly pass, and so broad disperseth the stream as there is not past five or six foot at a low water, and to the shore scarce passage with a barge; the water floweth four foot, and the freshes by reason of the rocks have left marks of the inundations eight or nine foot. The south side is plain low ground, and the north side high mountains, the rocks being of a gravelly nature, interlaced with many veins of glistering spangles.

That night we returned to Powhatan; the next day (being Whitsunday after dinner) we returned to the falls, leaving a mariner in pawn with the Indians for a guide of theirs; he that they honored for king followed us by the river. That afternoon we trifled in looking upon the rocks and river (further he would not go); so there we

1 The selection, of which the title has been supplied and the text modernized by the editors, is from *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as hath Happened at Virginia since the First Planting of that Colony which is now Resident in the South Part thereof, till the Last Return from Thence*(London, 1608); reprinted in Arber, ed., *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*(Edinburgh,1910),5–22. The bracketed additions to the text are Arber's.

erected a cross; and that night taking our man at Powhatan's, Captain Newport congratulated his kindness with a gown and a hatchet; returning to Arrohattoc, and stayed there the next day to observe the height thereof; and so with many signs of love we departed.

The next day the Queen of Appomattoc kindly entreated us, her people being no less contented than the rest, and from thence we went to another place (the name whereof I do not remember), where the people showed us the manner of their diving for mussels, in which they find pearls.

That night, passing by Weanoc some twenty miles from our fort, they according to their former churlish condition seemed little to affect us; but as we departed and lodged at the point of Weanoc, the people the next morning seemed kindly to content us, yet we might perceive many signs of a more jealousy in them than before, and also the hind that the King of Arrohattoc had given us altered his resolution in going to our fort, and with many kind circumstances left us there. This gave us some occasion to doubt some mischief at the fort; yet Captain Newport intended to have visited Paspahegh and Quioucohanock; but, the instant change of the wind being fair for our return, we repaired to the fort with all speed, where the first we heard was that four hundred Indians the day before had assaulted the fort and surprised it; had not God (beyond all their expectations) by means of the ships (at whom they shot with their ordnances and muskets) caused them to retire, they had entered the fort with our own men, which were then busied in setting corn, their arms being then in dryfats and few ready but certain gentlemen of their own; in which conflict most of the council was hurt, a boy slain in the pinnace, and thirteen or fourteen more hurt.

With all speed we palisadoed our fort; each other day for six or seven days we had alarums by ambuscadoes, and four or five cruelly wounded by being abroad; the Indians' loss we know not, but as they report three were slain and divers hurt.

Captain Newport, having set things in order, set sail for England the twenty-second of June, leaving provision for thirteen or fourteen weeks.

The day before the ship's departure, the King of Pamunkey sent the Indian that had met us before in our discovery to assure us peace, our fort being then palisadoed round and all our men in good health and comfort, albeit that through some discontented humors it did not so long continue. For the President and Captain Gosnold, with the rest of the council, being for the most part discontented with one another in so much that things were neither carried with that discretion nor any business effected in such good sort as wisdom would, nor our own good and safety required, whereby and through the hard dealing of our President the rest of the council being diversely affected through his audacious command, and for Captain Martin albeit very honest and wishing the best good yet so sick and weak, and myself so disgraced through others' malice; through which disorder God (being angry with us) plagued us with such famine and sickness that the living were scarce able to bury the dead; our want of sufficient and good victuals, with continual watching, four or five each night at three bulwarks, being the chief cause. Only of sturgeon we had great store, whereon our men would so greedily surfeit as it cost many their lives; the sack, aqua vitae, and other preservatives for our health being kept only in the President's hands for his own diet and his few associates.

Shortly after, Captain Gosnold fell sick and within three weeks died. Captain Ratcliffe being then also very sick and weak, and myself having also tasted of the extremity thereof, but by God's assistance being well recovered. Kendall about this time for divers reasons deposed from being of the council; and shortly after it pleased God (in our extremity) to move the Indians to bring us corn, ere it was half ripe, to refresh us, when we rather expected when they would destroy us.

About the tenth of September there was about forty-six of our men dead; at which time, Captain Wingfield having ordered the affairs in such sort that he was generally hated of all, in which respect with one consent he was deposed from his presidency; and Captain Ratcliffe according to his course was elected.

Our provision being now within twenty days spent, the Indians brought us great

store both of corn and bread ready made; and also there came such abundance of fowls into the rivers as greatly refreshed our weak estates, whereupon many of our weak men were presently able to go abroad.

As yet we had no houses to cover us, our tents were rotten, and our cabins worse than naught; our best commodity was iron, which we made into little chisels.

The President's and Captain Martin's sickness constrained me to be cape-merchant, and yet to spare no pains in making houses for the company; who, notwithstanding our misery, little ceased their malice, grudging, and muttering.

As at this time were most of our chiefest men either sick or discontented, the rest being in such despair as they would rather starve and rot with idleness than be persuaded to do anything for their own relief without constraint, our victuals being now within eighteen days spent and the Indians' trade decreasing, I was sent to the mouth of the river, to Kecoughtan, an Indian town, to trade for corn and try the river for fish; but our fishing we could not effect by reason of the stormy weather. The Indians, thinking us near famished, with careless kindness offered us little pieces of bread and small handfulls of beans or wheat for a hatchet or a piece of copper; in like manner I entertained their kindness, and in like scorn offered them like commodities; but the children, or any that showed extraordinary kindness, I liberally contented with free gift of such trifles as well contented them.

Finding this cold comfort, I anchored before the town and the next day returned to trade; but God (the absolute disposer of all hearts) altered their conceits, for now they were no less desirous of our commodities than we of their corn. Under color to fetch fresh water, I sent a man to discover the town, their corn, and force, to try their intent in that they desired me up to their houses; which well understanding, with four shot I visited them. With fish, oysters, bread, and deer they kindly traded with me and my men, being no less in doubt of my intent than I of theirs; for well I might with twenty men have freighted a ship with corn. The town containeth eighteen houses, pleasantly seated upon three acres of ground upon a plain half environed with a great bay of the great river, the other part with a bay of the other river falling into the great bay, with a little isle fit for a castle in the mouth thereof, the town adjoining to the main by a neck of land of sixty yards.

With sixteen bushels of corn I returned towards our fort; by the way I encountered with two canoes of Indians, who came aboard me, being the inhabitants of Warrasqueoc, a kingdom on the south side of the river, which is in breadth five miles, and twenty mile or near from the mouth. With these I traded, who, having but their hunting provision, requested me to return to their town, where I should load my boat with corn; and with near thirty bushels I returned to the fort, the very name whereof gave great comfort to our despairing company.

Time thus passing away, and having not above fourteen days' victuals left, some motions were made about our President's and Captain Archer's going for England to procure a supply; in which meantime we had reasonably fitted us with houses. And our President and Captain Martin being able to walk abroad, with much ado it was concluded that the pinnace and barge should go towards Powhatan to trade for corn.

Lots were cast who should go in her; the chance was mine; and while she was a-rigging, I made a voyage to Quioucohanock, where arriving, there was but certain women and children who fled from their houses; yet at last I drew them to draw near; truck they durst not, corn they had plenty, and to spoil I had no commission.

In my return to Paspahegh, I traded with that churlish and treacherous nation; having loaded ten or twelve bushels of corn, they offered to take our pieces and swords, yet by stealth, but [we] seeming to dislike it, they were ready to assault us: yet, standing upon our guard, in coasting the shore, divers out of the woods would meet with us with corn and trade. But lest we should be constrained either to endure overmuch wrong or directly [to] fall to revenge, seeing them dog us from place to place, it being night and our necessity not fit for wars, we took occasion to return with ten bushels of corn.

Captain Martin after made two journeys to that nation of Paspahegh, but each time returned with eight or ten bushels.

All things being now ready for my journey to Powhatan, for the performance thereof I had eight men and myself for the barge, as well for discovery as trading, [and in] the pinnace five mariners and two landmen to take in our ladings at convenient places.

The ninth of November I set forward for the discovery of the country of Chickahominy, leaving the pinnace the next tide to follow and stay for my coming at Point Weanoc, twenty miles from our fort; the mouth of this river falleth into the great river at Paspahegh, eight miles above our fort.

That afternoon I stayed the ebb in the bay of Paspahegh with the Indians; towards the evening certain Indians hailed me; one of them, being of Chickahominy, offered to conduct me to his country; the Paspahegheans grudged thereat. Along we went by moonlight; at midnight he brought us before his town, desiring one of our men to go up with him, whom he kindly entertained and returned back to the barge.

The next morning I went up to the town and showed them what copper and hatchets they should have for corn, each family seeking to give me most content. So long they caused me to stay that a hundred at least was expecting my coming by the river, with corn. What I liked, I bought; and lest they should perceive my too great want, I went higher up the river.

This place is called Manosquosick, a quarter of a mile from the river, containing thirty or forty houses, upon an exceeding high land; at the foot of the hill towards the river is a plane wood watered with many springs, which fall twenty yards right down into the river. Right against the same is a great marsh of four or five miles' circuit, divided in two islands by the parting of the river, abounding with fish and fowl of all sorts.

A mile from thence is a town called Oraniocke. I further discovered the towns of Mansa, Apanaock, Werawahon, and Mamanahunt; [was] at each place kindly used, especially at the last, being the heart of the country; where were assembled two hundred people with such abundance of corn as, having laded our barge, as also I might have laded a ship.

I returned to Paspahegh, and considering the want of corn at our fort, it being night, with the ebb, by midnight I arrived at our fort, where I found our pinnace run aground.

The next morning I unladed seven hogsheads into our store.

The next morning I returned again; the second day I arrived at Mamanahunt, where the people, having heard of my coming, were ready with three or four hundred baskets, little and great, of which having laded my barge, with many signs of great kindness I returned.

At my departure they requested me to hear our pieces, being in the midst of the river; which in regard of the echo seemed a peal of ordnance. Many birds and fowls they see us daily kill that much feared them. So desirous of trade were they that they would follow me with their canoes, and for anything give it me rather than return it back. So I unladed again seven or eight hogsheads at our fort.

Having thus by God's assistance gotten good store of corn, notwithstanding, some bad spirits not content with God's providence still grew mutinous; in so much that our President, having occasion to chide the smith for his misdemeanor, he not only gave him bad language but also offered to strike him with some of his tools. For which rebellious act the smith was by a jury condemned to be hanged; but being upon the ladder, continuing very obstinate as hoping upon a rescue, when he saw no other way but death with him, he became penitent and declared a dangerous conspiracy; for which Captain Kendall, as principal, was by a jury condemned, and shot to death.

This conspiracy appeased, I set forward for the discovery of the river [of] Chickahominy. This third time I discovered the towns of Mattapanient, Morinogh, Askakep, Moysenock, Righkahauk, Nechanicok, Mattalunt, Attamuspincke, and divers others; their plenty of corn I found decreased, yet lading the barge I returned to our fort.

Our store being now indifferently well provided with corn, there was much ado for to have the pinnace go for England, against which Captain Martin and myself stood chiefly against it; and in fine, after many debatings *pro et contra*, it was resolved to stay a further resolution.

This matter also quieted, I set forward to finish this discovery, which as yet I had neglected in regard of the necessity we had to take in provision whilst it was to be had. Forty miles I passed up the river, which for the most part is a quarter of a mile broad and three fathom and a half deep, exceed-[ing] oozy, many great low marshes, and many high lands, especially about the midst at a place called Moysonicke, a peninsula of four miles' circuit, betwixt two rivers, joined to the main by a neck of forty or fifty yards, and forty or fifty yards from the high-water mark. On both sides in the very neck of the main are high hills and dales, yet much inhabited, the isle declining in a plain fertile corn field, the lower end a low marsh. More plenty of swans, cranes, geese, ducks, and mallards, and divers sorts of fowls, none would desire; more plain fertile planted ground in such great proportions as there I had not seen; of a light black sandy mould, the cliffs commonly red, white, and yellow-colored sand and, under, red and white clay; fish [in] great plenty, and people [in] abundance; the most of their inhabitants in view of the neck of land, where a better seat for a town cannot be desired.

At the end of forty miles this river environeth many low islands, at each high water drowned, for a mile, where it uniteth itself at a place called Appocant, the highest town inhabited.

Ten miles higher I discovered with the barge; in the midway, a great tree hindered my passage, which I cut in two. Here the river became narrower, eight, nine, or ten foot at a high water, and six or seven at a low; the stream exceeding swift, and the bottom hard channel; the ground, most part a low plain, sandy soil. This occasioned me to suppose it might issue from some lake or some broad ford, for it could not be far to the head, but rather then I would endanger the barge.[1] Yet to have been able to resolve this doubt, and to discharge the imputations of malicious tongues that half suspected I durst not for so long delaying, some of the company as desirous as myself, we resolved to hire a canoe and return with the barge to Appocant, there to leave the barge secure and put ourselves upon the adventure; the country only a vast and wild wilderness, and but only that town.

Within three or four mile we hired a canoe, and two Indians to row us the next day a-fowling. Having made such provision for the barge as was needful, I left her there to ride, with express charge not any [one] to go ashore till my return.

Though some wise men may condemn this too bold attempt of too much indiscretion, yet if they well consider the friendship of the Indians in conducting me, the desolateness of the country, the probability of some lake, and the malicious judges of my actions at home, as also to have some matters of worth to encourage our adventurers in England, [these] might well have caused any honest mind to have done the like, as well for his own discharge as for the public good.

Having two Indians for my guide and two of our own company, I set forward, leaving seven in the barge.

Having discovered twenty miles further in this desert, the river still kept his depth and breadth, but [was] much more cumbered with trees.

Here we went ashore (being some twelve miles higher than the barge had been) to refresh ourselves, during the boiling of our victuals. One of the Indians I took with me, to see the nature of the soil, and to cross the boughts of the river; the other Indian I left with Master Robbinson and Thomas Emry, with their matches lighted and order to discharge a piece for my retreat, at the first sight of any Indian.

But within a quarter of an hour I heard a loud cry and a holloing of Indians, but no warning piece. Supposing them surprised and that the Indians had betrayed us, presently I seized him and bound his arm fast to my hand in a garter, with my pistol ready bent to be revenged on him; he advised me to fly, and seemed ignorant of what was done.

1 Smith probably means: 'but in that case I should definitely endanger the barge [by proceeding upstream].'

But as we went discoursing, I was struck with an arrow on the right thigh, but without harm; upon this occasion I espied two Indians drawing their bows, which I prevented in discharging a French pistol.

By that I had charged again, three or four more did the like; for the first fell down and fled. At my discharge, they did the like. My hind I made my barricado, who offered not to strive. Twenty or thirty arrows were shot at me, but short. Three or four times I had discharged my pistol ere the king of Pamunkey, called Opechancanough, with two hundred men environed me, each drawing their bow; which done they laid them[selves] upon the ground, yet without shot.

My hind treated betwixt them and me of conditions of peace; he discovered me to be the captain. My request was to retire to the boat; they demanded my arms; the rest they said were slain, only me they would reserve.

The Indian importuned me not to shoot. In retiring, being in the midst of a low quagmire and minding them more than my steps, I stepped fast into the quagmire, and also the Indian in drawing me forth.

Thus surprised, I resolved to try their mercies; my arms I cast from me, till which none durst approach me.

Being seized on me, they drew me out and led me to the king. I presented him with a compass dial, describing by my best means the use thereof; whereat he so amazedly admired as he suffered me to proceed in a discourse of the roundness of the earth, the course of the sun, moon, stars, and planets.

With kind speeches and bread he requited me, conducting me where the canoe lay and John Robbinson slain, with twenty or thirty arrows in him. Emry I saw not.

I perceived by the abundance of fires all over the woods. At each place I expected when they would execute me, yet they used me with what kindness they could.

Approaching their town, which was within six miles where I was taken, only made as arbors and covered with mats, which they remove as occasion requires, all the women and children, being advertised of this accident, came forth to meet them; the king well guarded with twenty bowmen, five flank and rear, and each flank before him a sword and a piece, and after him the like, then a bowman, then I, on each hand a bowman, the rest in file in the rear, which rear led forth amongst the trees in abition, each his bow and a handful of arrows, a quiver at his back grimly painted; on each flank a sergeant, the one running always towards the front, the other towards the rear, each a true pace and in exceeding good order.

This being a good time continued, they cast themselves in a ring with a dance; and so each man departed to his lodging.

The captain conducting me to his lodging, a quarter of venison and some ten pound of bread I had for supper; what I left was reserved for me, and sent with me to my lodging.

Each morning three women presented me three great platters of fine bread; more venison than ten men could devour I had. My gown, points and garters, my compass, and my tablet they gave me again. Though eight ordinarily guarded me, I wanted not what they could devise to content me; and still our longer acquaintance increased our better affection.

Much they threatened to assault our fort, as they were solicited by the king of Paspahegh, who showed at our fort great signs of sorrow for this mischance. The king took great delight in understanding the manner of our ships, and sailing the seas, the earth and skies, and of our God. What he knew of the dominions he spared not to acquaint me with, as of certain men clothed at a place called Ocanahonan, clothed like me; the course of our river; and that within four or five days' journey of the falls was a great turning of salt water.

I desired he would send a messenger to Paspahegh with a letter I would write, by which they should understand how kindly they used me and that I was well, lest they should revenge my death. This he granted and sent three men, in such weather as in reason were unpossible by any naked to be endured. Their cruel minds towards the fort I had diverted, in describing the ordnance and the mines in the fields, as also the revenge Captain Newport would take of them at his return. Their intent, I inserted the fort, [as also of] the people of Ocanahonum and the back sea; this report they after found divers Indians that confirmed.

The next day after my letter, came a sav-

age to my lodging with his sword, to have slain me; but being by my guard intercepted, with a bow and arrow he offered to have effected his purpose. The cause I knew not till the king, understanding thereof, came and told me of a man a-dying, wounded with my pistol; he told me also of another I had slain; yet the most concealed they had any hurt. This was the father of him I had slain, whose fury to prevent, the king presently conducted me to another kingdom, upon the top of the next northerly river, called Youghtanund.

Having feasted me, he further led me to another branch of the river, called Mattapanient; to two other hunting towns they led me, and to each of these countries, a house of the great emperor of Powhatan, whom as yet I supposed to be at the falls; to him I told him I must go, and so return to Paspahegh.

After this four or five days' march we returned to Rasawrack, the first town they brought me to; where, binding the mats in bundles, they marched two days' journey and crossed the river of Youghtanund where it was as broad as Thames, so conducting me to a place called Menapacute in Pamunkey, where the king inhabited.

The next day another king of that nation, called Kekataugh, having received some kindness of me at the fort, kindly invited me to feast at his house; the people from all places flocked to see me, each showing to content me.

By this, the great king hath four or five houses, each containing fourscore or an hundred foot in length, pleasantly seated upon an high sandy hill, from whence you may see westerly a goodly low country, the river before the which his crooked course causeth many great marshes of exceeding good ground. An hundred houses and many large plains are here together inhabited. More abundance of fish and fowl and a pleasanter seat cannot be imagined. The king with forty bowmen to guard me entreated me to discharge my pistol, which they there presented me, with a mark at six score to strike therewith; but to spoil the practice, I broke the cock, whereat they were much discontented, though a chance supposed.

From hence this kind king conducted me to a place called Rappahannock, a kingdom upon another river northward; the cause of this was that the year before a ship had been in the river of Pamunkey, who, having been kindly entertained by Powhatan their emperor, they returned thence and discovered the river of Rappahannock; where being received with like kindness, yet he slew the king and took of his people; and they supposed I were he. But the people reported him [to be] a great man that was [the] captain, and using me kindly, the next day we departed.

This river of Rappahannock seemeth in breadth not much less than that we dwell upon. At the mouth of the river is a country called Cuttatawomen; upwards is Moraughtacund, Tapohanock, Appamatuck, and Nantaughtacund; at Topmanahocks, the head issuing from many mountains.

The next night I lodged at a hunting town of Powhatan's, and the next day arrived at Werowacomoco upon the river of Pamunkey, where the great king is resident. By the way we passed by the top of another little river, which is betwixt the two, called Piankatank. The most of this country [is] through desert, yet exceeding fertile; good timber, most hills and dales, in each valley a crystal spring.

Arriving at Werowacomoco, their emperor proudly lying upon a bedstead a foot high, upon ten or twelve mats, richly hung with many chains of great pearls about his neck, and covered with a great covering of raccoon. At [his] head sat a woman, at his feet another; on each side sitting upon a mat upon the ground were ranged his chief men on each side the fire, ten in a rank, and behind them as many young women, each [with] a great chain of white beads over their shoulders, their heads painted in red; and with such a grave and majestical countenance as drave me into admiration to see such state in a naked savage.

He kindly welcomed me with good words and great platters of sundry victuals, assuring me his friendship and my liberty within four days. He much delighted in Opechancanough's relation of what I had described to him, and oft examined me upon the same.

He asked me the cause of our coming.

I told him being in fight with the Spaniards our enemy, being overpowered, near put to retreat, and by extreme weather put

to this shore; where landing at Chesapeake, the people shot us, but at Kecoughtan they kindly used us; we by signs demanded fresh water, they described us up the river was all fresh water; at Paspahegh also they kindly used us; our pinnace being leaky, we were enforced to stay to mend her, till Captain Newport my father came to conduct us away.

He demanded why we went further with our boat. I told him in that I would have occasion to talk of the back sea, that on the other side the main, where was salt water. My father had a child slain, which we supposed Monacan his enemy [had done], whose death we intended to revenge.

After good deliberation, he began to describe me the countries beyond the falls, with many of the rest, confirming what not only Opechancanough and an Indian which had been prisoner to Powhatan had before told me; but some called it five days, some six, some eight, where the said water dashed amongst many stones and rocks each storm, which caused ofttimes the head of the river to be brackish.

Anchanachuck he described to be the people that had slain my brother, whose death he would revenge. He described also upon the same sea a mighty nation called Bocootawwonauke, a fierce nation that did eat men and warred with the people of Moyawance and Pataromerke, nations upon the top of the head of the bay, under his territories, where the year before they had slain an hundred. He signified their crowns were shaven, long hair in the neck, tied on a knot, swords like pole-axes.

Beyond them, he described people with short coats and sleeves to the elbows, that passed that way in ships like ours. Many kingdoms he described me to the head of the bay, which seemed to be a mighty river issuing from mighty mountains betwixt the two seas. The people clothed at Ocanahowan he also confirmed, and the southerly countries also, as the rest that reported us to be within a day and a half of Mangoge, two days of Chowanoc, six from Roonock, to the south part of the back sea. He described a country called Anone, where they have abundance of brass and houses walled as ours.

I requited his discourse (seeing what pride he had in his great and spacious dominions, seeing that all he knew were under his territories) in describing to him the territories of Europe, which was subject to our great king, whose subject I was, the innumerable multitude of his ships; I gave him to understand the noise of trumpets and terrible manner of fighting [that] were under Captain Newport my father, whom I entitled the Meworames, which they call the king of all the waters. At his greatness he admired and not a little feared. He desired me to forsake Paspahegh and to live with him upon his river, a country called Capahowasic. He promised to give me corn, venison, or what I wanted to feed us; hatchets and copper we should make him, and none should disturl us.

This request I promised to perform; and thus, having with all the kindness he could devise sought to content me, he sent me home with four men—one that usually carried my gown and knapsack after me, two others loaded with bread, and one to accompany me.

This river of Pamunkey is not past twelve miles from that we dwell on, his course northwest and westerly as the other. Werowacomoco is upon salt water in breadth two miles, and so keepeth his course without any tarrying some twenty miles; where at the parting of the fresh water and the salt it divideth itself into two parts, the one part to Goughland, as broad as Thames, and navigable with a boat threescore or fourscore miles and with a ship fifty; exceeding crooked, and many low grounds and marshes, but inhabited with abundance of warlike and tall people. The country of Youghtanund of no less worth, only it is lower; but all the soil a fat, fertile, sandy ground. Above Menapucunt, many high, sandy mountains. By the river is many rocks, seeming, if not, of several mines.

The other branch a little less in breadth, yet extendeth not near so far, nor so well inhabited; somewhat lower, and a white sandy and a white clay soil; here is their best *terra sigillata*. The mouth of the river, as I see in the discovery thereof with Captain Newport, is half a mile broad, and within four miles not above a musket shot; the channel exceeding good and deep, the river straight to the divisions. Kiskirk the nearest nation to the entrances.

Their religion and ceremony I observed was thus: three or four days after my taking, seven of them in the house where I lay, each with a rattle, began at ten o'clock in the morning to sing about the fire, which they environed with a circle of meal, and after a foot or two from that at the end of each song laid down two or three grains of wheat; continuing this order till they have included six or seven hundred in a half circle; and after that, two or three more circles in like manner, a hand breadth from other. That done, at each song, they put betwixt every three, two, or five grains a little stick; so counting as an old woman her *paternoster*.

One disguised with a great skin, his head hung round with little skins of weasels and other vermin, with a crownet of feathers on his head, painted as ugly as the devil, at the end of each song will make many signs and demonstrations with strange and vehement actions. Great cakes of deer suet, deer, and tobacco he casteth in the fire. Till six o'clock in the evening their howling would continue ere they would depart.

Each morning in the coldest frost the principal, to the number of twenty or thirty, assembled themselves in a round circle a good distance from the town, where they told me they there consulted where to hunt the next day.

So fat they fed me that I much doubted they intended to have sacrificed me to the Quiyoughquosicke, which is a superior power they worship; a more uglier thing cannot be described. One they have for chief sacrifices, which also they call Quiyoughquosicke. To cure the sick, a man with a rattle and extreme howling, shouting, singing, and such violent gestures and antic actions over the patient, will suck out blood and phlegm from the patient, out of their unable stomach or any diseased place, as no labor will more tire them.

Tobacco they offer the water in passing in foul weather. The death of any they lament with great sorrow and weeping. Their kings they bury betwixt two mats within their houses, with all his beads, jewels, hatchets, and copper; the others in graves like ours. They acknowledge no resurrection.

Powhatan hath three brethren and two sisters; each of his brethren succeeded other. For the crown, their heirs inherit not, but the first heirs of the sisters, and so successively the women's heirs. For the kings have as many women as they will, his subjects two, and most but one.

From Werowacomoco is but twelve miles, yet the Indians trifled away that day and would not go to our fort by any persuasions, but in certain old hunting houses of Paspahegh we lodged all night.

The next morning ere sunrise we set forward for our fort, where we arrived within an hour; where each man with the truest signs of joy they could express welcomed me. . . .

1608 1608

RICHARD RICH

*fl.*1610

NEWS FROM VIRGINIA [1]

It is no idle fabulous tale, nor is it feignèd news:
For Truth herself is here arrived, because you should not muse.

With her both Gates and Newport come to tell report doth lie
Which did divulge unto the world that they at sea did die.

'Tis true that eleven months and more, these gallant worthy wights
Was in the ship, *Sea-Venture* named, deprived Virginia's sight.
And bravely did they glide the main, 'til Neptune 'gan to frown,
As if a courser proudly backed would throw his rider down.

1 The full title is as follows: *News from Virginia. The Lost Flock Triumphant. With the Happy Arrival of that Famous and Worthy Knight, Sir Thomas Gates, and Valiant Captain, Mr. Christopher Newport, and Others into England. With the Manner of their Distress in the Island of Devils (otherwise called Bermuda), where they remained 42 Weeks, and built two Pinnaces in which they returned into Virginia*(London,1610). The text has been modernized by the editors.

The seas did rage, the winds did blow,
distressèd were they then;
Their ship did leak, her tacklings break, in
danger were her men.
But Heaven was pilot in this storm, and to
an island near,
Bermoothawes called, conducted them,
which did abate their fear.

But yet these worthies forcèd were,
oppressed with weather again,
To run their ship between two rocks, where
she doth still remain;
And then on shore the island came,
inhabited by hogs,
Some fowl and tortoises there were. They
only had one dog

To kill these swine to yield them food, that
little had to eat;
Their store was spent, and all things scant;
alas! they wanted meat.
A thousand hogs that dog did kill, their
hunger to sustain,
And with such food did in that isle two-
and-forty weeks remain.

And there two gallant pinnaces did build of
cedar-tree;
The brave *Deliverance* one was called, of
seventy ton was she.
The other *Patience* had to name, her
burden thirty ton;
Two only of their men which there pale
death did overcome.

And for the loss of these two souls, which
were accounted dear,
A son and daughter then was born, and
were baptizèd there.
The two-and-forty weeks being past, they
hoist sail and away;
Their ships with hogs well freighted were,
their hearts with mickle joy.

And so unto Virginia came, where these
brave soldiers find
The Englishmen oppressed with grief and
discontent in mind.
They seemed distracted and forlorn, for
those two worthies' loss;
Yet at their home return they joyed;
amongst them some were cross.

And in the midst of discontent came noble
Delaware;
He heard their griefs on either part, and set
them free from care.
He comforts them and cheers their hearts,
that they abound with joy;
He feeds them full and feeds their souls
with God's word every day.

A discreet council he creates of men of
worthy fame,
That noble Gates lieutenant was the
admiral had to name.
The worthy Sir George Somers, knight,
and others of command;
Master George Percy, which is brother
unto Northumberland.

Sir Ferdinando Wayneman, knight, and
others of good fame,
That noble lord his company, which to
Virginia came
And landed there; his number was one
hundred seventy; then
Add to the rest, and they make full four
hundred able men.

Where they unto their labor fall, as men
that mean to thrive;
Let's pray that Heaven may bless them all,
and keep them long alive.
Those men that vagrants lived with us,
have there deservèd well;
Their governor writes in their praise, as
divers letters tell.

And to th'adventurers thus he writes: 'Be
not dismayed at all,
For scandal cannot do us wrong; God will
not let us fall.
Let England know our willingness, for that
our work is good;
We hope to plant a nation, where none
before hath stood.

'To glorify the Lord 'tis done, and to no
other end;
He that would cross so good a work, to God
can be no friend.
There is no fear of hunger here, for corn
much store here grows;
Much fish the gallant rivers yield, 'tis truth
without suppose.

'Great store of fowl, of venison, of grapes and mulberries,
Of chestnuts, walnuts, and such like, of fruits and strawberries;
There is indeed no want at all, but some, conditioned ill,
That wish the work should not go on, with words do seem to kill.'

And for an instant of their store, the noble Delaware
Hath for the present hither sent, to testify his care
In managing so good a work, two gallant ships, by name
The *Blessing* and the *Hercules*, well fraught, and in the same

Two ships are these commodities: furs, sturgeon, caviar,
Black-walnut tree, and some deal boards, with such they laden are;
Some pearl, some wainscot and clapboards, with some sassafras wood,
And iron promised, for 'tis true their mines are very good.

Then maugre scandal, false report, or any opposition,
Th'adventurers do thus divulge to men of good condition,
That he that wants shall have relief, be he of honest mind,
Apparel, coin, or any thing, to such they will be kind;

To such as to Virginia do purpose to repair;
And when that they shall thither come, each man shall have his share.
Day wages for the laborer, and for his more content,
A house and garden plot shall have; besides, 'tis further meant

That every man shall have a part, and not there be denied
Of general profit, as if that he twelve pounds ten shillings paid;
And he that in Virginia shall copper coin receive,
For hire or commodities, and will the country leave

Upon delivery of such coin unto the governor,
Shall by exchange at his return be by their treasurer
Paid him in London at first sight; no man shall cause to grieve,
For 'tis their general will and wish that every man should live.

The number of adventurers, that are for this plantation,
Are full eight hundred worthy men, some noble, all of fashion.
Good, discreet, their work is good, and as they have begun,
May Heaven assist them in their work; and thus our news is done.

1610

WILLIAM BRADFORD

1590–1657

FROM OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION

OF THEIR VOYAGE, AND HOW THEY PASSED THE SEA, AND OF THEIR SAFE ARRIVAL AT CAPE COD [1]

SEPTEMBER 6, [1620]. These troubles being blown over, and now all being compact together in one ship, they put to sea again with a prosperous wind, which continued divers days together, which was some encouragement unto them; yet according to the usual manner many were afflicted with seasickness. And I may not omit here a special work of God's providence. There was a proud and very profane young man, one of the seamen, of a lusty, able body, which made him the more haughty; he would alway be contemning the poor people in their sickness, and cursing them daily with grievous execrations, and did not let to tell them that he hoped to help to cast half of them overboard before they came to their journey's end, and to make merry with what they had; and if he were by any gently reproved, he would curse and swear most bitterly. But it pleased God before they

1 The selection, the text of which has been modernized by the editors, is Chapter 9 of *Of Plymouth Plantation.*

came half-seas over to smite this young man with a grievous disease, of which he died in a desperate manner, and so was himself the first that was thrown overboard. Thus his curses light on his own head; and it was an astonishment to all his fellows, for they noted it to be the just hand of God upon him.

After they had enjoyed fair winds and weather for a season, they were encountered many times with cross winds, and met with many fierce storms, with which the ship was shrewdly shaken, and her upper works made very leaky; and one of the main beams in the midships was bowed and cracked, which put them in some fear that the ship could not be able to perform the voyage. So some of the chief of the company, perceiving the mariners to fear the sufficiency of the ship, as appeared by their mutterings, they entered into serious consultation with the master and other officers of the ship, to consider in time of the danger, and rather to return than to cast themselves into a desperate and inevitable peril. And truly there was great distraction and difference of opinion amongst the mariners themselves; fain would they do what could be done for their wages' sake (being now half the seas over), and on the other hand they were loath to hazard their lives too desperately. But in examining of all opinions, the master and others affirmed they knew the ship to be strong and firm under water; and for the buckling of the main beam, there was a great iron screw the passengers brought out of Holland which would raise the beam into his place; the which being done, the carpenter and master affirmed that with a post put under it, set firm in the lower deck, and otherways bound, he would make it sufficient. And as for the decks and upper works, they would caulk them as well as they could, and though with the working of the ship they would not long keep staunch, yet there would otherwise be no great danger, if they did not overpress her with sails. So they committed themselves to the will of God, and resolved to proceed. In sundry of these storms the winds were so fierce, and the seas so high, as they could not bear a knot of sail, but were forced to hull, for divers days together. And in one of them, as they thus lay at hull in a mighty storm, a lusty young man (called John Howland), coming upon some occasion above the gratings, was with a seel of the ship thrown into the sea; but it pleased God that he caught hold of the topsail halyards, which hung overboard and ran out at length; yet he held his hold, though he was sundry fathoms under water, till he was hauled up by the same rope to the brim of the water, and then with a boat hook and other means got into the ship again, and his life saved; and though he was something ill with it, yet he lived many years after, and became a profitable member both in church and commonwealth. In all this voyage there died but one of the passengers, which was William Butten, a youth, servant to Samuel Fuller, when they drew near the coast. But to omit other things, that I may be brief, after long beating at sea they fell with that land which is called Cape Cod; the which being made and certainly known to be it, they were not a little joyful. After some deliberation had amongst themselves and with the master of the ship, they tacked about and resolved to stand for the southward, the wind and weather being fair, to find some place about Hudson's River for their habitation. But after they had sailed that course about half the day, they fell amongst dangerous shoals and roaring breakers, and they were so far entangled therewith as they conceived themselves in great danger; and the wind shrinking upon them withall, they resolved to bear up again for the Cape, and thought themselves happy to get out of those dangers before night overtook them, as by God's providence they did. And the next day they got into the Cape harbor where they rid in safety. A word or two by the way of this cape; it was thus first named by Captain Gosnold and his company,[1] Anno 1602, and after by Captain Smith was called Cape James; but it retains the former name amongst seamen. Also that point which first showed those dangerous shoals unto them, they called Point Care, and Tucker's Terror; but the French and Dutch to this day call it Malabarr, by reason of those perilous shoals and the losses they have suffered there.

Being thus arrived in a good harbor and

1 'Because they took much of that fish there.' Author's note, *Bradford's History 'Of Plimoth Plantation'*(Boston,1899),94.

brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. And no marvel if they were thus joyful, seeing wise Seneca was so affected with sailing a few miles on the coast of his own Italy, as he affirmed that he had rather remain twenty years on his way by land than pass by sea to any place in a short time, so tedious and dreadful was the same unto him.

But here I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor people's present condition; and so I think will the reader too, when he well considers the same. Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation (as may be remembered by that which went before), they had now no friends to welcome them, nor inns to entertain or refresh their weather-beaten bodies, no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor. It is recorded in Scripture as a mercy to the apostle and his shipwrecked company that the barbarians showed them no small kindness in refreshing them; but these savage barbarians, when they met with them (as after will appear) were readier to fill their sides full of arrows than otherwise. And for the season it was winter; and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? And what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah, to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens), they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face; and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue. If they looked behind them, there was the mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a main bar and gulf to separate them from all the civil parts of the world. If it be said they had a ship to succor them, it is true; but what heard they daily from the master and company but that with speed they should look out a place with their shallop where they would be at some near distance; for the season was such as he would not stir from thence till a safe harbor was discovered by them where they would be, and he might go without danger; and that victuals consumed apace, but he must and would keep sufficient for themselves and their return? Yea, it was muttered by some that if they got not a place in time, they would turn them and their goods ashore and leave them. Let it also be considered what weak hopes of supply and succor they left behind them, that might bear up their minds in this sad condition and trials they were under; and they could not but be very small. It is true, indeed, the affections and love of their brethren at Leyden was cordial and entire towards them, but they had little power to help them, or themselves; and how the case stood between them and the merchants at their coming away hath already been declared. What could now sustain them but the spirit of God and His grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: 'Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice, and looked on their adversity, etc. Let them therefore praise the Lord, because He is good, and His mercies endure for ever. Yea, let them which have been redeemed of the Lord show how He hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor. When they wandered in the desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord His loving kindness, and His wonderful works before the sons of men.' [1]

1856

1 The manner in which seventeenth century writers turned the phrases of the Bible to a contemporary application may be seen by a comparison of the last speech of the selection with the biblical parallels cited by Bradford in a footnote. The quotations are from the Genevan text, most familiar to the colonists: *Deut.*26:5 'And thou shalt answer and say before the Lord thy

THOMAS MORTON

*fl.*1622–1647

FROM NEW ENGLISH CANAAN

THE SIEGE OF MA-RE MOUNT [1]

I

Of the Revels of New Canaan

THE inhabitants of Pasonagessit, having translated the name of their habitation from that ancient savage name to Ma-re Mount,[2] and being resolved to have the new name confirmed for a memorial to after-ages, did devise amongst themselves to have it performed in a solemn manner with revels and merriment after the old English custom. [They] prepared to set up a Maypole upon the festival day of Philip and Jacob, and therefore brewed a barrel of excellent beer and provided a case of bottles, to be spent, with other good cheer, for all comers of that day. And because they would have it in a complete form, they had prepared a song fitting to the time and present occasion. And upon May Day they brought the Maypole to the place appointed, with drums, guns, pistols, and other fitting instruments for that purpose, and there erected it with the help of savages that came thither of purpose to see the manner of our revels. A goodly pine tree of eighty foot long was reared up, with a pair of buck's horns nailed on somewhat near unto the top of it; where it stood as a fair sea-mark for directions how to find out the way to mine host of Ma-re Mount.

And because it should more fully appear to what end it was placed there, they had a poem in readiness made, which was fixed to the Maypole, to show the new name confirmed upon that plantation; which, although it were made according to the occurrences of the time, it being enigmatically composed, puzzled the Separatists most pitifully to expound it, which, for the better information of the reader, I have here inserted.

The Poem

Rise, Œdipus, and, if thou canst, unfold
What means Charybdis underneath the mold,
When Scylla solitary on the ground
(Sitting in form of Niobe) was found,
Till Amphitrite's darling did acquaint
Grim Neptune with the tenor of her plaint,
And caused him send forth Triton with the sound
Of trumpet loud, at which the seas were found
So full of Protean forms that the bold shore
Presented Scylla a new paramour
So strong as Sampson and so patient

God, "A Syrian was my father, who, being ready to perish for hunger, went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a small company, and grew there unto a nation great and mighty and full of people."

7 'But when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our adversity, and on our labour, and on our oppression.'

*Psal.*107:1 'Praise the Lord, because he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.

2 'Let them which have been redeemed of the Lord show how he hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor.

4 'When they wandered in the desert and wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in.

5 'Both hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 'Let them therefore confess before the Lord his loving kindness, and his wonderful works before the sons of men.'

1 The selection, of which the title has been given and the text modernized by the editors, is Chapters 14–15 of Book III of *New English Canaan*(Amsterdam,1637).

2 'Morton uniformly speaks of the place as Ma-re-Mount, and John Adams on this point commented in his notes as follows: "The Fathers of Plymouth, Dorchester, Charlestown, &c., I suppose would not allow the name to be Ma-re-Mount, but insisted upon calling it Merry-Mount, for the same reason that the common people in England will not call gentlemen's ornamental grounds gardens, but insist upon calling them pleasure-grounds, i.e. to excite envy and make them unpopular."

'Ma-re-Mount, however, was a characteristic bit of Latin punning on Morton's part, designed to tease his more austere neighbors. He himself says: "The inhabitants of Passonagessit, having translated the name of their habitation from that ancient salvage name to Ma-re-Mount . . . the precise separatists that lived at New Plimmouth stood at defiance with the place threatening to make it a woefull mount and not a merry mount." In view of the situation of the place, Ma-re-Mount was a very appropriate name, but it may well be questioned whether it was ever so called by any human being besides Morton, or by him except in print. Bradford calls it Merie-mounte.' The translation of the Indian name for Mount Wollaston is probably 'at a place near the little point.' Editor's note, C.F.Adams, Jr., ed., *The New English Canaan*(Boston,1883),14.

As Job himself, directed thus, by fate,
To comfort Scylla so unfortunate.
I do profess, by Cupid's beauteous mother,
Here's Scogan's choice for Scylla, and none other;
Though Scylla's sick with grief, because no sign
Can there be found of virtue masculine.
Aesculapius, come; I know right well
His labor's lost when you may ring her knell.
The fatal sisters' doom none can withstand,
Nor Cytherea's power, who points to land
With proclamation that the first of May
At Ma-re Mount shall be kept holiday.

The setting up of this Maypole was a lamentable spectacle to the precise Separatists that lived at New Plymouth. They termed it an idol; yea, they called it the calf of Horeb, and stood at defiance with the place, naming it Mount Dagon, threatening to make it a woeful mount and not a merry mount.

The riddle, for want of Œdipus, they could not expound; only they made some explication of part of it and said it was meant by Sampson Job, the carpenter of the ship that brought over a woman to her husband, that had been there long before and thrived so well that he sent for her and her children to come to him, where shortly after he died; having no reason but because of the sound of those two words; whenas, the truth is, the man they applied it to was altogether unknown to the author.

There was likewise a merry song made, which, to make their revels more fashionable, was sung with a chorus, every man bearing his part; which they performed in a dance, hand in hand about the Maypole, while one of the company sung and filled out the good liquor, like Ganymede and Jupiter.

The Song

Chorus

Drink and be merry, merry, merry boys;
Let all your delight be in the Hymen's joys;
Iô [1] to Hymen! now the day is come,
About the merry Maypole take a room.
Make green garlands, bring bottles out,
And fill sweet nectar freely about;
Uncover thy head and fear no harm,
For here's good liquor to keep it warm.
Then drink and be merry, etc.
Iô to Hymen, etc.
Nectar is a thing assigned
By the deity's own mind
To cure the heart oppressed with grief,
And of good liquors is the chief.
Then drink, etc.
Iô to Hymen, etc.
Give to the melancholy man
A cup or two of 't now and then;
This physic will soon revive his blood,
And make him be of a merrier mood.
Then drink, etc.
Iô to Hymen, etc.
Give to the nymph that's free from scorn
No Irish stuff nor Scotch overworn.
Lasses in beaver coats, come away,
Ye shall be welcome to us night and day.
To drink and be merry, etc.
Iô to Hymen, etc.

This harmless mirth made by young men (that lived in hope to have wives brought over to them, that would save them a labor to make a voyage to fetch any over) was much distasted of the precise Separatists, that keep much ado about the tithe of mint and cummin,[2] troubling their brains more than reason would require about things that are indifferent; and from that time sought occasion against my honest host of Ma-re Mount to overthrow his undertakings and to destroy his plantation quite and clean. But because they presumed with their imaginary gifts (which they have out of Phaon's [3] box) they could expound hidden mysteries, to convince them of blindness as well in this as in other matters of more consequence, I will illustrate the poem according to the true intent of the authors of these revels, so much distasted by those moles.

1 'Joy.'

2 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' Matthew xxiii.23.

3 Phaon was an old ferryman who once ferried Aphrodite (in the form of an old woman) from Lesbos to the mainland. She gave him in thanks a little container of costly ointment, which made him handsome and attractive.

Œdipus is generally received for the absolute reader of riddles, who is invoked. Scylla and Charybdis are two dangerous places for seamen to encounter, near unto Venice, and have been by poets formerly resembled to man and wife; the like license the author challenged for a pair of his nomination, the one lamenting for the loss of the other as Niobe for her children. Amphitrite is an arm of the sea, by which the news was carried up and down of a rich widow, now to be taken up or laid down. By Triton is the fame spread that caused the suitors to muster (as it had been to Penelope of Greece); and, the coast lying circular, all our passage to and fro is made more convenient by sea than land. Many aimed at this mark; but he that played Proteus best and could comply with her humor must be the man that would carry her; and he had need have Sampson's strength to deal with a Delilah, and as much patience as Job, that should come there, for a thing that I did observe in the lifetime of the former.

But marriage and hanging, they say, comes by destiny; and Scogan's choice 'tis better [than] none at all. He that played Proteus (with the help of Priapus) put their noses out of joint, as the proverb is.

And this the whole company of the revellers at Ma-re Mount knew to be the true sense and exposition of the riddle that was fixed to the Maypole, which the Separatists were at defiance with. Some of them affirmed that the first institution thereof was in memory of a whore, not knowing that it was a trophy erected at first in honor of Maia, the lady of learning, which they despise, vilifying the two Universities with uncivil terms, accounting what is there obtained by study is but unnecessary learning; not considering that learning does enable man's mind to converse with elements of a higher nature than is to be found within the habitation of the mole.

2

Of a Great Monster Supposed to be at Ma-re Mount; and the Preparation Made to Destroy it

THE Separatists, envying the prosperity and hope of the plantation at Ma-re Mount, which they perceived began to come forward and to be in a good way for gain in the beaver trade, conspired together against mine host especially, who was the owner of that plantation, and made up a party against him; and mustered up what aid they could, accounting of him as of a great monster.

Many threatening speeches were given out both against his person and his habitation, which they divulged should be consumed with fire; and taking advantage of the time when his company, which seemed little to regard their threats, were gone up into the inlands to trade with the savages for beaver, they set upon my honest host at a place called Wessaguscus, where by accident they found him. The inhabitants there were in good hope of the subversion of the plantation at Ma-re Mount, which they principally aimed at; and the rather because mine host was a man that endeavored to advance the dignity of the Church of England, which they, on the contrary part, would labor to vilify with uncivil terms, inveighing against the sacred Book of Common Prayer and mine host, that used it in a laudable manner amongst his family as a practise of piety.

There he would be a means to bring sacks to their mill (such is the thirst after beaver), and helped the conspirators to surprise mine host, who was there all alone; and they charged him, because they would seem to have some reasonable cause against him to set a gloss upon their malice, with criminal things; which indeed had been done by such a person, but was of their conspiracy. Mine host demanded of the conspirators who it was that was author of that information that seemed to be their ground for what they now intended. And because they answered they would not tell him, he as peremptorily replied that he would not say whether he had or he had not done as they had been informed.

The answer made no matter, as it seemed, whether it had been negatively or affirmatively made; for they had resolved what he should suffer, because, as they boasted, they were now become the greater number; they had shaked off their shackles of servitude, and were become masters, and masterless people.

It appears they were like bears' whelps in former time, when mine host's planta-

tion was of as much strength as theirs; but now, theirs being stronger, they, like overgrown bears, seemed monstrous. In brief, mine host must endure to be their prisoner until they could contrive it so that they might send him for England, as they said, there to suffer according to the merit of the fact which they intended to father upon him; supposing, belike, it would prove a heinous crime.

Much rejoicing was made that they had gotten their capital enemy, as they concluded him, whom they purposed to hamper in such sort that he should not be able to uphold his plantation at Ma-re Mount.

The conspirators sported themselves at my honest host, that meant them no hurt, and were so jocund that they feasted their bodies and fell to tippling as if they had obtained a great prize, like the Trojans when they had the custody of Hippeus' pine-tree horse.

Mine host feigned grief and could not be persuaded either to eat or drink, because he knew emptiness would be a means to make him as watchful as the geese kept in the Roman capitol: whereon the contrary part, the conspirators, would be so drowsy that he might have an opportunity to give them a slip, instead of a tester.[1] Six persons of the conspiracy were set to watch him at Wessaguscus. But he kept waking, and in the dead of night (one lying on the bed for further surety) up gets mine host and got to the second door that he was to pass, which, notwithstanding the lock, he got open, and shut it after him with such violence that it affrighted some of the conspirators.

The word, which was given with an alarm, was: 'Oh, he's gone, he's gone! What shall we do? He's gone!' The rest, half asleep, start up in amaze, and like rams ran their heads one at another full butt in the dark.

Their grand leader, Captain Shrimp,[2] took on most furiously and tore his clothes for anger to see the empty nest, and their bird gone.

The rest were eager to have torn their hair from their heads; but it was so short that it would give them no hold. Now Captain Shrimp thought in the loss of this prize, which he accounted his masterpiece, all his honor would be lost forever.

In the meantime mine host was got home to Ma-re Mount through the woods, eight miles round about the head of the river Monatoquit that parted the two plantations, finding his way by the help of the lightning (for it thundered as he went, terribly); and there he prepared powder, three pounds dried, for his present employment, and four good guns for him and the two assistants left at his house, with bullets of several sizes, three hundred or thereabouts, to be used if the conspirators should pursue him thither; and these two persons promised their aids in the quarrel, and confirmed that promise with health in good rosa solis.

Now Captain Shrimp, the first captain in the land, as he supposed, must do some new act to repair this loss and to vindicate his reputation, who had sustained blemish by this oversight, begins now to study how to repair or survive his honor. In this manner, calling of council, they conclude.

He takes eight persons more to him, and like the nine worthies of New Canaan they embark with preparation against Ma-re Mount, where this monster of a man, as their phrase was, had his den; the whole number, had the rest not been from home, being but seven, would have given Captain Shrimp a quondam drummer, such a welcome as would have made him wish for a drum as big as Diogenes' tub, that he might have crept into it out of sight.

Now the nine worthies are approached, and mine host prepared, having intelligence by a savage that hastened in love from Wessaguscus to give him notice of their intent.

One of mine host's men proved a craven; the other had proved his wits to purchase a little valor before mine host had observed his posture.

The nine worthies coming before the den of this supposed monster (this seven-headed Hydra, as they termed him), and began, like Don Quixote against the windmill, to beat a parley and to offer quarter if mine host would yield; for they resolved to send him for England and bade him lay by his arms.

1 This is an example of Morton's many puns. A 'slip' was a counterfeit coin; while a 'tester' was, in Morton's day, a slang term for a sixpence.

2 Captain Shrimp was Capt. Myles Standish, short and pugnacious military leader of the Pilgrims.

But he, who was the son of a soldier, having taken up arms in his just defense, replied that he would not lay by those arms, because they were so needful at sea if he should be sent over. Yet, to save the effusion of so much worthy blood as would have issued out of the veins of these nine worthies of New Canaan if mine host should have played upon them out at his portholes (for they came within danger like a flock of wild geese, as if they had been tailed one to another, as colts to be sold at a fair), mine host was content to yield upon quarter, and did capitulate with them in what manner it should be, for more certainty, because he knew what Captain Shrimp was.

He expressed that no violence should be offered to his person, none to his goods nor any of his household, but that he should have his arms and what else was requisite for the voyage; which their herald returns, it was agreed upon and should be performed.

But mine host no sooner had set open the door and issued out, but instantly Captain Shrimp and the rest of the worthies stepped to him, laid hold of his arms, and had him down; and so eagerly was every man bent against him (not regarding any agreement made with such a carnal man) that they fell upon him as if they would have eaten him. Some of them were so violent that they would have a slice with scabbard, and all for haste; until an old soldier ('of the Queen's', as the proverb is) that was there by accident, clapped his gun under the weapons and sharply rebuked these worthies for their unworthy practises. So the matter was taken into more deliberate consideration.

Captain Shrimp and the rest of the nine worthies made themselves, by this outrageous riot, masters of mine host of Ma-re Mount, and disposed of what he had at his plantation.

This they knew, in the eye of the savages, would add to their glory and diminish the reputation of mine honest host; whom they practised to be rid of upon any terms, as willingly as if he had been the very Hydra of the time.

1634 1637

NATHANIEL WARD

*c.*1578–1652

FROM THE SIMPLE COBBLER OF AGGAWAM

ON WOMEN'S FASHIONS [1]

SHOULD I not keep promise in speaking a little to women's fashions, they would take it unkindly. I was loath to pester better matter with such stuff; I rather thought it meet to let them stand by themselves, like the *Quae Genus* in the grammar, being deficients, or redundants, not to be brought under any rule. I shall therefore make bold for this once to borrow a little of their loose-tongued liberty, and misspend a word or two upon their long-waisted but short-skirted patience. A little use of my stirrup will do no harm.

Ridentem dicere verum, quid prohibet? [2]

Gray gravity itself can well beteam
That language be adapted to the theme.
He that to parrots speaks, must parrotize;
He that instructs a fool, may act th' unwise.

It is known more than enough that I am neither niggard nor cynic to the due bravery of the true gentry; if any man mislikes a bullimong drassock more than I, let him take her for his labor; I honor the woman that can honor herself with her attire; a good text always deserves a fair margin; I am not much offended if I see a trim far trimmer than she that wears it; in a word, whatever Christianity or civility will allow,

1 The selection, of which the first title has been supplied and the texts modernized by the editors, is from the fourth edition of *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam. Willing to help 'mend his Native Country, Lamentably Tattered, both in the Upper-Leather and Sole, with all the Honest Stitches he can take*(London,1647),25–32, 84–80; reprinted in *Pub. of the Ipswich Hist. Soc.*, XIV.

2 'What is to prevent speaking the truth with a smile?' Horace,*S.I.*,i,24.

I can afford with London measure. But when I hear a nugiperous gentledame inquire what dress the Queen is in this week, what the nudiustertian fashion of the court, with edge to be in it in all haste, whatever it be; I look at her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher, the epitome of nothing, fitter to be kicked, if she were of a kickable substance, than either honored or humored.

To speak moderately, I truly confess it is beyond the ken of my understanding to conceive how those women should have any true grace or valuable virtue that have so little wit as to disfigure themselves with such exotic garbs as not only dismantles their native lovely lustre but transclouts them into gant bar-geese, ill-shapen, shotten shellfish, Egyptian hieroglyphics, or at the best into French flirts of the pastry, which a proper Englishwoman should scorn with her heels; it is no marvel they wear drails on the hinder part of their heads, having nothing as it seems in the fore part but a few squirrels' brains to help them frisk from one ill-favored fashion to another.

These whim-crowned shes, these fashion-fancying wits,
Are empty thin-brained shells and fiddling kits.

The very troublers and impoverishers of mankind; I can hardly forbear to commend to the world a saying of a lady living sometime with the Queen of Bohemia; I know not where she found it, but it is pity it should be lost:

The world is full of care, much like unto a bubble,
Women and care, and care and women, and women and care and trouble.

The verses are even enough for such odd pegmas. I can make myself sick at any time with comparing the dazzling splendor wherewith our gentlewomen were embellished in some former habits, with the gut-foundered goosedom wherewith they are now surcingled and debauched. We have about five or six of them in our colony; if I see any of them accidentally, I cannot cleanse my fancy of them for a month after. I have been a solitary widower almost twelve years, purposed lately to make a step over to my native country for a yoke-fellow; but when I consider how women there have tripe-wifed themselves with their cladments, I have no heart to the voyage, lest their nauseous shapes and the sea should work too sorely upon my stomach. I speak sadly; methinks it should break the hearts of Englishmen to see so many goodly Englishwomen imprisoned in French cages, peering out of their hood-holes for some men of mercy to help them with a little wit; and nobody relieves them.

It is a more common than convenient saying that nine tailors make a man; it were well if nineteen could make a woman to her mind; if tailors were men indeed, well furnished but with mere moral principles, they would disdain to be led about like apes by such mimic marmosets. It is a most unworthy thing for men that have bones in them to spend their lives in making fiddle-cases for futilous women's fancies, which are the very pettitoes of infirmity, the giblets of perquisquilian toys. I am so charitable to think that most of that mystery would work the cheerfuller while they live if they might be well discharged of the tiring slavery of mis-tiring women; it is no little labor to be continually putting up Englishwomen into outlandish casks, who, if they be not shifted anew once in a few months, grow too sour for their husbands. What this trade will answer for themselves when God shall take measure of tailors' consciences is beyond my skill to imagine. There was a time when

The joining of the red rose with the white
Did set our state into a damask plight.

But now our roses are turned to fleur-de-lis, our carnations to tulips, our gilliflowers to daisies, our city-dames to an indenominable quaemalry of overturcased things. He that makes coats for the moon had need to take measure every noon; and he that makes for women, as often, to keep them from lunacy.

I have often heard divers ladies vent loud feminine complaints of the wearisome varieties and chargeable changes of fashions; I marvel themselves prefer not a bill of redress. I would Essex ladies would lead the chore, for the honor of their county and

persons; or rather the thrice honorable ladies of the court, whom it best beseems; who may well presume of a *le roy le veult* from our sober King, a *les seigneurs ont assentus* from our prudent Peers, and the like *assentus*, from our considerate, I dare not say wife-worn Commons,[1] who I believe had much rather pass one such bill than pay so many tailors' bills as they are forced to do.

Most dear and unparalleled ladies, be pleased to attempt it; as you have the precellency of the women of the world for beauty and feature, so assume the honor to give and not take law from any, in matter of attire; if ye can transact so fair a motion among yourselves unanimously, I dare say they that most renite will least repent. What greater honor can your honors desire than to build a promontory president to all foreign ladies, to deserve so eminently at the hands of all the English gentry present and to come; and to confute the opinion of all the wise men in the world, who never thought it possible for women to do so good a work?

If any man think I have spoken rather merrily than seriously, he is much mistaken; I have written what I write with all the indignation I can, and no more than I ought. I confess I veered my tongue to this kind of language *de industria* though unwillingly, supposing those I speak to are uncapable of grave and rational arguments.

I desire all ladies and gentlewomen to understand that all this while I intend not such as, through necessary modesty to avoid morose singularity, follow fashions slowly, a flight shot or two off, showing by their moderation that they rather draw countermont with their hearts than put on by their examples.

I point my pen only against the light-heeled beagles that lead the chase so fast that they run all civility out of breath, against these ape-headed pullets which invent antique fool-fangles merely for fashion and novelty's sake.

In a word, if I begin once to declaim against fashions, let men and women look well about them, there is somewhat in the business; I confess to the world I never had grace enough to be strict in that kind; and of late years I have found syrup of pride very wholesome in a due dose, which makes me keep such store of that drug by me that if anybody comes to me for a question-full or two about fashions, they never complain of me for giving them hard measure, or underweight.

But I address myself to those who can both hear and mend all if they please; I seriously fear, if the pious Parliament do not find a time to state fashions, as ancient Parliaments have done in part, God will hardly find a time to state religion or peace; they are the surquedryes of pride, the wantonness of idleness, provoking sins, the certain prodromies of assured judgment, Zeph.1:7,8.

It is beyond all account how many gentlemen's and citizens' estates are deplumed by their feather-headed wives; what useful supplies the pannage of England would afford other countries, what rich returns to itself, if it were not sliced out into male and female fripperies; and what a multitude of misemployed hands might be better improved in some more manly manufactures for the public weal. It is not easily credible what may be said of the preterpluralities of tailors in London; I have heard an honest man say that not long since there were numbered between Temple Bar and Charing Cross eight thousand of that trade; let it be conjectured by that proportion how many there are in and about London, and in all England they will appear to be very numerous. If the Parliament would please to mend women, which their husbands dare not do, there need not so many men to make and mend as there are. I hope the present doleful estate of the realm will persuade more strongly to some considerate course herein than I now can.

Knew I how to bring it in, I would speak a word to long hair, whereof I will say no more but this: if God proves not such a barber to it as he threatens, unless it be amended (Isa.7:20) before the peace of the State and Church be well settled, then

1 The three old French assents are, respectively, traditional responses of the English Crown, the House of Lords, and the Commons during the passage of a bill. The phrase 'wife-worn Commons' probably refers either to the increased burden on the members from bringing their wives to London for the season, increasingly important in English social life, or to their exhaustion from the oft-repeated jest of James I, that he was the man of the English household, and the Commons his wife.

let my prophecy be scorned as a sound mind scorns the riot of that sin, and more it needs not. If those who are termed Rattleheads and Impuritans would take up a resolution to begin in moderation of hair, to the just reproach of those that are called Puritans and Roundheads, I would honor their manliness as much as the others' godliness, so long as I knew what man or honor meant; if neither can find a barber's shop, let them turn in to Pss.68:21; Jer.7:29; 1 Cor.11:14. If it be thought no wisdom in men to distinguish themselves in the field by the scissors, let it be thought no injustice in God not to distinguish them by the sword. I had rather God should know me by my sobriety than mine enemy not know me by my vanity. He is ill kept that is kept by his own sin. A short promise is a far safer guard than a long lock; it is an ill distinction which God is loath to look at, and His angels cannot know His saints by. Though it be not the mark of the Beast, yet it may be the mark of a beast prepared to slaughter. I am sure men used not to wear such manes; I am also sure soldiers used to wear other marklets or notadoes in time of battle.

ERRATA AT NON CORRIGENDA[1]

Now I come to rub over my work, I find five or six things like faults, which would be mended or commended, I know not well which, nor greatly care.

1. For *levity*, read *lepidity*,—and that a very little, and that very necessary, if not unavoidable.

> *Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem:*
> *Dulce est desipere in loco.*[2]
>
> Horat.

To speak to light heads with heavy words were to break their necks; to clothe summer matter with winter rug would make the reader sweat. It is music to me to hear every ditty speak its spirit in its apt tune, every breast to sing its proper part, and every creature to express itself in its natural note; should I hear a mouse roar like a bear, a cat low like an ox, or a horse whistle like a redbreast, it would scare—me.

> The world's a well strung fiddle, man's
> tongue the quill
> That fills the world with fumble for want
> of skill;
> When things and words in tune and tone do
> meet,
> The universal song goes smooth and sweet.

2. For *audacity*, read *veracity*, or *Verum Gallice non libenter audis.*[3] Mart. Flattery never doth well but when it is whispered through a pair of lisping teeth; truth best when it is spoken out through a pair of open lips. Ye make such a noise there, with drums and trumpets, that if I should not speak loud, ye could not hear me. Ye talk one to another with whole culverin and cannon; give us leave to talk squibs and pistolettoes charged with nothing but powder of love and shot of reason. If you will cut such deep gashes in one another's flesh, we must sew them up with deep stitches, else ye may bleed to death; ye were better let us, your tender countrymen, do it than foreign surgeons, who will handle you more cruelly, and take no other pay but your lives and lands.

> *Aspice vultus,*
> *Ecce meos, utinamque oculos in pectore posses*
> *Inferere: et patrias intus deprendere curas.*[4]
>
> Ovid.
> (*Phoeb.*)

> He that to tall men speaks, must lift up 's
> head,
> And when h' hath done, must set it where
> he did;
> He that to proud men talks, must put on
> pride,
> And when h' hath done, 'tis good to lay 't
> aside.

3. For *Yes, but you speak at three thousand miles distance, which every coward dare*

1 'Mistakes, but not to be corrected.'

2 'Mix some foolishness into your councils; it is pleasant to be silly at times.' Horace, *C.* IV,xii,28.

3 'Truth, Gallicus, you don't willingly hear.' Martial, VIII,76.

4 'See; look upon my face! And would that you might look into my heart as well, and understand a father's care!' Ovid, *Met.* II,92–94.

do, read: *If my heart deceives me not, I would speak thus in the Presence Chamber or House of Commons;* hoping Homer will speak a good word for me.

Θαρσαλέος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀμείνων ἔργοισι

Omnibus in rebus potior vir fortis et audax
Sit licet hospes, et e longinquis venerit oris.[1]

When kings are lost, and subjects cast
away,
A faithful heart should speak what
tongue can say;
It skills not where this faithful heart doth
dwell,
His faithful dealing should be taken well.

4. For *affected terms*, read: *I hope not—*. If I affect terms, it is my feebleness; friends that know me think I do not. I confess I see I have here and there taken a few finish stitches, which may haply please a few velvet ears; but I cannot now well pull them out, unless I should seam-rend all. It seems it is in fashion with you to sugar your papers with carnation phrases, and spangle your speeches with new-coddled words. Ermines in miniver is every man's coat. Yet we hear some are raking in old musty charnel books, for old mouldy monosyllables; I wish they were all banished to Monmouthshire, to return when they had more wit.

Multa renascentur quae jam cecidere,
cadentque
Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si
volet usus.[2]
Horat.

I honor them with my heart that can express more than ordinary matter in ordinary words—it is a pleasing eloquence; them more that study wisely and soberly to enhance their native language; them most of all that esteem the late significant speech the third great blessing of the land, it being so enriched that a man may speak many tongues in his mother's mouth, and an outlandish rustic more in one word than himself and all the parish understands. Affected terms are unaffecting things to solid hearers; yet I hold him prudent that in these fastidious times will help disedged appetites with convenient condiments, and bangled ears with pretty quick plucks. I speak the rather because not long since I met with a book, the best to me I ever saw but the Bible; yet, under favor, it was somewhat underclad, especially by him who can both excogitate and express what he undertakes as well as any man I know.

The world is grown so fine in words and
wit
That pens must now Sir Edward
Nich'las it.[3]
He that much matter speaks, speaks ne'er
a whit
If's tongue doth not career 't above his
wit.

5. For: *You verse it simply; what need have we of your thin poetry?* read: *I confess I wonder at it myself, that I should turn poet.* I can impute it to nothing but to the flatuousness of our diet; they are but sudden raptures, soon up, soon down.

Deductum dicere carmen [4] is highly commended by Macrobius. Virgil himself said:

Agrestem tenui meditabor arundine musam.[5]

Poetry's a gift wherein but few excel;
He doth very ill that doth not passing
well.
But he doth passing well that doth his best,
And he doth best that passeth all the
rest.

6. For *tediousness*, read: *I am sorry for it—*. We have a strong weakness in New England, that when we are speaking we know not how to conclude; we make many ends before we make an end. The fault is in the climate; we cannot help it though we can, which is the arch infirmity in all mo-

1 'In all things a bold and brave man is preferable, even though he be a guest and come from far-off shores.' The first line of the Latin translates the Greek.

2 'Many words that now have fallen out of use shall be reborn, and many which now are honored shall fall out of use, if usage wishes.' Horace, *A.P.* 71.

3 Sir Edward Nicholas (1593–1669) was the principal secretary of Charles I. The remark probably refers only to the necessity for recording contemporary complexities.

4 'To sing a subtle song.' Virgil, *Ecl.* VI,5.

5 'Now I shall woo the rustic Muse on slender reed.' Virgil, *Ecl.* VI,8.

rality. We are so near the west pole that our longitudes are as long as any wise man would wish, and somewhat longer. I scarce know any adage more grateful than *Grata brevitas.*[1]

Verba confer maxume ad compendium.[2]
Plaut.

Cobblers will mend, but some will never mend,
But end, and end, and end, and never end.
A well-girt hour gives every man content;
Six ribs of beef are worth six weeks of Lent.

For *all my other faults, which may be more and greater than I see,* read: *I am heartily sorry for them before I know them, lest I should forget it after;* and humbly crave pardon at adventure, having nothing that I can think of to plead but this:

Quisquis inops peccat, minor est reus.[3]
Petron.

Poor cobblers well may fault it now and then,
They're ever mending faults for other men.
And if I work for nought, why is it said
This bungling cobbler would be soundly paid?

So farewell, England Old;
If evil times ensue,
Let good men come to us;
We'll welcome them to New.

And farewell, honored friends;
If happy days ensue,
You'll have some guests from hence;
Pray welcome us to you.

And farewell, simple world;
If thou'lt thy cranium mend,
There is my last and all,
And a shoemaker's
End.

1647

ROGER WILLIAMS

*c.*1603–1683

FROM THE BLOODY TENENT YET MORE BLOODY

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TRUTH AND PEACE[4]

Truth. Dear Peace, our golden sand is out; we now must part, with an holy kiss of heavenly peace and love. Mr. Cotton speaks and writes his conscience; yet the Father of Lights may please to show him that what he highly esteems as a tenet washed white in the Lamb's blood is yet more black and abominable in the most pure and jealous eye of God.

Peace. The blackamoor's darkness differs not in the dark from the fairest white.

Truth. Christ Jesus the Sun of Righteousness hath broke forth, and daily will, to a brighter and brighter discovery of this deformed Ethiopian; and for myself I must proclaim before the Most Holy God, angels, and men that whatever other white and heavenly tenets Mr. Cotton holds, yet this is a foul, a black, and a bloody tenet.

A tenet of high blasphemy against the God of Peace, the God of Order, who hath of one blood made all mankind, to dwell upon the face of the earth, now all confounded and destroyed in their civil beings and subsistences by mutual flames of war from their several respective religions and consciences.

A tenet warring against the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus, denying His appearance and coming in the flesh to put an end to and abolish the shadows of that ceremonial and typical land of Canaan.

1 'Pleasing brevity.'
2 'Compress your remarks into a very brief compass.' Plautus, *Mil.* 3, 1, 184.
3 'Any man who breaks the law because of poverty is not much of a criminal.' Petronius, 133.
4 The selection, to which the title has been given and the text modernized by the editors, is from *The Bloody Tenent yet more Bloody: by Mr. Cotton's Endeavor to Wash it White in the Blood of the Lamb* (London, 1652); reprinted in *Pub. of the Narraganset Club,* 1st Series, IV, 493–501.

A tenet fighting against the sweet end of His coming, which was not to destroy men's lives for their religions, but to save them by the meek and peaceable invitations and persuasions of His peaceable wisdom's maidens.

A tenet foully charging His wisdom, faithfulness, and love, in so poorly providing such magistrates and civil powers all the world over as might effect so great a charge pretended to be committed to them.

A tenet lamentably guilty of His most precious blood, shed in the blood of so many hundred thousand of His poor servants by the civil powers of the world, pretending to suppress blasphemies, heresies, idolatries, superstition, etc.

A tenet fighting with the spirit of love, holiness, and meekness, by kindling fiery spirits of false zeal and fury, when yet such spirits know not of what spirit they are.

A tenet fighting with those mighty angels who stand up for the peace of the saints against Persia, Greece, etc., and so consequently all other nations who, fighting for their several religions and against the truth, leave no room for such as fear and love the Lord on the earth.

A tenet against which the blessed souls under the altar cry loud for vengeance, this tenet having cut their throats, torn out their hearts, and poured forth their blood in all ages, as the only heretics and blasphemers in the world.

A tenet which no uncleanness, no adultery, incest, sodomy, or bestiality can equal, this ravishing and forcing (explicitly or implicitly) the very souls and consciences of all the nations and inhabitants of the world.

A tenet that puts out the very eye of all true faith, which cannot but be as free and voluntary as any virgin in the world, in refusing or embracing any spiritual offer or object.

A tenet loathsome and ugly (in the eyes of the God of Heaven, and serious sons of men) I say, loathsome with the palpable filths of gross dissimulation and hypocrisy; thousands of peoples and whole nations compelled by this tenet to put on the foul vizard of religious hypocrisy for fear of laws, losses, and punishments, and for the keeping and hoping for of favor, liberty, worldly commodity, etc.

A tenet woefully guilty of hardening all false and deluded consciences (of whatsoever sect, faction, heresy, or idolatry, though never so horrid and blasphemous) by cruelties and violences practiced against them, all false teachers and their followers (ordinarily) contracting a brawny and steely hardness from their sufferings for their consciences.

A tenet that shuts and bars out the gracious prophecies and promises and discoveries of the most glorious Sun of Righteousness, Christ Jesus; that burns up the Holy Scriptures, and forbids them, upon the point, to be read in English, or that any trial or search, or truly free disquisition be made by them; when the most able, diligent, and conscionable readers must pluck forth their own eyes, and be forced to read by the (whichsoever predominant) clergy's spectacles.

A tenet that seals up the spiritual graves of all men, Jews and Gentiles, and consequently stands guilty of the damnation of all men, since no preachers nor trumpets of Christ himself may call them out but such as the several and respective nations of the world themselves allow of.

A tenet that fights against the common principles of all civility, and the very civil being and combinations of men in nations, cities, etc., by commixing (explicitly or implicitly) a spiritual and civil state together, and so confounding and overthrowing the purity and strength of both.

A tenet that kindles the devouring flames of combustions and wars in most nations of the world, and (if God were not infinitely gracious) had almost ruined the English, French, the Scotch and Irish, and many other nations, German, Polonian, Hungarian, Bohemian, etc.

A tenet that bows down the backs and necks of all civil states and magistrates, kings and emperors, under the proud feet of that man and monster of sin and pride the pope, and all popish and proud clergymen, rendering such laics and seculars (as they call them) but slavish executioners (upon the point) of their most imperious synodical decrees and sentences.

A tenet that renders the highest civil magistrates and ministers of justice (the fathers and gods of their countries) either odious or lamentably grievous unto the

very best subjects by either clapping or keeping on the iron yokes of cruelest oppression. No yoke or bondage comparably so grievous, as that upon the soul's neck of men's religion and consciences.

A tenet all besprinkled with the bloody murders, stabs, poisonings, pistolings, powder-plots, etc., against many famous kings, princes, and states, either actually performed or attempted, in France, England, Scotland, Low Countries, and other nations.

A tenet all red and bloody with those most barbarous and tiger-like massacres of so many thousand and ten thousands formerly in France, and other parts, and so lately and so horribly in Ireland; of which, whatever causes be assigned, this chiefly will be found the true; and while this continues (to wit, violence against conscience), this bloody issue sooner or later must break forth again (except God wonderfully stop it) in Ireland and other places too.

A tenet that stunts the growth and flourishing of the most likely and hopefulest commonweals and countries, while consciences the best and the best-deserving subjects are forced to fly (by enforced or voluntary banishment) from their native countries; the lamentable proof whereof England hath felt in the flight of so many worthy English into the Low Countries and New England, and from New England into Old again and other foreign parts.

A tenet whose gross partiality denies the principles of common justice, while men weigh out to the consciences of all others that which they judge not fit nor right to be weighed out to their own, since the persecutor's rule is to take and persecute all consciences, only himself must not be touched.

A tenet that is but Machiavellism, and makes a religion but a cloak or stalking horse to policy and private ends of Jeroboam's crown, and the priest's benefice, etc.

A tenet that corrupts and spoils the very civil honesty and natural conscience of a nation, since conscience to God, violated, proves (without repentance) ever after a very jade, a drug, loose and unconscionable in all converse with men.

Lastly, a tenet in England most unseasonable, as pouring oil upon those flames which the high wisdom of the Parliament (by easing the yokes on men's consciences) had begun to quench.

In the sad consideration of all which, dear Peace, let heaven and earth judge of the washing and color of this tenet. For thee, sweet heavenly guest, go lodge thee in the breasts of the peaceable and humble witnesses of Jesus, that love the truth in peace! Hide thee from the world's tumults and combustions, in the breasts of thy truly noble children, who profess and endeavor to break the irony and insupportable yokes upon the souls and consciences of any of the sons of men.

Peace. Methinks, dear Truth, if any of the least of these deep charges be found against this tenet, you do not wrong it when you style it bloody; but since, in the woeful proof of all ages past since Nimrod (the hunter or persecutor before the Lord), these and more are lamentably evident and undeniable, it gives me wonder that so many and so excellent eyes of God's servants should not espy so foul a monster, especially considering the universal opposition this tenet makes against God's glory, and the good of all mankind.

Truth. There hath been many foul opinions with which the old Serpent hath infected and bewitched the sons of men (touching God, Christ, the Spirit, the Church, against holiness, against peace, against civil obedience, against chastity), in so much that even sodomy itself hath been a tenet maintained in print by some of the very pillars of the Church of Rome; but this tenet is so universally opposite to God and man, so pernicious and destructive to both (as hath been declared), that like the powder-plot it threatens to blow up all religion, all civility, all humanity, yea, the very being of the world and the nations thereof at once.

Peace. He that is the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning, he knows this well, and this ugly blackamoor needs a mask or vizard.

Truth. Yea, the bloodiness and inhumanity of it is such that not only Mr. Cotton's more tender and holy breast but even the most bloody Bonners and Gardiners have been forced to arm themselves with the fair shows and glorious pretences of the glory of God, and zeal for that glory,

the love of His truth, the gospel of Christ Jesus, love and pity to men's souls, the peace of the Church, uniformity, order, the peace of the commonweal, the wisdom of the State, the king's, queen's and parliament's proceedings, the odiousness of sects, heresies, blasphemies, novelties, seducers, and their insections, the obstinacy of heretics, after all means, disputations, examinations, synods, yea, and after conviction in the poor heretic's own conscience; add to these the flattering sound of those glozing titles—the godly magistrate, the Christian magistrate, the nursing fathers and mothers of the Church, Christian kings and queens. But all other kings and magistrates (even all the nations of the world over, as Mr. Cotton pleads) must suspend and hold their hands, and not meddle in matters of religion, until they be informed, etc.

Peace. The dreadful righteous hand of God, the eternal and avenging God, is pulling off these masks and vizards, that thousands and the world may see this bloody tenet's beauty.

Truth. But see, my heavenly sister and true stranger in this sea-like restless, raging world, see here what fires and swords are come to part us! Well; our meetings in the heavens shall not thus be interrupted, our kisses thus distracted, and our eyes and cheeks thus wet, unwiped. For me, though censured, threatened, persecuted, I must profess while heaven and earth lasts that no one tenet that either London, England, or the world doth harbor is so heretical, blasphemous, seditious, and dangerous to the corporal, to the spiritual, to the present, to the eternal good of all men, as the bloody tenet (however washed and whited), I say, as is the bloody tenet of persecution for cause of conscience.

1652 1652

A LETTER TO THE TOWN OF PROVIDENCE [1]

[PROVIDENCE, JANUARY, 1654–5.]

THAT ever I should speak or write a tittle that tends to such an infinite liberty of conscience is a mistake, and which I have ever disclaimed and abhorred. To prevent such mistakes, I shall at present only propose this case: There goes many a ship to sea, with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common, and is a true picture of a commonwealth or a human combination or society. It hath fallen out sometimes that both papists and Protestants, Jews and Turks may be embarked in one ship; upon which supposal I affirm that all the liberty of conscience that ever I pleaded for turns upon these two hinges—that none of the papists, Protestants, Jews, or Turks be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship, nor compelled from their own particular prayers or worship, if they practice any. I further add that I never denied that, notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course, yea, and also command that justice, peace, and sobriety be kept and practiced, both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any of the seamen refuse to perform their services, or passengers to pay their freight; if any refuse to help, in person or purse, towards the common charges or defence; if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship concerning their common peace or preservation; if any shall mutiny and rise up against their commanders and officers; if any should preach or write that there ought to be no commanders or officers, because all are equal in Christ, therefore no masters nor officers, no laws nor orders, nor corrections nor punishments—I say, I never denied but in such cases, whatever is pretended, the commander or commanders may judge, resist, compel, and punish such transgressors, according to their desserts and merits. This, if seriously and honestly minded, may, if it so please the Father of Lights, let in some light to such as willingly shut not their eyes.

I remain studious of your common peace and liberty.

ROGER WILLIAMS.

1655 1874

1 The letter, of which the title has been given and the text modernized by the editors, was written by Williams in answer to a paper circulated in Providence that it was 'against the rule of the Gospel to execute judgment upon transgressors against the public or private weal.'

PHILIP PAIN

?–*c.*1668

FROM DAILY MEDITATIONS

JULY 21. THE 7TH DAY

Meditat. 9

MAN'S life is like a rose that in the spring
Begins to blossom, fragrant smells to bring.
Within a day or two, behold Death's sent,
A public messenger of discontent.
  Lord grant, that when my rose begins
    to fade,
  I may behold an everlasting shade.

Meditat. 10

ALAS, what is the world? A sea of glass!
Alas, what's earth? It's but an hourglass!
The sea dissolves; the glass is quickly run;
Behold, with speed man's life is quickly
    done.
  Let me so swim in this sea, that I may
  With Thee live happy in another day.

Meditat. 11

HAD I as many days to live, as I
See drops are in the sea, yet I must die.
Each day a drop would carry away a day,
And so my life would swiftly pass away.
  Jehovah great, humbly I Thee beseech
  The number of my days me for to teach.

Meditat. 12

I EVERY day do see that here below
Is nothing permanent; away they go
Friends and relations, every thing that I
Do cast my eyes upon is vanity.
  Give me a portion then, even in that
    place
  Where still I may behold Thy blessed
    face.

I now lie down to rest, but do not know
Where by the morning God will me bestow.

. . . . . .

Meditat. 44

ETERNITY! O soul-amazing thought,
That never to my senses yet was brought
Rightly to understand it. Oh, the height,
The breadth, the length, the depth of what
    I slight!
  Help, Son of David, mercy on me have.
  This is a-coming; I must to the grave.

Meditat. 56

THE time will be when we shall be *No more.*
Where will the world be then? 'Twill be
    No more.
Where will our comforts be? They'll be
    No more.
Where will our friends be then? They'll be
    No more.
  Lord, grant me then thy grace, lest that
    No more
  Do seize upon me, and I be *No more.*

1668

ANNE BRADSTREET

*c.*1612–1672

FROM MEDITATIONS DIVINE AND MORAL

FOR MY DEAR SON SIMON BRADSTREET [1]

PARENTS perpetuate their lives in their posterity, and their manners in their imitation. Children do naturally rather follow the failings than the virtues of their predecessors, but I am persuaded better things of you. You once desired me to leave something for you in writing that you might look upon when you should see me no more. I could think of nothing more fit for you, nor of more ease to myself, than these short meditations following. Such as they are I bequeath to you: small legacies are accepted by true friends, much more by dutiful children. I have avoided encroaching upon others' conceptions, because I would leave you nothing but mine own; though in value they fall short of all in this kind, yet I presume they will be better prized by you for

1 The texts of both prose and poetry have been modernized by the editors.

the author's sake. The Lord bless you with grace here, and crown you with glory hereafter, that I may meet you with rejoicing at that great day of appearing, which is the continual prayer of

Your affectionate mother,

March 20, 1664. A.B.

THIRTY-THREE MEDITATIONS

1

THERE is no object that we see, no action that we do, no good that we enjoy, no evil that we feel or fear, but we may make some spiritual advantage of all; and he that makes such improvement is wise, as well as pious.

2

Many can speak well, but few can do well. We are better scholars in the theory than the practical part, but he is a true Christian that is a proficient in both.

3

Youth is the time of getting, middle age of improving, and old age of spending; a negligent youth is usually attended by an ignorant middle age, and both by an empty old age. He that hath nothing to feed on but vanity and lies must needs lie down in the bed of sorrow.

4

A ship that bears much sail, and little or no ballast, is easily overset; and that man whose head hath great abilities, and his heart little or no grace, is in danger of foundering.

5

It is reported of the peacock that, priding himself in his gay feathers, he ruffles them up; but, spying his black feet, he soon lets fall his plumes: so he that glories in his gifts and adornings should look upon his corruptions, and that will damp his high thoughts.

6

The finest bread hath the least bran; the purest honey, the least wax; and the sincerest Christian, the least self-love.

7

The hireling that labors all the day comforts himself that when night comes he shall both take his rest and receive his reward: the painful Christian that hath wrought hard in God's vineyard and hath born the heat and drought of the day, when he perceives his sun apace to decline, and the shadows of his evening to be stretched out, lifts up his head with joy, knowing his refreshing is at hand.

8

Downy beds make drowsy persons, but hard lodging keeps the eyes open. A prosperous state makes a secure Christian, but adversity makes him consider.

9

Sweet words are like honey: a little may refresh, but too much gluts the stomach.

10

Diverse children have their different natures: some are like flesh which nothing but salt will keep from putrefaction; some again like tender fruits that are best preserved with sugar. Those parents are wise that can fit their nurture according to their nature.

11

That town which thousands of enemies without hath not been able to take, hath been delivered up by one traitor within; and that man which all the temptations of Satan without could not hurt, hath been foiled by one lust within.

12

Authority without wisdom is like a heavy axe without an edge, fitter to bruise than polish.

13

The reason why Christians are so loath to exchange this world for a better is because they have more sense than faith: they see what they enjoy, they do but hope for that which is to come.

14

If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

16

That house which is not often swept makes the cleanly inhabitant soon loathe it; and

that heart which is not continually purifying itself is no fit temple for the spirit of God to dwell in.

18

He that will undertake to climb up a steep mountain with a great burden on his back will find it a wearisome, if not an impossible task: so he that thinks to mount to heaven clogged with the cares and riches of this life, 'tis no wonder if he faint by the way.

19

Corn, till it have passed through the mill and been ground to powder, is not fit for bread. God so deals with his servants: He grinds them with grief and pain till they turn to dust, and then are they fit manchet for His mansion.

23

The skilful fisher hath his several baits for several fish, but there is a hook under all: Satan, that great angler, hath his sundry baits for sundry tempers of men, which they all catch greedily at, but few perceive the hook till it be too late.

25

An aching head requires a soft pillow, and a drooping heart a strong support.

31

Iron till it be thoroughly heat is incapable to be wrought: so God sees good to cast some men into the furnace of affliction, and then beats them on His anvil into what frame He pleases.

32

Ambitious men are like hops that never rest climbing so long as they have any thing to stay upon; but take away their props, and they are of all the most dejected.

34

Dim eyes are the concomitants of old age; and shortsightedness, in those that are eyes of a republic, foretells a declining state.

35

We read in Scripture of three sorts of arrows—the arrow of an enemy, the arrow of pestilence, and the arrow of a slanderous tongue; the two first kill the body, the last the good name; the two former leave a man when he is once dead, but the last mangles him in his grave.

36

Sore laborers have hard hands, and old sinners have brawny consciences.

38

Some children are hardly weaned: although the teat be rubbed with wormwood or mustard, they will either wipe it off or else suck down sweet and bitter together. So is it with some Christians: let God embitter all the sweets of this life that so they might feed upon more substantial food; yet they are so childishly sottish that they are still hugging and sucking these empty breasts, that God is forced to hedge up their way with thorns, or lay affliction on their loins, that so they might shake hands with the world before it bid them farewell.

45

We often see stones hang with drops, not from any innate moisture, but from a thick air about them. So may we sometimes see marble-hearted sinners seem full of contrition; but it is not from any dew of grace within, but from some black clouds that impend them, which produce these sweating effects.

50

Sometimes the sun is only shadowed by a cloud that we cannot see his luster, although we may walk by his light; but when he is set we are in darkness till he arise again. So God doth sometimes veil His face but for a moment, that we cannot behold the light of His countenance as at some other time, yet He affords so much light as may direct our way, that we may go forwards to the city of habitation; but when He seems to set and be quite gone out of sight, then must we needs walk in darkness and see no light, yet then must we trust in the Lord, and stay upon our God; and when the morning (which is the appointed time) is come, the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings.

53

He that is to sail into a far country, although the ship, cabin, and provision be all

convenient and comfortable for him, yet he hath no desire to make that his place of residence, but longs to put in at that port where his business lies. A Christian is sailing through this world unto his heavenly country, and here he hath many conveniences and comforts; but he must beware of desiring to make this the place of his abode, lest he meet with such tossings that may cause him to long for shore before he sees land. We must, therefore, be here as strangers and pilgrims, that we may plainly declare that we seek a city above, and wait all the days of our appointed time till our change shall come.

61

Corn is produced with much labor (as the husbandman well knows), and some land asks much more pains than some other doth to be brought into tilth, yet all must be ploughed and harrowed; some children (like sour land) are of so tough and morose a disposition, that the plough of correction must make long furrows on their back, and the harrow of discipline go often over them, before they be fit soil to sow the seed of morality, much less of grace in them. But when by prudent nurture they are brought into a fit capacity, let the seed of good instruction and exhortation be sown in the spring of their youth, and a plentiful crop may be expected in the harvest of their years.

62

As man is called the little world, so his heart may be called the little commonwealth: his more fixed and resolved thoughts are like to inhabitants, his slight and flitting thoughts are like passengers that travel to and fro continually; here is also the great court of justice erected, which is alway kept by conscience, who is both accuser, excuser, witness, and judge, whom no bribes can pervert, nor flattery cause to favor, but as he finds the evidence, so he absolves or condemns; yea, so absolute is this court of judicature, that there is no appeal from it—no, not to the court of heaven itself; for if our conscience condemn us, He also, who is greater than our conscience, will do it much more; but he that would have boldness to go to the throne of grace to be accepted there, must be sure to carry a certificate from the court of conscience, that he stands right there.

67

All the works and doings of God are wonderful, but none more awful than His great work of election and reprobation; when we consider how many good parents have had bad children, and again how many bad parents have had pious children, it should make us adore the sovereignty of God, who will not be tied to time nor place, nor yet to persons, but takes and chooses when and where and whom He pleases; it should also teach the children of godly parents to walk with fear and trembling, lest they, through unbelief, fall short of a promise; it may also be a support to such as have or had wicked parents, that, if they abide not in unbelief, God is able to graft them in; the upshot of all should make us, with the Apostle, to admire the justice and mercy of God, and say, how unsearchable are His ways, and His footsteps past finding out.

70

All men are truly said to be tenants at will, and it may as truly be said that all have a lease of their lives—some longer, some shorter—as it pleases our great Landlord to let. All have their bounds set, over which they cannot pass, and till the expiration of that time, no dangers, no sickness, no pains nor troubles shall put a period to our days; the certainty that that time will come, together with the uncertainty how, where, and when, should make us so to number our days as to apply our hearts to wisdom, that when we are put out of these houses of clay, we may be sure of an everlasting habitation that fades not away.

77

God hath by His providence so ordered that no one country hath all commodities within itself, but what it wants another shall supply, that so there may be a mutual commerce through the world. As it is with countries, so it is with men: there was never yet any one man that had all excellences; let his parts, natural and acquired, spiritual and moral, be never so large, yet he stands in need of something which another man hath (perhaps meaner than himself); which shows us perfection is not below, as also

that God will have us beholden one to another.

1867

THE PROLOGUE

1

To sing of wars, of captains, and of kings,
Of cities founded, commonwealths begun,
For my mean pen are too superior things;
Or how they all, or each, their dates have run;
Let poets and historians set these forth;
My obscure lines shall not so dim their worth.

2

But when my wond'ring eyes and envious heart
Great Bartas sugared lines do but read o'er,
Fool, I do grudge the muses did not part
'Twixt him and me that overfluent store.
A Bartas can do what a Bartas will;
But simple I according to my skill.

3

From schoolboy's tongue no rhet'ric we expect,
Nor yet a sweet consort from broken strings,
Nor perfect beauty where's a main defect.
My foolish, broken, blemished Muse so sings;
And this to mend, alas, no art is able,
'Cause nature made it so irreparable.

4

Nor can I, like that fluent, sweet-tongued Greek
Who lisped at first, in future times speak plain.
By art he gladly found what he did seek;
A full requital of his striving pain.
Art can do much, but this maxim's most sure:
A weak or wounded brain admits no cure.

5

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue
Who says my hand a needle better fits;
A poet's pen all scorn I should thus wrong,
For such despite they cast on female wits.
If what I do prove well, it won't advance;
They'll say it's stol'n, or else it was by chance.

6

But sure the antique Greeks were far more mild;
Else of our sex why feignèd they those nine,
And Poesy made Calliope's own child?
So 'mongst the rest they placed the arts divine,
But this weak knot they will full soon untie:
The Greeks did nought but play the fools and lie.

7

Let Greeks be Greeks, and women what they are;
Men have precedency and still excel.
It is but vain unjustly to wage war;
Men can do best, and women know it well.
Preëminence in all and each is yours;
Yet grant some small acknowledgement of ours.

8

And O ye high-flown quills that soar the skies,
And ever with your prey still catch your praise,
If e'er you deign these lowly lines your eyes,
Give thyme or parsley wreath; I ask no bays.
This mean and unrefinèd ore of mine
Will make your glistering gold but more to shine.

1650

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

In secret place where once I stood
Close by the banks of lacrim flood,
I heard two sisters reason on
Things that are past and things to come.
One Flesh was called, who had her eye
On worldly wealth and vanity;
The other Spirit, who did rear
Her thoughts unto a higher sphere.
'Sister,' quoth Flesh, 'what liv'st thou on—
Nothing but meditation?
Doth contemplation feed thee, so
Regardlessly to let earth go?
Can speculation satisfy
Notion without reality?

Dost dream of things beyond the moon,
And dost thou hope to dwell there soon?
Hast treasures there laid up in store,
That all in th' world thou count'st but poor?
Art fancy sick, or turned a sot,
To catch at shadows which are not?
Come, come, I'll show unto thy sense
Industry hath its recompense.
What canst desire but thou mayst see
True substance in variety?
Dost honor like? Acquire the same,
As some to their immortal fame,
And trophies to thy name erect
Which wearing time shall ne'er deject.
For riches dost thou long full sore?
Behold enough of precious store;
Earth hath more silver, pearls, and gold
Than eyes can see or hands can hold.
Affect'st thou pleasure? Take thy fill;
Earth hath enough of what you will.
Then let not go what thou mayst find
For things unknown, only in mind.'
Spirit: 'Be still, thou unregenerate part;
Disturb no more my settled heart,
For I have vowed (and so will do)
Thee as a foe still to pursue,
And combat with thee will and must
Until I see thee laid in th' dust.
Sisters we are, yea, twins we be,
Yet deadly feud 'twixt thee and me;
For from one father are we not:
Thou by old Adam wast begot,
But my arise is from above,
Whence my dear Father I do love.
Thou speak'st me fair but hat'st me sore;
Thy flattering shows I'll trust no more.
How oft thy slave hast thou me made
When I believed what thou hast said,
And never had more cause of woe
Than when I did what thou bad'st do.
I'll stop mine ears at these thy charms
And count them for my deadly harms.
Thy sinful pleasures I do hate,
Thy riches are to me no bait,
Thine honors do nor will I love;
For my ambition lies above.
My greatest honor it shall be
When I am victor over thee
And triumph shall, with laurel head,
When thou my captive shalt be led.
How I do live thou need'st not scoff,
For I have meat thou know'st not of;
The hidden manna I do eat,
The word of life it is my meat.
My thoughts do yield me more content
Than can thy hours in pleasure spent.
Nor are they shadows which I catch,
Nor fancies vain at which I snatch;
But reach at things that are so high,
Beyond thy dull capacity.
Eternal substance I do see,
With which enrichèd I would be;
Mine eye doth pierce the heavens, and see
What is invisible to thee.
My garments are not silk nor gold
Nor such like trash which earth doth hold,
But royal robes I shall have on
More glorious than the glist'ring sun.
My crown not diamonds, pearls, and gold,
But such as angels' heads infold.
The city where I hope to dwell
There's none on earth can parallel;
The stately walls both high and strong
Are made of precious jasper stone;
The gates of pearl both rich and clear;
And angels are for porters there;
The streets thereof transparent gold,
Such as no eye did e'er behold;
A crystal river there doth run,
Which doth proceed from the Lamb's throne;
Of life there are the waters sure,
Which shall remain forever pure;
Nor sun nor moon they have no need,
For glory doth from God proceed;
No candle there, nor yet torchlight,
For there shall be no darksome night.
From sickness and infirmity
For evermore they shall be free,
Nor withering age shall e'er come there,
But beauty shall be bright and clear.
This city pure is not for thee,
For things unclean there shall not be.
If I of heaven may have my fill,
Take thou the world, and all that will.'

1678

EPITAPH ON A PATRIOT [1]

WITHIN this tomb a patriot lies
That was both pious, just, and wise,
To truth a shield, to right a wall,
To sectaries a whip and maul,
A magazine of history,
A prizer of good company,

1 The poem, to which the title has been given by the editors, is the concluding epitaph of Mrs. Bradstreet's poem, 'To the Memory of my Dear and ever Honored Father, Thomas Dudley, Esq.'

In manners pleasant and severe;
The good him loved, the bad did fear.
And when his time with years was spent,
If some rejoiced, more did lament.
1653 1678

TO MY DEAR AND LOVING HUSBAND

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee.
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay;
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then, while we live, in love let's so persever,
That when we live no more we may live ever.

1678

BEFORE THE BIRTH OF ONE OF HER CHILDREN

All things within this fading world hath end,
Adversity doth still our joys attend;
No ties so strong, no friends so dear and sweet,
But with death's parting blow is sure to meet.
The sentence past is most irrevocable,
A common thing, yet oh, inevitable.
How soon, my dear, death may my steps attend,
How soon 't may be thy lot to lose thy friend
We both are ignorant; yet love bids me
These farewell lines to recommend to thee,
That when that knot's untied that made us one,
I may seem thine, who in effect am none.
And if I see not half my days that's due,
What nature would, God grant to yours and you;
The many faults that well you know I have,
Let be interred in my oblivion's grave;
If any worth or virtue were in me,
Let that live freshly in thy memory,
And when thou feel'st no grief, as I no harms,
Yet love thy dead, who long lay in thine arms.
And when thy loss shall be repaid with gains,
Look to my little babes, my dear remains.
And if thou love thyself, or loved'st me,
These O protect from stepdame's injury.
And if chance to thine eyes shall bring this verse,
With some sad sighs honor my absent hearse;
And kiss this paper for thy love's dear sake,
Who with salt tears this last farewell did take.

1678

CONTEMPLATIONS

1

Some time now past in the autumnal tide,
When Phoebus wanted but one hour to bed,
The trees all richly clad, yet void of pride,
Were gilded o'er by his rich golden head;
Their leaves and fruits seemed painted, but was true,
Of green, of red, of yellow, mixèd hue;
Rapt were my senses at this delectable view.

2

I wist not what to wish. 'Yet sure,' thought I,
'If so much excellence abide below,
How excellent is He that dwells on high?
Whose power and beauty by His works we know!
Sure He is goodness, wisdom, glory, light,
That hath this underworld so richly dight.'
More heaven than earth was here, no winter and no night.

3

Then on a stately oak I cast mine eye,
Whose ruffling top the clouds seemed to aspire;
'How long since thou wast in thine infancy?
Thy strength and stature, more thy years admire.
Hath hundred winters passed since thou wast born,

Or thousand since thou brak'st thy shell of horn?
If so, all these as nought eternity doth scorn.'

4

Then higher on the glistering sun I gazed,
Whose beams was shaded by the leafy tree;
The more I looked the more I grew amazed,
And softly said, 'What glory's like to thee?
Soul of this world, this universe's eye,
No wonder some made thee a deity;
Had I not better known, alas, the same had I.

5

'Thou as a bridegroom from thy chamber rushes
And, as a strong man, joys to run a race.
The morn doth usher thee with smiles and blushes,
The earth reflects her glances in thy face.
Birds, insects, animals, with vegetative,
Thy heart from death and dullness doth revive,
And in the darksome womb of fruitful nature dive.

6

'Thy swift annual and diurnal course,
Thy daily straight and yearly oblique path,
Thy pleasing fervor and thy scorching force,
All mortals here the feeling knowledge hath.
Thy presence makes it day, thy absence night,
Quaternal seasons causèd by thy might.
Hail, creature, full of sweetness, beauty, and delight!

7

'Art thou so full of glory that no eye
Hath strength thy shining rays once to behold?
And is thy splendid throne erect so high
As to approach it can no earthly mould?
How full of glory then must thy Creator be,
Who gave this bright light luster unto thee!
Admired, adored forever be that majesty!'

8

Silent, alone, where none or saw or heard,
In pathless paths I led my wand'ring feet;
My humble eyes to lofty skies I reared;
To sing some song my mazèd Muse thought meet;
My great Creator I would magnify,
That nature had thus deckèd liberally.
But ah, and ah, again, my imbecility!

9

I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,
The black-clad cricket bear a second part;
They kept one tune and played on the same string,
Seeming to glory in their little art.
Shall creatures abject thus their voices raise,
And in their kind resound their Maker's praise,
Whilst I, as mute, can warble forth no higher lays?

10

When present times look back to ages past,
And men in being fancy those are dead,
It makes things gone perpetually to last
And calls back months and years that long since fled;
It makes a man more agèd in conceit
Than was Methuselah or 's grandsire great
While of their persons and their acts his mind doth treat.

11

Sometimes in Eden fair he seems to be,
Sees glorious Adam there made lord of all,
Fancies the apple dangle on the tree
That turned his sovereign to a naked thrall,
Who like a miscreant's driven from that place
To get his bread with pain and sweat of face:
A penalty imposed on his backsliding race.

12

Here sits our grandame in retirèd place,
And in her lap her bloody Cain new-born;
The weeping imp oft looks her in the face,
Bewails his unknown hap and fate forlorn.
His mother sighs to think of paradise,
And how she lost her bliss to be more wise,
Believing him that was, and is, father of lies.

13

Here Cain and Abel come to sacrifice;
Fruits of the earth and fatlings each do bring;

On Abel's gift the fire descends from skies,
But no such sign on false Cain's offering;
With sullen hateful looks he goes his ways,
Hath thousand thoughts to end his brother's days,
Upon whose blood his future good he hopes to raise.

14

There Abel keeps his sheep, no ill he thinks;
His brother comes, then acts his fratricide;
The virgin earth of blood her first draught drinks,
But since that time she often hath been cloyed.
The wretch with ghastly face and dreadful mind
Thinks each he sees will serve him in his kind,
Though none on earth but kindred near then could he find.

15

Who fancies not his looks now at the bar,
His face like death, his heart with horror fraught?
Nor malefactor ever felt like war
When deep despair with wish of life hath fought.
Branded with guilt and crushed with treble woes,
A vagabond to land of Nod he goes;
A city builds, that walls might him secure from foes.

16

Who thinks not oft upon the fathers' ages?
Their long descent, how nephews sons they saw,
The starry observations of those sages,
And how their precepts to their sons were law,
How Adam sighed to see his progeny
Clothed all in his black sinful livery,
Who neither guilt nor yet the punishment could fly?

17

Our life compare we with their length of days;
Who to the tenth of theirs doth now arrive?
And though thus short, we shorten many ways,
Living so little while we are alive,
In eating, drinking, sleeping, vain delight.
So unawares comes on perpetual night
And puts all pleasures vain unto eternal flight.

18

When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth, though old, still clad in green,
The stones and trees insensible of time—
Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen;
If winter come, and greenness then do fade,
A spring returns, and they more youthful made.
But man grows old, lies down, remains where once he's laid.

19

By birth more noble than those creatures all,
Yet seems by nature and by custom cursed;
No sooner born but grief and care makes fall,
That state obliterate he had at first.
Nor youth nor strength nor wisdom spring again;
Nor habitations long their names retain,
But in oblivion to the final day remain.

20

Shall I then praise the heavens, the trees, the earth,
Because their beauty and their strength last longer?
Shall I wish there or never to had birth,
Because they're bigger and their bodies stronger?
Nay, they shall darken, perish, fade, and die,
And when unmade so ever shall they lie.
But man was made for endless immortality.

21

Under the cooling shadow of a stately elm
Close sat I by a goodly river's side,
Where gliding streams the rocks did overwhelm;
A lonely place, with pleasures dignified.
I once that loved the shady woods so well
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.

22

While on the stealing stream I fixed mine eye,
Which to the longed-for ocean held its course,
I marked nor crooks nor rubs that there did lie
Could hinder aught, but still augment its force.
'O happy flood,' quoth I, 'that holds thy race
Till thou arrive at thy belovèd place,
Nor is it rocks or shoals that can obstruct thy pace!

23

'Nor is't enough that thou alone mayst slide,
But hundred brooks in thy clear waves do meet;
So hand in hand along with thee they glide
To Thetis' house, where all embrace and greet.
Thou emblem true of what I count the best,
O could I lead my rivulets to rest!
So may we press to that vast mansion ever blest.

24

'Ye fish which in this liquid region bide,
That for each season have your habitation,
Now salt, now fresh, where you think best to glide,
To unknown coasts to give a visitation,
In lakes and ponds you leave your numerous fry;
So nature taught, and yet you know not why,
You wat'ry folk that know not your felicity.

25

'Look how the wantons frisk to taste the air,
Then to the colder bottom straight they dive;
Eftsoon to Neptune's glassy hall repair
To see what trade they, great ones, there do drive,
Who forrage o'er the spacious sea-green field
And take the trembling prey before it yield,
Whose armor is their scales, their spreading fins their shield.'

26

While musing thus with contemplation fed,
And thousand fancies buzzing in my brain,
The sweet-tongued Philomel perched o'er my head
And chanted forth a most melodious strain,
Which rapt me so with wonder and delight,
I judged my hearing better than my sight,
And wished me wings with her a while to take my flight.

27

'O merry bird,' said I, 'that fears no snares,
That neither toils nor hoards up in thy barn,
Feels no sad thoughts nor cruciating cares
To gain more good or shun what might thee harm;
Thy clothes ne'er wear, thy meat is everwhere,
Thy bed a bough, thy drink the water clear;
Reminds not what is past, nor what's to come doth fear.

28

'The dawning morn with songs thou dost prevent,
Sets hundred notes unto thy feathered crew,
So each one tunes his pretty instrument
And warbling out the old, begin anew.
And thus they pass their youth in summer season,
Then follow thee into a better region,
Where winter's never felt by that sweet airy legion.'

29

Man at the best a creature frail and vain,
In knowledge ignorant, in strength but weak,
Subject to sorrows, losses, sickness, pain;
Each storm his state, his mind, his body break;
From some of these he never finds cessation,
But day or night, within, without, vexation,
Troubles from foes, from friends, from dearest, near'st relation.

30

And yet this sinful creature, frail and vain,
This lump of wretchedness, of sin and sorrow,

This weather-beaten vessel wracked with pain,
Joys not in hope of an eternal morrow;
Nor all his losses, crosses, and vexation,
In weight, in frequency and long duration,
Can make him deeply groan for that divine translation.

31

The mariner that on smooth waves doth glide
Sings merrily and steers his bark with ease,
As if he had command of wind and tide,
And now become great master of the seas;
But suddenly a storm spoils all the sport
And makes him long for a more quiet port
Which 'gainst all adverse winds may serve for fort.

32

So he that faileth in this world of pleasure,
Feeding on sweets, that never bit of th' sour,
That's full of friends, of honor, and of treasure,
Fond fool, he takes this earth ev'n for heaven's bower.
But sad affliction comes and makes him see
Here's neither honor, wealth, nor safety;
Only above is found all with security.

33

O time, the fatal wrack of mortal things,
That draws oblivion's curtains over kings;
Their sumptuous monuments, men know them not;
Their names without a record are forgot;
Their parts, their ports, their pomp's all laid in th' dust;
Nor wit nor gold nor buildings 'scape time's rust.
But he whose name is graved in the white stone
Shall last and shine when all of these are gone.

1678

AS WEARY PILGRIM, NOW AT REST

As weary pilgrim, now at rest,
Hugs with delight his silent nest;
His wasted limbs now lie full soft
That miry steps have trodden oft;
Blesses himself to think upon
His dangers past and travails done;
The burning sun no more shall heat,
Nor stormy rains on him shall beat;
The briars and thorns no more shall scratch,
Nor hungry wolves at him shall catch;
He erring paths no more shall tread
Nor wild fruits eat instead of bread;
For waters cold he doth not long,
For thirst no more shall parch his tongue;
No rugged stones his feet shall gall,
Nor stumps nor rocks cause him to fall;
All cares and fears he bids farewell
And means in safety now to dwell:
A pilgrim I on earth, perplexed
With sins, with cares and sorrows vexed,
By age and pains brought to decay,
And my clay house mould'ring away.
Oh! how I long to be at rest
And soar on high among the blest!
This body shall in silence sleep;
Mine eyes no more shall ever weep;
No fainting fits shall me assail,
Nor grinding pains, my body frail;
With cares and fears ne'er cumbered be,
Nor losses know, nor sorrows see.
What though my flesh shall there consume?
It is the bed Christ did perfume;
And when a few years shall be gone,
This mortal shall be clothed upon;
A corrupt carcass down it lies,
A glorious body it shall rise;
In weakness and dishonor sown,
In power 'tis raised by Christ alone.
Then soul and body shall unite
And of their maker have the sight,
Such lasting joys shall there behold
As ear ne'er heard nor tongue e'er told.
Lord, make me ready for that day!
Then come, dear bridegroom, come away!

1669 1867

JOHN JOSSELYN

*fl.*1638–1675

FROM NEW ENGLAND'S RARITIES DISCOVERED

A DESCRIPTION OF AN INDIAN SQUAW [1]

NOW, gentle reader, having trespassed upon your patience a long while in the perusing of these rude observations, I shall, to make you amends, present you by way of divertissement or recreation with a copy of verses made some time since upon the picture of a young and handsome gipsy, not improperly transferred upon the Indian squaw, or female Indian, tricked up in all her bravery.

The men are somewhat horse-faced and generally faucious, i.e., without beards; but the women, many of them, have very good features; seldom without a come-to-me, or *cos amoris*, in their countenance; all of them black-eyed; having even, short teeth, and very white; their hair black, thick, and long; broad-breasted; handsome, straight bodies, and slender, considering their constant loose habit; their limbs cleanly, straight, and of a convenient stature, generally as plump as partridges; and, saving here and there, one of a modest deportment.

Their garments are a pair of sleeves of deer or moose skin, dressed and drawn with lines of several colors into Asiatic works, with buskins of the same; a short mantle of trading-cloth, either blue or red, fastened with a knot under the chin, and girt about the middle with a zone wrought with white and blue beads into pretty works. Of these beads they have bracelets for their neck and arms, and links to hang in their ears, and a fair table, curiously made up with beads likewise, to wear before their breast. Their hair they comb backward and tie it up short, with a border about two handfuls broad, wrought in works, as the other, with their beads. But enough of this.

THE POEM

WHETHER white or black be best,
Call your senses to the quest;
And your touch shall quickly tell
The black in softness doth excel
And in smoothness; but the ear—
What! can that a color hear?
No; but 'tis your black one's wit
That doth catch and captive it.
And, if slut and fair be one,
Sweet and fair there can be none;
Nor can aught so please the taste
As what's brown and lovely dressed.
And who'll say that that is best
To please one sense, displease the rest?
Maugre, then, all that can be said
In flattery of white and red,
Those flatterers themselves must say
That darkness was before the day.
And such perfection here appears,
It neither wind nor sunshine fears.

1672

MARY ROWLANDSON

*c.*1635–*c.*1678

FROM A NARRATIVE OF THE CAPTIVITY AND RESTORATION OF MRS. MARY ROWLANDSON [2]

ON the tenth of February 1676, came the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster. Their first coming was about sunrising; hearing the noise of some guns, we looked out; several houses were burning, and the smoke ascending to heaven. There were five persons taken in one house; the father and the mother and a sucking child they knocked on the head, the other two they took and carried away alive. There were two others who, being out of their garrison upon some occasion, were set upon; one was knocked on the head, the other escaped. Another there was who running

1 The selection, which has been modernized by the editors, is taken from Josselyn, *New-Englands Rarities Discovered*, reprinted in *Trans. and Coll. of the American Antiquarian Society*, IV, 230–32. The first edition was printed in London, 1672.

2 The text has been modernized by the editors.

along was shot and wounded, and fell down; he begged of them his life, promising them money (as they told me), but they would not hearken to him but knocked him in head, and stripped him naked, and split open his bowels. Another, seeing many of the Indians about his barn, ventured and went out, but was quickly shot down. There were three others belonging to the same garrison who were killed; the Indians, getting up upon the roof of the barn, had advantage to shoot down upon them over their fortification. Thus these murderous wretches went on, burning and destroying before them.

At length they came and beset our own house, and quickly it was the dolefullest day that ever mine eyes saw. The house stood upon the edge of a hill; some of the Indians got behind the hill, others into the barn, and others behind any thing that could shelter them; from all which places they shot against the house, so that the bullets seemed to fly like hail; and quickly they wounded one man among us, then another, and then a third. About two hours (according to my observation, in that amazing time) they had been about the house before they prevailed to fire it, which they did with flax and hemp which they brought out of the barn, and there being no defence about the house, only two flankers at two opposite corners and one of them not finished. They fired it once, and one ventured out and quenched it; but they quickly fired it again, and that took. Now is the dreadful hour come that I have often heard of (in time of war, as it was the case of others), but now mine eyes see it. Some in our house were fighting for their lives, others wallowing in their blood, the house on fire over our heads, and the bloody heathen ready to knock us on the head if we stirred out. Now might we hear mothers and children crying out for themselves and one another, 'Lord, what shall we do?' Then I took my children (and one of my sisters, hers) to go forth and leave the house; but as soon as we came to the door and appeared, the Indians shot so thick that the bullets rattled against the house as if one had taken a handful of stones and thrown them, so that we were fain to give back. We had six stout dogs belonging to our garrison, but none of them would stir; though another time, if any Indian had come to the door, they were ready to fly upon him and tear him down. The Lord hereby would make us the more to acknowledge His hand, and to see that our help is always in Him. But out we must go, the fire increasing and coming along behind us, roaring, and the Indians gaping before us with their guns, spears, and hatchets to devour us. No sooner were we out of the house, but my brother-in-law (being before wounded, in defending the house, in or near the throat) fell down dead, whereat the Indians scornfully shouted and hallooed, and were presently upon him, stripping off his clothes. The bullets flying thick, one went through my side, and the same (as would seem) through the bowels and hand of my dear child in my arms. One of my elder sister's children, named William, had then his leg broken, which the Indians perceiving, they knocked him on head. Thus were we butchered by those merciless heathen, standing amazed, with the blood running down to our heels. My eldest sister being yet in the house and seeing those woeful sights, the infidels haling mothers one way and children another, and some wallowing in their blood, and her elder son telling her that her son William was dead and myself was wounded, she said, 'And, Lord, let me die with them!'—which was no sooner said, but she was struck with a bullet, and fell down dead over the threshold. I hope she is reaping the fruit of her good labors, being faithful to the service of God in her place. In her younger years she lay under much trouble upon spiritual accounts, till it pleased God to make that precious Scripture take hold of her heart, 2 Cor.12:9: 'And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee.' More than twenty years after, I have heard her tell how sweet and comfortable that place was to her. But to return: the Indians laid hold of us, pulling me one way and the children another, and said, 'Come, go along with us.' I told them they would kill me; they answered, if I were willing to go along with them they would not hurt me.

Oh, the doleful sight that now was to behold at this house! 'Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth.' Of thirty-seven persons who were in this one house, none escaped either present death or a bitter captivity,

save only one, who might say as he, Job 1: 15: 'And I only am escaped alone to tell the news.' There were twelve killed, some shot, some stabbed with their spears, some knocked down with their hatchets. When we are in prosperity, oh! the little that we think of such dreadful sights, and to see our dear friends and relations lie bleeding out their heart-blood upon the ground. There was one who was chopped into the head with a hatchet, and stripped naked, and yet was crawling up and down. It is a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood, some here, and some there, like a company of sheep torn by wolves, all of them stripped naked by a company of hell-hounds, roaring, singing, ranting, and insulting, as if they would have torn our very hearts out. Yet the Lord by His almighty power preserved a number of us from death, for there were twenty-four of us taken alive and carried captive.

I had often before this said that, if the Indians should come, I should choose rather to be killed by them than taken alive; but when it came to the trial, my mind changed; their glittering weapons so daunted my spirit, that I chose rather to go along with those (as I may say) ravenous beasts, than that moment to end my days; and that I may the better declare what happened to me during that grievous captivity, I shall particularly speak of the several removes we had up and down the wilderness.

The First Remove

Now away we must go with those barbarous creatures, with our bodies wounded and bleeding, and our hearts no less than our bodies. About a mile we went that night, up upon a hill within sight of the town, where they intended to lodge. There was hard by a vacant house (deserted by the English before, for fear of the Indians). I asked them whether I might not lodge in the house that night, to which they answered: 'What! Will you love Englishmen still?' This was the dolefullest night that ever my eyes saw. Oh, the roaring, and singing, and dancing, and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell! And as miserable was the waste that was there made of horses, cattle, sheep, swine, calves, lambs, roasting pigs, and fowl (which they had plundered in the town), some roasting, some lying and burning, and some boiling to feed our merciless enemies, who were joyful enough though we were disconsolate. To add to the dolefulness of the former day and the dismalness of the present night, my thoughts ran upon my losses and sad, bereaved condition. All was gone, my husband gone (at least separated from me, he being in the Bay; and to add to my grief, the Indians told me they would kill him as he came homeward), my children gone, my relations and friends gone, our house and home and all our comforts within door and without—all was gone except my life; and I knew not but the next moment that might go too. There remained nothing to me but one poor wounded babe; and it seemed at present worse than death that it was in such a pitiful condition, bespeaking compassion, and I had no refreshing for it, nor suitable things to revive it. Little do many think what is the savageness and brutishness of this barbarous enemy, ay, even those that seem to profess more than others among them when the English have fallen into their hands.

Those seven that were killed at Lancaster the summer before upon a Sabbath day, and the one that was afterward killed upon a week day, were slain and mangled in a barbarous manner, by One-eyed John and Marlborough's Praying Indians, which Captain Mosely brought to Boston, as the Indians told me.

The Third Remove

The morning being come, they prepared to go on their way. One of the Indians got up upon a horse, and they set me up behind him, with my poor sick babe in my lap. A very wearisome and tedious day I had of it, what with my own wound and my child's being so exceeding sick and in a lamentable condition with her wound. It may be easily judged what a poor feeble condition we were in, there being not the least crumb of refreshing that came within either of our mouths from Wednesday night to Saturday night, except only a little cold water. This day in the afternoon, about an hour by sun, we came to the place where they intended, viz., an Indian town called Wenimesset,

northward of Quabaug. When we were come, oh, the number of pagans (now merciless enemies) that there came about me, that I may say as David, Psal.27:13: 'I had fainted, unless I had believed, etc.' The next day was the Sabbath; I then remembered how careless I had been of God's holy time, how many Sabbaths I had lost and misspent, and how evilly I had walked in God's sight; which lay so close unto my spirit that it was easy for me to see how righteous it was with God to cut off the thread of my life and cast me out of His presence for ever. Yet the Lord still showed mercy to me, and upheld me; and as He wounded me with one hand, so He healed me with the other. This day there came to me one Robert Pepper, a man belonging to Roxbury, who was taken in Captain Beers his fight and had been now a considerable time with the Indians, and up with them almost as far as Albany to see King Philip, as he told me, and was now very lately come into these parts. Hearing, I say, that I was in this Indian town, he obtained leave to come and see me. He told me he himself was wounded in the leg at Captain Beers his fight, and was not able some time to go, but as they carried him, and as he took oaken leaves and laid to his wound, and through the blessing of God he was able to travel again. Then I took oaken leaves and laid to my side, and with the blessing of God it cured me also; yet before the cure was wrought, I may say, as it is in Psal.38: 5,6: 'My wounds stink and are corrupt, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.' I sat much alone with a poor wounded child in my lap, which moaned night and day, having nothing to revive the body or cheer the spirits of her; but instead of that sometimes one Indian would come and tell me one hour that 'your master will knock your child in the head,' and then a second, and then a third, 'your master will quickly knock your child in the head.'

This was the comfort I had from them; 'miserable comforters are ye all,' as he said. Thus nine days I sat upon my knees, with my babe in my lap, till my flesh was raw again; my child being even ready to depart this sorrowful world, they bade me carry it out to another wigwam (I suppose because they would not be troubled with such spectacles). Whither I went with a very heavy heart, and down I sat with the picture of death in my lap. About two hours in the night, my sweet babe like a lamb departed this life, on February 18, 1675, it being about six years and five months old. It was nine days from the first wounding in this miserable condition, without any refreshing of one nature or other except a little cold water. I cannot but take notice how at another time I could not bear to be in the room where any dead person was, but now the case is changed; I must and could lie down by my dead babe, side by side all the night after. I have thought since of the wonderful goodness of God to me, in preserving me in the use of my reason and senses in that distressed time, that I did not use wicked and violent means to end my own miserable life. In the morning, when they understood that my child was dead, they sent for me home to my master's wigwam; by my master in this writing must be understood Quanopin, who was a sagamore, and married King Philip's wife's sister; not that he first took me, but I was sold to him by another Narragansett Indian, who took me when first I came out of the garrison. I went to take up my dead child in my arms to carry it with me, but they bid me let it alone; there was no resisting, but go I must and leave it. When I had been at my master's wigwam, I took the first opportunity I could get to go look after my dead child; when I came, I asked them what they had done with it. Then they told me it was upon the hill; then they went and showed me where it was, where I saw the ground was newly digged; and there they told me they had buried it. There I left that child in the wilderness, and must commit it, and myself also in this wilderness-condition, to Him who is above all. . . .

The Eighth Remove

On the morrow morning we must go over the river, i.e., Connecticut, to meet with King Philip. Two canoes full they had carried over; the next turn I myself was to go, but as my foot was upon the canoe to step in, there was a sudden outcry among them, and I must step back; and instead of going over the river, I must go four or five miles up the river farther northward. Some of the Indians ran one way, and some another.

The cause of this rout was, as I thought, their espying some English scouts who were thereabout. In this travel up the river about noon the company made a stop and sat down, some to eat and others to rest them. As I sat amongst them, musing of things past, my son Joseph unexpectedly came to me; we asked of each other's welfare, bemoaning our doleful condition and the change that had come upon us. We had husband and father, and children and sisters, and friends, and relations, and house, and home, and many comforts of this life; but now we may say, as Job: 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' I asked him whether he would read; he told me he earnestly desired it. I gave him my Bible, and he lighted upon that comfortable scripture, Psal.118:17,18: 'I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore, yet He hath not given me over to death.' 'Look here, Mother,' says he, 'did you read this?' And here I may take occasion to mention one principal ground of my setting forth these lines: even as the Psalmist says, to declare the works of the Lord, and His wonderful power in carrying us along, preserving us in the wilderness while under the enemy's hand, and returning of us in safety again, and His goodness in bringing to my hand so many comfortable and suitable Scriptures in my distress. But to return: we travelled on till night, and in the morning we must go over the river to Philip's crew. When I was in the canoe, I could not but be amazed at the numerous crew of pagans that were on the bank on the other side. When I came ashore, they gathered all about me, I sitting alone in the midst. I observed they asked one another questions, and laughed, and rejoiced over their gains and victories. Then my heart began to fail, and I fell a weeping, which was the first time to my remembrance that I wept before them. Although I had met with so much affliction, and my heart was many times ready to break, yet could I not shed one tear in their sight, but rather had been all this while in a maze, and like one astonished; but now I may say, as Psal.137:1: 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down: yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.' There one of them asked me why I wept; I could hardly tell what to say, yet I answered they would kill me. 'No,' said he, 'none will hurt you.' Then came one of them and gave me two spoonfuls of meal to comfort me, and another gave me half a pint of peas, which was more worth than many bushels at another time. Then I went to see King Philip; he bade me come in and sit down, and asked me whether I would smoke it (a usual compliment nowadays amongst saints and sinners); but this no way suited me. For though I had formerly used tobacco, yet I had left it ever since I was first taken. It seems to be a bait the devil lays to make men lose their precious time. I remember with shame how formerly, when I had taken two or three pipes, I was presently ready for another, such a bewitching thing it is; but I thank God He has now given me power over it. Surely there are many who may be better employed than to lie sucking a stinking tobacco pipe.

Now the Indians gather their forces to go against Northampton; overnight one went about yelling and hooting to give notice of the design. Whereupon they fell to boiling of groundnuts and parching of corn (as many as had it) for their provision; and in the morning away they went. During my abode in this place, Philip spake to me to make a shirt for his boy, which I did, for which he gave me a shilling; I offered the money to my master, but he bade me keep it; and with it I bought a piece of horse flesh. Afterwards he asked me to make a cap for his boy, for which he invited me to dinner. I went, and he gave me a pancake, about as big as two fingers; it was made of parched wheat, beaten, and fried in bear's grease, but I thought I never tasted pleasanter meat in my life. There was a squaw who spake to me to make a shirt for her *sannup*, for which she gave me a piece of bear. Another asked me to knit a pair of stockings, for which she gave me a quart of peas. I boiled my peas and bear together, and invited my master and mistress to dinner, but the proud gossip, because I served them both in one dish, would eat nothing, except one bit that he gave her upon the point of his knife. Hearing that my son was come to this place, I went to see him, and found him lying flat upon the ground. I asked him how he could sleep so; he answered me that he

was not asleep but at prayer, and lay so that they might not observe what he was doing. I pray God he may remember these things now he is returned in safety. At this place, the sun now getting higher, what with the beams and heat of the sun and the smoke of the wigwams, I thought I should have been blind. I could scarce discern one wigwam from another. There was here one Mary Thurston of Medfield, who, seeing how it was with me, lent me a hat to wear; but as soon as I was gone, the squaw who owned that Mary Thurston came running after me and got it away again. Here was the squaw that gave me one spoonful of meal. I put it in my pocket to keep it safe; yet, notwithstanding, somebody stole it, but put five Indian corns in the room of it, which corns were the greatest provisions I had in my travel for one day.

The Indians returning from Northampton brought with them some horses and sheep and other things which they had taken; I desired them that they would carry me to Albany upon one of those horses and sell me for powder; for so they had sometimes discoursed. I was utterly hopeless of getting home on foot, the way that I came. I could hardly bear to think of the many weary steps I had taken to come to this place.

The Eleventh Remove

The next day in the morning they took their travel, intending a day's journey up the river; I took my load at my back, and quickly we came to wade over the river, and passed over tiresome and wearisome hills. One hill was so steep that I was fain to creep up upon my knees, and to hold by the twigs and bushes to keep myself from falling backward. My head also was so light that I usually reeled as I went; but I hope all these wearisome steps that I have taken are but a forewarning to me of the heavenly rest. 'I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me,' Psal.119:71.

The Twentieth Remove

It was their usual manner to remove when they had done any mischief, lest they should be found out; and so they did at this time. We went about three or four miles, and there they built a great wigwam, big enough to hold an hundred Indians, which they did in preparation to a great day of dancing. They would say now amongst themselves that the Governor would be so angry for his loss at Sudbury that he would send no more about the captives, which made me grieve and tremble. My sister being not far from the place where we now were, and hearing that I was here, desired her master to let her come and see me, and he was willing to it, and would go with her; but she, being ready before him, told him she would go before, and was come within a mile or two of the place; then he overtook her and began to rant as if he had been mad, and made her go back again in the rain; so that I never saw her till I saw her in Charlestown. But the Lord requited many of their ill doings, for this Indian her master was hanged afterward at Boston. The Indians now began to come from all quarters against their merry dancing day. Among some of them came one Goodwife Kettle; I told her my heart was so heavy that it was ready to break. 'So is mine too,' said she, but yet said, 'I hope we shall hear some good news shortly.' I could hear how earnestly my sister desired to see me, and I as earnestly desired to see her; and yet neither of us could get an opportunity. My daughter was also now about a mile off, and I had not seen her in nine or ten weeks, as I had not seen my sister since our first taking. I earnestly desired them to let me go and see them; yea, I entreated, begged, and persuaded them but to let me see my daughter, and yet so hard-hearted were they that they would not suffer it. They made use of their tyrannical power whilst they had it; but through the Lord's wonderful mercy, their time was now but short.

On a Sabbath day, the sun being about an hour high in the afternoon, came Mr. John Hoar (the Council permitting him, and his own forward spirit inclining him) together with the two fore-mentioned Indians, Tom and Peter, with their third letter from the Council. When they came near, I was abroad; though I saw them not, they presently called me in, and bade me sit down and not stir. Then they catched up their guns and away they ran, as if an enemy had been at hand; and the guns went off apace. I manifested some great trouble, and they asked me what was the matter. I

told them I thought they had killed the Englishman (for they had in the meantime informed me that an Englishman was come); they said no, they shot over his horse and under, and before his horse; and they pushed him this way and that way, at their pleasure, showing what they could do; then they let them come to their wigwams. I begged of them to let me see the Englishman, but they would not. But there was I fain to sit their pleasure. When they had talked their fill with him, they suffered me to go to him. We asked each other of our welfare, and how my husband did, and all my friends. He told me they were all well, and would be glad to see me. Amongst other things which my husband sent me, there came a pound of tobacco, which I sold for nine shillings in money; for many of the Indians for want of tobacco smoked hemlock and ground ivy. It was a great mistake in any who thought I sent for tobacco; for through the favor of God that desire was overcome. I now asked them whether I should go home with Mr. Hoar. They answered no, one and another of them; and it being night, we lay down with that answer; in the morning Mr. Hoar invited the sagamores to dinner; but when we went to get it ready, we found that they had stolen the greatest part of the provision Mr. Hoar had brought, out of his bags, in the night. And we may see the wonderful power of God in that one passage, in that when there was such a great number of the Indians together, and so greedy of a little good food, and no English there but Mr. Hoar and myself, that there they did not knock us in the head and take what we had, there being not only some provision but also trading-cloth, a part of the twenty pounds agreed upon; but instead of doing us any mischief, they seemed to be ashamed of the fact, and said it were some Matchit Indian that did it. Oh, that we could believe that there is no thing too hard for God! God showed His power over the heathen in this, as He did over the hungry lions when Daniel was cast into the den. Mr. Hoar called them betime to dinner, but they ate very little, they being so busy in dressing themselves and getting ready for their dance; which was carried on by eight of them, four men and four squaws, my master and mistress being two. He was dressed in his holland shirt, with great laces sewed at the tail of it; he had his silver buttons, his white stockings; his garters were hung round with shillings; and he had girdles of wampum upon his head and shoulders. She had a kersey coat, and covered with girdles of wampum from the loins upward; her arms from her elbows to her hands were covered with bracelets; there were handfuls of necklaces about her neck, and several sorts of jewels in her ears. She had fine red stockings and white shoes, her hair powdered and face painted red, that was always before black. And all the dancers were after the same manner. There were two others, singing and knocking on a kettle for their music. They kept hopping up and down one after another, with a kettle of water in the midst, standing warm upon some embers, to drink of when they were dry. They held on till it was almost night, throwing out wampum to the standers by. At night I asked them again if I should go home. They all as one said no, except my husband would come for me. When we were lain down, my master went out of the wigwam, and by and by sent in an Indian called James the Printer, who told Mr. Hoar that my master would let me go home tomorrow if he would let him have one pint of liquor. Then Mr. Hoar called his own Indians, Tom and Peter, and bid them go and see whether he would promise it before them three; and if he would, he should have it; which he did, and he had it. Then Philip smelling the business called me to him, and asked me what I would give him to tell me some good news and speak a good word for me. I told him, I could not tell what to give him, I would anything I had, and asked him what he would have. He said two coats and twenty shillings in money, and half a bushel of seed corn, and some tobacco. I thanked him for his love; but I knew the good news as well as the crafty fox. My master, after he had had his drink, quickly came ranting into the wigwam again and called for Mr. Hoar, drinking to him and saying he was a good man; and then again he would say, 'Hang him rogue!' Being almost drunk, he would drink to him, and yet presently say he should be hanged. Then he called for me. I trembled to hear him, yet I was fain to go to him, and he drank to me, showing no incivility. He was the first Indian I saw drunk all the while I was amongst them. At

last his squaw ran out, and he after her, round the wigwam, with his money jingling at his knees; but she escaped him. But having an old squaw, he ran to her. And so, through the Lord's mercy, we were no more troubled that night. . . .

I can remember the time when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts whole nights together, but now it is other ways with me. When all are fast about me, and no eye open but His who ever waketh, my thoughts are upon things past, upon the awful dispensation of the Lord towards us, upon His wonderful power and might in carrying of us through so many difficulties, in returning us in safety, and suffering none to hurt us. I remember in the night season how the other day I was in the midst of thousands of enemies, and nothing but death before me. It was then hard work to persuade myself that ever I should be satisfied with bread again. But now we are fed with the finest of the wheat, and, as I may say, with honey out of the rock; instead of the husk, we have the fatted calf. The thoughts of these things in the particulars of them, and of the love and goodness of God towards us, make it true of me what David said of himself, Psal.6:5: 'I watered my couch with my tears.' Oh! the wonderful power of God that mine eyes have seen, affording matter enough for my thoughts to run in that when others are sleeping mine eyes are weeping.

I have seen the extreme vanity of this world; one hour I have been in health, and wealth, wanting nothing; but the next hour in sickness and wounds, and death, having nothing but sorrow and affliction.

Before I knew what affliction meant, I was ready sometimes to wish for it. When I lived in prosperity, having the comforts of the world about me, my relations by me, my heart cheerful, and taking little care for anything, and yet seeing many, whom I preferred before myself, under many trials and afflictions, in sickness, weakness, poverty, losses, crosses, and cares of the world, I should be sometimes jealous lest I should have my portion in this life; and that scripture would come to my mind, Heb.12:6: 'For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' But now I see the Lord had His time to scourge and chasten me. The portion of some is to have their afflictions by drops, now one drop and then another; but the dregs of the cup, the wine of astonishment, like a sweeping rain that leaveth no food, did the Lord prepare to be my portion. Affliction I wanted, and affliction I had full measure (I thought) pressed down and running over. Yet I see, when God calls a person to anything, and through never so many difficulties, yet He is fully able to carry them through and make them see and say they have been gainers thereby. And I hope I can say in some measure, as David did: 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' The Lord hath showed me the vanity of these outward things—that they are the vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit; that they are but a shadow, a blast, a bubble, and things of no continuance; that we must rely on God Himself, and our whole dependence must be upon Him. If trouble from smaller matters begin to arise in me, I have something at hand to check myself with, and say, 'Why am I troubled?' It was but the other day that, if I had had the world, I would have given it for my freedom, or to have been a servant to a Christian. I have learned to look beyond present and smaller troubles, and to be quieted under them, as Moses said, Exod. 14:13: 'Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.'

1682

MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH

1631–1705

FROM THE DAY OF DOOM

THE COMING TO JUDGMENT [1]

1

STILL was the night, serene and bright,
when all men sleeping lay;
Calm was the season, and carnal reason
thought so 'twould last for aye.
'Soul, take thine ease, let sorrow cease;
much good thou hast in store.'
This was their song, their cups among,
the evening before.

2

Wallowing in all kind of sin,
vile wretches lay secure;
The best of men had scarcely then
their lamps kept in good ure.
Virgins unwise, who through disguise
amongst the best were numbered,
Had closed their eyes; yea, and the wise
through sloth and frailty slumbered.

3

Like as of old, when men grew bold
God's threat'nings to contemn,
Who stopt their ear, and would not hear
when Mercy warnèd them,
But took their course, without remorse,
till God began to pour
Destruction the world upon,
in a tempestuous shower;

4

Who put away the evil day,
and drowned their cares and fears,
Till drowned were they, and swept away
by vengeance unawares;
So at the last, whilst men sleep fast
in their security,
Surprised they are in such a snare
as cometh suddenly.

5

For at midnight breaks forth a light
which turns the night to day,
And speedily an hideous cry
doth all the world dismay.
Sinners awake, their hearts do ache,
trembling their loins surpriseth;
Amazed with fear by what they hear,
each one of them ariseth.

6

They rush from beds with giddy heads,
and to their windows run,
Viewing this light, which shines more bright
than doth the noonday sun.
Straightway appears (they see't with tears)
the Son of God most dread,
Who with His train comes on amain
to judge both quick and dead.

7

Before His face the heav'ns give place,
and skies are rent asunder
With mighty voice and hideous noise
more terrible than thunder.
His brightness damps heav'ns glorious
lamps
and makes them hide their heads;
As if afraid and quite dismayed,
they quit their wonted steads.

8

Ye sons of men that durst contemn
the threat'nings of God's Word,
How cheer you now? Your hearts, I trow,
are thrilled as with a sword.
Now atheist blind, whose brutish mind
a God could never see,
Dost thou perceive, dost now believe,
that Christ thy Judge shall be?

14

The Judge draws nigh, exalted high
upon a lofty throne,
Amidst the throng of angels strong,
lo, Israel's Holy One!
The excellence of whose presence
and awful majesty
Amazeth nature, and every creature
doth more than terrify.

15

The mountains smoke, the hills are shook,
the earth is rent and torn

[1] The text has been modernized, and the titles to the various sections have been supplied by the editors. The original text contained marginal commentary and citation of parallel biblical passages.

As if she should be clear dissolved
or from her center borne.
The sea doth roar, forsakes the shore,
and shrinks away for fear;
The wild beasts flee into the sea,
so soon as He draws near,

16

Whose glory bright, whose wond'rous
might,
whose power imperial,
So far surpass whatever was
in realms terrestrial,
That tongues of men (nor angel's pen)
cannot the same express;
And therefore I must pass it by,
lest speaking should transgress.

17

Before His throne a trump is blown,
proclaiming th' Day of Doom;
Forthwith He cries, '*Ye dead arise*
and unto judgment come!'
No sooner said, but 'tis obeyed;
sepulchers opened are;
Dead bodies all rise at His call,
and's mighty power declare.

20

His wingèd hosts fly through all coasts,
together gathering
Both good and bad, both quick and dead,
and all to judgment bring.
Out of their holes those creeping moles,
that hid themselves for fear,
By force they take, and quickly make
before the Judge appear.

21

Thus every one before the throne
of Christ the Judge is brought,
Both righteous and impious,
that good or ill hath wrought.
A separation and diff'ring station
by Christ appointed is
(To sinners sad) 'twixt good and bad,
'twixt heirs of woe and bliss.

54

There Christ demands at all their hands
a strict and straight account
Of all things done under the sun,
whose number far surmount
Man's wit and thought; they all are brought
unto this solemn trial,
And each offense with evidence,
so that there's no denial.

55

There's no excuse for their abuse,
since their own consciences
More proof give in of each man's sin,
than thousand witnesses.
Though formerly this faculty
had grossly been abusèd
(Men could it stifle, or with it trifle,
when as it them accusèd),

56

Now it comes in, and every sin
unto men's charge doth lay;
It judgeth them and doth condemn,
though all the world say nay.
It so stingeth and tortureth,
it worketh such distress,
That each man's self against himself,
is forcèd to confess.

57

It's vain moreover for men to cover
the least iniquity;
The Judge hath seen, and privy been
to all their villainy.
He unto light and open sight
the work of darkness brings;
He doth unfold both new and old,
both known and hidden things.

66

Thus He doth find of all mankind
that stand at His left hand,
No mother's son but hath misdone,
and broken God's command.
All have transgressed, even the best,
and merited God's wrath,
Unto their own perditiön
and everlasting scath.

The Trial of Hypocrites

68

Nevertheless, they all express
(Christ granting liberty)
What for their way they have to say,
how they have lived, and why.
They all draw near and seek to clear
themselves by making pleas;
There hypocrites, false-hearted wights,
do make such pleas as these:

69

'Lord, in Thy name, and by the same,
we devils dispossessed;
We raised the dead and minist'rèd
Succor to the distressed.
Our painful teaching and pow'rful
preaching
by Thine own wondrous might
Did throughly win to God from sin
many a wretched wight.'

70

'All this,' quoth He, 'may granted be,
and your case little bettered,
Who still remain under a chain
and many irons fettered.
You that the dead have quickenèd,
and rescued from the grave,
Yourselves were dead, yet ne'er needèd
a Christ your souls to save.

71

'You that could preach, and others teach
what way to life doth lead,
Why were you slack to find that track
and in that way to tread?
How could you bear to see or hear
of others freed at last
From Satan's paws, whilst in his jaws
yourselves were held more fast?

72

'Who though you knew Repentance true
and Faith is My great name,
The only mean to quit you clean
from punishment and blame,
Yet took no pain true faith to gain,
such as might not deceive,
Nor would repent with true intent
your evil deeds to leave.

73

'His Master's will how to fulfil
the servant that well knew,
Yet left undone his duty known,
more plagues to him are due.
You against light perverted right;
wherefore it shall be now
For Sidon and for Sodom's land
more easy than for you.'

74

'But we have in Thy presence been,'
say some, 'and eaten there.
Did we not eat Thy Flesh for meat,
and feed on heav'nly cheer?
Whereon who feed shall never need,
as Thou Thyself dost say,
Nor shall they die eternally,
but live with Christ for aye.

75

'We may allege, Thou gav'st a pledge
of Thy dear love to us,
In wine and bread, which figurèd
Thy grace bestowèd thus.
Of strength'ning seals, of sweetest
meals,
have we so oft partaken;
And shall we be cast off by Thee,
and utterly forsaken?'

76

To whom the Lord, thus in a word,
returns a short reply:
'I never knew any of you
that wrought iniquity.
You say you've been My presence in;
but then, how came you there
With raiment vile that did defile
and quite disgrace My cheer?

77

'Durst you draw near without due fear
unto My holy table?
Durst you profane and render vain,
so far as you were able,
Those mysteries, which whoso prize
and carefully improve
Shall savèd be undoubtedly,
and nothing shall them move?

78

'How durst you venture bold guests to
enter
in such a sordid hue,
Amongst My guests unto those feasts
that were not made for you?
How durst you eat for spir'tual meat
your bane, and drink damnation,
Whilst by your guile you render'd vile
so rare and great salvation?

79

'Your fancies fed on heav'nly bread
your hearts fed on some lust;
You loved the creature more than
th'Creator,
your souls clove to the dust.

And think you by hypocrisy
and cloakèd wickedness,
To enter in laden with sin
to lasting happiness?

80

'This your excuse shows your abuse
of things ordained for good,
And doth declare you guilty are
of My dear flesh and blood.
Wherefore those seals and precious meals
you put so much upon
As things divine, they seal and sign
you to perditiön.'

THE ERROR OF GOOD WORKS

92

Then were brought nigh a company
of civil honest men,
That loved true dealing and hated stealing,
ne'er wronged their bretheren,
Who pleaded thus: 'Thou knowest us
that we were blameless livers;
No whoremongers, no murderers,
no quarrelers nor strivers.

93

'Idolaters, adulterers,
church-robbers we were none,
Nor false dealers, nor cozeners,
but paid each man his own.
Our way was fair, our dealing square,
we were no wasteful spenders,
No lewd toss-pots, no drunken sots,
no scandalous offenders.

94

'We hated vice and set great price,
by virtuous conversation;
And by the same we got a name
and no small commendation.
God's laws express that righteousness
is that which He doth prize;
And to obey, as He doth say,
is more than sacrifice.

95

'Thus to obey hath been our way;
let our good deeds, we pray,
Find some regard and some reward
with Thee, O Lord, this day.
And whereas we transgressors be,
of Adam's race were none,
No, not the best, but have confessed
themselves to have misdone.'

96

Then answerèd unto their dread,
the Judge: 'True piety
God doth desire and eke require,
no less than honesty.
Justice demands at all your hands
perfect obedience;
If but in part you have come short,
that is a just offense.

97

'On earth below, where men did owe
a thousand pounds and more,
Could twenty pence it recompense?
Could that have cleared the
score?
Think you to buy felicity
with part of what's due debt?
Or for desert of one small part,
the whole should off be set?

98

'And yet that part whose great
desert
you think to reach so far,
For your excuse doth you accuse,
and will your boasting mar.
However fair, however square
your way and work hath been
Before men's eyes, yet God espies
iniquity therein.

99

'God looks upon th'affectiön
and temper of the heart;
Not only on the actiön,
and the external part.
Whatever end vain men pretend,
God knows the verity,
And by the end which they intend
their words and deeds doth try.

100

'Without true faith, the Scripture
saith,
God cannot take delight
In any deed that doth proceed
from any sinful wight.
And without love all actions prove
but barren empty things;
Dead works they be and vanity,
the which vexation brings.

101

'Nor from true faith, which quencheth wrath,
hath your obedience flown;
Nor from true love, which wont to move believers, hath it grown.
Your argument shows your intent
in all that you have done;
You thought to scale heav'n's lofty wall
by ladders of your own.

102

'Your blinded spirit hoping to merit
by your own righteousness,
Needed no Saviour but your behavior,
and blameless carriages.
You trusted to what you could do,
and in no need you stood;
Your hearty pride laid Me aside,
and trampled on My blood.

103

'All men have gone astray, and done
that which God's laws condemn;
But My purchase and offered grace
all men did not contemn.
The Ninevites and Sodomites
had no such sin as this;
Yet as if all your sins were small,
you say, "All did amiss."

104

'Again you thought and mainly sought
a name with men t' acquire;
Pride bare the bell that made you swell,
and your own selves admire.
Mean fruit it is, and vile, I wis,
that springs from such a root;
Virtue divine and genuine
wonts not from pride to shoot.

105

'Such deeds as your are worse than poor;
they are but sins gilt over
With silver dross, whose glist'ring gloss
can them no longer cover.
The best of them would you condemn,
and ruin you alone,
Although you were from faults so clear,
the other you had none.

106

'Your gold is brass, your silver dross,
your righteousness is sin;
And think you by such honesty
eternal life to win?
You much mistake, if for its sake
you dream of acceptation;
Whereas the same deserveth shame
and meriteth damnation.'

THE JUDGMENT

182

Thus all men's pleas the Judge with ease
doth answer and confute,
Until that all, both great and small,
are silenced and mute.
Vain hopes are cropt, all mouths are stopt,
sinners have naught to say,
But that 'tis just and equal most
they should be damned for aye.

THE SATISFACTION OF THE ELECT

219

The saints behold with courage bold
and thankful wonderment
To see all those that were their foes
thus sent to punishment.
Then do they sing unto their King
a song of endless praise;
They praise His name and do proclaim
that just are all His ways.

220

Thus with great joy and melody
to heav'n they all ascend,
Him there to praise with sweetest lays,
and hymns that never end;
Where with long rest they shall be blest,
and naught shall them annoy,
Where they shall see as seen they be,
and whom they love enjoy.

221

Oh, glorious place! where face to face
Jehovah may be seen,
By such as were sinners while here,
and no dark veil between!
Where the sunshine and light divine
of God's bright countenance
Doth rest upon them every one,
with sweetest influence!

222

Oh, blessèd state of the renate!
Oh, wond'rous happiness,

To which they're brought beyond what thought
can reach or words express!
Grief's watercourse and sorrow's source
are turned to joyful streams;
Their old distress and heaviness
are vanishèd like dreams.

223

For God above in arms of love
doth dearly them embrace,
And fills their sprights with such delights
and pleasures in His grace
As shall not fail, nor yet grow stale,
through frequency of use;
Nor do they fear God's favor there
to forfeit by abuse.

224

For there the saints are perfect saints,
and holy ones indeed;
From all the sin that dwelt within
their mortal bodies freed;
Made kings and priests to God through Christ's
dear love's transcendency,
There to remain and there to reign
with him eternally.

1662

GOD'S CONTROVERSY WITH NEW ENGLAND

WRITTEN IN THE TIME OF THE GREAT DROUGHT, ANNO 1662

BY A LOVER OF NEW ENGLAND'S PROSPERITY

The Warning of the Lord[1]

Our temp'ral blessings did abound,
But spiritual good things
Much more abounded, to the praise
Of that great King of kings.
God's throne was here set up, here was
His tabernacle pight;
This was the place and these the folk
In whom He took delight.

Our morning stars shone all day long,
Their beams gave forth such light
As did the noonday sun abash
And's glory dazzle quite.
Our day continued many years
And had no night at all;
Yea, many thought the light would last
And be perpetual.

Such, O New England, was thy first,
Such was thy best estate;
But, lo! a strange and sudden change
My courage did amate.
The brightest of our morning stars
Did wholly disappear;
And those that tarrièd behind
With sackcloth covered were.

Moreover, I beheld and saw
Our welkin overcast,
And dismal clouds for sunshine late
O'erspread from east and west.
The air became tempestuous;
The wilderness 'gan quake;
And from above with awful voice
Th'Almighty thund'ring spake:

Are these the men that erst at My command
Forsook their ancient seats and native soil,
To follow Me into a desert land,
Contemning all the travel and the toil,
Whose love was such to purest ordinances
As made them set at nought their fair inheritances?

Are these the men that prizèd liberty
To walk with God according to their light,
To be as good as He would have them be,
To serve and worship Him with all their might,
Before the pleasures which a fruitful field,
And country flowing-full of all good things, could yield?

Are these the folk whom from the British Isles,
Through the stern billows of the wat'ry main,
I safely led so many thousand miles,
As if their journey had been through a plain,
Whom having from all enemies protected,
And through so many deaths and dangers well directed,

I brought and planted on the western shore,
Where nought but brutes and savage wights did swarm

1 The text has been modernized, and the sub-title supplied by the editors.

(Untaught, untrained, untamed by virtue's lore)
That sought their blood, yet could not do them harm;
My fury's flail them threshed, My fatal broom
Did sweep them hence, to make My people elbow-room.

Are these the men whose gates with peace I crowned,
To whom for bulwarks I salvation gave,
Whilst all things else with rattling tumults sound,
And mortal frays send thousands to the grave?
Whilst their own brethren bloody hands embrewed
In brothers' blood, and fields with carcasses bestrewed?

Is this the people blest with bounteous store,
By land and sea full richly clad and fed,
Whom plenty's self stands waiting still before,
And poureth out their cups well temperèd?
For whose dear sake an howling wilderness
I lately turned into a fruitful paradise?

Are these the people in whose hemisphere
Such bright-beamed, glist'ring, sun-like stars I placed,
As by their influence did all things cheer,
As by their light blind ignorance defaced,
As errors into lurking holes did fray,
As turned the late dark night into a lightsome day?

Are these the folk to whom I milkèd out,
And sweetness streamed from consolation's breast;
Whose souls I fed and strengthenèd throughout
With finest spiritual food most finely dressed?
On whom I rainèd living bread from heaven,
Withouten error's bane, or superstition's leaven?

With whom I made a covenant of peace,
And unto whom I did most firmly plight
My faithfulness, if whilst I live I cease
To be their guide, their God, their full delight;
Since them with cords of love to Me I drew,
Enwrapping in My grace such as should them ensue?

Are these the men, that now Mine eyes behold,
Concerning whom I thought, and whilom spake,
First heaven shall pass away together scrolled,
Ere they My laws and righteous ways forsake,
Or that they slack to run their heavenly race?
Are these the same? or are some others come in place?

If these be they, how is it that I find
Instead of holiness, carnality;
Instead of heavenly frames, an earthly mind;
For burning zeal, luke-warm indifferency;
For flaming love, key-cold dead-heartedness;
For temperance (in meat, and drink, and clothes), excess?

Whence cometh it that pride, and luxury,
Debate, deceit, contentiön, and strife,
False-dealing, covetousness, hypocrisy,
(With such like crimes) amongst them are so rife,
That one of them doth over-reach another?
And that an honest man can hardly trust his brother?

How is it that security and sloth
Amongst the best are common to be found?
That grosser sins, instead of grace's growth,
Amongst the many more and more abound?
I hate dissembling shows of holiness.
Or practice as you talk, or never more profess.

Judge not, vain world, that all are hypocrites
That do profess more holiness than thou;
All foster not dissembling, guileful sprites,

Nor love their lusts, though very many do.
Some sin through want of care and constant watch;
Some with the sick converse till they the sickness catch.

Some, that maintain a real root of grace,
Are overgrown with many noisome weeds,
Whose heart, that those no longer may take place,
The benefit of due correction needs.
And such as these, however gone astray,
I shall by stripes reduce into a better way.

Moreover some there be that still retain
Their ancient vigor and sincerity;
Whom both their own and others' sins constrain
To sigh, and mourn, and weep, and wail, and cry;
And for their sakes I have forborne to pour
My wrath upon revolters to this present hour.

To praying saints I always have respect,
And tender love, and pitiful regard;
Nor will I now in any wise neglect
Their love and faithful service to reward;
Although I deal with others for their folly,
And turn their mirth to tears that have been too jolly.

For think not, O backsliders, in your heart,
That I shall still your evil manners bear;
Your sins Me press as sheaves do load a cart,
And therefore I will plague you for this gear.
Except you seriously, and soon, repent,
I'll not delay your pain and heavy punishment.

And who be those themselves that yonder show?
The seed of such as name My dreadful Name!
On whom while 'ere compassion's skirt I threw
Whilst in their blood they were, to hide their shame!
Whom My preventing love did ne'er Me take!
Whom for Mine own I marked, lest they should Me forsake!

I looked that such as these to virtue's lore
(Though none but they) would have inclined their ear;
That they at least Mine image should have bore,
And sanctified My name with awful fear.
Let pagan's brats pursue their lusts, whose meed
Is death. For Christian's children are an holy seed.

But hear, O heavens! Let earth amazèd stand!
Ye mountains melt, and hills come flowing down!
Let horror seize upon both sea and land!
Let nature's self be cast into a stone!
I children nourished, nurtured, and upheld;
But they against a tender Father have rebelled.

What could have been by Me performèd more?
Or wherein fell I short of your desire?
Had you but asked, I would have oped My store,
And given what lawful wishes could require.
For all this bounteous cost I looked to see
Heaven-reaching hearts and thoughts, meekness, humility.

But lo! a sensual heart all void of grace,
An iron neck, a proud presumptuous hand,
A self-conceited, stiff, stout, stubborn race,
That fears no threats, submits to no command;
Self-willed, perverse, such as can bear no yoke;
A generation even ripe for vengeance stroke.

Such were that carnal brood of Israelites
That Joshua and the Elders did ensue,
Who growing like the cursèd Canaanites
Upon themselves My heavy judgments drew.
Such also was that fleshly generation
Whom I o'erwhelmed by water's deadly inundation.

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They darker light and lesser means misused;
They had not such examples them to warn;
You clearer rules and precepts have abused,
And dreadful monuments of others' harm.
My Gospel's glorious light you do not prize;
My Gospel's endless, boundless grace you clean despise.

My painful messengers you disrespect,
Who toil and sweat and swill themselves away,
Yet nought at all with you can take effect,
Who hurry headlong to your own decay.
In vain the founder melts, and taketh pains;
Bellows and lead's consumed, but still your dross remains.

What should I do with such a stiff-necked race?
How shall I ease Me of such foes as they?
What shall befall despisers of My grace?
I'll surely bear their candlestick away,
And lamps put out. Their glorious noonday light
I'll quickly turn into a dark Egyptian night.

Oft have I charged you by My ministers
To gird yourselves with sackcloth, and repent.
Oft have I warned you by My messengers,
That so you might My wrathful ire prevent.
But who among you hath this warning taken?
Who hath his crooked ways and wicked works forsaken?

Yea, many grow to more and more excess;
More light and loose, more carnal and prophane.
The sins of Sodom, pride and wantonness,
Among the multitude spring up amain.
Are these the fruits of pious education,
To run with greater speed and courage to damnation?

If here and there some two or three shall steer
A wiser course than their companions do,
You make a mock of such; and scoff and jeer
Because they will not be so bad as you.
Such is the generation that succeeds
The men whose eyes have seen My great and awful deeds.

Now therefore hearken and incline your ear;
In judgment I will henceforth with you plead;
And if by that you will not learn to fear,
But still go on a sensual life to lead,
I'll strike at once an all-consuming stroke;
Nor cries nor tears shall then My fierce intent revoke.

. . . .

1662 1871

BENJAMIN TOMPSON

1642–1714

FROM NEW ENGLAND'S CRISIS

THE PROLOGUE [1]

THE times wherein old Pompion was a saint,
When men fared hardly yet without complaint
On vilest cates; the dainty Indian maize
Was eat with clamshells out of wooden trays
Under thatched huts without the cry of rent;
And the best sauce to every dish, content;
When flesh was food, and hairy skins made coats,
And men as well as birds had chirping notes;
When simnels were accounted noble blood
Among the tribes of common herbage food;
Of Ceres' bounty formed was many a knack,

1 The texts of Tompson's poems have been modernized by the editors.

Enough to fill *Poor Robin's Almanac*—
These golden times (too fortunate to hold)
Were quickly sinned away for love of gold.
'Twas then, among the bushes, not the street,
If one in place did an inferior meet:
'Good morrow, brother; is there aught you want?
Take freely of me what I have you ha'nt.'
Plain 'Tom' and 'Dick' would pass as current now
As ever since 'Your servant, sir,' and bow.
Deep-skirted doublets, puritanic capes,
Which now would render men like upright apes,
Was comelier wear, our wiser fathers thought,
Than the cast fashions from all Europe brought.
'Twas in those days an honest grace would hold
Till an hot pudding grew at heart a cold;
And men had better stomachs to religion
Than I to capon, turkey-cock, or pigeon.
When honest sisters met to pray, not prate,
About their own and not their neighbor's state;
During Plain Dealing's reign, that worthy stud
Of th' ancient planters' race before the flood—
These times were good; merchants cared not a rush
For other fare than jonakin and mush.
Although men fared and lodgèd very hard,
Yet innocence was better than a guard.
'Twas long before spiders and worms had drawn
Their dungy webs or hid with cheating lawn
New England's beauties, which still seemed to me
Illustrious in their own simplicity.
'Twas ere the neighboring Virgin-land had broke
The hogsheads of her worse than hellish smoke.
'Twas ere the Islands sent their presents in,
Which but to use was counted next to sin.
'Twas ere a barge had made so rich a freight
As chocolate, dust-gold, and bits of eight.
Ere wines from France and muscovado too,
Without the which the drink will scarcely do,
From western isles, ere fruits and delicacies
Did rot maid's teeth and spoil their handsome faces.
Or ere these times did chance, the noise of war
Was from our towns and hearts removèd far.
No bugbear comets in the crystal air
To drive our Christian planters to despair.
No sooner pagan malice peepèd forth
But valor snibbed it; then were men of worth,
Who by their prayers slew thousands, angel-like—
Their weapons are unseen with which they strike.
Then had the churches rest; as yet the coals
Were covered up in most contentious souls.
Freeness in judgment; union in affection,
Dear love, sound truth—they were our grand protection.
These were the twins which in our councils sate;
These gave prognostics of our future fate.
If these be longer-lived, our hopes increase;
These wars will usher in a longer peace;
But if New England's love die in its youth,
The grave will open next for blessed Truth.
This theme is out of date, the peaceful hours
When castle's needed not but pleasant bowers.
Not ink but blood and tears now serve the turn
To draw the figure of New England's urn.
New England's hour of passion is at hand,
No power except divine can it withstand.
Scarce hath her glass of fifty years run out,
But her old prosperous steeds turn heads about,
Tracking themselves back to their poor beginnings,
To fear and fare upon their fruits of sinnings,
So that the mirror of the Christian world
Lies burnt to heaps in part, her streamers furled;
Grief reigns, joys flee, and dismal fears surprise
Not dastard spirits only but the wise.
Thus have the fairest hopes deceived the eye
Of the big-swoll'n expectant standing by.
Thus the proud ship after a little turn
Sinks into Neptune's arms to find its urn.

Thus hath the heir to many thousands born
Been in an instant from the mother torn.
Even thus thine infant cheeks begin to pale,
And thy supporters through great losses
fail.
This is the prologue to thy future woe;
The epilogue no mortal yet can know.
1676

ON A FORTIFICATION AT BOSTON BEGUN BY WOMEN

DUX FEMINA FACTI [1]

A GRAND attempt some Amazonian dames
Contrive, whereby to glorify their names;
A ruff for Boston Neck of mud and turf,
Reaching from side to side, from surf to
surf,
Their nimble hands spin up like Christmas
pies;
Their pastry by degrees on high doth rise.
The wheel at home counts it an holiday,
Since while the mistress worketh, it may
play.
A tribe of female hands—but manly
hearts—
Forsake at home their pastry-crust and
tarts
To knead the dirt; the samplers down they
hurl;
Their undulating silks they closely furl.
The pickaxe one as a commandress holds,
While t'other at her awkness gently scolds.
One puffs and sweats, the other mutters,
'Why
Can't you promove your work so fast as I?'
Some dig, some delve, and others' hands do
feel
The little waggon's weight with single
wheel.
And lest some fainting fits the weak
surprise,
They want no sack nor cakes, they are
more wise.
These brave essays draw forth male
stronger hands,
More like to daubers than to martial
bands;
These do the work, and sturdy bulwarks
raise.
But the beginners well deserve the praise.
1676

1 'A woman was the leader of the deed.'

EPITAPH FOR MY FATHER [2]

GULIELMI TOMPSONI BRAINTREENSIS ECCLESIAE PASTORIS IN ANGLIA UTRAQUE CELEBERRIMI VICE. EPITAPHIUM [3]

JUDICIOUS zeal! New England's Boanerges
Lies tombless; not to spare the church's
charges,
But that the world may know he lacks no
tomb
Who in ten thousand hearts commanded
room.
While thus the thund'ring textman hidden
lies,
Some virgins slumber; others wantonize.
1666 1924

A NEIGHBOR'S TEARS SPRINKLED ON THE DUST OF THE AMIABLE VIRGIN, MRS. REBEKAH SEWALL, WHO WAS BORN DECEMBER 30, 1704, AND DIED SUDDENLY AUGUST 3, 1710. AETATIS 6.[4]

HEAV'NS only, in dark hours, can succor
send
And show a fountain where the cisterns
end.
I saw this little one but t'other day
With a small flock of doves, just in my way.
What new-made creature's this so bright?
thought I;

2 The title has been supplied by the editors.

3 'The epitaph of William Tompson of Braintree, famous pastor of the Church, first of one England and then the other.'

4 Rebekah Sewall was the grand-daughter of Samuel Sewall, the diarist. The title of 'Mrs.' refers not to matrimony but to the social pre-eminence of her family. Of her death, her father wrote: 'An account of my daughter Rebekah's death. Aug.2,1710. In the afternoon she was taken ill at the Governor's. Sent for Doctor Noyes and Mrs. Baily; so continued ill; in the morning after, her mother and myself were sent for; got there about six o'clock. Doctor Noyes and Mrs. Baily applying those things which they thought most proper. My daughter Rebekah died Aug.3,1710, ten minutes before nine in the morning, being lamented by all that knew her. Friday, Aug. 4, she was carried from the Governor's house . . . to the Governor's tomb, where she was interred. Gave . . . [the bearers] white scarfs and gloves. My wife and I went into deep mourning. Gave gloves to several relations, Governor's servants and mine. Gave Mr. Tompson a pair; he made two copies of verses on her.' *Coll.Mass. Hist.Soc.*,*V*,xxvii, *Diary of Samuel Sewall*,I. The elegy was printed as a broadside.

Ah! Pity 'tis such prettiness should die.
Madam, behold the Lamb of God; for there's
Your pretty lamb while you dissolve in tears;
She lies infolded in her Shepherd's arms,
Whose bosom's always full of gracious charms.
Great Jesus claimed His own; never begrutch
Your jewels rare into the hands of such.
He with His righteousness has better dress'd
Your babe than e'er you did when at your breast.
'Tis not your case alone, for thousands have
Followed their sweetest comforts to the grave.
Seeking the plat of immortality,
I saw no place secure; but all must die.
Death, that stern officer, takes no denial.
I'm grieved he found your door to make a trial.
Thus, be it on the land or swelling seas,
His sov'reignty doth what his wisdom please.
Must then the rulers of this world's affairs
By Providence be brought thus into tears?
It is a lesson hard, I must confess,
For our proud wills with Heaven's to acquiesce.
But when Death goes before—unseen, behind,
There's such a One as may compose the mind.
Pray, madam, wipe the tears off your fair eyes;
With your translated damsel sympathize.
Could she from her new school obtain the leave,
She'd tell you things would make you cease to grieve.

1710 1710

FRANCIS PASTORIUS

1651–*c.*1720

DELICIÆ HORTENSES OR GARDEN RECREATIONS [1]

HONEST countryman, cultor virentis agelli,[2]
Thy garden, orchard, fields
And vineyard being planted
With what good nature yields,
Brave things to thee are granted,
Besides the gifts of grace.
Therefore go on, and gather,
Use each kind in its place.
And our God and Father,
Who gives thus liberally
What's needful for our living
And would have us reply
In bowèd-down Thanksgiving,
To HIM, to WHOM belongs
All praise in prose and songs,
Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!
Soli DEO gloria!
In sempiterna saecula.
Amen.[3]

c.1711 1908

VOLUPTATES APIANÆ NECTAR ET AMBROSIA ID EST [4]

A LITTLE time of leisure full of the greatest pleasure or
A mouthful of fresh air among my bees,
The sweetest of all birds man ever sees.
Brave, harmless creatures, which do always sing
Hymn hum! and never bite, but sometimes sting
Unchaste or wanton ones and drunkards too;

1 The poems, the texts of which have been modernized by the editors, are from the title-pages of the first and second volumes, respectively, of Pastorius' *Bee-Hive*, and were first published in Learned, *The Life of Daniel Francis Pastorius*(Philadelphia,1908),258–59.

2 'Tiller of the verdant plot.' Horace,*A.P.*,117.

3 'Glory to God alone!
Days without end.
Amen.'

4 'The pleasures of bee-keeping; nectar and ambrosia, that is—'

Vor ihnen gute Leut hab'n gute
Ruh.
That is to say, all those for them have
rest
Who may be call'd good, better, best.
Thou that art none of such, the
smallest bee
Here in my garden is convincing thee
Of thy misdoings, and we want no
more.
A thousand witnesses! My friend,
therefore
Repent of all what's bad; amend, and
then
A sure reward will crown the end. Amen!
1908

EDWARD TAYLOR

*c.*1644–1729

FROM GOD'S DETERMINATIONS TOUCHING HIS ELECT [1]

PROLOGUE

LORD, can a crumb of earth the earth
outweigh,
Outmatch all mountains, nay, the
crystal sky?
Imbosom in't designs that shall display
And trace into the boundless Deity?
Yea! hand, a pen whose moisture doth
gild o'er
Eternal glory with a glorious glor?

If it its pen had of an angel's quill,
And sharpened on a precious stone
ground tight,
And dipt in liquid gold, and moved by
skill,
In crystal leaves should golden letters
write,
It would but blot and blur, yea, jag and
jar
Unless Thou mak'st the pen, and
scrivener.

I am this crumb of dust which is design'd
To make my pen unto Thy praise alone,
And my dull fancy I would gladly grind
Unto an edge on Zion's precious stone,
And write in liquid gold upon Thy
name
My letters till Thy glory forth doth
flame.

Let not th'attempts break down my dust, I
pray,
Nor laugh Thou them to scorn, but
pardon give.
Inspire this crumb of dust till it display
Thy glory through't, and then Thy dust
shall live.
Its failings then Thou'lt overlook, I trust,
They being slips slipped from Thy
crumb of dust.

Thy crumb of dust breathes two words
from its breast:
That Thou wilt guide its pen to write
aright
To prove Thou art and that Thou art the
best,
And show Thy properties to shine most
bright.
And then Thy works will shine as
flowers on stems,
Or as in jewelary shops do gems.
1937

UPON WHAT BASE WAS FIXED THE LATH WHEREIN [2]

UPON what base was fixed the lath wherein
He turned this globe and riggalled it so
trim?
Who blew the bellows of His furnace vast?
Or held the mould wherein the world was
cast?
Who laid its corner-stone? Or whose
command?
Where stand the pillars upon which it
stands?
Who laced and filleted the earth so fine
With rivers like green ribbons smaragdine?

1 The full title is as follows: *God's Determinations touching His Elect: and the Elect's Combat in their Conversion and Coming up to God in Christ: together with the Comfortable Effects thereof.* Taylor's poems were first discovered by Thomas H. Johnson and printed by him in 'Edward Taylor: A Puritan "Sacred Poet",' *The New England Quarterly*, X, ii, 290–322. The texts of the poems have been modernized by the editors.

2 The selection is excerpted from the Preface to *God's Determinations.*

Who made the seas its selvedge, and its
locks
Like a quilt ball within a silver box?
Who spread its canopy? Or curtains spun?
Who in this bowling alley bowled the sun?

THE SOUL'S ADMIRATION HEREUPON

WHAT, I such praises sing! How can it be?
Shall I in heaven sing?
What, I, that scarce durst hope to see,
Lord, such a thing?
Though nothing is too hard for Thee,
One hope hereof seems hard to me.

What, can I ever tune those melodies,
Who have no tune at all,
Not knowing where to stop nor rise,
Nor when to fall?
To sing Thy praise I am unfit;
I have not learned my gamut yet.

But should these praises on stringed
instruments
Be sweetly tuned? I find
I nonplussed am, for no consents
I ever mind.
My tongue is neither quill nor bow,
Nor can my fingers quavers show.

But was it otherwise, I have no kit;[1]
Which though I had, I could
Not tune the strings, which soon would
slip
Though others should.
But should they not, I cannot play,
But for an F should strike an A.

And should Thy praise upon wind
instruments
Sound all o'er heaven shrill?
My breath will hardly through such vents
A whistle fill.
Which though it should, it's past my spell
By stops and falls to sound it well.

How should I then join in such exercise?
One sight of Thee'll entice
Mine eyes to heft, whose ecstasies
Will stob[2] my voice.
Hereby mine eyes will bind my tongue
Unless Thou, Lord, do cut the thong.

What use of useless me then there, poor
snake?
There saints and angels sing
Thy praise in full career, which make
The heavens to ring.
Yet if Thou wilt, Thou canst me raise
With angels bright to sing Thy praise.

THE JOY OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP
RIGHTLY ATTENDED

IN heaven soaring up I dropt an ear
On earth, and, oh! sweet melody!
And listening found it was the saints who
were
Encoached for heaven that sang for joy.
For in Christ's coach they sweetly sing
As they to glory ride therein.

Oh, joyous hearts! Enfired with holy flame!
Is speech thus tasselèd with praise?
Will not your inward fire of joy contain,
That it in open flames doth blaze?
For in Christ's coach saints sweetly sing
As they to glory ride therein.

And if a string do slip by chance, they soon
Do screw it up again, whereby
They set it in a more melodious tune
And a diviner harmony.
For in Christ's coach they sweetly sing
As they to glory ride therein.

In all their acts public and private, nay
And secret too, they praise impart;
But in their acts divine and worship, they
With hymns do offer up their heart.
Thus in Christ's coach they sweetly sing
As they to glory ride therein.

Some few not in; and some, whose time and
place
Block up this coach's way, do go
As travellers afoot, and so do trace
The road that gives them right thereto.
While in this coach these sweetly sing
As they to glory ride therein.

1937

HOUSEWIFERY

MAKE me, O Lord, Thy spinning-wheel
complete.
Thy holy Word my distaff make for me;

1 Kit: a miniature violin.

2 Stob: 'The sense in which this rare word is here used (and elsewhere in the poems)—to interrupt, bring to a halt, or overpower—is not recorded in the *New English Dictionary*, unless the word is to be taken figuratively.' Johnson's note, ibid.,304.

Make mine affections Thy swift flyers neat;
And make my soul Thy holy spool to be;
My conversation make to be Thy reel,
And reel the yarn thereon spun of Thy wheel.

Make me Thy loom then; knit therein this twine;
And make Thy Holy Spirit, Lord, wind quills;
Then weave the web Thyself. The yarn is fine.
Thine ordinances make my fulling mills.
Then dye the same in heavenly colors choice,
All pinked with varnished flowers of paradise.

Then clothe therewith mine understanding, will,
Affections, judgment, conscience, memory,
My words and actions, that their shine may fill
My ways with glory and Thee glorify.
Then mine apparel shall display before Ye
That I am clothed in holy robes for glory.

c.1685 1937

FROM MEDITATIONS

1

WHAT love is this of Thine, that cannot be
In Thine infinity, O Lord, confined,
Unless it in Thy very Person see
Infinity and finity conjoined?
What! hath Thy godhead, as not satisfied,
Married our manhood, making it its bride?

Oh, matchless love! filling heaven to the brim!
O'errunning it, all running o'er beside
This world! Nay, overflowing hell, wherein
For Thine elect there rose a mighty tide!
That there our veins might through Thy Person bleed
To quench those flames that else would on us feed.

Oh! that my love might overflow my heart
To fire the same with love! For love I would,
But oh! my straitened breast! my lifeless spark!
My fireless flame! What chilly love and cold!
In measure small! in manner chilly! See!
Lord, blow the coal, Thy love enflame in me.

1682 1937

3

LIKE to the marigold I blushing close
My golden blossoms when Thy sun goes down,
Moist'ning my leaves with dewy sighs, half froze
By the nocturnal cold that hoars my crown.
Mine apples ashes are in apple shells,
And dirty too—strange and bewitching spells!

When, Lord, mine eye doth spy Thy grace to beam,
Thy mediatorial glory in the shine,
Out-spouted so from Adam's typic stream
And emblemiz'd in Noah's polished shrine,
Thine theirs outshines so far it makes their glory
In brightest colors seem a smoky story.

But when mine eye full of these beams doth cast
Its rays upon my dusty essence thin,
Impregnate with a spark divine defaced,
All candied o'er with leprosy of sin,
Such influences on my spirits light
Which them as bitter gall or cold ice smite.

My bristled sins hence do so horrid 'pear,
None but Thyself (and Thou decked up must be
In Thy transcendent glory sparkling clear)
A mediator unto God for me.
So high they rise, faith scarce can toss a sight
Over their head upon Thyself to light.

Is't possible such glory, Lord, e'er should
Center its love on me, sin's dunghill else?
My case up take, make it its own? Who would
Wash with his blood my blots out? Crown his shelf

Or dress his golden cupboard with such
ware?
This makes my pale-faced hope almost
despair.

Yet let my titimouse's quill suck in
Thy grace's milk pails some small drop;
or cart
A bit or splinter of some ray, the wing
Of grace's sun springed out, into my
heart,
To build there wonder's chapel, where
Thy praise
Shall be the psalms sung forth in
gracious lays.

1693 1937

38

Oh! What a thing is man? Lord, who am I?
That Thou shouldst give him law (Oh!
golden line)
To regulate his thoughts, words, life
thereby?
And judge him wilt thereby too in Thy
time.
A court of justice Thou in heaven hold'st
To try his case while he's here housed on
mould.

How do Thy angels lay before Thine eye
My deeds both white and black I daily
do?
How doth Thy court Thou panel'st there
them try?
But flesh complains. What right for this?
Let's know.
For right or wrong, I can't appear unto't.
And shall a sentence pass on such a suit?

Soft; blemish not this golden bench or place.
Here is no bribe, nor colorings to hide,
Nor pettifogger to befog the case;
But justice hath her glory here well tried;
Her spotless law all spotted cases tends,
Without respect or disrespect them ends.

God's judge Himself, and Christ attorney
is,
The Holy Ghost registerer is found;
Angels the sergeants are, all creatures kiss
The book, and do as evidence abound.
All cases pass according to pure law,
And in the sentence is no fret nor flaw.

What say'st, my soul? Here all thy deeds
are tried.
Is Christ thy advocate to plead thy cause?
Art thou His client? Such shall never slide.
He never lost His case: He pleads such
laws
As carry do the same, nor doth refuse
The vilest sinner's case that doth Him
choose.

This is His honor, not dishonor. Nay,
No habeas corpus 'gainst His clients
came.
For all their fines His purse doth make
down pay.
He non-suits Satan's suit or casts the
same.
He'll plead thy case, and not accept a fee.
He'll plead *sub forma pauperis* for thee.

My case is bad. Lord, be my advocate.
My sin is red; I'm under God's arrest.
Thou hast the hit of pleading; plead my
state.
Although it's bad, Thy plea will make it
best.
If Thou wilt plead my case before the
King,
I'll wagon-loads of love and glory bring.

1690 1937

COTTON MATHER

1663–1728

FROM WINTER MEDITATIONS

INTRODUCTION [1]

IT is the description which Martinius in that noble and learned piece of geography which he calls *Atlas Chinensis* gives concerning the air in that part of the Eastern world; *Maius in hac provincia frigus est quam illius poscat poli altitudo;* says he: 'The cold in China is greater than the elevation of the pole there would seem to allow; for the country lies in little more than forty degrees of latitude, and yet for four months together in the year the rivers there are so frozen that the ice will bear the passage not only of men but of horses and coaches too upon it. Yea, and the ships are so shut up in their harbors that unto the beginning of March there is hardly any stirring out; and there is more froze in one day than there can be thawed in many.' I almost thought that I read the description of our winters in this part of our Western world in these words of the geographer; for though the latitude of the principal town in this province be but forty-two degrees, twenty-seven minutes, yet our cold is by many degrees more fierce and hard, however more clear, pleasant, and wholesome, than that of many places that lie beyond fifty; and when it shall be told unto strangers that we have had frosts both in June and in August, they will also conclude that our winters must needs be as long as they are cold. Now, the pinches of such a New English winter awakened me to consider how so cold and so long a time of diversion from very much of our other business might be best employed for the glory of that God who made both the summer and the winter. As 'twas the manner of an ingenious person, when in the morning there was a prospect of a fair day, to say, ' 'Tis pity such a fair day should be lost'; so the most of our winter days are fair ones—not such dirty, sloppy, lowering things as fill the winters in some other lands; and methought 'twas pity any of them should be lost, as too many of them are. I am sufficiently dissatisfied at the ordinary definition which the schools have given of the cold, 'A quality that congregates things both a like and an unlike nature.' Yet I have been far more dissatisfied at the too usual way of spending our days when the cold almost confines us from our Christian congregations. But what seemed the best way of redeeming these days? Truly I was willing to try, not only whether there could not be found many pious works to be attended with a singular convenience in the winter, but also whether the accidents of the winter itself might not afford something to assist us and quicken us in those works. There are certain plants which keep green all the winter long; and, thought I, why should not I endeavor that the exercises of devotion might so do, both in myself and others who desire to be as green olive trees in the house of our God? The winter has been sometimes called *hiems iners*, 'the sluggish winter'; but I would contribute what I can that it may be *hiems sancta*, 'the pious winter, the holy winter, the useful winter'; a winter devoted unto the works of the God of Heaven. To sleep all winter more befits a bear than a man, and much more than a saint. It is very certain that there is more time contained in a natural day of the winter than there is in a natural day of the summer; for the sun in its annual motion from the west unto the east, through the zodiac, passes equal arches in unequal times: the winter half-year of the sun's passing from Libra to Aries is but an hundred and seventy-eight days, whereas the summer half-year of his passing from Aries to Libra is no less than an hundred and eighty-seven days; the sun is nine days more in passing through the semi-ecliptic of the summer than he is through that of the winter; and accordingly an hour upon the sundial when the sun is inclining to the winter tropic, is longer than an hour upon the dial when he is advancing near the sum-

1 The selection, to which the title of the second section has been given by the editors, is from Mather's *Winter Meditations* (Boston, 1693), [vii–xiii], 39–51, 81–82. The texts of all selections from Mather have been modernized by the editors.

mer tropic. Hereupon I could not but make that reflection: if there be more, though it scarce be sensibly more, time in a day now than at other times in the year, why should I do less work for God, for Christ, for His people now than at other times? And as an effect of that reflection, behold, reader, some of my Winter Meditations.

'Tis, as I remember, Polydore Virgil who related that when Mathildis was, during the depth of winter, straitly besieged in Oxford, she arrayed herself and her followers all in white, the color of the snow upon the ground, and by the advantage of that color escaped through the besiegers unto a place of safety. That which I desire is a free passage for the truths and the ways and the works of God into the minds of my neighbors; and I have therefore taken the advantage of putting a winter complexion upon them; I have clothed them in the colors of the winter. And in this essay I have after a sort moralized the fable of Antiphanes, that there is in a certain Scythian region such a frost that the words uttered in the winter there congeal so as to be not heard until the summer following shall dissolve them; for 'twas at Boston lecture, in the month of December last, that the heads of these Winter Meditations were first preached; and it is now in the month of November following that they are printed, on the same designs of religion that gave them their original.

When the excellent Bartholinus published his book, *De Usu Nivis*, it was accompanied with an epigram, something to this purpose,

Libros authoris, quicumque recenset et annos, annos quot poterit, tot numerare libros.[1]

'Tis possible that, now I am composing my book about the use of the winter, I may find myself obliged to confess unto the world as a great fault what was indeed counted none at all in that incomparable person. I do confess that I have written too many books for one of my small attainments; and I would say to my reader, whom I now suppose by the fireside, if this or any book of mine hinder men from acquainting themselves with the Bible, that book of God, I wish, as Luther in that case did about his own books, that they were all thrown into the fire. But I hope it will be otherwise; whereto I would also add that all that weariness of the flesh, as well as the various and humbling temptation otherwise which I have undergone in the study of writing many books, has been abundantly recompensed by the comfort of thinking that the free grace of my good God will accept of my poor thoughts, to be serviceable unto the interests of His Kingdom in the world. And, now I am appendicing unto all the rest one book upon the winter, I will not say as my newly mentioned Bartholinus did in the preface of his: *Ego quidem ex niveo labore praeter atram invidiam nihil exspecto*, or, that I expect nothing but only to be frost-bitten with envy for what I do. 'Tis true, there is a froward generation in every place, whose calumnies must persecute all that serve the public; and I have had the experience of both my father's as well as my own to convince me that this place has of those frowards in it. If this people could have had greater (which I know not), yet all mankind will shortly know that it was impossible for any people to have truer, juster, and more indefatigable servants than some, with whom I have the honor to be well acquainted, have been to this. But the monstrous detractations that have attended them have taught me that I also must *bene agere et male audire*, 'hear ill, if I will do well'; and it will indeed be at last found that unto all activity in well-disposed persons for the public weal, the spirit of nitre itself is not a greater freezer than such ingrateful usages. Nevertheless, I am so charitable as to think that this is the spirit of but a few; or at least that there are multitudes among us who when any service is done for them do heartily give thanks to God for it, and who kindly resent the zeal with which they may see Almighty God inspiring of any to be laboring for their good. For the sake of such, none of our thoughts, none of our cares, none of our weary studies are too much; and it is unto such that these of mine are now humbly offered.

1 'Whoever reckons up the books of the author and the years of his age will be able to count just as many of the former as of the latter.'

The Merciful Works of God

It is written in

Job 37:6,7:

He saith to the snow, be thou upon the earth; likewise to the small rain, & to the great rain of his strength.
He sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know His work.

. . . The merciful works of God which provide for our necessities in the winter are very manifold, and it becomes us to take a most thankful notice of those many mercies. When our God seals up our hands in the winter, He opens His own hand in our liberal supplies for the winter; and we should so know those works of God as to be thankfully affected with them.

The winter itself, that is not without much of mercy in it. It is our winter particularly which for divers months in the year is a better defense unto us against foreign invasions than all the sconces and castles wherewith we could be fortified. Doubtless the Polanders thought their cold was a kindness unto them when, in an army of seventy thousand Turks invading them, forty thousand suddenly perished by the severity of the cold, though it were but the month of November with them. Truly, in the month of November the cold begins none of the least preservatives also for us New Englanders! And who can say how many epidemical diseases have by our winter been extinguished? Our cold precipitates the vapors which would else thicken and poison our air, and by freezing the surface of the earth it keeps in many malignant steams that otherwise would thence arise to suffocate us. It is called for in Pss.148:8: 'Praise the Lord, ye hail, and snow, and vapor, and stormy wind.' It seems they that have much of the hail, the snow, the vapor, may find something in them for which they should praise the Lord. The Psalmist says: 'God giveth snow like wool'; the snow is as a goodly white robe on the body of the earth, whereby 'tis cherished with a nitrous impregnation for fruitfulness in the year ensuing. Thuanus tells us that sometimes it has rained corn; and, indeed, what corn should we have if all rain were denied unto us? It was miraculous when God after a sort rained first bread and then flesh for Israel of old; He does it in effect for us continually.

But as the winter brings much of mercy to us, it brings much of hardship too. Pliny calls the snow and the ice the punishments of the mountains. We who dwell in a plain region, as well as they who dwell upon the rigid and ragged edges of such mountains, would be sorely punished by the hardship of the winter, if the mercy of our God should not relieve us. It was said, in Job 38:22,23: 'Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble?' Truly, the time of snow and the time of hail would be a sore-time of trouble unto us if God should not from the other treasures of his bounty therein make a comfortable provision for us. This I would say: the common mercies of God are a ground, and call for more than common praises to God. May we from this time resolve to be more than ordinarily thankful for our common mercies, and we have to extraordinary good purpose now spent the time of this present exercise.

We may be thankful that the winter itself is not so hard, either as it might be if God should make it so, or as it is now in some other lands, yea, or as it has been heretofore among ourselves. The Psalmist saw cause to say, in Pss.147:17: 'Who can stand before His cold?' If God should carry on the cold unto a little further extremity upon us, there could be no standing before it. Or, if the cold which in its extremity tarries usually but three days among us were extended for three months, instead of any standing there could be no living for us. But, in the midst of the cold, God remembers mercy. And our winters indeed are not so fiercely cold as those of some other countries. We are not, as Livy speaks of the Alps, *æternis damnati nivibus*, 'doomed unto eternal snows'! 'Tis not with us, as Olearius tells us 'tis in Muscovia, where their spittle will freeze ere it reach the ground; and so violent is the cold that no furs can hinder it, but sometimes men's noses, ears, hands, and feet will be frozen and all fall off; and, as the great Fletcher has reported, not only they who travel abroad but many in the very markets of their towns are mortally pinched, so that

you shall see many drop down in the streets, and many travellers brought home dead and stiff in their sleds. Which is a report that Sigismundus ab Herberstein has also given us. Nor is it with us as Captain James found it in some of his northern coasting, where, when he and his companions were a little while parted, they had their faces, hair, and clothes frozen over that they could not know each other by their habits, no, nor by their voices; nor, as where Gerat de Voerb was, when their shoes froze as hard as horns upon their feet, nor were they able to wear them; nor as where Beauplan tells us that without good precautions the cold produces those cancers which in a few hours destroy the parts they seize upon.

Yea, and our own winters are as observably as comfortably moderated since the land has been peopled and opened, of later years. Our snows are not so deep and long since the progress that has been made in the clearing of our woods; and our winds blow not such razors as in the days of our fathers, when the hands of the good men would freeze unto the bread upon their tables, and the strongest wine there would in a few minutes be hardly to be swallowed for its congelation; yea, water cast up into the air would be turned into ice ere it came unto the ground. I wish that all wise men would make the reflection of Petronius upon such a matter; says he: *Incultis asperisque regionibus diutius nives hærent, ast ubi aratro domefacta tellus nitet, dum loqueris, levis pruina dilabitur. Similiter in pectoribus ira considit: feras quidem mentes obsidet, eruditas præterlabitur.* In short English: 'as our land grows better cultivated, we shall have less winter and less anger too among us.'

But then, let our thankful thoughts proceed unto the more particular provisions wherewith our kind God furnishes us against the assaults of a needy winter. Be thankful that we do not undergo the torments of cold in such starving circumstances as ecclesiastical history tells us the martyrdom of Muria was attended with.

Let us be thankful for our clothing. It is a stroke in the picture of the wise woman, she is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with double garments. 'Tis well for us that we have such garments by night as well as by day, to keep off the cold which would otherwise prodigiously mortify us. A poor naked beggar of Russia, being in the depth of winter asked by a person of quality, covered with his thick furs, how he could, so thin-clad, bear the cold, he replied, 'My lord, should you do as I do, you would feel as little cold as I!' But being asked, 'How is that?' he answered, 'Why, as I do, put on all the clothes you've got.' But indeed, if we were almost naked in the cold of our winter, it would be but a cold comfort unto us to think, 'These few thread-bare clothes are all we have to cover us.' Be thankful; and at the same time let us entreat of our God that He would bestow upon us the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for the garment of our souls, and adorn us with the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints.

Let us also be thankful for our fuel. There have been pagans that have sometimes worshipped the fire as a god. But it would well become Christians to worship the true God with manifold praises for the advantages which we have against our cold by the fire. Our Indians have thought the fire must needs be a god, because when a poor man is ready to perish with cold in the winter, one spark of it will in a few minutes blaze out so comfortably as to save the life of him. Instead of so rude a fancy, it beseems us to say, 'There is much of God in the fire; His greatness and His bounty may be seen sparkling in it.' Be thankful; and at the same time let us entreat of our God that we may be baptized with the fire of His Holy Spirit, which will make us fervent in spirit serving the Lord.

Let us be thankful for our houses too. We are not left now to lodge abroad in the cold, with none but the ground for our bed, the snow for our coverlid, and the sky for our canopy; nor are we obliged unto such wretched wigwams as were the best habitations of the barbarous natives that were here before us. How well are we lodged in the winter, and neither by burnings nor by earthquakes forced out of doors! Be thankful; and at the same time let us entreat of our God that we have a mansion in our Heavenly Father's house forever. The keenest winters in the world have been made very tolerable by people's making

some rooms of their houses under the earth, keeping themselves in such subterraneous rooms. But let the winters which call us to give thanks for our warm houses on the earth, cause us to be concerned for an house eternal in the heavens.

And let us be thankful for our tables. How many warm dishes have we to cherish us, whereby we are strengthened against the cold of the winter? And how many refreshing draughts to refocillate our enfeebled spirits? Be thankful, and entreat of God that we may be admitted unto His feast of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined, the least whereat there will be no taking away.

We have a glorious benefactor in the heavens by whose benignity upon earth we live well all the winter long; and all the expressions of that benignity are to be received with a most hearty thankfulness.

I pray, let us not be condemned by the very Jews themselves, with whom it has been customary still to make use of their daily comforts with a *Baruk Adonai*, or 'Blessed be the Lord!' When Job was looking back upon the good days which he had seen, he said, in Job 29:2,4: 'O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; as I was in the days of my youth!' Some render it so: 'As I was in the days of my winter quarters.' Why, when the great Commander of the universe does command us into our winter quarters, He does then preserve us, and by His light we walk through the darkness of the winter. And I would now say, 'O that we were so thankful as we should be for such merciful months!'

The works which God has formerly done towards ourselves ought always to be remembered with us; and the winter is a very proper season for that remembrance.

Here is the work of God which we are to know, when by the winter He seals up our hand; even the whole work of God, in the whole course of our life.

There have been smiting works of God, which ought seriously to be remembered with us, as it is said in Lam.3:19,20: 'Remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.' Behold a fit work for the winter! Have we not sometimes been in a winter of adversity, wherein this and that storm of affliction and misery has been hard upon us? Now in the winter let it be part of our work to recount every such work of God. Now bring to remembrance all that wormwood and gall; but what for? Truly, to see whether you have been such gainers by all those chastisements as you should have been; and whether the weeds of the corruptions in your hearts, and of the disorders in your lives, have been duly nipped by the frost of such a winter.

But there have also been smiling works of God, which ought carefully to be remembered with us. It was the language of a David, in Pss.103:2: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' To bless God is not the least of the duties which the everblessed God requires of man; and all true Davids or men beloved by God evermore love to be blessing of God. If this is to be done 'at all times' as the Psalmist elsewhere speaks, I am sure it may eminently be done in winter times. But God is not really blessed or served if not heartily; and in our blessing of God, the thing is done to halves, if the whole soul, or all the powers of the soul, be not engaged in it. Indeed such is our backwardness to the blessing of God that we had need earnestly to stir, and spur, and rouse ourselves unto the doing of it. Let us then stir up ourselves till we have got ourselves into an heat at this work, in our winter, and know that a commemoration of God's benefits to us is to be one main ingredient of our thanksgivings to Him.

Well, then, let this be one considerable stroke of our winter work, even to run over the stories of our lives, by reckoning up the benefits of God, and reflecting on that goodness and mercy wherewith we have been followed all our lives. What if you should now and then spend whole days of thanksgiving, not only when the authority does usually once in a winter call the whole province to observe such a day, but also in secret places before God, by yourselves alone? Some children of God have doubtless enjoyed an heaven upon earth by devoting themselves unto such an heavenly and glorious exercise; and a day so devoted has ordinarily been followed with some observable mercy of God. However, let us every winter set apart our time to

commemorate the many benefits of God unto us in our lives, and utter our just hallelujahs upon every article in that commemoration.

Particularly, the first article in our commemoration may be the benefits of God relating to the protection which attended our first production—our formation in the womb and reception from the womb. About our being shaped in our mothers, we may say, 'Lord, I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' And about our being taken from our mothers, we may say, 'Lord, Thou art He who took me out of the womb.' As for our bodies, 'tis impossible for anything to be better contrived than they are in the whole make of them. What a sad thing would it have been if these had been monstrously deformed or defective in any one of all their members? Truly, there are thousands of mercies and wonders in one perfect child! And then, as for our spirits, they are certainly the most noble things that inhabit this lower world. How doleful had been our plight if these had lost any of their faculties; were we fools, or mad! But indeed we have souls capable of a very vast improvement in the honoring and enjoying of our God! What shall I say? That we are arrived alive among the living on the earth is a thing full of marvels, if not of miracles. What if we had expired embryos, whereby all our opportunities to glorify God had been lost forever; yea, and this after our being animated, but perhaps before our being any way given unto God in the New Covenant by our parents, who 'tis possible were themselves at that time strangers from the covenant of promise, and so having no hope for their miserable offspring? O think on what thou art, and what thou mightest have been! But,

The *second* article in our commemoration may be the benefits of God relating to the place of our nativity, or at least of our habitation. Where do we dwell! 'Tis in a land enriched with all sorts of temporal conveniencies. 'Tis not where we must have endured the want of all things, not in the dark places of the earth, which are filled with cruelty. We dwell where we have a plenty of meat, of drink, of apparel, and of the best; and it is plain that the poor do not in any country live so well as they do in ours. We dwell where we have the right of Englishmen for our birthright, which is an inheritance of more consequence than what any other nation upon earth is favored with; yea, and we have additional privileges, as we are New Englanders, whereof we may say, as the Jewish rabbi did of liberty, 'If the heavens were parchment, and the seas were ink, all would be too little to write the praises due unto our God upon that account.' We dwell where civility abounds; where knowledge and learning, with schools and other means for it, are promoted; where vice is by wholesome laws restrained; where human society is made easy and pleasant by the orders of it; and where industry is encouraged. But this is not all; *multo maiora canamus.*[1] 'Tis in a land exalted with all sorts of spiritual advantages; 'tis not where the people perish because they have no vision. I pray mark it: if the world at this day be divided into one-and-thirty parts, about nineteen of them are heathen idolaters; about seven of them are Mahometans; hardly five of them are so much as called Christians. And of what has been styled Christendom, how small a moiety is rescued either from that superstition or persecution which destroys all real Christianity? Yea, but you and I have the lines fallen to us in such a pleasant place! We dwell in a Goshen, in a Protestant and a Puritan soil; and where a power to persecute is by a royal charter forever kept from coming into the hands of any that might hereafter incline to use it on us. And in what age? Had we been born a few ages ago, it must have been in a pagan, or in a popish age, and before printing was invented, when a Bible must have cost a man an incredible sum of money, if he could have got it so, and perhaps hanging or burning into the bargain. Alas, brethren, there is not one of us but what are descended from the loins of many that are now roaring in the place of dragons! But as for us, we are born in an age of light. Yea, 'tis in the very dawns of our Lord's coming to destroy the wicked one. I am verily persuaded there are some already born who shall see the most glorious revolutions that ever happened in any former ages; even the glorious things that are spoken of Thee, O thou City of God! It is a privilege to be

1 'We sing of much greater things.'

born so low, so far down in the line of time. . . .

Unto all I say, God forbid this winter should pass before you have made your peace with Him. And to excite you hereunto, as in some wintry countries the carpenters must thaw their wood before they can cut it, let me essay to thaw your hearts in order to a better shaping and squaring of them. I say then, consider that fire, as well as that cold, which the almighty God has to punish the disobedient. It has been said, 'Who can stand before His cold?' But it has also been said, 'Who can stand before His fire?' Thus, in Isa.33:14: 'Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' We wonder at the strength of the ice when we see a piece of it near three inches broad and a quarter of an inch thick, laid over a frame three inches distant, bear a weight of near twenty pounds for a long while together, as Mr. Boyle experienced; or when we read Olaus Magnus affirming that their septentrional ice is of such a tenacity that when 'tis two or three fingers thick it will bear an armed man upon it, and when three or four hands thick, vast armies will venture over it for their winter wars. But thy heart, O man, is prodigiously harder than a piece of ice, if besides the weight of sin upon it, it can bear the thought of the fire that never shall be quenched. Remember, the wrath of God, like a formidable fire, will at last, with exquisite agonies and anguishes, torture the soul of them that shall die in their unregeneracy. One that felt some flashes of that fire in the troubles of his conscience, hearing of some speaking about burning to death, cried out, 'Oh, that is but a metaphor to what I endure!' And another that was broiling in the fire of such troubles roared in this manner, 'Oh, might I have this mitigation of my torments, to lie as a backlog in the fire on the hearth, for a thousand ages!' I urge this: when you are by the fireside this winter, think seriously with yourselves, 'Could I bear to roast in this fire? Alas, this is but a painted fire to that wherein God will take vengeance on them that know Him not, and that obey not His Gospel! And if I can't bear the metaphor, no, not so much as for a minute, how then shall I bear to remain under the wrath of God in hell for infinitely more millions of ages than all the fires on earth have made ashes in the world!' And O let your hearts be thawed by such considerations this winter, immediately to mourn for and turn from all your sins, and give yourselves to God in Christ by a covenant never to be forgotten. It is a work of God that is done after the winter is over, whereof there is mention in Pss.104:30: 'Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, and thou renewest the face of the earth.' O that such a work as this may be done upon you, while this winter is running! Send forth thy Spirit, O most glorious Lord, and now renew the hearts of them that have hitherto continued unregenerates!

In fine, I now leave these my poor labors in the hands of that eternal Spirit, with my humblest supplications that these my endeavors may be made profitable and acceptable unto His people, and assist my neighbors in their travels to that country where the winter shall forever cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest.

1693 1693

POLITICAL FABLES [1]

I

The New Settlement of the Birds in New England

The birds had maintained good order among themselves for several years, under

1 In 1688, Increase Mather was sent by the Massachusetts colony to England as their agent to regain their charter, revoked in 1684. Mather secured a new and reasonably liberal charter in 1691, but there was discontent at home because of the abridged autonomy. 'Cotton Mather's *Political Fables* were not printed in Mather's time, but were circulated in manuscript, presumably about 1692. . . . They were written, it appears, to defend Increase Mather's acceptance of the new charter against those who believed that he had wantonly sacrificed the old rights of New England. In "The New Settlement of the Birds" the characters are:

The Birds	The New Englanders
Jupiter	The King of England
The Eagle	Increase Mather
The Goldfinch	Sir Henry Ashurst
The Harpies (or Locusts)	The foes of New England
The King's-fisher	Sir William Phips

The fable itself is simply a statement of the advantages of the new charter, and the reasons why the colonists should be grateful for it. In the last fable ["The Dogs and the Wolves"], the wolves are the French, and the

the shelter of charters by Jupiter granted to several flocks among them; but Heaven, to chastise many faults too observable in its birds, left them to be deprived of their ancient settlements. There were birds of all sorts in their several flocks; for some catched fish, some lived upon grains; the woodpeckers also made a great figure among them; some of them scraped for their living with their claws; and many supplied their nests from beyond sea. Geese you may be sure there were good store, as there are everywhere. Moreover, when they had lost their charters, those poetical birds called harpies became really existent, and visited these flocks, not so much that they might build nests of their own as plunder and pull down the nests of others.

There were many endeavors used by an eagle and a goldfinch, afterwards accompanied with two more—no less deserving the love of all the flocks than desirous to serve their interest—that flew into Jupiter's palace for the resettlement of good government among the birds. These endeavors did for awhile prosper no further than to stop the inroads of harpies or locusts; but at length Jupiter's court was willing that Jupiter's grace, which would have denied nothing for the advantage of them whose wings had carried them a thousand leagues to serve his empire, should not be hindered from giving them a comfortable settlement, though not exactly in their old forms.

Upon this there grew a difference of opinion between some that were concerned for the welfare of the birds. Some were of opinion that if Jupiter would not reinstate the birds in all their ancient circumstances, they had better accept of just nothing at all, but let all things be left for the harpies to commit as much rapine as they were doing when they were ejecting every poor bird out of his nest that would not at an excessive rate produce a patent for it, and when canary-birds[1] domineered over all the flocks. Others were of opinion that the birds ought rather thankfully to accept the offers of Jupiter; and if anything were yet grievous, they might shortly see a fitter season to ask further favors, especially considering that Jupiter made them offer of such things as all the other American birds would part with more than half the feathers on their backs to purchase. He offered that the birds might be everlastingly confirmed in their titles to their nests and fields. He offered that not so much as a twig should be plucked from any tree the birds would roost upon, without their own consent. He offered that the birds might constantly make their own laws, and annually choose their own rulers. He offered that all strange birds might be made uncapable of a seat in their council. He offered that it should be made impossible for any to disturb the birds in singing of their songs to the praise of their Maker, for which they had sought liberty in the wilderness. Finally, he offered that the king's-fisher should have his commission to be their governor until they had settled what good orders among them they pleased, and that he should be more concerned than ever now to defend them from the French kites that were abroad. The king's-fisher indeed was to have his negative upon the birds, but the birds were to have a negative too upon the king's-fisher; and this was a privilege beyond what was enjoyed by the birds in any of their plantations, or even in Ireland itself.

The birds, not being agreed in their opinion, resolved that they would refer it to reasonable creatures to advise them upon this question—which of these was to be chosen; but when the reasonable creatures heard the question, they all declared none that had any reason could make any question of it.

dogs are the New Englanders. Its point is simply that in a time when there were enemies at her gates, New England could not safely allow herself to be weakened by political disputes at home.' Murdock, *Selections from Cotton Mather*(N.Y.,1926),liv–lvi.

1 A slang term for 'jail-bird.'

2

An additional STORY OF THE DOGS AND THE WOLVES, the substance of which was used, an hundred and fifty Years ago by Melancthon, to unite the Protestants

The wolves and the dogs were going to meet each other in a battle, upon a certain old quarrel that was between them; and the wolves, that they might know the strength of the dogs aforehand, sent forth a scout.

The scout returned and informed the wolves that the dogs were more numerous

than they. Nevertheless he bid them not be discouraged, for the dogs were not only divided into three or four several bodies, which had little disposition to help one another, but also they were very quarrelsome among themselves. One party was for having the army formed one way, and another party another. Some were not satisfied in their commanders; and the commanders themselves had their emulations. Nor did they want those among them that accounted it more necessary to lie down where they were and hunt and kill fleas than march forth to subdue wolves abroad. In short, there was little among them but snapping and snarling at one another. 'And therefore,' said he, 'monsieurs, let's have at them. We shall easily play the wolf upon them that have played the dog upon one another.'

This is a story so old that, as the good man said, I hope it is not true.

c.1692 1825

FROM MAGNALIA CHRISTI AMERICANA [1]

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION [2]

Ἐρῶ δὲ τοῦτο τῆς τῶν ἐντευξομένων, ὠφελείας ἕνεκα[3]

Dicam hoc propter utilitatem eorum qui lecturi sunt hoc opus.

Theodoret.[4]

I WRITE the wonders of the Christian religion, flying from the depravations of Europe to the American strand; and, assisted by the holy author of that religion, I do, with all conscience of truth, required therein by Him who is the truth itself, report the wonderful displays of His infinite power, wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, wherewith His divine providence hath irradiated an Indian wilderness.

I relate the considerable matters that produced and attended the first settlement of colonies which have been renowned for the degree of reformation professed and attained by evangelical churches, erected in those ends of the earth; and a field being thus prepared, I proceed unto a relation of the considerable matters which have been acted thereupon.

I first introduce the actors that have in a more exemplary manner served those colonies, and give remarkable occurrences in the exemplary lives of many magistrates, and of more ministers, who so lived as to leave unto posterity examples worthy of everlasting remembrance.

I add hereunto the notables of the only Protestant university that ever shone in that hemisphere of the New World, with particular instances of Criolians in our biography provoking the whole world with virtuous objects of emulation.

I introduce then the actions of a more eminent importance that have signalized those colonies, whether the establishments, directed by their synods, with a rich variety of synodical and ecclesiastical determinations, or the disturbances with which they have been from all sorts of temptations and enemies tempestuated, and the methods by which they have still weathered out each horrible tempest.

And into the midst of these actions, I interpose an entire book wherein there is, with all possible veracity, a collection made of memorable occurrences and amazing judgments and mercies befalling many particular persons among the people of New England.

Let my readers expect all that I have promised them in this bill of fare; and it may be they will find themselves entertained with yet many other passages, above and beyond their expectation, deserving likewise a room in history; in all which

1 Mather wrote in his diary, for July 1693: 'And because I foresaw an inexpressible deal of service like to be thereby done for the Church of God, not only here but abroad in Europe, I formed a design to endeavor *The Church-History of this Country*. Laying my design before the neighboring ministers, they encouraged it; and accordingly I set myself to cry mightily unto the Lord that if my undertaking herein might be for His glory, He would grant me his assistance in it.' 'Diary of Cotton Mather,' *Mass.Hist.Soc.Coll.*, 7th Series, VII,166. The task, actually begun later in the year, was more or less completed in 1697. Much of the *Magnalia* consists of earlier of Mather's writings, brought together and filled out. In his book he discussed the foundation of the colony, its civil and ecclesiastical leaders, its university, and its spiritual and physical warfare. The *Magnalia* was first published in London in 1702.

2 The selection is from *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford, 1820),23,28–30.

3 'I say this for those who are going to read this book.'

4 Mather has subjoined a Latin translation of the original.

there will be nothing but the author's too mean way of preparing so great entertainments to reproach the invitation. . . .

Reader! I have done the part of an impartial historian, albeit not without all occasion perhaps for the rule which a worthy writer in his *Historica* gives to every reader: *Historici legantur cum moderatione et venia, et cogitetur fieri non posse ut in omnibus circumstantiis Lynceï sint.*[1] Polybius complains of those historians who always made either the Carthaginians brave and the Romans base, or *è contra*, in all their actions, as their affection for their own party led them. I have endeavored with all good conscience to decline this writing merely for a party, or doing like the dealer in history whom Lucian derides for always calling the captain of his own party an Achilles, but of the adverse party a Thersites; nor have I added unto the just provocations for the complaint made by the Baron Maurier, that the greatest part of histories are but so many panegyrics composed by interested hands, which elevate iniquity to the heavens, like Paterculus and like Machiavel, who propose Tiberius Caesar and Caesar Borgia as examples fit for imitation, whereas true history would have exhibited them as horrid monsters—as very devils. 'Tis true, I am not of the opinion that one cannot merit the name of an impartial historian except he write bare matters of fact, without all reflection; for I can tell where to find this given as the definition of history, *Historia est rerum gestarum, cum laude aut vituperatione, narratio*;[2] and if I am not altogether a Tacitus, when virtues or vices occur to be matters of reflection as well as of relation, I will, for my vindication, appeal to Tacitus himself, whom Lipsius calls one of the prudentest (though Tertullian, long before, counts him the lyingest) of them who have enriched the world with history; he says, *Præcipuum munus annalium reor ne virtutes sileantur utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit.*[3] I have not commended any person but when I have really judged, not only that he deserved it, but also that it would be a benefit unto posterity to know wherein he deserved it; and my judgment of desert hath not been biassed by persons' being of my own particular judgment in matters of disputation among the churches of God. I have been as willing to wear the name of Simplicius Verinus throughout my whole undertaking as he that, before me, hath assumed it; nor am I like Pope Zachary, impatient so much as to hear of any Antipodes. The spirit of a Schlusselbergius, who falls foul with fury and reproach on all who differ from him; the spirit of an Heylin, who seems to count no obloquy too hard for a reformer; and the spirit of those (folio-writers there are, some of them, in the English nation!) whom a noble historian stigmatizes as 'those hotheaded, passionate bigots, from whom 'tis enough if you be of a religion contrary unto theirs to be defamed, condemned, and pursued with a thousand calumnies'—I thank Heaven I hate it with all my heart. But how can the lives of the commendable be written without commending them? Or is that law of history, given in one of the eminentest pieces of antiquity we now have in our hands, wholly antiquated; *Maxime proprium est historiæ laudem rerum egregie gestarum persequi?*[4] Nor have I, on the other side, forborne to mention many censurable things, even in the best of my friends, when the things in my opinion were not good; or so bore away for Placentia, in the course of our story as to pass by Verona; but been mindful of the direction which Polybius gives to the historian, 'It becomes him that writes an history, sometimes to extol enemies in his praises, when their praiseworthy actions bespeak it, and at the same time to reprove the best friends, when their deeds appear worthy of a reproof; inasmuch as history is good for nothing, if truth (which is the very eye of the animal) be not in it.' Indeed I have thought it my duty upon all accounts (and if it have proceeded unto the degree of a fault, there is, it may be, something in my temper and nature that has betrayed me therein) to be more sparing and easy in thus mentioning of censurable things than in my other liberty; a writer of church history should, I know, be

1 'Historians should be read with moderation and indulgence, and one must keep in mind that they cannot in all circumstances be as keen-sighted as Lynceus.'

2 'History is the account of events, with praise or blame.'

3 'I regard it as the primary function of history to record virtues, and to instil a fear of that infamy which evil words and deeds will have in the eyes of posterity.'

4 'It is the chief property of history to praise exceptionally fine deeds.'

like the builder of the temple, one of the tribe of Naphthali; and for this I will also plead my Polybius in my excuse: 'It is not the work of an historian to commemorate the vices and villainies of men so much as their just, their fair, their honest actions; and the readers of history get more good by the objects of their emulation than of their indignation.' Nor do I deny that, though I cannot approve the conduct of Josephus (whom Jerome not unjustly nor ineptly calls 'The Greek Livy') when he left out of his *Antiquities* the story of the golden calf, and I don't wonder to find Chamier, and Rivet, and others taxing him for his partiality towards his countrymen, yet I have left unmentioned some censurable occurrences in the story of our colonies, as things no less unuseful than improper to be raised out of the grave, wherein oblivion hath now buried them; lest I should have incurred the pasquil bestowed upon Pope Urban, who employing a committee to rip up the old errors of his predecessors, one clapped a pair of spurs upon the heels of the statue of St. Peter; and a label from the statue of St. Paul opposite thereunto, upon the bridge, asked him, 'Whither he was bound?' St. Peter answered, 'I apprehend some danger in staying here; I fear they'll call me in question for denying my master.' And St. Paul replied, 'Nay, then I had best be gone too, for they'll question me also, for persecuting the Christians before my conversion.' Briefly, my pen shall reproach none that can give a good word unto any good man that is not of their own faction, and shall fall out with none but those that can agree with nobody else except those of their own schism. If I draw any sort of men with charcoal, it shall be because I remember a notable passage of the best queen that ever was in the world, our late Queen Mary. Monsieur Jurieu, that he might justify the Reformation in Scotland, made a very black representation of their old Queen Mary; for which a certain sycophant would have incensed our Queen Mary against that reverend person, saying, 'Is it not a shame that this man, without any consideration for your royal person, should dare to throw such infamous calumnies upon a queen from whom your royal highness is descended?' But that excellent princess replied, 'No, not at all; is it not enough that by fulsome praises great persons be lulled asleep all their lives, but must flattery accompany them to their very graves? How should they fear the judgment of posterity, if historians be not allowed to speak the truth after their death?' But whether I do myself commend, or whether I give my reader an opportunity to censure, I am careful above all things to do it with truth; and as I have considered the words of Plato: *Deum indigne et graviter ferre cum quis ei similem, id est virtute præstantem, vituperet aut laudet contrarium*,[1] so I have had the ninth Commandment of a greater lawgiver than Plato to preserve my care of truth from first to last. If any mistake have been anywhere committed, it will be found merely circumstantial, and wholly involuntary; and let it be remembered that, though no historian ever merited better than the incomparable Thuanus, yet learned men have said of his work what they never shall truly say of ours, that it contains *multa falsissima et indigna*.[2] I find Erasmus himself mistaking one man for two when writing of the ancients. And even our own English writers too are often mistaken, and in matters of a very late importance, as Baker and Heylin and Fuller (professed historians) tell us that Richard Sutton, a single man, founded the Charterhouse; whereas his name was Thomas, and he was a married man. I think I can recite such mistakes, it may be *sans* number, occurring in the most credible writers; yet I hope I shall commit none such. But although I thus challenge, as my due, the character of an impartial, I doubt I may not challenge that of an elegant historian. I cannot say whether the style wherein this church history is written will please the modern critics; but if I seem to have used ἁπλουστάτῃ συντάξει γραφῆς a simple, submiss, humble style, 'tis the same that Eusebius affirms to have been used by Hegesippus, who, as far as we understand, was the first author (after Luke) that ever composed an entire body of ecclesiastical history, which he divided into five books,

1 'That God considers it a serious offence, and one unworthy of Him, when someone condemns a man who is like Him (that is, outstanding in virtue), or praises the opposite.'

2 'Much that is very false and unworthy.'

and entitled *ὑπομνήματα τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πραξέων*.[1] Whereas others, it may be, will reckon the style embellished with too much of ornament by the multiplied references to other and former concerns, closely couched, for the observation of the attentive, in almost every paragraph; but I must confess that I am of his mind who said, *Sicuti sal modice cibis aspersus condit et gratiam saporis addit, ita, si paulum antiquitatis admiscueris, oratio fit venustior.*[2] And I have seldom seen that way of writing faulted but by those who, for a certain odd reason, sometimes find fault that the grapes are not ripe. These embellishments (of which yet I only *veniam pro laude peto*[3]) are not the puerile spoils of Polyanthea's; but I should have asserted them to be as choice flowers as most that occur in ancient or modern writings, almost unavoidably putting themselves into the author's hand while about his work, if those words of Ambrose had not a little frightened me, as well as they did Baronius: *Unumquemque fallunt sua scripta.*[4] I observe that learned men have been so terrified by the reproaches of pedantry, which little smatterers at reading and learning have by their quoting humors brought upon themselves, that, for to avoid all approaches towards that which those feeble creatures have gone to imitate, the best way of writing has been most injuriously deserted. But what shall we say? The best way of writing under heaven shall be the worst, when Erasmus his monosyllable tyrant will have it so! And if I should have resigned myself wholly to the judgment of others what way of writing to have taken, the story of the two statues made by Polyclitus tells me what may have been the issue: he contrived one of them according to the rules that best pleased himself, and the other according to the fancy of every one that looked upon his work; the former was afterwards applauded by all, and the latter derided by those very persons who had given their directions for it. . . .

1697 1702

1 'Memorials of ecclesiastical transactions.'

2 'Just as a moderate amount of salt seasons food and improves its flavor, in the same way a style is given more charm if seasoned with a few archaisms.'

3 'I seek indulgence for this adulation.'

4 'Everyone misjudges his own writings.'

GALEACIUS SECUNDUS [5]

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM BRADFORD, ESQ.; GOVERNOR OF PLYMOUTH COLONY [6]

Omnium somnos illius vigilantia defendit, omnium otium illius labor, omnium delicias illius industria, omnium vacationem illius occupatio.[7]

IT has been a matter of some observation that, although Yorkshire be one of the largest shires in England, yet, for all the fires of martyrdom which were kindled in the days of Queen Mary, it afforded no more fuel than one poor leaf; namely, John Leaf, an apprentice, who suffered for the doctrine of the Reformation at the same time and stake with the famous John Bradford. But when the reign of Queen Elizabeth would not admit the reformation of worship to proceed unto those degrees which were proposed and pursued by no small number of the faithful in those days, Yorkshire was not the least of the shires in England that afforded suffering witnesses thereunto. The churches there gathered were quickly molested with such a raging persecution that if the spirit of separation in them did carry them unto a further extreme than it should have done, one blamable cause thereof will be found in the extremity of that persecution. Their troubles made that cold country too hot for them, so that they were under a necessity to seek a retreat in the low countries; and yet the watchful malice and fury of their adversaries rendered it almost impossible for them to find what they sought. For them to leave their native soil, their lands, and their friends, and go into a

5 'The second helmet-wearer.'

6 'And if it has been determined that the name of historian shall be Virtue's secretary, I know not how the pen of an historian can be better employed than in reporting the virtuous tempers and actions of the men that have therein shown forth the virtues of our blessed Redeemer, and been the epistles of Christ unto the rest of mankind. Nor indeed has mankind generally found any sort of history more useful and more grateful than what has been given in the lives of men that have been distinguished by an excellent spirit. The Best of Books does very much consist of such an history.' Mather, *Parentator* (Boston, 1724), ii.

7 'His vigilance secures the sleep of all; his toil, the rest of all; his industry, the pleasures of all; his diligence, the leisure of all.'

strange place where they must hear foreign language, and live meanly and hardly and in other employments than that of husbandry wherein they had been educated, these must needs have been such discouragements as could have been conquered by none save those who sought first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. But that which would have made these discouragements the more unconquerable unto an ordinary faith was the terrible zeal of their enemies to guard all ports, and search all ships, that none of them should be carried off. I will not relate the sad things of this kind then seen and felt by this people of God, but only exemplify those trials with one short story. Divers of this people having hired a Dutchman then lying at Hull to carry them over to Holland, he promised faithfully to take them in between Grimsby and Hull; but they coming to the place a day or two too soon, the appearance of such a multitude alarmed the officers of the town adjoining, who came with a great body of soldiers to seize upon them. Now it happened that one boat full of men had been carried aboard, while the women were yet in a bark that lay aground in a creek at low water. The Dutchman, perceiving the storm that was thus beginning ashore, swore by the sacrament that he would stay no longer for any of them; and so taking the advantage of a fair wind then blowing, he put out to sea for Zealand. The women thus left near Grimsby Common, bereaved of their husbands, who had been hurried from them, and forsaken of their neighbors, of whom none durst in this fright stay with them, were a very rueful spectacle; some crying for fear, some shaking for cold, all dragged by troops of armed and angry men from one justice to another, till not knowing what to do with them they e'en dismissed them to shift as well as they could for themselves. But by their singular afflictions, and by their Christian behaviors, the cause for which they exposed themselves did gain considerably. In the meantime, the men at sea found reason to be glad that their families were not with them, for they were surprized with an horrible tempest, which held them for fourteen days together, in seven whereof they saw not sun, moon, or star, but were driven upon the coast of Norway. The mariners often despaired of life, and once with doleful shrieks gave over all, as thinking the vessel was foundered; but the vessel rose again, and when the mariners with sunk hearts often cried out, 'We sink! We sink!' the passengers without such distraction of mind, even while the water was running into their mouths and ears, would cheerfully shout, 'Yet, Lord, Thou canst save! Yet, Lord Thou canst save!' And the Lord accordingly brought them at last safe unto their desired haven, and not long after helped their distressed relations thither after them, where indeed they found upon almost all accounts a new world, but a world in which they found that they must live like strangers and pilgrims.

Among those devout people was our William Bradford, who was born Anno 1588 in an obscure village called Austerfield, where the people were as unacquainted with the Bible as the Jews do seem to have been with part of it in the days of Josiah; a most ignorant and licentious people, and like unto their priest. Here, and in some other places, he had a comfortable inheritance left him of his honest parents, who died while he was yet a child, and cast him on the education, first of his grandparents, and then of his uncles, who devoted him, like his ancestors, unto the affairs of husbandry. Soon a long sickness kept him, as he would afterwards thankfully say, from the vanities of youth, and made him the fitter for what he was afterwards to undergo. When he was about a dozen years old, the reading of the Scriptures began to cause great impressions upon him; and those impressions were much assisted and improved when he came to enjoy Mr. Richard Clifton's illuminating ministry, not far from his abode; he was then also further befriended by being brought into the company and fellowship of such as were then called professors, though the young man that brought him into it did after become a profane and wicked apostate. Nor could the wrath of his uncles, nor the scoff of his neighbors now turned upon him, as one of the Puritans, divert him from his pious inclinations.

At last beholding how fearfully the evangelical and apostolical church form, whereinto the churches of the primitive times were cast by the good spirit of God, had been deformed by the apostasy of the suc-

ceeding times, and what little progress the Reformation had yet made in many parts of Christendom towards its recovery, he set himself by reading, by discourse, by prayer, to learn whether it was not his duty to withdraw from the communion of the parish assemblies, and engage with some society of the faithful that should keep close unto the written word of God as the rule of their worship. And after many distresses of mind concerning it, he took up a very deliberate and understanding resolution of doing so, which resolution he cheerfully prosecuted, although the provoked rage of his friends tried all the ways imaginable to reclaim him from it; unto all whom his answer was: 'Were I like to endanger my life, or consume my estate by any ungodly courses, your counsels to me were very seasonable; but you know that I have been diligent and provident in my calling, and not only desirous to augment what I have, but also to enjoy it in your company, to part from which will be as great a cross as can befall me. Nevertheless, to keep a good conscience, and walk in such a way as God has prescribed in His Word, is a thing which I must prefer before you all, and above life itself. Wherefore, since 'tis for a good cause that I am like to suffer the disasters which you lay before me, you have no cause to be either angry with me, or sorry for me; yea, I am not only willing to part with every thing that is dear to me in this world for this cause, but I am also thankful that God has given me an heart so to do, and will accept me so to suffer for Him.' Some lamented him, some derided him, all dissuaded him; nevertheless the more they did it, the more fixed he was in his purpose to seek the ordinances of the Gospel where they should be dispensed with most of the commanded purity; and the sudden deaths of the chief relations which thus lay at him quickly after convinced him what a folly it had been to have quitted his profession in expectation of any satisfaction from them. So to Holland he attempted a removal.

Having with a great company of Christians hired a ship to transport them for Holland, the master perfidiously betrayed them into the hands of those persecutors who rifled and ransacked their goods and clapped their persons into prison at Boston, where they lay for a month together. But Mr. Bradford, being a young man of about eighteen, was dismissed sooner than the rest, so that within a while he had opportunity with some others to get over to Zealand, through perils both by land and sea not inconsiderable; where he was not long ashore ere a viper seized on his hand, that is, an officer, who carried him unto the magistrates, unto whom an envious passenger had accused him as having fled out of England. When the magistrates understood the true cause of his coming thither, they were well satisfied with him; and so he repaired joyfully unto his brethren at Amsterdam, where the difficulties to which he afterwards stooped in learning and serving of a Frenchman at the working of silks were abundantly compensated by the delight wherewith he sat under the shadow of our Lord in His purely dispensed ordinances. At the end of two years, he did, being of age to do it, convert his estate in England into money; but setting up for himself, he found some of his designs by the providence of God frowned upon, which he judged a correction bestowed by God upon him for certain decays of internal piety, whereinto he had fallen; the consumption of his estate he thought came to prevent a consumption in his virtue. But after he had resided in Holland about half a score years, he was one of those who bore a part in that hazardous and generous enterprise of removing into New England, with part of the English church at Leyden, where at their first landing his dearest consort, accidentally falling overboard, was drowned in the harbor; and the rest of his days were spent in the services, and the temptations, of that American wilderness.

Here was Mr. Bradford in the year 1621, unanimously chosen the governor of the plantation, the difficulties whereof were such that, if he had not been a person of more than ordinary piety, wisdom and courage, he must have sunk under them. He had with a laudable industry been laying up a treasure of experiences, and he had now occasion to use it; indeed, nothing but an experienced man could have been suitable to the necessities of the people. The potent nations of the Indians, into whose country they were come, would have cut them off, if the blessing of God upon his conduct had not quelled them; and if his prudence, jus-

tice, and moderation had not overruled them, they had been ruined by their own distempers. One specimen of his demeanor is to this day particularly spoken of. A company of young fellows that were newly arrived were very unwilling to comply with the Governor's order for working abroad on the public account; and therefore on Christmas Day, when he had called upon them, they excused themselves with a pretence that it was against their conscience to work such a day. The Governor gave them no answer, only that he would spare them till they were better informed; but by and by he found them all at play in the street, sporting themselves with various diversions; whereupon, commanding the instruments of their games to be taken from them, he effectually gave them to understand that it was against his conscience that they should play whilst others were at work, and that if they had any devotion to the day, they should show it at home in the exercises of religion, and not in the streets with pastime and frolics; and this gentle reproof put a final stop to all such disorders for the future.

For two years together after the beginning of the colony, whereof he was now governor, the poor people had a great experiment of man's not living by bread alone; for when they were left all together without one morsel of bread for many months one after another, still the good providence of God relieved them, and supplied them, and this for the most part out of the sea. In this low condition of affairs, there was no little exercise for the prudence and patience of the Governor, who cheerfully bore his part in all; and, that industry might not flag, he quickly set himself to settle property among the new planters, foreseeing that while the whole country labored upon a common stock, the husbandry and business of the plantation could not flourish, as Plato and others long since dreamed that it would if a community were established. Certainly, if the spirit which dwelt in the old Puritans had not inspired these new planters, they had sunk under the burden of these difficulties; but our Bradford had a double portion of that spirit.

The plantation was quickly thrown into a storm that almost overwhelmed it by the unhappy actions of a minister sent over from England by the adventurers concerned for the plantation; but by the blessing of Heaven on the conduct of the Governor, they weathered out that storm. Only the adventurers, hereupon breaking to pieces, threw up all their concernments with the infant colony; whereof they gave this as one reason, that the planters dissembled with his majesty and their friends in their petition, wherein they declared for a church discipline agreeing with the French and others of the reforming churches in Europe; whereas 'twas now urged that they had admitted into their communion a person who at his admission utterly renounced the churches of England (which person, by the way, was that very man who had made the complaints against them); and therefore, though they denied the name of Brownists, yet they were the thing. In answer hereunto, the very words written by the Governor were these: 'Whereas you tax us with dissembling about the French discipline, you do us wrong, for we both hold and practice the discipline of the French and other reformed churches (as they have published the same in the harmony of confessions) according to our means, in effect and substance. But whereas you would tie us up to the French discipline in every circumstance, you derogate from the liberty we have in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul would have none to follow him in any thing but wherein he follows Christ; much less ought any Christian or church in the world to do it. The French may err, we may err, and other churches may err, and doubtless do in many circumstances. That honor therefore belongs only to the infallible Word of God and pure Testament of Christ, to be propounded and followed as the only rule and pattern for direction herein to all churches and Christians. And it is too great arrogancy for any men or church to think that he or they have so sounded the Word of God unto the bottom as precisely to set down the churches' discipline without error in substance or circumstance, that no other without blame may digress or differ in any thing from the same. And it is not difficult to show that the reformed churches differ in many circumstances among themselves.' By which words it appears how far he was free from that rigid spirit of separation

which broke to pieces the Separatists themselves in the low countries, unto the great scandal of the reforming churches. He was indeed a person of a well-tempered spirit; or else it had been scarce possible for him to have kept the affairs of Plymouth in so good a temper for thirty-seven years together, in every one of which he was chosen their governor except the three years wherein Mr. Winslow, and the two years wherein Mr. Prince, at the choice of the people, took a turn with him.

The leader of a people in a wilderness had need be a Moses; and if a Moses had not led the people of Plymouth colony, when this worthy person was their governor, the people had never with so much unanimity and importunity still called him to lead them. Among many instances thereof, let this one piece of self-denial be told for a memorial of him, wheresoever this history shall be considered. The patent of the colony was taken in his name, running in these terms: 'To William Bradford, his heirs, associates and assigns'; but when the number of the freemen was much increased, and many new townships erected, the general court there desired of Mr. Bradford that he would make a surrender of the same into their hands, which he willingly and presently assented unto, and confirmed it according to their desire by his hand and seal, reserving no more for himself than was his proportion, with others, by agreement. But as he found the providence of Heaven many ways recompensing his many acts of self-denial, so he gave this testimony to the faithfulness of the divine promises, that he had forsaken friends, houses, and lands for the sake of the gospel, and the Lord gave them him again. Here he prospered in his estate; and besides a worthy son which he had by a former wife, he had also two sons and a daughter by another, whom he married in this land.

He was a person for study as well as action; and hence, notwithstanding the difficulties through which he passed in his youth, he attained unto a notable skill in languages; the Dutch tongue was become almost as vernacular to him as the English; the French tongue he could also manage; the Latin and the Greek he had mastered; but the Hebrew he most of all studied, because, he said, he would see with his own eyes the ancient oracles of God in their native beauty. He was also well skilled in history, in antiquity, and in philosophy; and for theology he became so versed in it that he was an irrefragable disputant against the errors, especially those of Anabaptism, which with trouble he saw rising in his colony; wherefore he wrote some significant things for the confutation of those errors. But the crown of all was his holy, prayerful, watchful, and fruitful walk with God, wherein he was very exemplary.

At length he fell into an indisposition of body which rendered him unhealthy for a whole winter; and as the spring advanced, his health declined; yet he felt himself not what he counted sick, till one day; in the night after which, the God of Heaven so filled his mind with ineffable consolations that he seemed little short of Paul, rapt up unto the unutterable entertainments of paradise. The next morning he told his friends that the good spirit of God had given him a pledge of his happiness in another world, and the first fruits of his eternal glory; and on the day following he died, May 9, 1657, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, lamented by all the colonies of New England as a common blessing and father to them all.

O mihi si similis contingat clausula vitæ! [1]

Plato's brief description of a governor is all that I will now leave as his character, in an

EPITAPH

Νομεὺς, τροφὸς ἀγέλης ἀνθρωπίνης.[2]

Men are but flocks; Bradford beheld their need,
And long did them at once both rule and feed.

1702

THE MEMORABLE ACTION AT WELLS [3]

A VESSEL, the name whereof I know not (reader, let it be the *Charity*), being imme-

1 'Oh would that there might fall to my lot a like end to life.'

2 'Shepherd and feeder of the human flock.'

3 The selection was first printed as one of the episodes in *Decennium Luctuosum* (Boston, 1699), which was in-

diately dispatched unto Sagadehock by the charitable compassions of the more southward neighbors, with effects to accomplish it, happily effected the redemption of many that were taken captives at York. But the rest of the people in that broken town talking of drawing off the government, sent Captain Converse and Captain Greenleaf with such encouragements unto them to keep their station as prevailed with 'em still to stand their ground. In February, Major Hutchinson was made commander-in-chief, and forces under the command of Captain Converse, Captain Floyd, and Captain Thaxter were by him so prudently posted on the frontiers that by maintaining a continual communication it became a difficult thing for the enemy to make any more approaches. Lieutenant Wilson particularly hearing of a man shot at in Quochecho Woods, went out with a scout of about eighteen men, who came upon the Indians that had shot at the man, and killed and wounded all but one of the whole company. But now, reader, the longest day in the year is to come on, and, if I mistake not, the bravest act in the war fell out upon it. Modockawando is now come, according to his promise a twelve-month ago. Captain Converse was lodged in Storer's garrison at Wells with but fifteen men; and there came into Wells two sloops, with a shallop, which had aboard supplies of ammunition for the soldiers, and contribution for the needy. The cattle this day came frightened and bleeding out of the woods, which was a more certain omen of Indians a-coming than all the prodigies that Livy reports of the 'sacrificed oxen.' Converse immediately issued out his commands unto all quarters, but especially to the sloops just then arrived. The sloops were commanded by Samuel Storer and James Gouge, and Gouge's being two miles up the river, he wisely brought her down undiscovered unto Storer's, by the advantage of a mist then prevailing. A careful night they had on't! The next morning before daylight, one John Diamond, a stranger that came in the shallop on a visit, came to Captain Converse's garrison, where the watch invited him in; but he chose rather to go aboard the sloops, which were little more than a gun-shot off; and, alas! the enemy issuing out from their lurking-places, immediately seized him, and haled him away by the hair of the head (in spite of all the attempts used by the garrison to recover him) for an horrible story to be told by and by concerning him. The general of the enemies' army was Monsieur Burniff; and one Monsieur Labocree was a principal commander (the enemy said he was Lieutenant General); there were also divers other Frenchmen of quality, accompanied with Modockawando, and Moxus, and Egeremet, and Warumbo, and several more Indian sagamores; the army made up in all about five hundred men, or fierce things in the shape of men, all to encounter fifteen men in one little garrison, and about fifteen more men (worthily called such!) in a couple of open sloops. Diamond having informed them how 'twas in all points (only that for fifteen by a mistake he said thirty), they fell to dividing the persons and plunder, and agreeing that such an English captain should be slave to such a one, and such a gentleman in the town should serve such a one, and his wife be a maid of honor to such or such a squaw proposed, and Mr. Wheelwright (instead of being a worthy counsellor of the province, which he now is!) was to be servant of such a *netop*; and the sloops, with their stores, to be so and so parted among them. There wanted but one thing to consummate the whole matter, even the chief thing of all, which I suppose they had not thought of; that was, for Heaven to deliver all this prize into their hands; but *aliter statutum est in cælo*! [1] A man habited like a gentleman made a speech to them in English, exhorting 'em to courage and assuring

cluded in the *Magnalia*. The book is an account of the ten years battle with the Indians to the north, from 1688–1698. In his dedication, Mather wrote: 'The history is indeed of no very fine thread; and the readers who everywhere fish for nothing but carps, and who love, like Augustus, to tax all the world may find fault enough with it. Nevertheless, while the fault of an untruth can't be found in it, the author pretends that the famous history of the Trojan War itself comes behind our little history of the Indian War; for the best antiquaries have now confuted Homer; the walls of Troy were, it seems, all made of poet's paper; and the siege of the town, with the tragedies of the wooden horse, were all but a piece of poetry. And if a war between us and a handful of Indians do appear no more than a *Batrachomyomachia* [*The Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, a parody of Homer's epic] to the world abroad, yet unto us at home it hath been considerable enough to make an history.' *Magnalia Christi Americana*(Hartford,1820),II,503–04.

1 'It was ordered otherwise in heaven.'

'em that, if they would courageously fall upon the English, all was their own. The speech being ended, they fell to the work, and with an horrid shout and shot, made their assault upon the feeble garrison; but the English answered with a brisk volley, and sent such a leaden shower among them, that they retired from the garrison to spend the storm of their fury upon the sloops.

You must know that Wells' harbor is rather a creek than a river, for 'tis very narrow and at low water in many places dry; nevertheless, where the vessels ride it is deep enough, and so far off the bank that there is from thence no leaping aboard. But our sloops were sorely incommoded by a turn of the creek, where the enemy could lie out of danger so near 'em as to throw mud aboard with their hands. The enemy was also privileged with a great heap of plank lying on the bank, and with an haystack which they strengthened with the posts and rails; and from all these places they poured in their vengeance upon the poor sloops, while they so placed smaller parties of their savages as to make it impossible for any of the garrisons to afford 'em any relief. Lying thus within a dozen yards of the sloops, they did with their fire-arrows divers times desperately set the sloops on fire; but the brave defendants, with a swab at the end of a rope tied unto a pole and so dipped into the water, happily put the fire out. In brief, the sloops gave the enemy so brave a repulse that at night they retreated; when they renewed their assault, finding that their fortitude would not assure the success of the assault unto them, they had recourse unto their policy. First, an Indian comes on with a slab for a shield before him; when a shot from one of the sloops pierced the slab, which fell down instead of a tombstone with the dead Indian under it; on which, as little a fellow as he was, I know not whether some will not reckon it proper to inscribe the epitaph which the Italians use to bestow upon their dead popes: 'When the dog is dead, all his malice is dead with him.' Their next stratagem was this: they brought out of the woods a kind of a cart, which they trimmed and rigged and fitted up into a thing that might be called a chariot; whereupon they built a platform, shot-proof in the front, and placed many men upon the platform. Such an engine they understood how to shape, without having read (I suppose) the description of the *pluteus* in *Vegetius*! This chariot they pushed on towards the sloops till they were got, it may be, within fifteen yards of them; when, lo! one of their wheels, to their admiration, sunk into the ground. A Frenchman stepping to heave the wheel with an helpful shoulder, Storer shot him down; another stepping to the wheel, Storer with a well-placed shot sent him after his mate; so the rest thought it was best to let it stand as it was. The enemy kept galling the sloop from their several batteries, and calling 'em to surrender, with many fine promises to make them happy, which ours answered with a just laughter, that had now and then a mortiferous bullet at the end of it. The tide rising, the chariot overset, so that the men behind it lay open to the sloops, which immediately dispensed an horrible slaughter among them; and they that could get away got as fast and as far off as they could. In the night the enemy had much discourse with the sloops; they inquired who were the commanders, and the English gave an answer, which in some other cases and places would have been too true, that they had a great many commanders; but the Indians replied, 'You lie! You have none but Converse, and we will have him too before morning!' They also, knowing that the magazine was in the garrison, lay under an hillside, pelting at that by times; but Captain Converse once in the night sent out three or four of his men into a field of wheat for a shot, if they could get one. There seeing a black heap lying together, ours all at once let fly upon them a shot that slew several of them that were thus 'caught in the corn,' and made the rest glad that they were able to run for it. Captain Converse was this while in much distress about a scout of six men which he had sent forth to Newichawannick the morning before the arrival of the enemy, ordering them to return the day following. The scout returned into the very mouth of the enemy that lay before the garrison; but the corporal having his wits about him called out aloud (as if he had seen Captain Converse making a sally forth upon 'em): 'Captain, wheel about your men round the hill, and we shall catch 'em; there are but a few rogues of 'em!' upon which the Indians, imagining that

Captain Converse had been at their heels, betook themselves to their heels; and our folks got safe into another garrison. On the Lord's Day morning there was for a while a deep silence among the assailants; but at length, getting into a body, they marched with great formality towards the garrison, where the captain ordered his handful of men to lie snug, and not to make a shot until every shot might be likely to do some execution. While they thus beheld a formidable crew of dragons, coming with open mouth upon them to swallow them up at a mouthful, one of the soldiers began to speak of surrendering; upon which the captain vehemently protested that he would lay the man dead who should so much as mutter that base word any more! and so they heard no more on it; but the valiant Storer was put upon the like protestation to keep 'em in good fighting trim aboard the sloops also. The enemy, now approaching very near, gave three shouts that made the earth ring again; and crying out in English, 'Fire, and fall on, brave boys!' the whole body, drawn into three ranks, fired at once. Captain Converse immediately ran into the several flankers, and made their best guns fire at such a rate that several of the enemy fell, and the rest of 'em disappeared almost as nimbly as if there had been so many spectres; particularly a parcel of them got into a small deserted house; which having but a boardwall to it, the captain sent in after them those bullets of twelve to the pound, that made the house too hot for them that could get out of it. The women in the garrison on this occasion took up the Amazonian stroke, and not only brought ammunition to the men, but also with a manly resolution fired several times upon the enemy. The enemy, finding that things would not yet go to their minds at the garrison, drew off to try their skill upon the sloops, which lay still abreast in the creek, lashed fast one to another. They built a great fire-work, about eighteen or twenty foot square, and filled it up with combustible matter which they fired; and then they set it in the way for the tide now to float it up unto the sloops, which had now nothing but an horrible death before them. Nevertheless their demands of both the garrison and the sloops to yield themselves were answered no otherwise than with death upon many of them, spit from the guns of the besieged. Having towed their fire-work as far as they durst, they committed it unto the tide; but the distressed Christians that had this deadly fire swimming along upon the water towards them, committed it unto God; and God looked from heaven upon them in this prodigious article of their distress. 'These poor men cried, and the Lord heard them, and saved them out of their troubles.' The wind, unto their astonishment, immediately turn'd about, and with a fresh gale drove the machine ashore on the other side, and split it so that, the water being let in upon it, the fire went out. So the godly men that saw God from heaven thus fighting for them cried out with an astonishing joy, 'If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, they had swallowed us up quick! Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth; our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers!' The enemy were now in a pitiful pickle with toiling and moiling in the mud, and blackened with it, if mud could add blackness to such miscreants; and their ammunition was pretty well exhausted; so that now they began to draw off in all parts, and with rafts get over the river; some whereof breaking, there did not a few cool their late heat by falling into it. But first they made all the spoil they could upon the cattle about the town; and giving one shot more at the sloops, they killed the only man of ours that was killed aboard 'em. Then, after about half an hour's consultation, they sent a flag of truce to the garrison, advising 'em with much flattery to surrender; but the captain sent 'em word that he wanted for nothing but for men to come and fight him. The Indian replied unto Captain Converse, 'Being you are so stout, why don't you come and fight in the open field like a man, and not fight in a garrison like a squaw?' The captain rejoined, 'What a fool are you! Do you think thirty men a match for five hundred? No,' (says the captain, counting, as well he might, each of his fifteen men to be as good as two!) 'come with your thirty men upon the plain, and I will meet you with my thirty as soon as you will.' Upon this the Indian answered, 'Nay, me own English fashion is all one fool: you kill me, me kill you! No; better lie somewhere and shoot a man, and he no see! that

the best soldier!' Then they fell to coaxing the captain with as many fine words as the fox in the fable had for the allurement of his prey unto him; and urged mightily that Ensign Hill, who stood with the flag of truce, might stand a little nearer their army. The captain, for a good reason, to be presently discerned, would not allow that; whereupon they fell to threatening and raging, like so many defeated devils, using these words: 'Damn ye, we'll cut you as small as tobacco before tomorrow morning.' The captain bid 'em to make haste, for he 'wanted work'; so the Indian, throwing his flag on the ground, ran away, and Ensign Hill, nimbly stripping his flag, ran into the valley; but the savages presently fired from an ambushment behind an hill, near the place where they had urged for a parley.

And now for poor John Diamond! The enemy retreating (which opportunity the sloops took to burn down the dangerous haystack) into the plain, out of gunshot, they fell to torturing their captive, John Diamond, after a manner very diabolical. They stripped him, they scalped him alive, and after a castration, they finished that article in the punishment of traitors upon him; they slit him with knives between his fingers and his toes; they made cruel gashes in the most fleshy parts of his body, and stuck the gashes with fire-brands which were afterwards found sticking in the wounds. Thus they butchered one poor Englishman with all the fury that they would have spent upon them all, and performed an exploit for five hundred furies to brag of at their coming home. Ghastly to express! What was it then to suffer? They returned then unto the garrison, and kept firing at it now and then till near ten o'clock at night; when they all marched off, leaving behind 'em some of their dead; whereof one was Monsieur Labocree, who had about his neck a pouch with about a dozen reliques ingeniously made up, and a printed paper of indulgences, and several other implements; and, no doubt, thought himself in as good safety as if he had all the spells of Lapland about him; but it seems none of the amulets about his neck would save him from a mortal shot in the head. Thus in forty-eight hours was finished an action as worthy to be related as perhaps any that occurs in our story. And it was not long before the valiant Gouge, who bore his part in this action, did another that was not much inferior to it, when he suddenly recovered from the French a valuable prey which they had newly taken upon our coast.

I doubt, reader, we have had this article of our history a little too long. We will finish it when we have remarked that, albeit there were too much feebleness discovered by my countrymen in some of their actions during this war at sea, as well as on shore, yet several of their actions, especially at sea, deserve to be remembered. And I cannot but particularly bespeak a remembrance for the exploit performed by some of my neighbors in a vessel going into Barbados. They were in sight of Barbados assaulted by a French vessel, which had a good number of guns and between sixty and seventy hands. Our vessel had four guns and eight fighting men (truly such!), with two tawny servants. The names of these men were Barret, Sunderland, Knoles, Nash, Morgan, Fosdyke, and two more that I now forget. A desperate engagement ensued, wherein our eight mariners managed the matter with such bravery that by the help of Heaven they killed between thirty and forty of the French assailants, without losing one of their own little number; and they sank the French vessel which lay by their side, out of which they took twenty-seven prisoners, whereof some were wounded, and all were crying for quarter. In the fight, the French pennant being by the wind fastened about the topmast of the English vessel, it was torn off by the sinking of the French vessel and left pleasantly flying there. So they sailed into Barbados, where the assembly voted them one public acknowledgment of their courage and conduct in this brave action. And our history now gives them another.

1699

FROM ESSAYS TO DO GOOD

AN ESSAY FOR GENTLEMEN [1]

I HOPE we are now ready for proposals. We shall set ourselves to devise liberal things.

1 The selection, of which the text has been modernized and the title supplied by the editors, is from *Bonifacius, or Essays to do Good*(Boston,1710),144–51. It was of the *Essays to do Good* that Franklin wrote in 1784 to Mather's son, 'If I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to

Gentlemen, it is of old said, *Res est sacra miser.*[1] To relieve the necessities of the poor (*Non pavistis, occidistis*[2]): this is a thing acceptable to the compassionate God, who had given to you what he might have given to them; and has given it unto you that you might have the honor and pleasure to impart it unto them. And who has told you, 'He that has pity unto the poor, lends unto the Lord'? The more you consider the command and image of a glorious Christ in what you do this way, the more assurance you have that in the Day of God you shall joyfully hear him saying, 'You have done it unto me.' And the more humble, silent, reserved modesty you express, concealing even from the left hand what is done with the right, the more you are assured of a great reward in the heavenly world. Such liberal men, 'tis observed, are usually long-lived men. *Fructus liberat arborem.*[3] And at last they pass from this unto an everlasting life.

The name of a *Lady*! What is it in the original sense of the word? It was first *leafdian*, then *lafdy*: from *leaf*, or *laf*, which signifies 'a loaf of bread.' And from *d'ian*: 'to serve.' As much as to say, 'one who distributes bread.' The true lady is one who feeds the poor, and makes agreeable distributions to their indigencies. In the days of primitive Christianity, the ladies of the best quality would seek and find out the sick, and visit the hospitals, and see what help they wanted, and help them with an admirable alacrity. The mother and the sister of Nazianzen,—what a good report have they obtained from his pen for their unwearied bounties to the poor! Empresses themselves have stooped, and they never looked so great as in their stooping to relieve the miserable,

— 'And when they stooped, it was to do
Some good to others. Angels, they do so!'

When you keep your days of prayers, now is a special season for your alms, that your prayers may go up with your alms as a memorial before the Lord. Verily, there are prayers in alms. And, 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen?' saith the Lord. The note of the beggar among the Jews was, 'Deserve something by me.' Among us it may be, 'Obtain something by me.'

There is a city in the world where every house hath a box hanging on a chain, on which is written, 'Think on the poor'; and they commonly conclude no bargain, but more or less is put into the box. The deacons have the key, and, once a quarter, go round the city and take out the money. When that city was like to have been lost, one who was not the best man in the world yet could say that he was of opinion God would preserve that city from being destroyed, if it were only for the great charity they express to the poor. 'Tis the richest city of the richest country, for its bigness, that ever was in the world; a city that it is thought spends yearly in charitable uses more than all the revenues which the whole fine country of the Grand Duke of Tuscany brings in to the arbitrary master of it. You know, *Manus pauperum est Christi gazophylacium.*[4]

When you dispense your alms unto the poor, who know what it is to pray, you may oblige them to pray for you, by name, every day. 'Tis an excellent thing to have the blessing of them that have been ready to perish, thus coming upon you. Behold a surprising sense in which you may be praying always! You are so even while you are sleeping, if those whom you have so obliged are thus praying for you. And now, look for the accomplishment of that word: 'Blessed is he that considers the poor; the Lord will preserve him and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed on the earth.'

Very often your alms are dispersed among such as very much need admonitions of piety to accompany them. Can't you contrive to intermix a spiritual charity with your temporal? Perhaps you may discourse with them about the state of their souls, and obtain from them, which you now have a singular advantage to do, some declared resolutions to do what they ought to do. Or else you may convey little books unto them, which certainly they will prom-

that book.' *Essays to do Good* was often reprinted, and well into the nineteenth century thousands of copies, drastically recast to fit the literary style of the times, were distributed by organizations like the American Tract Society.

1 'A poor man is a sacred thing.'

2 'You did not fear; you slew!'

3 'The fruit relieves the tree.'

4 'The hand of the poor is the treasury-box of Christ.'

ise to read, when you thus bespeak their doing so.

Charity to the souls of men is undoubtedly the highest and the noblest charity, and of the greatest consequence. To furnish the poor with catechisms and Bibles is to do an unknown deal of good unto them. To publish and scatter books of piety, and to put into the hands of mankind such treatises of divinity as may have a tendency to make them wiser or better: no man knows what good he does in doing such things! It was excellently done of some good men, who, a little while ago were at the charge of printing thirty thousand of the *Alarm to the Unconverted*, written by Joseph Alleine, to be all given away unto such as would promise to read it. A man of no great estate has before now, with no great trouble, given away the best part of a thousand books of piety every year, for many years together. Who can tell but with the expense of less than a shilling, sir, you may convert a sinner from the error of his way, and save a soul from death. A worse doom than a *damnatio ad metalla* [1] is upon the soul who had rather hoard up his money than employ it on such a charity.

He that supports the office of the evangelical ministry, supports a good work, and performs one; yea, at the second hand, performs what is done by the skilful, faithful, painful minister,—and that is many a one! The encouraged servant of the Lord will do the more good for your assistances. 'Tis done for a glorious Christ, what you have done for him, and in consideration of the glorious Gospel preached by him. And you shall receive a prophet's reward! Luther said, *Si quid scholasticis confers, Deo ipsi contulisti.*[2] 'Tis more sensibly so when the scholars are become godly and useful preachers.

I have read this passage: 'It was for several years the practice of a worthy gentleman, in renewing his leases, instead of making it a condition that his tenants should keep a hawk or a dog for him, to oblige them that they should keep a bible in their houses for themselves, and should bring up their children to read and be catechized.' Landlords, 'tis worth your considering whether you may not in your leases insert some clauses that may serve the kingdom of God. You are His tenants in those very freeholds where you are landlords to other men! Oblige your tenants to worship God in their families.

To take a poor child, especially an orphan left in poverty, and bestow an education upon it, especially if it be a liberal education, is an admirable and a complicated charity; yea, it may draw on a long train of good, and interest you in all the good that shall be done by those whom you have educated.

Hence, also, what is done for schools, and for colleges, and for hospitals is done for a general good. The endowing of these, or the maintaining of them is at once to do good unto many.

But, alas! how much of the silver and gold in the world is buried in hands where 'tis little better than conveyed back to the mines from whence it came! Or employed unto as little purpose as what arrives at Hindustan, where a large part of the silver and gold of the world is, after a circulation, carried as unto a fatal center, and by the moguls lodged in subterraneous caves never to see the light any more. *Talia non facit bonæ fidei ac spei Christianus.*[3]

Sometimes there may be got ready for the press elaborate composures of great bulk and greater worth, by which the best interests of knowledge and virtue may be considerably served in the world (perhaps what may be called, as the *Octapla* of Origen was, *opus ecclesiæ* [4]). They lie like the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda; and there they are like to lie till God inspire some wealthy persons to subscribe nobly for their publication, and by this generous application of their wealth to bring them abroad. The names of such noble benefactors to mankind ought to live as long as the works themselves; where the works do any good, what these have done towards the publishing of them ought to be told for a memorial of them.[5]

1 'Sentence to the mines.'

2 'What you give to scholars, you give to God Himself.'

3 'A Christian of good faith and hope does not do such things.'

4 'A need of the church.'

5 Much seventeenth-century American publishing was subsidized in this way. The costs of printing the *Magnalia* were guaranteed by an English Puritan; and it was a bitter disappointment to Mather that his two most 'elaborate compositions,' the *Biblia Americana* and *The Angel of Bethesda*, were never published.

Yea, I will carry the matter further than so. The saying may seem to carry some affront in it: 'Idle gentlemen and idle beggars are the pests of the commonwealth.' But they that are offended must quarrel with the ashes of a bishop. 'Twas Dr. Sanderson's. Will you then think, sirs, of some honorable and agreeable employments? I will mention one. The Pythagoreans forbade men's eating their own brains, or keeping their good thoughts to themselves. 'Tis an observation of the incomparable Boyle, 'that as to religious books in general, it has been observed that those penned by laymen, and especially gentlemen, have (*ceteris paribus*[1]) been better entertained and more effectual than those of ecclesiastics.' We all know his own were so. It is no rare thing for men of quality to accomplish themselves in languages and sciences until they have been prodigies of literature. Their libraries, too, have been stupendous collections approaching towards Vatican or Bodleian dimensions. An English gentleman has been sometimes the most accomplished thing in the whole world! How many of these (besides a Leigh, a Wolseley, or a Polhill) have been benefactors to mankind by their incomparable writings? It were mightily to be wished that rich men and persons of an elevated condition would quality themselves for the use of the pen as well as of the sword; and by their pen deserve to have it said of them, they have written excellent things. An English person of quality, in a book of his entitled *A View of the Soul*, has a passage which I will address you with. Says he: 'It is certainly the highest dignity if not the greatest happiness human nature is capable of, here in the vale below, to have the soul so far enlightened as to become the mirror, or conduit, or conveyer of God's truth to others.' It is an ill motto for men of capacity: 'My understanding is unfruitful.' Gentlemen, consider what subjects may most properly and usefully fall under your cultivation. Your pen will stab atheism and wickedness with an efficacy beyond other men's. If out of your tribe there come those who handle the pen of the writer, they will do uncommon execution. One of them has ingeniously told you: 'Though I know some functions, yet I know no truths of religion like the shewbread (Matthew 12:4) only for the priests.'

I will address you with one proposal more. 'Tis that you would, as Ambrosius had his Origen, wisely choose a friend of shining abilities, of hearty affections, and of excellent piety: a minister of such a character, if it may be. And entreat him, yea, oblige him to study for you and suggest to you opportunities to do good. Make him, as I may say, your monitor. Let him advise you from time to time what good you may do. Cause him to see that he never gratifies you more than by his advise upon this intention. If a David have a seer to do such a good office for him, and be on the lookout for to find out what good he may do, what services may be done for the temple of God in the world!

There seems no need of adding any thing but this. When gentlemen occasionally come together, why should not their conversation be agreeable to their superior quality? Methinks they should reckon it beneath people of their quality to employ their conversation with one another on trifling impertinences; or at such a rate that if their discourse were taken down in shorthand by one behind the hangings, they would blush to have it repeated unto them. *Nihil sed nugæ, et risus, et verba proferuntur in ventum.*[2] Sirs, it becomes a gentleman to entertain his company with the finest thoughts on the finest themes! But certainly, there cannot be any subject so worthy of a gentleman as this: 'What good is there to be done in the world?' Were this noble subject oftener started in the conversation of gentlemen an incredible deal of good would be done.

I will conclude with saying, you must come forth to any public service whereof you may be capable when you are called unto it. Honest Jeans has a pungent passage: 'The world applauds the politic retiredness of those that bury their parts and gifts in an obscure privacy, though both from God and man they have a fair call to public employment. But the terrible censure of these men by Christ at the last day will discover them to be the arrantest fools that ever were upon the face of the earth. That fault of not employing one's parts for

1 'Other things being equal.'

2 'Only nonsense and laughter and words are spoken to the winds.'

the public, one calls 'a great sacrilege in the temple of the God of Nature.' It was a sad age wherein Tacitus tells, *Inertia fuit sapientia.*[1]

1710

FROM THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER

OF THE ANATOMY OF PLANTS [2]

THE contrivance of our most glorious Creator in the vegetables growing upon this globe cannot be wisely observed without admiration and astonishment.

We will single out some remarkables, and glorify our God. . . .

Every particular part of the plant has its astonishing uses. The roots give it a stability, and fetch the nourishment into it which lies in the earth ready for it. The fibres contain and convey the sap which carries up that nourishment. The plant has also larger vessels which entertain the proper and specific juice of it, and others to carry the air for its necessary respiration. The outer and inner bark defend it from annoyances and contribute to its augmentation. The leaves embrace and preserve the flower and fruit as they come to their explication. But the principal use of them, as Malpighi and Perault and Mariotte have observed, is to concoct and prepare the sap for the nourishment of the fruit and of the whole plant; not only that which ascends from the root, but also what they take in from without, from the dew and from the rain. For there is a regress of the sap in plants from above downwards; and this descendent juice is that which principally nourishes both fruit and plant, as has been clearly proved by the experiments of Signior Malpighi and Mr. Brotherton.

'How agreeable the shade of plants,' let every man say that sits under his own vine and under his own fig tree!

How charming the proportion and pulchritude of the leaves, the flowers, the fruits! He who confesses not must be, as Dr. More says, one sunk into a forlorn pitch of degeneracy and stupid as a beast.

Our Saviour says of the lilies (which some, not without reason, suppose to be tulips) that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. And it is observed by Spigelius, that the art of the most skilful painter cannot so mingle and temper his colors, as exactly to imitate or counterfeit the native ones of the flowers of vegetables.

Mr. Ray thinks it worthy a very particular observation that wheat, which is the best sort of grain and affords the wholesomest bread, is in a singular manner patient of both extremes, both heat and cold, and will grow to maturity as well in Scotland and in Denmark as in Egypt and Guinea and Madagascar. It scarce refuses any climate. And the exceeding fertility of it is by a pagan, Pliny, acknowledged as an instance of the divine bounty to man: *Quod eo maxime hominem alat,*[3] one bushel in a fit soil, he says, yielding one hundred and fifty. A German divine so far plays the philosopher on this occasion, as to propose it for a singularity in bread that *totum corpus sustentat adeo ut in unica buccella omnium membrorum totius externi corporis nutrimentum contineatur, illiusque vis per totum corpus sese diffundat.*[4] A friend of mine had thirty-six ears of rye growing from one grain, and on one stalk.

But of our Indian corn, one grain of corn will produce above a thousand. And of Guinea corn, one grain has been known to produce ten thousand.

The anatomy of plants, as it has been exhibited by the incomparable curiosity of Dr. Grew—what a vast field of wonders does it lead us into!

The most inimitable structure of the parts!

The particular canals, and most adapted ones, for the conveyance of the lymphatic and essential juices!

1 'Inactivity rated as wisdom.'

2 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *The Christian Philosopher* (London, 1721), 122, 125–27. In his introduction, Mather says: 'The essays now before us will demonstrate that philosophy is no enemy, but a mighty and wondrous incentive to religion. . . . The whole world is indeed a temple of God, built and filled by that Almighty Architect; and in this temple every such one, affecting himself with the occasions for it will speak of His glory. . . . Behold, a religion which will be found without controversy; a religion which will challenge all possible regards from the high as well as the low among the people. I will *résumé* the term: a philosophical religion. And yet how evangelical!' Ibid., 1–2.

3 'Because by it most of all He feeds man.'

4 'It sustains the whole body to such an extent that in a single bushel there is contained the nourishment of all the members of the whole outer body, and the force of it diffuses itself throughout the whole body.'

The air vessels in all their curious coilings!

The coverings which befriend them, a work unspeakably more curious in reality than in appearance!

The strange texture of the leaves, the angular or circular but always most orderly position of their fibres; the various foldings, with a duplicature, a multiplicature, the fore-roll, the back-roll, the tre-roll; the noble guard of the films interposed!

The flowers, their gaiety and fragrancy; the perianthium or empalement of them; their curious foldings in the calyx before their expansion, with a close couch or a concave couch, a single plait or a double plait, or a plait and couch together, or a roll, or a spire, or plait and spire together; and their luxuriant colors after their foliation, and the expanding of their petala!

The stamina, with their apices; and the stylus (called the 'attire' by Dr. Grew), which is found a sort of male sperm to impregnate and fructify the seed!

At last the whole rudiments and lineaments of the parent vegetable, surprisingly locked up in the little compass of the fruit or seed! [1]

Gentlemen of leisure, consult my illustrious Doctor, peruse his *Anatomy of Plants*, ponder his numberless discoveries; but all the while consider that rare person as inviting you to join with him in adoring the God of his father, and the God who has done these excellent things, which ought to be known in all the earth.

1721

FROM MANUDUCTIO AD MINISTERIUM

OF POETRY AND OF STYLE [2]

POETRY, whereof we have now even an antediluvian piece in our hands, has from the beginning been in such request that I must needs recommend unto you some acquaintance with it. Though some have had a soul so unmusical that they have decried all verse as being but a mere playing and fiddling upon words, all versifying as if it were more unnatural than if we should choose dancing instead of walking, and rhyme as if it were but a sort of Morisco dancing with bells, yet I cannot wish you a soul that shall be wholly unpoetical. An old Horace has left us an *Art of Poetry*, which you may do well to bestow a perusal on. And besides your lyric hours, I wish you may so far understand an epic poem that the beauties of an Homer and a Virgil may be discerned with you. As to the moral part of Homer, 'tis true, and let me not be counted a Zoilus for saying so, that by first exhibiting their gods as no better than rogues he set open the floodgates for a prodigious inundation of wickedness to break in upon the nations, and was one of the greatest apostles the devil ever had in the world. Among the rest that felt the ill impressions of this universal corrupter (as men of the best sentiments have called him), one was that overgrown robber of execrable memory whom we celebrate under the name of Alexander the Great, who by his continual admiring and studying of his *Iliad*, and by following that false model of heroic virtue set before him in his Achilles, became one of the worst of men, and at length inflated with the ridiculous pride of being himself a deity exposed himself to all the scorn that could belong unto a lunatic. And hence, notwithstanding the veneration which this idol has had, yet Plato banishes him out of

1 Mather, a member of The Royal Society, although deeply interested in the newest scientific discoveries, did not pretend to any general originality in the observations reported in *The Christian Philosopher*. In addition to its demonstration of Mather's acceptance of radically significant research, the book is stylistically interesting because of the manner in which Mather often turned the straightforward prose of his originals into an excited, psalm-like hymn of praise. For example, compare with the above: 'I might also survey here the curious anatomy and structure of their bodies, and show the admirable provision made for the conveyance of the lymphatic and essential juices, for communicating the air, as necessary to vegetables, as animal life: I might also speak of even the very covering they are provided with, because it is a curious work in reality, although less so in appearance; and much more therefore might I survey the neat variety and texture of their leaves, the admirable finery, gaiety, and fragrancy of their flowers. I might also inquire into the wonderful generation and make of the seed, and the great usefulness of their fruit; I might show that the rudiments and lineaments of the parent vegetable, though never so large and spacious, is locked up in the little compass of their fruit or seed, though some of those seeds are scarce visible to the naked eye.' Derham, *Physico-Theology* (London, 1714), 416–19. Derham's book was made up of his Boyle lectures for 1711–12, and was first published in 1713.

2 The selection is from the *Manuductio ad Ministerium. Directions for a Candidate of the Ministry* (Boston, 1726), 38–47.

a commonwealth, the welfare whereof he was concerned for. Nevertheless, custom or conscience obliges him to bear testimonies unto many points of morality. And it is especially observable that he commonly propounds prayer to Heaven as a most necessary preface unto all important enterprises; and when the action comes on too suddenly for a more extended supplication, he yet will not let it come on without an ejaculation; and he never speaks of any supplication but he brings in a gracious answer to it. I have seen a travesteering high-flyer, not much to our dishonor, scoff at Homer for this, as making his actors to be like those whom the English call Dissenters. But then, we are so much led into the knowledge of antiquities by reading of this poet, and into so many parts of the recondite learning, that notwithstanding some little nods in him, not a few acute pens besides the old bishop of Thessalonica's have got a reputation by regaling us with annotations upon him. Yea, though one can't but smile at the fancy of Crœse, who tries with much ostentation of erudition to show that Homer has all along tendered us in a disguise and fable the history of the Old Testament, yet many illustrations of the sacred scriptures I find are to be fetched from him; who indeed had probably read what was extant of them in his days; particularly, our Eighteenth Psalm is what he has evidently imitated. Virgil too, who so much lived upon him, as well as after him, is unaccountably mad upon his fate, which he makes to be he knows not what himself, but superior to gods as well as to men; and through his whole composures he so asserts the doctrine of this nonsensical power as is plainly inconsistent with all virtue. And what fatal mischief did Fascinator do to the Roman Empire when, by deifying one great emperor, he taught the successors to claim the adoration of gods while they were perpetrating the crimes of devils? I will not be a Carbilius upon him; nor will I say any thing, how little the married state owes unto one who writes as if he were a woman-hater; nor what his blunders are about his poor-spirited and inconsistent hero, for which many have taxed him. Nevertheless 'tis observed that the pagans had no rules of manners that were more laudable and regular than what are to be found in him. And some have said it is hardly possible seriously to read his works without being more disposed unto goodness, as well as being agreeably entertained. Be sure, had Virgil writ before Plato, his works had not been any of the books prohibited. But then, this poet also has abundance of rare antiquities for us, and such things as others besides a Servius have imagined that they have instructed and obliged mankind by employing all their days upon. Wherefore if his *Æneid*, which though it were once near twenty times as big as he has left it, yet he has left it unfinished, may not appear so valuable to you that you may think twenty-seven verses of the part that is the most finished in it worth one-and-twenty hundred pounds and odd money; yet his *Georgics*, which he put his last hand unto, will furnish you with many things far from despicable. But after all, when I said I was willing that the beauties of these two poets might become visible to your visive faculty in poetry, I did not mean that you should judge nothing to be admittable into an epic poem which is not authorized by their example; but I perfectly concur with one who is inexpressibly more capable to be a judge of such a matter than I can be, that it is a false critic who with a petulant air will insult reason itself if it presumes to oppose such authority.

I proceed now to say that if (under the guidance of a Vida) you try your young wings now and then to see what flights you can make, at least for an epigram, it may a little sharpen your sense and polish your style for more important performances; for this purpose you are now even overstocked with patterns, and—*poemata passim.*[1] You may, like Nazianzen, all your days make a little recreation of poetry in the midst of your more painful studies. Nevertheless, I cannot but advise you, 'Withhold thy throat from thirst.' Be not so set upon poetry as to be always poring on the passionate and measured pages. Let not what should be sauce rather than food for you engross all your application. Beware of a boundless and sickly appetite for the reading of the poems, which now the rickety nation swarms withal; and let not the Circean cup

1 'Poems, here and there.'

intoxicate you. But especially preserve the chastity of your soul from the dangers you may incur by a conversation with muses that are no better than harlots, among which are others besides Ovid's *Epistles*, which for their tendency to excite and foment impure flames and cast coals into your bosom deserve rather to be thrown into the fire than to be laid before the eye which a covenant should be made withal. Indeed, not merely for the impurities which they convey, but also on some other accounts, the powers of darkness have a library among us, whereof the poets have been the most numerous as well as the most venomous authors. Most of the modern plays, as well as the romances and novels and fictions, which are a sort of poems, do belong to the catalogue of this cursed library. The plays, I say, in which there are so many passages that have a tendency to overthrow all piety, that one whose name is Bedford has extracted near seven thousand instances of them from the plays chiefly of but five years preceding, and says awfully upon them, 'They are national sins, and therefore call for national plagues; and if God should enter into judgment, all the blood in the nation would not be able to atone for them.' How much do I wish that such pestilences, and indeed all those worse than Egyptian toads (the spawns of a Butler, and a Brown, and a Ward, and a company whose name is legion!) might never crawl into your chamber! The unclean spirits that come like frogs out of the mouth of the dragon, and of the beast; which go forth unto the young people of the earth, and expose them to be dealt withal as the enemies of God, in the battle of the Great Day of the Almighty. As for those wretched scribbles of madmen, my son, touch them not, taste them not, handle them not; thou wilt perish in the using of them. They are the dragons whose contagious breath peoples the dark retreats of death. To much better purpose will an excellent but an envied Blackmore feast you than those vile rhapsodies (of that *vinum demonium*)[1] which you will find always leave a taint upon your mind, and among other ill effects will sensibly indispose you to converse with the holy oracles of God your Saviour.

But there is what I may rather call a parenthesis than a digression, which this may be not altogether an improper place for the introducing of.

There has been a deal of ado about a style, so much that I must offer you my sentiments upon it. There is a way of writing wherein the author endeavors that the reader may have something to the purpose in every paragraph. There is not only a vigor sensible in every sentence, but the paragraph is embellished with profitable references even to something beyond what is directly spoken. Formal and painful quotations are not studied; yet all that could be learnt from them is insinuated. The writer pretends not unto reading, yet he could not have writ as he does if he had not read very much in his time; and his composures are not only a cloth of gold, but also stuck with as many jewels, as the gown of a Russian ambassador. This way of writing has been decried by many, and is at this day more than ever so, for the same reason that in the old story the grapes were decried, that they were not ripe. A lazy, ignorant, conceited set of authors would persuade the whole tribe to lay aside that way of writing, for the same reason that one would have persuaded his brethren to part with the encumbrance of their bushy tails. But however fashion and humor may prevail, they must not think that the club at their coffeehouse is all the world; but there will always be those who will in this case be governed by indisputable reason, and who will think that the real excellency of a book will never lie in saying of little; that the less one has for his money in a book, 'tis really the more valuable for it; and that the less one is instructed in a book, and the more of superfluous margin and superficial harangue, and the less of substantial matter one has in it, the more 'tis to be accounted of. And if a more massy way of writing be never so much disgusted at this day, a better gust will come on, as will some other thing, *quae iam cecidere*.[2] In the meantime, nothing appears to me more impertinent and ridiculous than the modern way (I cannot say rule, for they have none!) of criticizing. The blades that set up for critics, I know

1 'The wine of demons.'

2 The phrase is used to suggest the sentiment of: 'Many words that now have fallen out of use shall be reborn, and many which are now honored shall fall out of use if usage wishes.' Horace, *A.P.*, 71.

not who constituted or commissioned 'em —they appear to me for the most part as contemptible as they are a supercilious generation. For indeed no two of them have the same style; and they are as intolerably cross-grained and severe in their censures upon one another as they are upon the rest of mankind. But while each of them, conceitedly enough, sets up for the standard of perfection, we are entirely at a loss which fire to follow. Nor can you easily find any one thing wherein they agree for their style, except perhaps a perpetual care to give us jejune and empty pages, without such touches of erudition (to speak in the style of an ingenious traveller) as may make the discourses less tedious and more enriching to the mind of him that peruses them. There is much talk of a florid style obtaining among the pens that are most in vogue; but how often would it puzzle one, even with the best glasses, to find the flowers! And if they were to be chastized for it, it would be with as much of justice as Jerome was for being a Ciceronian. After all, every man will have his own style, which will distinguish him as much as his gait; and if you can attain to that which I have newly described, but always writing so as to give an easy conveyance unto your ideas, I would not have you by any scourging be driven out of your gait; but if you must confess a fault in it, make a confession like that of the lad unto his father while he was beating him for his versifying.

However, since every man will have his own style, I would pray that we may learn to treat one another with mutual civilities and condescensions, and handsomely indulge one another in this, as gentlemen do in other matters.

I wonder what ails people, that they can't let Cicero write in the style of Cicero, and Seneca write in the (much other!) style of Seneca, and own that both may please in their several ways.—But I will freely tell you; what has made me consider the humorists that set up for critics upon style as the most unregardable set of mortals in the world, is this! Far more illustrious critics than any of those to whom I am now bidding defiance, and no less men than your Erasmuses, and your Grotiuses, have taxed the Greek style of the New Testament with I know not what solecisms and barbarisms; and how many learned folks have obsequiously run away with the notion! Whereas 'tis an ignorant and an insolent whimsy which they have been guilty of. It may be (and particularly by an ingenious Blackwall, it has been) demonstrated, that the gentlemen are mistaken in every one of their pretended instances; all the unquestionable classics may be brought in to convince them of their mistakes. Those glorious oracles are as pure Greek as ever was written in the world; and so correct, so noble, so sublime is their style, that never anything under the cope of Heaven, but the Old Testament, has equalled it.

1726

BENJAMIN COLMAN

1673–1747

FROM PRACTICAL DISCOURSES ON THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

THE FOOLISH AND THE WISE [1]

TEXT: *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* I shall now proceed to raise some observations from the words. . . .

That sincerity and holy living is the highest wisdom of man, hypocrisy and irreligion the greatest folly. The foolish and the wise in the text are names for the hypocrite and the sincere believer, the wicked professor and the godly. So is the world and the church divided; there are but two sorts or denominations of men, many fools and a few wise; as there are but two places in the

1 The selection, of which the title has been supplied and the text modernized by the editors, is from the second edition of Colman, *Practical Discourses on the Parable of the Ten Virgins* (Boston, 1747), 61–69, 77–81. The first edition, of 1707, was printed in London.

judgment, the right hand and the left, and but two states to pass into, heaven or hell.

It lies upon me to justify this character, which is a point of great use as well as a main thing in the parable; wherein, as in a glass, every one may see his own face, and the figure he makes in the world. It is good for us to be often reproached by our consciences with the folly of our wicked ways; and shame is one passion by which the holy spirit of God comes at the consciences of men for their awakening.

How often is religion recommended to us under the name of wisdom in the Holy Scripture? Moses makes this his argument when he exhorts Israel to obedience: 'Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me; keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding.' The wise Solomon was an accomplished judge, and he thinks nothing worthy to be called wisdom save only piety: 'They are the wise in heart,' he says, 'that receive the commandments.' The Psalmist also is of the same judgment: 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom'; and the Apostle James speaks of the 'wisdom from above,' which is 'pure and full of good fruits.'

On the other hand, sin and irreligion is as often branded with the odious name of folly. The meek Moses so reproaches the crooked and perverse Israelites: 'O foolish people and unwise!' It is a proper confession for a sinner bewailing himself: 'I have played the fool!' It was of old a severe reproof of heinous wickedness: 'A committing folly in Israel,' or 'one of the fools in Israel.' 'The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight,' says David. Whom does he call the foolish? It follows: 'Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' Of all such it may be truly said: 'Their way is their folly,' and 'in the greatness of their folly they go astray.' Therefore thus also does the wisdom of God address to sinners: 'Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding.'

And now what need is there of any further proof? May we not acquiesce in the judgment of God, who is the only wise? He knows the fool and the transgressor. Yet to justify the wisdom of God in this matter, I will set myself a little to consider the nature and properties of wisdom and folly, and see how natural and applicable they are to religion and irreligion. It is an argument that has been often labored in, by very excellent hands, and I shall not be able to bring any new light to it.

Wisdom takes in both sapience and prudence. The first consists in the knowing whatsoever things are true and good, together with the best method of arriving at them. The last consists in a fixed disposition to choose the means of truth and happiness, and diligently to improve them. That is to say, wisdom consists first in the knowledge of our true good, then in discerning the means that most directly and infallibly lead to it, and lastly in a vigorous, constant use of those means for the attaining it. On the other hand, folly appears in the ignorance of our true good, or in the neglect of it when known, or in the taking wrong and ridiculous measures to attain it. As wisdom in God respects 'His ordering and disposing things to the best ends and purposes,' so wisdom in man is to choose best for himself and then to use the best means with utmost diligence to compass what we truly apprehend to be best for us. In short, wisdom is 'the minding our chief end', and laboring by all means to promote it. And by this one rule we may judge of the wisdom of a religious life, and the folly of a wicked one. I shall therefore speak a little to these three general and comprehensive properties of wisdom: the knowing our chief good, our discerning and choosing the true way and means of attaining it, and our diligence in using those means.

One property of wisdom is for men to know and understand their chief good and last end. As much ignorance as there is in us, so much folly will there be; for though knowledge may have a distinct consideration from wisdom, in as much as a man may know much better than he acts, yet wisdom cannot be without knowledge, especially not without the knowledge of those things that are of the greatest weight, consequence, and necessity, and of what does most immediately relate to the acquisition of these.

Now the Scripture gives us the knowledge of our chief interest, business in the world, and the end of our being. It teaches

us why we were born, and what we have to do; that there is a God to be served and glorified; that we have souls to save, a Savior to get an interest in, everlasting life to secure, and deliverance from eternal death. It informs us in the means and way unto all these things; how we may work out our own salvation, enjoy the love of God, and be happy for ever. 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee.' There is an infinite and eternal good to be enjoyed, there is pardon, grace, and mercy to be had; these are the one necessary and important interest of man, they are our blessedness and our life, the good part that can never be taken from us again. Now that which qualifies us for, entitles us unto, and will at last bring us to this blessedness, that is our wisdom.

But irreligion is folly for this very reason, because it proposes some mean insignificant end to itself, some little worldly interest, some paltry lust or other, some sensitive finite good, and too often also that only imaginary; and this trifle, this phantom, it places in the seat of God, mistaking it for the proper happiness of man. This is gross ignorance and folly, and is certain of ending in shame and disappointment; for it bounds all its cares within the narrow compass of this short life, a dying body, and a perishing world; as if there were no immortal part, nor unseen and spiritual world to be cared for.

It is true that all men are athirst and inquiring after good. Who will show us any? But the folly of the most by far appears in their choosing amiss, mistaking their proper end and happiness, or regardless of it. And it is true again that there is a bewitching appearance of good in the sins men court; but really they are the most formidable evils, only washed over to take with the weak eye of sense. Some court unnecessary good; this is folly, when but one thing is needful. To fawn after worldly honors, or scrape for riches, or hunt after vanishing pleasures, when indeed our life consisteth not in these things, not so much as our true felicity at present. This is folly, to center and terminate our cares upon unprofitable vanity. Men build on imagination: an airy idea they have of huge satisfactions to be found in sinful courses; but foolishly enough, as they are soon convinced. Yet, which is the strangest piece of madness of all, after many trials and experiments, their expectations rise again, and what a man has found a hundred times over to be shadows, dreams, delusions, and a lie, he courts anew with double desires. 'Sure every man walketh in a vain show, he disquieteth himself in vain.' Just reason had the Psalmist to ask, 'Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?' They are words of astonishment and carry in them both admiration and reprehension, which do with great pathos and elegance lament that ignorance which they charge. The charge is extensive and universal, but not at all beyond sober truth; all the workers of iniquity, and no knowledge! Every sinner, as such, utterly destitute of the least degree of knowledge! i.e., judging by their course and actions. Sin is a strong, astonishing proof of ignorance. For it is presumed that knowledge is given men for their good conduct and government; and it is human and candid to suppose they will use what they have, as much as he that hath eyes will open them to see his way. It is to incline to the mildest interpretation of sinful actions to impute it to ignorance rather than malice, to resolve it into want of knowledge rather than into mere venom and spite. And indeed it looks as if men had no notice of the being, power, and excellency of God. 'His ways are always grievous. God is not in all his thoughts,' and, one would think, was never heard of. 'He will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.' As senselessly as impudently he confounds good and evil, puts darkness for light and sweet for bitter. He seems wholly ignorant of the world he lives in, its emptiness, instability, deceits, vexations. Would he labor so for the wind? for froth? a shadow? a vapor? No, it's plain the man thinks it a substantial good, worth a great deal of toil and sweat, and that it will well recompense his cares and pains. As for worldly honors, how ignorantly do men think and speak of them? What nonsense is their magnificent talk of it! A gilded bubble, shattered by the breath! A brittle idol, which vain fools see broken to pieces while they are worshiping it! An imaginary happiness, for there may be real contempt in the heart while the knee cringes and the tongue flatters. And how

soon do the names of honor change into those of contempt, so that at this day slaves wear those once exalted names of Caesar, Pompey, Scipio, etc., which this vain changing world once reverenced and trembled at. Moreover, the fool sees not the poverty of earthly riches; he thinks his houses shall endure for ever, and that he has goods laid up for many years. And as to fleshly pleasures, he thinks they'll never cloy or sting again; he believes his lying appetite once more, after all its past cheats. It shows great ignorance to be so easily gulled, and credulous to all the flatteries of sense, so often found false and collusive. And then how ignorant seems the sensualist of the world's vexations and afflictions? Would he else expect rest and ease for his soul here? O sot! that is every minute at the mercy of ten thousand sorrows, and sees it not! Who but a fool would build on a merry life in this vale of tears? Or if there were a pretty solid happiness to be enjoyed, yet it were a sufficient mark of a fool to be insensible of the instability of these things! to bless his soul as if he had a propriety and could keep possession! or as if his glory could descend after him! Yet less does a wicked man seem to know any thing of the world to come, and the distant states that await the godly and the wicked. Does the man seem to know there is a heaven of glory and blessedness, but never to be enjoyed by a defiled soul? Think you the ambitious man ever heard of the dignity of the saints in glory, their thrones, and crowns, and robes of unclouded light? Knows he that there is a glorious court above, where the Eternal sits enthroned, and the Mediator at his right hand, surrounded by myriads of noble spirits, among whom the love and favors of this glorious King are distributed with an equal but munificent hand? How happy are they that live forever in His presence, and minister unto Him, beyond those of the wise and magnificent Solomon, whom queens themselves could envy! Would not the noble spirit court only this, knew he of any such transcendent and unfading honor attainable? Would he not tread on crowns and scepters, and spurn at palaces and thrones, if they would clog his way to a better and more lasting state of renown? The very prince on earth being but a vassal and worm before the most high God; and if he be compared to an angel of His, it is a flight in his honor, too high for his mortal state. Again, do you think the voluptuous man knows any thing of the joys of heaven, that never cloy or sour? Knew he the least part of the sweetness of the sense of God's love, and the unspeakable joys He can fill and satiate the soul with; knew he the ravished elders' transports while they sing the praises and victories of the Lamb, their hearts rising with their notes and keeping way with their voice; knew he the deliciousness of those eternal greens and living fountains of waters, where the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall lead and feed his redeemed; did the sinner know any thing of this place of pure and full and endless pleasure, would he, could he hanker any longer after the dreggy cheap pleasures of sin? No, no! He would despise, and hate, and loath them; his stomach would turn at them; his ennobled soul would not relish them; his past surfeits would soon end in antipathy. To give one instance more: does not the wretched worldling seem altogether ignorant of any durable incorruptible treasures to be had beyond the grave? of that better country, and that city of the great King, paved with his idolized gold? Would he not find a heart to open his rusty chest and empty his mouldy bags for this better substance; would he not give alms (which he'll as soon his heart's blood now) and provide himself bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, etc.? His own principles of gain would constrain him, did he understand and credit these things. Nor does the sinner seem ever to have heard any thing of a hell; for would self-love and fear suffer him to run headlong into that place of torments? He knows not that it is for his life! In a word, irreligion shows a man to be a stranger to himself, ignorant of his own frame and make, that he has a soul in the delight and perfection whereof his happiness consists. One would think the man esteemed himself only of the upper order of brutes, to graze with and perish like them. Our alliance to the spiritual world, the unseen vital substance, the glory of our nature, is forgotten. Nor can there be a more gross piece of ignorance than this, even in the first thing that we have to learn, *scil.*, the frame of our nature, and our relation to a

better world. Herein the sinner is ignorant of the grasp and reach of his own nature, which no finite good can ever satisfy, but it will be cheated after all, hungry, and calling for more. We may as well throw a shrimp to a whale, or hold a thimbleful of water to Behemoth to drink, whenas he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth; behold he drinketh up a river, he taketh it with his eyes. To conclude, sinners seem not to know or at all imagine that truth is the proper food and nourishment of a rational mind, and that husks are only for swine; that his soul cannot be nourished by the gross diet of sense, but is oppressed and starved in the luxurious surfeits of the body. Thus sinners publish their own ignorance of themselves and the world they live in, of their own mortality and immortality too; for they lay in as it were for the body's everlasting subsistence here below, but make no provision for the immortal spirit when it shall take its flight.

This is to think and speak scripturally: never to take that for knowledge which does not influence to agreeable practice; for words of sense in Scripture do imply affection and action: as, to know God signifies to acknowledge and regard Him and carry it to Him as God. 'I will give them a heart to know Me, and they shall return unto Me with their whole heart.' A life 'alienated from the life of God' argues a 'mind full of vanity,' and an 'understanding darkened.' But 'who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.' . . .

But I must needs add a particular thought or two on the folly of hypocrisy, that sin above others. The parable calls for this, because the foolish virgins here spoken of are such as however profess faith in Christ—they have their lamps and are looking out for the coming of the bridegroom, but they took no oil in their lamps, and therefore are called the foolish. So that it is the hypocrite or unsound professor that is the fool. And indeed, a heathen or profane infidel is not guilty of such glaring folly in his practices as a wicked professor is. His profession is every way absurd.

It is a monstrous absurdity, whether he believes what he professes, yea or no. The hypocrite will be angry if we call into question the truth of his faith; he says, 'I see'; therefore his folly remains obvious. For granting him his say, let him only hear his own strange account of himself, which is: he sees a hell open before him and runs into it; the glories of heaven and flies from them; the pointed sword of justice and he runs upon it. And if so, sense is gone as well as reason, and the dumb ass would reprove the madness, for the beast fled back from the threatening sword of the angel; but you more stupid force on the sword of vengeance. This is mere distraction and frenzy.

But if the hypocrite believes not a word of what he professes, then he is a trifling fool to make any profession at all. What a wanton, ludicrous animal is he! What a ridiculous figure does he make here at God's worship! How grave is his play! How serious a pageantry! How solemn a mock! For his worship is so to him if he do not believe, and worse if he do.

How mean and little is the hypocrite's aim, to impose on men and deceive them into a good opinion of him? None but a fool would take so much pains to do this, or value himself on it when it's done. 'Tis no such mighty feat to be prided in, only requiring a good measure of dishonesty and impudence. Nor is the praise of men to be much set by; 'tis a brittle uncertain thing, a flash in the air; to desire which praise but not deserve it is but like the silly dog in the fable, to lose the substance for the shadow. The hypocrite is a fool to toil so much for that which alone by itself is not worth the having: a name to live only for a day, doubly to be despised hereafter when found among the dead. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, shalt Thou despise their image. Nay, methinks hypocrites will look most despicable to the devils themselves, and to them who shall be damned for profaneness and infidelity.

If the hypocrite would impose upon God, his folly is yet more gross. If he say in his heart, 'How does God know? Thick darkness is a covering to Him that He seeth not.' And yet he acts as if he verily thought God were to be deluded with his false vizor of sanctity, and he could hide his heart from Him as well as from men; as if he thought

that the Lord seeth no further than man seeth, that is, to the outward appearance only. See with what disdain and indignation the holy Psalmist reflects on this infidel thought: 'Understand, ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will you be wise.' And yet if the hypocrite believes that God sees him through, that His eyes are as a flame of fire which pierce through all things and make the darkness light before Him and the night to shine as the day, he is then guilty of more daring folly than if he really thought the Deity blind and inobservant. It is madness to dissemble when God can't be mocked. Blind man! cleanse first the inward thoughts which are all naked and open before that God with whom we have to do. Else we act like silly children that shut their own eyes, and then think that nobody sees them neither.

The hypocrite consults his present peace as little as his future safety; and he that does neither is certainly a fool. It is very obvious that he consults not his future safety, since his Judge is omniscient, and has spoken of hypocrisy as a most aggravated crime, and of the terrible punishment that awaits it in the world to come. He highly resents treachery in professors, which He ranks among and compares with the foulest abominations. The 'portion of hypocrites' is spoken of as the worst part of hell. The abuse of special privileges will increase our future misery; 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell.' Such pay very dear for their folly, seek for themselves the hottest place in hell, and cast oil into the flames they are ever to fry in.

But you would certainly think now that men made some present advantage of hypocrisy, or they must be fools indeed, if it be their present misery too. Which yet I dare to say of it, for what peace can conscience have in it! Can it possibly refrain from reproaching the man, and telling him of his portion to come? There is indeed a delusion sometimes which is sweet while it lasts, when men think themselves to be something when they are nothing; but most ill professors know themselves to be nothing, and so have not so much as the sweets of a delusive dream for their pains. Indeed sincerity rejoices in the testimony of conscience; but hypocrisy has its lash, as an infamous criminal deserves. It cannot but loath itself; and every day the man condemns himself, remorse and guilty fears torment him, and his sweets are bitter in his mouth. This is the folly of the hypocrite: he takes the direct way to perpetual discontents, fears, and the loathings of his own mind. He loses all comforts of life, throws away peace, that invaluable jewel, and has a kind of hell in his conscience.

And lastly, the hypocrite is a fool, for at the best he only proposes to himself to repent hereafter of what he does. Which is but a sorrowful work at last, and yet the best that he can hope for. That is, he courts one hour's sin now, though it cost him an age of sorrow if he live to be old. This is indeed better than an eternity of it, but nevertheless a dear price for a minute's pleasure. Would any man take a bee into his mouth, and be content it should leave its sting in his tongue, for a drop of honey in its body? Much less would a wise man undergo the pains of repentance for all the pleasures of sin. Grant it then that wickedness be sweet in the mouth, yet 'tis like to prove the 'gall of asps within.' Suppose the poison be vomited up, and we escape with our life, yet not without dreadful convulsions and dying sickness. But of this piece of folly more may be said in a more proper place. Meanwhile let me only add this general account of a hypocrite, and I will do no more to paint his egregious folly.

He pretends to believe that God is, and to worship Him, and to live to Him. He professes to think religion a reality, and to show forth the life and power of it; he says that God ought to be feared for His power and righteousness, loved for His beauty and goodness, praised for His benefits, trusted in for His truth and faithfulness, imitated for His holiness, and obeyed for His dominion and authority; but all this while he no more regards God in his heart than if He were only a name or a stupid stock. He is the grossest piece of self-contradiction in the whole world. He knows the judgment of God and yet incurs it; believes the promises and yet slights them; puts on a demure look as from a reverential awe of God's presence, and yet laughs at Him in his heart; disdains Him when in secret; says of Him, 'He is not,' or 'He cannot

see,' or 'He cannot strike'; takes off his mask when none but God can see, and puts it on again when he goes out; surfeits jollily on the dainties at home, which he has stolen by long prayers abroad; and uses the name of Christ only as the silversmith did Diana's, to maintain his craft. His life is farce and comedy, but will have a tragical end. The play won't last always; the last act will be sad and doleful, when God will terribly revenge the sport men make of holy things.

1707

SAMUEL SEWALL

1652–1730

FROM DIARY OF SAMUEL SEWALL

THE COURTSHIP OF MADAM WINTHROP [1]

SEPTEMBER 30 [1720]. Mr. Colman's lecture. Daughter Sewall acquaints Madam Winthrop that if she pleased to be within at 3 P.M., I would wait on her. She answered she would be at home.

October 1. Saturday. I dine at Mr. Stoddard's; from thence I went to Madam Winthrop's just at 3. Spake to her, saying my loving wife died so soon and suddenly, 'twas hardly convenient for me to think of marrying again; however, I came to this resolution, that I would not make my court to any person without first consulting with her. Had a pleasant discourse about 7 (seven) single persons sitting in the foreseat September 29th, viz., Madam Rebecca Dudley, Katherine Winthrop, Bridget Usher, Deliverance Legg, Rebecca Lloyd, Lydia Colman, Elizabeth Bellingham. She propounded one and another for me; but none would do; said Mrs. Lloyd was about her age.

October 3. 2. Waited on Madam Winthrop again; 'twas a little while before she came in. Her daughter Noyes being there alone with me, I said I hoped my waiting on her mother would not be disagreeable to her. She answered she should not be against that that might be for her comfort. I saluted her, and told her I perceived I must shortly wish her a good time (her mother had told me she was with child and within a month or two of her time). By and by in came Mr. Airs, chaplain of the Castle, and hanged up his hat, which I was a little startled at, it seeming as if he was to lodge there. At last Madam Winthrop came too. After a considerable time I went up to her and said if it might not be inconvenient, I desired to speak with her. She assented, and spake of going into another room; but Mr. Airs and Mrs. Noyes presently rose up and went out, leaving us there alone. Then I ushered in discourse from the names in the fore-seat; at last I prayed that Katherine [Mrs. Winthrop] might be the person assigned for me. She instantly took it up in the way of denial, as if she had catched at an opportunity to do it, saying she could not do it before she was asked. Said that was her mind unless she should change it, which she believed she should not; could not leave her children. I expressed my sorrow that she should do it so speedily, prayed her consideration, and asked her when I should wait on her again. She setting no time, I mentioned that day sennight. Gave her Mr. Willard's *Fountain*, opened with the little print and verses, saying I hoped if we did well read that book, we should meet together hereafter, if we did not now. She took the book and put it in her pocket. Took leave.

October 5. Midweek. I dined with the court; from thence went and visited Cousin Jonathan's wife, lying in with her little Betty. Gave the nurse 2s. Although I had appointed to wait upon her, Madam Winthrop, next Monday, yet I went from my cousin Sewall's thither about 3 P.M. The nurse told me Madam dined abroad at her daughter Noyes's, they were to go out together. I asked for the maid, who was not within. Gave Katee a penny and a kiss, and came away. Accompanied my son and daughter Cooper in their remove to their new house. Went to tell Joseph, and Mr. Belcher saw me by the South Meeting-

1 The selection, of which the title has been supplied and the text modernized by the editors, is from *Diary of Samuel Sewall*, V *Coll.Mass.Hist.Soc.*, VII, 262–75.

house though 'twas duskish, and said I had been at house-warming (he had been at our house). Invited me to drink a glass of wine at his house at 7, and eat part of the pasty provided for the commissioners' voyage to Casco Bay. His Excellency, Madam Belcher, S.S., Col. Fitch, Mr. D. Oliver, Mr. Anthony Stoddard, Mr. Welsteed, Mr. White, Mr. Belcher sat down. At coming home gave us of the cake and gingerbread to carry away. 'Twas about ten before we got home; Mr. Oliver and I waited on the Governor to his gate; and then Mr. Oliver would wait on me home.

October 6th. Lecture day. Mr. Cutler, president of the Connecticut college, preached in Dr. C. Mather's turn. He made an excellent discourse from Heb.11:14: 'For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.' Brother Odlin, Son Sewall of Brookline, and Mary Hirst dine with me. I asked Mary of Madam Lord, Mr. Oliver and wife, and bid her present my service to them. October 6th. A little after 6 P.M. I went to Madam Winthrop's. She was not within. I gave Sarah Chickering the maid 2s, Juno, who brought in wood, 1s. Afterward the nurse came in; I gave her 18d, having no other small bill. After a while Dr. Noyes came in with his mother, and quickly after his wife came in; they sat talking, I think, till eight o'clock. I said I feared I might be some interruption to their business; Dr. Noyes replied pleasantly he feared they might be an interruption to me, and went away. Madam seemed to harp upon the same string. Must take care of her children; could not leave that house and neighborhood where she had dwelt so long. I told her she might do her children as much or more good by bestowing what she laid out in housekeeping, upon them. Said her son would be of age the 7th of August. I said it might be inconvenient for her to dwell with her daughter-in-law, who must be mistress of the house. I gave her a piece of Mr. Belcher's cake and gingerbread wrapped up in a clean sheet of paper; told her of her father's kindness to me when treasurer, and I constable. My daughter Judith was gone from me and I was more lonesome—might help to forward one another in our journey to Canaan. Mr. Eyre came within the door; I saluted him, asked how Mr. Clark did, and he went away. I took leave about 9 o'clock. I told [her] I came now to refresh her memory as to Monday night; said she had not forgot it. In discourse with her, I asked leave to speak with her sister; I meant to gain Madam Mico's favor to persuade her sister. She seemed surprised and displeased, and said she was in the same condition.

October 7th. Friday. I gather the quinces. Gave Mr. Jonathan Simson and Mrs. Fifield, each of them, a funeral sermon.

Cousin Abiel Hobart comes to us. Mr. Short, having received his £40, returns home.

Mr. Cooper visits me, thanks me for my cheese.

October 8. Mr. Short returns not till this day.

October 9. Mr. Sewall preaches very well from Acts 2:24 of the resurrection of Christ. One woman taken into church; one child baptized.

October 10th. Examine Mr. Briggs his account; said they could not find Mr. Whittemore. Mr. Willard offered to answer for him. But I showed the necessity of his being here; and appointed Wednesday, 10 o'clock; and ordered notice to be given to the auditors, to pray their assistance.

In the evening I visited Madam Winthrop, who treated me with a great deal of courtesy; wine, marmalade. I gave her a *News-Letter* about the Thanksgiving; proposals, for sake of the verses for David Jeffries. She tells me Dr. Increase Mather visited her this day, in Mr. Hutchinson's coach.

It seems Dr. Cotton Mather's chimney fell afire yesterday, so as to interrupt the Assembly A.M. Mr. Cutler ceased preaching ¼ of an hour.

October 11th. I writ a few lines to Madam Winthrop to this purpose: 'Madam, These wait on you with Mr. Mayhew's sermon, and account of the state of the Indians on Martha's Vineyard. I thank you for your unmerited favors of yesterday; and hope to have the happiness of waiting on you tomorrow before eight o'clock after noon. I pray God to keep you, and give you a joyful entrance upon the two hundred and twenty-ninth year of Christopher Columbus his discovery; and take leave, who am, Madam, your humble servant. S.S.'

Sent this by Deacon Green, who delivered it to Sarah Chickering, her mistress not being at home.

October 12. Give Mr. Whittemore and Willard their oath to Dr. Mather's inventory. Visit Mr. Cooper. Go to the meeting at the Widow Emon's; Mr. Manly prayed, I read half Mr. Henry's 12th chapter of *The Lord's Supper*. Sung 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 12th verses of the 30th Psalm. Brother Franklin concluded with prayer. At Madam Winthrop's steps I took leave of Capt. Hill, etc.

Mrs. Anne Cotton came to door ('twas before 8), said Madam Winthrop was within, directed me into the little room, where she was full of work behind a stand; Mrs. Cotton came in and stood. Madam Winthrop pointed to her to set me a chair. Madam Winthrop's countenance was much changed from what 'twas on Monday, looked dark and lowering. At last the work (black stuff or silk) was taken away; I got my chair in place, had some converse, but very cold and indifferent to what 'twas before. Asked her to acquit me of rudeness if I drew off her glove. Inquiring the reason, I told her 'twas great odds between handling a dead goat and a living lady. Got it off. I told her I had one petition to ask of her—that was that she would take off the negative she laid on me the third of October; she readily answered she could not, and enlarged upon it; she told me of it so soon as she could; could not leave her house, children, neighbors, business. I told her she might do some good to help and support me. Mentioning Mrs. Gookin (Nath.), the Widow Weld was spoken of; said I had visited Mrs. Denison. I told her, 'Yes!' Afterward I said if after a first and second vagary she would accept of me returning, her victorious kindness and good will would be very obliging. She thanked me for my book (Mr. Mayhew's sermon), but said not a word of the letter. When she insisted on the negative, I prayed there might be no more thunder and lightning, I should not sleep all night. I gave her Dr. Preston, *The Church's Marriage and the Church's Carriage*, which cost me 6s at the sale. The door standing open, Mr. Airs came in, hung up his hat, and sat down. After awhile, Madam Winthrop moving, he went out. John Eyre looked in; I said, 'How do ye?' or, 'Your servant, Mr. Eyre,' but heard no word from him. Sarah filled a glass of wine; she drank to me, I to her; she sent Juno home with me with a good lantern; I gave her 6d and bid her thank her mistress. In some of our discourse, I told her I had rather go to the stone house adjoining to her than to come to her against her mind. Told her the reason why I came every other night was lest I should drink too deep draughts of pleasure. She had talked of canary; her kisses were to me better than the best canary. Explained the expression concerning Columbus.

October 13. I tell my son and daughter Sewall that the weather was not so fair as I apprehended. Mr. Sewall preached very well in Mr. Wadsworth's turn. Mr. Williams of Weston and Mr. Odlin dine with us. Text was the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

Friday, October 14. Made a dinner for my son and daughter Cooper. At table in the best room were Sister Stoddard, Sister Cooper, His Excellency, Mrs. Hannah Cooper, Brother Stoddard, S.S., Mr. Joseph Sewall, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Sewall of Brookline, Mrs. Rand, Mrs. Gerrish, daughter of Brookline. Mr. Gerrish, Clark, and Rand sat at a side table.

October 15. Sent my son Cooper, Pareus, 3 books.

October 15. I dine on fish and oil at Mr. Stoddard's. Capt. Hill wished me joy of my proceedings, i.e., with M—. Winthrop; Sister Cooper applauded it, spake of visiting her; I said her complaisance of her visit would be obliging to me.

October 16. Lord's Day. I upbraided myself that could be so solicitous about earthly things, and so cold and indifferent as to the love of Christ, who is altogether lovely. Mr. Prince administered. Dined at my son's with Mr. Cutler and Mr. Shurtleff. Mr. Cutler preaches in the afternoon from Ezek.16:30: 'How weak is thy heart.' Son reads the order for the Thanksgiving.

October 17. Monday. Give Mr. Dan[l] Willard and Mr. Pelatiah Whittemore their oaths to their accounts, and Mr. John Briggs to his, as they are attorneys to Dr. Cotton Mather, administrator to the estate of Nathan Howell, deceased. In the evening I visited Madam Winthrop, who

treated me courteously, but not in clean linen as sometimes. She said she did not know whether I would come again or no. I asked her how she could so impute inconstancy to me. (I had not visited her since Wednesday night, being unable to get over the indisposition received by the treatment received that night, and *I must* in it seemed to sound like a made piece of formality.) Gave her this day's *Gazette*. Heard David Jeffries say the Lord's Prayer, and some other portions of the Scriptures. He came to the door and asked me to go into chamber where his grandmother was tending little Katee, to whom she had given physic; but I chose to sit below. Dr. Noyes and his wife came in and sat a considerable time; had been visiting Son and Daughter Cooper. Juno came home with me.

October 18. Visited Madam Mico, who came to me in a splendid dress. I said, 'It may be you have heard of my visiting Madam Winthrop,' her sister. She answered, her sister had told her of it. I asked her good will in the affair. She answered, if her sister were for it, she should not hinder it. I gave her Mr. Homes's sermon. She gave me a glass of canary, entertained me with good discourse and a respectful remembrance of my first wife. I took leave.

October 19. Midweek. Visited Madam Winthrop; Sarah told me she was at Mr. Walley's, would not come home till late. I gave her Hannah 3 oranges with her duty, not knowing whether I should find her or no. Was ready to go home; but said if I knew she was there, I would go thither. Sarah seemed to speak with pretty good courage she would be there. I went and found her there, with Mr. Walley and his wife in the little room below. At 7 o'clock I mentioned going home; at 8 I put on my coat and quickly waited on her home. She found occasion to speak loud to the servant, as if she had a mind to be known. Was courteous to me, but took occasion to speak pretty earnestly about my keeping a coach. I said 'twould cost £100 per annum; she said 'twould cost but £40. Spake much against John Winthrop, his false-heartedness. Mr. Eyre came in and sat a while; I offered him Dr. Incr. Mather's *Sermons*, whereof Mr. Appleton's ordination sermon was one; said he had them already. I said I would give him another. Exit. Came away somewhat late.

October 20. Mr. Colman preaches from Luke 15: 10: 'Joy among the angels'; made an excellent discourse.

At council, Col. Townsend spake to me of my hood: should get a wig. I said 'twas my chief ornament; I wore it for sake of the day. Brother Odlin, and Sam, Mary, and Jane Hirst dine with us. Promised to wait on the Governor about 7. Madam Winthrop not being at lecture, I went thither first; found her very serene with her daughter Noyes, Mrs. Dering, and the Widow Shipreeve, sitting at a little table, she in her armed chair. She drank to me, and I to Mrs. Noyes. After a while prayed the favor to speak with her. She took one of the candles and went into the best room, closed the shutters, sat down upon the couch. She told me Madam Usher had been there, and said the coach must be set on wheels, and not by rusting. She spake something of my needing a wig. Asked me what her sister said to me. I told her she said if her sister were for it, she would not hinder it. But I told her she did not say she would be glad to have me for her brother. Said, 'I shall keep you in the cold'; and asked her if she would be within tomorrow night, for we had had but a running feat. She said she could not tell whether she should or no. I took leave. As were drinking at the Governor's, he said in England the ladies minded little more than that they might have money, and coaches to ride in. I said, 'And New England brooks its name.' At which Mr. Dudley smiled. Governor said they were not quite so bad here.

October 21. Friday. My son the minister came to me P.M. by appointment and we pray one for another in the old chamber, more especially respecting my courtship. About 6 o'clock I go to Madam Winthrop's; Sarah told me her mistress was gone out, but did not tell me whither she went. She presently ordered me a fire; so I went in, having Dr. Sibb's *Bowels* with me to read. I read the two first sermons; still nobody came in. At last about 9 o'clock Mr. John Eyre came in; I took the opportunity to say to him as I had done to Mrs. Noyes before, that I hoped my visiting his mother would not be disagreeable to him; he answered me with much respect. When 'twas after

9 o'clock he of himself said he would go and call her, she was but at one of his brothers'; a while after I heard Madam Winthrop's voice, inquiring something about John. After a good while and clapping the garden door twice or thrice, she came in. I mentioned something of the lateness; she bantered me, and said I was later. She received me courteously. I asked when our proceedings should be made public; she said they were like to be no more public than they were already. Offered me no wine that I remember. I rose up at 11 o'clock to come away, saying I would put on my coat; she offered not to help me. I prayed her that Juno might light me home; she opened the shutter and said 'twas pretty light abroad, Juno was weary and gone to bed. So I came home by star light as well as I could. At my first coming in, I gave Sarah five shillings. I writ Mr. Eyre his name in his book with the date October 21, 1720. It cost me 8s. *Jehovah jireh!* [1] Madam told me she had visited M. Mico, Wendell, and William Clark of the South [Church].

October 22. Daughter Cooper visited me before my going out of town, stayed till about sunset. I brought her, going near as far as the Orange-tree. Coming back, near Leg's Corner, little David Jeffries saw me, and looking upon me very lovingly, asked me if I was going to see his grandmother. I said, 'Not to-night.' Gave him a penny and bid him present my service to his grandmother.

October 24. I went in the hackney coach through the Common, stopped at Madam Winthrop's (had told her I would take my departure from thence). Sarah came to the door with Katee in her arms; but I did not think to take notice of the child. Called her mistress. I told her, being encouraged by David Jeffries' loving eyes and sweet words, I was come to inquire whether she could find in her heart to leave that house and neighborhood, and go and dwell with me at the South End; I think she said softly, 'Not yet.' I told her it did not lie in my lands to keep a coach. If I should, I should be in danger to be brought to keep company with her neighbor Brooker (he was a little before sent to prison for debt). Told her I had an antipathy against those who would pretend to give themselves, but nothing of their estate. I would a proportion of my estate with myself. And I supposed she would do so. As to a periwig, my best and greatest Friend, I could not possibly have a greater, began to find me with hair before I was born, and had continued to do so ever since; and I could not find in my heart to go to another. She commended the book I gave her, Dr. Preston, *The Church Marriage*; quoted him saying 'twas inconvenient keeping out of a fashion commonly used. I said the time and tide did circumscribe my visit. She gave me a dram of black-cherry brandy, and gave me a lump of the sugar that was in it. She wished me a good journey. I prayed God to keep her, and came away. Had a very pleasant journey to Salem.

October 25. Sent a letter of it to my son by Wakefield, who delivered it not till Wednesday; so he visited her not till Friday P.M. and then presented my service to her.

October 27. Kept the Thanksgiving at Salem. Mr. Fisk preached very well from Ephes.5:20: 'Giving thanks always.' Dine at Col. Brown's.

October 29. Hold court in the morn. Had a pleasant journey home a little before sunset.

October 30. Mrs. Phillips and her son sit in their pew.

October 31. She proves her husband's will. At night I visited Madam Winthrop about 6 P.M. They told me she was gone to Madam Mico's. I went thither and found she was gone; so returned to her house, read the epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians in Mr. Eyre's Latin Bible. After the clock struck 8, I began to read the 103 Psalm. Mr. Wendell came in from his warehouse. Asked me if I were alone. Spake very kindly to me, offered me to call Madam Winthrop. I told him she would be angry, had been at Mrs. Mico's; he helped me on with my coat, and I came home; left the *Gazette* in the Bible, which told Sarah of, bid her present my service to Mrs. Winthrop, and tell her I had been to wait on her if she had been at home.

November 1. I was so taken up that I could not go if I would.

November 2. Midweek. Went again, and

1 'The Lord will provide.'

found Mrs. Alden there, who quickly went out. Gave her about ½ pound of sugar almonds, cost 3ˢ per £. Carried them on Monday. She seemed pleased with them, asked what they cost. Spake of giving her a hundred pounds per annum if I died before her. Asked her what sum she would give me, if she should die first. Said I would give her time to consider of it. She said she heard as if I had given all to my children by deeds of gift. I told her 'twas a mistake, Point Judith was mine, etc. That in England, I owned, my father's desire was that it should go to my eldest son; 'twas £20 per annum; she thought 'twas forty. I think when I seemed to excuse pressing this, she seemed to think 'twas best to speak of it; a long winter was coming on. Gave me a glass or two of canary.

November 4th. Friday. Went again about 7 o'clock; found there Mr. John Walley and his wife; sat discoursing pleasantly. I showed them Isaac Moses's [an Indian] writing. Madam W. served comfits to us. After a while a table was spread, and supper was set. I urged Mr. Walley to crave a blessing; but he put it upon me. About 9 they went away. I asked Madam what fashioned necklace I should present her with; she said, 'None at all.' I asked her whereabout we left off last time, mentioned what I had offered to give her, asked her what she would give me; she said she could not change her condition, she had said so from the beginning, could not be so far from her children, the lecture. Quoted the Apostle Paul affirming that a single life was better than a married. I answered that was for the present distress. Said she had not pleasure in things of that nature as formerly. I said, 'You are the fitter to make me a wife.' If she held in that mind, I must go home and bewail my rashness in making more haste than good speed. However, considering the supper, I desired her to be within next Monday night, if we lived so long. Assented. She charged me with saying that she must put away Juno if she came to me; I utterly denied it, it never came in my heart; yet she insisted upon it, saying it came in upon discourse about the Indian woman that obtained her freedom this court. About 10 I said I would not disturb the good orders of her house, and came away. She not seeming pleased with my coming away. Spake to her about David Jeffries; had not seen him.

Monday, November 7th. My son prayed in the old chamber. Our time had been taken up by Son and Daughter Cooper's visit, so that I only read the 130th and 143rd Psalm. 'Twas on the account of my courtship. I went to Mad. Winthrop; found her rocking her little Katee in the cradle. I excused my coming so late (near eight). She set me an armed chair and cushion; and so the cradle was between her armed chair and mine. Gave her the remnant of my almonds; she did not eat of them as before, but laid them away; I said I came to enquire whether she had altered her mind since Friday, or remained of the same mind still. She said, 'Thereabouts.' I told her I loved her, and was so fond as to think that she loved me. She said [she] had a great respect for me. I told her I had made her an offer without asking any advice; she had so many to advise with that 'twas a hindrance. The fire was come to one short brand besides the block, which brand was set up in end; at last it fell to pieces, and no recruit was made. She gave me a glass of wine. I think I repeated again that I would go home and bewail my rashness in making more haste than good speed. I would endeavor to contain myself, and not go on to solicit her to do that which she could not consent to. Took leave of her. As came down the steps she bid me have a care. Treated me courteously. Told her she had entered the 4th year of her widowhood. I had given her the *News-Letter* before. I did not bid her draw off her glove as sometime I had done. Her dress was not so clean as sometime it had been. *Jehovah jireh!*

Midweek, November 9th. Dine at Brother Stoddard's; were so kind as to inquire of me if they should invite Madam Winthrop; I answered 'No.'

COPY OF A LETTER TO MRS. MARY GIBBS, WIDOW, AT NEWTOWN, JANUARY 12th 1722.[1]

MADAM, your removal out of town and the severity of the winter are the reason of

1 Fourteen months later, Sewall's matrimonial enthusiasm revived, and he included in his diary the letter of proposal printed above. This time he was successful Ibid.,VII,299.

my making you this epistolary visit. In times past (as I remember) you were minded that I should marry you, by giving you to your desirable bridegroom. Some sense of this intended respect abides with me still, and puts me upon inquiring whether you be willing that I should marry you now, by becoming your husband; aged. and feeble, and exhausted as I am, your favorable answer to this inquiry, in a few lines, the candor of it will much oblige, Madam, your humble servant,

Madam Gibbs. S.S.

1878

SARAH KEMBLE KNIGHT

1666–1727

FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAM KNIGHT

TO NEW LONDON [1]

TUESDAY, October the third, about 8 in the morning, I with the post proceeded forward without observing anything remarkable; and about two, afternoon, arrived at the post's second stage, where the western post met him and exchanged letters. Here, having called for something to eat, the woman brought in a twisted thing like a cable, but something whiter; and laying it on the board, tugged for life to bring it into a capacity to spread; which having with great pains accomplished, she served in a dish of pork and cabbage. I suppose the remains of dinner. The sauce was of a deep purple, which I thought was boiled in her dye kettle; the bread was Indian, and everything on the table service agreeable to these. I, being hungry, got a little down; but my stomach was soon cloyed, and what cabbage I swallowed served me for a cud the whole day after.

Having here discharged the ordinary for self and guide (as I understood was the custom), about three, afternoon, went on with my third guide, who rode very hard; and having crossed Providence Ferry, we come to a river which they generally ride through. But I dare not venture; so the post got a lad and canoe to carry me to t'other side, and he rid through and led my horse. The canoe was very small and shallow, so that when we were in she seemed ready to take in water, which greatly terrified me, and caused me to be very circumspect, sitting with my hands fast on each side, my eyes steady, not daring so much as to lodge my tongue a hair's breadth more on one side of my mouth than t'other, nor so much as think on Lot's wife, for a wry thought would have overset our wherry; but was soon put out of this pain, by feeling the canoe on shore, which I as soon almost saluted with my feet; and rewarding my sculler, again mounted and made the best of our way forwards. The road here was very even and the day pleasant, it being now near sunset. But the post told me we had near 14 miles to ride to the next stage, where we were to lodge. I asked him of the rest of the road, foreseeing we must travel in the night. He told me there was a bad river we were to ride through, which was so very fierce a horse could sometimes hardly stem it; but it was but narrow, and we should soon be over. I cannot express the concern of mind this relation set me in; no thoughts but those of the dangerous river could entertain my imagination, and they were as formidable as various, still tormenting me with blackest ideas of my approaching fate—sometimes seeing myself drowning, otherwhiles drowned, and at the best like a holy sister just come out of a spiritual bath in dripping garments.

Now was the glorious luminary with his swift coursers arrived at his stage, leaving poor me with the rest of this part of the lower world in darkness, with which we were soon surrounded. The only glimmering we now had was from the spangled skies, whose imperfect reflections rendered every object formidable. Each lifeless trunk, with its shattered limbs, appeared an armed enemy; and every little stump like a ravenous devourer. Nor could I so much as dis-

1 The selection, of which the title has been given and the text modernized by the editors, is from *The Journal of Madam Knight* (N.Y., 1935), 8–29.

cern my guide, when at any distance, which added to the terror.

Thus, absolutely lost in thought, and dying with the very thoughts of drowning, I came up with the post, whom I did not see till even with his horse; he told me he stopped for me, and we rode on very deliberately a few paces, when we entered a thicket of trees and shrubs, and I perceived by the horse's going we were on the descent of a hill, which, as we came nearer the bottom, 'twas totally dark with the trees that surrounded it. But I knew by the going of the horse we had entered the water, which my guide told me was the hazardous river he had told me of; and he, riding up close to my side, bid me not fear—we should be over immediately. I now rallied all the courage I was mistress of, knowing that I must either venture my fate of drowning or be left like the children in the wood. So, as the post bid me, I gave reigns to my nag; and sitting as steady as just before in the canoe, in a few minutes got safe to the other side, which he told me was the Narragansett country.

Here we found great difficulty in traveling, the way being very narrow, and on each side the trees and bushes gave us very unpleasant welcomes with their branches and boughs, which we could not avoid, it being so exceeding dark. My guide, as before so now, put on harder than I with my weary bones could follow; so left me and the way behind him. Now returned my distressed apprehensions of the place where I was: the dolesome woods, my company next to none, going I knew not whither, and encompassed with terrifying darkness; the least of which was enough to startle a more masculine courage. Added to which the reflections, as in the afternoon of the day, that my call was very questionable, which till then I had not so prudently as I ought considered. Now, coming to the foot of a hill, I found great difficulty in ascending; but being got to the top, was there amply recompensed with the friendly appearance of the kind conductress of the night, just then advancing above the horizontal line. The raptures which the sight of that fair planet produced in me caused me for the moment to forget my present weariness and past toils, and inspired me for most of the remaining way with very diverting thoughts, some of which, with the other occurrences of the day, I reserved to note down when I should come to my stage. My thoughts on the sight of the moon were to this purpose:

Fair Cynthia, all the homage that I may
Unto a creature, unto thee I pay;
In lonesome woods to meet so kind a guide,
To me's more worth than all the world beside.
Some joy I felt just now, when safe got o'er
Yon surly river to this rugged shore,
Deeming rough welcomes from these clownish trees
Better than lodgings with Nereidees.
Yet swelling fears surprise; all dark appears;
Nothing but light can dissipate those fears.
My fainting vitals can't lend strength to say,
But softly whisper, O I wish 'twere day.
The murmur hardly warmed the ambient air,
Ere thy bright aspect rescues from despair:
Makes the old hag her sable mantle loose,
And a bright joy does through my soul diffuse.
The boisterous trees now lend a passage free,
And pleasant prospects thou giv'st light to see.

From hence we kept on, with more ease than before, the way being smooth and even, the night warm and serene; and the tall and thick trees at a distance, especially when the moon glared light through the branches, filled my imagination with the pleasant delusion of a sumptuous city, filled with famous buildings and churches, with their spiring steeples, balconies, galleries, and I know not what—grandeurs which I had heard of, and which the stories of foreign countries had given me the idea of.

Here stood a lofty church, there is a steeple,
And there the grand parade—O see the people!
That famous castle there, were I but nigh
To see the moat and bridge and walls so high—
They're very fine! says my deluded eye.

Being thus agreeably entertained without a thought of anything but thoughts themselves, I on a sudden was roused from these pleasing imaginations by the post's sounding his horn, which assured me he was arrived at the stage where we were to lodge; and that music was then most musical and agreeable to me.

Being come to Mr. Havens', I was very civilly received and courteously entertained in a clean, comfortable house; and the good woman was very active in helping off my riding clothes, and then asked what I would eat. I told her I had some chocolate if she would prepare it; which with the help of some milk and a little, clean brass kettle she soon effected to my satisfaction. I then betook me to my apartment, which was a little room parted from the kitchen by a single board partition; where, after I had noted the occurrences of the past day, I went to bed, which, though pretty hard, yet neat and handsome. But I could get no sleep because of the clamor of some of the town topers in next room, who were entered into a strong debate concerning the signification of the name of their country, viz., *Narragansett*. One said it was named so by the Indians, because there grew a briar there, of a prodigious height and bigness, the like hardly ever known, called by the Indians Narragansett; and quotes an Indian of so barbarous a name for his author that I could not write it. His antagonist replied no, it was from a spring it had its name, which he well knew where it was, which was extreme cold in summer and as hot as could be imagined in the winter, which was much resorted to by the natives, and by them called Narragansett (hot and cold); and that was the original of their place's name—with a thousand impertinences not worth notice, which he uttered with such a roaring voice and thundering blows with the fist of wickedness on the table that it pierced my very head. I heartily fretted, and wished 'em tongue-tied; but with as little success as a friend of mine once, who was (as she said) kept a whole night awake, on a journey, by a country Lieut., and a Sergeant, Ensign, and a Deacon contriving how to bring a triangle into a square. They kept calling for t'other gill, which while they were swallowing was some intermission; but presently, like oil to fire, increased the flame. I set my candle on a chest by the bedside, and setting up, fell to my old way of composing my resentments, in the following manner:

I ask thy aid, O potent rum!
To charm these wrangling topers dumb.
Thou hast their giddy brains possessed—
The man confounded with the beast;
And I, poor I, can get no rest.
Intoxicate them with thy fumes!
O still their tongues till morning comes!

And I know not but my wishes took effect; for the dispute soon ended with t'other dram; and so good night!

Wednesday, October 4th. About four in the morning, we set off for Kingston (for so was the town called) with a French doctor in our company. He and the post put on very furiously, so that I could not keep up with them, only as now and then they'd stop till they see me. This road was poorly furnished with accommodations for travelers, so that we were forced to ride 22 miles by the post's account, but nearer thirty by mine, before we could bait so much as our horses, which I exceedingly complained of. But the post encouraged me by saying we should be well accommodated anon at Mr. Devell's, a few miles further. But I questioned whether we ought to go to the Devil to be helped out of affliction. However, like the rest of deluded souls that post to the infernal den, we made all possible speed to this Devil's habitation; where alighting, in full assurance of good accommodation, we were going in. But meeting his two daughters—as I supposed twins, they so nearly resembled each other both in features and habit, and looked as old as the Devil himself and quite as ugly—we desired entertainment, but could hardly get a word out of 'em till with our importunity, telling them our necessity, etc., they called the old sophister, who was as sparing of his words as his daughters had been, and no, or none, was the replies he made us to our demands. He differed only in this from the old fellow in t'other country: he let us depart. However, I thought it proper to warn poor travelers to endeavor to avoid falling into circumstances like ours, which at our next stage I sat down and did as followeth:

May all that dread the cruel fiend of night
Keep on, and not at this cursed mansion light.
'Tis hell; 'tis hell! And devils here do dwell.
Here dwells the Devil—surely this is hell.
Nothing but wants: a drop to cool your tongue
Can't be procured these cruel fiends among.
Plenty of horrid grins and looks severe,
Hunger and thirst, but pity's banished here—
The right hand keep, if hell on earth you fear!

Thus leaving this habitation of cruelty, we went forward; and arriving at an ordinary about two mile further, found tolerable accommodation. But our hostess, being a pretty full-mouthed old creature, entertained our fellow traveler, the French doctor, with innumerable complaints of her bodily infirmities, and whispered to him so loud that all the house had as full a hearing as he; which was very diverting to the company (of which there was a great many), as one might see by their sneering. But poor weary I slipped out to enter my mind in my journal, and left my great landlady with her talkative guests to themselves.

From hence we proceeded, about ten, forenoon, through the Narragansett country pretty leisurely, and about one, afternoon, came to Paukataug River, which was about two hundred paces over and now very high, and no way over to the other side but this. I dared not venture to ride through, my courage at best in such cases but small and now at the lowest ebb by reason of my weary, very weary, hungry, and uneasy circumstances. So taking leave of my company, though with no little reluctance that I could not proceed with them on my journey [I] stop at a little cottage just by the river to wait the water's falling, which the old man that lived there said would be in a little time, and he would conduct me safe over. This little hut was one of the wretchedest I ever saw a habitation for human creatures. It was supported with shores enclosed with clapboards laid on lengthwise, and so much asunder that the light came through everywhere; the door tied on with a cord in the place of hinges; the floor the bare earth; no windows but such as the thin covering afforded, nor any furniture but a bed with a glass bottle hanging at the head on it; an earthen cup, a small pewter basin, a board with sticks to stand on instead of a table, and a block or two in the corner instead of chairs. The family were the old man, his wife, and two children; all and every part being the picture of poverty. Notwithstanding, both the hut and its inhabitants were very clean and tidy, to the crossing the old proverb that bare walls make giddy housewives.

I blest myself that I was not one of this miserable crew; and the impressions their wretchedness formed in me caused me on the very spot to say:

Though ill at ease, a stranger and alone,
All my fatigues shall not extort a groan.
These indigents have hunger with their ease;
Their best is worse by half than my disease.
Their miserable hut which heat and cold
Alternately without repulse do hold;
Their lodgings thin and hard, their Indian fare,
Their mean apparel which the wretches wear,
And their ten thousand ills which can't be told
Makes nature e'er 'tis middle-aged look old.
When I reflect, my late fatigues do seem
Only a notion or forgotten dream.

I had scarce done thinking, when an Indian-like animal came to the door on a creature very much like himself in mien and feature as well as ragged clothing and having 'lit, makes an awkward scratch with his Indian shoe, and a nod, sits on the block, fumbles out his black junk, dips it in the ashes, and presents it piping hot to his muscheetos, and fell to sucking like a calf without speaking for near a quarter of an hour. At length the old man said, 'How does Sarah do?' who I understood was the wretch's wife and daughter to the old man. He replied, 'As well as can be expected, etc.' So I remembered the old say, and supposed I knew Sarah's case. But he being, as I understood, going over the river, as ugly as he was, I was glad to ask him to show me the way to Saxton's at Stoningtown; which he promising, I ventured over with the old man's assistance;

who having rewarded to content, with my tatter-tailed guide I rode on very slowly through Stoningtown, where the road was very stony and uneven. I asked the fellow, as we went, divers questions of the place and way, etc. I, being arrived at my country, Saxton's at Stoningtown, was very well accommodated both as to victuals and lodging, the only good of both I had found since my setting out. Here I heard there was an old man and his daughter to come that way, bound to New London; and being now destitute of a guide, gladly waited for them, being in so good a harbor; and accordingly, Thursday, October the 5th, about 3 in the afternoon, I set forward with neighbor Polly and Jemima, a girl about 18 years old, whom he said he had been to fetch out of the Narragansetts, and said they had ridden thirty miles that day, on a sorry lean jade, with only a bag under her for a pillion, which the poor girl often complained was very uneasy.

We made good speed along, which made poor Jemima make many a sour face, the mare being a very hard trotter; and after many a hearty and bitter 'Oh!' she at length lowed out: 'Lawful heart, father! This bare mare hurts me dingeely, I'm direful sore I vow,' with many words to that purpose. 'Poor child,' says gaffer, 'she used to serve your mother so.' 'I don't care how mother used to do,' quoth Jemima in a passionate tone, at which the old man laughed, and kicked his jade o' the side, which made her jolt ten times harder.

About seven that evening we came to New London Ferry; here, by reason of a very high wind, we met with great difficulty in getting over—the boat tossed exceedingly, and our horses capered at a very surprizing rate and set us all in a fright; especially poor Jemima, who desired her father to say, 'So, Jack!' to the jade to make her stand. But the careless parent taking no notice of her repeated desires, she roared out in a passionate manner: 'Pray sooth, father, are you deaf? Say, "So, Jack," to the jade, I tell you.' The dutiful parent obeys, saying, 'So, Jack, so, Jack,' as gravely as if he'd been to saying catechism after young Miss, who with her fright looked of all colors in the rainbow.

Being safely arrived at the house of Mrs. Prentice's in N. London, I treated neighbor Polly and daughter for their diverting company and bid them farewell; and between nine and ten at night waited on the Reverend Mr. Gurdon Saltonstall, minister of the town, who kindly invited me to stay that night at his house, where I was very handsomely and plentifully treated and lodged; and made good the great character I had before heard concerning him, viz., that he was the most affable, courteous, generous, and best of men.

1704 1825

MATHER BYLES and JOSEPH GREEN

1707–1788 1706–1780

HYMNOLOGY [1]

Dover, August 28, 1780

My dear Sir,—

After I had wrote what I suppose you have got before now, I received yours of the 9th inst., which fully accounts for your not coming here, and not only so, but 'leaves me to judge your feelings under such a disappointment.' This is nearly the language of my last to you, so that it seems we have had *mutual feelings* on the occasion, and these you know are in many cases the best criterion of truth. . . .

'The Hymn composed for Dr. B.' you request, and his parody upon it. . . . The former I will give you, after first acquainting you with the occasion of it, as I had it from his own mouth some years ago. N.B. He would not let me have a copy of his parody. The story is this. When Belcher

1 The selection is from a letter first published in V *Coll. of the Mass.Hist.Soc.*,II,69–75; in which has been substituted the version of Green's parody as printed in the *London Magazine* for Nov.1733; and to which Byles' rejoinder has been added, as published in Duyckinck, E.A. and G.L., eds., *Cyclopedia of American Literature*(N.Y.,1855),I,122. The titles to the selection and the last hymn have been supplied, and the text modernized by the editors. Byles' original hymn was included in his *Poems on Several Occasions* (Boston,1736).

was Governor, he undertook a voyage to the eastward to treat with the Indians, and carried Byles (who was his nephew) as a chaplain. The ship sailed on a Sunday P.M. after service, but the weather was such that they were at sea the next Sunday, and it was necessary to perform Divine service on shipboard. B. had forgot his psalm-book, and the ship did not furnish one, so his ingenuity was set to work to supply the defect, which he did by composing an hymn 'Upon the Objects then in View.' The hymn is printed in his collection, but because you may not have seen it I will transcribe it:—

UPON THE OBJECTS THEN IN VIEW

Great God! Thy works our wonder raise,
To Thee our swelling notes belong;
While skies and winds and rocks and seas
Around shall echo to our song.

Thy power produced this mighty frame,
Aloud to Thee the tempests roar;
Or softer breezes tune Thy name
Gently along the shelly shore.

Round thee the scaly nation roves,
Thy opening hand their joys bestow;
Through all the blushing coral groves,
These silent gay retreats below.

See the broad sun forsake the skies,
Glow on the waves, and downward slide;
Anon! heaven opens all its eyes,
And starbeams tremble in the tide.

Each various scene, or day, or night,
Lord, points to Thee our ravish'd soul;
Thy glories fix our whole delight,
So the touch'd needle courts the pole.

The singing of this hymn furnished Joseph Green with the hint for the following piece of satire:—

HYMN COMPOSED FOR DR. B.

In David's Psalms an oversight
Byles found one morning o'er his tea.
Alas! why did not David write
A proper psalm to sing at sea?

Thus ruminating on his feat,
Ambitious thoughts at length prevailed;
The bard determined to complete
The part in which the prophet failed.

Awhile he paused, and stroked his Muse,[1]
Then, taking up his tuneful pen,
Wrote a few stanzas for the use
Of his seafaring bretheren.

The task performed, the bard content
(Well chosen was each flowing word),
On a short voyage himself he went,
To hear it read and sung on board.

What extasies of joy appear,
What pleasures and unknown delights
Thrilled the vain poet's soul to hear
Others repeat the things he writes.

Most agèd Christians do aver
(Their credit sure we may rely on),
In former times that, after prayer,
They used to sing a song of Zion.

Our modern parson having prayed
(Unless loud fame our faith beguiles),
Sat down, took out his book, and said,
'Let's sing a song of Mather Byles.'

As soon as he began to read,
The heads th' assembly downward hung;
But he with boldness did proceed,
And thus he read, and thus they sung,—

THE HYMN

With vast amazement we survey
The wonders of the deep,
Where mack'rel swim, and porpoise play,
And crabs and lobsters creep.

Fish of all kinds inhabit there,
And throng the dark abode;
There haddock, hake, and flounders are,
And eels, and perch, and cod.

From raging winds and tempests free,
So smooth that, as you pass,
The shining surface seems to be
A piece of Bristol glass.

1 'Alluding to his remarkable fondness for a cat, which was jocosely called his "Muse," and on the death of which Green wrote an Elegy.' Belknap's note, V *Coll. of the Mass. Hist. Soc.*, II, 71.

But when the winds tempestuous rise,
  And foaming billows swell,
The vessel mounts above the skies,
  Then lower sinks than hell.

Our brains the tott'ring motion feel,
  And quickly we become
Giddy as new-dropped calves, and reel
  Like Indians drunk with rum.

What praises then are due, that we
  Thus far have safely got,
Amariscoggin tribe to see,
  And tribe of *Penobscot*!

Much of the fun of the piece consists in its being formed, as Byles's real hymn was, on the objects then present. The ship at sea within view of the shore, the rising and falling of the waves, the rocks, the fish, the sun setting, the evening approaching, the needle in the binacle,—these were Byles's real objects. Green has funnified the mass of these, and has added the Indians, who were the principal objects of the voyage, and the rum which was on board to treat them with, as very important hints in such an occasional ode. If I can by any means get a copy of the parody (which by the by is a very good one, and turned the laugh upon Green in the time of it), I will send it you. . . .

HYMN COMPOSED FOR MR. G.

In Byles's works an oversight
  Green spy'd, as once he smoked his chunk;
Alas! that Byles should never write
  A song to sing, when folks are drunk.

Thus in the chimney on his block,
  Ambition fired the 'stiller's pate;
He summoned all his little stock,
  The poet's volume to complete.

Long paused the lout, and scratched his skull.
  Then took his chalk (he owned no pen),
And scrawled some doggrel, for the whole
  Of his flip-drinking brethren.

The task performed—not to content—
  Ill-chosen was each Grub-street word;
Straight to the tavern club he went,
  To hear it bellowed round the board.

Unknown delights his ears explore,
  Inured to midnight caterwauls,
To hear his hoarse companions roar,
  The horrid thing his dullness scrawls.

The club, if fame we may rely on,
  Convened, to hear the drunken catch,
At the Three Horse Shoes, or Red Lion—
  Tippling began the night's debauch.

The little 'stiller took the pint
  Full fraught with flip and songs obscene,
And, after a long stutt'ring, meant
  To sing a song of Josy Green.

Soon as with stam'ring tongue, to read
  The drunken ballad, he began,
The club from clam'ring straight recede,
  To hear him roar the thing alone.

SONG

With vast amazement we survey
  The can so broad, so deep,
Where punch succeeds to strong sangree,
  Both to delightful flip.

Drink of all smacks, inhabit here,
  And throng the dark abode;
Here's rum, and sugar, and small beer,
  In a continual flood.

From cruel thoughts and conscience free,
  From dram to dram we pass:
Our cheeks, like apples, ruddy be;
  Our eyeballs look like glass.

At once, like furies up we rise,
  Our raging passions swell;
We hurl the bottle to the skies,
  But why, we cannot tell.

Our brains a tott'ring motion feel,
  And quickly we become
Sick, as with negro steaks, and reel
  Like Indians drunk with rum.

Thus lost in deep tranquillity,
  We sit, supine and sot,
Till we two moons distinctly see—
  Come give us t'other pot.

I am your faithful and much obliged friend and servant,

Jeremy Belknap

To Ebenezer Hazard, Esq.

WILLIAM DAWSON

1704–1752

HYMN TO THE MORNING [1]

AWAKE, my soul, and with the constant morn
Carol th' Almighty's praise; awake and tune
The vocal shell to sympathetic sounds
And heav'nly consort. See! the radiant sun
Stains with etherial gold the varied east
And vast expanse; behold! with giant stride
He' advances ruddy, and with him returns
The sweet vicissitude of day, and all
Th' obsequious train of filial colors. Now
The vivid green extends her welcome sway
O'er the sequestered lawns and smiling meads;
And now the purpled violet resumes
Its costly dye; and all th' extended plains
Confess th' Almighty's hand, of ornament
Profuse. Behold! with fleshy pink they smile
Enameled, and the daisy's dwarfy bloom
Of pallid hue, and gorgeous marigold.

On ev'ry grassy sprig a pearly drop
Hangs wav'ring, and with varied ray proclaims
Its great progenitor. The liquid gem,
Pendent and tremulous, with rival gleam
Mimics the lustre of its parent orb.
Vain Man's best emblem! who, with borrowed light
Which ev'ry touch destroys, against his God
Dares wage an impious and gigantic war.

From downy nest of artificial weft
The sedulous airlings rise, and to their task
Hie joyous. Or with gamesome wing they cut
The yielding fluent, and with transient touch
Skim the moist element in sportive whirl;
Or else to studious wand'rer's curious view
Delightful, they collect their grainy food
And masticative stones. But heark! the grove,
Respondent to the tuneful choir, resound
Celestial symphony. The speckled thrush
Of various note, and blackbird's piercing sound,
Conjoined to Philomela's parting lay,
Mournfully sweet, conspire to usher in
The pompous morn. Nor shall my only voice
Be wanting in the general hymn; of song
Unskilful, yet with grateful hand I'll touch
The trembling string, and chant th' Almighty's praise.
Vagrant, like the industrious bee, I'll cull
Nature's choice sweets, and still with prying ken
Descry the wonders of her fruitful womb.

But see! the great exemplar of my verse,
The lab'rer bee, assiduous rise! Behold!
From waxen cell and more inglorious ease,
Active he hastens, and with hov'ring buzz
Extracts mellific juice. From bloom to bloom
He wanders dainty, and with nice discern
Rejects each vulgar sweet. Hail, mighty chief!
Hyblæan wand'rer, hail! Still may'st thou sip
The pure and elemental dews; whilst I,
With daring song and more advent'rous foot,
Attempt the steepy heights where Milton first,
Great chieftain, solitary trod; and taught
The list'ning world what Michael's potent arm
In fight could do, and human wit achieve.

1736

SONG

YOUNG poets in love
Will call from above
Cytherea, drest all in her graces and airs,
And will tell their fond dreams of Ida's soft grove,
Of cupids, of doves, and of cars.

Some Chloe beside,
Or Sylvia must hide
The name of the fair that possesses their heart;
Thus sighing in pomp of poetical pride,
They vainly make show of their art.

[1] The texts have been modernized by the editors.

No poet am I,
And no dame of the sky,
No fiction, shall ever disgrace my bright flame;
That truth is most beautiful, none will deny,
When I tell them that —— is her name.

Then fill up my glass;
Here's a health to the lass!
As for Venus, I fairly now bid you adieu;
Since on her you can never reflect any praise,
I'll not labor to compliment you. 1736

WILLIAM BYRD

1674–1744

A PROGRESS TO THE MINES, IN THE YEAR 1732

NEIGHBORS [1]

SEPT. 18. For the pleasure of the good company of Mrs. Byrd, and her little governor, my son, I went about halfway to the falls in the chariot. There we halted, not far from a purling stream, and upon the stump of a propagate oak picked the bones of a piece of roast beef. By the spirit which that gave me, I was the better able to part with the dear companions of my travels, and to perform the rest of my journey on horseback by myself. I reached Shaccoe's before two o'clock, and crossed the river to the mills. I had the grief to find them both stand as still for the want of water as a dead woman's tongue for want of breath. It had rained so little for many weeks above the falls that the naiads had hardly water enough left to wash their faces. However, as we ought to turn all our misfortunes to the best advantage, I directed Mr. Booker, my first minister there, to make use of the lowness of the water for blowing up the rocks at the mouth of the canal. For that purpose I ordered iron drills to be made about two foot long, pointed with steel, chisel-fashion, in order to make holes, into which we put our cartridges of powder, containing each about three ounces. There wanted skill among my engineers to choose the best parts of the stone for boring, that we might blow to the most advantage. They made all their holes quite perpendicular, whereas they should have humored the grain of the stone for the more effectual execution. I ordered the points of the drills to be made chisel-way, rather than the diamond, that they might need to be seldomer repaired, though in stone the diamond points would make the most dispatch. The water now flowed out of the river so slowly that the miller was obliged to pond it up in the canal by setting open the flood-gates at the mouth and shutting those close at the mill. By this contrivance, he was able at any time to grind two or three bushels, either for his choice customers or for the use of my plantations. Then I walked to the place where they broke the flax, which is wrought with much greater ease than the hemp, and is much better for spinning. From thence I paid a visit to the weaver, who needed a little of Minerva's inspiration to make the most of a piece of fine cloth. Then I looked in upon my Caledonian spinster, who was mended more in her looks than in her humor. However, she promised much, though at the same time intended to perform little. She is too high-spirited for Mr. Booker, who hates to have his sweet temper ruffled, and will rather suffer matters to go a little wrong sometimes than give his righteous spirit any uneasiness. He is very honest, and would make an admirable overseer where servants will do as they are bid. But eye-servants, who want abundance of overlooking, are not so proper to be committed to his care. I found myself out of order and for that reason retired early, yet with all this precaution had a gentle fever in the night; but towards morning nature sat open all her gates, and drove it out in a plentiful perspiration. . . .

20. I continued the bark, and then tossed down my poached eggs, with as much ease as some good breeders slip children into the world. About nine I left the prudentest

1 The selections from *A Progress to the Mines* have been modernized, and the title supplied by the editors.

orders I could think of with my vizier, and then crossed the river to Shaccoe's. I made a running visit to three of my quarters, where, besides finding all the people well, I had the pleasure to see better crops than usual, both of corn and tobacco. I parted there with my intendant, and pursued my journey to Mr. Randolph's, at Tuckahoe, without meeting with any adventure by the way. Here I found Mrs. Fleming, who was packing up her baggage with design to follow her husband the next day, who was gone to a new settlement in Goochland. Both he and she have been about seven years persuading themselves to remove to that retired part of the country, though they had the two strong arguments of health and interest for so doing. The widow smiled graciously upon me, and entertained me very handsomely. Here I learned all the tragical story of her daughter's humble marriage with her uncle's overseer. Besides the meanness of this mortal's aspect, the man has not one visible qualification, except impudence, to recommend him to a female's inclinations. But there is sometimes such a charm in that Hibernian endowment that frail woman can't withstand it, though it stand alone without any other recommendation. Had she run away with a gentleman or a pretty fellow, there might have been some excuse for her, though he were of inferior fortune; but to stoop to a dirty plebeian, without any kind of merit, is the lowest prostitution. I found the family justly enraged at it; and though I had more good nature than to join in her condemnation, yet I could devise no excuse for so senseless a prank as this young gentlewoman had played. Here good drink was more scarce than good victuals, the family being reduced to the last bottle of wine, which was therefore husbanded very carefully. But the water was excellent. The heir of the family did not come home till late in the evening. He is a pretty young man, but had the misfortune to become his own master too soon. This puts young fellows upon wrong pursuits before they have sense to judge rightly for themselves, though at the same time they have a strange conceit of their own sufficiency, when they grow near twenty years old, especially if they happen to have a small smattering of learning. 'Tis then they fancy themselves wiser than all their tutors and governors, which makes them headstrong to all advice, and above all reproof and admonition.

21. I was sorry in the morning to find myself stopped in my career by bad weather brought upon us by a northeast wind. This drives a world of raw, unkindly vapors upon us from Newfoundland, loaden with blight, coughs, and pleurisies. However, I complained not, lest I might be suspected to be tired of the good company, though Mrs. Fleming was not so much upon her guard, but mutinied strongly at the rain that hindered her from pursuing her dear husband. I said what I could to comfort a gentlewoman under so sad a disappointment. I told her a husband that stayed so much at home as her's did could be no such violent rarity, as for a woman to venture her precious health to go daggling through the rain after him, or to be miserable if she happened to be prevented. That it was prudent for married people to fast sometimes from one another, that they might come together again with the better stomach. That the best things in this world, if constantly used, are apt to be cloying, which a little absence and abstinence would prevent. This was strange doctrine to a fond female, who fancies people should love with as little reason after marriage as before. In the afternoon Monsieur Marij, the minister of the parish, came to make me a visit. He had been a Romish priest, but found reasons, either spiritual or temporal, to quit that gay religion. The fault of this new convert is that he looks for as much respect from his Protestant flock as is paid to the popish clergy, which our ill-bred Huguenots don't understand. Madam Marij had so much curiosity as to want to come too; but another horse was wanting, and she believed it would have too vulgar an air to ride behind her husband. This woman was of the true exchange breed, full of discourse but void of discretion, and married a parson with the idle hopes he might some time or other come to be his grace of Canterbury. The gray mare is the better horse in that family, and the poor man submits to her wild vagaries for peace's sake. She has just enough of the fine lady to run in debt and be of no signification in her household. And the only thing that can prevent her from undoing her loving husband will be that

nobody will trust them beyond the 16,000,[1] which is soon run out in a Goochland store. The way of dealing there is for some small merchant or pedlar to buy a Scotch pennyworth of goods, and clap 150 per cent upon that. At this rate the parson can't be paid much more for his preaching than 'tis worth. No sooner was our visitor retired, but the facetious widow was so kind as to let me into all this secret history, but was at the same time exceedingly sorry that the woman should be so indiscreet, and the man so tame as to be governed by an unprofitable and fantastical wife.

22. We had another wet day, to try both Mrs. Fleming's patience and my good breeding. The northeast wind commonly sticks by us three or four days, filling the atmosphere with damps, injurious both to man and beast. The worst of it was, we had no good liquor to warm our blood, and fortify our spirits against so strong a malignity. However, I was cheerful under all these misfortunes, and expressed no concern but a decent fear lest my long visit might be troublesome. Since I was like to have thus much leisure, I endeavored to find out what subject a dull married man could introduce that might best bring the widow to the use of her tongue. At length I discovered she was a notable quack, and therefore paid that regard to her knowledge as to put some questions to her about the bad distemper that raged then in the country. I mean the bloody flux, that was brought us in the negro-ship consigned to Col. Braxton. She told me she made use of very simple remedies in that case, with very good success. She did the business either with Hartshorn drink, that had plantain leaves boiled in it, or else with a strong decoction of St. Andrew's Cross, in new milk instead of water. I agreed with her that those remedies might be very good, but would be more effectual after a dose or two of Indian physic. But for fear this conversation might be too grave for a widow, I turned the discourse, and began to talk of plays, and finding her taste lay most towards comedy, I offered my service to read one to her, which she kindly accepted. She produced the second part of *The Beggar's Opera*, which had diverted the town for 40 nights successively, and gained four thousand pounds to the author. This was not owing altogether to the wit or humor that sparkled in it, but to some political reflections that seemed to hit the ministry. But the great advantage of the author was that his interest was solicited by the Duchess of Queensbury, which no man could refuse who had but half an eye in his head, or half a guinea in his pocket. Her grace, like Death, spared nobody, but even took my Lord Selkirk in for two guineas, to repair which extravagance he lived upon Scotch herrings two months afterwards. But the best story was, she made a very smart officer in his majesty's guards give her a guinea, who swearing at the same time 'twas all he had in the world, she sent him fifty for it the next day, to reward his obedience. After having acquainted my company with the history of the play, I read three acts of it, and left Mrs. Fleming and Mr. Randolph to finish it, who read as well as most actors do at a rehearsal. Thus we killed the time, and triumphed over the bad weather.

23. The clouds continued to drive from the northeast, and to menace us with more rain. But as the lady resolved to venture through it, I thought it a shame for me to venture to flinch. Therefore, after fortifying myself with two capacious dishes of coffee, and making my compliments to the ladies, I mounted, and Mr. Randolph was so kind as to be my guide. At the distance of about three miles, in a path as narrow as that which leads to heaven, but much more dirty, we reached the homely dwelling of the Reverend Mr. Marij. His land is much more barren than his wife, and needs all Mr. Bradley's skill in agriculture to make it bring corn. Thence we proceeded five miles farther, to a mill of Mr. Randolph's, that is apt to stand still when there falls but little rain, and to be carried away when there falls a great deal. Then we pursued a very blind path four miles farther, which puzzled my guide, who I suspect led me out of the way. At length we came into a great road, where he took leave, after giving me some very confused directions, and so left me to blunder out the rest of the journey by myself. I lost myself more than once, but soon recovered the right way again. About three miles after quitting my guide, I

1 16,000 pounds of tobacco was the legal salary of a minister.

passed the south branch of Pamunkey River, near fifty yards over, and full of stones. After this, I had eight miles to Mr. Chiswell's, where I arrived at about two o'clock, and saved my dinner. I was very handsomely entertained, finding every thing very clean, and very good. I had not seen Mrs. Chiswell in twenty-four years, which, alas! had made great havoc with her pretty face, and plowed very deep furrows in her fair skin. It was impossible to know her again, so much the flower was faded. However, though she was grown an old woman, yet she was one of those absolute rarities, a very good old woman. I found Mr. Chiswell a sensible, well-bred man, and very frank in communicating his knowledge in the mystery of making iron, wherein he has had long experience. I told him I was come to spy the land, and inform myself of the expense of carrying on an iron work with effect; that I sought my instruction from him, who understood the whole mystery, having gained full experience in every part of it; only I was very sorry he had bought that experience so dear. He answered that he would, with great sincerity, let me into the little knowledge he had, and so we immediately entered upon the business. . . .

27. . . . I took my leave about ten, and drove over a spacious level road ten miles, to a bridge built over the river Po, which is one of the four branches of the Mattaponi, about forty yards wide. Two miles beyond that, we passed by a plantation belonging to the Company, of about 500 acres, where they keep a great number of oxen to relieve those that have dragged their loaded carts thus far. Three miles farther we came to the Germanna road, where I quitted the chair and continued my journey on horseback. I rode eight miles together over a stony road, and had on either side continual poisoned fields, with nothing but saplings growing on them. Then I came into the main county road, that leads from Fredericksburg to Germanna, which last place I reached in ten miles more. This famous town consists of Colonel Spotswood's enchanted castle on one side of the street, and a baker's dozen of ruinous tenements on the other, where so many German families had dwelt some years ago; but are now removed ten miles higher, in the fork of Rappahannock, to land of their own. There had also been a chapel about a bowshot from the Colonel's house, at the end of an avenue of cherry trees, but some pious people had lately burnt it down, with intent to get another built nearer to their own homes. Here I arrived about three o'clock, and found only Mrs. Spotswood at home, who received her old acquaintance with many a gracious smile. I was carried into a room elegantly set off with pier glasses, the largest of which came soon after to an odd misfortune. Amongst other favorite animals that cheered this lady's solitude, a brace of tame deer ran familiarly about the house, and one of them came to stare at me as a stranger. But unluckily spying his own figure in the glass, he made a spring over the tea table that stood under it and shattered the glass to pieces, and falling back upon the tea table, made a terrible fracas among the china. This exploit was so sudden and accompanied with such a noise that it surprised me, and perfectly frightened Mrs. Spotswood. But 'twas worth all the damage to show the moderation and good humor with which she bore this disaster. In the evening the noble Colonel came home from his mines, who saluted me very civilly, and Mrs. Spotswood's sister, Miss Theky, who had been to meet him *en cavalier*, was so kind too as to bid me welcome. We talked over a legend of old stories, supped about nine, and then prattled with the ladies, till 'twas time for a traveler to retire. In the meantime I observed my old friend to be very uxorious, and exceedingly fond of his children. This was so opposite to the maxims he used to preach up before he was married that I could not forbear rubbing up the memory of them. But he gave a very good-natured turn to his change of sentiments by alleging that whoever brings a poor gentlewoman into so solitary a place, from all her friends and acquaintance, would be ungrateful not to use her and all that belongs to her with all possible tenderness.

28. We all kept snug in our several apartments till nine, except Miss Theky, who was the housewife of the family. At that hour we met over a pot of coffee, which was not quite strong enough to give us the palsy. After breakfast the Colonel and I left the ladies to their domestic af-

fairs and took a turn in the garden, which has nothing beautiful but three terrace walks that fall in slopes one below another. I let him understand that besides the pleasure of paying him a visit I came to be instructed by so great a master in the mystery of making of iron, wherein he had led the way and was the Tubal Cain of Virginia. He corrected me a little there, by assuring me he was not only the first in this country but the first in North America who had erected a regular furnace. That they ran altogether upon bloomeries in New England and Pennsylvania, till his example had made them attempt greater works. But in this last colony, they have so few ships to carry their iron to Great Britain that they must be content to make it only for their own use, and must be obliged to manufacture it when they have done. That he hoped he had done the country very great service by setting so good an example. That the four furnaces now at work in Virginia circulated a great sum of money for provisions and all other necessaries in the adjacent counties. That they took off a great number of hands from planting tobacco and employed them in works that produced a large sum of money in England to the persons concerned, whereby the country is so much the richer. That they are besides a considerable advantage to Great Britain, because it lessens the quantity of bar iron imported from Spain, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, and Muscovy, which used to be no less than 20,000 tons yearly, though at the same time no sow iron is imported thither from any country but only from the plantations. For most of this bar iron they do not only pay silver, but our friends in the Baltic are so nice, they even expect to be paid all in crown pieces. On the contrary, all the iron they receive from the plantations, they pay for it in their own manufactures, and send for it in their own shipping. Then I inquired after his own mines, and hoped, as he was the first that engaged in this great undertaking, that he had brought them to the most perfection. He told me he had iron in several parts of his great tract of land, consisting of 45,000 acres. But that the mine he was at work upon was thirteen miles below Germanna. That his ore (which was very rich) he raised a mile from his furnace, and was obliged to cart the iron, when it was made, fifteen miles to Massaponax, a plantation he had upon Rappahannock River; but that the road was exceeding good, gently declining all the way, and had no more than one hill to go up in the whole journey. For this reason his loaded carts went it in a day without difficulty. He said it was true his works were of the oldest standing: but that his long absence in England and the wretched management of Mr. Greame, whom he had entrusted with his affairs, had put him back very much. That what with neglect and severity, above eighty of his slaves were lost while he was in England, and most of his cattle starved. That his furnace stood still great part of the time, and all his plantations ran to ruin. That indeed he was rightly served for committing his affairs to the care of a mathematician, whose thoughts were always among the stars. That nevertheless, since his return, he had applied himself to rectify his steward's mistakes and bring his business again into order. That now he had contrived to do everything with his own people except raising the mine and running the iron, by which he had contracted his expense very much. Nay, he believed that by his directions he could bring sensible negroes to perform those parts of the work tolerably well. But at the same time he gave me to understand that his furnace had done no great feats lately, because he had been taken up in building an air furnace at Massaponax, which he had now brought to perfection, and should be thereby able to furnish the whole country with all sorts of cast iron, as cheap and as good as ever came from England. I told him he must do one thing more to have a full vent for those commodities, he must keep a shallop running into all the rivers, to carry his wares home to people's own doors. And if he would do that I would set a good example, and take of a whole ton of them. Our conversation on this subject continued till dinner, which was both elegant and plentiful. The afternoon was devoted to the ladies, who showed me one of their most beautiful walks. They conducted me through a shady lane to the landing, and by the way made me drink some very fine water that issued from a marble fountain, and ran incessantly. Just behind it was a

covered bench, where Miss Theky often sat and bewailed her virginity. Then we proceeded to the river, which is the south branch of Rappahannock, about fifty yards wide, and so rapid that the ferry boat is drawn over by a chain, and therefore called the Rapidan. At night we drank prosperity to all the Colonel's projects in a bowl of rack punch, and then retired to our devotions.

29. Having employed about two hours in retirement, I sallied out at the first summons to breakfast, where our conversation with the ladies, like whip sillabub, was very pretty, but had nothing in it. This it seems was Miss Theky's birthday, upon which I made her my compliments, and wished she might live twice as long a married woman as she had lived a maid. I did not presume to pry into the secret of her age, nor was she forward to disclose it, for this humble reason, lest I should think her wisdom fell short of her years. She contrived to make this day of her birth a day of mourning, for having nothing better at present to set her affections upon, she had a dog that was a great favorite. It happened that very morning the poor cur had done something very uncleanly upon the Colonel's bed, for which he was condemned to die. However, upon her entreaty, she got him a reprieve; but was so concerned that so much severity should be intended on her birthday that she was not to be comforted; and lest such another accident might oust the poor cur of his clergy, she protested she would board out her dog at a neighbor's house, where she hoped he would be more kindly treated. Then the Colonel and I took another turn in the garden, to discourse farther on the subject of iron. He was very frank in communicating all his dear-bought experience to me, and told me very civilly he would not only let me into the whole secret, but would make a journey to James River and give me his faithful opinion of all my conveniences. For his part he wished there were many more iron-works in the country, provided the parties concerned would preserve a constant harmony among themselves, and meet and consult frequently what might be for their common advantage. By this they might be better able to manage the workmen, and reduce their wages to what was just and reasonable. After this frank speech, he began to explain the whole charge of an iron-work. He said there ought at least to be an hundred negroes employed in it, and those upon good land would make corn and raise provisions enough to support themselves and the cattle, and do every other part of the business. That the furnace might be built for £700, and made ready to go to work, if I went the nearest way to do it, especially since, coming after so many, I might correct their errors and avoid their miscarriages. That if I had ore and wood enough, and a convenient stream of water to set the furnace upon, having neither too much nor too little water, I might undertake the affair with a full assurance of success, provided the distance of carting be not too great, which is exceedingly burdensome. That there must be abundance of wheel carriages shod with iron and several teams of oxen provided to transport the wood that is to be coaled, and afterwards the coal and ore to the furnace, and last of all the sow iron to the nearest water carriage, and carry back limestone and other necessaries from thence to the works; and a sloop also would be useful to carry the iron on board the ships, the masters not being always in the humor to fetch it. Then he enumerated the people that were to be hired, viz.: a founder, a mine-raiser, a collier, a stock-taker, a clerk, a smith, a carpenter, a wheelwright, and several carters. That these altogether will be a standing charge of about £500 a year. That the amount of freight, custom, commission and other charges in England, comes to 27s a ton. But that the merchants yearly find out means to inflame the account with new articles, as they do in those of tobacco. That, upon the whole matter, the expenses here and in England may be computed modestly at £3 a ton. And the rest that the iron sells for will be clear gain, to pay for the land and negroes, which 'tis to be hoped will be £3 more for every ton that is sent over. As this account agreed pretty near with that which Mr. Chiswell had given me, I set it down (notwithstanding it may seem a repetition of the same thing) to prove that both these gentlemen were sincere in their representations. We had a Michaelmas goose for dinner, of Miss Theky's own raising, who was now good-natured enough to forget the jeop-

ardy of her dog. In the afternoon we walked in a meadow by the riverside, which winds in the form of a horseshoe about Germanna, making it a peninsula containing about 400 acres. Rappahannock forks about fourteen miles below this place, the northern branch being the larger, and consequently must be the river that bounds my lord Fairfax's grant of the northern neck.

1732 1841

JONATHAN EDWARDS

1703–1758

SARAH PIERREPONT [1]

THEY say there is a young lady in [New Haven] who is beloved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on Him—that she expects after a while to be received up where He is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. There she is to dwell with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do any thing wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this Great God has manifested Himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her.

1723 1829

1 Sarah Pierrepont became in 1727 Edwards' wife. At the time of this apostrophe, written on a blank leaf of a book, she was but thirteen. The concept of such a mystical union with God is not uncommon among the Puritans, nor among the highly religious of any sect; the Christian precedent being set by the religious interpretations of the amorous songs ascribed to Solomon. The text, as printed above, has been modernized by the editors.

NATURE [2]

WE have shown that the Son of God created the world for this very end, to communicate Himself in an image of His own excellency. He communicates Himself properly only to spirits, and they only are capable of being proper images of His excellency, for they only are properly 'beings,' as we have shown. Yet He communicates a sort of a shadow or glimpse of His excellencies to bodies which, as we have shown, are but the shadows of beings and not real beings. He who, by His immediate influence, gives being every moment, and by His spirit actuates the world, because He inclines to communicate Himself and His excellencies, doth doubtless communicate His excellency to bodies, as far as there is any consent or analogy. And the beauty of face and sweet airs in men are not always the effect of the corresponding excellencies of mind; yet the beauties of nature are really emanations or shadows of the excellency of the Son of God.

So that, when we are delighted with flowery meadows and gentle breezes of wind, we may consider that we see only the emanations of the sweet benevolence of Jesus Christ. When we behold the fragrant rose and lily, we see His love and purity. So the green trees and fields, and singing of birds, are the emanations of His infinite joy and benignity. The easiness and naturalness of trees and vines are shadows of His beauty and loveliness. The crystal

2 The text has been modernized from an undated fragment, and the title is that generally adopted by editors.

rivers and murmuring streams are the footsteps of His favor, grace, and beauty. When we behold the light and brightness of the sun, the golden edges of an evening cloud, or the beauteous bow, we behold the adumbrations of His glory and goodness; and in the blue sky, of His mildness and gentleness. There are also many things wherein we may behold His awful majesty: in the sun in His strength, in comets, in thunder, in the hovering thunder-clouds, in ragged rocks and the brows of mountains. That beauteous light with which the world is filled in a clear day is a lively shadow of His spotless holiness, and happiness and delight in communicating Himself. And doubtless this is a reason that Christ is compared so often to those things, and called by their names, as the Sun of Righteousness, the morning-star, the rose of Sharon, and lily of the valley, the apple-tree among trees of the wood, a bundle of myrrh, a roe, or a young hart. By this we may discover the beauty of many of those metaphors and similes which to an unphilosophical person do seem so uncouth.

In like manner, when we behold the beauty of man's body in its perfection, we still see like emanations of Christ's divine perfections, although they do not always flow from the mental excellencies of the person that has them. But we see the most proper image of the beauty of Christ when we see beauty in the human soul.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE [1]

I HAD a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys, and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I with some of my schoolmates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and was from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

But in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off; and I entirely lost all those affections and delights and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. Indeed I was at times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of my time at college; when it pleased God, to seize me with the pleurisy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell. And yet, it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with my quietness; I had great and violent inward struggles, till, after many conflicts, with wicked inclinations, repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek salvation, and practice many religious duties; but without that kind of affection and delight which I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet, it seems to me, I sought after a miserable manner; which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving; being ready to doubt, whether such miserable seeking ever succeeded. I was indeed brought to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an

1 The text has been modernized by the editors.

interest in Christ.—My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper to express that concern by the name of terror.

From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom He would to eternal life, and rejecting whom He pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and His justice in thus eternally disposing of men according to His sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it; but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense, in God's shewing mercy to whom He will shew mercy, and hardening whom He will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of any thing that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often since had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet.

Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so.

The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Tim. i:17: 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.' As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought within myself, how excellent a being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him forever! I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy Him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature in this.

From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by Him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of His person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in Him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those that treated of these subjects. Those words, Cant.ii:1, used to be abundantly with me: 'I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys.' The words seemed to me, sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it, about that time; and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that would carry me away, in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart; an ardor of soul, that I know not how to express.

Not long after I began to experience

these things, I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture for contemplation. And as I was walking there and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together; it was a gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; a high, great, and holy gentleness.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God's excellency, His wisdom, His purity and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time, singing forth, with a low voice; my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so delightful to me as thunder and lightning; formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural to me to sing, or chant for my meditations; or, to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.

I felt then great satisfaction, as to my good state; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the Psalmist, Psal.cxix:28: 'My soul breaketh for the longing it hath.' I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy, and prayer, and converse with God; and it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in the things of religion, were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what I then had no more notion of than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart; and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God, or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase, until I went to preach at New York, which was about a year and a half after they began; and while I was there, I felt them, very sensibly, in a higher degree than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness, were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly Christianity, appeared exceedingly amiable to me. I felt a burning desire to be in every thing a complete Christian; and conform to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should *be* more holy, and *live* more holily, and more becoming a child of God,

and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, and a holy life, with much more earnestness, than ever I sought grace before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means, how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness, than ever I pursued any thing in my life; but yet with too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness, and conformity to Christ.

The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments there, and living there in perfect holiness, humility and love. And it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and burden, that what I felt within, I could not express as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul, seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love; and that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness; and said sometimes to myself, 'I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes.' It appeared to me, that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness—a divine beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement, in comparison of it.

Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; all pleasant, delightful, and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing as it were in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrancy; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature holiness, that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this, to lie low before God, as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be ALL, that I might become as a little child.

While at New York, I was sometimes much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then; and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.

On January 12, 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God; to be for the future in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and His law for the constant rule of my obedience; engaging to fight with all my might, against the world, the flesh and the devil, to the end of my life. But I have reason to be infinitely humbled, when I consider how much I have failed of answering my obligation.

I had then abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family where I lived, with Mr. John Smith and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those in whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions, but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great

longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; and my secret prayer used to be, in great part, taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened, in any part of the world, that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly catched at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be eager to read public news-letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable to the interest of religion in the world.

I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things, and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God; and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

I came away from New York in the month of April, 1723, and had a most bitter parting with Madam Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me at leaving the family and city, where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New York to Weathersfield, by water, and as I sailed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could. However, that night, after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at Westchester, where we went ashore to lodge; and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear Christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge, on Saturday, and there kept the Sabbath; where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor, I remained much in a like frame of mind, as when at New York; only sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends at New York. My support was in contemplations on the heavenly state; as I find in my diary of May 1, 1723. It was a comfort to think of that state, where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, calm, and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where those persons who appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How will it fill us with joy to think, that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises will never cease, but will last to all eternity! I continued much in the same frame, in the general, as when at New York, till I went to New Haven as tutor to the college; particularly once at Bolton, on a journey from Boston, while walking out alone in the fields. After I went to New Haven I sunk in religion; my mind being diverted from my eager pursuits after holiness, by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my thoughts.

In September, 1725, I was taken ill at New Haven, and while endeavoring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village, that I could go no further; where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year. In this sickness God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there in divine, pleasant contemplations, and longings of soul. I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out wishfully for the morning; which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, and which my soul with delight made its own language: 'My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning'; and when the light of day came in at the windows, it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to be some image of the light of God's glory.

I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with; I could gladly honor them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy. But, some time after this, I was again greatly diverted in my mind with some temporal concerns that exceedingly took up my thoughts, greatly to the wounding of my soul; and went on through various exercises, that it would be tedious to relate, which gave me much more experience of my own heart, than ever I had before.

Since I came to this town, I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of His glorious perfections and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely being, chiefly on the account of His holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all His attributes. The doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in shewing mercy to whom He would shew mercy; and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me, great part of His glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore Him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of Him.

I have loved the doctrines of the gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared, in a general way, glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful. It has often seemed to me, that it would in a great measure spoil heaven, to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me. Isa.xxxii:2: 'A man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, &c.'

It has often appeared to me delightful, to be united to Christ; to have Him for my head, and to be a member of His body; also to have Christ for my teacher and prophet. I very often think with sweetness, and longings, and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by Him through the wilderness of this world. That text, Matth.xviii:3, has often been sweet to me, 'except ye be converted and become as little children, &c.' I love to think of coming to Christ, to receive salvation of Him, poor in spirit, and quite empty of self, humbly exalting Him alone; cut off entirely from my own root, in order to grow into, and out of Christ; to have God in Christ to be all in all; and to live by faith on the Son of God, a life of humble unfeigned confidence in Him. That scripture has often been sweet to me, Psal.cxv:1: 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.' And those words of Christ, Luke x:21: 'In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' That sovereignty of God which Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worthy of such joy; and that rejoicing seemed to show the excellency of Christ, and of what spirit He was.

Sometimes, only mentioning a single word caused my heart to burn within me; or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. And God has appeared glorious to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that He subsists in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own estate; it seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good estate.

My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected, in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have rejoiced in the prospect, all the way as I read. And my mind has been much enter-

tained and delighted with the scripture promises and prophecies, which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fulness of Christ, and His meetness and suitableness as a Saviour; whereby He has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. His blood and atonement have appeared sweet, and His righteousness sweet; which was always accompanied with ardency of spirit; and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

Once as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception—which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to trust in Him; to live upon Him; to serve and follow Him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have, several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in His office of Sanctifier; in His holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul. God, in the communications of His Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life. And I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God, as a word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving word; accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart.

Often, since I lived in this town, I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my own heart, than ever I had before my conversion. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been, since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. When others, that have come to talk with me about their soul concerns, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expression seemed exceedingly faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness.

My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind, and in my mouth. 'Infinite upon infinite—Infinite upon infinite!' When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far beyond the sight of every thing, but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet, it seems to me, that my conviction of sin is exceedingly small, and faint; it is enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know

certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew at the time, that my repentance was nothing to my sin.

I have greatly longed of late, for a broken heart, and to lie low before God; and, when I ask for humility, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile self-exaltation to me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be 'humbled to the dust'; that may be a proper expression for them, but I always think of myself, that I ought, and it is an expression that has long been natural for me to use in prayer, 'to lie infinitely low before God.' And it is affecting to think, how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit, left in my heart.

I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The very thought of any joy arising in me, on any consideration of my own amiableness, performances, or experiences, or any goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, every where, all around me.

Though it seems to me, that, in some respects, I was a far better Christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure; yet, of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, and a delight in that sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a Mediator revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night, in particular, I had such a discovery of the excellency of the gospel above all other doctrines, that I could not but say to myself, 'This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine'; and of Christ, 'This is my chosen Prophet.' It appeared sweet, beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught, and enlightened, and instructed by him; to learn of him, and live to him. Another Saturday night (January, 1739), I had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty; to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping, which held me some time, so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors. I could not but, as it were, cry out, 'How happy are they which do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!' I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to His own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that His will was done.

c.1739 1808

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD [1]

Deuteronomy xxxii:35:—*Their foot shall slide in due time.*

IN this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israel-

1 The text of the sermon, delivered 8 July 1741, has been modernized by the editors. The scene was described by a contemporary: 'While the people in the neighbouring towns were in great distress for their souls, the inhabitants of that town [Enfield, Connecticut] were very secure, loose and vain. A lecture had been appointed at Enfield, and the neighbouring people, the night before, were so affected at the thoughtlessness of the inhabitants, and in such fear that God would in His righteous judgment, pass them by, while the divine showers were falling all around them, as to be prostrate before Him a considerable part of it, supplicating mercy for their souls. When the time appointed for the lecture came, a number of the neighbouring ministers attended, and some from a distance. When they went into the meeting-house, the appearance of the assembly was thoughtless and vain. The people hardly conducted themselves with common decency. The Rev. Mr. Edwards, of Northampton, preached, and before the sermon was ended, the assembly appeared deeply impressed and bowed down, with an awful conviction of their sin and danger. There was such a breathing of distress, and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence, that he might be heard.' Trumbull, *History of Connecticut* (New London, Conn., 1898), II, 112.

For, preached Edwards on another occasion: 'When ministers preach of hell, and warn sinners to avoid it, in a cold manner—though they may say in words that

ites, that were God's visible people, and lived under means of grace; and that notwithstanding all God's wonderful works that he wrought towards that people, yet remained, as is expressed verse 28, void of counsel, having no understanding in them; and that, under all the cultivations of heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text.

The expression that I have chosen for my text, 'Their foot shall slide in due time,' seems to imply the following things relating to the punishment and destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to.

1. That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction's coming upon them, being represented by their foot's sliding. The same is expressed, Psalm lxxiii:18: 'Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction.'

2. It implies that they were always exposed to sudden, unexpected destruction; as he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he can't foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once, without warning, which is also expressed in that Psalm lxxiii:18, 19: 'Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!'

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and don't fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said that when that due time, or appointed time comes, their foot shall slide. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God won't hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall to destruction; as he that stands in such slippery declining ground on the edge of a pit that he can't stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this,

There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God.

By the mere pleasure of God, I mean His sovereign pleasure, His arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree or in any respect whatsoever any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment.

The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands can't be strong when God rises up: the strongest have no power to resist Him, nor can any deliver out of His hands.

He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but He can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel that has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the number of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defence against the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces: they are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so 'tis easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by; thus easy is it for God, when He pleases, to cast His enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before Him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down!

it is infinitely terrible—they contradict themselves. For actions . . . have a language as well as words. . . . And certainly such earnestness and affection in speaking is beautiful, as becomes the nature and importance of the subject. . . . Some talk of it as an unreasonable thing to fright persons to heaven; but I think it is a reasonable thing to endeavor to fright persons away from hell.' *The Works of President Edwards*(N.Y.,1857),I,538.

2. They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using His power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' Luke xiii:7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and 'tis nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They don't only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between Him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell: John iii:18: 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is: John viii:23: 'Ye are from beneath'; and thither he is bound; 'tis the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of His unchangeable law, assigns to him.

4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell: and the reason why they don't go down to hell at each moment is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry as He is with many of those miserable creatures that He is now tormenting in hell, and do there feel and bear the fierceness of His wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth, yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, that, it may be, are at ease and quiet, than He is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and don't resent it, that He don't let loose His hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as themselves, though they may imagine Him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation don't slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them.

5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The Scripture represents them as his goods, Luke xi: 21. The devils watch them; they are ever by them, at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back; if God should withdraw His hand by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men a foundation for the torments of hell: there are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell-fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the heart of damned souls, and would beget the same torments in 'em as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in Scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isaiah lvii:20. For the present God restrains their wickedness by His mighty power, as He does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further'; but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all afore it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is a thing that is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whenas if it were let loose,

it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so, if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. 'Tis no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he don't see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages shows that this is no evidence that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step won't be into another world. The unseen, unthought of ways and means of persons' going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they won't bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight can't discern them. God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending 'em to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners' going out of the world are so in God's hands, and so absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it don't depend at all less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, don't secure 'em a moment. This, divine providence and universal experience does also bear testimony to. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death; but how is it in fact? Eccles. ii:16: 'How dieth the wise man? As the fool.'

9. All wicked men's pains and contrivance they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, don't secure 'em from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security, he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do; every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes won't fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the bigger part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done: he don't intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take care that shall be effectual, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men do miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in their confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The bigger part of those that heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those that are now alive; it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If it were so that we could come to speak with them, and could inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be subjects of that misery, we, doubtless, should hear one and another reply, 'No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself: I thought my scheme good: I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief: death outwitted me: God's wrath was too quick for me. O my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me.'

10. God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise, to keep any natural

man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace that are not the children of the covenant, and that do not believe in any of the promises of the covenant, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, 'tis plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that thus it is, that natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold 'em up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out; and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

Application

The use may be of awakening to unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of. There is nothing between you and hell but the air; 'tis only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but don't see the hand of God in it, but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not that so is the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun don't willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth don't willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air don't willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and don't willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of Him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it

would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. 'Tis true, that judgment against your evil work has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the floodgate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Thus are all you that never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin to a state of new and before altogether unexperienced light and life (however you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, and may be strict in it), you are thus in the hands of an angry God; 'tis nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction.

However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, 'Peace and safety': now they see, that those things that they depended on for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. 'Tis ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world after you closed your eyes to sleep; and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you han't gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you don't this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in. 'Tis a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done,

nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

And consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath that you are in such danger of.

1. Whose wrath it is. It is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, that have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Prov.xx:2: 'The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.' The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth: it is but little that they can do when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth before God are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke xii:4, 5: 'And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.'

2. 'Tis the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah lix:18: 'According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries.' So Isaiah lxvi:15: 'For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.' And so in many other places. So we read of God's fierceness, Rev.xix:15. There we read of 'the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.' The words are exceeding terrible: if it had only been said, 'the wrath of God,' the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but 'tis not only said so, but 'the fierceness and wrath of God.' The fury of God! The fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but 'the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.' As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong! And whose heart endure! To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger implies that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you should not suffer beyond what strict justice requires: nothing shall be withheld because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezek.viii:18: 'Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.' Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy: but when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare; God will have no other use to put you to, but only to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to

no other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but only to be filled full of wrath: God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that 'tis said he will only 'laugh and mock,' Prov. i:25, 26, &c.

How awful are those words, Isaiah lxiii:3, which are the words of the great God: 'I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.' 'Tis perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz., contempt and hatred and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that he'll only tread you under foot: and though he will know that you can't bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he won't regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he'll crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt; no place shall be thought fit for you but under his feet, to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that provoke 'em. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; and accordingly gave order that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it; but the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful Majesty and mighty power in the extreme suffering of his enemies. Rom.ix:22: 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?' And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, to show how terrible the unmixed, unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isa.xxxiii:12, 13, 14: 'And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites,' &c.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness, of the Omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isa.lxvi:23, 24: 'And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.'

4. It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: there will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and

amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty, merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: for 'who knows the power of God's anger?'

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh, that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons that now sit here in some seats of this meeting-house in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest, will be there in a little time! Your damnation don't slumber; it will come swiftly and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. 'Tis doubtless the case of some that heretofore you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair. But here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor, damned, hopeless souls give for one day's such opportunity as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has flung the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him and pressing into the Kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very likely in the same miserable condition that you are in are in now a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest for one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield, where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here that have lived long in the world that are not to this day born again, and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and have done nothing ever since they have lived but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case in an especial manner is extremely dangerous; your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Don't you see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves and wake thoroughly out of sleep;

you cannot bear the fierceness and the wrath of the infinite God.

And you that are young men and young women, will you neglect this precious season that you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities and flocking to Christ! You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as it is with those persons that spent away all the precious days of youth in sin and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness.

And you children that are unconverted, don't you know that you are going down to hell to bear the dreadful wrath of that God that is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one that is yet out of Christ and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women or middle-aged or young people or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord that is a day of such great favor to some will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls. And never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the bigger part of adult persons that ever shall be saved will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on that great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the Apostles' days, the election will obtain and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you was born to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore let every one that is out of Christ now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom. 'Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest ye be consumed.'

1741 1741

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

1706–1790

A QUERY ON STYLE[1]

QUERY: How shall we judge of the goodness of a writing? Or what qualities should a writing have to be good and perfect of its kind?

ANSWER. To be good, it ought to have a tendency to benefit the reader by improving his virtue or his knowledge. But, not regarding the intention of the author, the method should be just; that is, it should proceed regularly from things known to things unknown, distinctly and clearly without confusion. The words used should be the most expressive that the language affords, provided that they are the most generally understood. Nothing should be expressed in two words that can be as well expressed in one; that is, no synonyms should be used, or very rarely, but the whole should be so placed as to be agreeable to the ear in reading; summarily it should be smooth, clear, and short, for the contrary qualities are displeasing.

But, taking the query otherwise, an ill man may write an ill thing well; that is, having an ill design, he may use the properest style and arguments (considering who are to be readers) to attain his ends. In this sense, that is best wrote, which is best adapted for obtaining the end of the writer.

[1] The text of all selections from Franklin has been modernized, and the title above given by the editors.

FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BOSTON AND PHILADELPHIA[1]

Twyford, at the Bishop of St.Asaph's, 1771.
DEAR SON: I have ever had pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors. You may remember the inquiries I made among the remains of my relations when you were with me in England, and the journey I undertook for that purpose. Now imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the circumstances of my life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with, and expecting a week's uninterrupted leisure in my present country retirement, I sit down to write them for you. To which I have besides some other inducements. Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducing means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated.

That felicity, when I reflected on it, has induced me sometimes to say, that were it offered to my choice, I should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some faults of the first. So would I, if I might, besides correcting the faults, change some sinister accidents and events of it for others more favorable. But though this were denied, I should still accept the offer. However, since such a repetition is not to be expected, the next thing most like living one's life over again seems to be a recollection of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible by putting it down in writing.

Hereby, too, I shall indulge the inclination, so natural in old men, to be talking of themselves and their own past actions; and I shall indulge it without being troublesome to others, who, through respect to age, might conceive themselves obliged to give me a hearing; since this may be read or not as any one pleases. And, lastly (I may as well confess it, since my denial of it will be believed by nobody), perhaps I shall a good deal gratify my own vanity. Indeed, I scarce ever heard or saw the introductory words, 'Without vanity I may say,' etc., but some vain thing immediately followed. Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor, and to others that are within his sphere of action; and therefore, in many cases, it would not be quite absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life.—

And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I owe the mentioned happiness of my past life to His kind providence, which led me to the means I used and gave them success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not presume, that the same goodness will still be exercised towards me in continuing that happiness, or in enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done; the complexion of my future fortune being known to Him only, in whose power it is to bless to us even our afflictions.

The notes one of my uncles (who had the same kind of curiosity in collecting family anecdotes), once put into my hands, furnished me with several particulars relating to our ancestors. From these notes I learned that the family had lived in the same village, Ecton, in Northamptonshire, for three hundred years, and how much longer he knew not (perhaps from the time when the name Franklin, that before was the name of an order of people, was assumed by them for a surname, when others took surnames all over the kingdom), on a freehold of about thirty acres, aided by the smith's business, which had continued in the family till his time; the eldest son being always bred to that business, a custom which he and my father followed as to their eldest sons. When I searched the registers at Ecton, I found an account of their births, marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, there being no register kept in that parish at any time preceding. By that register I perceived that I was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations

[1] The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from Franklin's first draft of his *Autobiography*.

back. My grandfather Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Ecton till he grew too old to follow business longer, when he went to live with his son John, a dyer at Banbury, in Oxfordshire, with whom my father served an apprenticeship. There my grandfather died and lies buried. We saw his gravestone in 1758. His eldest son Thomas lived in the house at Ecton, and left it with the land to his only child, a daughter, who, with her husband, one Fisher, of Wellingborough, sold it to Mr. Isted, now lord of the manor there. My grandfather had four sons that grew up, viz. Thomas, John, Benjamin and Josiah. I will give you what account I can of them, at this distance from my papers, and if these are not lost in my absence, you will among them find many more particulars.

Thomas was bred a smith under his father; but, being ingenious, and encouraged in learning (as all his brothers likewise were) by an Esquire Palmer, then the principal gentleman in that parish, he qualified himself for the business of scrivener, became a considerable man in the county affairs, was a chief mover of all public-spirited undertakings for the county or town of Northampton, and his own village, of which many instances were told us; and he was at Ecton much taken notice of and patronized by the then Lord Halifax. He died in 1702, January 6, old style, just four years to a day before I was born. The account we received of his life and character from some old people at Ecton, I remember, struck you as something extraordinary, from its similarity to what you knew of mine. 'Had he died on the same day,' you said, 'one might have supposed a transmigration.'

John was bred a dyer, I believe of woolens. Benjamin was bred a silk-dyer, serving an apprenticeship at London. He was an ingenious man. I remember him well, for when I was a boy he came over to my father in Boston, and lived in the house with us some years. He lived to a great age. His grandson, Samuel Franklin, now lives in Boston. He left behind him two quarto volumes, ms. of his own poetry, consisting of little occasional pieces addressed to his friends and relations, of which the following, sent to me, is a specimen. He had formed a shorthand of his own, which he taught me; but never practising it, I have now forgot it. I was named after this uncle, there being a particular affection between him and my father. He was very pious, a great attender of sermons of the best preachers, which he took down in his shorthand, and had with him many volumes of them. He was also much of a politician; too much, perhaps, for his station. There fell lately into my hands, in London, a collection he had made of all the principal pamphlets relating to public affairs from 1641 to 1717. Many of the volumes are wanting, as appears by the numbering, but there still remains eight volumes folio and twenty-four in quarto and in octavo. A dealer in old books met with them, and knowing me by my sometimes buying of him, he brought them to me. It seems my uncle must have left them here when he went to America, which was above fifty years since. There are many of his notes in the margins.

This obscure family of ours was early in the Reformation, and continued Protestants through the reign of Queen Mary, when they were sometimes in danger of trouble on account of their zeal against popery. They had got an English Bible, and to conceal and secure it, it was fastened open with tapes under and within the frame of a joint-stool. When my great-great-grandfather read it to his family, he turned up the joint-stool upon his knees, turning over the leaves then under the tapes. One of the children stood at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor coming, who was an officer of the spiritual court. In that case the stool was turned down again upon its feet, when the Bible remained concealed under it as before. This anecdote I had from my uncle Benjamin. The family continued all of the Church of England till about the end of Charles the Second's reign, when some of the ministers that had been ousted for nonconformity, holding conventicles in Northamptonshire, Benjamin and Josiah adhered to them, and so continued all their lives. The rest of the family remained with the Episcopal Church.

Josiah, my father, married young, and carried his wife with three children into New England, about 1682. The conventicles having been forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed, induced some considerable men of his acquaintance to remove to that country, and he was prevailed with to

accompany them thither, where they expected to enjoy their mode of religion with freedom. By the same wife he had four children more born there, and by a second wife ten more, in all seventeen; of which I remember thirteen sitting at one time at his table, who all grew up to be men and women, and married. I was the youngest son, and the youngest child but two, and was born in Boston, New England. My mother, the second wife, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather, in his church history of that country, entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana*, as 'a godly, learned Englishman,' if I remember the words rightly. I have heard that he wrote sundry small occasional pieces, but only one of them was printed, which I saw now many years since. It was written in 1675, in the homespun verse of that time and people, and addressed to those then concerned in the government there. It was in favor of liberty of conscience, and in behalf of the Baptists, Quakers, and other sectaries that had been under persecution; ascribing the Indian wars, and other distresses that had befallen the country, to that persecution, as so many judgments of God to punish so heinous an offense; and exhorting a repeal of those uncharitable laws. The whole appeared to me as written with a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom. The six last concluding lines I remember, though I have forgotten the two first of the stanza; but the purport of them was that his censures proceeded from good will, and, therefore he would be known as the author.

'Because to be a libeller (says he)
I hate it with my heart;
From Sherburne town, where now I dwell,
My name I do put here;
Without offense your real friend,
It is Peter Folgier.'

My elder brothers were all put apprentices to different trades. I was put to the grammar school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me, as the tithe of his sons, to the service of the Church. My early readiness in learning to read (which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read), and the opinion of all his friends that I should certainly make a good scholar, encouraged him in this purpose of his. My uncle Benjamin, too, approved of it, and proposed to give me all his shorthand volumes of sermons; I suppose as a stock to set up with if I would learn his character. I continued, however, at the grammar school not quite one year, though in that time I had risen gradually from the middle of the class of that year to be the head of it, and farther was removed into the next class above it, in order to go with that into the third at the end of the year. But my father, in the meantime, from a view of the expense of a college education, which having so large a family he could not well afford, and the mean living many so educated were afterwards able to obtain—reasons that he gave to his friends in my hearing—altered his first intention, took me from the grammar school, and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic, kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brownell, very successful in his profession generally, and that by mild, encouraging methods. Under him I acquired fair writing pretty soon, but I failed in the arithmetic, and made no progress in it. At ten years old I was taken home to assist my father in his business, which was that of a tallow-chandler and soap-boiler; a business he was not bred to, but had assumed on his arrival in New England, and on finding his dying trade would not maintain his family, being in little request. Accordingly, I was employed in cutting wick for the candles, filling the dipping mold and the molds for cast-candles, attending the shop, going of errands, etc.

I disliked the trade, and had a strong inclination for the sea, but my father declared against it; however, living near the water, I was much in and about it, learned early to swim well, and to manage boats; and when in a boat or canoe with other boys, I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally a leader among the boys, and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, though not then justly conducted.

There was a salt marsh that bounded part of the mill pond, on the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand to fish for

minnows. By much trampling, we had made it a mere quagmire. My proposal was to build a wharf there fit for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones, which were intended for a new house near the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone, I assembled a number of my playfellows, and working with them diligently like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, we brought them all away and built our little wharf. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones, which were found in our wharf. Inquiry was made after the removers; we were discovered and complained of; several of us were corrected by our fathers; and, though I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinced me that nothing was useful which was not honest.

I think you may like to know something of his person and character. He had an excellent constitution of body, was of middle stature, but well set, and very strong. He was ingenious, could draw prettily, was skilled a little in music, and had a clear pleasing voice, so that when he played psalm tunes on his violin and sung withal, as he sometimes did in an evening after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear. He had a mechanical genius too, and, on occasion, was very handy in the use of other tradesmen's tools. But his great excellence lay in a sound understanding and solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and public affairs. In the latter, indeed, he was never employed, the numerous family he had to educate and the straitness of his circumstances keeping him close to his trade; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading people, who consulted him for his opinion in affairs of the town or of the church he belonged to, and showed a good deal of respect for his judgment and advice. He was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties. At his table he liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbor to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just, and prudent in the conduct of life; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table, whether it was well- or ill-dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavor, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind, so that I was brought up in such a perfect inattention to those matters as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me, and so unobservant of it that to this day, if I am asked, I can scarce tell a few hours after dinner what I dined upon. This has been a convenience to me in travelling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed, tastes and appetites.

My mother had likewise an excellent constitution: she suckled all her ten children. I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness but that of which they died, he at 89, and she at 85 years of age. They lie buried together at Boston, where I some years since placed a marble over their grave, with this inscription:

Josiah Franklin
and
Abiah his wife
lie here interred.
They lived lovingly together in wedlock
fifty-five years.
Without an estate, or any gainful
employment,
By constant labor and industry,
with God's blessing.
They maintained a large family
comfortably;
and brought up thirteen children
and seven grandchildren
reputably.
From this instance, reader,
Be encouraged to diligence in thy calling,
And distrust not Providence.
He was a pious and prudent man;
She, a discreet and virtuous woman.
Their youngest son,
In filial regard to their memory,
Places this stone.

J.F. born 1655, *died* 1744, *Aetat* 89.
A.F. born 1667, *died* 1752, —85.

By my rambling digressions I perceive myself to be grown old. I used to write more methodically. But one does not dress for private company as for a public ball. 'Tis perhaps only negligence.

To return. I continued thus employed in my father's business for two years, that is, till I was twelve years old; and my brother John, who was bred to that business, having left my father, married and set up for himself at Rhode Island, there was all appearance that I was destined to supply his place, and become a tallow-chandler. But my dislike to the trade continuing, my father was under apprehensions that if he did not find one for me more agreeable, I should break away and get to sea, as his son Josiah had done to his great vexation. He therefore sometimes took me to walk with him, and see joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers, etc., at their work, that he might observe my inclination, and endeavor to fix it on some trade or other on land. It has ever since been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools; and it has been useful to me, having learned so much by it as to be able to do little jobs myself in my house when a workman could not readily be got, and to construct little machines for my experiments, while the intention of making the experiment was fresh and warm in my mind. My father at last fixed upon the cutler's trade, and my uncle Benjamin's son Samuel, who was bred to that business in London, being about that time established in Boston, I was sent to be with him some time on liking. But his expectations of a fee with me displeasing my father, I was taken home again.

From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. Pleased with the *Pilgrim's Progress*, my first collection was of John Bunyan's works, in separate little volumes. I afterward sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's *Historical Collections*; they were small chapmen's books, and cheap, forty or fifty in all. My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted that, at a time when I had such a thirst for knowledge, more proper books had not fallen in my way, since it was now resolved I should not be a clergyman. Plutarch's *Lives* there was in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of De Foe's, called an *Essay on Projects*, and another of Dr. Mather's, called *Essays to do Good*, which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life.

This bookish inclination at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son, James, of that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures when I was yet but twelve years old. I was to serve as an apprentice till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother. I now had access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned early in the morning lest it should be missed or wanted. And after some time an ingenious tradesman, Mr. Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, and who frequented our printing-house, took notice of me, invited me to his library, and very kindly lent me such books as I chose to read.

I now took a fancy to poetry, and made some little pieces. My brother, thinking it might turn to account, encouraged me, and put me on composing occasional ballads. One was called the *Lighthouse Tragedy*, and contained an account of the drowning of Captain Worthilake, with his two daughters; the other was a sailor song, on the taking of Teach (or Blackbeard) the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-street ballad style; and when they were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully; the event,

being recent, having made a great noise. This flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one. But as prose writing has been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement, I shall tell you how, in such a situation, I acquired what little ability I have in that way.

There was another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of argument, and very desirous of confuting one another; which disputatious turn, by the way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, [is] productive of disgusts and perhaps enmities where you may have occasion for friendship. I had caught it by reading my father's books of dispute about religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh.

A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, had a ready plenty of words, and sometimes, as I thought, bore me down more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters of a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which I owed to the printing-house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor at improvement.

About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With that view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my 'Spectator' with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses, since the continual occasion for words of the same import but of different length to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse. And, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious.

My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I

contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care; and which indeed I still thought a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it.

When about sixteen years of age I happened to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusing to eat flesh occasioned an inconveniency, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty pudding, and a few others, and then proposed to my brother, that if he would give me weekly half the money he paid for my board, I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast (which often was no more than a biscuit or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry-cook's, and a glass of water), had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking.

And now it was that, being on some occasion made ashamed of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed in learning when at school, I took Cocker's book of arithmetic, and went through the whole by myself with great ease. I also read Seller's and Sturmy's books of navigation, and became acquainted with the little geometry they contain; but never proceeded far in that science. And I read about this time Locke *On Human Understanding*, and *The Art of Thinking*, by Messrs. du Port Royal.

While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's), at the end of which there were two little sketches of the arts of rhetoric and logic, the latter finishing with a specimen of a dispute in the Socratic method; and soon after I procured Xenophon's *Memorable Things of Socrates*, wherein there are many instances of the same method. I was charmed with it, adopted it, dropped my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer and doubter. And being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine, I found this method safest for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took a delight in it, practised it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved. I continued this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence; never using, when I advanced any thing that may possibly be disputed, the words 'certainly,' 'undoubtedly,' or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather say, 'I conceive' or 'I apprehend' a thing to be so or so; 'it appears to me,' or 'I should think it so or so for such and such reasons'; or 'it is so, if I am not mistaken.' This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engaged in promoting. And, as the chief ends of conversation are 'to inform' or 'to be informed,' 'to please' or 'to persuade,' I wish well meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure. For, if you would 'inform,' a positive, dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may provoke contradiction and prevent a candid attention. If you wish information and improvement from the knowledge of others, and yet at the same time express yourself as firmly fixed in your present opinions, modest, sensible men,

who do not love disputation, will probably leave you undisturbed in the possession of your error. And by such a manner, you can seldom hope to recommend yourself in 'pleasing' your hearers, or to persuade those whose concurrence you desire. Pope says, judiciously,

'Men should be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot,'

farther recommending it to us,

'To speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence.'

And he might have coupled with this line that which he has coupled with another, I think less properly,

'For want of modesty is want of sense.'

If you ask, 'why less properly,' I must repeat the lines,

'Immodest words admit of no defense,
For want of modesty is want of sense.'

Now, is not want of sense (where a man is so unfortunate as to want it) some apology for his want of modesty? and would not the lines stand more justly thus?

'Immodest words admit but this defense,
That want of modesty is want of sense.'

This however, I should submit to better judgments.

My brother had, in 1720 or '21, begun to print a newspaper. It was the second that appeared in America, and was called the *New England Courant*. The only one before it was the *Boston News-Letter*. I remember his being dissuaded by some of his friends from the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being in their judgment enough for America. At this time, 1771, there are not less than five-and-twenty. He went on however with the undertaking, and after having worked in composing the types and printing off the sheets, I was employed to carry the papers thro' the streets to the customers.

He had some ingenious men among his friends, who amused themselves by writing little pieces for this paper, which gained it credit and made it more in demand, and these gentlemen often visited us. Hearing their conversations, and their accounts of the approbation their papers were received with, I was excited to try my hand among them. But being still a boy and suspecting that my brother would object to printing anything of mine in his paper if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and, writing an anonymous paper, I put it in at night under the door of the printing-house. It was found in the morning, and communicated to his writing friends when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity. I suppose now that I was rather lucky in my judges, and that perhaps they were not really so very good ones as I then esteemed them.

Encouraged, however, by this, I wrote and conveyed in the same way to the press several more papers which were equally approved; and I kept my secret till my small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, and then I discovered it; when[ce] I began to be considered a little more by my brother's acquaintance, and in a manner that did not quite please him, as he thought, probably with reason, that it tended to make me too vain. And, perhaps, this might be one occasion of the differences that we began to have about this time. Though a brother, he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice, and, accordingly, expected the same services from me as he would from another; while I thought he demeaned me too much in some he required of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence. Our disputes were often brought before our father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right, or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favor. But my brother was passionate, and had often beaten me, which I took extremely amiss; and, thinking my apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for

some opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a manner unexpected.

One of the pieces in our newspaper on some political point, which I have now forgotten, gave offense to the Assembly. He was taken up, censured, and imprisoned for a month, by the speaker's warrant, I suppose, because he would not discover his author. I too was taken up and examined before the council; but, though I did not give them any satisfaction, they contented themselves with admonishing me, and dismissed me, considering me, perhaps, as an apprentice, who was bound to keep his master's secrets.

During my brother's confinement, which I resented a good deal, notwithstanding our private differences, I had the management of the paper; and I made bold to give our rulers some rubs in it, which my brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavorable light, as a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satire. My brother's discharge was accompanied with an order of the House (a very odd one), that 'James Franklin should no longer print the paper called the *New England Courant*.'

There was a consultation held in our printing-house among his friends, what he should do in this case. Some proposed to evade the order by changing the name of the paper; but my brother, seeing inconveniences in that, it was finally concluded on as a better way, to let it be printed for the future under the name of Benjamin Franklin. And to avoid the censure of the Assembly, that might fall on him as still printing it by his apprentice, the contrivance was that my old indenture should be returned to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to be shown on occasion, but to secure to him the benefit of my service, I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme it was; but, however, it was immediately executed, and the paper went on accordingly, under my name for several months.

At length, a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first errata of my life. But the unfairness of it weighed little with me, when under the impressions of resentment for the blows his passion too often urged him to bestow upon me. Though he was otherwise not an ill-natured man: perhaps I was too saucy and provoking.

When he found I would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting employment in any other printing-house of the town, by going round and speaking to every master, who accordingly refused to give me work. I then thought of going to New York, as the nearest place where there was a printer; and I was rather inclined to leave Boston when I reflected that I had already made myself a little obnoxious to the governing party; and, from the arbitrary proceedings of the Assembly in my brother's case, it was likely I might, if I stayed, soon bring myself into scrapes; and farther, that my indiscrete disputations about religion began to make me pointed at with horror by good people as an infidel or atheist. I determined on the point, but my father now siding with my brother, I was sensible that, if I attempted to go openly, means would be used to prevent me. My friend Collins, therefore, undertook to manage a little for me. He agreed with the captain of a New York sloop for my passage, under the notion of my being a young acquaintance of his, that had got a naughty girl with child, whose friends would compel me to marry her, and therefore I could not appear or come away publicly. So I sold some of my books to raise a little money, was taken on board privately, and as we had a fair wind, in three days I found myself in New York, near three hundred miles from home, a boy of but seventeen, without the least recommendation to or knowledge of any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket.

My inclinations for the sea were by this time worn out, or I might now have gratified them. But, having a trade, and supposing myself a pretty good workman, I offered my service to the printer in the place, old Mr. William Bradford, who had been the first printer in Pennsylvania, but removed from thence upon the quarrel of George Keith. He could give me no employment, having little to do and help enough already. But, says he, 'My son at Philadelphia has

lately lost his principal hand, Aquila Rose, by death; if you go thither, I believe he may employ you.' Philadelphia was a hundred miles further. I set out, however, in a boat for Amboy, leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea.

In crossing the bay, we met with a squall that tore our rotten sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill; and drove us upon Long Island. In our way, a drunken Dutchman, who was a passenger too, fell overboard; when he was sinking, I reached through the water to his shock-pate, and drew him up, so that we got him in again. His ducking sobered him a little, and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book, which he desired I would dry for him. It proved to be my old favorite author, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in Dutch, finely printed on good paper, with copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language. I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more generally read than any other book, except perhaps the Bible. Honest John was the first that I know of who mixed narration and dialogue; a method of writing very engaging to the reader, who in the most interesting parts finds himself, as it were, brought into the company and present at the discourse. De Foe in his *Crusoe*, his *Moll Flanders*, *Religious Courtship*, *Family Instructor*, and other pieces, has imitated it with success; and Richardson has done the same in his *Pamela*, etc.

When we drew near the island, we found it was at a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surf on the stony beach. So we dropped anchor, and swung round towards the shore. Some people came down to the water edge and halloed to us, as we did to them; but the wind was so high, and the surf so loud, that we could not hear so as to understand each other. There were canoes on the shore, and we made signs, and halloed that they should fetch us; but they either did not understand us, or thought it impracticable. So they went away, and night coming on, we had no remedy but to wait till the wind should abate; and, in the mean time, the boatman and I concluded to sleep, if we could; and so crowded into the scuttle, with the Dutchman, who was still wet, and the spray beating over the head of our boat, leaked through to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay all night, with very little rest. But the wind abating the next day, we made a shift to reach Amboy before night, having been thirty hours on the water, without victuals, or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum, the water we sailed on being salt.

In the evening I found myself very feverish, and went in to bed; but, having read somewhere that cold water drank plentifully was good for a fever, I followed the prescription, sweat plentifully most of the night, my fever left me, and in the morning, crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having fifty miles to Burlington, where I was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia.

It rained very hard all the day; I was thoroughly soaked, and by noon a good deal tired; so I stopped at a poor inn, where I stayed all night, beginning now to wish that I had never left home. I cut so miserable a figure, too, that I found, by the questions asked me, I was suspected to be some runaway servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However, I proceeded the next day, and got in the evening to an inn, within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown.

He entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment, and, finding I had read a little, became very sociable and friendly. Our acquaintance continued as long as he lived. He had been, I imagine, an itinerant doctor, for there was no town in England, or country in Europe, of which he could not give a very particular account. He had some letters, and was ingenious, but much of an unbeliever, and wickedly undertook, some years after, to travesty the Bible in doggerel verse, as Cotton had done Virgil. By this means he set many of the facts in a very ridiculous light, and might have hurt weak minds if his work had been published, but it never was.

At his house I lay that night, and the next morning reached Burlington, but had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before my coming, and no other expected to go before Tuesday, this being Saturday. Wherefore I

returned to an old woman in the town, of whom I had bought gingerbread to eat on the water, and asked her advice. She invited me to lodge at her house till a passage by water should offer; and being tired with my foot travelling, I accepted the invitation. She understanding I was a printer would have had me stay at that town and follow my business, being ignorant of the stock necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of ox-cheek with great good will, accepting only a pot of ale in return. And I thought myself fixed till Tuesday should come. However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going towards Philadelphia, with several people in her. They took me in, and, as there was no wind, we rowed all the way; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it, and would row no farther; the others knew not where we were; so we put towards the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold, in October, and there we remained till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arrived there about eight or nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, and landed at the Market Street wharf.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings; I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with travelling, rowing and want of rest, I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of the boat for my passage, who at first refused it, on account of my rowing; but I insisted on their taking it, a man being sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than when he has plenty, perhaps through fear of being thought to have but little.

Then I walked up the street, gazing about, till near the market-house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to, in Second Street, and asked for biscuit, intending such as we had in Boston; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none such; so not considering or knowing the difference of money, and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I bade him give me three-penny worth of any sort. He gave me three great puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walked off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market Street Wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther.

Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy through labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continued so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

Walking down again towards the river, and, looking in the faces of people, I met a young Quaker man, whose countenance I liked, and, accosting him, requested he would tell me where a stranger could get lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners. 'Here,' says he, 'is one place that entertains strangers, but it is not a reputable house; if thee wilt walk with me,

I'll show thee a better.' He brought me to the Crooked Billet in Water Street. Here I got a dinner. And, while I was eating it, several sly questions were asked me, as it seemed to be suspected from my youth and appearance, that I might be some runaway.

After dinner, my sleepiness returned, and being shown to a bed, I lay down without undressing, and slept till six in the evening, was called to supper, went to bed again very early and slept soundly till next morning. Then I made myself as tidy as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford, the printer's. I found in the shop the old man, his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who, travelling on horseback, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduced me to his son, who received me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately supplied with one. But there was another printer in town, lately set up, one Keimer, who, perhaps, might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then till fuller business should offer.

The old gentleman said he would go with me to the new printer; and when we found him, 'Neighbor,' says Bradford, 'I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps you may want such a one.' He asked me a few questions, put a composing stick in my hand to see how I worked, and then said he would employ me soon, though he had just then nothing for me to do. And, taking old Bradford, whom he had never seen before, to be one of the townspeople that had a good will for him, entered into a conversation on his present undertaking and prospects; while Bradford, not discovering that he was the other printer's father, on Keimer's saying he expected soon to get the greatest part of the business into his own hands, drew him on by artful questions, and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what interest he relied on, and in what manner he intended to proceed. I, who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old sophister, and the other a mere novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surprised when I told him who the old man was.

Keimer's printing-house, I found, consisted of an old shattered press, and one small, worn-out font of English, which he was then using himself, composing in it an elegy on Aquila Rose, before mentioned, an ingenious young man, of excellent character, much respected in the town, clerk of the Assembly, and a pretty poet. Keimer made verses too, but very indifferently. He could not be said to write them, for his manner was to compose them in the types directly out of his head. So there being no copy, but one pair of cases, and the elegy likely to require all the letters, no one could help him. I endeavored to put his press (which he had not yet used, and of which he understood nothing) into order fit to be worked with; and, promising to come and print off his elegy as soon as he should have got it ready, I returned to Bradford's, who gave me a little job to do for the present, [and] there I lodged and dieted. A few days after, Keimer sent for me to print off the elegy. And now he had got another pair of cases, and a pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work.

These two printers I found poorly qualified for their business. Bradford had not been bred to it, and was very illiterate; and Keimer, though something of a scholar, was a mere compositor, knowing nothing of presswork. He had been one of the French prophets, and could act their enthusiastic agitations. At this time he did not profess any particular religion, but something of all on occasion; was very ignorant of the world; and had, as I afterward found, a good deal of the knave in his composition. He did not like my lodging at Bradford's while I worked with him. He had a house, indeed, but without furniture, so he could not lodge me; but he got me a lodging at Mr. Read's, before mentioned, who was the owner of his house; and, my chest and clothes being come by this time, I made rather a more respectable appearance in the eyes of Miss Read than I had done when she first happened to see me eating my roll in the street.

I began now to have some acquaintance among the young people of the town, that were lovers of reading, with whom I spent my evenings very pleasantly; and gaining money by my industry and frugality, I lived very agreeably, forgetting Boston as much as I could, and not desiring that any there should know where I resided, except

my friend Collins, who was in my secret, and kept it when I wrote to him.

1771 1791

THE WAY TO WEALTH [1]

COURTEOUS READER,

I have heard that nothing gives an author so great pleasure as to find his works respectfully quoted by other learned authors. This pleasure I have seldom enjoyed; for though I have been, if I may say it without vanity, an eminent author of almanacs annually now a full quarter of a century, my brother authors in the same way, for what reason I know not, have ever been very sparing in their applauses; and no other author has taken the least notice of me; so that, did not my writings produce me some solid pudding, the great deficiency of praise would have quite discouraged me.

I concluded at length that the people were the best judges of my merit, for they buy my works; and besides, in my rambles where I am not personally known, I have frequently heard one or other of my adages repeated, with 'as Poor Richard says' at the end on't. This gave me some satisfaction, as it showed not only that my instructions were regarded, but discovered likewise some respect for my authority; and I own that, to encourage the practice of remembering and repeating those wise sentences, I have sometimes *quoted myself* with great gravity.

Judge, then, how much I must have been gratified by an incident I am going to relate to you. I stopped my horse lately where a great number of people were collected at a vendue of merchant goods. The hour of sale not being come, they were conversing on the badness of the times, and one of the company called to a plain, clean old man with white locks: 'Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the times? Won't these heavy taxes quite ruin the country? How shall we be ever able to pay them? What would you advise us to?' Father Abraham stood up and replied, 'If you'd have my advice, I'll give it you in short, for "A word to the wise is enough," and "Many words won't fill a bushel," as Poor Richard says.' They joined in desiring him to speak his mind, and gathering round him, he proceeded as follows:

'Friends,' says he, 'and neighbors, the taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly; and from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice, and something may be done for us; "God helps them that help themselves," as Poor Richard says in his almanac of 1733.

'It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one-tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service. But idleness taxes many of us much more, if we reckon all that is spent in absolute sloth, or doing of nothing, with that which is spent in idle employments or amusements that amount to nothing. Sloth, by

1 In continuing his *Autobiography* in 1788, Franklin recalled: 'In 1732 I first published my Almanac, under the name of *Richard Saunders*; it was continued by me about twenty-five years, commonly called *Poor Richard's Almanac*. I endeavored to make it both entertaining and useful, and it accordingly came to be in such demand, that I reaped considerable profit from it, vending annually near ten thousand. And observing that it was generally read, scarce any neighborhood in the province being without it, I considered it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the common people, who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces that occurred between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality, as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want, to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, *it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright*.

"These proverbs, which contained the wisdom of many ages and nations, I assembled and formed into a connected discourse prefixed to the Almanac of 175[8], as the harangue of a wise old man to the people attending an auction. The bringing all these scattered counsels thus into a focus enabled them to make greater impression. The piece, being universally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the Continent; reprinted in Britain on a broad side, to be stuck up in houses; two translations were made of it in French, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants. In Pennsylvania, as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money which was observable for several years after its publication.' Bigelow, ed., *The Life of Benjamin Franklin*(N.Y.,1924),127–28.

bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. "Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears; while the used key is always bright," as Poor Richard says. "But dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that's the stuff life is made of," as Poor Richard says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that "The sleeping fox catches no poultry," and that "There will be sleeping enough in the grave," as Poor Richard says.

' "If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be," as Poor Richard says, "the greatest prodigality"; since, as he elsewhere tells us, "Lost time is never found again"; and "What we call time enough always proves little enough." Let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. "Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy," as Poor Richard says; and "He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night"; while "Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him," as we read in Poor Richard, who adds, "Drive thy business, let not that drive thee"; and "Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

'So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We may make these times better if we bestir ourselves. "Industry need not wish," as Poor Richard says, and "He that lives upon hope will die fasting." "There are no gains without pains"; "Then help, hands, for I have no lands," or if I have, they are smartly taxed. And, as Poor Richard likewise observes, "He that hath a trade hath an estate; and he that hath a calling, hath an office of profit and honor"; but then the trade must be worked at, and the calling well followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious, we shall never starve; for, as Poor Richard says, "At the working man's house hunger looks in but dares not enter." Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter, for "Industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them," says Poor Richard. What though you have found no treasure, nor has any rich relation left you a legacy, "Diligence is the mother of good luck," as Poor Richard says, and "God gives all things to industry." "Then plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep," says Poor Dick. Work while it is called today, for you know not how much you may be hindered tomorrow, which makes Poor Richard say, "One today is worth two tomorrows," and farther, "Have you somewhat to do tomorrow, do it today." If you were a servant, would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Are you then your own master, "Be ashamed to catch yourself idle," as Poor Dick says. When there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, your country, and your gracious King, be up by peep of day; "Let not the sun look down and say, 'Inglorious here he lies.' " Handle your tools without mittens; remember that "The cat in gloves catches no mice," as Poor Richard says. 'Tis true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects, for "Constant dropping wears away stones," and "By diligence and patience the mouse ate in two the cable"; and "Little strokes fell great oaks," as Poor Richard says in his almanac—the year I cannot just now remember.

'Methinks I hear some of you say, "Must a man afford himself no leisure?" I will tell thee, my friend, what Poor Richard says: "Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure"; and, "Since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour." Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; so that, as Poor Richard says, "A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things." Do you imagine that sloth will afford you more comfort than labor? No, for as Poor Richard says, "Trouble springs from idleness, and grievous toil from needless ease." "Many, without labor, would live by their wits only, but they break for want of stock." Whereas industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect: "Fly pleasures, and they'll follow you." "The diligent spinner has a large shift"; and, "Now I have a sheep and a cow, everybody bids me good morrow"; all which is well said by Poor Richard.

'But with our industry we must likewise be steady, settled, and careful, and oversee our own affairs with our own eyes, and not

trust too much to others; for, as Poor Richard says,

"I never saw an oft-removèd tree,
Nor yet an oft-removèd family,
That throve so well as those that settled be."

And again, "Three removes is as bad as a fire"; and again, "Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee"; and again, "If you would have your business done, go; if not, send." And again,

"He that by the plough would thrive
Himself must either hold or drive."

And again, "The eye of a master will do more work than his hands"; and again, "Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge"; and again, "Not to oversee workmen is to leave them your purse open." Trusting too much to others' care is the ruin of many; for, as the almanac says, "In the affairs of this world men are saved not by faith but by the want of it"; but a man's own care is profitable; for, saith Poor Dick, "Learning is to the studious, and riches to the careful, as well as power to the bold, and heaven to the virtuous"; and farther, "If you would have a faithful servant and one that you like, serve yourself." And again, he adviseth to circumspection and care, even in the smallest matters, because sometimes "A little neglect may breed great mischief"; adding: "For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy; all for want of care about a horseshoe nail."

'So much for industry, my friends, and attention to one's own business; but to these we must add frugality if we would make our industry more certainly successful. A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose all his life to the grindstone, and die not worth a groat at last. "A fat kitchen makes a lean will," as Poor Richard says; and

"Many estates are spent in the getting,
Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting,
And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting."

"If you would be wealthy," says he in another almanac, "think of saving as well as of getting: the Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes."

'Away then with your expensive follies, and you will not then have so much cause to complain of hard times, heavy taxes, and chargeable families; for, as Poor Dick says,

"Women and wine, game and deceit
Make the wealth small and the wants great."

And farther, "What maintains one vice would bring up two children." You may think, perhaps, that a little tea, or a little punch now and then, diet a little more costly, clothes a little finer, and a little entertainment now and then can be no great matter; but remember what Poor Richard says, "Many a little makes a mickle"; and farther, "Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship"; and again, "Who dainties love, shall beggars prove"; and moreover, "Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them."

'Here you are all got together at this vendue of fineries and knickknacks. You call them goods; but if you do not take care, they will prove evils to some of you. You expect they will be sold cheap, and perhaps they may for less than they cost; but if you have no occasion for them, they must be dear to you. Remember what Poor Richard says, "Buy what thou hast no need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessaries." And again, "At a great pennyworth pause a while." He means that perhaps the cheapness is apparent only, and not real; or the bargain, by straitening thee in thy business, may do thee more harm than good. For in another place he says, "Many have been ruined by buying good pennyworths." Again, Poor Richard says, " 'Tis foolish to lay out money in a purchase of repentance"; and yet this folly is practiced every day at vendues for want of minding the almanac. "Wise men," as Poor Dick says, "learn by others' harms, fools scarcely by their own"; but *felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*[1] Many a one, for the sake of finery on the back, have gone with a hungry belly and half starved their families.

1 'Fortunate the man whom another's dangers render cautious.'

"Silks and satins, scarlet and velvets," as Poor Richard says, "put out the kitchen fire."

'These are not the necessaries of life; they can scarcely be called the conveniences; and yet, only because they look pretty, how many want to have them! The artificial wants of mankind thus become more numerous than the natural; and, as Poor Dick says, "For one poor person, there are an hundred indigent." By these and other extravagancies the genteel are reduced to poverty and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who through industry and frugality have maintained their standing; in which case it appears plainly that "A ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees," as Poor Richard says. Perhaps they have had a small estate left them, which they knew not the getting of; they think 'tis day and will never be night, that a little to be spent out of so much is not worth minding. "A child and a fool," as Poor Richard says, "imagine twenty shillings and twenty years can never be spent"; but "Always taking out of the meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom"; then as Poor Dick says, "When the well's dry, they know the worth of water." But this they might have known before if they had taken his advice. "If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some"; or "He that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing"; and indeed so does he that lends to such people, when he goes to get it in again. Poor Dick farther advises, and says,

"Fond pride of dress is sure a very curse;
E'er fancy you consult, consult your purse."

And again, "Pride is as loud a beggar as want, and a great deal more saucy." When you have bought one fine thing, you must buy ten more, that your appearance may be all of a piece; but Poor Dick says, " 'Tis easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it." And 'tis as truly folly for the poor to ape the rich as for the frog to swell in order to equal the ox.

"Great estates may venture more,
But little boats should keep near shore."

'Tis, however, a folly soon punished; for "Pride that dines on vanity sups on contempt," as Poor Richard says. And in another place, "Pride breakfasted with plenty, dined with poverty, and supped with infamy." And after all, of what use is this pride of appearance, for which so much is risked, so much is suffered? It cannot promote health, or ease pain; it makes no increase of merit in the person; it creates envy, it hastens misfortune.

"What is a butterfly? At best
He's but a caterpillar drest.
The gaudy fop's his picture just,"

as Poor Richard says.

'But what madness must it be to run in debt for these superfluities! We are offered by the terms of this vendue six months' credit; and that perhaps has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spare the ready money and hope now to be fine without it. But, ah, think what you do when you run in debt; you give to another power over your liberty! If you cannot pay at the time, you will be ashamed to see your creditor; you will be in fear when you speak to him; you will make poor pitiful sneaking excuses, and by degrees come to lose your veracity, and sink into base downright lying; for, as Poor Richard says, "The second vice is lying, the first is running in debt." And again, to the same purpose, "Lying rides upon debt's back." Whereas a free-born Englishman ought not to be ashamed or afraid to see or speak to any man living. But poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue: " 'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright," as Poor Richard truly says.

'What would you think of that prince or that government who should issue an edict forbidding you to dress like a gentleman or a gentlewoman on pain of imprisonment or servitude? Would you not say that you were free, have a right to dress as you please, and that such an edict would be a breach of your privileges, and such a government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put yourself under that tyranny, when you run in debt for such dress! Your creditor has authority at his pleasure to deprive you of your liberty by confining you in gaol for life, or to sell you as a servant, if

you should not be able to pay him! When you have got your bargain, you may perhaps think little of payment; but "Creditors," Poor Richard tells us, "have better memories than debtors"; and in another place says, "Creditors are a superstitious sect, great observers of set days and times." The day comes round before you are aware, and the demand is made before you are prepared to satisfy it; or, if you bear your debt in mind, the term which at first seemed so long will, as it lessens, appear extremely short. Time will seem to have added wings to his heels as well as shoulders. "Those have a short Lent," saith Poor Richard, "who owe money to be paid at Easter." Then since, as he says, "The borrower is a slave to the lender, and the debtor to the creditor," disdain the chain, preserve your freedom; and maintain your independency. Be industrious and free; be frugal and free. At present, perhaps, you may think yourself in thriving circumstances, and that you can bear a little extravagance without injury; but,

"For age and want, save while you may;
No morning sun lasts a whole day,"

as Poor Richard says. Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever while you live expense is constant and certain; and " 'Tis easier to build two chimneys than to keep one in fuel," as Poor Richard says. So, "Rather go to bed supperless than rise in debt."

"Get what you can, and what you get hold;
'Tis the stone that will turn all your lead
into gold,"

as Poor Richard says. And when you have got the philosopher's stone, sure you will no longer complain of bad times or the difficulty of paying taxes.

'This doctrine, my friends, is reason and wisdom; but after all, do not depend too much upon your own industry, and frugality, and prudence, though excellent things, for they may all be blasted without the blessing of Heaven; and therefore ask that blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember, Job suffered, and was afterwards prosperous.

'And now to conclude, "Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that"; for it is true, "We may give advice, but we cannot give conduct," as Poor Richard says. However, remember this: "They that won't be counselled can't be helped," as Poor Richard says; and farther, that "If you will not hear reason, she'll surely rap your knuckles." '

Thus the old gentleman ended his harangue. The people heard it and approved the doctrine, and immediately practiced the contrary, just as if it had been a common sermon; for the vendue opened, and they began to buy extravagantly, notwithstanding all his cautions and their own fear of taxes. I found the good man had thoroughly studied my almanacs and digested all I had dropped on these topics during the course of five and twenty years. The frequent mention he made of me must have tired anyone else, but my vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious that not a tenth part of the wisdom was my own which he ascribed to me, but rather the gleanings I had made of the sense of all ages and nations. However, I resolved to be the better for the echo of it; and though I had at first determined to buy stuff for a new coat, I went away resolved to wear my old one a little longer. Reader, if thou wilt do the same, thy profit will be as great as mine. I am, as ever, thine to serve thee.

RICHARD SAUNDERS.

July 7, 1757. 1758

THE SALE OF THE HESSIANS

FROM THE COUNT DE SCHAUMBERGH TO THE BARON HOHENDORF, COMMANDING THE HESSIAN TROOPS IN AMERICA

Rome, February 18, 1777.

Monsieur Le Baron:—On my return from Naples, I received at Rome your letter of the 27th December of last year. I have learned with unspeakable pleasure the courage our troops exhibited at Trenton, and you cannot imagine my joy on being told that of the 1,950 Hessians engaged in the fight, but 345 escaped. There were just 1,605 men killed, and I cannot sufficiently commend your prudence in sending an exact list of the dead to my minister in London. This precaution was the more neces-

sary, as the report sent to the English ministry does not give but 1,455 dead. This would make 483,450 florins instead of 643,500 which I am entitled to demand under our convention. You will comprehend the prejudice which such an error would work in my finances, and I do not doubt you will take the necessary pains to prove that Lord North's list is false and yours correct.

The Court of London objects that there were a hundred wounded who ought not to be included in the list, nor paid for as dead; but I trust you will not overlook my instructions to you on quitting Cassel, and that you will not have tried by human succor to recall the life of the unfortunates whose days could not be lengthened but by the loss of a leg or an arm. That would be making them a pernicious present, and I am sure they would rather die than live in a condition no longer fit for my service. I do not mean by this that you should assassinate them; we should be humane, my dear Baron, but you may insinuate to the surgeons with entire propriety that a crippled man is a reproach to their profession, and that there is no wiser course than to let every one of them die when he ceases to be fit to fight.

I am about to send to you some new recruits. Don't economize them. Remember glory before all things. Glory is true wealth. There is nothing degrades the soldier like the love of money. He must care only for honor and reputation, but this reputation must be acquired in the midst of dangers. A battle gained without costing the conqueror any blood is an inglorious success, while the conquered cover themselves with glory by perishing with their arms in their hands. Do you remember that of the 300 Lacedæmonians who defended the defile of Thermopylæ, not one returned? How happy should I be could I say the same of my brave Hessians!

It is true that their king, Leonidas, perished with them: but things have changed, and it is no longer the custom for princes of the empire to go and fight in America for a cause with which they have no concern. And besides, to whom should they pay the thirty guineas per man if I did not stay in Europe to receive them? Then, it is necessary also that I be ready to send recruits to replace the men you lose. For this purpose I must return to Hesse. It is true, grown men are becoming scarce there, but I will send you boys. Besides, the scarcer the commodity the higher the price. I am assured that the women and little girls have begun to till our lands, and they get on not badly. You did right to send back to Europe that Dr. Crumerus who was so successful in curing dysentery. Don't bother with a man who is subject to looseness of the bowels. That disease makes bad soldiers. One coward will do more mischief in an engagement than ten brave men will do good. Better that they burst in their barracks than fly in a battle, and tarnish the glory of our arms. Besides, you know that they pay me as killed for all who die from disease, and I don't get a farthing for runaways. My trip to Italy, which has cost me enormously, makes it desirable that there should be a great mortality among them. You will therefore promise promotion to all who expose themselves; you will exhort them to seek glory in the midst of dangers; you will say to Major Maundorff that I am not at all content with his saving the 345 men who escaped the massacre of Trenton. Through the whole campaign he has not had ten men killed in consequence of his orders. Finally, let it be your principal object to prolong the war and avoid a decisive engagement on either side, for I have made arrangements for a grand Italian opera, and I do not wish to be obliged to give it up. Meantime I pray God, my dear Baron de Hohendorf, to have you in his holy and gracious keeping.

THE EPHEMERA

An Emblem of Human Life[1]

You may remember, my dear friend, that when we lately spent that happy day in the

1 Franklin wrote, 17 June 1780, to his friend William Carmichael, then in Madrid: 'Enclosed I send you the little piece you desire. To understand it rightly you should be acquainted with some few circumstances. The person to whom it was addressed is Madame Brillon, a lady of most respectable character and pleasing conversation; mistress of an amiable family in this neighborhood, with which I spend an evening twice in every week. She has, among other elegant accomplishments, that of an excellent musician; and with her daughters, who sing prettily, and some friends who play, she kindly entertains me and my grandson with little concerts, a cup of tea, and a game of chess. I call this *my Opera*, for I rarely go to the Opera at Paris.

'The Moulin Joli is a little island in the Seine about

delightful garden and sweet society of the Moulin Joli, I stopt a little in one of our walks, and staid some time behind the company. We had been shown numberless skeletons of a kind of little fly, called an ephemera, whose successive generations, we were told, were bred and expired within the day. I happened to see a living company of them on a leaf, who appeared to be engaged in conversation. You know I understand all the inferior animal tongues: my too great application of the study of them is the best excuse I can give for the little progress I have made in your charming language. I listened through curiosity to the discourse of these little creatures; but as they, in their national vivacity, spoke three or four together, I could make but little of their conversation. I found, however, by some broken expressions that I heard now and then, they were disputing warmly on the merits of two foreign musicians, one a *cousin*, the other a *moscheto*; in which dispute they spent their time, seemingly as regardless of the shortness of life as if they had been sure of living a month. Happy people! thought I, you live certainly under a wise, just, and mild government, since you have no public grievances to complain of, nor any subject of contention but the perfections and imperfections of foreign music. I turned my head from them to an old grey-headed one, who was single on another leaf, and talking to himself. Being amused with his soliloquy, I put it down in writing, in hopes it will likewise amuse her to whom I am so much indebted for the most pleasing of all amusements, her delicious company and heavenly harmony.

'It was,' said he, 'the opinion of learned philosophers of our race, who lived and flourished long before my time, that this vast world, the Moulin Joli, could not itself subsist more than eighteen hours; and I think there was some foundation for that opinion, since by the apparent motion of the great luminary that gives life to all nature, and which in my time has evidently declined considerably towards the ocean at the end of our earth, it must then finish its course, be extinguished in the waters that surround us, and leave the world in cold and darkness, necessarily producing universal death and destruction. I have lived seven of those hours, a great age, being no less than four hundred and twenty minutes of time. How very few of us continue so long! I have seen generations born, flourish, and expire. My present friends are the children and grandchildren of the friends of my youth, who are now, alas, no more! And I must soon follow them; for, by the course of nature, though still in health, I cannot expect to live above seven or eight minutes longer. What now avails all my toil and labor, in amassing honey-dew on this leaf, which I cannot live to enjoy! What the political struggles I have been engaged in, for the good of my compatriot inhabitants of this bush, or my philosophical studies for the benefit of our race in general! for, in politics, what can laws do without morals? Our present race of ephemeræ will in a course of minutes become corrupt, like those of other and older bushes, and consequently as wretched. And in philosophy how small our progress! Alas! art is long, and life is short! My friends would comfort me with the idea of a name, they say, I shall leave behind me, and they tell me I have lived long enough to nature and to glory. But what will fame be to an ephemera who no longer exists? And what will become of all history in the eighteenth hour, when the world itself, even the whole Moulin Joli, shall come to its end, and be buried in universal ruin?'

To me, after all my eager pursuits, no solid pleasures now remain, but the reflection of a long life spent in meaning well, the sensible conversation of a few good lady ephemeræ, and now and then a kind smile and a tune from the ever amiable *Brillante*.

B. FRANKLIN.

1778 1818

two leagues hence, part of the country-seat of another friend, where we visit every summer, and spend the day in the pleasing society of the ingenious, learned, and very polite persons who inhabit it. At the time when the letter was written, all conversations at Paris were filled with disputes about the music of Gluck and Picini, a German and Italian musician, who divided the town into violent parties. A friend of this lady having obtained a copy of it, under a promise not to give another, did not observe that promise; so that many have been taken, and it is become as public as such a thing can well be, that is not printed; but I could not dream of its being heard of at Madrid! The thought was partly taken from a little piece of some unknown writer, which I met with fifty years since in a newspaper, and which the sight of the Ephemera brought to my recollection.' Smyth, ed., *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*(N.Y.,1906),VIII,99–100.

THE WHISTLE

To Madame Brillon

Passy, November 10, 1779.

I RECEIVED my dear friend's two letters, one for Wednesday and one for Saturday. This is again Wednesday. I do not deserve one for today, because I have not answered the former. But indolent as I am, and averse to writing, the fear of having no more of your pleasing epistles if I do not contribute to the correspondence, obliges me to take up my pen. And as Mr. B. has kindly sent me word that he sets out tomorrow to see you, instead of spending this Wednesday evening as I have done its namesakes, in your delightful company, I sit down to spend it in thinking of you, in writing to you, and in reading over and over again your letters.

I am charmed with your description of Paradise, and with your plan of living there. And I approve much of your conclusion, that, in the mean time, we should draw all the good we can from this world. In my opinion we might all draw more good from it than we do, and suffer less evil, if we would take care 'not to give too much for our whistles.' For to me it seems that most of the unhappy people we meet with, are become so by neglect of that caution.

You ask what I mean?—You love stories, and will excuse my telling one of myself. When I was a child of seven years old, my friends on a holiday filled my little pocket with halfpence. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and being charmed with the sound of a whistle that I met by the way, in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for it. When I came home, whistling all over the house, much pleased with my whistle, but disturbing all the family; my brothers, sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure.

This however was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, 'Do not give too much for the whistle'; and I saved my money.

As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met many, 'who gave too much for the whistle.'—When I saw one ambitious of court favor, sacrificing his time in attendance at levees, his repose, his liberty, his virtue, and perhaps his friend, to obtain it, I have said to myself, 'This man gives too much for his whistle.'—When I saw another fond of popularity, constantly employing himself in political bustles, neglecting his own affairs, and ruining them by that neglect, 'He pays,' says I, 'too much for his whistle.'—If I knew a miser, who gave up every kind of comfortable living, all the pleasure of doing good to others, all the esteem of his fellow-citizens, and the joys of benevolent friendship for the sake of accumulating wealth, 'Poor man' says I, 'you pay too much for your whistle.'—When I met with a man of pleasure, sacrificing every laudable improvement of his mind or of his fortune, to mere corporeal satisfactions, and ruining his health in their pursuit, 'Mistaken man,' says I, 'you are providing pain for yourself instead of pleasure; you pay too much for your whistle.'—If I see one fond of appearance, or fine clothes, fine houses, fine furniture, fine equipages, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, and ends his career in a prison, 'Alas!' says I, 'he has paid dear, very dear, for his whistle.'—When I saw a beautiful, sweet-tempered girl, married to an ill-natured brute of a husband, 'What a pity,' says I, 'that she should pay so much for a whistle!'—In short, I conceived that great part of the miseries of mankind were brought upon them by the false estimates they have made of the value of things, and by their 'giving too much for their whistles.'

Yet I ought to have charity for these unhappy people, when I consider that with all this wisdom of which I am boasting there are certain things in the world so tempting; for example, the apples of King John, which happily are not to be bought, for if they were put to sale by auction, I might very easily be led to ruin myself in

the purchase, and find that I had once more 'given too much for the whistle.'

Adieu, my dearest friend, and believe me ever yours very sincerely and with unalterable affection.

B. FRANKLIN.

1779 1818

DIALOGUE BETWEEN FRANKLIN AND THE GOUT

Midnight, October 22, 1780.

FRANKLIN. Eh! Oh! Eh! What have I done to merit these cruel sufferings?

GOUT. Many things; you have ate and drank too freely, and too much indulged those legs of yours in their indolence.

FRANKLIN. Who is it that accuses me?

GOUT. It is I, even I, the Gout.

FRANKLIN. What! my enemy in person?

GOUT. No, not your enemy.

FRANKLIN. I repeat it; my enemy; for you would not only torment my body to death, but ruin my good name; you reproach me as a glutton and a tippler; now all the world, that knows me, will allow that I am neither the one nor the other.

GOUT. The world may think as it pleases; it is always very complaisant to itself, and sometimes to its friends; but I very well know that the quantity of meat and drink proper for a man, who takes a reasonable degree of exercise, would be too much for another, who never takes any.

FRANKLIN. I take—Eh! Oh!—as much exercise—Eh!—as I can, Madam Gout. You know my sedentary state, and on that account, it would seem, Madam Gout, as if you might spare me a little, seeing it is not altogether my own fault.

GOUT. Not a jot; your rhetoric and your politeness are thrown away; your apology avails nothing. If your situation in life is a sedentary one, your amusements, your recreations, at least, should be active. You ought to walk or ride; or, if the weather prevents that, play at billiards. But let us examine your course of life. While the mornings are long, and you have leisure to go abroad, what do you do? Why, instead of gaining an appetite for breakfast, by salutary exercise, you amuse yourself, with books, pamphlets, or newspapers, which commonly are not worth the reading. Yet you eat an inordinate breakfast, four dishes of tea, with cream, and one or two buttered toasts, with slices of hung beef, which I fancy are not things the most easily digested. Immediately afterward you sit down to write at your desk, or converse with persons who apply to you on business. Thus the time passes till one, without any kind of bodily exercise. But all this I could pardon, in regard, as you say, to your sedentary condition. But what is your practice after dinner? Walking in the beautiful gardens of those friends, with whom you have dined, would be the choice of men of sense; yours is to be fixed down to chess, where you are found engaged for two or three hours! This is your perpetual recreation, which is the least eligible of any for a sedentary man, because, instead of accelerating the motion of the fluids, the rigid attention it requires helps to retard the circulation and obstruct internal secretions. Wrapt in the speculations of this wretched game, you destroy your constitution. What can be expected from such a course of living, but a body replete with stagnant humors, ready to fall a prey to all kinds of dangerous maladies, if I, the Gout, did not occasionally bring you relief by agitating those humors, and so purifying or dissipating them? If it was in some nook or alley in Paris, deprived of walks, that you played awhile at chess after dinner, this might be excusable; but the same taste prevails with you in Passy, Auteuil, Montmartre, or Sanoy, places where there are the finest gardens and walks, a pure air, beautiful women, and most agreeable and instructive conversation; all which you might enjoy by frequenting the walks. But these are rejected for this abominable game of chess. Fie, then, Mr. Franklin! But amidst my instructions, I had almost forgot to administer my wholesome corrections; so take that twinge,—and that.

FRANKLIN. Oh! Eh! Oh! Ohhh! As much instruction as you please, Madam Gout, and as many reproaches; but pray, Madam, a truce with your corrections!

GOUT. No, Sir, no,—I will not abate a particle of what is so much for your good,—therefore—

FRANKLIN. Oh! Ehhh!—It is not fair to say I take no exercise, when I do very often, going out to dine and returning in my carriage.

GOUT. That, of all imaginable exercises, is the most slight and insignificant, if you allude to the motion of a carriage suspended on springs. By observing the degree of heat obtained by different kinds of motion, we may form an estimate of the quantity of exercise given by each. Thus, for example, if you turn out to walk in winter with cold feet, in an hour's time you will be in a glow all over; ride on horseback, the same effect will scarcely be perceived by four hours' round trotting; but if you loll in a carriage, such as you have mentioned, you may travel all day, and gladly enter the last inn to warm your feet by a fire. Flatter yourself then no longer, that half an hour's airing in your carriage deserves the name of exercise. Providence has appointed few to roll in carriages, while he has given to all a pair of legs, which are machines infinitely more commodious and serviceable. Be grateful, then, and make a proper use of yours. Would you know how they forward the circulation of your fluids, in the very action of transporting you from place to place; observe when you walk, that all your weight is alternately thrown from one leg to the other; this occasions a great pressure on the vessels of the foot, and repels their contents; when relieved, by the weight being thrown on the other foot, the vessels of the first are allowed to replenish, and, by a return of this weight, this repulsion again succeeds; thus accelerating the circulation of the blood. The heat produced in any given time, depends on the degree of this acceleration; the fluids are shaken, the humors attenuated, the secretions facilitated, and all goes well; the cheeks are ruddy, and health is established. Behold your fair friend at Auteuil, a lady who received from bounteous nature more really useful science, than half a dozen such pretenders to philosophy as you have been able to extract from all your books. When she honors you with a visit, it is on foot. She walks all hours of the day, and leaves indolence, and its concomitant maladies, to be endured by her horses. In this see at once the preservative of her health and personal charms. But when you go to Auteuil, you must have your carriage, though it is no further from Passy to Auteuil than from Auteuil to Passy.

FRANKLIN. Your reasonings grow very tiresome.

GOUT. I stand corrected. I will be silent and continue my office; take that, and that.

FRANKLIN. Oh! Ohh! Talk on, I pray you!

GOUT. No, no; I have a good number of twinges for you tonight, and you may be sure of some more tomorrow.

FRANKLIN. What, with such a fever! I shall go distracted. Oh! Eh! Can no one bear it for me?

GOUT. Ask that of your horses; they have served you faithfully.

FRANKLIN. How can you so cruelly sport with my torments?

GOUT. Sport! I am very serious. I have here a list of offences against your own health distinctly written, and can justify every stroke inflicted on you.

FRANKLIN. Read it then.

GOUT. It is too long a detail; but I will briefly mention some particulars.

FRANKLIN. Proceed. I am all attention.

GOUT. Do you remember how often you have promised yourself, the following morning, a walk in the grove of Boulogne, in the garden de la Muette, or in your own garden, and have violated your promise, alleging, at one time, it was too cold, at another too warm, too windy, too moist, or what else you pleased; when in truth it was too nothing, but your insuperable love of ease?

FRANKLIN. That I confess may have happened occasionally, probably ten times in a year.

GOUT. Your confession is very far short of the truth; the gross amount is one hundred and ninety-nine times.

FRANKLIN. Is it possible?

GOUT. So possible, that it is fact; you may rely on the accuracy of my statement. You know M. Brillon's gardens, and what fine walks they contain; you know the handsome flight of an hundred steps, which lead from the terrace above to the lawn below. You have been in the practice of visiting this amiable family twice a week, after dinner, and it is a maxim of your own, that 'a man may take as much exercise in walking a mile, up and down stairs, as in ten on level ground.' What an opportunity was here for you to have had exercise

in both these ways! Did you embrace it, and how often?

FRANKLIN. I cannot immediately answer that question.

GOUT. I will do it for you; not once.

FRANKLIN. Not once?

GOUT. Even so. During the summer you went there at six o'clock. You found the charming lady, with her lovely children and friends, eager to walk with you, and entertain you with their agreeable conversation; and what has been your choice? Why to sit on the terrace, satisfying yourself with the fine prospect, and passing your eye over the beauties of the garden below, without taking one step to descend and walk about in them. On the contrary, you call for tea and the chess-board; and lo! you are occupied in your seat till nine o'clock, and that besides two hours' play after dinner; and then, instead of walking home, which would have bestirred you a little, you step into your carriage. How absurd to suppose that all this carelessness can be reconcilable with health, without my interposition!

FRANKLIN. I am convinced now of the justness of Poor Richard's remark, that 'Our debts and our sins are always greater than we think for.'

GOUT. So it is. You philosophers are sages in your maxims, and fools in your conduct.

FRANKLIN. But do you charge among my crimes, that I return in a carriage from Mr. Brillon's?

GOUT. Certainly; for, having been seated all the while, you cannot object the fatigue of the day, and cannot want therefore the relief of a carriage.

FRANKLIN. What then would you have me do with my carriage?

GOUT. Burn it if you choose; you would at least get heat out of it once in this way; or, if you dislike that proposal, here's another for you; observe the poor peasants, who work in the vineyards and grounds about the villages of Passy, Auteuil, Chaillot, &c.; you may find every day, among these deserving creatures, four or five old men and women, bent and perhaps crippled by weight of years, and too long and too great labor. After a most fatiguing day, these people have to trudge a mile or two to their smoky huts. Order your coachman to set them down. This is an act that will be good for your soul; and, at the same time, after your visit to the Brillons, if you return on foot, that will be good for your body.

FRANKLIN. Ah! how tiresome you are!

GOUT. Well, then, to my office; it should not be forgotten that I am your physician. There.

FRANKLIN. Ohhh! what a devil of a physician!

GOUT. How ungrateful you are to say so! Is it not I who, in the character of your physician, have saved you from the palsy, dropsy, and apoplexy? one or other of which would have done for you long ago, but for me.

FRANKLIN. I submit, and thank you for the past, but entreat the discontinuance of your visits for the future; for, in my mind, one had better die than be cured so dolefully. Permit me just to hint, that I have also not been unfriendly to *you*. I never feed physician or quack of any kind, to enter the list against you; if then you do not leave me to my repose, it may be said you are ungrateful too.

GOUT. I can scarcely acknowledge that as any objection. As to quacks, I despise them; they may kill you indeed, but cannot injure me. And, as to regular physicians, they are at last convinced that the gout, in such a subject as you are, is no disease, but a remedy; and wherefore cure a remedy?—but to our business,—there.

FRANKLIN. Oh! oh!—for Heaven's sake leave me! and I promise faithfully never more to play at chess, but to take exercise daily, and live temperately.

GOUT. I know you too well. You promise fair; but, after a few months of good health, you will return to your old habits; your fine promises will be forgotten like the forms of last year's clouds. Let us then finish the account, and I will go. But I leave you with an assurance of visiting you again at a proper time and place; for my object is your good, and you are sensible now that I am your *real friend*.

1780 1818

JOHN WOOLMAN

1720–1772

FROM THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WOOLMAN

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION [1]

I HAVE often felt a motion of love to leave some hints of my experience of the goodness of God; and pursuant thereto, in the thirty-sixth year of my age, I begin this work.

I was born in Northampton, in Burlington County in West Jersey, in the year of our Lord 1720, and before I was seven years old, I began to be acquainted with the operations of divine love. Through the care of my parents, I was taught to read near as soon as I was capable of it; and as I went from school one Seventh Day, I remember, while my companions went to play by the way, I went forward out of sight, and setting down I read the twenty-second chapter of the *Revelation*: 'He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,' etc.; and in the reading of it my mind was drawn to seek after that pure habitation which I then believed God had prepared for His servants. The place where I sat and the sweetness that attended my mind remain fresh in my memory.

This and the like gracious visitations had that effect upon me that when boys used ill language it troubled me, and through the continued mercies of God I was preserved from it. The pious instructions of my parents were often fresh in my mind when I happened to be among wicked children, and were of use to me.

My parents, having a large family of children, used frequently on First Days after meeting to put us to read in the Holy Scriptures, or some religious books, one after another, the rest sitting by without much conversation, which I have since often thought was a good practice. From what I had read, I believed there had been in past ages people who walked in uprightness before God in a degree exceeding any that I knew, or heard of, now living; and the apprehension of there being less steadiness and firmness amongst people in this age than in past ages often troubled me while I was still young.

I had a dream about the ninth year of my age, as follows: I saw the moon rise near the west, and run a regular course eastward, so swift[ly] that in about a quarter of an hour she reached our meridian, when there descended from her a small cloud on a direct line to the earth, which lighted on a pleasant green about twenty yards from the door of my father's house (in which I thought I stood) and was immediately turned into a beautiful green tree. The moon appeared to run on with equal swiftness, and soon set in the east; at which time the sun arose at the place where it commonly doth in the summer, and shining with full radiance in a serene air, it appeared as pleasant a morning as ever I saw.

All this time I stood still in the door, in an awful frame of mind, and I observed that as heat increased by the rising sun, it wrought so powerfully on the little green tree that the leaves gradually withered, and before noon it appeared dry and dead. There then appeared a being, small of size, moving swiftly from the north southward, called a 'sun worm.'

Though I was a child, this dream was instructive to me.

Another thing remarkable in my childhood was that once as I went to a neighbor's house, I saw on the way a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off but, having young ones, flew about and with many cries expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her till, one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror, as having in a sportive way killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young. I beheld her lying dead, and thought those young ones for which she was so careful must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them; and after some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the

1 The selection, of which the title has been supplied and the text modernized by the editors, is from Gummere, ed., *The Journal and Essays of John Woolman* (N.Y., 1922), 151–57.

young birds, and killed them, supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably; and believed in this case that Scripture proverb was fulfilled: 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' I then went on my errand, but for some hours could think of little else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled.

Thus He whose tender mercies are over all His works hath placed that in the human mind which incites to exercise goodness towards every living creature; and this being singly attended to, people become tenderhearted and sympathizing; but being frequently and totally rejected, the mind shuts itself up in a contrary disposition.

About the twelfth year of my age, my father being abroad, my mother reproved me for some misconduct, to which I made an undutiful reply; and the next First Day, as I was with my father returning from meeting, he told me he understood I had behaved amiss to my mother, and advised me to be more careful in future. I knew myself blamable, and in shame and confusion remained silent. Being thus awakened to a sense of my wickedness, I felt remorse in my mind, and getting home I retired and prayed to the Lord to forgive me; and I do not remember that I ever after that spoke unhandsomely to either of my parents, however foolish in some other things.

Having attained the age of sixteen, I began to love wanton company; and though I was preserved from profane language or scandalous conduct, still I perceived a plant in me which produced much wild grapes. Yet my merciful Father forsook me not utterly, but at times through His grace I was brought seriously to consider my ways, and the sight of my backsliding affected me with sorrow; but for want of rightly attending to the reproofs of instruction, vanity was added to vanity, and repentance. Upon the whole my mind was more and more alienated from the truth, and I hastened towards destruction. While I meditate on the gulf towards which I traveled, and reflect on my youthful disobedience, my heart is affected with sorrow.

Advancing in age, the number of my acquaintance increased, and thereby my way grew more difficult. Though I had heretofore found comfort in reading the Holy Scriptures, and thinking on heavenly things, I was now estranged therefrom. I knew I was going from the flock of Christ, and had no resolution to return; hence serious reflections were uneasy to me, and youthful vanities and diversions my greatest pleasure. Running in this road I found many like myself, and we associated in that which is reverse to true friendship. But in this swift race it pleased God to visit me with sickness, so that I doubted of recovering; and then did darkness, horror, and amazement with full force seize me, even when my pain and distress of body was very great; I thought it would have been better for me never to have had a being than to see the day which I now saw. I was filled with confusion, and in great affliction both of mind and body I lay and bewailed myself. I had not confidence to lift up my cries to God, whom I had thus offended; but in a deep sense of my great folly I was humbled before Him, and at length that Word which is as a fire and a hammer broke and dissolved my rebellious heart; and then my cries were put up in contrition, and in the multitude of His mercies I found inward relief, and felt a close engagement that, if He was pleased to restore my health, I might walk humbly before Him.

After my recovery, this exercise remained with me a considerable time; but by degrees giving way to youthful vanities, they gained strength, and getting with wanton young people I lost ground. The Lord had been very gracious, and spoke peace to me in the time of my distress; and I now most ungratefully turned again to folly, on which account at times I felt sharp reproof, but did not get low enough to cry for help. I was not so hardy as to commit things scandalous, but to exceed in vanity and promote mirth was my chief study. Still I retained a love and esteem for pious people, and their company brought an awe upon me. My dear parents several times admonished me in the fear of the Lord, and their admonition entered into my heart and had a good effect for a season. but not getting deep enough to pray rightly, the tempter when he came found entrance. I remember once, having spent a

part of a day in wantonness, as I went to bed at night there lay in a window near my bed a Bible, which I opened, and first cast my eye on the text: 'We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covers us.' This I knew to be my case, and meeting with so unexpected a reproof, I was somewhat affected with it, and went to bed under remorse of conscience, which I soon cast off again.

Thus time passed on; my heart was replenished with mirth and wantonness, while pleasing scenes of vanity were presented to my imagination, till I attained the age of eighteen years, near which time I felt the judgments of God in my soul like a consuming fire; and looking over my past life, the prospect was moving. I was often sad, and longed to be delivered from those vanities; then again my heart was strongly inclined to them, and there was in me a sore conflict. At times I turned to folly, and then again sorrow and confusion took hold of me. In a while I resolved totally to leave off some of my vanities, but there was a secret reserve in my heart of the more refined part of them, and I was not low enough to find true peace. Thus for some months I had great troubles and disquiet, there remaining in me an unsubjected will which rendered my labors fruitless, till at length, through the merciful continuance of heavenly visitations, I was made to bow down in spirit before the Most High. I remember one evening I had spent some time in reading a pious author, and walking out alone, I humbly prayed to the Lord for His help, that I might be delivered from those vanities which so ensnared me. . . . Thus being brought low, He helped me, and as I learned to bear the cross, I felt refreshment to come from His presence. But not keeping in that strength which gave victory, I lost ground again, the sense of which greatly afflicted me; and I sought deserts and lonely places, and there with tears did confess my sins to God, and humbly craved help of Him; and I may say with reverence He was near to me in my troubles, and in those times of humiliation opened my ear to discipline.

I was now led to look seriously at the means by which I was drawn from the pure truth, and I learned this: that if I would live in the life which the faithful servants of God lived in, I must not go into company as heretofore in my own will, but all the cravings of sense must be governed by a divine principle. In times of sorrow and abasement these instructions were sealed upon me, and I felt the power of Christ prevail over all selfish desires, so that I was preserved in a good degree of steadiness, and being young and believing at that time that a single life was best for me, I was strengthened to keep from such company as had often been a snare to me.

I kept steady to meetings, spent First Days in the afternoon chiefly in reading the Scriptures and other good books, and was early convinced in my mind that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learn to exercise true justice and goodness not only toward all men but also toward the brute creatures. That as the mind was moved by an inward principle to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible Being, by the same principle it was moved to love Him in all His manifestations in the visible world. That as by His breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal and sensible creatures, to say we love God as unseen, and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by His life or by life derived from Him, was a contradiction in itself.

I found no narrowness respecting sects and opinions, but believe that sincere upright-hearted people in every society who truly love God were accepted by Him.

As I lived under the cross, and simply followed the openings of truth, my mind from day to day was more enlightened; my former acquaintance were left to judge of me as they would, for I found it safest for me to live in private and keep these things sealed up in my own breast. While I silently ponder on that change which was wrought in me, I find no language equal to it, nor any means to convey to another a clear idea of it. I looked upon the works of God in this visible creation, and an awfulness covered me; my heart was tender and often contrite, and a universal love to my fellow creatures increased in me. This will be understood by such who have trodden in the same path.

Some glances of real beauty is perceivable in their faces who dwell in true meek-

ness, some tincture of true harmony in the sound of that voice to which divine love gives utterance, and some appearance of right order in their temper and conduct whose passions are fully regulated; yet all these do not fully show forth that inward life to such who have not felt it; but this white stone and new name is known rightly to such only who have it.

1755 1774

WILLIAM BARTRAM

1739–1823

FROM TRAVELS

FLORIDA SCENES [1]

THE evening was temperately cool and calm. The crocodiles began to roar and appear in uncommon numbers along the shores and in the river. I fixed my camp in an open plain, near the utmost projection of the promontory, under the shelter of a large live oak which stood on the highest part of the ground and but a few yards from my boat. From this open, high situation, I had a free prospect of the river, which was a matter of no trivial consideration to me, having good reason to dread the subtle attacks of the alligators, who were crowding about my harbor. Having collected a good quantity of wood for the purpose of keeping up a light and smoke during the night, I began to think of preparing my supper, when, upon examining my stores, I found but a scanty provision. I thereupon determined, as the most expeditious way of supplying my necessities, to take my bob and try for some trout. About one hundred yards above my harbor began a cove or bay of the river, out of which opened a large lagoon. The mouth or entrance from the river to it was narrow, but the waters soon after spread and formed a little lake, extending into the marshes; its entrance and shores within I observed to be verged with floating lawns of the Pistia and Nymphæa and other aquatic plants; these I knew were excellent haunts for trout.

The verges and islets of the lagoon were elegantly embellished with flowering plants and shrubs; the laughing coots with wings half-spread were tripping over the little coves and hiding themselves in the tufts of grass; young broods of the painted summer teal, skimming the still surface of the waters, and following the watchful parent unconscious of danger, were frequently surprised by the voracious trout; and he, in turn, as often by the subtle greedy alligator. Behold him rushing forth from the flags and reeds. His enormous body swells. His plaited tail brandished high, floats upon the lake. The waters like a cataract descend from his opening jaws. Clouds of smoke issue from his dilated nostrils. The earth trembles with his thunder. When immediately from the opposite coast of the lagoon, emerges from the deep his rival champion. They suddenly dart upon each other. The boiling surface of the lake marks their rapid course, and a terrific conflict commences. They now sink to the bottom folded together in horrid wreaths. The water becomes thick and discolored. Again they rise, their jaws clap together, re-echoing through the deep surrounding forests. Again they sink, when the contest ends at the muddy bottom of the lake, and the vanquished makes a hazardous escape, hiding himself in the muddy turbulent waters and sedge on a distant shore. The proud victor exulting returns to the place of action. The shores and forests resound his dreadful roar, together with the triumphing shouts of these plaited tribes around, witnesses of the horrid combat. . . .

The noise of the crocodiles kept me awake the greater part of the night, but when I arose in the morning, contrary to my expectations, there was perfect peace; very few of them to be seen, and those were asleep on the shore. Yet I was not able to suppress my fears and apprehensions of being attacked by them in the future; and indeed yesterday's combat with them, not-

1 The selection, of which the title has been given and the text modernized by the editors, is from Part II, Chapter 5, of Bartram's *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida* . . . (Philadelphia, 1791), 117–18, 125–33, 139–43, 146–47, 149–50, 152–55, 156–60.

withstanding I came off in a manner victorious, or at least made a safe retreat, had left sufficient impression on my mind to damp my courage; and it seemed too much for one of my strength, being alone in a very small boat, to encounter such collected danger. To pursue my voyage up the river, and be obliged every evening to pass such dangerous defiles, appeared to me as perilous as running the gauntlet betwixt two rows of Indians armed with knives and firebrands. I however resolved to continue my voyage one day longer, if I possibly could with safety, and then return down the river, should I find the like difficulties to oppose. Accordingly I got everything on board, charged my gun, and set sail cautiously along shore. As I passed by Battle Lagoon, I began to tremble and keep a good lookout, when suddenly a huge alligator rushed out of the reeds, and with a tremendous roar came up, and darted as swift as an arrow under my boat, emerging upright on my lee quarter, with open jaws, and belching water and smoke that fell upon me like rain in a hurricane. I laid soundly about his head with my club and beat him off; and after plunging and darting about my boat, he went off on a straight line through the water, seemingly with the rapidity of lightning, and entered the cape of the lagoon. I now employed my time to the very best advantage in paddling close along shore, but could not forbear looking now and then behind me, and presently perceived one of them coming up again. The water of the river hereabouts was shoal and very clear; the monster came up with the usual roar and menaces, and passed close by the side of my boat, when I could distinctly see a young brood of alligators to the number of one hundred or more, following after her in a long train. They kept close together in a column without straggling off to the one side or the other; the young appeared to be of an equal size, about fifteen inches in length, almost black, with pale yellow transverse-waved clouds or blotches, much like rattlesnakes in color. I now lost sight of my enemy again.

Still keeping close along shore, on turning a point or projection of the river bank, at once I beheld a great number of hillocks or small pyramids, resembling haycocks, ranged like an encampment along the banks. They stood fifteen or twenty yards distant from the water, on a high marsh, about four feet perpendicular above the water. I knew them to be the nests of the crocodile, having had a description of them before, and now expected a furious and general attack, as I saw several large crocodiles swimming abreast of these buildings. These nests being so great a curiosity to me, I was determined at all events immediately to land and examine them. Accordingly I ran my bark on shore at one of their landing places, which was a sort of nick or little dock, from which ascended a sloping path or road up to the edge of the meadow, where their nests were; most of them were deserted, and the great thick whitish eggshells lay broken and scattered upon the ground round about them.

The nests or hillocks are of the form of an obtuse cone, four feet high and four or five feet in diameter at their bases; they are constructed with mud, grass and herbage. At first they lay a floor of this kind of tempered mortar on the ground, upon which they deposit a layer of eggs, and upon this a stratum of mortar, seven or eight inches in thickness, and then another layer of eggs, and in this manner one stratum upon another, nearly to the top. I believe they commonly lay from one to two hundred eggs in a nest. These are hatched, I suppose, by the heat of the sun; and perhaps the vegetable substances mixed with the earth, being acted upon by the sun, may cause a small degree of fermentation, and so increase the heat in those hillocks. The ground for several acres about these nests showed evident marks of a continual resort of alligators; the grass was everywhere beaten down, hardly a blade or straw was left standing; whereas, all about, at a distance, it was five or six feet high, and as thick as it could grow together. The female, as I imagine, carefully watches her own nest of eggs until they are all hatched; or perhaps while she is attending her own brood, she takes under her care and protection, as many as she can get at one time, either from her own particular nest o others. But certain it is, that the young are not left to shift for themselves; having had frequent opportunities of seeing the female alligator leading about the shores her train

of young ones, just as a hen does her brood of chickens; and she is equally assiduous and courageous in defending the young, which are under her care, and providing for their subsistence. And when she is basking upon the warm banks, with her brood around her, you may hear the young ones continually whining and barking, like young puppies. I believe but few of a brood live to the years of full growth and magnitude, as the old feed on the young as long as they can make prey of them.

The alligator when full grown is a very large and terrible creature, and of prodigious strength, activity and swiftness in the water. I have seen them twenty feet in length, and some are supposed to be twenty-two or twenty-three feet. Their body is as large as that of a horse; their shape exactly resembles that of a lizard, except their tail, which is flat or cuneiform, being compressed on each side, and gradually diminishing from the abdomen to the extremity, which, with the whole body is covered with horny plates or squammæ, impenetrable when on the body of the live animal, even to a rifle ball, except about their head and just behind their fore-legs or arms, where it is said they are only vulnerable. The head of a full-grown one is about three feet, and the mouth opens nearly the same length; the eyes are small in proportion and seem sunk deep in the head, by means of the prominency of the brows; the nostrils are large, inflated and prominent on the top, so that the head in the water resembles, at a distance, a great chunk of wood floating about. Only the upper jaw moves, which they raise almost perpendicular, so as to form a right angle with the lower one. In the fore-part of the upper jaw, on each side, just under the nostrils, are two very large, thick, strong teeth or tusks, not very sharp, but rather the shape of a cone; these are as white as the finest polished ivory, and are not covered by any skin or lips, and always in sight, which gives the creature a frightful appearance; in the lower jaw are holes opposite to these teeth, to receive them; when they clap their jaws together it causes a surprising noise, like that which is made by forcing a heavy plank with violence upon the ground, and may be heard at a great distance.

But what is yet more surprising to a stranger, is the incredible loud and terrifying roar, which they are capable of making, especially in the spring season, their breeding time. It most resembles very heavy distant thunder, not only shaking the air and waters, but causing the earth to tremble; and when hundreds and thousands are roaring at the same time, you can scarcely be persuaded but that the whole globe is violently and dangerously agitated.

An old champion, who is perhaps absolute sovereign of a little lake or lagoon (when fifty less than himself are obliged to content themselves with swelling and roaring in little coves round about) darts forth from the reedy coverts all at once, on the surface of the waters, in a right line; at first seemingly as rapid as lightning, but gradually more slowly until he arrives at the center of the lake, when he stops. He now swells himself by drawing in wind and water through his mouth, which causes a loud sonorous rattling in the throat for near a minute, but it is immediately forced out again through his mouth and nostrils, with a loud noise, brandishing his tail in the air, and the vapor ascending from his nostrils like smoke. At other times, when swollen to an extent ready to burst, his head and tail lifted up, he spins or twirls round on the surface of the water. He acts his part like an Indian chief when rehearsing his feats of war; and then retiring, the exhibition is continued by others who dare to step forth, and strive to excel each other, to gain the attention of the favorite female.

Having gratified my curiosity at this general breeding place and nursery of crocodiles, I continued my voyage up the river without being greatly disturbed by them. In my way I observed islets or floating fields of the bright green Pistia, decorated with other amphibious plants, as Senecio Jacobea, Perficaria amphibia, Coreopsis bidens, Hydrocotile fluitans, and many others of less note.

The swamps on the banks and islands of the river are generally three or four feet above the surface of the water, and very level; the timber large and growing thinly, more so than what is observed to be in the swamps below Lake George. The black rich earth is covered with moderately tall and very succulent tender grass, which when chewed is sweet and agreeable to the

taste, somewhat like young sugar cane. It is a jointed decumbent grass, sending out radiculæ at the joints into the earth, and so spreads itself by creeping over its surface.

The large timber trees which possess the low lands are Acer rubrum, Ac. negundo, Ac. glaucum, Ulmus sylvatica, Fraxinus excelsior, Frax. aquatica, Ulmus suberifer, Gleditsia monosperma, Gledit. triacanthus, Diospyros Virginica, Nyssa aquatica, Nyssa sylvatica, Juglans cinerea, Quercus dentata, Quercus phillos, Hopea tinctoria, Corypha palma, Morus rubra, and many more. The palm grows on the edges of the banks, where they are raised higher than the adjacent level ground by the accumulation of sand, river-shells, etc. I passed along several miles by those rich swamps; the channels of the river which encircle the several fertile islands I had passed, now uniting, formed one deep channel near three hundred yards over. The banks of the river on each side began to rise and present shelly bluffs, adorned by beautiful orange groves, laurels and live oaks. And now appeared in sight a tree that claimed my whole attention: it was the Carica papaya, both male and female, which were in flower; and the latter both in flower and fruit, some of which were ripe, as large and of the form of a pear, and of a most charming appearance.

This admirable tree is certainly the most beautiful of any vegetable production I know of; the towering laurel magnolia and exalted palm indeed exceed it in grandeur and magnificence, but not in elegance, delicacy, and gracefulness. It rises erect, with a perfectly straight tapering stem, to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, which is smooth and polished, of a bright ash color resembling leaf silver, curiously inscribed with the footsteps of the fallen leaves; and these vestiges are placed in a very regular uniform imbricated order, which has a fine effect, as if the little column were elegantly carved all over. Its perfectly spherical top is formed of very large lobe-sinuate leaves, supported on very long footstalks; the lower leaves are the largest as well as their petioles the longest, and make a graceful sweep or flourish, like the long $\int$ or the branches of a sconce candlestick. The ripe and green fruit are placed round about the stem or trunk, from the lowermost leaves, where the ripe fruit are, and upwards almost to the top; the heart or inmost pithy part of the trunk is in a manner hollow, or at best consists of very thin porous medullæ or membranes. The tree very seldom branches or divides into limbs; I believe never unless the top is by accident broken off when very young. I saw one which had two tops or heads, the stem of which divided near the earth. It is always green, ornamented at the same time with flowers and fruit, which like figs come out singly from the trunk or stem.

After resting and refreshing myself in these delightful shades, I left them with reluctance. Embarking again after the fervid heats of the meridian sun was abated, for some time I passed by broken ridges of shelly high land, covered with groves of live oak, palm, Olea americana, and orange trees; frequently observing floating islets and green fields of the Pistia near the shores of the river and lagoons.

Here is in this river and in the waters all over Florida a very curious and handsome species of birds. The people call them snakebirds. I think I have seen paintings of them on the Chinese screens and other India pictures. They seem to be a species of cormorant or loon (Colymbus cauda elongata), but far more beautiful and delicately formed than any other species that I have ever seen. The head and neck of this bird are extremely small and slender, the latter very long indeed, almost out of all proportion; the bill long, straight, and slender, tapering from its ball to a sharp point; all the upper side, the abdomen and thighs, are as black and glossy as a raven's, covered with feathers so firm and elastic that they in some degree resemble fish-scales; the breast and upper part of the belly are covered with feathers of a cream color; the tail is very long, of a deep black, and tipped with a silvery white, and when spread represents an unfurled fan. They delight to sit in little peaceable communities, on the dry limbs of trees hanging over the still waters, with their wings and tails expanded, I suppose to cool and air themselves, when at the same time they behold their images in the watery mirror. At such times, when we approach them, they drop off the limbs into the water as if dead, and for a minute or two are not to be seen; when on a sudden, at a vast distance, their long slender head and

neck only appear and have very much the appearance of a snake, and no other part of them are to be seen when swimming in the water, except sometimes the tip end of their tail. In the heat of the day they are seen in great numbers, sailing very high in the air, over lakes and rivers.

I doubt not but if this bird had been an inhabitant of the Tiber in Ovid's days it would have furnished him with a subject for some beautiful and entertaining metamorphoses. I believe it feeds entirely on fish, for its flesh smells and tastes intolerably strong of it; it is scarcely to be eaten unless constrained by insufferable hunger. . . .

The air continued sultry, and scarcely enough wind to flutter the leaves on the trees. The eastern coast of the river now opens, and presents to view ample plains, consisting of grassy marshes and green meadows, and affords a prospect almost unlimited and extremely pleasing. The opposite shore exhibits a sublime contrast—a high bluff bearing magnificent forests of grand magnolia, glorious palms, fruitful orange groves, live oaks, bays, and other trees. This grand elevation continues four or five hundred yards, describing a gentle curve on the river, ornamented by a sublime grove of palms, consisting of many hundreds of trees together—they entirely shade the ground under them. Above and below the bluff, the grounds gradually descend to the common level swamps on the river; at the back of this eminence open to view expansive green meadows or savannas, in which are to be seen glittering ponds of water, surrounded at a great distance by high open pine forests and hummocks, and islets of oaks and bays projecting into the savannas. After ranging about these solitary groves and peaceful shades, I re-embarked and continued some miles up the river, between elevated banks of the swamps or low lands; when on the east shore, in a capacious cove or winding of the river, were pleasing floating fields of Pistia; and in the bottom of this cove opened to view a large creek or branch of the river, which I knew to be the entrance to a beautiful lake, on the banks of which was the farm I was going to visit, and which I designed should be the last extent of my voyage up the river.

About noon the weather became extremely sultry, not a breath of wind stirring, hazy or cloudy, with very heavy distant thunder, which was answered by the crocodiles, sure presage of a storm.

Soon after ascending this branch of the river, on the right hand presents to view a delightful little bluff, consisting chiefly of shells, and covered with a dark grove of red cedar, Zanthoxylum and myrtle. I could not resist the temptation to stop here, although the tremendous thunder all around the hemisphere alarmed me greatly, having a large lake to cross. From this grove appears to view an expansive and pleasing prospect. The beauteous long lake in front, about north-east from me, its most distant east shores adorned with dark, high forests of stately trees; north and south almost endless green plains and meadows, embellished with islets and projecting promontories of high, dark forests, where the pyramidal Magnolia grandiflora, Palma elata, and shady oak, conspicuously tower.

Being heretofore so closely invested by high forests and deep swamps of the great river, I was prevented from seeing the progress and increase of the approaching tempest, the terrific appearance of which now at once confounded me. How purple and fiery appeared the tumultuous clouds, swiftly ascending or darting from the horizon upwards! they seemed to oppose and dash against each other; the skies appeared streaked with blood or purple flame overhead, the flaming lightning streaming and darting about in every direction around, seems to fill the world with fire; whilst the heavy thunder keeps the earth in a constant tremor. I had yet some hopes of crossing the lake to the plantation in sight. On the opposite shore of the creek before me, and on the cape as we enter the lake, stood a large islet or grove of oaks and palms. Here I intended to seek shelter and abide till the fury of the hurricane was overpast, if I found it too violent to permit me to cross the lake. In consequence of this precipitate determination, I stepped into my boat and pushed off. What a dreadful rushing and roaring there is everywhere around me! and to my utter confusion and astonishment, I could not find from what particular quarter its strongest current or direction came, whereby I might have a proper

chance of taking measures of securing a harbor or running from it. The high forests behind me bend to the blast; and the sturdy limbs of the trees crack. I had by this time got up abreast of the grove or hummock. The hurricane close by, pursuing me, I found it dangerous and imprudent in the highest degree to put in here, as the groves were already torn up, and the spreading limbs of the ancient live oaks were flying over my head, and carried about in the air as leaves and stubble. I ran by and boldly entered the lake (being hurried in by a strong current, which seemed a prodigy, the violent wind driving the stream of the creek back again into the lake), and as soon as possible took shelter under the high reedy bank of the lake, made fast my bark to the boughs of a low shrubby hickory, that leaned over the water. Such was the violence of the wind, that it raised the waters on the opposite shores of the lake several feet perpendicular, and there was a rapid flow of water from the creek into it, which was contrary to its natural course. Such floods of rain fell during the space of half or three quarters of an hour, that my boat was filled, and I expected every moment when I should see her sink to the bottom of the lake; and the violence of the wind kept the cable so constantly extended, that it was beyond my ability to get to her. My box which contained my books of specimens and other collections, was floating about in her; and for a great part of the time the rain came down with such rapidity and fell in such quantities, that every object was totally obscured, excepting the continual streams or rivers of lightning, pouring from the clouds. All seemed a frightful chaos. When the wind and rain abated, I was overjoyed to see the face of nature again appear.

It took me an hour or more to clear the water out of my bark. I then crossed the lake before a brisk and favorable breeze (it was about a mile over), and landed safely at the plantation.

When I arrived, my friend was affrighted to see me, and immediately inquired of me in what manner I came there; supposing it impossible (until I had showed him my boat) that I could have arrived by water, through so tremendous a hurricane. . . .

My hospitable friend, after supplying me with necessaries, prevailed on me to accept of the company and assistance of his purveyor, one day's voyage down the river, whom I was to set on shore at a certain bluff, upwards of twenty miles below, but not above one third that distance by land; he was to be out in the forests one day, on a hunt for turkeys.

The current of the river being here confined within its perpendicular banks, ran briskly down. We cheerfully descended the grand river St. Juan, enjoying enchanting prospects.

Before night we reached the destined port, at a spacious orange grove. Next morning we separated, and I proceeded down the river. The prospects on either hand are now pleasing, and I view them at leisure, and without toil or dread.

Induced by the beautiful appearance of the green meadows, which open to the eastward, I determined not to pass this Elysium without a visit. Behold the loud, sonorous, watchful savanna cranes (grus pratensis) with musical clangor, in detached squadrons. They spread their light elastic sail; at first they move from the earth heavy and slow; they labor and beat the dense air; they form the line with wide extended wings, tip to tip; they all rise and fall together as one bird; now they mount aloft, gradually wheeling about; each squadron performs its evolution, encircling the expansive plains, observing each one their own orbit; then lowering sail, descend on the verge of some glittering lake; whilst other squadrons, ascending aloft in spiral circles, bound on interesting discoveries, wheel round and double the promontory, in the silvery regions of the clouded skies, where, far from the scope of eye, they carefully observe the verdant meadows on the borders of the East Lake; then contract their plumes and descend to the earth, where, resting a while on some verdant eminence, near the flowery border of the lake, with dignified, yet slow, respectful steps, approach the kindred band, they confer, and treat for habitation; the bounds and precincts being settled, they confederate and take possession. . . .

Since I have turned my observation upon

the birds of this country, I shall notice another very singular one, which though already most curiously and exactly figured by Catesby, which seems to be nearly allied to those before mentioned; I mean the bird which he calls the wood pelican. This is a large bird, perhaps near three feet high when standing erect. The bill is very long and strong, bending with a moderate curve from the base to the tip; the upper mandible is the largest, and receives the edges of the nether one into its whole length; the edges are very sharp and firm; the whole of a dark ash or horn color; the forehead round the base of the beak and sides of the head is bare of feathers, and of a dark greenish color, in which space is placed the eyes, which are very large; the remainder of the head and neck is of a nut brown color; the back of a light bluish grey; upper part of the wings, breast, and belly, almost white, with some slight dashes of grey; the quill-feathers and tail, which are very short, are of a dark slate color, almost black; the legs, which are very long, and bare of feathers a great length above the knees are of a dark dull greenish color: they have a small bag or pouch under their throat: they feed on serpents, young alligators, frogs, and other reptiles.

This solitary bird does not associate in flocks, but is generally seen alone; commonly near the banks of great rivers, in vast marshes or meadows, especially such as are caused by inundations; and also in the vast deserted rice plantations: he stands alone on the topmost limb of tall dead cypress trees, his neck contracted or drawn in upon his shoulders, and beak resting like a long scythe upon his breast. In this pensive posture and solitary situation, it looks extremely grave, sorrowful, and melancholy, as if in the deepest thought. They are never seen on the salt seacoast, and yet are never found at a great distance from it. I take this bird to be of a different genus from the tantalus, and perhaps approaches the nearest to the Egyptian ibis of any other bird yet known.[1] . . .

1 Wordsworth owed much of the exotic scenery of poems like 'Ruth' to Bartram, and the wood pelican of the passage above makes his appearance in a scene reminiscent of the pantisocratic Utopia which Coleridge and Wordsworth hoped to find by the Susquehanna:

> Oh, what joy
> To see a sanctuary for our country's youth
> Informed with such a spirit as might be
> Its own protection; a primeval grove,
> Where, though the shades of cheerfulness were filled,
> Nor indigent of songs warbled from crowds
> In under-coverts yet the countenance
> Of the whole place should bear a stamp of awe;
> A habitation sober and demure
> For ruminating creatures; a domain
> For quiet things to wander in; a haunt
> In which the heron should delight to feed
> By the shy rivers, and the pelican
> Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought
> Might sit and sun himself.
>
> *The Prelude*(1850),III,427–41.

Cf. Fagin, *William Bartram*(Baltimore,1933),149–76.

Having agreeably diverted away the intolerable heats of sultry noon in fruitful fragrant groves, with renewed vigor I again resume my sylvan pilgrimage. The afternoon and evening moderately warm, and exceeding pleasant views from the river and its varied shores. I passed by Battle Lagoon and the bluff, without much opposition; but the crocodiles were already assembling in the pass. Before night I came to, at a charming orange grove bluff, on the east side of the little lake; and after fixing my camp on a high open situation, and collecting a plenty of dry wood for fuel, I had time to get some fine trout for supper, and joyfully return to my camp.

What a most beautiful creature is this fish before me! gliding to and fro, and figuring in the still clear waters, with his orient attendants and associates: the yellow bream or sun fish. It is about eight inches in length, nearly of the shape of the trout, but rather larger in proportion over the shoulders and breast: the mouth large, and the branchiostega opens wide; the whole fish is of a pale gold (or burnished brass) color, darker on the back and upper sides; the scales are of a proportionable size, regularly placed, and everywhere variably powdered with red, russet, silver, blue, and green specks, so laid on the scales as to appear like real dust or opaque bodies, each apparent particle being so projected by light and shade, and the various attitudes of the fish, as to deceive the sight; for in reality nothing can be of a more plain and polished surface than the scales and whole body of the fish. The fins are of an orange color; and, like all the species of the bream, the

ultimate angle of the branchiostega terminates by a little spatula, the extreme end of which represents a crescent of the finest ultramarine blue, encircled with silver and velvet black, like the eye in the feathers of a peacock's train. He is a fish of prodigious strength and activity in the water; a warrior in a gilded coat of mail; and gives no rest or quarter to small fish, which he preys upon. They are delicious food and in great abundance. [1]

The orange grove is but narrow, betwixt the river banks and ancient Indian fields, where there are evident traces of the habitations of the ancients, surrounded with groves of live oak, laurel, magnolia, Zanthoxylum, liquidambar, and others.

How harmonious and soothing is this native sylvan music now at still evening! inexpressibly tender are the responsive cooings of the innocent dove, in the fragrant Zanthoxylum groves, and the variable and tuneful warblings of the nonpareil, with the more sprightly and elevated strains of the blue linnet and golden icterus. This is indeed harmony, even amidst the incessant croaking of the frogs: the shades of silent night are made more cheerful, with the shrill voice of the whip-poor-will and active mock-bird.

My situation high and airy, a brisk and cool breeze steadily and incessantly passing over the clear waters of the lake, and fluttering over me through the surrounding groves, wings its way to the moonlight savannas, while I repose on my sweet and healthy couch of the soft Tillandsi ulneaadcites, and the latter gloomy and still hours of night passed rapidly away as it were in a moment. I arose, strengthened and cheerful, in the morning. . . .

At evening I arrived at Cedar Point, my former safe and pleasant harbor, at the east cape of the great lake, where I had noticed some curious shrubs and plants. Here I rested, and on the smooth and gentle current launch again into the little ocean of Lake George, meaning now, on my return, to coast his western shores in search of new beauties in the bounteous kingdom of Flora.

I was however induced to deviate a little from my intended course, and touch at the enchanting little Isle of Palms. This delightful spot, planted by nature, is almost an entire grove of palms, with a few pyramidal magnolias, live-oaks, golden orange, and the animating Zanthoxylum. What a beautiful retreat is here! blessed, unviolated spot of earth! rising from the limpid waters of the lake; its fragrant groves and blooming lawns invested and protected by encircling ranks of the Yucca gloriosa. A fascinating atmosphere surrounds this blissful garden; the balmy Lantana, ambrosial Citra, perfumed Crinum, perspiring their mingled odors, wafted through Zanthoxylum groves. I at last broke away from the enchanting spot, and stepped on board my boat, hoisted sail and soon approached the coast of the main, at the cool eve of day; then traversing a capacious, semicircular cove of the lake,

1 John Livingston Lowes, in discussing the background of Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner' and in particular the lines:

> Within the shadow of the ship,
> I watched their rich attire:
> Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
> They coiled and swam: and every track
> Was a flash of golden fire.
> (277–81)

says, after citing certain probable influences: 'But neither Father Bourzes's fishes nor Cook's protozoa are "velvet black" or, for that matter, black at all. Where did the rich array of the water-snakes acquire its shadowed livery? Probably none of the books which Coleridge was reading during the gestation of "The Ancient Mariner" left more lively images in his memory than Bartram's *Travels*. The fascinating fifth chapter of Part Two in particular had awakened him to all manner of poetic possibilities, and had prompted copious transcriptions in the Note Book. And these transcripts form, as it happens, a significant cluster. The alligators (punctuated by Hartley's moonlit tears) were set down from pages 127–30 of the *Travels*; the "little peaceable community" of snake-birds, from pages 132–33; the antiphonal roarings of the crocodiles and the thunder, from page 140; the wilderness plot, green, fountainous, and unviolated, from page 157; and the Gordonia lasianthus, from pages 161–62. Coleridge's memory, it is clear, had been greedily absorbing impressions from these thirty-odd pages, as Gideon's fleece drank up the dew. Now on pages 153–54 of the *Travels*, at the very heart of the cluster, flanked on both sides by passages which Coleridge actually transcribed, appears a long and vivid description of "the yellow bream or sun fish." "What a most beautiful creature is this fish before me!" exclaims Bartram, "gliding to and fro, and figuring in the still clear waters, with his orient attendants and associates." "The whole fish," he goes on, "is of a pale gold (or *burnished* brass) color . . . the scales are . . powdered with *red*, russet, silver, *blue* and *green* specks," while at the gills is "a little spatula . . . encircled with silver, and velvet black." ' Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu*(Boston,1930),46–47.

verged by low, extensive, grassy meadows, I at length by dusk made a safe harbor, in a little lagoon, on the seashore or strand of a bold sandy point, which descended from the surf of the lake. This was a clean sandy beach, hard and firm by the beating surf, when the wind sets from the east coast. I drew up my light vessel on the sloping shore, that she might be safe from the beating waves in case of a sudden storm of wind in the night. A few yards back the land was a little elevated, and overgrown with thickets of shrubs and low trees, consisting chiefly of Zanthoxylum, Olea Americana, Rhamus frangula, Sideroxylon, Morus, Ptelea, Halesia, Querci, Myrica cerifera and others. These groves were but low, yet sufficiently high to shelter me from the chilling dews; and being but a few yards distance from my vessel, here I fixed my encampment. A brisk wind arising from the lake, drove away the clouds of mosquitoes into the thickets. I now, with difficulty and industry, collected a sufficiency of dry wood to keep up a light during the night, and to roast some trout which I had caught when descending the river. Their heads I stewed in the juice of oranges, which, with boiled rice, afforded me a wholesome and delicious supper. I hung the remainder of my broiled fish on the snags of some shrubs over my head. I at last, after reconnoitring my habitation, returned, spread abroad my skins and blanket upon the clean sands by my fireside, and betook myself to repose.

How glorious[ly] the powerful sun, minister of the Most High in the rule and government of this earth, leaves our hemisphere, retiring from our sight beyond the western forests! I behold with gratitude his departing smiles, tinging the fleecy roseate clouds, now riding far away on the eastern horizon. Behold they vanish from sight in the azure skies!

All now silent and peaceable, I suddenly fell asleep. At midnight I awake; when, raising my head erect, I find myself alone in the wilderness of Florida, on the shores of Lake George. Alone indeed, but under the care of the Almighty, and protected by the invisible hand of my guardian angel.

When quite awake, I started at the heavy tread of some animal, the dry limbs of trees upon the ground crack under his feet, the close shrubby thickets part and bend under him as he rushes off.

I rekindled up my sleepy fire, lay in contact with the exfoliated, smoking brands damp with the dew of heaven.

The bright flame ascends and illuminates the ground and groves around me.

When looking up, I found my fish carried off, though I had thought them safe on the shrubs just over my head, but their scent, carried to a great distance by the damp nocturnal breezes, I suppose were too powerful attractions to resist.

Perhaps it may not be time lost, to rest awhile here, and reflect on the unexpected and unaccountable incident, which however pointed out to me an extraordinary deliverance or protection of my life, from the rapacious wolf that stole my fish from over my head.

How much easier and more eligible might it have been for him to have leaped upon my breast in the dead of sleep, and torn my throat, which would have instantly deprived me of life, and then glutted his stomach for the present with my warm blood, and dragged off my body, which would have made a feast afterwards for him and his howling associates! I say would not this have been a wiser step, than to have made protracted and circular approaches, and then after, by chance, espying the fish over my head, with the greatest caution and silence rear up and take them off the snags one by one, then make off with them, and that so cunningly as not to awaken me until he had fairly accomplished his purpose?

The morning being clear, I set sail with a favorite breeze, coasting along the shores; when on a sudden the waters became transparent, and discovered the sandy bottom, and the several nations of fish, passing and repassing each other. Following this course I was led to the cape of the little river, descending from Six Mile Springs, and meanders six miles from its source through green meadows. I entered this pellucid stream, sailing over the heads of innumerable squadrons of fish, which, although many feet deep in the water, were distinctly to be seen. I passed by charming islets of flourishing trees, as palm, red bay, ash, maple, nyssa, and others. As I approached the distant high forest on the

main, the river widened, floating fields of the green Pistia surrounded me, the rapid stream winding through them. What an alluring scene was now before me! A vast basin or little lake of crystal waters, half encircled by swelling hills, clad with orange and odoriferous Illicium groves, the towering magnolia, itself a grove, and the exalted palm, as if conscious of their transcendent glories, tossed about their lofty heads, painting, with mutable shades, the green floating fields beneath. The social prattling coot enrobed in blue, and the squealing water-hen, with wings half-expanded, tripped after each other over the watery mirror.

I put in at an ancient landing-place, which is a sloping ascent to a level grassy plain, an old Indian field. As I intended to make my most considerable collections at this place, I proceeded immediately to fix my encampment but a few yards from my safe harbor, where I securely fastened my boat to a live oak which overshadowed my port.

1791

HECTOR ST. JEAN DE CRÈVECŒUR

1735–1813

A SNOW STORM AS IT AFFECTS THE AMERICAN FARMER [1]

No man of the least degree of sensibility can journey through any number of years in whatever climate without often being compelled to make many useful observations on the different phenomena of Nature which surround him; and without involuntarily being struck either with awe or admiration in beholding some of the elementary conflicts in the midst of which he lives. A great thunder storm; an extensive flood; a desolating hurricane; a sudden and intense frost; an overwhelming snow storm; a sultry day,—each of these different scenes exhibits singular beauties even in spite of the damage they cause. Often whilst the heart laments the loss to the citizen, the enlightened mind, seeking for the natural causes, and astonished at the effects, awakes itself to surprise and wonder.

Of all the scenes which this climate offers, none has struck me with a greater degree of admiration than the ushering in of our winters, and the vehemence with which their first rigor seizes and covers the earth; a rigor which, when once descended, becomes one of the principal favors and blessings this climate has to boast of. I mean to view it as connected with the welfare of husbandry; as a great flood of congealed water sheltering the grass and the grains of our fields; and overwhelming men, beasts, birds living under the care of man. [He] in the midst of this sudden alteration has to provide food and shelter for so many animals, on the preservation of which the husbandman's welfare entirely depends. This single thought is really tremendous: from grass and pastures growing in our meadows and in our fields; from various other means by which the tenants of our farms lived before, they must suddenly pass to provenders, to grains, and to other resources gathered by Man when the face of the earth teemed with a luxuriant vegetation.

'Tis at this period that the functions of a great farmer become more extended and more difficult. 'Tis from his stores that all must draw their subsistence. He must know whether they will be sufficient to reach the other end of the wintry career. He must see whether all have a sufficient quantity daily delivered to them; whether each class is properly divided; whether water can be procured; what diseases and accidents may happen. These are a few sketches of that energetic circle of foresight, knowledge, and activity which fill the space of five months; to which you must add the care of a large family as to raiment, fuel, and victuals.

The tenants of his house, like the beasts of his farm, must now depend on the collected stores of the preceding season, sagaciously distributed and prepared by the industry of his wife. There lies the *aurum potabile* of an American farmer. He may

1 The texts from Crèvecœur have been modernized by the editors.

work and gather the choicest fruits of his farm, but if female economy fails, he loses the comfort of good victuals. He sees wholesome meats, excellent flours converted into indifferent food; whilst his neighbor, more happy, though less rich, feeds on well-cooked dishes, well-composed puddings. For such is our lot: if we are blessed with a good wife, we may boast of living better than any people of the same rank on the globe.

Various tokens, long since known, guide the farmer in his daily progress and various occupations from the autumnal fall of the leaves. If he is prudent and active, he makes himself ready against the worst which Nature can give. Sheds, stables, barn-yards, partitions, racks, and mangers must be carefully reviewed and repaired; the stores of corn-stalks, straw, and hay must be securely placed where neither rain nor snow can damage them.

Great rains at last replenish the springs, the brooks, the swamps, and impregnate the earth. Then a severe frost succeeds which prepares it to receive the voluminous coat of snow which is soon to follow; though it is often preceded by a short interval of smoke and mildness, called the Indian Summer. This is in general the invariable rule: winter is not said properly to begin until these few moderate days and the rising of the waters have announced it to Man. This great mass of liquid once frozen spreads everywhere natural bridges; opens communications impassable before. The man of foresight neglects nothing; he has saved every object which might be damaged or lost; he is ready.

The wind, which is a great regulator of the weather, shifts to the northeast; the air becomes bleak and then intensely cold; the light of the sun becomes dimmed as if an eclipse had happened; a general night seems coming on. At last imperceptible atoms make their appearance; they are few and descend slowly, a sure prognostic of a great snow. Little or no wind is as yet felt. By degrees the number as well as the size of these white particles is increased; they descend in larger flakes; a distant wind is heard; the noise swells and seems to advance; the new element at last appears and overspreads everything. In a little time the heavy clouds seem to approach nearer the earth and discharge a winged flood, driving along towards the southwest, howling at every door, roaring in every chimney, whistling with asperous sound through the naked limbs of the trees; these are the shrill notes which mark the weight of the storm. Still the storm increases as the night approaches, and its great obscurity greatly adds to the solemnity of the scene.

Sometimes the snow is preceded by melted hail which, like a shining varnish, covers and adorns the whole surface of the earth, of buildings and trees; a hurtful time for the cattle which it chills and oppresses. Mournful and solitary they retire to what shelter they can get, and, forgetting to eat, they wait with instinctive patience until the storm is over. How amazingly changed is the aspect of Nature! From the dusky hues of the autumnal shades, everything becomes refulgently white; from soft, miry roads, we pass all at once to solid icy bridges. What could an inhabitant of Africa say or think in contemplating this northern phenomenon? Would not it raise in his mind a greater degree of astonishment than his thunder storms and his vertical suns?

A general alarm is spread through the farm. The master calls all his hands; opens the gates; lets down the bars; calls and counts all his stock as they come along. The oxen, the cows, remembering ancient experience, repair to the place where they were foddered the preceding winter; the colts wild, whilst they could unrestrained bound on the grassy fields, suddenly deprived of that liberty, become tame and docile to the hands which stroke and feed them. The sheep, more encumbered than the rest, slowly creep along, and by their incessant bleating show their instinctive apprehension; they are generally the first which attract our attention and care. The horses are led to their stables; the oxen to their stalls; the rest are confined under their proper sheds and districts. All is safe, but no fodder need be given them yet; the stings of hunger are necessary to make them eat cheerfully the dried herbage and forget the green one on which they so lately fed. Heaven be praised, no accident has happened; all is secured from the inclemency of the storm. The farmer's vigilant eye has seen every operation performed; has num-

bered every head; and as a good master provided for the good welfare of all.

At last he returns home loaded with hail and snow melting on his rough but warm clothes; his face is red with the repeated injury occasioned by the driving wind. His cheerful wife, not less pleased, welcomes him home with a mug of gingered cider; and whilst she helps him to dried and more comfortable clothes, she recounts to him the successful pains she has taken also in collecting all her ducks, geese, and all the rest of her numerous poultry; a province less extensive indeed but not less useful. But no sooner this simple tale is told than the cheerfulness of her mind is clouded by a sudden thought. Her children went to a distant school early in the morning whilst the sun shone, and ere any ideas were formed of this storm. They are not yet returned. What is become of them? Has the master had tenderness enough to tarry awhile and watch over his little flock until the arrival of some relief? Or has he rudely dismissed them in quest of his own safety?

These alarming thoughts are soon communicated to her husband who, starting up in all the glow of paternal anxiety, orders one of his negroes to repair to the schoolhouse with Bonny, the old faithful mare, who, like his wife, by her fecundity has replenished his farm. 'Tis done: she is mounted bare-back and hurried through the storm to the schoolhouse, at the door of which each child is impatiently waiting for this paternal assistance. At the sight of honest Tom, the negro, their joy is increased by the pleasure of going home on horseback. One is mounted before, and two behind. Rachel, the poor widow's little daughter, with tears in her eyes, sees her playmates, just before her equals, as she thought, now provided with a horse and an attendant,—a sad mortification. This is the first time she ever became sensible of the difference of her situation. Her distressed mother, not less anxious to fetch her child, prays to heaven that some charitable neighbor may bring her along. She, too, has a cow to take care of; a couple of pigs hitherto tenderly fed at the door; three or four ewes, perhaps, demanding her shelter round some part of her lonely log-house. Kind heaven hears her prayers. Honest Tom lifts her [Rachel] up and, for want of room, places her on Bonny's neck; there she is upheld by the oldest boy. Thus fixed with difficulty, they turn about and boldly face the driving storm; they all scream and are afraid of falling; at last they clinch together and are hushed. With cheerfulness and instinctive patience, Bonny proceeds along, and, sensible of the valuable cargo, highly lifting her legs, she securely treads along, shaking now and then her ears as the drifted snow penetrates into them.

A joyful meeting ensues. The thoughts of avoided danger increase the pleasure of the family. The milk-biscuit, the short-cake, the newly-baked apple-pie are immediately produced, and the sudden joy these presents occasion expels every idea of cold and snow. In this country of hospitality and plenty it would be a wonder indeed if little Rachel had not partaken of the same bounty. She is fed, made to warm herself; she has forgot the little reflections she had made at the schoolhouse door; she is happy, and to complete the goodly act, she is sent home on the same vehicle. The unfeigned thanks, the honest blessings of the poor widow, who was just going to set out, amply repays the trouble that has been taken; happy wages of this charitable attention.

The messenger returns. Everything is safe both within and without. At that instant the careful negro, Jack, who has been busily employed in carrying wood to the shed that he may not be at a loss to kindle fire in the morning, comes into his master's room carrying on his hip an enormous back-log without which a fire is supposed to be imperfectly made and to be devoid of heat. All hands rise; the fire is made to blaze; the hearth is cleaned; and all the cheerful family sit around. Rest after so many laborious operations brings along with it an involuntary silence, even among the children who grow sleepy with their victuals in their hands, as they grow warm. 'Lord, hear, how it blows!' says one. 'My God, what a storm!' says another. 'Mammy, where does all this snow come from?' asks a third. 'Last year's storm, I think, was nothing to this,' observes the wife. 'I hope all is fast about the house. How happy it is for us that we had daylight to prepare us for it.'

The father now and then opens the door

to pass judgment, and to contemplate the progress of the storm: ' 'Tis dark, 'tis pitch-dark,' he says; 'a fence four rods off cannot be distinguished. The locust-trees hard by the door bend under the pressure of the loaded blast. Thank God, all is secured. I'll fodder my poor cattle well in the morning if it please Him I should live to see it.' And this pious sentiment serves him as a reward for all his former industry, vigilance, and care. The negroes, friends to the fire, smoke and crack some coarse jokes; and, well-fed and clad, they contentedly make their brooms and ladles without any further concerns on their minds. Thus the industrious family, all gathered together under one roof, eat their wholesome supper, drink their mugs of cider, and grow imperceptibly less talkative and more thoughtless, as they grow more sleepy. Now and then, when the redoubled fury of the storm rattles in the chimney, they seem to awake. They look at the door again and again, but 'tis the work of omnipotence; it is unavoidable; their neighbors feel it as well as themselves. Finally they go to bed, not to that bed of slavery or sorrow as is the case in Europe with people of their class, but on the substantial collection of honest feathers picked and provided by the industrious wife. There, stretched between flannel sheets and covered with warm blankets made of their own sheep's wool, they enjoy the luxury of sound, undisturbed repose, earned by the fatigues of the preceding day. The Almighty has no crime to punish in this innocent family; why should He permit ominous dreams and terrific visions to disturb the imaginations of these good people?

As soon as day reappears, the American farmer awakes and calls all his hands. While some are busy in kindling the fires, the rest with anxiety repair to the barns and sheds. What a dismal aspect presents itself to their view! The roads, the paths are no longer visible. The drifted snow presents obstacles which must be removed with the shovel. The fences and the trees, bending under the weight of snow which encumbers them, bend in a thousand shapes; but by a lucky blast of wind they are discharged, and they immediately recover their natural situation. The cattle who had hitherto remained immovable, their tails to the wind, appear strangely disfigured by the long accession and adherence of the snow to their bodies. On the sight of the master, suddenly animated, they heavily shake themselves clean, and crowd from all parts in expectation of that fodder which the industry of Man has provided for them. Where their number is extensive, various and often distant are their allotments, which are generally in the vicinity of the stacks of hay. In that case, when the barn-yard work is done, the farmer mounts his horse, followed by his men armed with pitch-forks. He counts again the number of each sort, and sees that each receives a sufficient quantity. The strong are separated from the weak, oxen with oxen, yearlings with yearlings, and so on through every class. For cattle, like men, conscious of their superior force will abuse it when unrestrained by any law, and often live on their neighbor's property.

What a care, what an assiduity does this life require! Who on contemplating the great and important field of action performed every year by a large farmer, can refrain from valuing and praising as they ought this useful, this dignified class of men? These are the people who, scattered on the edge of this great continent, have made it to flourish; and have without the dangerous assistance of mines, gathered, by the sweat of their honest brows and by the help of their ploughs, such a harvest of commercial emoluments for their country, uncontaminated either by spoils or rapine. These are the men who in future will replenish this huge continent even to its utmost unknown limits, and render this new found part of the world by far the happiest, the most potent as well as the most populous of any. Happy people! May the poor, the wretched of Europe, animated by our example, invited by our laws, avoid the fetters of their country, and come in shoals to partake of our toils as well as of our happiness!

The next operation is to seek for convenient watering-places. Holes must be cut through the ice; 'tis done. The veteran, experienced cattle lead the way, tread down the snow, and form a path; the rest soon follow. Two days' experience [teaches] them all the way to this place as well as the station they must occupy in their progress thither; the stoutest marching first and the

weakest closing the rear. The succeeding operations with regard to the preservation of the cattle entirely depend on the judgment of the farmer. He knows, according to the weather, when it is best to give them either straw, corn-stalks, or hay. In very hard weather they are more hungry and better able to consume the coarse fodder; corn-stalks are reserved for sheep and young cattle; hay is given to all in thaws.

Soon after this great fall of snow the wind shifts to the northwest and blows with great impetuosity; it gathers and drives the loose element. Everything seems to be involved a second time in a general whirlwind of white atoms, not so dangerous indeed as those clouds of sand raised in the deserts of Arabia. This second scourge is rather worse than the first, because it renders parts of the roads seemingly impassable. 'Tis then that with empty sleighs the neighborhood gather, and by their united efforts open a communication along the road. If new snow falls, new endeavors must be made use of to guard against the worst of inconveniences. For, to live, it is necessary to go to market, to mill, to the woods. This is, besides, the season of merriment and mutual visiting. All the labors of the farm are now reduced to those of the barn; to the fetching of fuel and to cleaning their own flax. The fatigues of the preceding summer require now some relaxation. What can be more conducive to it than the great plenty of wholesome food we all have? Cider is to be found in every house. The convenience of travelling invites the whole country to society, pleasure, and visiting. Bees are made, by which a number of people with their sleighs resort to the inviter's house, and there in one day haul him as much wood as will serve him a whole year. Next day 'tis another man's turn; admirable contrivance which promotes good-will, kindness, and mutual assistance. By means of these associations often the widows and orphans are relieved.

After two or three falls of snow the weather becomes serene though cold. New communications are opened over lakes and rivers and through forests hitherto impassable. The ox rests from his summer labor, and the horse amply fed now does all the work. His celerity is strengthened by the steel shoes with which his hoofs are armed; he is fit to draw on the snow as well as on the ice. Immense is the value of this season: logs for future buildings are easily drawn to the saw-mills; ready-piled stones are with equal ease brought to the intended spot; grain is conveyed to the different landings on our small rivers, from whence in the spring small vessels carry it to the sea-port towns, and from which again larger ones convey it away to the different marts of the world. The constancy of this serenely cold weather is one of the greatest blessings which seldom fails us. More to the southward their winters are often interrupted by thaws and rains which are unfavorable to transportation as well as to the cattle. [This is] a happy suspension of toils and labors; happy rest without which the vegetation of our cold climates would soon be exhausted. On the other hand, 'tis an expensive season in every respect: nothing profitable can be done, and clothes of the warmest sorts must be provided for everyone. Great parts of the profits of summer are expended in carrying a family through this wintry career,—but let not that reflection diminish our happiness! We are robust, healthy, and strong; the milder climates of the South have nothing that can compensate for these advantages. It is true that the class of men who work for the farmers have less employment, but nevertheless they live with comfort and in such abundance as is proportioned to their situation; everyone has bread and meat. As for the real poor, we have none in this happy country; those who through age and infirmities are past labor, are provided for by the township to which they belong. Such are the Mohawk and Canadian winters. . . . A long ramble like this through a cold Canadian storm requires rest, silence, and sleep. After so long an excursion we may with propriety wish each other good night.

c.1770–1774 1787

WHAT IS AN AMERICAN?

I WISH I could be acquainted with the feelings and thoughts which must agitate the heart and present themselves to the mind of an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent. He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see

this fair country discovered and settled; he must necessarily feel a share of national pride, when he views the chain of settlements which embellishes these extended shores. When he says to himself, this is the work of my countrymen, who, when convulsed by factions, afflicted by a variety of miseries and wants, restless and impatient, took refuge here. They brought along with them their national genius, to which they principally owe what liberty they enjoy, and what substance they possess. Here he sees the industry of his native country displayed in a new manner, and traces in their works the embryos of all the arts, sciences, and ingenuity which flourish in Europe. Here he beholds fair cities, substantial villages, extensive fields, an immense country filled with decent houses, good roads, orchards, meadows, and bridges, where an hundred years ago all was wild, woody and uncultivated! What a train of pleasing ideas this fair spectacle must suggest; it is a prospect which must inspire a good citizen with the most heartfelt pleasure. The difficulty consists in the manner of viewing so extensive a scene. He is arrived on a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he had hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything, and of a herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe. Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida. We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory, communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws, without dreading their power, because they are equitable. We are all animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself. If he travels through our rural districts he views not the hostile castle, and the haughty mansion, contrasted with the clay-built hut and miserable cabin, where cattle and men help to keep each other warm, and dwell in meanness, smoke, and indigence. A pleasing uniformity of decent competence appears throughout our habitations. The meanest of our log-houses is a dry and comfortable habitation. Lawyer or merchant are the fairest titles our towns afford; that of a farmer is the only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country. It must take some time ere he can reconcile himself to our dictionary, which is but short in words of dignity, and names of honor. There, on a Sunday, he sees a congregation of respectable farmers and their wives, all clad in neat homespun, well mounted, or riding in their own humble wagons. There is not among them an esquire, saving the unlettered magistrate. There he sees a parson as simple as his flock, a farmer who does not riot on the labor of others. We have no princes, for whom we toil, starve, and bleed: we are the most perfect society now existing in the world. Here man is free as he ought to be; nor is this pleasing equality so transitory as many others are. Many ages will not see the shores of our great lakes replenished with inland nations, nor the unknown bounds of North America entirely peopled. Who can tell how far it extends? Who can tell the millions of men whom it will feed and contain? for no European foot has as yet travelled half the extent of this mighty continent!

The next wish of this traveller will be to know whence came all these people? they are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race now called Americans have arisen. The eastern provinces must indeed be excepted, as being the unmixed descendants of Englishmen. I have heard many wish that they had been more intermixed also: for my part, I am no wisher, and think it much better as it has happened. They exhibit a most conspicuous figure in this great and variegated picture; they too enter for a great share in the pleasing perspective displayed in these thirteen provinces. I know it is fashionable to reflect on them, but I respect them for what they have done; for the accuracy and wisdom with which they have settled their territory; for the decency of their manners; for their early love of letters; their ancient college, the first in this

hemisphere; for their industry; which to me who am but a farmer, is the criterion of everything. There never was a people, situated as they are, who with so ungrateful a soil have done more in so short a time. Do you think that the monarchical ingredients which are more prevalent in other governments, have purged them from all foul stains? Their histories assert the contrary.

In this great American asylum, the poor of Europe have by some means met together, and in consequence of various causes; to what purpose should they ask one another what countrymen they are? Alas, two thirds of them had no country. Can a wretch who wanders about, who works and starves, whose life is a continual scene of sore affliction or pinching penury; can that man call England or any other kingdom his country? A country that had no bread for him, whose fields procured him no harvest, who met with nothing but the frowns of the rich, the severity of the laws, with jails and punishments; who owned not a single foot of the extensive surface of this planet? No! urged by a variety of motives, here they came. Every thing has tended to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they are become men: in Europe they were as so many useless plants, wanting vegetative mould, and refreshing showers; they withered, and were mowed down by want, hunger, and war; but now by the power of transplantation, like all other plants they have taken root and flourished! Formerly they were not numbered in any civil lists of their country, except in those of the poor; here they rank as citizens. By what invisible power has this surprising metamorphosis been performed? By that of the laws and that of their industry. The laws, the indulgent laws, protect them as they arrive, stamping on them the symbol of adoption; they receive ample rewards for their labors; these accumulated rewards procure them lands; those lands confer on them the title of freemen, and to that title every benefit is affixed which men can possibly require. This is the great operation daily performed by our laws. From whence proceed these laws? From our government. Whence the government? It is derived from the original genius and strong desire of the people ratified and confirmed by the crown. This is the great chain which links us all, this is the picture which every province exhibits, Nova Scotia excepted. There the crown has done all; either there were no people who had genius, or it was not much attended to: the consequence is, that the province is very thinly inhabited indeed; the power of the crown in conjunction with the mosquitoes has prevented men from settling there. Yet some parts of it flourished once, and it contained a mild harmless set of people. But for the fault of a few leaders, the whole were banished. The greatest political error the crown ever committed in America, was to cut off men from a country which wanted nothing but men!

What attachment can a poor European emigrant have for a country where he had nothing? The knowledge of the language, the love of a few kindred as poor as himself, were the only cords that tied him: his country is now that which gives him land, bread, protection, and consequence. *Ubi panis ibi patria*,[1] is the motto of all emigrants. What then is the American, this new man? He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. *He* is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great *Alma Mater*. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit. The

1 'Where there is bread, there is my fatherland.'

American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein either he or his forefathers were born. Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labor; his labor is founded on the basis of nature, *self-interest*; can it want a stronger allurement? Wives and children, who before in vain demanded of him a morsel of bread, now, fat and frolicsome, gladly help their father to clear those fields whence exuberant crops are to arise to feed and to clothe them all; without any part being claimed, either by a despotic prince, a rich abbot, or a mighty lord. Here religion demands but little of him; a small voluntary salary to the minister, and gratitude to God; can he refuse these? The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labor, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence.—This is an American.

British America is divided into many provinces, forming a large association, scattered along a coast 1500 miles extent and about 200 wide. This society I would fain examine, at least such as it appears in the middle provinces; if it does not afford that variety of tinges and gradations which may be observed in Europe, we have colors peculiar to ourselves. For instance, it is natural to conceive that those who live near the sea, must be very different from those who live in the woods; the intermediate space will afford a separate and distinct class.

Men are like plants; the goodness and flavor of the fruit proceeds from the peculiar soil and exposition in which they grow. We are nothing but what we derive from the air we breathe, the climate we inhabit, the government we obey, the system of religion we profess, and the nature of our employment. Here you will find but few crimes; these have acquired as yet no root among us. I wish I were able to trace all my ideas; if my ignorance prevents me from describing them properly, I hope I shall be able to delineate a few of the outlines, which are all I propose.

Those who live near the sea, feed more on fish than on flesh, and often encounter that boisterous element This renders them more bold and enterprising; this leads them to neglect the confined occupations of the land. They see and converse with a variety of people; their intercourse with mankind becomes extensive. The sea inspires them with a love of traffic, a desire of transporting produce from one place to another; and leads them to a variety of resources which supply the place of labor. Those who inhabit the middle settlements, by far the most numerous, must be very different; the simple cultivation of the earth purifies them, but the indulgences of the government, the soft remonstrances of religion, the rank of independent freeholders, must necessarily inspire them with sentiments, very little known in Europe among people of the same class. What do I say? Europe has no such class of men; the early knowledge they acquire, the early bargains they make, give them a great degree of sagacity. As freemen they will be litigious; pride and obstinacy are often the cause of law suits; the nature of our laws and governments may be another. As citizens it is easy to imagine, that they will carefully read the newspapers, enter into every political disquisition, freely blame or censure governors and others. As farmers they will be careful and anxious to get as much as they can, because what they get is their own. As northern men they will love the cheerful cup. As Christians, religion curbs them not in their opinions; the general indulgence leaves every one to think for themselves in spiritual matters; the laws inspect our actions, our thoughts are left to God. Industry, good living, selfishness, litigiousness, country politics, the pride of freemen, religious indifference, are their characteristics. If you recede still farther from the sea, you will come into more modern settlements; they exhibit the same strong lineaments, in a ruder appearance. Religion seems to have still less influence, and their manners are less improved.

Now we arrive near the great woods, near the last inhabited districts; there men seem to be placed still farther beyond the reach of government, which in some measure leaves them to themselves. How can it pervade every corner; as they were driven there by misfortunes, necessity of beginnings, desire of acquiring large tracts of land, idleness, frequent want of economy,

ancient debts; the re-union of such people does not afford a very pleasing spectacle. When discord, want of unity and friendship; when either drunkenness or idleness prevail in such remote districts; contention, inactivity, and wretchedness must ensue. There are not the same remedies to these evils as in a long established community. The few magistrates they have, are in general little better than the rest; they are often in a perfect state of war; that of man against man, sometimes decided by blows, sometimes by means of the law; that of man against every wild inhabitant of these venerable woods, of which they are come to dispossess them. There men appear to be no better than carnivorous animals of a superior rank, living on the flesh of wild animals when they can catch them, and when they are not able, they subsist on grain. He who would wish to see America in its proper light, and have a true idea of its feeble beginnings and barbarous rudiments, must visit our extended line of frontiers where the last settlers dwell, and where he may see the first labors of settlement, the mode of clearing the earth, in all their different appearances; where men are wholly left dependent on their native tempers, and on the spur of uncertain industry, which often fails when not sanctified by the efficacy of a few moral rules. There, remote from the power of example and check of shame, many families exhibit the most hideous parts of our society. They are a kind of forlorn hope, preceding by ten or twelve years the most respectable army of veterans which come after them. In that space, prosperity will polish some, vice and the law will drive off the rest, who uniting again with others like themselves will recede still farther; making room for more industrious people, who will finish their improvements, convert the log-house into a convenient habitation, and rejoicing that the first heavy labors are finished, will change in a few years that hitherto barbarous country into a fine fertile, well regulated district. Such is our progress, such is the march of the Europeans toward the interior parts of this continent. In all societies there are off-casts; this impure part serves as our precursors or pioneers; my father himself was one of that class, but he came upon honest principles, and was therefore one of the few who held fast; by good conduct and temperance, he transmitted to me his fair inheritance, when not above one in fourteen of his contemporaries had the same good fortune.

Forty years ago this smiling country was thus inhabited; it is now purged, a general decency of manners prevails throughout, and such has been the fate of our best countries.

Exclusive of those general characteristics, each province has its own, founded on the government, climate, mode of husbandry, customs, and peculiarity of circumstances. Europeans submit insensibly to these great powers, and become, in the course of a few generations, not only Americans in general, but either Pennsylvanians, Virginians, or provincials under some other name. Whoever traverses the continent must easily observe those strong differences, which will grow more evident in time. The inhabitants of Canada, Massachusetts, the middle provinces, the southern ones will be as different as their climates; their only points of unity will be those of religion and language.

As I have endeavored to show you how Europeans become Americans; it may not be disagreeable to show you likewise how the various Christian sects introduced, wear out, and how religious indifference becomes prevalent. When any considerable number of a particular sect happen to dwell contiguous to each other, they immediately erect a temple, and there worship the Divinity agreeably to their own peculiar ideas. Nobody disturbs them. If any new sect springs up in Europe it may happen that many of its professors will come and settle in America. As they bring their zeal with them, they are at liberty to make proselytes if they can, and to build a meeting and to follow the dictates of their consciences; for neither the government nor any other power interferes. If they are peaceable subjects, and are industrious, what is it to their neighbors how and in what manner they think fit to address their prayers to the Supreme Being? But if the sectaries are not settled close together, if they are mixed with other denominations, their zeal will cool for want of fuel, and will be extinguished in a little time. Then the Americans become as to religion, what they are as to country,

allied to all. In them the name of Englishman, Frenchman, and European is lost, and in like manner, the strict modes of Christianity as practised in Europe are lost also. This effect will extend itself still farther hereafter, and though this may appear to you as a strange idea, yet it is a very true one. I shall be able perhaps hereafter to explain myself better; in the meanwhile, let the following example serve as my first justification.

Let us suppose you and I to be travelling; we observe that in this house, to the right, lives a Catholic, who prays to God as he has been taught, and believes in transubstantiation; he works and raises wheat, he has a large family of children, all hale and robust; his belief, his prayers offend nobody. About one mile farther on the same road, his next neighbor may be a good honest plodding German Lutheran, who addresses himself to the same God, the God of all, agreeably to the modes he has been educated in, and believes in consubstantiation; by so doing he scandalizes nobody; he also works in his fields, embellishes the earth, clears swamps, etc. What has the world to do with his Lutheran principles? He persecutes nobody, and nobody persecutes him, he visits his neighbors, and his neighbors visit him. Next to him lives a seceder, the most enthusiastic of all sectaries; his zeal is hot and fiery, but separated as he is from others of the same complexion, he has no congregation of his own to resort to, where he might cabal and mingle religious pride with worldly obstinacy. He likewise raises good crops, his house is handsomely painted, his orchard is one of the fairest in the neighborhood. How does it concern the welfare of the country, or of the province at large, what this man's religious sentiments are, or really whether he has any at all? He is a good farmer, he is a sober, peaceable, good citizen: William Penn himself would not wish for more. This is the visible character, the invisible one is only guessed at, and is nobody's business. Next again lives a Low Dutchman, who implicitly believes the rules laid down by the synod of Dort. He conceives no other idea of a clergyman than that of an hired man; if he does his work well he will pay him the stipulated sum; if not he will dismiss him, and do without his sermons, and let his church be shut up for years. But notwithstanding this coarse idea, you will find his house and farm to be the neatest in all the country; and you will judge by his wagon and fat horses, that he thinks more of the affairs of this world than of those of the next. He is sober and laborious, therefore he is all he ought to be as to the affairs of this life; as for those of the next, he must trust to the great Creator. Each of these people instruct their children as well as they can, but these instructions are feeble compared to those which are given to the youth of the poorest class in Europe. Their children will therefore grow up less zealous and more indifferent in matters of religion than their parents. The foolish vanity, or rather the fury of making proselytes, is unknown here; they have no time, the seasons call for all their attention, and thus in a few years, this mixed neighborhood will exhibit a strange religious medley, that will be neither pure Catholicism nor pure Calvinism. A very perceptible indifference even in the first generation, will become apparent; and it may happen that the daughter of the Catholic will marry the son of the seceder, and settle by themselves at a distance from their parents. What religious education will they give their children? A very imperfect one. If there happens to be in the neighborhood any place of worship, we will suppose a Quaker's meeting; rather than not show their fine clothes, they will go to it, and some of them may perhaps attach themselves to that society. Others will remain in a perfect state of indifference; the children of these zealous parents will not be able to tell what their religious principles are, and their grandchildren still less. The neighborhood of a place of worship generally leads them to it, and the action of going thither, is the strongest evidence they can give of their attachment to any sect. The Quakers are the only people who retain a fondness for their own mode of worship; for be they ever so far separated from each other, they hold a sort of communion with the society, and seldom depart from its rules, at least in this country. Thus all sects are mixed as well as all nations; thus religious indifference is imperceptibly disseminated from one end of the continent to the other; which is at present one of the strongest characteristics of the Americans.

Where this will reach no one can tell, perhaps it may leave a vacuum fit to receive other systems. Persecution, religious pride, the love of contradiction, are the food of what the world commonly calls religion. These motives have ceased here; zeal in Europe is confined; here it evaporates in the great distance it has to travel; there it is a grain of powder inclosed, here it burns away in the open air, and consumes without effect.

But to return to our back settlers. I must tell you, that there is something in the proximity of the woods, which is very singular. It is with men as it is with the plants and animals that grow and live in the forests; they are entirely different from those that live in the plains. I will candidly tell you all my thoughts but you are not to expect that I shall advance any reasons. By living in or near the woods, their actions are regulated by the wildness of the neighborhood. The deer often come to eat their grain, the wolves to destroy their sheep, the bears to kill their hogs, the foxes to catch their poultry. This surrounding hostility immediately puts the gun into their hands; they watch these animals, they kill some; and thus by defending their property, they soon become professed hunters; this is the progress; once hunters, farewell to the plough. The chase renders them ferocious, gloomy, and unsociable; a hunter wants no neighbor, he rather hates them, because he dreads the competition. In a little time their success in the woods makes them neglect their tillage. They trust to the natural fecundity of the earth, and therefore do little; carelessness in fencing often exposes what little they sow to destruction; they are not at home to watch; in order therefore to make up the deficiency, they go oftener to the woods. That new mode of life brings along with it a new set of manners, which I cannot easily describe. These new manners being grafted on the old stock, produce a strange sort of lawless profligacy, the impressions of which are indelible. The manners of the Indian natives are respectable, compared with this European medley. Their wives and children live in sloth and inactivity; and having no proper pursuits, you may judge what education the latter receive. Their tender minds have nothing else to contemplate but the example of their parents; like them they grow up a mongrel breed, half civilized, half savage, except nature stamps on them some constitutional propensities. That rich, that voluptuous sentiment is gone that struck them so forcibly; the possession of their freeholds no longer conveys to their minds the same pleasure and pride. To all these reasons you must add, their lonely situation, and you cannot imagine what an effect on manners the great distances they live from each other has! Consider one of the last settlements in its first view: of what is it composed? Europeans who have not that sufficient share of knowledge they ought to have, in order to prosper; people who have suddenly passed from oppression, dread of government, and fear of laws, into the unlimited freedom of the woods. This sudden change must have a very great effect on most men, and on that class particularly. Eating of wild meat, whatever you may think, tends to alter their temper: though all the proof I can adduce, is, that I have seen it: and having no place of worship to resort to, what little society this might afford is denied them. The Sunday meetings, exclusive of religious benefits, were the only social bonds that might have inspired them with some degree of emulation in neatness. Is it then surprising to see men thus situated, immersed in great and heavy labors, degenerate a little? It is rather a wonder the effect is not more diffusive. The Moravians and the Quakers are the only instances in exception to what I have advanced. The first never settle singly, it is a colony of the society which emigrates; they carry with them their forms, worship, rules, and decency: the others never begin so hard, they are always able to buy improvements, in which there is a great advantage, for by that time the country is recovered from its first barbarity. Thus our bad people are those who are half cultivators and half hunters; and the worst of them are those who have degenerated altogether into the hunting state. As old ploughmen and new men of the woods, as Europeans and new made Indians, they contract the vices of both; they adopt the moroseness and ferocity of a native, without his mildness, or even his industry at home. If manners are not refined, at least they are rendered simple and inoffensive by tilling the earth;

all our wants are supplied by it, our time is divided between labor and rest, and leaves none for the commission of great misdeeds. As hunters it is divided between the toil of the chase, the idleness of repose, or the indulgence of inebriation. Hunting is but a licentious idle life, and if it does not always pervert good dispositions; yet, when it is united with bad luck, it leads to want: want stimulates that propensity to rapacity and injustice, too natural to needy men, which is the fatal gradation. After this explanation of the effects which follow by living in the woods, shall we yet vainly flatter ourselves with the hope of converting the Indians? We should rather begin with converting our back-settlers; and now if I dare mention the name of religion, its sweet accents would be lost in the immensity of these woods. Men thus placed, are not fit either to receive or remember its mild instructions; they want temples and ministers, but as soon as men cease to remain at home, and begin to lead an erratic life, let them be either tawny or white, they cease to be its disciples.

Thus have I faintly and imperfectly endeavored to trace our society from the sea to our woods! yet you must not imagine that every person who moves back, acts upon the same principles, or falls into the same degeneracy. Many families carry with them all their decency of conduct, purity of morals, and respect of religion; but these are scarce, the power of example is sometimes irresistible. Even among these back-settlers, their depravity is greater or less, according to what nation or province they belong. Were I to adduce proofs of this, I might be accused of partiality. If there happens to be some rich intervals, some fertile bottoms, in those remote districts, the people will there prefer tilling the land to hunting, and will attach themselves to it; but even on these fertile spots you may plainly perceive the inhabitants to acquire a great degree of rusticity and selfishness.

It is in consequence of this straggling situation, and the astonishing power it has on manners, that the back-settlers of both the Carolinas, Virginia, and many other parts, have been long a set of lawless people; it has been even dangerous to travel among them. Government can do nothing in so extensive a country, better it should wink at these irregularities, than that it should use means inconsistent with its usual mildness. Time will efface those stains: in proportion as the great body of population approaches them they will reform, and become polished and subordinate. Whatever has been said of the four New England provinces, no such degeneracy of manners has ever tarnished their annals; their back-settlers have been kept within the bounds of decency, and government, by means of wise laws, and by the influence of religion. What a detestable idea such people must have given to the natives of the Europeans! They trade with them, the worst of people are permitted to do that which none but persons of the best characters should be employed in. They get drunk with them, and often defraud the Indians. Their avarice, removed from the eyes of their superiors, knows no bounds; and aided by a little superiority of knowledge, these traders deceive them, and even sometimes shed blood. Hence those shocking violations, those sudden devastations which have so often stained our frontiers, when hundreds of innocent people have been sacrificed for the crimes of a few. It was in consequence of such behavior, that the Indians took the hatchet against the Virginians in 1774. Thus are our first steps trod, thus are our first trees felled, in general, by the most vicious of our people; and thus the path is opened for the arrival of a second and better class, the true American freeholders; the most respectable set of people in this part of the world: respectable for their industry, their happy independence, the great share of freedom they possess, the good regulation of their families, and for extending the trade and the dominion of our mother country.

Europe contains hardly any other distinctions but lords and tenants; this fair country alone is settled by freeholders, the possessors of the soil they cultivate, members of the government they obey, and the framers of their own laws, by means of their representatives. This is a thought which you have taught me to cherish; our difference from Europe, far from diminishing, rather adds to our usefulness and consequence as men and subjects. Had our forefathers remained there, they would only have crowded it, and perhaps prolonged those

convulsions which had shook it so long. Every industrious European who transports himself here, may be compared to a sprout growing at the foot of a great tree; it enjoys and draws but a little portion of sap; wrench it from the parent roots, transplant it, and it will become a tree bearing fruit also. Colonists are therefore entitled to the consideration due to the most useful subjects; a hundred families barely existing in some parts of Scotland, will here in six years, cause an annual exportation of 10,000 bushels of wheat: 100 bushels being but a common quantity for an industrious family to sell, if they cultivate good land. It is here then that the idle may be employed, the useless become useful, and the poor become rich; but by riches I do not mean gold and silver, we have but little of those metals; I mean a better sort of wealth, cleared lands, cattle, good houses, good clothes, and an increase of people to enjoy them.

There is no wonder that this country has so many charms, and presents to Europeans so many temptations to remain in it. A traveller in Europe becomes a stranger as soon as he quits his own kingdom; but it is otherwise here. We know, properly speaking, no strangers; this is every person's country; the variety of our soils, situations, climates, governments, and produce, hath something which must please everybody. No sooner does an European arrive, no matter of what condition, than his eyes are opened upon the fair prospect; he hears his language spoke, he retraces many of his own country manners, he perpetually hears the names of families and towns with which he is acquainted; he sees happiness and prosperity in all places disseminated; he meets with hospitality, kindness, and plenty every where; he beholds hardly any poor, he seldom hears of punishments and executions; and he wonders at the elegance of our towns, those miracles of industry and freedom. He cannot admire enough our rural districts, our convenient roads, good taverns, and our many accommodations; he involuntarily loves a country where everything is so lovely. When in England, he was a mere Englishman; here he stands on a larger portion of the globe, not less than its fourth part, and may see the productions of the north, in iron and naval stores; the provisions of Ireland, the grain of Egypt, the indigo, the rice of China. He does not find, as in Europe, a crowded society, where every place is over-stocked; he does not feel that perpetual collision of parties, that difficulty of beginning, that contention which oversets so many. There is room for everybody in America; has he any particular talent, or industry? he exerts it in order to procure a livelihood, and it succeeds. Is he a merchant? the avenues of trade are infinite; is he eminent in any respect? he will be employed and respected. Does he love a country life? pleasant farms present themselves; he may purchase what he wants, and thereby become an American farmer. Is he a laborer, sober and industrious? he need not go many miles, nor receive many informations before he will be hired, well fed at the table of his employer, and paid four or five times more than he can get in Europe. Does he want uncultivated lands? thousands of acres present themselves, which he may purchase cheap. Whatever be his talents or inclinations, if they are moderate, he may satisfy them. I do not mean that every one who comes will grow rich in a little time; no, but he may procure an easy, decent maintenance, by his industry. Instead of starving he will be fed, instead of being idle he will have employment; and these are riches enough for such men as come over here. The rich stay in Europe, it is only the middling and the poor that emigrate. Would you wish to travel in independent idleness, from north to south, you will find easy access, and the most cheerful reception at every house; society without ostentation, good cheer without pride, and every decent diversion which the country affords, with little expense. It is no wonder that the European who has lived here a few years, is desirous to remain; Europe with all its pomp, is not to be compared to this continent, for men of middle stations, or laborers.

An European, when he first arrives, seems limited in his intentions, as well as in his views; but he very suddenly alters his scale; two hundred miles formerly appeared a very great distance, it is now but a trifle; he no sooner breathes our air than he forms schemes, and embarks in designs he never would have thought of in his own country. There the plenitude of society confines many useful ideas, and often extin-

guishes the most laudable schemes which here ripen into maturity. Thus Europeans become Americans.

But how is this accomplished in that crowd of low, indigent people, who flock here every year from all parts of Europe? I will tell you; they no sooner arrive than they immediately feel the good effects of that plenty of provisions we possess: they fare on our best food, and they are kindly entertained; their talents, character, and peculiar industry are immediately inquired into; they find countrymen everywhere disseminated, let them come from whatever part of Europe. Let me select one as an epitome of the rest; he is hired, he goes to work, and works moderately; instead of being employed by a haughty person, he finds himself with his equal, placed at the substantial table of the farmer, or else at an inferior one as good; his wages are high, his bed is not like that bed of sorrow on which he used to lie: if he behaves with propriety, and is faithful, he is caressed, and becomes as it were a member of the family. He begins to feel the effects of a sort of resurrection; hitherto he had not lived, but simply vegetated, he now feels himself a man, because he is treated as such; the laws of his own country had overlooked him in his insignificancy; the laws of this cover him with their mantle. Judge what an alteration there must arise in the mind and thoughts of this man; he begins to forget his former servitude and dependence, his heart involuntarily swells and glows; this first swell inspires him with those new thoughts which constitute an American. What love can he entertain for a country where his existence was a burden to him; if he is a generous good man, the love of this new adoptive parent will sink deep into his heart. He looks around, and sees many a prosperous person, who but a few years before was as poor as himself. This encourages him much, he begins to form some little scheme, the first, alas, he ever formed in his life. If he is wise he thus spends two or three years, in which time he acquires knowledge, the use of tools, the modes of working the lands, felling trees, etc. This prepares the foundation of a good name, the most useful acquisition he can make. He is encouraged, he has gained friends; he is advised and directed, he feels bold, he purchases some land; he gives all the money he has brought over, as well as what he has earned, and trusts to the God of harvests for the discharge of the rest. His good name procures him credit. He is now possessed of the deed, conveying to him and his posterity the fee simple and absolute property of two hundred acres of land, situated on such a river. What an epoch in this man's life! He is become a freeholder, from perhaps a German boor—he is now an American, a Pennsylvanian, an English subject. He is naturalized, his name is enrolled with those of the other citizens of the province. Instead of being a vagrant, he has a place of residence; he is called the inhabitant of such a county, or of such a district, and for the first time in his life counts for something; for hitherto he has been a cypher. I only repeat what I have heard many say, and no wonder their hearts should glow, and be agitated with a multitude of feelings, not easy to describe. From nothing to start into being; from a servant to the rank of a master; from being the slave of some despotic prince, to become a free man, invested with lands, to which every municipal blessing is annexed! What a change indeed! It is in consequence of that change that he becomes an American. This great metamorphosis has a double effect, it extinguishes all his European prejudices, he forgets that mechanism of subordination, that servility of disposition which poverty had taught him; and sometimes he is apt to forget too much, often passing from one extreme to the other. If he is a good man, he forms schemes of future prosperity, he proposes to educate his children better than he has been educated himself; he thinks of future modes of conduct, feels an ardor to labor he never felt before. Pride steps in and leads him to everything that the laws do not forbid: he respects them; with a heartfelt gratitude he looks toward the east, toward that insular government from whose wisdom all his new felicity is derived, and under whose wings and protection he now lives. These reflections constitute him the good man and the good subject. Ye poor Europeans, ye, who sweat, and work for the great—ye, who are obliged to give so many sheaves to the church, so many to your lords, so many to your government, and have hardly any left for yourselves—

ye, who are held in less estimation than favorite hunters or useless lap-dogs—ye, who only breathe the air of nature, because it cannot be withheld from you; it is here that ye can conceive the possibility of those feelings I have been describing; it is here the laws of naturalization invite every one to partake of our great labors and felicity, to till unrented, untaxed lands! Many, corrupted beyond the power of amendment, have brought with them all their vices, and disregarding the advantages held to them, have gone on in their former career of iniquity, until they have been overtaken and punished by our laws. It is not every emigrant who succeeds; no, it is only the sober, the honest, and industrious: happy those to whom this transition has served as a powerful spur to labor, to prosperity, and to the good establishment of children, born in the days of their poverty; and who had no other portion to expect but the rags of their parents, had it not been for their happy emigration. Others again, have been led astray by this enchanting scene; their new pride, instead of leading them to the fields, has kept them in idleness; the idea of possessing lands is all that satisfies them—though surrounded with fertility, they have mouldered away their time in inactivity, misinformed husbandry, and ineffectual endeavors. How much wiser, in general, the honest Germans than almost all other Europeans; they hire themselves to some of their wealthy landsmen, and in that apprenticeship learn everything that is necessary. They attentively consider the prosperous industry of others, which imprints in their minds a strong desire of possessing the same advantages. This forcible idea never quits them, they launch forth, and by dint of sobriety, rigid parsimony, and the most persevering industry, they commonly succeed. Their astonishment at their first arrival from Germany is very great—it is to them a dream; the contrast must be powerful indeed; they observe their countrymen flourishing in every place; they travel through whole counties where not a word of English is spoken; and in the names and the language of the people, they retrace Germany. They have been an useful acquisition to this continent, and to Pennsylvania in particular; to them it owes some share of its prosperity: to their mechanical knowledge and patience it owes the finest mills in all America, the best teams of horses, and many other advantages. The recollection of their former poverty and slavery never quits them as long as they live.

The Scotch and the Irish might have lived in their own country perhaps as poor, but enjoying more civil advantages, the effects of their new situation do not strike them so forcibly, nor has it so lasting an effect. From whence the difference arises I know not, but out of twelve families of emigrants of each country, generally seven Scotch will succeed, nine German, and four Irish. The Scotch are frugal and laborious, but their wives cannot work so hard as German women, who on the contrary vie with their husbands, and often share with them the most severe toils of the field, which they understand better. They have therefore nothing to struggle against, but the common casualties of nature. The Irish do not prosper so well; they love to drink and to quarrel; they are litigious, and soon take to the gun, which is the ruin of everything; they seem beside to labor under a greater degree of ignorance in husbandry than the others; perhaps it is that their industry had less scope, and was less exercised at home. I have heard many relate, how the land was parcelled out in that kingdom; their ancient conquest has been a great detriment to them, by over-setting their landed property. The lands possessed by a few, are leased down *ad infinitum*, and the occupiers often pay five guineas an acre. The poor are worse lodged there than anywhere else in Europe; their potatoes, which are easily raised, are perhaps an inducement to laziness: their wages are too low, and their whisky too cheap.

There is no tracing observations of this kind, without making at the same time very great allowances, as there are everywhere to be found, a great many exceptions. The Irish themselves, from different parts of that kingdom, are very different. It is difficult to account for this surprising locality, one would think on so small an island an Irishman must be an Irishman: yet it is not so, they are different in their aptitude to, and in their love of labor.

The Scotch on the contrary are all industrious and saving; they want nothing more

than a field to exert themselves in, and they are commonly sure of succeeding. The only difficulty they labor under is, that technical American knowledge which requires some time to obtain; it is not easy for those who seldom saw a tree, to conceive how it is to be felled, cut up, and split into rails and posts.

As I am fond of seeing and talking of prosperous families, I intend to finish this letter by relating to you the history of an honest Scotch Hebridean, who came here in 1774, which will show you in epitome what the Scotch can do, wherever they have room for the exertion of their industry. Whenever I hear of any new settlement, I pay it a visit once or twice a year, on purpose to observe the different steps each settler takes, the gradual improvements, the different tempers of each family, on which their prosperity in a great nature depends; their different modifications of industry, their ingenuity, and contrivance; for being all poor, their life requires sagacity and prudence. In the evening I love to hear them tell their stories, they furnish me with new ideas; I sit still and listen to their ancient misfortunes, observing in many of them a strong degree of gratitude to God, and the government. Many a well meant sermon have I preached to some of them. When I found laziness and inattention to prevail, who could refrain from wishing well to these new countrymen, after having undergone so many fatigues. Who could withhold good advice? What a happy change it must be, to descend from the high, sterile, bleak lands of Scotland, where everything is barren and cold, to rest on some fertile farms in these middle provinces! Such a transition must have afforded the most pleasing satisfaction.

The following dialogue passed at an outsettlement, where I lately paid a visit:

Well, friend, how do you do now; I am come fifty odd miles on purpose to see you; how do you go on with your new cutting and slashing? Very well, good Sir, we learn the use of the axe bravely, we shall make it out; we have a belly full of victuals every day, our cows run about, and come home full of milk, our hogs get fat of themselves in the woods: Oh, this is a good country! God bless the king, and William Penn; we shall do very well by and by, if we keep our healths. Your log-house looks neat and light, where did you get these shingles? One of our neighbors is a New-England man, and he showed us how to split them out of chestnut-trees. Now for a barn, but all in good time, here are fine trees to build with. Who is to frame it, sure you don't understand that work yet? A countryman of ours who has been in America these ten years, offers to wait for his money until the second crop is lodged in it. What did you give for your land? Thirty-five shillings per acre, payable in seven years. How many acres have you got? An hundred and fifty. That is enough to begin with; is not your land pretty hard to clear? Yes, Sir, hard enough, but it would be harder still if it was ready cleared, for then we should have no timber, and I love the woods much; the land is nothing without them. Have not you found out any bees yet? No, Sir; and if we had we should not know what to do with them. I will tell you by and by. You are very kind. Farewell, honest man, God prosper you; whenever you travel toward ——, inquire for J.S. He will entertain you kindly, provided you bring him good tidings from your family and farm. In this manner I often visit them, and carefully examine their houses, their modes of ingenuity, their different ways; and make them all relate all they know, and describe all they feel. These are scenes which I believe you would willingly share with me. I well remember your philanthropic turn of mind. Is it not better to contemplate under these humble roofs, the rudiments of future wealth and population, than to behold the accumulated bundles of litigious papers in the office of a lawyer? To examine how the world is gradually settled, how the howling swamp is converted into a pleasing meadow, the rough ridge into a fine field; and to hear the cheerful whistling, the rural song, where there was no sound heard before, save the yell of the savage, the screech of the owl, or the hissing of the snake? Here an European, fatigued with luxury, riches, and pleasures, may find a sweet relaxation in a series of interesting scenes, as affecting as they are new. England, which now contains so many domes, so many castles, was once like this; a place woody and marshy; its inhabitants, now the favorite nation for arts and commerce,

were once painted like our neighbors. The country will flourish in its turn, and the same observations will be made which I have just delineated. Posterity will look back with avidity and pleasure, to trace, if possible, the era of this or that particular settlement.

Pray, what is the reason that the Scots are in general more religious, more faithful, more honest, and industrious than the Irish? I do not mean to insinuate national reflections, God forbid! It ill becomes any man, and much less an American; but as I know men are nothing of themselves, and that they owe all their different modifications either to government or other local circumstances, there must be some powerful causes which constitute this great national difference.

Agreeable to the account which several Scotchmen have given me of the north of Britain, of the Orkneys, and the Hebride Islands, they seem, on many accounts, to be unfit for the habitation of men; they appear to be calculated only for great sheep pastures. Who then can blame the inhabitants of these countries for transporting themselves hither? This great continent must in time absorb the poorest part of Europe; and this will happen in proportion as it becomes better known; and as war, taxation, oppression, and misery increase there. The Hebrides appear to be fit only for the residence of malefactors, and it would be much better to send felons there than either to Virginia or Maryland. What a strange compliment has our mother country paid to two of the finest provinces in America! England has entertained in that respect very mistaken ideas; what was intended as a punishment, is become the good fortune of several; many of those who have been transported as felons, are now rich, and strangers to the stings of those wants that urged them to violations of the law: they are become industrious, exemplary, and useful citizens. The English government should purchase the most northern and barren of those islands; it should send over to us the honest, primitive Hebrideans, settle them here on good lands, as a reward for their virtue and ancient poverty: and replace them with a colony of her wicked sons. The severity of the climate, the inclemency of the seasons, the sterility of the soil, the tempestuousness of the sea, would afflict and punish enough. Could there be found a spot better adapted to retaliate the injury it had received by their crimes? Some of those islands might be considered as the hell of Great Britain, where all evil spirits should be sent. Two essential ends would be answered by this simple operation. The good people, by emigration, would be rendered happier; the bad ones would be placed where they ought to be. In a few years the dread of being sent to that wintry region would have a much stronger effect than that of transportation.—This is no place of punishment; were I a poor hopeless, breadless Englishman, and not restrained by the power of shame, I should be very thankful for the passage. It is of very little importance how, and in what manner an indigent man arrives; for if he is but sober, honest, and industrious, he has nothing more to ask of heaven. Let him go to work, he will have opportunities enough to earn a comfortable support, and even the means of procuring some land; which ought to be the utmost wish of every person who has health and hands to work. I knew a man who came to this country, in the literal sense of the expression, stark naked; I think he was a Frenchman, and a sailor on board an English man-of-war. Being discontented, he had stripped himself and swam ashore; where, finding clothes and friends, he settled afterwards at Maraneck, in the county of Chester, in the province of New York: he married and left a good farm to each of his sons. I knew another person who was but twelve years old when he was taken on the frontiers of Canada, by the Indians; at his arrival at Albany he was purchased by a gentleman, who generously bound him apprentice to a tailor. He lived to the age of ninety, and left behind him a fine estate and a numerous family, all well settled; many of them I am acquainted with.—Where is then the industrious European who ought to despair?

After a foreigner from any part of Europe is arrived, and become a citizen; let him devoutly listen to the voice of our great parent, which says to him, 'Welcome to my shores, distressed European; bless the hour in which thou didst see my verdant fields, my fair navigable rivers, and my green

mountains!—If thou wilt work, I have bread for thee; if thou wilt be honest, sober, and industrious, I have greater rewards to confer on thee—ease and independence. I will give thee fields to feed and clothe thee; a comfortable fireside to sit by, and tell thy children by what means thou hast prospered; and a decent bed to repose on. I shall endow thee beside with the immunities of a freeman. If thou wilt carefully educate thy children, teach them gratitude to God, and reverence to that government, that philanthropic government, which has collected here so many men and made them happy. I will also provide for thy progeny; and to every good man this ought to be the most holy, the most powerful, the most earnest wish he can possibly form, as well as the most consolatory prospect when he dies. Go thou and work and till; thou shalt prosper, provided thou be just, grateful, and industrious.'

1782

THOMAS HUTCHINSON

1711–1780

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE COLONY AND PROVINCE OF MASSACHUSETTS-BAY

A Stamp-Act Riot [1]

THERE appeared to be a general determination among the people to prevent the execution of the stamp act, if possible; but there did not appear to be any plan concerted. Most people of judgment thought that it would force its way; but it did not.

The first act of any of the assemblies against the authority of the act of parliament was in Virginia. These resolves were expressed in such terms that many people, upon the first surprise, pronounced them treasonable.[2] But the astonishment was of no long duration. The newspapers soon vindicated the resolves. From having been censured, the spirit discovered in them was applauded as worthy of imitation; and the declaration in them, that all who maintained the right of parliament should be deemed enemies to the colony, had a tendency to bring on those acts of violence which soon after were committed in Boston.

The distributor of stamps for the colony of Connecticut [3] arrived in Boston from London; and, having been agent for that colony, and in other respects of a very reputable character, received from many gentlemen of the town such civilities as were due to him. When he set out for Connecticut, Mr. Oliver, the distributor for Massachusetts Bay, accompanied him out of town. This occasioned murmuring among the people, and an inflammatory piece in the next *Boston Gazette*. A few days after, early in the morning, a stuffed image was hung upon a tree, called the great tree of the south part of Boston. Labels affixed denoted it to be designed for the distributor of stamps. People, who were passing by, stopped to view it, and the report caused others to gather from all quarters of the town, and many from the towns adjacent. The governor caused the council to be convened. Before they came to any determination, the sheriff, with his deputies, had been to the place, but, by advice of some of the graver persons present, forbore any attempt to remove the image. The majority of the council, but not the whole, advised not to meddle with it; and urged as a reason that the people were orderly, and, if left alone, would take down the image and bury it without any disturbance; but an attempt to remove it would bring on a riot, the mischief designed to be prevented.

1 The selection, of which the title has been supplied and the text modernized by the editors, is from Mayo, ed., Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay*(Cambridge, Mass.,1936),III,86–91. The first appearance of Volume III of Hutchinson's history was in London, 1828.

2 'Particularly Mr. Otis, one of the representatives of Boston, in the hearing of many persons in King Street.' Author's note, ibid.,III,86. James Otis (1725–1783) was personally antagonistic to Hutchinson, and one of the chief fomenters of revolution.

3 'Jared Ingersoll, esq.' Author's note, idem. Ingersoll (1722–1781) was finally forced by the angry citizenry of Connecticut to resign his post; but he remained a Loyalist.

The governor, however, thought fit to meet the council again in the afternoon. Before night, the image was taken down and carried through the townhouse, in the chamber whereof the governor and council were sitting. Forty or fifty tradesmen, decently dressed, preceded; and some thousands of the mob followed down King Street to Oliver's dock, near which Mr. Oliver had lately erected a building which, it was conjectured, he designed for a stamp office. This was laid flat to the ground in a few minutes. From thence the mob proceeded for Fort Hill, but Mr. Oliver's house being in the way, they endeavored to force themselves into it, and being opposed, broke the windows, beat down the doors, entered, and destroyed part of his furniture, and continued in riot until midnight, before they separated.

The next day, the governor, by advice of council, issued a proclamation, offering a reward for discovering offenders, &c. Many of the offenders were known, and the proclamation was considered as a mere matter of form. Some of the council advised to a military watch in the town the next night, but a majority were against it and thought it enough to recommend to the select men and justices to increase the number of the ordinary town watch; but even this was not done. Several of the council gave it as their opinion, Mr. Oliver being present, that the people, not only of the town of Boston, but of the country in general, would never submit to the execution of the stamp act, let the consequence of an opposition to it be what it would. It was also reported that the people of Connecticut had threatened to hang their distributor on the first tree after he entered the colony; and that, to avoid it, he had turned aside to Rhode Island.

Despairing of protection, and finding his family in terror and great distress, Mr. Oliver came to a sudden resolution to resign his office before another night, and immediately signified, by a writing under his hand, to one of his friends that he would send letters, by a ship then ready to sail for London, which should contain such resignation; and he desired that the town might be made acquainted with it and with the strong assurances he had given that he would never act in that capacity.

This victory was matter of triumph. The mob assembled in the evening; not to insult the distributor, but to give him thanks and to make a bonfire upon the hill near his house.

It was hoped that the people, having obtained all that they desired, would return to order, but, having repeatedly assembled with impunity, a very small pretence served to induce them to re-assemble.

The next evening, the mob surrounded the house of the lieutenant-governor and chief-justice [Thomas Hutchinson]. He was at Mr. Oliver's house when it was assaulted, and had excited the sheriff and the colonel of the regiment to attempt to suppress the mob. A report was soon spread that he was a favorer of the stamp act and had encouraged it by letters to the ministry. Upon notice of the approach of the people, he caused the doors and windows to be barred; and remained in the house. After attempting to enter, they called upon him to come into the balcony and to declare that he had not written in favor of the act, and they would retire quite satisfied. This was an indignity to which he would not submit; and, therefore, he made no answer. An ancient reputable tradesman obtained their attention, and endeavored to persuade them, not only of the unwarrantableness of their proceedings, but of the groundlessness of their suspicions of the lieutenant-governor, who might well enough wish the act of parliament had not passed, though he disapproved of the violent opposition to its execution. Some were for withdrawing, and others for continuing; when one of the neighbors called to them from his window and affirmed, that he saw the lieutenant-governor in his carriage, just before night, and that he was gone to lodge at his house in the country. Upon this, they dispersed, with only breaking some of the glass.

These attacks upon two of the principal officers of the crown struck terror into people of inferior rank; and though they saw the danger from this assumed power in the populace, yet they would give no aid in discountenancing it, lest they should become obnoxious themselves; for there were whisperings of danger from further acts of violence. On Sunday the 25th of August, a sermon was preached, in what was called

the West meeting-house, from these words, 'I would they were even cut off which trouble you.'[1] The text alone, without a comment,[2] delivered from the pulpit at that time, might be construed by some of the auditory into an approbation of the prevailing irregularities. One, who had a chief hand in the outrages which soon followed, declared, when he was in prison, that he was excited to them by this sermon,[3] and that he thought he was doing God service.

Certain depositions had been taken, many months before these transactions, by order of the governor, concerning the illicit trade carrying on; and one of them, made by the judge of the admiralty, at the special desire of the governor, had been sworn to before the lieutenant-governor, as chief-justice. They had been shown, at one of the offices in England, to a person who arrived in Boston just at this time, and he had acquainted several merchants, whose names were in some of the depositions as smugglers, with the contents. This brought, though without reason, the resentment of the merchants against the persons who, by their office, were obliged to administer the oaths, as well as against the officers of the customs and admiralty, who had made the depositions; and the leaders of the mob contrived a riot, which, after some small efforts against such officers, was to spend its principal force upon the lieutenant-governor. And, in the evening of the 26th of August [1765], such a mob was collected in King Street, drawn there by a bonfire, and well supplied with strong drink. After some annoyance to the house of the registrar of the admiralty, and somewhat greater to that of the comptroller of the customs, whose cellars they plundered of the wine and spirits in them, they came, with intoxicated rage, upon the house of the lieutenant-governor. The doors were immediately split to pieces with broad axes, and a way made there, and at the windows, for the entry of the mob; which poured in, and filled, in an instant, every room in the house.

The lieutenant-governor had very short notice of the approach of the mob. He directed his children, and the rest of his family, to leave the house immediately, determining to keep possession himself. His eldest daughter, after going a little way from the house, returned, and refused to quit it, unless her father would do the like.

This caused him to depart from his resolution, a few minutes before the mob entered. They continued their possession until daylight; destroyed, carried away, or cast into the street, everything that was in the house; demolished every part of it, except the walls, as far as lay in their power; and had begun to break away the brickwork.

The damage was estimated at about twenty-five hundred pounds sterling, without any regard to a great collection of publick as well as private papers, in the possession and custody of the lieutenant-governor.[4]

The town was, the whole night, under the awe of this mob; many of the magistrates, with the field officers of the militia, standing by as spectators; and nobody daring to oppose, or contradict.[5]

1 'Galatians 5th and 12th.' Author's note, ibid.,III,89.

2 'The verse which follows, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh," if properly enforced, would have been sufficient to have kept the people within bounds.' Author's note, idem.

3 'Dr. Mayhew, the preacher, in a letter to the lieutenant-governor, a few days after, expressed the greatest concern, nothing being further from his thoughts than such an effect; and declared, that, if the loss of his whole estate could recall the sermon, he would willingly part with it.' Author's note, idem.

4 'The loss which I sustained, as far as it was reparable, by his Majesty's most gracious recommendation to the province and their generous grant in consequence of it, both which, in this public manner, I most gratefully acknowledge, has been repaired or compensated; but the loss of many papers and books, in print as well as manuscript, besides my family memorials, never can be repaired.

'For several days, I had no hopes of recovering any considerable part of my history, but by the great care and pains of my good friend and neighbor the Reverend Mr. Eliot, who received into his house all my books and papers which were saved, the whole manuscript except eight or ten sheets, were collected together and, although it had lain in the street scattered abroad several hours in the rain, yet so much of it was legible as that I was able to supply the rest and transcribe it. The most valuable materials were lost, some of which I designed to have published in the appendix. I pray God to forgive the actors in and advisors to this most savage and inhuman injury, and I hope their posterity will read with pleasure and profit what has so narrowly escaped the outrage of their ancestors.' From author's preface, ibid.,II,x.

5 'The lieutenant-colonel of the regiment, observing two men disguised, with long staves in their hands, who seemed to be directors, expressed his concern at the damage other people, besides the lieutenant-

The governor was at the Castle, and knew nothing of what had happened until the next morning. He then went to town, and caused a council to be summoned. Before they could meet, the inhabitants of Boston assembled in Faneuil Hall; and, in as full a meeting as had been known, by an unanimous vote, declared an utter detestation of the extraordinary and violent proceeding of a number of persons unknown, against some of the inhabitants of the town, the preceding night; and desired the select men, and magistrates of the town, to use their utmost endeavors to suppress the like disorders for the future; the freeholders, and other inhabitants, being ready to do everything in their power to assist them. It could not be doubted, that many of those who were immediate actors in, as well as of those who had been abettors of, those violent proceedings, were present at this unanimous vote.

The council advised a proclamation, with promise of £300 reward for discovering the leader or leaders, and £100 for every other person. Information had been before given to the justices of peace in the town, and warrants had been issued and delivered to the sheriff for apprehending several persons. One of them, a tradesman of the town, whose name was Mackintosh, was soon taken in King Street; but the sheriff was immediately surrounded by a number of merchants, and other persons of property and character, who assured him, that, if he apprehended Mackintosh, not a man would appear in arms, as had been proposed, for the security of the town the next night. The sheriff released him, and made return of his doings to the governor, then in council. Some of the council gave their opinion, that the sheriff was inexcusable; but it passed over without any act of council to show a disapprobation. To this feeble state were the powers of government reduced.[1]

Six or eight other persons were apprehended, and, upon examination, committed to prison in order to trial, and were generally considered as capital offenders. Before the time of trial, a considerable number of people entered the house of the prison-keeper late in the evening, compelled him, by threats, to deliver to them the keys of the prison, which they opened, and then set the prisoners at liberty; and all this without any tumult. The prisoners thought fit to disappear for some months; but there was no authority, which considered it advisable to make any inquiry after them.

1828

THOMAS PAINE

1737–1809

FROM COMMON SENSE

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS[2]

IN the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms as the last resource decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the King, and the continent has accepted the challenge.

governor, might sustain by the destruction of so many papers. Answer was made that it had been resolved to destroy everything in the house; and such resolve should be carried to effect.' Author's note, ibid.,III, 90.

1 'The justices of peace being ordered to attend the governor and council, one, who had been most active in town meetings, &c., complained that his own life had been threatened, and wept. The governor observed to him that he had raised the devil and could not lay him again.' Author's note, ibid.,III,91.

2 The selection, the text of which has been modernized by the editors, is Section III from *Common Sense: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America* (Philadelphia, 1776).

It hath been reported of the late Mr. Pelham (who tho' an able minister was not without his faults) that on his being attacked in the House of Commons on the score that his measures were only of a temporary kind, replied, 'They will last my time.' Should a thought so fatal and unmanly possess the Colonies in the present contest, the name of ancestors will be remembered by future generations with detestation.

The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a county, a province or a kingdom; but of a continent—of at least one-eighth part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time by the proceedings now. Now is the seed-time of continental union, faith, and honor. The least fracture now, will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound will enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new era for politics is struck—a new method of thinking hath arisen. All plans, proposals, &c. prior to the 19th of April, i.e. to the commencement of hostilities, are like the almanacs of the last year; which, though proper then, are superseded and useless now. Whatever was advanced by the advocates on either side of the question then, terminated in one and the same point, viz. a union with Great Britain; the only difference between the parties was the method of effecting it; the one proposing force, the other friendship; but it hath so far happened that the first hath failed, and the second hath withdrawn her influence.

As much hath been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and inquire into some of the many material injuries which these Colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with, and dependent on Great Britain. To examine that connection and dependence on the principles of nature and common sense; to see what we have to trust to if separated, and what we are to expect if dependent.

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, that the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness and will always have the same effect.—Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument.—We may as well assert that because a child hath thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed us is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz. the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas! we have been long led away by ancient prejudices and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering, that her motive was interest not attachment; that she did not protect us from our enemies on our account but from her enemies on her own account, from those who had no quarrel with us on any other account, and who will always be our enemies on the same account. Let Britain waive her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependence, and we should be at peace with France and Spain were they at war with Britain. The miseries of Hanover's last war ought to warn us against connections.

It hath lately been asserted in Parliament, that the colonies have no relation to each other but through the parent country, i.e. that Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, and so on for the rest, are sister colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very roundabout way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enemyship, if I may so call it. France and Spain never were, nor perhaps

ever will be our enemies as Americans, but as our being the subjects of Great Britain.

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase, 'parent' or 'mother country' hath been jesuitically adopted by the King and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe and not England is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home pursues their descendants still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment.

It is pleasant to observe by what regular gradations we surmount the force of local prejudices as we enlarge our acquaintance with the world. A man born in any town in England divided into parishes, will naturally associate most with his fellow parishioners (because their interests in many cases will be common), and distinguish him by the name of 'neighbor'; if he meet him but a few miles from home, he drops the narrow idea of a street and salutes him by the name of 'townsman'; if he travel out of the county and meet him in any other, he forgets the minor divisions of street and town and calls him 'country-man.' i.e. 'countyman'; but if in their foreign excursions they should associate in France, or any other part of Europe, their local remembrance would be enlarged into that of 'Englishmen.' And by a just parity of reasoning, all Europeans meeting in America, or any other quarter of the globe, are 'countrymen'; for England, Holland, Germany, or Sweden, when compared with the whole, stand in the same places on the larger scale, which the divisions of street, town, and county do on the smaller ones; distinctions too limited for continental minds. Not one-third of the inhabitants, even of this province, are of English descent. Wherefore, I reprobate the phrase of parent or mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous.

But admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title; and to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly farcical. The first king of England, of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore, by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain and the colonies, that in conjunction, they might bid defiance to the world. But this is mere presumption, the fate of war is uncertain; neither do the expressions mean anything, for this continent would never suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support the British arms in either Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance? Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe? because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a free port. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation to show a single advantage that this continent can reap, by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge, not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will.

But the injuries and disadvantages we sustain by that connection, are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instructs us to renounce the alliance: because any submission to, or dependence on Great Britain, tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels. As Europe

is our market for trade, we ought to form no political connection with any part of it. 'Tis the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do, while by her dependence on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics.

Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, because of her connection with Britain. The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because neutrality in that case would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Everything that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'Tis time to part!' Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other was never the design of heaven. The time likewise at which the continent was discovered adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled increases the force of it.—The Reformation was preceded by the discovery of America: as if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.

The authority of Great Britain over this continent is a form of government which sooner or later must have an end; and a serious mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward, under the painful and positive conviction that what he calls 'the present constitution' is merely temporary. As parents, we can have no joy knowing that this government is not sufficiently lasting to insure any thing which we may bequeath to posterity; and by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it. Otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight.

Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offence, yet I am inclined to believe that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation may be included within the following descriptions: interested men who are not to be trusted, weak men who cannot see, prejudiced men who will not see, and a certain set of moderate men who think better of the European world than it deserves. And this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent than all the other three.

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of present sorrow; the evil is not sufficiently brought to their doors to make them feel the precariousness with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us for a few moments to Boston; that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us forever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust. The inhabitants of that unfortunate city, who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now no other alternative than to stay and starve, or turn out to beg. Endangered by the fire of their friends if they continue within the city, and plundered by the soldiery if they leave it. In their present condition they are prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief, they would be exposed to the fury of both armies.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offences of Britain, and still hoping for the best are apt to call out, 'Come, come, we shall be friends again for all this.' But examine the passions and feelings of mankind; bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can hereafter love, honor, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you cannot do all these, then are you only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon posterity. Your future connection with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honor, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time fall into a relapse more wretched than the first. But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, 'Hath your house been burnt? Hath your

property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor?' If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and still can shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover; and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant.

This is not inflaming or exaggerating matters, but trying them by those feelings and affections which nature justifies, and without which we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the felicities of it. I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object. 'Tis not in the power of England or of Europe to conquer America, if she doth not conquer herself by delay and timidity. The present winter is worth an age if rightly employed, but if lost or neglected, the whole continent will partake of the misfortune; and there is no punishment which that man doth not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

'Tis repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things, to all examples from former ages, to suppose, that this continent can long remain subject to any external power. The most sanguine in Britain doth not think so. The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time, compass a plan, short of separation, which can promise the continent even a year's security. Reconciliation is now a fallacious dream. Nature hath deserted the connection, and art cannot supply her place. For as Milton wisely expresses, 'Never can true reconcilement grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep.'

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain; and hath tended to convince us that nothing flatters vanity or confirms obstinacy in kings more than repeated petitioning—and nothing hath contributed more than that very measure to make the kings of Europe absolute. Witness Denmark and Sweden. Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake let us come to a final separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting throats under the violated unmeaning names of parent and child.

To say they will never attempt it again is idle and visionary. We thought so at the repeal of the Stamp Act, yet a year or two undeceived us; as well may we suppose that nations which have been once defeated will never renew the quarrel.

As to government matters, 'tis not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice: the business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which, when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness.—There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands not capable of protecting themselves are the proper objects for government to take under their care; but there is something very absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident they belong to different systems. England to Europe, America to itself.

I am not induced by motives of pride, party, or resentment to espouse the doctrine of separation and independence; I am clearly, positively, and conscientiously persuaded that 'tis the true interest of this continent to be so; that everything short of that is mere patchwork, that it can afford no lasting felicity;—that it is leaving the sword to our children, and shrinking back at a time when a little more, a little farther, would have rendered this continent the glory of the earth.

As Britain hath not manifested the least inclination towards a compromise, we may

be assured that no terms can be obtained worthy the acceptance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expense of blood and treasure we have been already put to.

The object contended for ought always to bear some just proportion to the expense. The removal of North, or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade was an inconvenience which would have sufficiently balanced the repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained; but if the whole continent must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, 'tis scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly, do we pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for in a just estimation, 'tis as great a folly to pay a Bunker-Hill price for law as for land. As I have always considered the independency of this continent as an event which sooner or later must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event could not be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest; otherwise it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself, before the fatal 19th of April 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England for ever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of 'Father of his People' can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent. And that for several reasons.

First. The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the King, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of this continent. And as he hath shown himself such an inveterate enemy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper man to say to these colonies, 'You shall make no laws but what I please.' And is there any inhabitant in America so ignorant as not to know, that according to what is called the 'present constitution,' this continent can make no laws but what the King gives leave to; and is there any man so unwise as not to see, that (considering what has happened) he will suffer no laws to be made here but such as suit his purpose. We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by submitting to laws made for us in England. After matters are made up (as it is called), can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the crown will be exerted to keep this continent as low and humble as possible? Instead of going forward we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarrelling, or ridiculously petitioning.—We are already greater than the King wishes us to be, and will he not hereafter endeavor to make us less? To bring the matter to one point: is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? Whoever says 'no' to this question is an Independent for independency means no more than whether we shall make our own laws, or, whether the King, the greatest enemy this continent hath, or can have, shall tell us, 'There shall be no laws but such as I like.'

But the King, you'll say, hath a negative in England; the people there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order there is something very ridiculous that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to six millions of people older and wiser than himself, 'I forbid this or that act of yours to be law.' But in this place I decline this sort of reply, though I will never cease to expose the absurdity of it, and only answer that England being the King's residence, and America not so, makes quite another case. The King's negative here is ten times more dangerous and fatal than it can be in England; for there he will scarcely refuse his consent to a bill for putting England into as strong a state of defense as possible, and here he would never suffer such a bill to be passed.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics; England consults the good of this country no farther than it answers her own purpose. Wherefore her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of ours in every case which doth not

promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it. A pretty state we should soon be in under such a second-hand government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name: and in order to show that reconciliation now is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm that it would be policy in the King at this time to repeal the acts for the sake of reinstating himself in the government of the provinces; in order that he may accomplish by craft and subtlety, in the long run, what he cannot do by force and violence in the short one. Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

Secondly. That as even the best terms which we can expect to obtain can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things in the interim will be unsettled and unpromising: emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and who is every day tottering on the brink of commotion and disturbance; and numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects, and quit the continent.

But the most powerful of all arguments is, that nothing but independence, i.e. a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable that it will be followed by a revolt some where or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.

Thousands are already ruined by British barbarity; (thousands more will probably suffer the same fate). Those men have other feelings than us who have nothing suffered. All they now possess is liberty; what they before enjoyed is sacrificed to its service; and having nothing more to lose, they disdain submission. Besides, the general temper of the colonies towards a British government will be like that of a youth who is nearly out of his time; they will care very little about her; and a government which cannot preserve the peace is no government at all, and in that case we pay our money for nothing: and pray what is it that Britain can do, whose power will be wholly on paper, should a civil tumult break out the very day after reconciliation? I have heard some men say, many of whom I believe spoke without thinking, that they dreaded an independence, fearing that it would produce civil wars. It is but seldom that our first thoughts are truly correct, and that is the case here; for there are ten times more to dread from a patched up connection than from independence. I make the sufferer's case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed, and my circumstances ruined, that as a man, sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider myself bound thereby.

The colonies hath manifested such a spirit of good order and obedience to continental government as is sufficient to make every reasonable person easy and happy on that head. No man can assign the least pretence for his fears on any other grounds than such as are truly childish and ridiculous, viz., that one colony will be striving for superiority over another.

Where there are no distinctions, there can be no superiority; perfect equality affords no temptation. The republics of Europe are all (and we may say always) in peace. Holland and Switzerland are without wars, foreign or domestic. Monarchical governments, it is true, are never long at rest: the crown itself is a temptation to enterprising ruffians at home; and that degree of pride and insolence ever attendant on regal authority, swells into a rupture with foreign powers in instances where a republican government, by being formed on more natural principles, would negotiate the mistake.

If there is any true cause for fear respecting independence, it is because no plan is yet laid down. Men do not see their way out.—Wherefore, as an opening into that business, I offer the following hints; at the same time modestly affirming, that I have no other opinion of them myself, than that they may be the means of giving rise to something better. Could the straggling thoughts of individuals be collected, they would frequently form materials for wise and able men to improve into useful matter.

Let the assemblies be annual, with a president only. The representation more equal. Their business wholly domestic, and

subject to the authority of a continental congress.

Let each colony be divided into six, eight, or ten, convenient districts, each district to send a proper number of delegates to congress, so that each colony send at least thirty. The whole number in congress will be at least 390. Each congress to sit and to choose a president by the following method: when the delegates are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen colonies by lot; after which let the whole congress choose (by ballot) a president from out of the delegates of that province. In the next congress let a colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that colony from which the president was taken in the former congress, and so proceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three-fifths of the congress to be called a majority. —He that will promote discord under a government so equally formed as this would have joined Lucifer in his revolt.

But as there is a peculiar delicacy from whom, or in what manner, this business must first arise, and as it seems most agreeable and consistent that it should come from some intermediate body between the governed and the governors, that is, between the congress and the people, let a continental conference be held in the following manner, and for the following purpose:

A committee of twenty-six members of congress, viz. Two for each colony. Two members from each house of assembly, or provincial convention; and five representatives of the people at large, to be chosen in the capital city or town of each province, for, and in behalf of the whole province, by as many qualified voters as shall think proper to attend from all parts of the province for that purpose; or, if more convenient, the representatives may be chosen in two or three of the most populous parts thereof. In this conference, thus assembled, will be united the two grand principles of business, knowledge and power. The members of congress, assemblies, or conventions, by having had experience in national concerns, will be able and useful counsellors, and the whole, by being empowered by the people, will have a truly legal authority.

The conferring members being met, let their business be to frame a continental charter, or Charter of the United Colonies; (answering to what is called the Magna Charta of England) fixing the number and manner of choosing members of congress, members of assembly, with their date of sitting, and drawing the line of business and jurisdiction between them: (always remembering, that our strength and happiness, is continental, not provincial). Securing freedom and property to all men, and above all things the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; with such other matters as is necessary for a charter to contain. Immediately after which, the said conference to dissolve, and the bodies which shall be chosen conformable to the said charter, to be the legislators and governors of this continent for the time being: whose peace and happiness, may God preserve. Amen.

Should any body of men be hereafter delegated for this or some similar purpose, I offer them the following extracts from that wise observer on governments Dragonetti. 'The science,' says he, 'of the politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense.'

But where, say some, is the king of America? I'll tell you, friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Great Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the Divine Law, the Word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America 'the law is king.' For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to be king; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is.

A government of our own is our natural right; and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will

become convinced that it is infinitely wiser and safer to form a constitution of our own, in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. If we omit it now, some Massanello may hereafter arise, who, laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a deluge. Should the government of America return again into the hands of Britain the tottering situation of things will be a temptation for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case what relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done; and ourselves suffering like the wretched Britons under the oppression of the conqueror. Ye that oppose independence now, ye know not what ye do: ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny by keeping vacant the seat of government. There are thousands and tens of thousands who would think it glorious to expel from the continent that barbarous and hellish power which have stirred up the Indians and the Negroes to destroy us; the cruelty hath a double guilt, it is dealing brutally by us, and treacherously by them.

To talk of friendship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections wounded thro' a thousand pores instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out the little remains of kindred between us and them, and can there be any reason to hope that as the relationship expires the affection will increase, or that we shall agree better when we have ten times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever?

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of His image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated the earth, or have only a casual existence were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is over-run with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her.—Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

1776

THOMAS JEFFERSON

1743–1826

THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA [1]

WHEN in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.—We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.—That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers

1 The text has been modernized by the editors.

from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.—He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.—He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.—He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.—He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.—He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.—He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.—He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.—He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.—He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.—He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.—He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.—He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power.—He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:—For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:—For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:—For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:—For imposing taxes on us without our consent:—For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:—For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences:—For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies:—For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:—For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.—He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us:—He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.—He is at

this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.—He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.—He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.—

We, THEREFORE, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.—And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

1776

JAMES MADISON

1750–1836

FROM THE FEDERALIST

X. The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection [1]

AMONG the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate, as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice. He will not fail, therefore, to set a due value on any plan which, without violating the principles to which he is attached, provides a proper cure for it. The instability, injustice, and confusion, introduced into the public councils have, in truth, been the mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished; as they continue to be the favorite and fruitful topics from which the adversaries to liberty derive their most specious declamations. The valuable improvements made by the American constitutions on the popular models, both ancient and modern, cannot certainly be too much admired; but it would be an unwarrantable partiality, to contend

1 The title to the selection is that of Number IX, the original title to X being 'The Same Subject Continued.' The text has been modernized by the editors.

that they have as effectually obviated the danger on this side, as was wished and expected. Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith, and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable; that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties; and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice, and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority. However anxiously we may wish that these complaints had no foundation, the evidence of known facts will not permit us to deny that they are in some degree true. It will be found, indeed, on a candid review of our situation, that some of the distresses under which we labor have been erroneously charged on the operation of our governments; but it will be found, at the same time, that other causes will not alone account for many of our heaviest misfortunes; and, particularly, for that prevailing and increasing distrust of public engagements, and alarm for private rights, which are echoed from one end of the continent to the other. These must be chiefly, if not wholly, effects of the unsteadiness and injustice with which a factious spirit has tainted our public administrations.

By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects.

There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests.

It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy, that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires. But it could not be a less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency.

The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed. As long as the connection subsists between his reason and his self-love, his opinions and his passions will have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the former will be objects to which the latter will attach themselves. The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to an uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties.

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power, or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other, than to co-operate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold, and those who are without property, have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those

who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of government.

No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause; because his interest will certainly bias his judgment, and, not improbably, corrupt his integrity. With equal, nay, with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time; yet what are many of the most important acts of legislation, but so many judicial determinations, not indeed concerning the rights of single persons, but concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens? and what are the different classes of legislators, but advocates and parties to the causes which they determine? Is a law proposed concerning private debts? It is a question to which the creditors are parties on one side, and the debtors on the other. Justice ought to hold the balance between them. Yet the parties are, and must be, themselves the judges; and the most numerous party, or, in other words, the most powerful faction, must be expected to prevail. Shall domestic manufactures be encouraged, and in what degree by restrictions on foreign manufactures? are questions which would be differently decided by the landed and the manufacturing classes; and probably by neither with a sole regard to justice and the public good. The apportionment of taxes on the various descriptions of property is an act which seems to require the most exact impartiality; yet there is, perhaps, no legislative act in which greater opportunity and temptation are given to a predominant party, to trample on the rules of justice. Every shilling with which they overburden the inferior number is a shilling saved to their own pockets.

It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests, and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm; nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all, without taking into view indirect and remote considerations which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another, or the good of the whole.

The inference to which we are brought is that the *causes* of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its *effects*.

If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the constitution. When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good, and private rights, against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed. Let me add that it is the great *desideratum* by which alone this form of government can be rescued from the opprobrium under which it has so long labored, and be recommended to the esteem and adoption of mankind.

By what means is this object attainable? Evidently by one of two only. Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority, at the same time, must be prevented; or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. If the impulse and the opportunity be suffered to coincide, we well know that neither moral nor religious motives can be relied on as an adequate control. They are not found to be such on the injustice and violence of individuals, and lose their efficacy in proportion to the number combined together; that is, in proportion as their efficacy becomes needful.

From this view of the subject, it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small num-

ber of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert results from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security, or the rights of property, and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would at the same time be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from pure democracy, and we shall comprehend both the nature of the cure and the efficacy which it must derive from the union.

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are most favorable to the election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations.

In the first place, it is to be remarked that, however small the republic may be, the representatives must be raised to a certain number, in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that, however large it may be, they must be limited to a certain number, in order to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence, the number of representatives in the two cases not being in proportion to that of the constituents, and being proportionally greatest in the small republic, it follows that if the proportion of fit characters be not less in the large than in the small republic, the former will present a greater option, and consequently a greater probability of a fit choice.

In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practise with success the vicious arts, by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people, being more free, will be more likely to center in men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters.

It must be confessed that in this, as in most other cases, there is a mean, on both sides of which inconveniences will be found to lie. By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal constitution forms a happy combination in this respect; the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the state legislatures.

The other point of difference is, the greater number of citizens and extent of

territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked that where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust, in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.

Hence, it clearly appears that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic—is enjoyed by the union over the states composing it. Does this advantage consist in the substitution of representatives, whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices, and to schemes of injustice? It will not be denied that the representation of the union will be most likely to possess these requisite endowments. Does it consist in the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber and oppress the rest? In an equal degree does the increased variety of parties, comprised within the union, increase this security. Does it, in fine, consist in the greater obstacles opposed to the concert and accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust and interested majority? Here, again, the extent of the union gives it the most palpable advantage.

The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular states, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other states. A religious sect may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it, must secure the national councils against any danger from that source. A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the union, than a particular member of it; in the same proportion as such a malady is more likely to taint a particular county or district, than an entire state.

In the extent and proper structure of the union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of federalists.

PUBLIUS.

1787 1788

THOMAS GODFREY

1736–1763

THE INVITATION

DAMON

HASTE! Sylvia! haste, my charming Maid!
Let's leave these fashionable toys;
Let's seek the shelter of some shade,
And revel in ne'er fading joys.
See spring in liv'ry gay appears,
And winter's chilly blasts are fled;
Each grove its leafy honours rears,
And meads their lovely verdure spread!

SYLVIA

Yes Damon, glad I'll quit the town,
Its gaities now languid seem;
Then sweets to luxury unknown

We'll taste, and sip th'untainted stream.
In Summer's sultry noon-tide heat
I'll lead thee to the shady grove;
There hush thy cares, or pleas'd repeat
Those vows that won my soul to love.

DAMON

When o'er the mountain peeps the dawn,
And round her ruddy beauties play,
I'll wake my Love to view the lawn,
Or hear the warblers hail the day.
But, without thee, the rising morn
In vain awakes the cooling breeze,
In vain does nature's face adorn;
Without my Sylvia nought can please.

SYLVIA

At night, when universal gloom
Hides the bright prospect from our view,
When the gay groves give up their bloom,
And verdant meads their lovely hue;
Tho' fleeting spectres round me move,
When in thy circling arms I'm prest,
I'll hush my rising fears with love,
And sink in slumber on thy breast.

DAMON

The new-blown rose, whilst on its leaves
Yet the bright scented dew-drops found,
Pleas'd on thy bosom, whilst it heaves,
Shall shake its heav'nly fragrance round.
Then mingled sweets the sense shall raise,
Then mingled beauties catch the eye;
What pleasure on such charms to gaze!
What rapture 'mid such sweets to lie!

SYLVIA

How sweet thy words!—but, Damon cease,
Nor strive to fix me ever here;
Too well you know these accents please,
That oft have fill'd my ravished ear.
Come, lead me to these promis'd joys
That dwelt so lately on thy tongue;
Direct me by thy well known voice,
And calm my transports with thy song!

1758 1765

A DITHYRAMBIC ON WINE

1

COME! let Mirth our hours employ,
The jolly God inspires;
The rosy juice our bosom fires,
And tunes our souls to joy.
See, great Bacchus now descending,
Gay, with blushing honours crown'd;
Sprightly Mirth and Love attending,
Around him wait,
In smiling state—
Let Echo resound,
Let Echo resound
The joyful news all around.

2

Fond Mortals come, if love perplex,
In Wine relief you'll find;
Who'd whine for woman's giddy sex
More fickle than the wind?
If beauty's bloom thy fancy warms,
Here, see her shine,
Cloth'd in superior charms;
More lovely than the blushing morn,
When first the op'ning day
Bedecks the thorn,
And makes the meadows gay.
Here see her in her crystal shrine;
See and adore; confess her all divine,
The Queen of Love and Joy.
Heed not thy Chloe's scorn—
This sparkling glass,
With winning grace,
Shall ever meet thy fond embrace,
And never, never, never cloy,
No never, never cloy.

3

Here, Poet! see, Castalia's spring—
Come, give me a bumper, I'll mount to the skies,
Another, another—'Tis done! I arise;
On fancy's wing,
I mount, I sing,
And now, sublime,
Parnassus' lofty top I climb—
But hark! what sounds are these I hear,
Soft as the dream of her in love,
Or Zephyr's whisp'ring thro' the Grove?
And now, more solemn far than fun'ral woe,
The heavy numbers flow!
And now again,
The varied strain,
Grown louder and bolder, strikes quick on the ear,
And thrills thro' ev'ry vein.

4

'Tis Pindar's song!
His softer notes the fanning gales

Waft across the spicy vales,
While, thro' the air,
Loud whirlwinds bear
The harsher notes along.
Inspir'd by Wine,
He leaves the lazy crowd below,
Who never dar'd to peep abroad,
And, mounting to his native sky,
For ever there shall shine.
No more I'll plod
The beaten road;
Like him inspir'd, like him I'll mount on high;
Like his my strain shall flow.

5

Haste, ye Mortals! leave your sorrow;
Let pleasure crown to-day—to-morrow
Yield to fate.
Join the universal chorus,
Bacchus reigns
Ever great;
Bacchus reigns
Ever glorious—
Hark! the joyful groves rebound,
Sporting breezes catch the sound,
And tell to hill and dale around—
'Bacchus reigns'—
While far away,
The busy Echoes die away.

1765

FRANCIS HOPKINSON

1737–1791

THE BATTLE OF THE KEGS [1]

GALLANTS attend and hear a friend,
Trill forth harmonious ditty,
Strange things I'll tell which late befel
In Philadelphia city.

'Twas early day, as poets say,
Just when the sun was rising,
A soldier stood on a log of wood,
And saw a thing surprising.

As in amaze he stood to gaze,
The truth can't be denied, sir,
He spied a score of kegs or more
Come floating down the tide, sir.

A sailor too in jerkin blue,
This strange appearance viewing,
First damn'd his eyes, in great surprise,
Then said some mischief's brewing.

These kegs, I'm told, the rebels bold,
Pack'd up like pickling herring;
And they're come down t'attack the town,
In this new way of ferrying.

The soldier flew, the sailor too,
And scar'd almost to death, sir,
Wore out their shoes, to spread the news,
And ran till out of breath, sir.

Now up and down throughout the town,
Most frantic scenes were acted;
And some ran here, and others there,
Like men almost distracted.

Some fire cry'd, which some denied,
But said the earth had quakèd;
And girls and boys, with hideous noise,
Ran thro' the streets half naked.

Sir William he, snug as a flea,
Lay all this time a snoring,
Nor dream'd of harm as he lay warm,
In bed with Mrs. Loring.

Now in a fright, he starts upright,
Awak'd by such a clatter;
He rubs both eyes, and boldly cries,
For God's sake, what's the matter?

At his bed-side he then espy'd,
Sir Erskine at command, sir,
Upon one foot, he had one boot,
And th'other in his hand, sir.

1 'This ballad was occasioned by a real incident. Certain machines, in the form of kegs, charg'd with gun powder, were sent down the river to annoy the British shipping then at Philadelphia. The danger of these machines being discovered, the British manned the wharfs and shipping, and discharged their small arms and cannons at every thing they saw floating in the river during the ebb tide.' Author's note, *Miscellaneous Essays* (Philadelphia, 1792), III, 173.

'Arise, arise,' Sir Erskine cries,
'The rebels—more's the pity,
'Without a boat are all afloat,
'And rang'd before the city.

'The motley crew, in vessels new,
'With Satan for their guide, sir.
'Pack'd up in bags, or wooden kegs,
'Come driving down the tide, sir.

'Therefore prepare for bloody war,
'These kegs must all be routed,
'Or surely we despised shall be,
'And British courage doubted.'

The royal band, now ready stand
All rang'd in dread array, sir,
With stomach stout to see it out,
And make a bloody, day, sir.

The cannons roar from shore to shore,
The small arms make a rattle;
Since wars began I'm sure no man
E'er saw so strange a battle.

The rebel dales, the rebel vales,
With rebel trees surrounded;
The distant wood, the hills and floods,
With rebel echoes sounded.

The fish below swam to and fro,
Attack'd from ev'ry quarter;
Why sure, thought they, the devil's to pay,
'Mongst folks above the water.

The kegs, 'tis said, tho' strongly made,
Of rebel staves and hoops, sir,
Could not oppose their powerful foes,
The conqu'ring British troops, sir.

From morn to night these men of might
Display'd amazing courage;
And when the sun was fairly down,
Retir'd to sup their porrage.

An hundred men with each a pen,
Or more upon my word, sir.
It is most true would be too few,
Their valour to record, sir.

Such feats did they perform that day,
Against these wick'd kegs, sir,
That years to come, if they get home,
They'll make their boasts and brags, sir.

1792

SONG

1

My gen'rous heart disdains
The slave of love to be,
I scorn his servile chains,
And boast my liberty.
This whining
And pining
And wasting with care,
Are not to my taste, be she ever so fair.

2

Shall a girl's capricious frown
Sink my noble spirits down?
Shall a face of white and red
Make me droop my silly head?
Shall I set me down and sigh
For an eye-brow or an eye?
For a braided lock of hair,
Curse my fortune and despair?
My gen'rous heart disdains, &c.

3

Still uncertain is to-morrow,
Not quite certain is to-day—
Shall I waste my time in sorrow?
Shall I languish life away?
All because a cruel maid,
Hath not Love with Love repaid.
My gen'rous heart disdains, &c.

1792

JOHN TRUMBULL

1750–1831

FROM M'FINGAL

THE LIBERTY POLE [1]

Now warm with ministerial ire,
Fierce sallied forth our loyal 'Squire,
And on his striding steps attends
His desperate clan of Tory friends.
When sudden met his wrathful eye
A pole ascending through the sky,
Which numerous throngs of whiggish race
Were raising in the market-place.
Not higher school-boys' kites aspire,
Or royal mast, or country spire;
Like spears at Brobdignagian tilting,
Or Satan's walking-staff in Milton.
And on its top, the flag unfurl'd
Waved triumph o'er the gazing world,
Inscribed with inconsistent types
Of *Liberty* and *thirteen stripes*.
Beneath, the crowd without delay
The dedication-rites essay,
And gladly pay, in ancient fashion,
The ceremonies of libation;
While briskly to each patriot lip
Walks eager round the inspiring flip:
Delicious draught! whose powers inherit
The quintessence of public spirit;
Which whoso tastes, perceives his mind
To nobler politics refined;
Or roused to martial controversy,
As from transforming cups of Circe;
Or warm'd with Homer's nectar'd liquor,
That fill'd the veins of gods with ichor.
At hand for new supplies in store,
The tavern opes its friendly door,
Whence to and fro the waiters run,
Like bucket-men at fires in town.
Then with three shouts that tore the sky,
'Tis consecrate to Liberty.
To guard it from th' attacks of Tories,
A grand committee cull'd of four is;
Who foremost on the patriot spot,
Had bought the flip, and paid the shot.
By this, M'Fingal with his train
Advanced upon th' adjacent plain,
And full with loyalty possest,
Pour'd forth the zeal, that fired his breast.
'What mad-brain'd rebel gave commission,
To raise this May-pole of sedition?
Like Babel, rear'd by bawling throngs,
With like confusion too of tongues,
To point at heaven and summon down
The thunders of the British crown?
Say, will this paltry pole secure
Your forfeit heads from Gage's power?
Attack'd by heroes brave and crafty,
Is this to stand your ark of safety;
Or driven by Scottish laird and laddie,
Think ye to rest beneath its shadow?
When bombs, like fiery serpents, fly,
And balls rush hissing through the sky,
Will this vile pole, devote to freedom,
Save like the Jewish pole in Edom;
Or like the brazen snake of Moses,
Cure your crackt skulls and batter'd noses?
'Ye dupes to every factious rogue
And tavern-prating demagogue,
Whose tongue but rings, with sound more full,
On th' empty drumhead of his skull,
Behold you not what noisy fools
Use you, worse simpletons, for tools?
For Liberty, in your own by-sense,
Is but for crimes a patent license;
To break of law th' Egyptian yoke,
And throw the world in common stock;
Reduce all grievances and ills
To Magna Charta of your wills;
Establish cheats and frauds and nonsense,
Framed to the model of your conscience;

1 The selection is Canto 3 of *M'Fingal*, the text being that of the author's revision published in 1820. The first two cantos tell of the Tory M'Fingal's heated arguments at his local town meeting. These were first published in 1776, but the third and fourth cantos did not appear until 1782.

"Trumbull himself refuted the charge that his poem is merely an imitation of *Hudibras*. In his unpublished "Critical Reflections" he wrote: "The Critical Reader will discern, that I have rather proposed to myself Swift and Churchill as models in my Hudibrastic writings, than the Author of *Hudibras*. I have sometimes had Butler's manner in my eye, for a few lines, but was soon forced to quit it. Indeed his kind of wit and the oddity of his Comparisons was in my Opinion never well imitated by any man, nor ever will be." In 1785 he reverted to the subject in his reply to a letter from the Marquis de Chastellux. On this occasion he called attention to the major distinction between the two poems: "In the style, I have preferred the high burlesque to the low (which is the style of *Hudibras*), not only as more agreeable to my own taste, but as it readily admits a transition to the grave, elevated or sublime. . . ." " Cowie, *John Trumbull* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1936), 151.

Cry justice down, as out of fashion,
And fix its scale of depreciation;
Defy all creditors to trouble ye,
And keep new years of Jewish jubilee;
Drive judges out, like Aaron's calves,
By jurisdiction of white staves,
And make the bar and bench and steeple
Submit t' our Sovereign Lord, The People;
By plunder rise to power and glory,
And brand all property, as Tory;
Expose all wares to lawful seizures
By mobbers or monopolizers;
Break heads and windows and the peace,
For your own interest and increase;
Dispute and pray and fight and groan
For public good, and mean your own;
Prevent the law by fierce attacks
From quitting scores upon your backs;
Lay your old dread, the gallows, low,
And seize the stocks, your ancient foe,
And turn them to convenient engines
To wreak your patriotic vengeance:
While all, your rights who understand,
Confess them in their owner's hand;
And when by clamours and confusions,
Your freedom's grown a public nuisance,
Cry "Liberty," with powerful yearning,
As he does, "Fire!" whose house is
burning;
Though he already has much more
Than he can find occasion for.
While every clown, that tills the plains,
Though bankrupt in estate and brains,
By this new light transform'd to traitor,
Forsakes his plough to turn dictator,
Starts an haranguing chief of Whigs,
And drags you by the ears, like pigs.
All bluster, arm'd with factious license,
New-born at once to politicians.
Each leather-apron'd dunce, grown wise,
Presents his forward face t' advise,
And tatter'd legislators meet,
From every workshop through the street.
His goose the tailor finds new use in,
To patch and turn the Constitution;
The blacksmith comes with sledge and grate
To iron-bind the wheels of state;
The quack forbears his patients' souse,
To purge the Council and the House;
The tinker quits his moulds and doxies,
To cast assembly-men and proxies.
From dunghills deep of blackest hue,
Your dirt-bred patriots spring to view,
To wealth and power and honors rise,
Like new-wing'd maggots chang'd to flies,
And fluttering round in high parade,
Strut in the robe, or gay cockade.
See Arnold quits, for ways more certain,
His bankrupt-perj'ries for his fortune,
Brews rum no longer in his store,
Jockey and skipper now no more,
Forsakes his warehouses and docks,
And writs of slander for the pox;
And cleansed by patriotism from shame,
Grows General of the foremost name.
For in this ferment of the stream
The dregs have work'd up to the brim,
And, by the rule of topsy-turvies,
The scum stands foaming on the surface.
You've caus'd your pyramid t' ascend,
And set it on the little end.
Like Hudibras, your empire's made,
Whose crupper had o'ertopped his head.
You've push'd and turn'd the whole
world up-
Side down, and got yourselves at top,
While all the great ones of your state
Are crush'd beneath the popular weight;
Nor can you boast, this present hour,
The shadow of the form of power.
For what's your Congress, or its end?
A power t' advise and recommend;
To call forth troops, adjust your quotas—
And yet no soul is bound to notice;
To pawn your faith to th' utmost limit,
But cannot bind you to redeem it;
And, when in want no more in them lies
Than begging from your State-Assemblies;
Can utter oracles of dread,
Like friar Bacon's brazen head,
But when a faction dares dispute 'em,
Has ne'er an arm to execute 'em:
As tho' you chose supreme dictators,
And put them under conservators.
You've but pursued the self-same way
With Shakespeare's Trinc'lo in the play;
"You shall be Viceroys here, 'tis true,
But we'll be Viceroys over you."
What wild confusion hence must ensue?
Tho' common danger yet cements you:
So some wreck'd vessel, all in shatters,
Is held up by surrounding waters,
But stranded, when the pressure ceases,
Falls by its rottenness to pieces.
And fall it must! if wars were ended,
You'll ne'er have sense enough to mend it:
But creeping on by low intrigues,
Like vermin of a hundred legs,
'Twill find as short a life assign'd,
As all things else of reptile kind.

Your Commonwealth's a common harlot,
The property of every varlet;
Which now in taste, and full employ,
All sorts admire, as all enjoy:
But soon a batter'd strumpet grown,
You'll curse and drum her out of town.
Such is the government you chose;
For this you bade the world be foes;
For this, so mark'd for dissolution,
You scorn the British Constitution,
That constitution form'd by sages,
The wonder of all modern ages;
Which owns no failure in reality,
Except corruption and venality;
And merely proves the adage just,
That best things spoil'd corrupt to worst:
So man supreme in earthly station,
And mighty lord of this creation,
When once his corse is dead as herring,
Becomes the most offensive carrion,
And sooner breeds the plague, 'tis found,
Than all beasts rotting on the ground.
Yet with republics to dismay us,
You've call'd up Anarchy from chaos,
With all the followers of her school,
Uproar and Rage and wild Misrule:
For whom this rout of Whigs distracted,
And ravings dire of every crack'd head;
These new-cast legislative engines
Of County-meetings and Conventions;
Committees vile of correspondence,
And mobs, whose tricks have almost
undone 's:
While reason fails to check your course,
And Loyalty's kick'd out of doors,
And Folly, like inviting landlord,
Hoists on your poles her royal standard;
While the king's friends, in doleful dumps,
Have worn their courage to the stumps,
And leaving George in sad disaster,
Most sinfully deny their master.
What furies raged when you, in sea,
In shape of Indians, drown'd the tea;
When your gay sparks, fatigued to watch it,
Assumed the moggison and hatchet,
With wampum'd blankets hid their laces,
And like their sweethearts, primed their
faces:
While not a red-coat dared oppose,
And scarce a Tory show'd his nose;
While Hutchinson, for sure retreat,
Manœuvred to his country seat,
And thence affrighted, in the suds,
Stole off bareheaded through the woods.
'Have you not roused your mobs to join,
And make Mandamus-men resign,
Call'd forth each duffil-drest curmudgeon,
With dirty trousers and white bludgeon,
Forced all our Councils through the land,
To yield their necks at your command;
While paleness marks their late disgraces,
Through all their rueful length of faces?
'Have you not caused as woeful work
In our good city of New-York,
When all the rabble, well cockaded,
In triumph through the streets paraded,
And mobb'd the Tories, scared their
spouses,
And ransack'd all the custom-houses;
Made such a tumult, bluster, jarring,
That mid the clash of tempests warring,
Smith's weather-cock, in veers forlorn,
Could hardly tell which way to turn?
Burn'd effigies of higher powers,
Contrived in planetary hours;
As witches with clay-images
Destroy or torture whom they please:
Till fired with rage, th'ungrateful club
Spared not your best friend, Beelzebub,
O'erlook'd his favors, and forgot
The reverence due his cloven foot,
And in the selfsame furnace frying,
Stew'd him, and North and Bute and
Tryon?
Did you not, in as vile and shallow way,
Fright our poor Philadelphian, Galloway,
Your Congress, when the loyal ribald
Belied, berated and bescribbled?
What ropes and halters did you send,
Terrific emblems of his end,
Till, least he'd hang in more than effigy,
Fled in a fog the trembling refugee?
Now rising in progression fatal,
Have you not ventured to give battle?
When Treason chaced our heroes troubled,
With rusty gun, and leathern doublet;
Turn'd all stone-walls and groves and
bushes,
To batteries arm'd with blunderbusses;
And with deep wounds that fate portend,
Gaul'd many a Briton's latter end;
Drove them to Boston, as in jail,
Confined without mainprize or bail.
Were not these deeds enough betimes,
To heap the measure of your crimes:
But in this loyal town and dwelling,
You raise these ensigns of rebellion?
'Tis done! fair Mercy shuts her door;
And Vengeance now shall sleep no more.
Rise then, my friends, in terror rise,

And sweep this scandal from the skies.
You'll see their Dagon, though well jointed,
Will shrink before the Lord's anointed,
And like old Jericho's proud wall,
Before our ram's horns prostrate fall.'
This said, our 'Squire, yet undismay'd,
Call'd forth the Constable to aid;
And bade him read, in nearer station,
The Riot-act and Proclamation.
He swift, advancing to the ring,
Began, 'Our Sovereign Lord, the King'—
When thousand clam'rous tongues he hears
And clubs and stones assail his ears.
To fly was vain; to fight was idle;
By foes encompass'd in the middle,
His hope, in stratagems, he found,
And fell right craftily to ground:
Then crept to seek an hiding place,
'Twas all he could, beneath a brace;
Where soon the conqu'ring crew espied him,
And where he lurk'd, they caught and tied him.
At once with resolution fatal,
Both Whigs and Tories rush'd to battle.
Instead of weapons, either band
Seized on such arms, as came to hand.
And as famed Ovid paints th' adventures
Of wrangling Lapithæ and Centaurs,
Who at their feast, by Bacchus led,
Threw bottles at each other's head;
And these arms failing in their scuffles,
Attack'd with andirons, tongs, and shovels:
So clubs and billets, staves and stones
Met fierce, encount'ring every sconce,
And cover'd o'er with knobs and pains
Each void receptacle for brains:
Their clamours rend the skies around,
The hills rebellow to the sound;
And many a groan increas'd the din
From batter'd nose and broken shin.
M'Fingal, rising at the word,
Drew forth his old militia-sword;
Thrice cry'd 'King George,' as erst in distress,
Knights of romance invoked a mistress,
And brandishing the blade in air,
Struck terror through th' opposing war.
The Whigs, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion, shrunk behind.
With whirling steel around address'd,
Fierce through their thickest throng he press'd,
(Who roll'd on either side in arch,
Like Red Sea waves in Israel's march)
And like a meteor rushing through,
Struck on their pole a vengeful blow.
Around, the Whigs, of clubs and stones
Discharged whole vollies, in platoons,
That o'er in whistling fury fly;
But not a foe dares venture nigh.
And now perhaps with glory crown'd
Our 'Squire had fell'd the pole to ground,
Had not some Pow'r, a Whig at heart,
Descended down and took their part;
(Whether 'twere Pallas, Mars, or Iris,
'Tis scarce worth while to make inquiries)
Who at the nick of time alarming,
Assumed the solemn form of Chairman,
Address'd a Whig, in ev'ry scene
The stoutest wrestler on the green,
And pointed where the spade was found,
Late used to set their pole in ground,
And urged, with equal arms and might,
To dare our 'Squire to single fight.[1]
The Whig thus arm'd, untaught to yield,
Advanced tremendous to the field:
Nor did M'Fingal shun the foe,
But stood to brave the desp'rate blow;
While all the party gazed, suspended
To see the deadly combat ended;
And Jove in equal balance weigh'd
The sword against the brandish'd spade,
He weigh'd; but lighter than a dream,
The sword flew up, and kick'd the beam.
Our 'Squire on tiptoe rising fair
Lifts high a noble stroke in air,
Which hung not, but like dreadful engines,
Descended on his foe in vengeance.
But ah! in danger, with dishonor
The sword, perfidious, fails its owner;
That sword, which oft had stood its ground,
By huge trainbands encircled round;
And on the bench, with blade right loyal,
Had won the day at many a trial,
Of stones and clubs had braved th' alarms,
Shrunk from these new Vulcanian arms.
The spade, so temper'd from the sledge,
Nor keen nor solid harm'd its edge,
Now met it, from his arm of might,
Descending with steep force to smite;
The blade snapp'd short—and from his hand,
With rust embrown'd the glittering sand.

1 'The learned reader will readily observe the allusions in this scene to the single combats of Paris and Menelaus in Homer, Æneas and Turnus in Virgil, and Michael and Satan in Milton.' Author's note, *M'Fingal* (Hartford, Conn., 1782), 59.

Swift turn'd M'Fingal at the view,
And call'd to aid th' attendant crew,
In vain: the Tories all had run,
When scarce the fight was well begun;
Their setting wigs he saw decreas'd
Far in th' horizon tow'rd the west.
Amazed he view'd the shameful sight,
And saw no refuge, but in flight:
But age unwieldy check'd his pace,
Though fear had wing'd his flying race;
For not a trifling prize at stake;
No less than great M'Fingal's back.
With legs and arms he work'd his course,
Like rider that outgoes his horse,
And labor'd hard to get away, as [1]
Old Satan struggling on through chaos;
'Till looking back, he spied in rear
The spade-arm'd chief advanced too near:
Then stopp'd and seized a stone that lay
An ancient landmark near the way;
Nor shall we, as old bards have done,
Affirm it weigh'd an hundred ton;
But such a stone, as at a shift
A modern might suffice to lift,
Since men, to credit their enigmas,
Are dwindled down to dwarfs and pigmies,
And giants exiled with their cronies
To Brobdignags and Patagonias.
But while our Hero turn'd him round,
And tugg'd to raise it from the ground,
The fatal spade discharged a blow
Tremendous on his rear below:
His bent knee fail'd, and void of strength
Stretch'd on the ground his manly length.
Like ancient oak o'erturn'd, he lay,
Or tower to tempests fall'n a prey,
Or mountain sunk with all his pines,
Or flow'r, the plow to dust consigns,
And more things else—but all men know 'em,
If slightly versed in epic poem.
At once the crew, at this dread crisis,
Fall on, and bind him, ere he rises;
And with loud shouts and joyful soul,
Conduct him prisoner to the pole.
When now the mob in lucky hour
Had got their en'mies in their power,
They first proceed, by grave command,
To take the Constable in hand.
Then from the pole's sublimest top
The active crew let down the rope,
At once its other end in haste bind,
And make it fast upon his waistband;
Till like the earth, as stretch'd on tenter,
He hung self-balanc'd on his centre.
Then upwards, all hands hoisting sail,
They swung him, like a keg of ale,
Till to the pinnacle in height
He vaulted, like balloon or kite.
As Socrates of old at first did,
To aid philosophy get hoisted,
And found his thoughts flow strangely clear,
Swung in a basket in mid air: [2]
Our culprit thus, in purer sky,
With like advantage raised his eye,
And looking forth in prospect wide,
His Tory errors clearly spied,
And from his elevated station,
With bawling voice began addressing.
'Good Gentlemen and friends and kin,
For heaven's sake hear, if not for mine!
I here renounce the Pope, the Turks,
The King, the Devil, and all their works;
And will, set me but once at ease,
Turn Whig or Christian, what you please;
And always mind your laws so justly,
Should I live long as old Methus'lah,
I'll never join in British rage,
Nor help Lord North, nor Gen'ral Gage;
Nor lift my gun in future fights,
Nor take away your Charter-rights;
Nor overcome your new-raised levies,
Destroy your towns, nor burn your navies;
Nor cut your poles down while I've breath,
Though rais'd more thick than hatchel-teeth;
But leave King George and all his elves
To do their conqu'ring work themselves.'
This said, they lower'd him down in state,
Spread at all points, like falling cat;
But took a vote first on the question,
That they'd accept this full confession,
And to their fellowship and favor,
Restore him on his good behaviour.
Not so, our 'Squire submits to rule,
But stood heroic as a mule.
'You'll find it all in vain,' quoth he,
'To play your rebel tricks on me.
All punishments the world can render,
Serve only to provoke th' offender;
The will gains strength from treatment horrid,
As hides grow harder when they're curried.
No man e'er felt the halter draw,

[1] 'In Milton.' Author's note, ibid.,61.

[2] 'Socrates is represented in Aristophanes's Comedy of the Clouds, as hoisted in a basket to aid contemplation.' Author's note, ibid.,62.

With good opinion of the law;
Or held in method orthodox
His love of justice in the stocks;
Or fail'd to lose by sheriff's shears
At once his loyalty and ears.
Have you made Murray look less big,
Or smoked old Williams to a Whig?
Did our mobb'd Ol'ver quit his station,
Or heed his vows of resignation?
Has Rivington, in dread of stripes,
Ceased lying since you stole his types?
And can you think my faith will alter,
By tarring, whipping, or the halter?
I'll stand the worst; for recompense
I trust King George and Providence.
And when with conquest gain'd I come,
Array'd in law and terror home,
You'll rue this inauspicious morn,
And curse the day, when ye were born,
In Job's high style of imprecations,
With all his plagues, without his patience.'
  Meanwhile beside the pole, the guard
A Bench of Justice had prepared,
Where sitting round in awful sort,
The grand Committee hold their Court;
While all the crew, in silent awe,
Wait from their lips the lore of law.
Few moments with deliberation
They hold the solemn consultation;
When soon in judgment all agree,
And Clerk proclaims the dread decree;
'That 'Squire M'Fingal having grown
The vilest Tory in the town,
And now in full examination
Convicted by his own confession,
Finding no tokens of repentence,
This Court proceeds to render sentence:
That first the Mob a slip-knot single
Tie round the neck of said M'Fingal;
And in due form do tar him next,
And feather, as the law directs;
Then through the town attendant ride him
In cart with Constable beside him,
And having held him up to shame,
Bring to the pole, from whence he came.'
  Forthwith the crowd proceed to deck
With halter'd noose M'Fingal's neck,
While he in peril of his soul
Stood tied half-hanging to the pole;
Then lifting high the ponderous jar,
Pour'd o'er his head the smoaking tar.
With less profusion once was spread
Oil on the Jewish monarch's head,
That down his beard and vestments ran,
And cover'd all his outward man.

As when (so Claudian sings) the Gods
And earth-born Giants fell at odds,
The stout Enceladus in malice,
Tore mountains up to throw at Pallas;
And while he held them o'er his head,
The river, from their fountains fed,
Pour'd down his back its copious tide,
And wore its channels in his hide:
So from the high-raised urn the torrents
Spread down his side their various
    currents;
His flowing wig, as next the brim,
First met and drank the sable stream;
Adown his visage stern and grave,
Roll'd and adhered the viscid wave;
With arms depending as he stood,
Each cuff capacious holds the flood:
From nose and chin's remotest end,
The tarry icicles descend:
Till all o'erspread with colors gay
He glitter'd to the western ray,
Like sleet-bound trees in wintry skies,
Or Lapland idol carved in ice.
And now the feather-bag display'd,
Is waved in triumph o'er his head,
And clouds him o'er with feathers missive,
And down, upon the tar, adhesive:
Not Maia's son, with wings for ears,
Such plumage around his visage wears;
Nor Milton's six-wing'd angel gathers
Such superfluity of feathers.
Now all complete appears our 'Squire,
Like Gorgon or Chimeræ dire;
No more could boast on Plato's plan
To rank among the race of man,
Or prove his claim to human nature,[1]
As a two-legg'd, unfeather'd creature.
  Then on the fatal cart, in state,
They rais'd our grand Duumvirate.
And as at Rome a like committee,
Who found an owl within their city,
With solemn rites and grave processions
At every shrine perform'd lustrations;
And lest infection might take place
From such grim fowl with feather'd face,
All Rome attends him through the street
In triumph to his country seat:
With like devotion, all the choir
Paraded round our awful 'Squire;
In front the martial music comes
Of horns and fiddles, fifes and drums,
With jingling sound of carriage bells,
And treble creak of rusted wheels.

1 'Alluding to Plato's famous definition of Man, *Animal bipes, implumis.*' Author's note, ibid.,66.

Behind, the crowd in lengthen'd row,
With proud procession, closed the show.
And at fit periods every throat
Combined in universal shout;
And hail'd great Liberty in chorus,
Or bawl'd 'confusion to the Tories.'
Not louder storm the welkin braves,
From clamors of conflicting waves;
Less dire in Lybian wilds the noise
When rav'ning lions lift their voice;
Or triumphs at town-meetings made,
On passing votes to regulate trade.
  Thus having borne them round the town,
Last at the pole they set them down;
And to the tavern take their way,
To end in mirth the festal day.
  And now the Mob, dispersed and gone,
Left 'Squire and Constable alone.
The constable with rueful face
Lean'd sad and solemn o'er a brace,
And fast beside him, cheek by jowl,
Stuck 'Squire M'Fingal 'gainst the pole,
Glued by the tar t' his rear applied,
Like barnacle on vessel's side.
But though his body lack'd physician,
His spirit was in worse condition.
He found his fears of whips and ropes
By many a drachm outweigh'd his hopes.
As men in jail without mainprize,
View everything with other eyes,
And all goes wrong in church and state,
Seen through perspective of the grate:
So now M'Fingal's Second-sight
Beheld all things in gloomier light;
His visual nerve, well purged with tar,
Saw all the coming scenes of war.
As his prophetic soul grew stronger,
He found he could hold in no longer.
First from the pole, as fierce he shook,
His wig from pitchy durance broke,
His mouth unglued, his feathers flutter'd,
His tarr'd skirts crack'd, and thus he utter'd:
'Ah, Mr. Constable, in vain
We strive 'gainst wind and tide and rain!
Behold my doom! this feathery omen
Portends what dismal times are coming.
Now future scenes, before my eyes,
And second-sighted forms arise.
I hear a voice, that calls away,
And cries, "The Whigs will win the day."
My beck'ning Genius gives command,
And bids me fly the fatal land;
Where changing name and constitution,
Rebellion turns to Revolution,
While Loyalty oppress'd, in tears,
Stands trembling for its neck and ears.
  'Go, summon all our brethren, greeting,
To muster at our usual meeting.
There my prophetic voice shall warn 'em
Of all things future that concern 'em,
And scenes disclose on which, my friend,
Their conduct and their lives depend.
There I—but first 'tis more of use,
From this vile pole to set me loose;
Then go with cautious steps and steady,
While I steer home and make all ready.'

1782

JOEL BARLOW

1754–1812

THE HASTY PUDDING [1]

CANTO I

YE Alps audacious, through the heavens that rise,
To cramp the day and hide me from the skies;
Ye Gallic flags, that o'er their heights unfurled,
Bear death to kings and freedom to the world,
I sing not you. A softer theme I choose,
A virgin theme, unconscious of the Muse,
But fruitful, rich, well suited to inspire
The purest frenzy of poetic fire.
  Despise it not, ye bards to terror steel'd,
Who hurl your thunders round the epic field;
Nor ye who strain your midnight throats to sing
Joys that the vineyard and the stillhouse bring;
Or on some distant fair your notes employ,
And speak of raptures that you ne'er enjoy.
I sing the sweets I know, the charms I feel,
My morning incense, and my evening meal,—
The sweets of Hasty Pudding. Come, dear bowl,

1 The text has been modernized by the editors.

Glide o'er my palate, and inspire my soul.
The milk beside thee, smoking from the kine,
Its substance mingled, married in with thine,
Shall cool and temper thy superior heat,
And save the pains of blowing while I eat.
Oh! could the smooth, the emblematic song
Flow like thy genial juices o'er my tongue,
Could those mild morsels in my numbers chime,
And, as they roll in substance, roll in rime,
No more thy awkward, unpoetic name
Should shun the muse or prejudice thy fame;
But, rising grateful to the accustom'd ear,
All bards should catch it, and all realms revere!
Assist me first with pious toil to trace
Through wrecks of time, thy lineage and thy race;
Declare what lovely squaw, in days of yore,
(Ere great Columbus sought thy native shore)
First gave thee to the world; her works of fame
Have lived indeed, but lived without a name.
Some tawny Ceres, goddess of her days,
First learn'd with stones to crack the well-dried maize,
Through the rough sieve to shake the golden shower,
In boiling water stir the yellow flour:
The yellow flour, bestrew'd and stirr'd with haste,
Swells in the flood and thickens to a paste,
Then puffs and wallops, rises to the brim,
Drinks the dry knobs that on the surface swim;
The knobs at last the busy ladle breaks,
And the whole mass its true consistence takes.
Could but her sacred name, unknown so long,
Rise, like her labors, to the son of song,
To her, to them I'd consecrate my lays,
And blow her pudding with the breath of praise.
If 'twas Oella whom I sang before,
I'd here ascribe her one great virtue more.
Nor through the rich Peruvian realms alone
The fame of Sol's sweet daughter should be known,
But o'er the world's wide climes should live secure,
Far as his rays extend, as long as they endure.

Dear Hasty Pudding, what unpromised joy
Expands my heart, to meet thee in Savoy!
Doom'd o'er the world through devious paths to roam,
Each clime my country, and each house my home,
My soul is soothed, my cares have found an end;
I greet my long-lost, unforgotten friend.
For thee through Paris, that corrupted town,
How long in vain I wandered up and down,
Where shameless Bacchus, with his drenching hoard,
Cold from his cave usurps the morning board.
London is lost in smoke and steep'd in tea;
No Yankee there can lisp the name of thee;
The uncouth word, a libel on the town,
Would call a proclamation from the crown.
From climes oblique, that fear the sun's full rays,
Chilled in their fogs, exclude the generous maize:
A grain whose rich, luxuriant growth requires
Short, gentle showers, and bright, ethereal fires.
But here, though distant from our native shore,
With mutual glee, we meet and laugh once more.
The same! I know thee by that yellow face,
That strong complexion of true Indian race,
Which time can never change, nor soil impair,
Nor Alpine snows, nor Turkey's morbid air;
For endless years, through every mild domain,
Where grows the maize, there thou art sure to reign.
But man, more fickle, the bold licence claims,
In different realms to give thee different names.
Thee the soft nations round the warm Levant

Polanta call; the French, of course, *Polante.*
E'en in thy native regions, how I blush
To hear the Pennsylvanians call thee *Mush*!
On Hudson's banks, while men of Belgic spawn
Insult and eat thee by the name *Suppawn.*
All spurious appellations, void of truth;
I've better known thee from my earliest youth:
Thy name is *Hasty Pudding*! thus my sire
Was wont to greet thee fuming from the fire;
And while he argued in thy just defense
With logic clear he thus explained the sense:
'In haste the boiling caldron, o'er the blaze,
Receives and cooks the ready powdered maize;
In haste 'tis served, and then in equal haste,
With cooling milk, we make the sweet repast.
No carving to be done, no knife to grate
The tender ear and wound the stony plate;
But the smooth spoon, just fitted to the lip,
And taught with art the yielding mass to dip,
By frequent journeys to the bowl well stored,
Performs the hasty honors of the board.'

Such is thy name, significant and clear,
A name, a sound to every Yankee dear,
But most to me, whose heart and palate chaste
Preserve my pure, hereditary taste.
There are who strive to stamp with disrepute
The luscious food, because it feeds the brute;
In troops of high-strain'd wit, while gaudy prigs
Compare thy nursling, man, to pamper'd pigs;
With sovereign scorn I treat the vulgar jest,
Nor fear to share thy bounties with the beast.
What though the generous cow gives me to quaff
The milk nutritious: am I then a calf?
Or can the genius of the noisy swine,
Though nursed on pudding, claim a kin to mine?
Sure the sweet song, I fashion to thy praise,
Runs more melodious than the notes they raise.
My song, resounding in its grateful glee,
No merit claims: I praise myself in thee.
My father loved thee through his length of days!
For thee his fields were shaded o'er with maize;
From thee what health, what vigor he possess'd,
Ten sturdy freemen from his loins attest;
Thy constellation ruled my natal morn,
And all my bones were made of Indian corn.
Delicious grain! whatever form it take,
To roast or boil, to smother or to bake,
In every dish 'tis welcome still to me,
But most, my Hasty Pudding, most in thee.
Let the green succotash with thee contend;
Let beans and corn their sweetest juices blend;
Let butter drench them in its yellow tide,
And a long slice of bacon grace their side;
Not all the plate, how famed soe'er it be,
Can please my palate like a bowl of thee.
Some talk of hoe-cake, fair Virginia's pride!
Rich johnny-cake this mouth has often tried;
Both please me well, their virtues much the same,
Alike their fabric, as allied their fame,
Except in dear New England, where the last
Receives a dash of pumpkin in the paste,
To give it sweetness and improve the taste.
But place them all before me, smoking hot,
The big, round dumpling, rolling from the pot;
The pudding of the bag, whose quivering breast,
With suet lined, leads on the Yankee feast;
The charlotte brown, within whose crusty sides
A belly soft the pulpy apple hides;
The yellow bread whose face like amber glows,
And all the Indian that the bakepan knows,—
Ye tempt me not; my favorite greets my eyes,
To that loved bowl my spoon by instinct flies.

Canto II

To mix the food by vicious rules of art,
To kill the stomach and to sink the heart,

To make mankind to social virtue sour,
Cram o'er each dish, and be what they devour;
For this the kitchen muse first framed her book,
Commanding sweets to stream from every cook;
Children no more their antic gambols tried,
And friends to physic wondered why they died.
Not so the Yankee: his abundant feast,
With simples furnished and with plainness drest,
A numerous offspring gathers round the board,
And cheers alike the servant and the lord;
Whose well-bought hunger prompts the joyous taste
And health attends them from the short repast.
While the full pail rewards the milk-maid's toil,
The mother sees the morning caldron boil;
To stir the pudding next demands their care;
To spread the table and the bowls prepare;
To feed the children as their portions cool
And comb their heads and send them off to school.
Yet may the simplest dish some rules impart,
For nature scorns not all the aids of art.
E'en Hasty Pudding, purest of all food,
May still be bad, indifferent, or good,
As sage experience the short process guides,
Or want of skill, or want of care presides.
Whoe'er would form it on the surest plan,
To rear the child and long sustain the man;
To shield the morals while it mends the size,
And all the powers of every food supplies,
Attend the lessons that the Muse shall bring,
Suspend your spoons, and listen while I sing.

But since, O man! thy life and health demand
Not food alone, but labor from thy hand,
First, in the field, beneath the sun's strong rays,
Ask of thy Mother Earth the needful maize;
She loves the race that courts her yielding soil,
And gives her bounties to the sons of toil.
When now the ox, obedient to thy call,
Repays the loan that filled the winter stall,
Pursue his traces o'er the furrow'd plain,
And plant in measur'd hills the golden grain.
But when the tender germ begins to shoot,
And the green spire declares the sprouting root,
Then guard your nursling from each greedy foe,
The insidious worm, the all-devouring crow.
A little ashes sprinkled round the spire,
Soon steep'd in rain, will bid the worm retire;
The feather'd robber with his hungry maw
Swift flies the field before your man of straw,
A frightful image, such as schoolboys bring
When met to burn the Pope or hang the King.
Thrice in the season, through each verdant row,
Wield the strong plowshare and the faithful hoe;
The faithful hoe, a double task that takes,
To till the summer corn and roast the winter cakes.
Slow springs the blade, while check'd by chilling rains,
E'er yet the sun the seat of Cancer gains;
But when his fiercest fires emblaze the land,
Then start the juices, then the roots expand;
Then, like a column of Corinthian mold,
The stalk struts upward and the leaves unfold;
The bushy branches all the ridges fill,
Entwine their arms, and kiss from hill to hill.
Here cease to vex them; all your cares are done:
Leave the last labors to the parent sun;
Beneath his genial smiles, the well-dressed field,
When autumn calls, a plenteous crop shall yield.
Now the strong foliage bears the standards high,
And shoots the tall top-gallants to the sky;
The suckling ears their silky fringes bend,
And pregnant grown, their swelling coats distend;

The loaded stalk, while still the burden grows,
O'erhangs the space that runs between the rows;
High as a hop-field waves the silent grove,
A safe retreat for little thefts of love,
When the fledged roasting-ears invite the maid
To meet her swain beneath the new-formed shade;
His generous hand unloads the cumbrous hill,
And the green spoils her ready basket fill;
Small compensation for the twofold bliss,
The promised wedding, and the present kiss.
Slight depredations these; but now the moon
Calls from his hollow tree the sly raccoon;
And while by night he bears his prize away,
The bolder squirrel labors through the day.
Both thieves alike, but provident of time,
A virtue rare, that almost hides their crime.
Then let them steal the little stores they can,
And fill their granaries from the toils of man;
We've one advantage where they take no part—
With all their wiles, they ne'er have found the art
To boil the Hasty Pudding; here we shine
Superior far to tenants of the pine;
This envied boon to man shall still belong,
Unshared by them in substance or in song.
At last the closing season browns the plain,
And ripe October gathers in the grain;
Deep-loaded carts the spacious corn-house fill;
The sack distended marches to the mill;
The lab'ring mill beneath the burden groans,
And showers the future pudding from the stones;
Till the glad housewife greets the powder'd gold,
And the new crop exterminates the old.
Ah! who can sing what every wight must feel,
The joy that enters with the bag of meal,
A general jubilee pervades the house,
Wakes every child and gladdens every mouse.

Canto III

The days grow short; but though the falling sun
To the glad swain proclaims his day's work done,
Night's pleasing shades his various tasks prolong,
And yield new subjects to my various song.
For now, the corn-house filled, the harvest home,
The invited neighbors to the Husking come;
A frolic scene, where work, and mirth, and play,
Unite their charms to chase the hours away.
Where the huge heap lies centered in the hall,
The lamp suspended from the cheerful wall,
Brown, corn-fed nymphs, and strong, hard-handed beaux,
Alternate ranged, extend in circling rows,
Assume their seats, the solid mass attack;
The dry husks rustle, and the corncobs crack;
The song, the laugh, alternate notes resound,
And the sweet cider trips in silence round.
The laws of husking every wight can tell;
And sure no laws he ever keeps so well:
For each red ear a general kiss he gains,
With each smut ear she smuts the luckless swains;
But when to some sweet maid a prize is cast,
Red as her lips and taper as her waist,
She walks the round and culls one favored beau,
Who leaps the luscious tribute to bestow.
Various the sport, as are the wits and brains
Of well-pleased lasses and contending swains;
Till the vast mound of corn is swept away,
And he that gets the last ear wins the day.
Meanwhile, the housewife urges all her care,
The well-earned feast to hasten and prepare.
The sifted meal already waits her hand,
The milk is strained, the bowls in order stand,
The fire flames high; and as a pool—that takes
The headlong stream that o'er the milldam breaks—

Foams, roars, and rages with incessant toils,
So the vexed caldron rages, roars, and boils.
First with clean salt she seasons well the food,
Then strews the flour, and thickens all the flood.
Long o'er the simmering fire she lets it stand;
To stir it well demands a stronger hand;
The husband takes his turn: and round and round
The ladle flies; at last the toil is crown'd;
When to the board the thronging huskers pour,
And take their seats as at the corn before.
I leave them to their feast. There still belong
More useful matters to my faithful song.
For rules there are, though ne'er unfolded yet,
Nice rules and wise, how pudding should be eat.
Some with molasses grace the luscious treat,
And mix, like bards, the useful and the sweet.
A wholesome dish, and well deserving praise,
A great resource in those bleak wintry days,
When the chilled earth lies buried deep in snow,
And raging Boreas dries the shivering cow.
Blest cow! thy praise shall still my notes employ,
Great source of health, the only source of joy;
Mother of Egypt's god,—but sure, for me,
Were I to leave my God, I'd worship thee.
How oft thy teats these pious hands have pressed!
How oft thy bounties proved my only feast!
How oft I've fed thee with my favorite grain!
And roared, like thee, to see thy children slain!
Ye swains who know her various worth to prize,
Ah! house her well from Winter's angry skies.
Potatoes, pumpkins, should her sadness cheer,
Corn from your crib, and mashes from your beer;
When spring returns, she'll well acquit the loan,
And nurse at once your infants and her own.
Milk then with pudding, I should always choose;
To this in future I confine my Muse,
Till she in haste some further hints unfold,
Good for the young, nor useless to the old.
First in your bowl the milk abundant take,
Then drop with care along the silver lake
Your flakes of pudding; these at first will hide
Their little bulk beneath the swelling tide;
But when their growing mass no more can sink,
When the soft island looms above the brink,
Then check your hand; you've got the portion due;
So taught my sires, and what they taught is true.
There is a choice in spoons. Though small appear
The nice distinction, yet to me 'tis clear.
The deep-bowled Gallic spoon, contrived to scoop
In ample draughts the thin, diluted soup,
Performs not well in those substantial things,
Whose mass adhesive to the metal clings;
Where the strong labial muscles must embrace
The gentle curve, and sweep the hollow space
With ease to enter and discharge the freight,
A bowl less concave, but still more dilate,
Becomes the pudding best. The shape, the size,
A secret rests, unknown to vulgar eyes.
Experienced feeders can alone impart
A rule so much above the lore of art.
These tuneful lips that thousand spoons have tried,
With just precision could the point decide,
Though not in song; the Muse but poorly shines
In cones, and cubes, and geometric lines;
Yet the true form, as near as she can tell,
Is that small section of a goose-egg shell,
Which in two equal portions shall divide
The distance from the center to the side.
Fear not to slaver; 'tis no deadly sin;—
Like the free Frenchman, from your joyous chin
Suspend the ready napkin; or, like me,

Poise with one hand your bowl upon your knee;
Just in the zenith your wise head project,
Your full spoon, rising in a line direct,
Bold as a bucket, heed no drops that fall,
The wide-mouthed bowl will surely catch them all!
1792 1792

PHILIP FRENEAU

1752–1832

TO THE MEMORY OF THE BRAVE AMERICANS

Under General Greene, in South Carolina, who fell in the action of September 8, 1781.

AT Eutaw Springs the valiant died;
Their limbs with dust are covered o'er—
Weep on, ye springs, your tearful tide;
How many heroes are no more!

If in this wreck of ruin, they
Can yet be thought to claim a tear,
O smite your gentle breast, and say
The friends of freedom slumber here!

Thou, who shalt trace this bloody plain,
If goodness rules thy generous breast,
Sigh for the wasted rural reign;
Sigh for the shepherds, sunk to rest!

Stranger, their humble graves adorn;
You too may fall, and ask a tear;
'Tis not the beauty of the morn
That proves the evening shall be clear.—

They saw their injured country's woe;
The flaming town, the wasted field;
Then rushed to meet the insulting foe;
They took the spear—but left the shield.

Led by thy conquering genius, Greene,
The Britons they compelled to fly;
None distant viewed the fatal plain,
None grieved, in such a cause to die—

But, like the Parthian, famed of old,
Who, flying, still their arrows threw,
These routed Britons, full as bold,
Retreated, and retreating slew.

Now rest in peace, our patriot band;
Though far from nature's limits thrown,
We trust they find a happier land,
A brighter sunshine of their own.
1781 1786

THE NORTHERN SOLDIER

OURS not to sleep in shady bowers,
When frosts are chilling all the plain,
And nights are cold and long the hours
To check the ardor of the swain,
Who parting from his cheerful fire
All comforts doth forego,
And here and there
And everywhere
Pursues the prowling foe.

But we must sleep in frost and snows,
No season shuts up our campaign;
Hard as the oaks, we dare oppose
The autumn's or the winter's reign.
Alike to us the winds that blow
In summer's season gay,
Or those that rave
On Hudson's wave
And drift his ice away.

For Liberty, celestial maid,
With joy all hardships we endure.
In her blest smiles we are repaid,
In her protection are secure.
Then rise superior to the foe,
Ye freeborn souls of fire;
Respect these arms,
'Tis freedom warms,
To noble deeds aspire.

Winter and death may change the scene,
The cold may freeze, the ball may kill,
And dire misfortunes intervene;
But freedom shall be potent still
To drive these Britons from our shore,
Who, cruel and unkind,
With slavish chain
Attempt in vain
Our freeborn limbs to bind.
1786

FROM THE HOUSE OF NIGHT

A VISION [1]

Advertisement—This Poem is founded upon the authority of Scripture, inasmuch as these sacred books assert, that 'the last enemy that shall be conquered is Death.' For the purposes of poetry he is here personified, and represented as on his dying bed. The scene is laid at a solitary palace, (the time midnight) which, tho' before beautiful and joyous, is now become sad and gloomy, as being the abode and receptacle of Death. Its owner, an amiable, majestic youth, who had lately lost a beloved consort, nevertheless with a noble philosophical fortitude and humanity, entertains him in a friendly manner, and by employing Physicians, endeavours to restore him to health, altho' an enemy; convinced of the excellence and propriety of that divine precept, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.' He nevertheless, as if by a spirit of prophecy, informs this (fictitiously) wicked being of the certainty of his doom, and represents to him in a pathetic manner the vanity of his expectations, either of a reception into the abodes of the just, or continuing longer to make havock of mankind upon earth. The patient finding his end approaching, composes his epitaph, and orders it to be engraved on his tombstone, hinting to us thereby, that even Death and Distress have vanity; and would be remembered with honour after he is no more, altho' his whole life has been spent in deeds of devastation and murder. He dies at last in the utmost agonies of despair, after agreeing with an avaricious Undertaker to intomb his bones. This reflects upon the inhumanity of those men, who, not to mention an enemy, would scarcely cover a departed friend with a little dust, without certainty of reward for so doing. The circumstances of his funeral are then recited, and the visionary and fabulous part of the poem disappears. It concludes with a few reflexions on the impropriety of a too great attachment to the present life, and incentives to such moral virtue as may assist in conducting us to a better.

1

Trembling I write my dream, and recollect
A fearful vision at the midnight hour;
So late, Death o'er me spread his sable wings,
Painted with fancies of malignant power!

2

Such was the dream the sage Chaldean saw
Disclos'd to him that felt heav'n's vengeful rod,
Such was the ghost, who through deep silence cry'd,
Shall mortal man—be juster than his God?

3

Let others draw from smiling skies their theme,
And tell of climes that boast unfading light,
I draw a darker scene, replete with gloom,
I sing the horrors of the House of Night.

6

By some sad means, when Reason holds no sway,
Lonely I rov'd at midnight o'er a plain
Where murmuring streams and mingling rivers flow
Far to their springs, or seek the sea again.

7

Sweet vernal May! tho' then thy woods in bloom
Flourish'd, yet nought of this could Fancy see,
No wild pinks bless'd the meads, no green the fields,
And naked seem'd to stand each lifeless tree:

8

Dark was the sky, and not one friendly star
Shone from the zenith or horizon, clear,
Mist sate upon the woods, and darkness rode
In her black chariot, with a wild career.

9

And from the woods the late resounding note
Issued of the loquacious Whip-poor-will,

1 The title to the selection has been given by the editors.

Hoarse, howling dogs, and nightly roving wolves
Clamour'd from far off cliffs invisible.

10

Rude, from the wide extended Chesapeke
I heard the winds the dashing waves assail,
And saw from far, by picturing fancy form'd,
The black ship travelling through the noisy gale.

11

At last, by chance and guardian fancy led,
I reach'd a noble dome, rais'd fair and high,
And saw the light from upper windows flame,
Presage of mirth and hospitality.

12

And by that light around the dome appear'd
A mournful garden of autumnal hue,
Its lately pleasing flowers all drooping stood
Amidst high weeds that in rank plenty grew.

13

The Primrose there, the violet darkly blue,
Daisies and fair Narcissus ceas'd to rise,
Gay spotted pinks their charming bloom withdrew,
And Polyanthus quench'd its thousand dyes.

14

No pleasant fruit or blossom gaily smil'd,
Nought but unhappy plants or trees were seen,
The yew, the myrtle, and the church-yard elm,
The cypress, with its melancholy green.

15

There cedars dark, the osier, and the pine,
Shorn tamarisks, and weeping willows grew,
The poplar tall, the lotos, and the lime,
And pyracantha did her leaves renew.

16

The poppy there, companion to repose,
Display'd her blossoms that began to fall,
And here the purple amaranthus rose
With mint strong-scented, for the funeral.

17

And here and there with laurel shrubs between
A tombstone lay, inscrib'd with strains of woe,
And stanzas sad, throughout the dismal green,
Lamented for the dead that slept below.

23

Then up three winding stairs my feet were brought
To a high chamber, hung with mourning sad,
The unsnuff'd candles glar'd with visage dim,
'Midst grief, in ecstacy of woe run mad.

24

A wide leaf'd table stood on either side,
Well fraught with phials, half their liquids spent,
And from a couch, behind the curtain's veil,
I heard a hollow voice of loud lament.

25

Turning to view the object whence it came,
My frighted eyes a horrid form survey'd;
Fancy, I own thy power—Death on the couch,
With fleshless limbs, at rueful length, was laid.

26

And o'er his head flew jealousies and cares,
Ghosts, imps, and half the black Tartarian crew,
Arch-angels damn'd, nor was their Prince remote,
Borne on the vaporous wings of Stygian dew.

27

Around his bed, by the dull flambeaux' glare,
I saw pale phantoms—Rage to madness vext,
Wan, wasting grief, and ever musing care,
Distressful pain, and poverty perplext.

28

Sad was his countenance, if we can call
That countenance, where only bones were seen

And eyes sunk in their sockets, dark and low,
And teeth, that only show'd themselves to grin.

29

Reft was his skull of hair, and no fresh bloom
Of cheerful mirth sate on his visage hoar:
Sometimes he rais'd his head, while deep-drawn groans
Were mixt with words that did his fate deplore.

30

Oft did he wish to see the daylight spring,
And often toward the window lean'd to hear,
Fore-runner of the scarlet-mantled morn,
The early note of wakeful Chanticleer.

98

'Death in this tomb his weary bones hath laid,
'Sick of dominion o'er the human kind—
'Behold what devastations he hath made,
'Survey the millions by his arm confin'd.

99

'Six thousand years has sovereign sway been mine,
'None, but myself, can real glory claim;
'Great Regent of the world I reign'd alone,
'And princes trembled when my mandate came.

100

'Vast and unmatch'd throughout the world, my fame
'Takes place of gods, and asks no mortal date—
'No; by myself, and by the heavens, I swear,
'Not Alexander's name is half so great.

101

'Nor swords nor darts my prowess could withstand,
'All quit their arms, and bowd to my decree,
'Even mighty Julius died beneath my hand,
'For slaves and Cæsars were the same to me!

102

'Traveller, wouldst thou his noblest trophies seek,
'Search in no narrow spot obscure for those;
'The sea profound, the surface of all land
'Is moulded with the myriads of his foes.'

103

Scarce had he spoke, when on the lofty dome
Rush'd from the clouds a hoarse resounding blast—
Round the four eves so loud and sad it play'd
As though all music were to breathe its last.

104

Warm was the gale, and such as travellers say
Sport with the winds on Zaara's barren waste;
Black was the sky, a mourning carpet spread,
Its azure blotted, and its stars o'ercast!

105

Lights in the air like burning stars were hurl'd,
Dogs howl'd, heaven mutter'd, and the tempest blew,
The red half-moon peeped from behind a cloud
As if in dread the amazing scene to view.

106

The mournful trees that in the garden stood
Bent to the tempest as it rush'd along,
The elm, the myrtle, and the cypress sad
More melancholy tun'd its bellowing song.

107

No more that elm its noble branches spread,
The yew, the cypress, or the myrtle tree,
Rent from the roots the tempest tore them down,
And all the grove in wild confusion lay.

108

Yet, mindful of his dread command, I part
Glad from the magic dome—nor found relief;
Damps from the dead hung heavier round my heart,
While sad remembrance rous'd her stores of grief.

1786

FROM MARS AND HYMEN

THE turtle on yon' withered bough,
That lately mourn'd her murder'd mate,
Has found another comrade now—
Such changes all await!
Again her drooping plume is drest,
Again she's willing to be blest
And takes her lover to her nest.

If nature has decreed it so
With all above, and all below,
Let us like them forget our woe,
And not be kill'd with sorrow.
If I should quit your arms to-night
And chance to die before 'twas light,
I would advise you—and you might
Love again to-morrow.

1775 1786

THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE

FAIR flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet:
No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by;
Thus quietly thy summer goes,
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
I grieve to see your future doom;
They died—nor were those flowers more gay,
The flowers that did in Eden bloom;
Unpitying frosts, and Autumn's power
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews
At first thy little being came:
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same;
The space between, is but an hour,
The frail duration of a flower.

1786 1788

THE INDIAN BURYING GROUND [1]

IN spite of all the learned have said,
I still my old opinion keep;
The posture, that we give the dead
Points out the soul's eternal sleep.

Not so the ancients of these lands—
The Indian, when from life released,
Again is seated with his friends,
And shares again the joyous feast.

His imaged birds, and painted bowl,
And venison, for a journey dressed,
Bespeak the nature of the soul,
Activity, that knows no rest.

His bow, for action ready bent,
And arrows, with a head of stone,
Can only mean that life is spent,
And not the old ideas gone.

Thou, stranger, that shalt come this way,
No fraud upon the dead commit—
Observe the swelling turf, and say
They do not lie, but here they sit.

Here still a lofty rock remains,
On which the curious eye may trace
(Now wasted, half, by wearing rains)
The fancies of a ruder race.

Here still an agèd elm aspires,
Beneath whose far-projecting shade
(And which the shepherd still admires)
The children of the forest played!

There oft a restless Indian queen
(Pale Shebah with her braided hair)
And many a barbarous form is seen
To chide the man that lingers there.

By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews;
In habit for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer—a shade!

And long shall timorous Fancy see
The painted chief, and pointed spear,
And Reason's self shall bow the knee
To shadows and delusions here.

1788

1 'The North American Indians bury their dead in a sitting posture; decorating the corpse with wampum, the images of birds, quadrupeds, &c.: And (if that of a warrior) with bows, arrows, tomahawks and other military weapons.' Author's note, Pattee, ed., *Poems of Philip Freneau* (Princeton, 1903), II, 369.

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

1795–1820

THE CULPRIT FAY [1]

'My visual orbs are purged from film, and lo!
Instead of Anster's turnip-bearing vales
I see old fairy land's miraculous show!
Her trees of tinsel kissed by freakish gales,
Her Ouphs that, cloaked in leaf-gold, skim the breeze,
And fairies, swarming thick as mites in rotten cheese.'

TENNANT'S *Anster Fair*

1

'Tis the middle watch of a summer's night—
The earth is dark, but the heavens are bright;
Nought is seen in the vault on high
But the moon, and the stars, and the cloudless sky,
And the flood which rolls its milky hue,
A river of white on the welkin blue.
The moon looks down on old Cronest,
She mellows the shades on his shaggy breast,
And seems his huge gray form to throw
In a silver cone on the waves below;
His sides are broken by spots of shade,
By the walnut bough and the cedar made,
And through their clustering branches dark
Glimmers and dies the fire-fly's spark—
Like starry twinkles that momently break
Through the rifts of the gathering tempest rack.

2

The stars are on the moving stream,
And fling, as its ripples gently flow,
A burnished length of wavy beam
In an eel-like, spiral line below;
The winds are whist and the owl is still,
The bat in the shelvy rock is hid,
And nought is heard on the lonely hill
But the cricket's chirp, and the answer shrill
Of the gauze-wingèd katydid;
And the plaint of the wailing whippoorwill,
Who mourns unseen, and ceaseless sings,
Ever a note of wail and woe,
Till morning spreads her rosy wings,
And earth and sky in her glances glow.

3

'Tis the hour of fairy ban and spell;
The wood-tick has kept the minutes well;
He has counted them all with click and stroke,
Deep in the heart of the mountain oak;
And he has awakened the sentry elve
Who sleeps with him in the haunted tree,
To bid him ring the hour of twelve,
And call the fays to their revelry;
Twelve small strokes on his tinkling bell—
('Twas made of the white snail's pearly shell)
'Midnight comes and all is well!
Hither Goblins wing your way!
'Tis the dawn of the fairy day.'

4

They come from beds of lichen green,
They creep from the mullen's velvet screen;
Some on the backs of beetles fly
From the silver tops of moon-touched trees,
Where they swung in their cobweb hammocks high,
And rocked about in the evening breeze;
Some from the hum-bird's downy nest—
They had driven him out by elfin power,
And pillowed on plumes of his rainbow breast,
Had slumbered there till the charmèd hour;
Some had lain in a scoop of the rock,
With glittering ising-stars inlaid;
And some had opened the four-o'clock,
And stole within its purple shade.
And now they throng to the moonlight glade,
Above—below—on every side,
Their little minim forms arrayed
In the tricksy pomp of fairy pride.

5

They come not now to print the lea,
In freak and dance around the tree,
Or at the mushroom board to sup,

1 The text is that of Drake's revision of 1817. Various portions of the poem appeared in American and English journals before its inclusion in the posthumous *The Culprit Fay and Other Poems* (N.Y., 1835).

And drink the dew from the buttercup;
A scene of sorrow waits them now,
For an Ouphe has broken his vestal vow;
He has loved an earthly maid,
And left for her his woodland shade;
He has lain upon her lips of dew,
He has sunned him in her eye of blue,
He has fanned her cheek with his wing of air,
And played in the ringlets of her hair,
And, nestling on her snowy breast,
Forgot the lily-king's behest.
For this the shadowy tribes of air,
To the elfin court must haste away;
And now they stand expectant there,
To hear the doom of the culprit fay.

6

The throne was reared upon the grass,
Of the spice wood and the sassafras;
On pillars of mottled tortoise-shell
Hung the burnished canopy—
And o'er it gorgeous curtains fell
Of the tulip's crimson drapery.
The monarch sat on his judgment-seat,
On his brow the crown imperial shone,
The prisoner fay was at his feet,
And his peers were ranged around the throne.
He waved his sceptre in the air,
He looked around and calmly spoke;
His brow was grave and his eye severe,
But his voice in a softened accent broke:

7

'Fairy! Fairy! list and mark—
Thou hast broke thy elfin chain,
Thy flame-wood lamp is quenched and dark,
And thy wings are dyed with a deadly stain;
Thou hast sullied thine elfin purity
In the glance of a mortal maiden's eye;
Thou hast scorned our dread decree,
And thou shouldst pay the forfeit high;
But well I know her sinless mind
Is pure as the angel forms above,
Gentle and meek, and chaste and kind,
Such as a spirit well might love;
Spirit! had she spot or taint,
Bitter had been thy punishment.
Tied to the hornet's shardy wings,
Tossed on the pricks of nettle stings,
Or seven long ages doomed to dwell
With the lazy worm in the walnut-shell;
Or every night to writhe and bleed
Beneath the tread of the centipede;
Or bound in a cobweb dungeon dim,
Your jailor a spider huge and grim,
Amid the carrion bodies to lie,
Of the worm, and the bug, and the murdered fly—
These it had been your lot to bear,
Had a stain been found on the earthly fair.
Now list, and mark our mild decree—
Fairy! this your doom must be:

8

'Thou shalt seek the beach of sand
Where the water bounds the elfin land;
Thou shalt watch the oozy brine
Till the sturgeon leaps in the bright moonshine,
Then dart the glistening arch below,
And catch a drop from his silver bow.
The water-sprites will wield their arms
And dash around, with roar and rave,
And vain are the woodland spirits' charms,
They are the imps that rule the wave.
Yet trust thee in thy single might,
If thy heart be pure and thy spirit right,
Thou shalt win the warlock fight.

9

'If the spray-bead gem be won,
The stain of thy wing is washed away,
But another errand must be done
Ere thy crime is lost for aye;
Thy flame-wood lamp is quenched and dark,
Thou must re-illume its spark.
Mount thy steed and spur him high
To the heaven's blue canopy;
And when thou seest a shooting star,
Follow it fast and follow it far—
The last faint spark of its burning train
Shall light thy fairy fire again.
Thou hast heard our sentence—say,
Elf! to the water-side, away!'

10

The goblin marked his monarch well;
He spoke no word, but he bowed him low,
Then plucked a crimson colen-bell,
And turned him round in act to go.
The way is long, he cannot fly,
His soiled wing has lost its power,
And he wends down the mountain high,

For many a sore and weary hour.
Through dreary beds of tangled fern,
Through groves of nightshade dark and dern,
Over the grass and through the brake,
Where toils the ant and sleeps the snake;
Now on the violet's azure flush
He skips along in lightsome mood;
And now he thrids the bramble bush,
Till its points are dyed in fairy blood.
He has leapt the bog, he has pierced the brier,
He has swum the brook, and waded the mire,
Till his spirit sank, and his limbs grew weak,
And the red waxed fainter in his cheek.
He had fallen to the ground outright,
For rugged and dim was his onward track,
But there came a spotted toad in sight,
And he laughed as he jumped upon her back.
He bridled her mouth with a silk-weed twist;
He lashed her side with an osier thong;
And now through evening's dewy mist,
With leap and spring they bound along,
Till the mountain's magic verge is past,
And the beach of sand is reached at last.

11

Soft and pale is the moony beam,
Moveless still the glassy stream,
The wave is clear, the beach is bright
With snowy shells and sparkling stones;
The shore-surge comes in ripples light,
In murmurings faint and distant moans;
And ever anon in the silence deep
Is heard the splash of the sturgeon's leap,
And the bend of his graceful bow is seen—
A glistening arch of silver sheen,
Spanning the wave of burnished blue,
And dripping with gems of the river dew.

12

The elfin cast a glance around,
As he lighted down from his courser toad,
Then round his breast his wings he wound,
And close to the river's brink he strode;
He sprang on a rock, he prayed a prayer,
Above his head his hands he threw,
Then tossed a tiny curve in air,
And headlong plunged in the waters blue.

13

Upsprung the spirits of the wave,
From sea-silk beds in their coral cave,
With snail-plate armor snatched in haste,
They speed their way through the liquid waste;
Some are rapidly borne along
On the mailèd shrimp or the prickly prong,
Some on the blood-red leeches glide,
Some on the stony star-fish ride,
Some on the back of the lancing squab,
And some on the sideling soldier-crab;
And some on the jellied quarl, who flings
At once a thousand streamy stings—
They cut the wave with the living oar
And hurry on to the moonlight shore,
To guard their realm and chase away
The footsteps of the invading fay.

14

Fearlessly he skims along,
His hope is high, and his limbs are strong,
He spreads his arms like the swallow's wing,
And he throws his feet with a frog-like fling;
His locks of gold on the waters shine,
At his breast the puny foam-beads rise,
His back gleams bright above the brine,
And the wake-line foam behind him lies.
But the water-sprites are gathering near
To check his course along the tide;
Their warriors come in swift career
And hem him round on every side;
On his thigh the leech has fixed his hold,
The quarl's long arms are round him rolled,
The prickled prong has pierced his skin,
The squab has thrown his javelin,
The gritty star has rubbed him raw,
And the crab has struck with his giant claw;
He howls with rage, and he shrieks with pain,
He strikes around, but his blows are vain;
Hopeless is the unequal fight,
Fairy! nought is left but flight.

15

He turned around and fled amain
With hurry and dash to the beach again;
He twisted over from side to side,
He laid his cheek to the cleaving tide.
The strokes of his plunging arms are fleet,

And with all his strength he flings his feet,
But the water-sprites are around him still,
To cross his path and to work him ill.
They bade the rock before him rise,
They flung the sea-fire in his eyes,
They stunned his ears with the scallop stroke,
With the porpoise heave and the drum-fish croak.
Oh! but a weary wight was he
When he reached the foot of the dog-wood tree;
Gashed and wounded, stiff and sore,
He laid him down on the sandy shore;
He blessed the force of the charmèd line,
And he banned the water-goblin's spite,
For he saw around in the sweet moonshine,
Their little wee faces above the brine,
Giggling and laughing with all their might
At the piteous hap of the fairy wight.

16

Soon he gathered the balsam dew
From the sorrel leaf and the henbane bud;
Over each wound the balm he drew,
And with cobweb lint he staunched the blood.
The mild west wind was soft and low,
It cooled the heat of his burning brow,
And he felt new life in his fibres shoot,
As he sucked the juice of the cal'mus root;
And now he treads the fatal shore,
As fresh and vigorous as before.

17

Wrapped in musing stands the sprite,
'Tis the middle wane of night,
His task is hard, the ways are far,
But he must do his errand right
Ere dawning mounts her beamy car,
And rolls her chariot wheels of light;
And vain are the spells of fairy-land,
He must work with a human hand.

18

He cast a saddened eye around,
And what to do he could not tell;
But he leapt with joy when on the ground,
He saw a purple mussel-shell;
Thither he ran, and he bent him low,
He heaved at the stern and he heaved at the bow,
And he pushed her over the yielding sand,
Till he came to the verge of the haunted land.
She was as lovely a pleasure boat
As ever fairy had paddled in,
For she glowed with purple paint without,
And shone with silvery pearl within;
A sculling notch in the stern he made,
An oar he shaped of the bootle blade;
Then sprung to his seat with a lightsome leap,
And launched afar on the calm blue deep.

19

The imps of the river yell and rave;
They had no power above the wave,
But they heaved the billow before the prow,
And they dashed the surge against her side,
And they struck her keel with jerk and blow,
Till her gunwale bent to the rocking tide.
She wimpled about in the pale moonbeam,
Like a feather that floats on a wave-tossed stream;
And momently athwart her track
The quarl upreared his island back,
And the fluttering scallop behind would float,
And spatter the water about the boat;
But he bailed her out with his colen-bell,
And he kept her trimmed with a wary tread,
While on every side like lightning fell
The heavy strokes of the bootle blade.

20

Onward still he held his way,
Till he came where the column of moonshine lay,
And saw beneath the surface dim
The brown-backed sturgeon slowly swim;
Around him were the goblin train—
But he sculled with all his might and main,
And followed wherever the sturgeon led,
Till he saw him upward point his head;
Then he dropped his paddle blade,
And held his colen goblet up
To catch the drop in its crimson cup.

21

With sweeping tail and quivering fin,
Through the wave the sturgeon flew,
And, like the heaven-shot javelin,

He sprung above the waters blue.
Instant as the star-fall light,
He plunged him in the deep again,
But left in shining silver bright,
The rainbow of the moony main.
It was a sweet and lovely sight
To see the puny goblin there;
He seemed an angel form of light,
With azure wing and sunny hair,
Throned on a cloud of purple fair,
Circled with blue and edged with white,
And sitting at the fall of even
Beneath the bow of summer heaven.

22

A moment—and its lustre fell,
But ere it met the billow blue,
He caught within his crimson bell,
A droplet of its sparkling dew.
Joy thee, fay! thy task is done,
Thy wings are pure, for the gem is won;
Cheerly ply thy dripping oar,
And haste away to the elfin shore.

23

He turns, and lo! on either side
The ripples on his path divide;
And the track o'er which his boat must pass
Is smooth as a sheet of polished glass.
Around, their limbs the sea-nymphs lave,
With snowy arms half swelling out,
While on the glossed and gleamy wave
Their sea-green ringlets loosely float;
They swim around with smile and song,
They press the bark with pearly hand,
And gently urge her course along,
Toward the beach of speckled sand;
And, as he lightly leapt to land,
They bade adieu with nod and bow,
Then gaily kissed each little hand,
And dropped in the crystal deep below.

24

A moment stayed the fairy there,
He kissed the beach and breathed a prayer,
Then spread his wings of gilded blue,
And on to the elfin court he flew.
As ever ye saw a bubble rise,
And shine with a thousand blended dyes,
Till lessening, far through ether driven,
It mingles with the hues of heaven.
As, at the glimpse of dawning pale,
The lance-fly spreads his silken sail,
And gleams with blendings soft and bright,
Till lost in the shades of fading night;
So rose from earth the lovely fay,
So vanished, far in heaven away!

. . . . . .

Up fairy! quit thy chickweed bower,
The cricket has called the second hour,
Twice again, and the lark will rise
To kiss the streakings of the skies;
Up! thy charmed armor don,
Thou wilt need it ere the night be gone.

25

He put his acorn helmet on;
It was plumed with the silk of the thistle-down.
The corslet plate that guarded his breast
Was once the wild bee's golden vest;
His cloak, of a thousand mingled dyes,
Was formed of the wings of butterflies;
His shield was the shell of a lady-bug queen,
Studs of gold on a ground of green;
And the quivering lance which he brandished bright,
Was the sting of a wasp he had slain in fight.
Swift he bestrode his fire-fly steed,
He bared his blade of the bent grass blue,
He drove his spurs of the cockle-seed,
And away like a glance of thought he flew,
To skim the heavens and follow far
The fiery trail of the rocket-star.

26

The moth-fly, as he shot the air,
Crept under the leaf, and hid her there;
The katydid forgot to bray,
The prowling gnat fled fast away,
The fell mosquito checked his drone
And folded his wings until the fay was gone,
And the wily beetle dropped his head,
And fell on the ground as if he were dead;
They couched them close in the darksome shade,
They quaked all o'er and they sweat with fear,
For they had felt the blue bent blade,
And writhed at the prick of the elfin spear;
Many a time on a summer's night,
When the sky was clear and the moon was bright,

They had been roused from the haunted ground,
With the yelp and the bay of the fairy hound;
They had heard the tiny bugle horn,
They had heard the twang of the maize-silk string,
When the vine-twig bows were tightly drawn,
And the nettle shaft through air was borne,
Feathered with down from the hum-bird's wing.
And now they deemed the courier ouphe
Some hunter sprite of the eildrich ground;
And they watched till they saw him mount the roof
That canopies the world around;
Then glad they left their covert lair,
And freaked about in the midnight air.

27

Up to the vaulted firmament
His path the fire-fly courser bent,
And at every gallop on the wind,
He flung a glittering spark behind;
He flies like a feather in the blast
Till the first light cloud in heaven is past,
But the shapes of air have begun their work,
And a drizzly mist is round him cast,
He cannot see through the mantle murk,
He shivers with cold, but he urges fast,
Through storm and darkness, sleet and shade,
He lashes his steed and spurs amain,
For shadowy hands have twitched the rein,
And flame-shot tongues around him played,
And near him many a fiendish eye
Glared with a fell malignity,
And yells of rage, and shrieks of fear,
Came screaming on his startled ear.

28

His wings are wet around his breast,
The plume hangs dripping from his crest,
His eyes are blind with the lightning's glare,
And his ears are stunned with the thunder's blare;
But he gave a shout, and his blade he drew,
He thrust before and he struck behind,
Till he pierced their cloudy bodies through,
And gashed their shadowy limbs of wind;
Howling, the misty spectres flew;
They rend the air with spiteful cries,
For he has gained the welkin blue,
And the land of clouds behind him lies.

29

Up to the cope careering swift
In breathless motion fast,
Fleet as the swallow cuts the drift
Or the sea-roc rides the blast,
The sapphire sheet of eve is shot,
The sphered moon is past,
The earth it seems a tiny blot
On a sheet of azure cast.
And oh! it was sweet in the clear moonlight,
To tread the starry plain of even,
To mark the thousand eyes of night,
And feel the cooling breath of heaven.
But the elfin made no stop nor stay
Till he came to the bank of the milky-way,
Then he checked his courser's foot,
And watched for the glimpse of the planet-shoot.

30

Sudden along the snowy tide
Which swelled to meet their footfall,
The sylphs of heaven are seen to glide,
Attired in sunset's crimson pall;
Around the fay they weave the dance,
They skip before him on the plain,
And one hath taken his wasp-sting lance,
And one upholds his bridle rein;
With warblings wild they led him on
To where, through clouds of amber seen,
Studded with stars, resplendent shone
The palace of the sylphid queen.
Its spiral columns gleaming bright
Were streamers of the northern light;
Its curtain's light and lovely flush
Was of the morning's rosy blush,
And the ceiling fair that rose aboon
The white and feathery fleece of noon.

31

But oh! how fair the shape that lay
Beneath a rainbow bending bright,
She seemed to the entrancèd fay
The loveliest of the forms of light;
Her mantle was the purple rolled
At twilight in the west afar;
'Twas tied with threads of dawning gold,
And buttoned with a sparkling star.

Her face was like the lily rune
That hides the vestal planet's hue;
Her eyes two beamlets from the moon,
Set floating in the welkin blue.
Her hair is like the sunny beam,
And the diamond gems which round it gleam
Are the pure drops of dewy even
Which ne'er have left their native heaven.

32

She raised her eyes to the wondering sprite,
And they leapt with smiles, for well I ween
Never before in the bowers of light
Had the form of an earthly fay been seen.
Long she looked in his tiny face;
Long with his butterfly cloak she played;
She smoothed his wing of azure lace,
And handled the tassel of his blade;
And as he told in accents low
The story of his love and woe,
She felt new pain in her bosom rise,
And the tear-drop started in her eyes.
And 'Oh! sweet spirit of earth,' she cried,
'Return no more to your woodland height,
But ever here with me abide
In the land of everlasting light!
Within the fleecy drift we'll lie,
We'll hang upon the rainbow's rim;
And all the jewels of the sky
Around thy brow shall brightly beam;
And thou shalt bathe thee in the stream
That rolls its whitening foam aboon,
And ride upon the lightning's gleam,
And dance upon the orbèd moon!
We'll sit within the Pleiad ring,
We'll rest on Orion's starry belt,
And I will bid my sylphs to sing
The song that makes the dew-mist melt;
Their harps are of the umber shade,
That hides the blush of waking day,
And every gleamy string is made
Of silvery moonshine's lengthened ray;
And thou shalt pillow on my breast,
While heavenly breathings float around,
And, with the sylphs of ether blest,
Forget the joys of fairy ground.'

33

She was lovely and fair to see
And the elfin's heart beat fitfully;
But lovelier far and still more fair,
The earthly form imprinted there,
Nought he saw in the heavens above
Was half so dear as his mortal love,
For he thought upon her look so meek,
And he thought of the light flush on her cheek;
Never again might he bask or lie
On that sweet cheek and moonlight eye;
But in his dreams her form to see,
To clasp her in his reverie,
To think upon his virgin bride,
Was worth all heaven and earth beside.

34

'Lady,' he cried, 'I have sworn to-night,
On the word of a fairy knight,
To do my sentence task aright;
My honor scarce is free from stain,
I may not soil its snows again;
Betide me weal, betide me woe,
Its mandate must be answered now.'
Her bosom heaved with many a sigh,
The tear was in her drooping eye,
But she had led him to the palace gate,
And called the sylphs who hovered there,
And bade them fly and bring him straight
Of clouds condensed a sable car.
With charm and spell she blessed it there,
From all the fiends of upper air;
Then round him cast the shadowy shroud,
And tied his steed behind the cloud,
And pressed his hand as she bade him fly
Far to the verge of the northern sky,
For by its wane and wavering light
There was a star that would fall to-night.

35

Borne afar on the wings of the blast,
Northward away, he speeds him fast,
And the courser follows the cloudy wain,
Till the hoof-strokes fall like pattering rain.
The clouds roll backward as he flies,
Each flickering star behind him lies,
And he has reached the northern plain,
And backed his fire-fly steed again,
Ready to follow in its flight
The streaming of the rocket light.

36

The star is yet in the vault of heaven,
But it rocks in the summer gale;
And now 'tis fitful and uneven,
And now 'tis deadly pale;
And now 'tis wrapped in sulphur smoke,
And quenched is its rayless beam;
And now with a rattling thunder-stroke,

It bursts in flash and flame.
As swift as the glance of the arrowy lance
  Which the storm-spirit flings from high,
The star-shoot flew o'er the welkin blue,
  As it fell from the sheeted sky.
As swift as the wind in its trail behind,
  The elfin gallops along;
The fiends of the cloud are bellowing loud,
  But the sylphid charm is strong;
He gallops unhurt in the shower of fire,
  While the cloud-fiends shrink from the blaze;
He watches each flake till its sparks expire,
  And rides in the light of its rays.
But he drove his steed to the lightning's speed,
  And he caught a glimmering spark;
Then wheeled around to the haunted ground,
  And sped through the midnight dark.

. . . . . .

Ouphe and goblin! imp and sprite!
  Elf of eve! and starry fay!
Ye that love the moon's light,
  Hither-hither wing your way;
Join ye in a jocund ring,
Hand to hand, and wing to wing,
  Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

Hail the wanderer again,
  With dance and song, and lute and lyre,
Pure his wing and strong his chain,
  And doubly bright his fairy fire.
Then twine ye in an eerie round,
  Brush the dew and print the lea;
Skip and gambol, hop and bound,
  Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

The beetle guards our holy ground,
  He flies about the haunted place,
And if mortal there be found,
  He hums in his ears and flaps his face;
The leaf-harp sounds our roundelay,
  The owlet's eyes our lanthornes be;
Thus we revel, dance and play,
  Round the wild witch-hazel tree.

But hark! from tower on tree-top high,
  The sentry elf his call has made,
A streak is in the eastern sky,
  Shapes of moonlight flit and fade!
The hillock gleams in morning spring,
The skylark shakes his dappled wing,
The day-glimpse glistens on the lawn,
The cocks have crowed, the fays are gone.
1816 1835

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK

1790–1867

ON THE DEATH OF JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

The good die first,
And they, whose hearts are dry as summer dust,
Burn to the socket.
WORDSWORTH

GREEN be the turf above thee,
  Friend of my better days!
None knew thee but to love thee,
  Nor named thee but to praise.

Tears fell, when thou wert dying,
  From eyes unused to weep,
And long where thou art lying,
  Will tears the cold turf steep.

When hearts, whose truth was proven,
  Like thine, are laid in earth,
There should a wreath be woven
  To tell the world their worth;

And I, who woke each morrow
  To clasp thy hand in mine,
Who shared thy joy and sorrow,
  Whose weal and wo were thine;

It should be mine to braid it
  Around thy faded brow,
But I've in vain essayed it,
  And feel I cannot now.

While memory bids me weep thee,
  Nor thoughts nor words are free,
The grief is fixed too deeply
  That mourns a man like thee.
1820 1827

MARCO BOZZARIS [1]

At midnight, in his guarded tent,
The Turk was dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,
Should tremble at his power:
In dreams, through camp and court, he bore
The trophies of a conqueror;
In dreams his song of triumph heard;
Then wore his monarch's signet ring:
Then pressed that monarch's throne—a king;
As wild his thoughts, and gay of wing,
As Eden's garden bird.

At midnight, in the forest shades,
Bozzaris ranged his Suliote band,
True as the steel of their tried blades,
Heroes in heart and hand.
There had the Persian's thousands stood,
There had the glad earth drunk their blood
On old Platæa's day;
And now there breathed that haunted air
The sons of sires who conquered there,
With arm to strike, and soul to dare,
As quick, as far as they.

An hour passed on—the Turk awoke;
That bright dream was his last;
He woke—to hear his sentries shriek,
'To arms! they come! the Greek! the Greek!'
He woke—to die midst flame, and smoke,
And shout, and groan, and sabre stroke,
And death shots falling thick and fast
As lightnings from the mountain cloud;
And heard, with voice as trumpet loud,
Bozzaris cheer his band:
'Strike—till the last armed foe expires;
Strike—for your altars and your fires;
Strike—for the green graves of your sires;
God—and your native land!'

They fought—like brave men, long and well;
They piled that ground with Moslem slain,
They conquered—but Bozzaris fell,
Bleeding at every vein.

His few surviving comrades saw
His smile when rang their proud hurrah,
And the red field was won;
Then saw in death his eyelids close
Calmly, as to a night's repose,
Like flowers at set of sun.

Come to the bridal chamber, Death!
Come to the mother's, when she feels,
For the first time, her first-born's breath;
Come when the blessed seals
That close the pestilence are broke,
And crowded cities wail its stroke;
Come in consumption's ghastly form,
The earthquake shock, the ocean storm;
Come when the heart beats high and warm,
With banquet song, and dance, and wine;
And thou art terrible—the tear,
The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier;
And all we know, or dream, or fear
Of agony, are thine.

But to the hero, when his sword
Has won the battle for the free,
Thy voice sounds like a prophet's word;
And in its hollow tones are heard
The thanks of millions yet to be.
Come, when his task of fame is wrought—
Come, with her laurel-leaf, blood-bought—
Come in her crowning hour—and then
Thy sunken eye's unearthly light
To him is welcome as the sight
Of sky and stars to prisoned men:
Thy grasp is welcome as the hand
Of brother in a foreign land;
Thy summons welcome as the cry
That told the Indian isles were nigh
To the world-seeking Genoese,
When the land wind, from woods of palm,
And orange groves, and fields of balm,
Blew o'er the Haytian seas.

Bozzaris! with the storied brave
Greece nurtured in her glory's time,
Rest thee—there is no prouder grave,
Even in her own proud clime.
She wore no funeral weeds for thee,
Nor bade the dark hearse wave its plume,
Like torn branch from death's leafless tree
In sorrow's pomp and pageantry,
The heartless luxury of the tomb:
But she remembers thee as one
Long loved, and for a season gone;
For thee her poet's lyre is wreathed,

1 'Marco Bozzaris, the Epaminondas of modern Greece. —He fell in a night attack upon the Turkish Camp at Laspi, the site of the ancient Platæa, August 20, 1823, and expired in the moment of victory. His last words were—"To die for liberty is a pleasure and not a pain." ' Author's note, *Alnwick Castle*(N.Y.,1827),63.

Her marble wrought, her music breathed;
For thee she rings the birthday bells;
Of thee her babes' first lisping tells;
For thine her evening prayer is said
At palace couch and cottage bed;
Her soldier, closing with the foe,
Gives for thy sake a deadlier blow;
His plighted maiden, when she fears
For him, the joy of her young years,
Thinks of thy fate, and checks her tears:
And she, the mother of thy boys,
Though in her eye and faded cheek
Is read the grief she will not speak,
The memory of her buried joys,
And even she who gave thee birth,
Will, by their pilgrim-circled hearth,
Talk of thy doom without a sigh:
For thou art Freedom's now, and Fame's;
One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die.

1824–1825 1827

THE FIELD OF THE GROUNDED ARMS

SARATOGA

STRANGERS! your eyes are on that valley fixed
Intently, as we gaze on vacancy,
When the mind's wings o'erspread
The spirit-world of dreams.

True, 'tis a scene of loveliness—the bright
Green dwelling of the summer's first-born Hours,
Whose wakened leaf and bud
Are welcoming the morn.

And morn returns the welcome, sun and cloud
Smile on the green earth from their home in heaven,
Even as a mother smiles
Above her cradled boy,

And wreath their light and shade o'er plain and mountain,
O'er sleepless seas of grass whose waves are flowers,
The river's golden shores,
The forests of dark pines.

The song of the wild bird is on the wind,
The hum of the wild bee, the music wild
Of waves upon the bank,
Of leaves upon the bough.

But all is song and beauty in the land,
Beneath her skies of June; then journey on,
A thousand scenes like this
Will greet you ere the eve.

Ye linger yet—ye see not, hear not now
The sunny smile, the music of to-day,
Your thoughts are wandering up,
Far up the stream of time;

And boyhood's lore and fireside listened tales
Are rushing on your memories, as ye breathe
That valley's storied name,
FIELD OF THE GROUNDED ARMS.

Strangers no more, a kindred 'pride of place',
Pride in the gift of country and of name,
Speaks in your eye and step—
Ye tread your native land.

And your high thoughts are on her glory's day,
The solemn sabbath of the week of battle,
Whose tempests bowed to earth
Her foeman's banner here.

The forest leaves lay scattered cold and dead,
Upon the withered grass that autumn morn,
When, with as withered hearts
And hopes as dead and cold,

A gallant army formed their last array
Upon that field, in silence and deep gloom,
And at their conqueror's feet
Laid their war-weapons down.

Sullen and stern, disarmed but not dishonored;
Brave men, but brave in vain, they yielded there:
The soldier's trial task
Is not alone 'to die.'

Honor to chivalry! the conqueror's breath
Stains not the ermine of his foeman's fame,
Nor mocks his captive's doom—
The bitterest cup of war.

But be that bitterest cup the doom of all
Whose swords are lightning flashes in the cloud
Of the Invader's wrath,
Threatening a gallant land.

His armies' trumpet-tones wake not alone
Her slumbering echoes; from a thousand hills
Her answering voices shout,
And her bells ring to arms!

Then danger hovers o'er the Invader's march,
On raven wings, hushing the song of fame,
And glory's hues of beauty
Fade from the cheek of death.

A foe is heard in every rustling leaf,
A fortress seen in every rock and tree,
The eagle eye of art
Is dim and powerless then,

And war becomes a people's joy, the drum
Man's merriest music, and the field of death
His couch of happy dreams,
After life's harvest home.

He battles heart and arm, his own blue sky
Above him, and his own green land around,
Land of his father's grave,
His blessing and his prayers,

Land where he learned to lisp a mother's name,
The first beloved in life, the last forgot,
Land of his frolic youth,
Land of his bridal eve,

Land of his children—vain your columned strength,
Invaders! vain your battles' steel and fire!
Choose ye the morrow's doom,—
A prison or a grave.

And such were Saratoga's victors—such
The Yeomen-Brave, whose deeds and death have given
A glory to her skies,
A music to her name.

In honorable life her fields they trod,
In honorable death they sleep below;
Their sons' proud feelings here
Their noblest monuments.

1828 1836

WASHINGTON IRVING

1783–1859

FROM

DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER'S A HISTORY OF NEW YORK [1]

To the Public

'To rescue from oblivion the memory of former incidents, and to render a just tribute of renown to the many great and wonderful transactions of our Dutch progenitors, Diedrich Knickerbocker, native of the city of New York, produces this historical essay.' [2] Like the great Father of History whose words I have just quoted, I treat of times long past, over which the twilight of uncertainty had already thrown its shadows, and the night of forgetfulness was about to descend forever. With great solicitude had I long beheld the early history of this venerable and ancient city, gradually slipping from our grasp, trembling on the lips of narrative old age, and day by day dropping piece-meal into the tomb. In a little while, thought I, and those venerable Dutch burghers, who serve as the tottering monuments of good old times, will be gathered to their fathers; their children engrossed by the empty pleasures or insignificant transactions of the present age, will neglect to treasure up the recollections of the past, and posterity shall search in vain, for memorials of the days of the Patriarchs. The origin of our city will be buried in eternal oblivion, and even the names and achievements of Wouter Van Twiller, William Kieft, and Peter Stuyvesant, be enveloped in doubt and fiction, like those of Romulus and Remus, of Charlemagne,

1 The selections are from the first edition, as reprinted in Williams and McDowell, eds., *Diedrich Knickerbocker's A History of New York*(N.Y.,1927),7–14,175–93. The title to the main section has been adapted from the original, and the text modernized by the editors.

2 'Beloe's *Herodotus*.' Author's note, ibid.,7.

King Arthur, Rinaldo, and Godfrey of Bologne.

Determined therefore, to avert if possible this threatening misfortune, I industriously sat myself to work to gather together all the fragments of our infant history which still existed, and like my revered prototype Herodotus, where no written records could be found, I have endeavored to continue the chain of history by well-authenticated traditions.

In this arduous undertaking, which has been the whole business of a long and solitary life, it is incredible the number of learned authors I have consulted; and all to but little purpose. Strange as it may seem, though such multitudes of excellent works have been written about this country, there are none extant which give any full and satisfactory account of the early history of New York, or of its three first Dutch governors. I have, however, gained much valuable and curious matter from an elaborate manuscript written in exceeding pure and classic Low Dutch, excepting a few errors in orthography, which was found in the archives of the Stuyvesant family. Many legends, letters and other documents have I likewise gleaned, in my researches among the family chests and lumber garrets of our respectable Dutch citizens, and I have gathered a host of well-authenticated traditions from divers excellent old ladies of my acquaintance, who requested that their names might not be mentioned. Nor must I neglect to acknowledge, how greatly I have been assisted by that admirable and praiseworthy institution, the New York Historical Society, to which I here publicly return my sincere acknowledgments.

In the conduct of this inestimable work I have adopted no individual model, but on the contrary have simply contented myself with combining and concentrating the excellences of the most approved ancient historians. Like Xenophon I have maintained the utmost impartiality, and the strictest adherence to truth throughout my history. I have enriched it after the manner of Sallust, with various characters of ancient worthies, drawn at full length, and faithfully colored. I have seasoned it with profound political speculations like Thucydides, sweetened it with the graces of sentiment like Tacitus, and infused into the whole the dignity, the grandeur and magnificence of Livy.

I am aware that I shall incur the censure of numerous very learned and judicious critics, for indulging too frequently in the bold excursive manner of my favorite Herodotus. And to be candid, I have found it impossible always to resist the allurements of those pleasing episodes, which like flowery banks and fragrant bowers, beset the dusty road of the historian, and entice him to turn aside, and refresh himself from his wayfaring. But I trust it will be found, that I have always resumed my staff, and addressed myself to my weary journey with renovated spirits, so that both my readers and myself, have been benefited by the relaxation.

Indeed, though it has been my constant wish and uniform endeavor, to rival Polybius himself, in observing the requisite unity of History, yet the loose and unconnected manner in which many of the facts herein recorded have come to hand, rendered such an attempt extremely difficult. This difficulty was likewise increased, by one of the grand objects contemplated in my work, which was to trace the rise of sundry customs and institutions in this best of cities, and to compare them when in the germ of infancy, with what they are in the present old age of knowledge and improvement.

But the chief merit upon which I value myself, and found my hopes for future regard, is that faithful veracity with which I have compiled this invaluable little work; carefully winnowing away all the chaff of hypothesis, and discarding the tares of fable, which are too apt to spring up and choke the seeds of truth and wholesome knowledge—Had I been anxious to captivate the superficial throng, who skim like swallows over the surface of literature; or had I been anxious to commend my writings to the pampered palates of literary voluptuaries, I might have availed myself of the obscurity that hangs about the infant years of our city, to introduce a thousand pleasing fictions. But I have scrupulously discarded many a pithy tale and marvellous adventure, whereby the drowsy ear of summer indolence might be enthralled; jealously maintaining that fidelity, gravity and

dignity, which should ever distinguish the historian. 'For a writer of this class,' observes an elegant critic, 'must sustain the character of a wise man, writing for the instruction of posterity; one who has studied to inform himself well, who has pondered his subject with care, and addresses himself to our judgment, rather than to our imagination.'

Thrice happy therefore, is this our renowned city, in having incidents worthy of swelling the theme of history; and doubly thrice happy is it in having such an historian as myself, to relate them. For after all, gentle reader, cities *of themselves*, and in fact empires *of themselves*, are nothing without an historian. It is the patient narrator who cheerfully records their prosperity as they rise—who blazons forth the splendor of their noon-tide meridian—who props their feeble memorials as they totter to decay—who gathers together their scattered fragments as they rot—and who piously at length collects their ashes into the mausoleum of his work, and rears a triumphal monument, to transmit their renown to all succeeding time.

'What,' (in the language of Diodorus Siculus), 'What has become of Babylon, of Nineveh, of Palmyra, of Persepolis, of Byzantium, of Agrigentum, of Cyzicum and Mytilene?' They have disappeared from the face of the earth—they have perished for want of an historian! The philanthropist may weep over their desolation—the poet may wander amid their mouldering arches and broken columns, and indulge the visionary flights of his fancy—but alas! alas! the modern historian, whose faithful pen, like my own, is doomed irrevocably to confine itself to dull matter of fact, seeks in vain among their oblivious remains, for some memorial that may tell the instructive tale, of their glory and their ruin.

'Wars, conflagrations, deluges (says Aristotle) destroy nations, and with them all their monuments, their discoveries and their vanities—The torch of science has more than once been extinguished and rekindled—a few individuals who have escaped by accident, reunite the thread of generations.' Thus then the historian is the patron of mankind, the guardian priest, who keeps the perpetual lamp of ages unextinguished—Nor is he without his reward. Every thing in a manner is tributary to his renown—Like the great projector of inland lock navigation, who asserted that rivers, lakes and oceans were only formed to feed canals; so I affirm that cities, empires, plots, conspiracies, wars, havoc and desolation, are ordained by providence only as food for the historian. They form but the pedestal on which he intrepidly mounts to the view of surrounding generations, and claims to himself, from ages as they rise, until the latest sigh of old time himself, the meed of immortality—The world—the world, is nothing without the historian!

The same sad misfortune which has happened to so many ancient cities, will happen again, and from the same sad cause, to nine-tenths of those cities which now flourish on the face of the globe. With most of them the time for recording their history is gone by; their origin, their very foundation, together with the early stages of their settlement, are forever buried in the rubbish of years; and the same would have been the case with this fair portion of the earth, the history of which I have here given, if I had not snatched it from obscurity, in the very nick of time, at the moment that those matters herein recorded, were about entering into the wide-spread, insatiable maw of oblivion—if I had not dragged them out, in a manner, by the very locks, just as the monster's adamantine fangs were closing upon them forever! And here have I, as before observed, carefully collected, collated and arranged them; scrip and scrap, *punt en punt*, *gat en gat*, and commenced in this little work, a history which may serve as a foundation, on which a host of worthies shall hereafter raise a noble superstructure, swelling in process of time, until *Knickerbocker's New York* shall be equally voluminous with *Gibbon's Rome*, or *Hume and Smollet's England*!

And now indulge me for a moment, while I lay down my pen, skip to some little eminence at the distance of two or three hundred years ahead; and casting back a bird's-eye glance, over the waste of years that is to roll between; discover myself—*little I*—at this moment the progenitor, prototype and precursor of them all, posted at the head of this host of literary worthies, with my book under my arm, and New

York on my back, pressing forward like a gallant commander, to honor and immortality.

Here then I cut my bark adrift, and launch it forth to float upon the waters. And oh! ye mighty Whales, ye Grampuses and Sharks of criticism, who delight in shipwrecking unfortunate adventurers upon the sea of letters, have mercy upon this my crazy vessel. Ye may toss it about in your sport; or spout your dirty water upon it in showers; but do not, for the sake of the unlucky mariner within—do not stave it with your tails and send it to the bottom. And you, oh ye great little fish! ye tadpoles, ye sprats, ye minnows, ye chubbs, ye grubs, ye barnacles, and all you small fry of literature, be cautious how you insult my new-launched vessel, or swim within my view; lest in a moment of mingled sportiveness and scorn, I sweep you up in a scoop net, and roast half a hundred of you for my breakfast.

Certain Chronicles of the Reign of William the Testy [1]

CHAP. I

Exposing the craftiness and artful devices of those arch Free Booters, the Book-Makers, and their trusty Squires, the Book-Sellers. Containing furthermore, the universal acquirements of William the Testy, and how a man may learn so much as to render himself good for nothing.

If ever I had my readers completely by the button, it is at this moment. Here is a redoubtable fortress reduced to the greatest extremity; a valiant commander in a state of the most imminent jeopardy—and a legion of implacable foes thronging upon every side. The sentimental reader is preparing to indulge his sympathies, and bewail the sufferings of the brave. The philosophic reader, to come with his first principles, and coolly take the dimensions and ascertain the proportions of great actions, like an antiquary, measuring a pyramid with a two-foot rule—while the mere reader, for amusement, promises to regale himself after the monotonous pages through which he has dozed, with murders, rapes, ravages, conflagrations, and all the other glorious incidents, that give *éclat* to victory, and grace the triumph of the conqueror.

Thus every reader must press forward—he cannot refrain, if he has the least spark of curiosity in his disposition, from turning over the ensuing page. Having therefore gotten him fairly in my clutches—what hinders me from indulging in a little recreation, and varying the dull task of narrative by stultifying my readers with a drove of sober reflections about this, that and the other thing—by pushing forward a few of my own darling opinions; or talking a little about myself—all which the reader will have to peruse, or else give up the book altogether, and remain in utter ignorance of the mighty deeds, and great events, that are contained in the sequel.

To let my readers into a great literary secret, your experienced writers, who wish to instil peculiar tenets, either in religion, politics or morals, do often resort to this expedient—illustrating their favorite doctrines by pleasing fictions on established facts—and so mingling historic truth, and subtle speculation together, that the unwary million never perceive the medley; but, running with open mouth, after an interesting story, are often made to swallow the most heterodox opinions, ridiculous theories, and abominable heresies. This is particularly the case with the industrious advocates of the modern philosophy, and many an honest unsuspicious reader, who devours their works under an idea of acquiring solid knowledge, must not be surprised if, to use a pious quotation, he finds 'his belly filled with the east wind.'

1 'William Kieft . . . is in personality and character an adumbration of Thomas Jefferson. Irving had obviously no ready-made parallel in two individuals so dissimilar as this governor of the New Netherlands and the fourth president of the new republic, but Kieft's "cocked hat and corduroy small-clothes" and his "raw-boned charger" would easily suggest to a reader in 1809 Jefferson's notorious saddle-horse which he rode between Washington and Monticello, and his democratic taste in breeches, so annoying to American aristocrats. . . . Thus the absurd characteristics of heavy scholarship, eccentric inventive genius, and philological accomplishments are less in the known facts about Kieft than in the reputation of Jefferson.' Also caricatured are Jefferson's dislike of Yankees, and his political policies: his program of economy, and his 'notion of substituting negotiations and economic pressure for warfare.' Cf. ibid.,lxi–lxvii.

This same expedient is likewise a literary artifice, by which one sober truth, like a patient and laborious pack horse, is made to carry a couple of panniers of rascally little conjectures on its back. In this manner books are increased, the pen is kept going and trade flourishes; for if every writer were obliged to tell merely what he knew, there would soon be an end of great books, and Tom Thumb's folio would be considered as a gigantic production—A man might then carry his library in his pocket, and the whole race of book-makers, book-printers, book-binders and book-sellers might starve together; but by being entitled to tell every thing he thinks, and every thing he does not think—to talk about every thing he knows, or does not know—to conjecture, to doubt, to argue with himself, to laugh with and laugh at his reader, (the latter of which we writers do nine times out of ten—in our sleeves) to indulge in hypotheses, to deal in dashes——and stars * * * * and a thousand other innocent indulgences—all these I say, do marvelously concur to fill the pages of books, the pockets of book-sellers, and the hungry stomachs of authors—do contribute to the amusement and edification of the reader, and redound to the glory, the increase and the profit of the craft!

Having thus, therefore, given my readers the whole art and mystery of book-making, they have nothing further to do, than to take pen in hand, set down and write a book for themselves—while in the mean time I will proceed with my history, without claiming any of the privileges above recited.

Wilhelmus Kieft who in 1634 ascended the *Gubernatorial* chair, (to borrow a favorite, though clumsy appellation of modern phraseologists) was in form, feature and character, the very reverse of Wouter Van Twiller, his renowned predecessor. He was of very respectable descent, his father being Inspector of Windmills in the ancient town of Saardam; and our hero we are told made very curious investigations into the nature and operations of those machines when a little boy, which is one reason why he afterwards came to be so ingenious a governor. His name according to the most ingenious etymologists was a corruption of *Kyver*, that is to say a *wrangler* or *scolder*, and expressed the hereditary disposition of his family, which for nearly two centuries, had kept the windy town of Saardam in hot water, and produced more tartars and brimstones than any ten families in the place—and so truly did Wilhelmus Kieft inherit this family endowment, that he had scarcely been a year in the discharge of his government, before he was universally known by the appellation of *William the Testy*.

He was a brisk, waspish, little old gentleman, who had dried and wilted away, partly through the natural process of years, and partly from being parched and burnt up by his fiery soul; which blazed like a vehement rush light in his bosom, constantly inciting him to most valorous broils, altercations and misadventures. I have heard it observed by a profound and philosophical judge of human nature, that if a woman waxes fat as she grows old, the tenure of her life is very precarious, but if haply she wilts, she lives forever—such likewise was the case with William the Testy, who grew tougher in proportion as he dried. He was some such a little Dutchman as we may now and then see, stumping briskly about the streets of our city, in a broad skirted coat, with buttons nearly as large as the shield of Ajax, which makes such a figure in Dan Homer, an old fashioned cocked hat stuck on the back of his head, and a cane as high as his chin. His visage was broad, but his features sharp, his nose turned up with a most petulant curl; his cheeks, like the region of Terra del Fuego, were scorched into a dusky red—doubtless in consequence of the neighborhood of two fierce little grey eyes, through which his torrid soul beamed as fervently, as a tropical sun blazing through a pair of burning glasses. The corners of his mouth were curiously modeled into a kind of fret work, not a little resembling the wrinkled proboscis of an irritable pug dog—in a word he was one of the most positive, restless, ugly little men, that ever put himself in a passion about nothing.

Such were the personal endowments of William the Testy, but it was the sterling riches of his mind that raised him to dignity and power. In his youth he had passed with great credit through a celebrated academy at the Hague, noted for producing finished scholars, with a dispatch unequalled, ex-

cept by certain of our American colleges, which seem to manufacture bachelors of arts, by some patent machine. Here he skirmished very smartly on the frontiers of several of the sciences, and made such a gallant inroad into the dead languages, as to bring off captive a host of Greek nouns and Latin verbs, together with divers pithy saws and apothegms, all which he constantly paraded in conversation and writing, with as much vain glory as would a triumphant general of yore display the spoils of the countries he had ravaged. He had moreover puzzled himself considerably with logic, in which he had advanced so far as to attain a very familiar acquaintance, by name at least, with the whole family of syllogisms and dilemmas; but what he chiefly valued himself on, was his knowledge of metaphysics, in which, having once upon a time ventured too deeply, he came well nigh being smothered in a slough of unintelligible learning—a fearful peril, from the effects of which he never perfectly recovered.—In plain words, like many other profound intermeddlers in this abstruse bewildering science, he so confused his brain, with abstract speculations which he could not comprehend, and artificial distinctions which he could not realize, that he could never think clearly on any subject however simple, through the whole course of his life afterwards. This I must confess was in some measure a misfortune, for he never engaged in argument, of which he was exceeding fond, but what between logical deductions and metaphysical jargon, he soon involved himself and his subject in a fog of contradictions and perplexities, and then would get into a mighty passion with his adversary, for not being convinced gratis.

It is in knowledge, as in swimming, he who ostentatiously sports and flounders on the surface, makes more noise and splashing, and attracts more attention, than the industrious pearl diver, who plunges in search of treasures to the bottom. The 'universal acquirements' of William Kieft, were the subject of great marvel and admiration among his countrymen—he figured about at the Hague with as much vain glory, as does a profound Bonze at Pekin, who has mastered half the letters of the Chinese alphabet; and in a word was unanimously pronounced an *universal genius*!—I have known many universal geniuses in my time, though to speak my mind freely I never knew one, who, for the ordinary purposes of life, was worth his weight in straw—but, for the purposes of government, a little sound judgment and plain common sense, is worth all the sparkling genius that ever wrote poetry, or invented theories.

Strange as it may sound therefore, the *universal acquirements* of the illustrious Wilhelmus, were very much in his way, and had he been a less learned little man, it is possible he would have been a much greater governor. He was exceedingly fond of trying philosophical and political experiments; and having stuffed his head full of scraps and remnants of ancient republics, and oligarchies, and aristocracies, and monarchies, and the laws of Solon and Lycurgus and Charondas, and the imaginary commonwealth of Plato, and the Pandects of Justinian, and a thousand other fragments of venerable antiquity, he was forever bent upon introducing some one or other of them into use; so that between one contradictory measure and another, he entangled the government of the little province of Nieuw Nederlandts in more knots during his administration, than half a dozen successors could have untied.

No sooner had this bustling little man been blown by a whiff of fortune into the seat of government, than he called together his council and delivered a very animated speech on the affairs of the province. As every body knows what a glorious opportunity a governor, a president, or even an emperor has, of drubbing his enemies in his speeches, messages and bulletins, where he has the talk all on his own side, they may be sure the high-mettled William Kieft did not suffer so favorable an occasion to escape him, of evincing that gallantry of tongue, common to all able legislators. Before he commenced, it is recorded that he took out of his pocket a red cotton handkerchief, and gave a very sonorous blast of the nose, according to the usual custom of great orators. This in general I believe is intended as a signal trumpet, to call the attention of the auditors, but with William the Testy it boasted a more classic cause, for he had read of the singular expedient of

that famous demagogue Caius Gracchus, who when he harangued the Roman populace, modulated his tones by an oratorical flute or pitch-pipe—'which,' said the shrewd Wilhelmus, 'I take to be nothing more nor less, than an elegant and figurative mode of saying—he previously blew his nose.'

This preparatory symphony being performed, he commenced by expressing a humble sense of his own want of talents—his utter unworthiness of the honor conferred upon him, and his humiliating incapacity to discharge the important duties of his new station—in short, he expressed so contemptible an opinion of himself, that many simple country members present, ignorant that these were mere words of course, always used on such occasions, were very uneasy, and even felt wrath that he should accept an office, for which he was consciously so inadequate.

He then proceeded in a manner highly classic, profoundly erudite, and nothing at all to the purpose, being nothing more than a pompous account of all the governments of ancient Greece, and the wars of Rome and Carthage, together with the rise and fall of sundry outlandish empires, about which the assembly knew no more than their great grand children who were yet unborn. Thus having, after the manner of your learned orators, convinced the audience that he was a man of many words and great erudition, he at length came to the less important part of his speech, the situation of the province—and here he soon worked himself into a fearful rage against the Yankees, whom he compared to the Gauls who desolated Rome, and the Goths and Vandals who overran the fairest plains of Europe—nor did he forget to mention, in terms of adequate opprobrium, the insolence with which they had encroached upon the territories of New Netherlands, and the unparalleled audacity with which they had commenced the town of New Plymouth, and planted the onion patches of Weathersfield under the very walls, or rather mud batteries of Fort Goed Hoop.

Having thus artfully wrought up his tale of terror to a climax, he assumed a self satisfied look, and declared, with a nod of knowing import, that he had taken measures to put a final stop to these encroachments—that he had been obliged to have recourse to a dreadful engine of warfare, lately invented, awful in its effects, but authorized by direful necessity. In a word, he was resolved to conquer the Yankees—by proclamation!

For this purpose he had prepared a tremendous instrument of the kind ordering, commanding and enjoining the intruders aforesaid, forthwith to remove, depart and withdraw from the districts, regions and territories aforesaid, under pain of suffering all the penalties, forfeitures, and punishments in such case made and provided, &c. This proclamation he assured them, would at once exterminate the enemy from the face of the country, and he pledged his valor as a governor, that within two months after it was published, not one stone should remain on another, in any of the towns which they had built.

The council remained for some time silent, after he had finished; whether struck dumb with admiration at the brilliancy of his project, or put to sleep by the length of his harangue, the history of the times doth not mention. Suffice it to say, they at length gave a universal grunt of acquiescence—the proclamation was immediately dispatched with due ceremony, having the great seal of the province, which was about the size of a buckwheat pancake, attached to it by a broad red ribband. Governor Kieft having thus vented his indignation, felt greatly relieved—adjourned the council *sine die*—put on his cocked hat and corduroy small-clothes, and mounting a tall raw boned charger, trotted out to his country seat, which was situated in a sweet, sequestered swamp, now called Dutch Street, but more commonly known by the name of Dog's Misery.

Here, like the good Numa, he reposed from the toils of legislation, taking lessons in government, not from the nymph Egeria, but from the honored wife of his bosom; who was one of that peculiar kind of females, sent upon earth a little after the flood, as a punishment for the sins of mankind, and commonly known by the appellation of *knowing women*. In fact, my duty as an historian obliges me to make known a circumstance which was a great secret at the time, and consequently was not a subject of scandal at more than half the tea

tables in New Amsterdam, but which like many other great secrets, has leaked out in the lapse of years—and this was, that the great Wilhelmus the Testy, though one of the most potent little men that ever breathed, yet submitted at home to a species of government, neither laid down in Aristotle, nor Plato; in short, it partook of the nature of a pure, unmixed tyranny, and is familiarly denominated *petticoat government*.—An absolute sway, which though exceedingly common in these modern days, was very rare among the ancients, if we may judge from the rout made about the domestic economy of honest Socrates; which is the only ancient case on record.

The great Kieft however, warded off all the sneers and sarcasms of his particular friends, who are ever ready to joke with a man on sore points of the kind, by alleging that it was a government of his own election, which he submitted to through choice; adding at the same time that it was a profound maxim which he had found in an ancient author—'he who would aspire to *govern*, should first learn to *obey*.'

CHAP. II

In which are recorded the sage Projects of a Ruler of universal Genius.—The art of Fighting by Proclamation—and how that the valiant Jacobus Van Curlet came to be foully dishonored at Fort Goed Hoop.

Never was a more comprehensive, a more expeditious, or, what is still better, a more economical measure devised, than this of defeating the Yankees by proclamation—an expedient, likewise, so humane, so gentle and pacific; there were ten chances to one in favour of its succeeding,—but then there was one chance to ten that it would not succeed—as the ill-natured fates would have it, that single chance carried the day! The proclamation was perfect in all its parts, well constructed, well written, well sealed and well published—all that was wanting to insure its effect, was that the Yankees should stand in awe of it; but, provoking to relate, they treated it with the most absolute contempt, applied it to an unseemly purpose, which shall be nameless, and thus did the first warlike proclamation come to a shameful end—a fate which I am credibly informed, has befallen but too many of its successors.

It was a long time before Wilhelmus Kieft could be persuaded by the united efforts of all his counsellors, that his war measure had failed in producing any effect. —On the contrary, he flew in a passion whenever any one dared to question its efficacy; and swore, that though it was slow in operating, yet when once it began to work, it would soon purge the land from these rapacious intruders. Time however, that tester of all experiments both in philosophy and politics, at length convinced the great Kieft that his proclamation was abortive; and that notwithstanding he had waited nearly four years, in a state of constant irritation, yet he was still further off than ever from the object of his wishes. His implacable adversaries in the east became more and more troublesome in their encroachments, and founded the thriving colony of Hartford close upon the skirts of Fort Goed Hoop. They moreover commenced the fair settlement of New Haven (alias the Red Hills) within the domains of their high mightinesses—while the onion patches of Pyquag were a continual eye sore to the garrison of Van Curlet. Upon beholding therefore the inefficacy of his measure, the sage Kieft like many a worthy practitioner of physic, laid the blame, not to the medicine, but the quantity administered, and resolutely resolved to double the dose.

In the year 1638 therefore, that being the fourth year of his reign, he fulminated against them a second proclamation, of heavier metal than the former; written in thundering long sentences, not one word of which was under five syllables. This, in fact, was a kind of non-intercourse bill, forbidding and prohibiting all commerce and connexion, between any and every of the said Yankee intruders, and the said fortified post of Fort Goed Hoop, and ordering, commanding and advising all his trusty, loyal and well-beloved subjects, to furnish them with no supplies of gin, gingerbread or sourcrout; to buy none of their pacing horses, meazly pork, apple brandy, Yankee rum, cyder water, apple sweetmeats, Weathersfield onions or wooden bowls, but to starve and exterminate them from the face of the land.

Another pause of a twelve month ensued, during which the last proclamation received the same attention, and experienced the same fate as the first—at the end of which term, the gallant Jacobus Van Curlet dispatched his annual messenger, with his customary budget of complaints and entreaties. Whether the regular interval of a year, intervening between the arrival of Van Curlet's couriers, was occasioned by the systematic regularity of his movements, or by the immense distance at which he was stationed from the seat of government is a matter of uncertainty. Some have ascribed it to the slowness of his messengers, who, as I have before noticed, were chosen from the shortest and fattest of his garrison, as least likely to be worn out on the road; and who, being pursy, short-winded little men, generally travelled fifteen miles a day, and then laid by a whole week, to rest. All these, however, are matters of conjecture; and I rather think it may be ascribed to the immemorial maxim of this worthy country—and which has ever influenced all its public transactions—not to do things in a hurry.

The gallant Jacobus Van Curlet, in his dispatches respectfully represented, that several years had now elapsed, since his first application to his late excellency, the renowned Wouter Van Twiller: during which interval, his garrison had been reduced nearly one-eighth, by the death of two of his most valiant, and corpulent soldiers, who had accidentally over eaten themselves on some fat salmon, caught in the Varsche Rivier. He further stated that the enemy persisted in their inroads, taking no notice of the fort or its inhabitants; but squatting themselves down, and forming settlements all around it; so that, in a little while, he should find himself enclosed and blockaded by the enemy, and totally at their mercy.

But among the most atrocious of his grievances, I find the following still on record, which may serve to show the bloody minded outrages of these savage intruders. 'In the meanetime, they of Hartford have not onely usurped and taken in the lands of Connecticott, although unrighteously and against the lawes of nations, but have hindered our nation in sowing theire owne purchased broken up lands, but have also sowed them with corne in the night, which the Netherlanders had broken up and intended to sowe: and have beaten the servants of the high and mighty the honored companie, which were laboring upon theire master's lands, from theire lands, with sticks and plow staves in hostile manner laming, and amongst the rest, struck Ever Duckings[1] a hole in his head, with a stick, soe that the blood ran downe very strongly downe upon his body.'

But what is still more atrocious—

'Those of Hartford sold a hogg, that belonged to the honored companie, under pretence that it had eaten of theire grounde grass, when they had not any foot of inheritance. They profered the hogg for 5*s*. if the commissioners would have given 5*s*. for damage; which the commissioners denied, because noe man's owne hogg (as men used to say) can trespasse upon his owne master's grounde.'[2]

The receipt of this melancholy intelligence incensed the whole community—there was something in it that spoke to the full comprehension, and touched the obtuse feelings even of the puissant vulgar, who generally require a kick in the rear, to awaken their slumbering dignity. I have known my profound fellow citizens bear without murmur, a thousand essential infringements of their rights, merely because they were not immediately obvious to their senses—but the moment the unlucky Pearce was shot upon our coasts, the whole body politic was in a ferment—so the enlighted Nederlanders, though they had treated the encroachments of their eastern neighbors with but little regard, and left their quill-valiant governor, to bear the whole brunt of war, with his single pen—yet now every individual felt his head broken in the broken head of Duckings—and the unhappy fate of their fellow citizen the hog; being impressed, carried and sold into captivity, awakened a grunt of sympathy from every bosom.

The governor and council, goaded by the clamors of the multitude, now set them-

1 'This name is no doubt misspelt. In some old Dutch MSS. of the time, we find the name of Evert Duyckingh, who is unquestionably the unfortunate hero above alluded to.' Author's note, ibid.,189. Irving is probably referring to some contemporary incident connected with Evert Duyckinck(1700–1800), a New York publisher.

2 'Haz. Col. State Pass.' Author's note, ibid.,190.

selves earnestly to deliberate upon what was to be done. Proclamations had at length fallen into temporary disrepute; some were for sending the Yankees a tribute, as we make peace offerings to the petty Barbary powers, or as the Indians sacrifice to the devil. Others were for buying them out, but this was opposed, as it would be acknowledging their title to the land they had seized. A variety of measures were, as usual in such cases, proposed, discussed and abandoned, and the council had at last, to adopt the means, which being the most common and obvious, had been knowingly overlooked—for your amazing acute politicians, are for ever looking through telescopes, which only enable them to see such objects as are far off, and unattainable; but which incapacitates them to see such things as are in their reach, and obvious to all simple folk, who are content to look with the naked eyes, heaven has given them. The profound council, as I have said, in their pursuit after Jack-o'-lanterns, accidentally stumbled on the very measure they were in need of; which was to raise a body of troops, and dispatch them to the relief and reinforcement of the garrison. This measure was carried into such prompt operation, that in less than twelve months, the whole expedition, consisting of a sergeant and twelve men, was ready to march; and was reviewed for that purpose, in the public square, now known by the name of the Bowling Green. Just at this juncture the whole community was thrown into consternation, by the sudden arrival of the Gallant Jacobus Van Curlet; who came straggling into town at the head of his crew of tatterdemalions, and bringing the melancholy tidings of his own defeat, and the capture of the redoubtable post of Fort Goed Hoop by the ferocious Yankees.

The fate of this important fortress, is an impressive warning to all military commanders. It was neither carried by storm, nor famine; no practicable breach was effected by cannon or mines; no magazines were blown up by red hot shot, nor were the barracks demolished, or the garrison destroyed, by the bursting of bombshells. In fact, the place was taken by a strategem no less singular than effectual; and one that can never fail of success, whenever an opportunity occurs of putting it in practice. Happy am I to add, for the credit of our illustrious ancestors, that it was a stratagem, which though it impeached the vigilance, yet left the bravery of the intrepid Van Curlet and his garrison, perfectly free from reproach.

It appears that the crafty Yankees, having learned the regular habits of the garrison, watched a favorable opportunity and silently introduced themselves into the fort, about the middle of a sultry day; when its vigilant defenders having gorged themselves with a hearty dinner and smoked out their pipes, were one and all snoring most obstreperously at their posts; little dreaming of so disasterous an occurrence. The enemy most inhumanly seized Jacobus Van Curlet, and his sturdy myrmidons by the nape of the neck, gallanted them to the gate of the fort, and dismissed them severally, with a kick on the crupper, as Charles the twelfth dismissed the heavy-bottomed Russians, after the battle of Narva—only taking care to give two kicks to Van Curlet, as a signal mark of distinction.

A strong garrison was immediately established in the fort; consisting of twenty long sided, hard fisted Yankees, with Weathersfield onions stuck in their hats, by way of cockades and feathers—long rusty fowling pieces for muskets—hasty pudding, dumb fish, pork and molasses for stores; and a huge pumpkin was hoisted on the end of a pole, as a standard—liberty caps not having as yet come into fashion.

1808–1809 1809

WESTMINSTER ABBEY [1]

When I behold, with deep astonishment,
To famous Westminster how there resorte

1 Irving writes in 'The Author's Account of Himself,' the introductory essay in *The Sketch Book*: 'I visited various parts of my own country; and had I been merely a lover of fine scenery, I should have felt little desire to seek elsewhere its gratification. . . . But Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly-cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every moldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement—to tread as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity—to loiter about the ruined castle—to meditate on the falling tower—to escape, in

Living in brasse or stonie monument,
The princes and the worthies of all sorte;
Doe not I see reformde nobilitie,
Without contempt, or pride, or ostentation,
And looke upon offenselesse majesty,
Naked of pomp or earthly domination?
And how a play-game of a painted stone
Contents the quiet now and silent sprites,
Whome all the world which late they stood upon
Could not content nor quench their appetites.
Life is a frost of cold felicitie,
And death the thaw of all our vanitie.
CHRISTOLERO'S EPIGRAMS, BY T.B. 1598.

On one of those sober and rather melancholy days, in the latter part of Autumn, when the shadows of morning and evening almost mingle together, and throw a gloom over the decline of the year, I passed several hours in rambling about Westminster Abbey. There was something congenial to the season in the mournful magnificence of the old pile; and, as I passed its threshold, seemed like stepping back into the regions of antiquity, and losing myself among the shades of former ages.

I entered from the inner court of Westminster School, through a long, low, vaulted passage, that had an almost subterranean look, being dimly lighted in one part by circular perforations in the massive walls. Through this dark avenue I had a distant view of the cloisters, with the figure of an old verger, in his black gown, moving along their shadowy vaults, and seeming like a spectre from one of the neighboring tombs. The approach to the abbey through these gloomy monastic remains prepares the mind for its solemn contemplation. The cloisters still retain something of the quiet and seclusion of former days. The gray walls are discolored by damps, and crumbling with age; a coat of hoary moss has gathered over the inscriptions of the mural monuments, and obscured the death's-heads, and other funereal emblems. The sharp touches of the chisel are gone from the rich tracery of the arches; the roses which adorned the key-stones have lost their leafy beauty; everything bears marks of the gradual dilapidations of time, which yet has something touching and pleasing in its very decay.

The sun was pouring down a yellow autumnal ray into the square of the cloisters; beaming upon a scanty plot of grass in the centre, and lighting up an angle of the vaulted passage with a kind of dusky splendor. From between the arcades, the eye glanced up to a bit of blue sky or a passing cloud, and beheld the sun-gilt pinnacles of the abbey towering into the azure heaven.

As I paced the cloisters, sometimes contemplating this mingled picture of glory and decay, and sometimes endeavoring to decipher the inscriptions on the tombstones, which formed the pavement beneath my feet, my eye was attracted to three figures, rudely carved in relief, but nearly worn away by the footsteps of many generations. They were the effigies of three of the early abbots; the epitaphs were entirely effaced; the names alone remained, having no doubt been renewed in later times. (Vitalis. Abbas. 1082, and Gislebertus Crispinus. Abbas. 1114, and Laurentius. Abbas. 1176.) I remained some little while, musing over these casual relics of antiquity, thus left like wrecks upon this distant shore of time, telling no tale but that such beings had been and had perished; teaching no moral but the futility of that pride which hopes still to exact homage in its ashes, and to live in an inscription. A little longer, and even these faint records will be obliterated, and the monument will cease to be a memorial. Whilst I was yet looking down upon these gravestones, I was roused by the sound of the abbey clock, reverberating from buttress to buttress, and echoing among the cloisters. It is almost startling to hear this warning of departed time sounding among the tombs, and telling the lapse of the hour, which, like a billow, has rolled us onward towards the grave. I pursued my walk to an arched door opening to the interior of the abbey. On entering here, the magnitude of the building breaks fully upon the mind, contrasted with the vaults of the cloisters. The eyes gaze with wonder at clustered columns of gigantic dimensions, with arches springing from them to such an amazing height; and man wandering about their bases, shrunk into insignificance in comparison with his own handiwork. The spaciousness and gloom of this vast edifice

short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past.'

produce a profound and mysterious awe. We step cautiously and softly about, as if fearful of disturbing the hallowed silence of the tomb; while every footfall whispers along the walls, and chatters among the sepulchres, making us more sensible of the quiet we have interrupted.

It seems as if the awful nature of the place presses down upon the soul, and hushes the beholder into noiseless reverence. We feel that we are surrounded by the congregated bones of the great men of past times, who have filled history with their deeds, and the earth with their renown.

And yet it almost provokes a smile at the vanity of human ambition, to see how they are crowded together and jostled in the dust; what parsimony is observed in doling out a scanty nook, a gloomy corner, a little portion of earth, to those, whom, when alive, kingdoms could not satisfy; and how many shapes, and forms, and artifices are devised to catch the casual notice of the passenger, and save from forgetfulness, for a few short years, a name which once aspired to occupy ages of the world's thought and admiration.

I passed some time in Poet's Corner, which occupies an end of one of the transepts or cross aisles of the abbey. The monuments are generally simple; for the lives of literary men afford no striking themes for the sculptor. Shakspeare and Addison have statues erected to their memories; but the greater part have busts, medallions, and sometimes mere inscriptions. Notwithstanding the simplicity of these memorials, I have always observed that the visitors to the abbey remained longest about them. A kinder and fonder feeling takes place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great and the heroic. They linger about these as about the tombs of friends and companions; for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and the reader. Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure; but the intercourse between the author and his fellowmen is ever new, active, and immediate. He has lived for them more than for himself; he has sacrificed surrounding enjoyments, and shut himself up from the delights of social life, that he might the more intimately commune with distant minds and distant ages. Well may the world cherish his renown; for it has been purchased, not by deeds of violence and blood, but by the diligent dispensation of pleasure. Well may posterity be grateful to his memory; for he has left it an inheritance, not of empty names and sounding actions, but whole treasures of wisdom, bright gems of thought, and golden veins of language.

From Poet's Corner I continued my stroll towards that part of the abbey which contains the sepulchres of the kings. I wandered among what once were chapels, but which are now occupied by the tombs and monuments of the great. At every turn I met with some illustrious name, or the cognizance of some powerful house renowned in history. As the eye darts into these dusky chambers of death, it catches glimpses of quaint effigies; some kneeling in niches, as if in devotion; others stretched upon the tombs, with hands piously pressed together: warriors in armor, as if reposing after battle; prelates with crosiers and mitres; and nobles in robes and coronets, lying as it were in state. In glancing over this scene, so strangely populous, yet where every form is so still and silent, it seems almost as if we were treading a mansion of that fabled city, where every being had been suddenly transmuted into stone.

I paused to contemplate a tomb on which lay the effigy of a knight in complete armor. A large buckler was on one arm; the hands were pressed together in supplication upon the breast; the face was almost covered by the morion; the legs were crossed, in token of the warrior's having been engaged in the holy war. It was the tomb of a Crusader; of one of those military enthusiasts who so strangely mingled religion and romance, and whose exploits form the connecting link between fact and fiction; between the history and the fairy tale. There is something extremely picturesque in the tombs of these adventurers, decorated as they are with rude armorial bearings and Gothic sculpture. They comport with the antiquated chapels in which they are generally found; and in considering them, the imagination is apt to kindle with the legendary associations, the romantic fiction, the chivalrous pomp and pageantry, which poetry

has spread over the wars for the sepulchre of Christ. They are the relics of times utterly gone by; of beings passed from recollection; of customs and manners with which ours have no affinity. They are like objects from some strange and distant land, of which we have no certain knowledge, and about which all our conceptions are vague and visionary. There is something extremely solemn and awful in those effigies on Gothic tombs, extended as if in the sleep of death, or in the supplication of the dying hour. They have an effect infinitely more impressive on my feelings than the fanciful attitudes, the overwrought conceits, and allegorical groups, which abound on modern monuments. I have been struck, also, with the superiority of many of the old sepulchral inscriptions. There was a noble way, in former times, of saying things simply, and yet saying them proudly; and I do not know an epitaph that breathes a loftier consciousness of family worth and honorable lineage than one which affirms, of a noble house, that 'all the brothers were brave, and all the sisters virtuous.'

In the opposite transept to Poet's Corner stands a monument which is among the most renowned achievements of modern art; but which to me appears horrible rather than sublime. It is the tomb of Mrs. Nightingale, by Roubillac. The bottom of the monument is represented as throwing open its marble doors, and a sheeted skeleton is starting forth. The shroud is falling from his fleshless frame as he launches his dart at his victim. She is sinking into her affrighted husband's arms, who strives, with vain and frantic effort, to avert the blow. The whole is executed with terrible truth and spirit; we almost fancy we hear the gibbering yell of triumph bursting from the distended jaws of the spectre.—But why should we thus seek to clothe death with unnecessary terrors, and to spread horrors round the tomb of those we love? The grave should be surrounded by everything that might inspire tenderness and veneration for the dead; or that might win the living to virtue. It is the place, not of disgust and dismay, but of sorrow and meditation.

While wandering about these gloomy vaults and silent aisles, studying the records of the dead, the sound of busy existence from without occasionally reaches the ear; —the rumbling of the passing equipage; the murmur of the multitude; or perhaps the light laugh of pleasure. The contrast is striking with the deathlike repose around: and it has a strange effect upon the feelings, thus to hear the surges of active life hurrying along, and beating against the very walls of the sepulchre.

I continued in this way to move from tomb to tomb, and from chapel to chapel. The day was gradually wearing away; the distant tread of loiterers about the abbey grew less and less frequent; the sweet-tongued bell was summoning to evening prayers; and I saw at a distance the choristers, in their white surplices, crossing the aisle and entering the choir. I stood before the entrance to Henry the Seventh's chapel. A flight of steps lead up to it, through a deep and gloomy, but magnificent arch. Great gates of brass, richly and delicately wrought, turn heavily upon their hinges, as if proudly reluctant to admit the feet of common mortals into this most gorgeous of sepulchres.

On entering, the eye is astonished by the pomp of architecture, and the elaborate beauty of sculptured detail. The very walls are wrought into universal ornament, incrusted with tracery, and scooped into niches, crowded with the statues of saints and martyrs. Stone seems, by the cunning labor of the chisel, to have been robbed of its weight and density, suspended aloft, as if by magic, and the fretted roof achieved with the wonderful minuteness and airy security of a cobweb.

Along the sides of the chapel are the lofty stalls of the Knights of the Bath, richly carved of oak, though with the grotesque decorations of Gothic architecture. On the pinnacles of the stalls are affixed the helmets and crests of the knights, with their scarfs and swords; and above them are suspended their banners, emblazoned with armorial bearings, and contrasting the splendor of gold and purple and crimson with the cold gray fretwork of the roof. In the midst of this grand mausoleum stands the sepulchre of its founder,—his effigy, with that of his queen, extended on a sumptuous tomb, and the whole surrounded by a superbly wrought brazen railing.

There is a sad dreariness in this magnifi-

cence; this strange mixture of tombs and trophies; these emblems of living and aspiring ambition, close beside mementos which show the dust and oblivion in which all must sooner or later terminate. Nothing impresses the mind with a deeper feeling of loneliness than to tread the silent and deserted scene of former throng and pageant. On looking round on the vacant stalls of the knights and their esquires, and on the rows of dusty but gorgeous banners that were once borne before them, my imagination conjured up the scene when this hall was bright with the valor and beauty of the land; glittering with the splendor of jewelled rank and military array; alive with the tread of many feet and the hum of an admiring multitude. All had passed away; the silence of death had settled again upon the place, interrupted only by the casual chirping of birds, which had found their way into the chapel, and built their nests among its friezes and pendants—sure signs of solitariness and desertion.

When I read the names inscribed on the banners, they were those of men scattered far and wide about the world; some tossing upon distant seas; some under arms in distant lands; some mingling in the busy intrigues of courts and cabinets; all seeking to deserve one more distinction in this mansion of shadowy honors: the melancholy reward of a monument.

Two small aisles on each side of this chapel present a touching instance of the equality of the grave; which brings down the oppressor to a level with the oppressed, and mingles the dust of the bitterest enemies together. In one is the sepulchre of the haughty Elizabeth; in the other is that of her victim, the lovely and unfortunate Mary. Not an hour in the day but some ejaculation of pity is uttered over the fate of the latter, mingled with indignation at her oppressor. The walls of Elizabeth's sepulchre continually echo with the sighs of sympathy heaved at the grave of her rival.

A peculiar melancholy reigns over the aisle where Mary lies buried. The light struggles dimly through windows darkened by dust. The greater part of the place is in deep shadow, and the walls are stained and tinted by time and weather. A marble figure of Mary is stretched upon the tomb, round which is an iron railing, much corroded, bearing her national emblem—the thistle. I was weary with wandering, and sat down to rest myself by the monument, revolving in my mind the chequered and disastrous story of poor Mary.

The sound of casual footsteps had ceased from the abbey. I could only hear, now and then, the distant voice of the priest repeating the evening service, and the faint responses of the choir; these paused for a time, and all was hushed. The stillness, the desertion and obscurity that were gradually prevailing around, gave a deeper and more solemn interest to the place.

For in the silent grave no conversation,
No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,
No careful father's counsel—nothing's heard,
For nothing is, but all oblivion,
Dust, and an endless darkness.

Suddenly the notes of the deep-laboring organ burst upon the ear, falling with doubled and redoubled intensity, and rolling, as it were, huge billows of sound. How well do their volume and grandeur accord with this mighty building! With what pomp do they swell through its vast vaults, and breathe their awful harmony through these caves of death, and make the silent sepulchre vocal! —And now they rise in triumph and acclamation, heaving higher and higher their accordant notes, and piling sound on sound.—And now they pause, and the soft voices of the choir break out into sweet gushes of melody; they soar aloft, and warble along the roof, and seem to play about these lofty vaults like the pure airs of heaven. Again the pealing organ heaves its thrilling thunders, compressing air into music, and rolling it forth upon the soul. What long-drawn cadences! What solemn sweeping concords! It grows more and more dense and powerful—it fills the vast pile, and seems to jar the very walls—the ear is stunned—the senses are overwhelmed. And now it is winding up in full jubilee—it is rising from the earth to heaven—the very soul seems rapt away and floated upwards on this swelling tide of harmony!

I sat for some time lost in that kind of reverie which a strain of music is apt some-

times to inspire: the shadows of evening were gradually thickening round me; the monuments began to cast deeper and deeper gloom; and the distant clock again gave token of the slowly waning day.

I rose and prepared to leave the abbey. As I descended the flight of steps which lead into the body of the building, my eye was caught by the shrine of Edward the Confessor, and I ascended the small staircase that conducts to it, to take from thence a general survey of this wilderness of tombs. The shrine is elevated upon a kind of platform, and close around it are the sepulchres of various kings and queens. From this eminence the eye looks down between pillars and funeral trophies to the chapels and chambers below, crowded with tombs, —where warriors, prelates, courtiers, and statesmen lie mouldering in their 'beds of darkness.' Close by me stood the great chair of coronation, rudely carved of oak, in the barbarous taste of a remote and Gothic age. The scene seemed almost as if contrived, with theatrical artifice, to produce an effect upon the beholder. Here was a type of the beginning and the end of human pomp and power; here it was literally but a step from the throne to the sepulchre. Would not one think that these incongruous mementos had been gathered together as a lesson to living greatness?—to show it, even in the moment of its proudest exaltation, the neglect and dishonor to which it must soon arrive; how soon that crown which encircles its brow must pass away, and it must lie down in the dust and disgraces of the tomb, and be trampled upon by the feet of the meanest of the multitude. For, strange to tell, even the grave is here no longer a sanctuary. There is a shocking levity in some natures, which leads them to sport with awful and hallowed things; and there are base minds, which delight to revenge on the illustrious dead the abject homage and grovelling servility which they pay to the living. The coffin of Edward the Confessor has been broken open, and his remains despoiled of their funereal ornaments; the sceptre has been stolen from the hand of the imperious Elizabeth, and the effigy of Henry the Fifth lies headless. Not a royal monument but bears some proof how false and fugitive is the homage of mankind. Some are plundered; some mutilated; some covered with ribaldry and insult,—all more or less outraged and dishonored!

The last beams of day were now faintly streaming through the painted windows in the high vaults above me; the lower parts of the abbey were already wrapped in the obscurity of twilight. The chapels and aisles grew darker and darker. The effigies of the kings faded into shadows; the marble figures of the monuments assumed strange shapes in the uncertain light; the evening breeze crept through the aisles like the cold breath of the grave; and even the distant footfall of a verger, traversing the Poet's Corner, had something strange and dreary in its sound. I slowly retraced my morning's walk, and as I passed out at the portal of the cloisters, the door, closing with a jarring noise behind me, filled the whole building with echoes.

I endeavored to form some arrangement in my mind of the objects I had been contemplating, but found they were already fallen into indistinctness and confusion. Names, inscriptions, trophies, had all become confounded in my recollection, though I had scarcely taken my foot from off the threshold. What, thought I, is this vast assemblage of sepulchres but a treasury of humiliation; a huge pile of reiterated homilies on the emptiness of renown, and the certainty of oblivion! It is, indeed, the empire of death—his great shadowy palace, where he sits in state, mocking at the relics of human glory, and spreading dust and forgetfulness on the monuments of princes. How idle a boast, after all, is the immortality of a name! Time is ever silently turning over his pages; we are too much engrossed by the story of the present, to think of the characters and anecdotes that gave interest to the past; and each age is a volume thrown aside to be speedily forgotten. The idol of to-day pushes the hero of yesterday out of our recollection; and will, in turn, be supplanted by his successor of to-morrow. 'Our fathers,' says Sir Thomas Browne, 'find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors.' History fades into fable; fact becomes clouded with doubt and controversy; the inscription moulders from the tablet; the statue falls from the pedestal. Columns, arches, pyramids, what are they but heaps of sand; and their epitaphs, but

characters written in the dust? What is the security of a tomb, or the perpetuity of an embalmment? The remains of Alexander the Great have been scattered to the wind, and his empty sarcophagus is now the mere curiosity of a museum. 'The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth; Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.'

What then is to insure this pile which now towers above me from sharing the fate of mightier mausoleums? The time must come when its gilded vaults, which now spring so loftily, shall lie in rubbish beneath the feet; when, instead of the sound of melody and praise, the wind shall whistle through the broken arches, and the owl hoot from the shattered tower,—when the garish sunbeam shall break into these gloomy mansions of death, and the ivy twine round the fallen column; and the foxglove hang its blossoms about the nameless urn, as if in mockery of the dead. Thus man passes away; his name perishes from record and recollection; his history is as a tale that is told, and his very monument becomes a ruin.

1818–1819 1819

RIP VAN WINKLE [1]

A Posthumous Writing of Diedrich Knickerbocker

By Woden, God of Saxons,
From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday.
Truth is a thing that ever I will keep
Unto thylke day in which I creep into
My sepulchre——

CARTWRIGHT.

[The following Tale was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch history of the province, and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more their wives, rich in that legendary lore so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farmhouse under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a book-worm.

The result of all these researches was a history of the province during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work, and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which indeed was a little questioned on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections, as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work, and now that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much harm to his memory to say that his time might have been much better employed in weightier labors. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbors, and grieve the spirit of some friends, for whom he felt the truest deference and affection; yet his errors and follies are remembered 'more in sorrow than in anger,' and it begins to be suspected that he never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear by many folk, whose good opinion is well worth having; particularly by certain biscuit-bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their new-year cakes; and have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to the being stamped on a Waterloo Medal, or a Queen Anne's Farthing.]

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed every hour of the day, produces some change in the

[1] 'Rip Van Winkle' is a transference to the American scene of a common European legend; Irving's evident source being Otmar's tale of 'Peter Klaus' in *Volkssagen* (Bremen, Germany, 1800).

magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weather-cocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple, good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple, good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient henpecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation; and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favorite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles; and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbor, even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone-fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always

made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst-conditioned farm in the neighborhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife; so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much henpecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village; which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of His Majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the school-master, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun-dial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every neat man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds; and sometimes, taking

the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and call the members all to naught; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. 'Poor Wolf,' he would say, 'thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!' Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and reëchoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing, 'Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!' He looked round, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air: 'Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!'—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place; but supposing it to be some one of the neighborhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist—several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to

be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had labored on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar: one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colors. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting in the parlor of Dominie Van Shaick, the village parson, which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such fixed, statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavor of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright, sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. 'Surely,' thought Rip, 'I have not slept here all night.' He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woe-begone party at nine-pins—the flagon—'Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!' thought Rip— 'what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?'

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean, well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel incrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roisters of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. 'These mountain beds do not agree with me,' thought Rip, 'and if this frolic should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle.' With some difficulty he got down into the glen: he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grapevines that twisted their coils or tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high, impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad, deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? the morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors —strange faces at the windows,—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been—Rip was sorely perplexed—'That flagon last night,' thought he, 'has addled my poor head sadly!'

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed —'My very dog,' sighed poor Rip, 'has forgotten me!'

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn—but it, too, was gone. A large, rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping win-

dows, some of them broken and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, 'The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle.' Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red night-cap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe; but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco-smoke instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of congress—liberty—Bunker's Hill—heroes of seventy-six—and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern-politicians. They crowded round him, eyeing him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired 'on which side he voted?' Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, 'Whether he was Federal or Democrat?' Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, 'what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?'—'Alas! gentlemen,' cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, 'I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the king, God bless him!'

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders—'A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!' It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and, having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit what he came there for, and whom he was seeking? The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbors, who used to keep about the tavern.

'Well—who are they?—name them.'

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, 'Where's Nicholas Vedder?'

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin, piping voice: 'Nicholas Vedder! why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too.'

'Where's Brom Dutcher?'

'Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point—others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know—he never came back again.'

'Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?'

'He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in Congress.'

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand:

war—Congress—Stony Point;—he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, 'Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?'

'Oh, Rip Van Winkle!' exclaimed two or three, 'Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree.'

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain: apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

'God knows,' exclaimed he, at his wit's end; 'I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!'

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief, at the very suggestion of which the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh, comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. 'Hush, Rip,' cried she, 'hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you.' The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind. 'What is your name, my good woman?' asked he.

'Judith Gardenier.'

'And your father's name?'

'Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since,—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl.'

Rip had but one question more to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

'Where's your mother?'

'Oh, she too had died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New England peddler.'

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. 'I am your father!' cried he—'Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now!—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle?'

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, 'Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself! Welcome home again, old neighbor—Why, where have you been these twenty long years?'

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbors stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks; and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discover of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Half-moon; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins in a hollow of the

mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm, but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time, and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favor.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the inn door, and was reverenced as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times 'before the war.' It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England—and that, instead of being a subject of his Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes, which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed, at first, to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighborhood but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunder-storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of ninepins; and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

1818 1819

LEGEND OF THE ROSE OF THE ALHAMBRA

For some time after the surrender of Granada by the Moors, that delightful city was a frequent and favorite residence of the Spanish sovereigns, until they were frightened away by successive shocks of earthquakes, which toppled down various houses, and made the old Moslem towers rock to their foundation.

Many, many years then rolled away, during which Granada was rarely honored by a royal guest. The palaces of the nobility remained silent and shut up; and the Alhambra, like a slighted beauty, sat in mournful desolation among her neglected gardens. The tower of the Infantas, once the residence of the three beautiful Moorish princesses, partook of the general desolation; the spider spun her web athwart the gilded vault, and bats and owls nestled in those chambers that had been graced by the presence of Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda. The neglect of this tower may partly have been owing to some superstitious notions of the neighbors. It was rumored that the spirit of the youthful Zorahayda, who had perished in that tower, was often seen by moonlight seated beside the fountain in the hall, or moaning about the battlements, and that the notes of her silver

lute would be heard at midnight by wayfarers passing along the glen.

At length the city of Granada was once more welcomed by the royal presence. All the world knows that Philip V. was the first Bourbon that swayed the Spanish sceptre. All the world knows that he married, in second nuptials, Elizabetta or Isabella (for they are the same), the beautiful princess of Parma; and all the world knows that by this chain of contingencies a French prince and an Italian princess were seated together on the Spanish throne. For a visit of this illustrious pair, the Alhambra was repaired and fitted up with all possible expedition. The arrival of the court changed the whole aspect of the lately deserted palace. The clangor of drum and trumpet, the tramp of steed about the avenues and outer court, the glitter of arms and display of banners about barbican and battlement, recalled the ancient and warlike glories of the fortress. A softer spirit, however, reigned within the royal palace. There was the rustling of robes and the cautious tread and murmuring voice of reverential courtiers about the antechambers; a loitering of pages and maids of honor about the gardens, and the sound of music stealing from open casements.

Among those who attended in the train of the monarchs was a favorite page of the queen, named Ruyz de Alarcon. To say that he was a favorite page of the queen was at once to speak his eulogium, for every one in the suite of the stately Elizabetta was chosen for grace, and beauty, and accomplishments. He was just turned of eighteen, light and lithe of form, and graceful as a young Antinous. To the queen he was all deference and respect, yet he was at heart a roguish stripling, petted and spoiled by the ladies about the court, and experienced in the ways of women far beyond his years.

This loitering page was one morning rambling about the groves of the Generalife, which overlook the grounds of the Alhambra. He had taken with him for his amusement a favorite ger-falcon of the queen. In the course of his rambles, seeing a bird rising from a thicket, he unhooded the hawk and let him fly. The falcon towered high in the air, made a swoop at his quarry, but missing it, soared away, regardless of the calls of the page. The latter followed the truant bird with his eye, in its capricious flight, until he saw it alight upon the battlements of a remote and lonely tower, in the outer wall of the Alhambra, built on the edge of a ravine that separated the royal fortress from the grounds of the Generalife. It was in fact the 'Tower of the Princesses.'

The page descended into the ravine and approached the tower, but it had no entrance from the glen, and its lofty height rendered any attempt to scale it fruitless. Seeking one of the gates of the fortress, therefore, he made a wide circuit to that side of the tower facing within the walls.

A small garden, enclosed by a trellis-work of reeds overhung with myrtle, lay before the tower. Opening a wicket, the page passed between beds of flowers and thickets of roses to the door. It was closed and bolted. A crevice in the door gave him a peep into the interior. There was a small Moorish hall with fretted walls, light marble columns, and an alabaster fountain surrounded with flowers. In the centre hung a gilt cage containing a singing-bird; beneath it, on a chair, lay a tortoise-shell cat among reels of silk and other articles of female labor, and a guitar decorated with ribbons leaned against the fountain.

Ruyz de Alarcon was struck with these traces of female taste and elegance in a lonely, and, as he had supposed, deserted tower. They reminded him of the tales of enchanted halls current in the Alhambra; and the tortoise-shell cat might be some spell-bound princess.

He knocked gently at the door. A beautiful face peeped out from a little window above, but was instantly withdrawn. He waited, expecting that the door would be opened, but he waited in vain; no footstep was to be heard within—all was silent. Had his senses deceived him, or was this beautiful apparition the fairy of the tower? He knocked again, and more loudly. After a little while the beaming face once more peeped forth; it was that of a blooming damsel of fifteen.

The page immediately doffed his plumed bonnet, and entreated in the most courteous accents to be permitted to ascend the tower in pursuit of his falcon.

'I dare not open the door, Señor,' replied

the little damsel, blushing, 'my aunt has forbidden it.'

'I do beseech you, fair maid—it is the favorite falcon of the queen: I dare not return to the palace without it.'

'Are you then one of the cavaliers of the court?'

'I am, fair maid; but I shall lose the queen's favor and my place, if I lose this hawk.'

'Santa Maria! It is against you cavaliers of the court my aunt has charged me especially to bar the door.'

'Against wicked cavaliers doubtless, but I am none of these, but a simple, harmless page, who will be ruined and undone if you deny me this small request.'

The heart of the little damsel was touched by the distress of the page. It was a thousand pities he should be ruined for the want of so trifling a boon. Surely too he could not be one of those dangerous beings whom her aunt had described as a species of cannibal, ever on the prowl to make prey of thoughtless damsels; he was gentle and modest, and stood so entreatingly with cap in hand, and looked so charming.

The sly page saw that the garrison began to waver, and redoubled his entreaties in such moving terms that it was not in the nature of mortal maiden to deny him; so the blushing little warden of the tower descended, and opened the door with a trembling hand, and if the page had been charmed by a mere glimpse of her countenance from the window, he was ravished by the full-length portrait now revealed to him.

Her Andalusian bodice and trim basquiña set off the round but delicate symmetry of her form, which was as yet scarce verging into womanhood. Her glossy hair was parted on her forehead with scrupulous exactness, and decorated with a fresh plucked rose, according to the universal custom of the country. It is true her complexion was tinged by the ardor of a southern sun, but it served to give richness to the mantling bloom of her cheek, and to heighten the lustre of her melting eyes.

Ruyz de Alarcon beheld all this with a single glance, for it became him not to tarry; he merely murmured his acknowledgments, and then bounded lightly up the spiral staircase in quest of his falcon.

He soon returned with the truant bird upon his fist. The damsel, in the mean time, had seated herself by the fountain in the hall, and was winding silk; but in her agitation she let fall the reel upon the pavement. The page sprang and picked it up, then dropping gracefully on one knee, presented it to her; but, seizing the hand extended to receive it, imprinted on it a kiss more fervent and devout than he had ever imprinted on the fair hand of his sovereign.

'Ave Maria, Señor!' exclaimed the damsel, blushing still deeper with confusion and surprise, for never before had she received such a salutation.

The modest page made a thousand apologies, assuring her it was the way at court of expressing the most profound homage and respect.

Her anger, if anger she felt, was easily pacified, but her agitation and embarrassment continued, and she sat blushing deeper and deeper, with her eyes cast down upon her work, entangling the silk which she attempted to wind.

The cunning page saw the confusion in the opposite camp, and would fain have profited by it, but the fine speeches he would have uttered died upon his lips; his attempts at gallantry were awkward and ineffectual; and to his surprise, the adroit page, who had figured with such grace and effrontery among the most knowing and experienced ladies of the court, found himself awed and abashed in the presence of a simple damsel of fifteen.

In fact, the artless maiden, in her own modesty and innocence, had guardians more effectual than the bolts and bars prescribed by her vigilant aunt. Still, where is the female bosom proof against the first whisperings of love? The little damsel, with all her artlessness, instinctively comprehended all that the faltering tongue of the page failed to express, and her heart was fluttered at beholding, for the first time, a lover at her feet—and such a lover!

The diffidence of the page, though genuine, was short-lived, and he was recovering his usual ease and confidence, when a shrill voice was heard at a distance.

'My aunt is returning from mass!' cried the damsel in affright: 'I pray you, Señor, depart.'

'Not until you grant me that rose from your hair as a remembrance.'

She hastily untwisted the rose from her raven locks. 'Take it,' cried she, agitated and blushing, 'but pray begone.'

The page took the rose, and at the same time covered with kisses the fair hand that gave it. Then, placing the flower in his bonnet, and taking the falcon upon his fist, he bounded off through the garden, bearing away with him the heart of the gentle Jacinta.

When the vigilant aunt arrived at the tower, she remarked the agitation of her niece, and an air of confusion in the hall; but a word of explanation sufficed. 'A ger-falcon had pursued his prey into the hall.'

'Mercy on us! to think of a falcon flying into the tower. Did ever one hear of so saucy a hawk? Why, the very bird in the cage is not safe!'

The vigilant Fredegonda was one of the most wary of ancient spinsters. She had a becoming terror and distrust of what she denominated 'the opposite sex,' which had gradually increased through a long life of celibacy. Not that the good lady had ever suffered from their wiles, nature having set up a safeguard in her face that forbade all trespass upon her premises; but ladies who have least cause to fear for themselves are most ready to keep a watch over their more tempting neighbors.

The niece was the orphan of an officer who had fallen in the wars. She had been educated in a convent, and had recently been transferred from her sacred asylum to the immediate guardianship of her aunt, under whose overshadowing care she vegetated in obscurity, like an opening rose blooming beneath a brier. Nor indeed is this comparison entirely accidental; for, to tell the truth, her fresh and dawning beauty had caught the public eye, even in her seclusion, and, with that poetical turn common to the people of Andalusia, the peasantry of the neighborhood had given her the appellation of 'the Rose of the Alhambra.'

The wary aunt continued to keep a faithful watch over her tempting little niece as long as the court continued at Granada, and flattered herself that her vigilance had been successful. It is true, the good lady was now and then discomposed by the tinkling of guitars and chanting of love-ditties from the moonlit groves beneath the tower; but she would exhort her niece to shut her ears against such idle minstrelsy, assuring her that it was one of the arts of the opposite sex, by which simple maids were often lured to their undoing. Alas! what chance with a simple maid has a dry lecture against a moonlight serenade?

At length king Philip cut short his sojourn at Granada, and suddenly departed with all his train. The vigilant Fredegonda watched the royal pageant as it issued forth from the Gate of Justice, and descended the great avenue leading to the city. When the last banner disappeared from her sight, she returned exulting to her tower, for all her cares were over. To her surprise, a light Arabian steed pawed the ground at the wicket-gate of the garden;—to her horror she saw through the thickets of roses a youth in gayly-embroidered dress, at the feet of her niece. At the sound of her footsteps he gave a tender adieu, bounded lightly over the barrier of reeds and myrtles, sprang upon his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

The tender Jacinta, in the agony of her grief, lost all thought of her aunt's displeasure. Throwing herself into her arms, she broke forth into sobs and tears.

'Ay de mi!' cried she; 'he's gone!—he's gone!—he's gone! and I shall never see him more!'

'Gone!—who is gone?—what youth is that I saw at your feet?'

'A queen's page, aunt, who came to bid me farewell.'

'A queen's page, child!' echoed the vigilant Fredegonda, faintly; 'and when did you become acquainted with the queen's page?'

'The morning that the ger-falcon came into the tower. It was the queen's ger-falcon, and he came in pursuit of it.'

'Ah silly, silly girl! know that there are no ger-falcons half so dangerous as these young prankling pages, and it is precisely such simple birds as thee that they pounce upon.'

The aunt was at first indignant at learning that in despite of her boasted vigilance, a tender intercourse had been carried on by the youthful lovers, almost beneath her eye; but when she found that her simple-hearted niece, though thus exposed, with-

out the protection of bolt or bar, to all the machinations of the opposite sex, had come forth unsinged from the fiery ordeal, she consoled herself with the persuasion that it was owing to the chaste and cautious maxims in which she had, as it were, steeped her to the very lips.

While the aunt laid this soothing unction to her pride, the niece treasured up the oft-repeated vows of fidelity of the page. But what is the love of restless, roving man? A vagrant stream that dallies for a time with each flower upon its bank, then passes on, and leaves them all in tears.

Days, weeks, months elapsed, and nothing more was heard of the page. The pomegranate ripened, the vine yielded up its fruit, the autumnal rains descended in torrents from the mountains; the Sierra Nevada became covered with a snowy mantle, and wintry blasts howled through the halls of the Alhambra—still he came not. The winter passed away. Again the genial spring burst forth with song and blossom and balmy zephyr; the snows melted from the mountains, until none remained but on the lofty summit of Nevada, glistening through the sultry summer air. Still nothing was heard of the forgetful page.

In the mean time, the poor little Jacinta grew pale and thoughtful. Her former occupations and amusements were abandoned, her silk lay entangled, her guitar unstrung, her flowers were neglected, the notes of her bird unheeded, and her eyes, once so bright, were dimmed with secret weeping. If any solitude could be devised to foster the passion of a love-lorn damsel, it would be such a place as the Alhambra, where everything seems disposed to produce tender and romantic reveries. It is a very paradise for lovers: how hard then to be alone in such a paradise—and not merely alone, but forsaken!

'Alas, silly child!' would the staid and immaculate Fredegonda say, when she found her niece in one of her desponding moods—'did I not warn thee against the wiles and deceptions of these men? What couldst thou expect, too, from one of a haughty and aspiring family—thou an orphan, the descendant of a fallen and impoverished line? Be assured, if the youth were true, his father, who is one of the proudest nobles about the court, would prohibit his union with one so humble and portionless as thou. Pluck up thy resolution, therefore, and drive these idle notions from thy mind.'

The words of the immaculate Fredegonda only served to increase the melancholy of her niece, but she sought to indulge it in private. At a late hour one midsummer night, after her aunt had retired to rest, she remained alone in the hall of the tower, seated beside the alabaster fountain. It was here that the faithless page had first knelt and kissed her hand; it was here that he had often vowed eternal fidelity. The poor little damsel's heart was overladen with sad and tender recollections, her tears began to flow, and slowly fell drop by drop into the fountain. By degrees the crystal water became agitated, and—bubble—bubble—bubble—boiled up and was tossed about, until a female figure, richly clad in Moorish robes, slowly rose to view.

Jacinta was so frightened that she fled from the hall, and did not venture to return. The next morning she related what she had seen to her aunt, but the good lady treated it as a fantasy of her troubled mind, or supposed she had fallen asleep and dreamt beside the fountain. 'Thou hast been thinking of the story of the three Moorish princesses that once inhabited this tower,' continued she, 'and it has entered into thy dreams.'

'What story, aunt? I know nothing of it.'

'Thou hast certainly heard of the three princesses, Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda, who were confined in this tower by the king their father, and agreed to fly with three Christian cavaliers. The two first accomplished their escape, but the third failed in her resolution, and, it is said, died in this tower.'

'I now recollect to have heard of it,' said Jacinta, 'and to have wept over the fate of the gentle Zorahayda.'

'Thou mayest well weep over her fate,' continued the aunt, 'for the lover of Zorahayda was thy ancestor. He long bemoaned his Moorish love; but time cured him of his grief, and he married a Spanish lady, from whom thou art descended.'

Jacinta ruminated upon these words. 'That what I have seen is no fantasy of the

brain,' said she to herself, 'I am confident. If indeed it be the spirit of the gentle Zorahayda, which I have heard lingers about this tower, of what should I be afraid? I'll watch by the fountain to-night—perhaps the visit will be repeated.'

Towards midnight, when everything was quiet, she again took her seat in the hall. As the bell in the distant watch-tower of the Alhambra struck the midnight hour, the fountain was again agitated; and bubble—bubble—bubble—it tossed about the waters until the Moorish female again rose to view. She was young and beautiful; her dress was rich with jewels, and in her hand she held a silver lute. Jacinta trembled and was faint, but was reassured by the soft and plaintive voice of the apparition, and the sweet expression of her pale, melancholy countenance.

'Daughter of mortality,' said she, 'what aileth thee? Why do thy tears trouble my fountain, and thy sighs and plaints disturb the quiet watches of the night?'

'I weep because of the faithlessness of man, and I bemoan my solitary and forsaken state.'

'Take comfort; thy sorrows may yet have an end. Thou beholdest a Moorish princess, who, like thee, was unhappy in her love. A Christian knight, thy ancestor, won my heart, and would have borne me to his native land and to the bosom of his church. I was a convert in my heart, but I lacked courage equal to my faith, and lingered till too late. For this the evil genii are permitted to have power over me, and I remain enchanted in this tower until some pure Christian will deign to break the magic spell. Wilt thou undertake the task?'

'I will,' replied the damsel, trembling.

'Come hither then, and fear not; dip thy hand in the fountain, sprinkle the water over me, and baptize me after the manner of thy faith; so shall the enchantment be dispelled, and my troubled spirit have repose.'

The damsel advanced with faltering steps, dipped her hand in the fountain, collected water in the palm, and sprinkled it over the pale face of the phantom.

The latter smiled with ineffable benignity. She dropped her silver lute at the feet of Jacinta, crossed her white arms upon her bosom, and melted from sight, so that it seemed merely as if a shower of dew-drops had fallen into the fountain.

Jacinta retired from the hall filled with awe and wonder. She scarcely closed her eyes that night; but when she awoke at daybreak out of a troubled slumber, the whole appeared to her like a distempered dream. On descending into the hall, however, the truth of the vision was established, for beside the fountain she beheld the silver lute glittering in the morning sunshine.

She hastened to her aunt, to relate all that had befallen her, and called her to behold the lute as a testimonial of the reality of her story. If the good lady had any lingering doubts, they were removed when Jacinta touched the instrument, for she drew forth such ravishing tones as to thaw even the frigid bosom of the immaculate Fredegonda, that region of eternal winter, into a genial flow. Nothing but supernatural melody could have produced such an effect.

The extraordinary power of the lute became every day more and more apparent. The wayfarer passing by the tower was detained, and, as it were, spell-bound, in breathless ecstasy. The very birds gathered in the neighboring trees, and hushing their own strains, listened in charmed silence.

Rumor soon spread the news abroad. The inhabitants of Granada thronged to the Alhambra to catch a few notes of the transcendent music that floated about the tower of Las Infantas.

The lovely little minstrel was at length drawn forth from her retreat. The rich and powerful of the land contended who should entertain and do honor to her; or rather, who should secure the charms of her lute to draw fashionable throngs to their saloons. Wherever she went her vigilant aunt kept a dragon watch at her elbow, awing the throngs of impassioned admirers who hung in raptures on her strains. The report of her wonderful powers spread from city to city. Malaga, Seville, Cordova, all became successively mad on the theme; nothing was talked of throughout Andalusia but the beautiful minstrel of the Alhambra. How could it be otherwise among a people so musical and gallant as the Andalusians, when the lute was magical in its powers, and the minstrel inspired by love!

While all Andalusia was thus music mad, a different mood prevailed at the court of Spain. Philip V., as is well known, was a miserable hypochondriac, and subject to all kinds of fancies. Sometimes he would keep to his bed for weeks together, groaning under imaginary complaints. At other times he would insist upon abdicating his throne, to the great annoyance of his royal spouse, who had a strong relish for the splendors of a court and the glories of a crown, and guided the sceptre of her imbecile lord with an expert and steady hand.

Nothing was found to be so efficacious in dispelling the royal megrims as the power of music; the queen took care, therefore, to have the best performers, both vocal and instrumental, at hand, and retained the famous Italian singer Farinelli about the court as a kind of royal physician.

At the moment we treat of, however, a freak had come over the mind of this sapient and illustrious Bourbon that surpassed all former vagaries. After a long spell of imaginary illness, which set all the strains of Farinelli and the consultations of a whole orchestra of court-fiddlers at defiance, the monarch fairly, in idea, gave up the ghost, and considered himself absolutely dead.

This would have been harmless enough, and even convenient both to his queen and courtiers, had he been content to remain in the quietude befitting a dead man; but to their annoyance he insisted upon having the funeral ceremonies performed over him, and, to their inexpressible perplexity, began to grow impatient, and to revile bitterly at them for negligence and disrespect, in leaving him unburied. What was to be done? To disobey the king's positive commands was monstrous in the eyes of the obsequious courtiers of a punctilious court —but to obey him, and bury him alive would be downright regicide!

In the midst of this fearful dilemma a rumor reached the court, of the female minstrel who was turning the brains of all Andalusia. The queen dispatched missions in all haste to summon her to St. Ildefonso, where the court at that time resided.

Within a few days, as the queen with her maids of honor was walking in those stately gardens, intended, with their avenues and terraces and fountains, to eclipse the glories of Versailles, the far-famed minstrel was conducted into her presence. The imperial Elizabetta gazed with surprise at the youthful and unpretending appearance of the little being that had set the world madding. She was in her picturesque Andalusian dress, her silver lute in hand, and stood with modest and downcast eyes, but with a simplicity and freshness of beauty that still bespoke her 'the Rose of the Alhambra.'

As usual she was accompanied by the ever-vigilant Fredegonda, who gave the whole history of her parentage and descent to the inquiring queen. If the stately Elizabetta had been interested by the appearance of Jacinta, she was still more pleased when she learnt that she was of a meritorious though impoverished line, and that her father had bravely fallen in the service of the crown. 'If thy powers equal their renown,' said she, 'and thou canst cast forth this evil spirit that possesses thy sovereign, thy fortunes shall henceforth be my care, and honors and wealth attend thee.'

Impatient to make trial of her skill, she led the way at once to the apartment of the moody monarch.

Jacinta followed with downcast eyes through files of guards and crowds of courtiers. They arrived at length at a great chamber hung with black. The windows were closed to exclude the light of day: a number of yellow wax tapers in silver sconces diffused a lugubrious light, and dimly revealed the figures of mutes in mourning dresses, and courtiers who glided about with noiseless step and woebegone visage. In the midst of a funeral bed or bier, his hands folded on his breast, and the tip of his nose just visible, lay extended this would-be-buried monarch.

The queen entered the chamber in silence, and pointing to a footstool in an obscure corner, beckoned to Jacinta to sit down and commence.

At first she touched her lute with a faltering hand, but gathering confidence and animation as she proceeded, drew forth such soft aerial harmony, that all present could scarce believe it mortal. As to the monarch, who had already considered himself in the world of spirits, he set it down for some angelic melody or the music of the spheres. By degrees the theme was varied, and the voice of the minstrel accompanied the in-

strument. She poured forth one of the legendary ballads treating of the ancient glories of the Alhambra and the achievements of the Moors. Her whole soul entered into the theme, for with the recollections of the Alhambra was associated the story of her love. The funeral chamber resounded with the animating strain. It entered into the gloomy heart of the monarch. He raised his head and gazed around: he sat up on his couch, his eye began to kindle —at length, leaping upon the floor, he called for sword and buckler.

The triumph of music, or rather of the enchanted lute, was complete; the demon of melancholy was cast forth; and, as it were, a dead man brought to life. The windows of the apartment were thrown open; the glorious effulgence of Spanish sunshine burst into the late lugubrious chamber; all eyes sought the lovely enchantress, but the lute had fallen from her hand, she had sunk upon the earth, and the next moment was clasped to the bosom of Ruyz de Alarcon.

The nuptials of the happy couple were celebrated soon afterwards with great splendor, and the Rose of the Alhambra became the ornament and delight of the court. 'But hold—not so fast'—I hear the reader exclaim, 'this is jumping to the end of a story at a furious rate! First let us know how Ruyz de Alarcon managed to account to Jacinta for his long neglect?' Nothing more easy; the venerable, time-honored excuse, the opposition to his wishes by a proud, pragmatical old father: besides, young people who really like one another soon come to an amicable understanding, and bury all past grievances when once they meet.

But how was the proud, pragmatical old father reconciled to the match?

Oh! as to that, his scruples were easily overcome by a word or two from the queen; especially as dignities and rewards were showered upon the blooming favorite of royalty. Besides, the lute of Jacinta, you know, possessed a magic power, and could control the most stubborn head and hardest breast.

And what came of the enchanted lute?

O that is the most curious matter of all, and plainly proves the truth of the whole story. That lute remained for some time in the family, but was purloined and carried off, as was supposed, by the great singer Farinelli, in pure jealousy. At his death it passed into other hands in Italy, who were ignorant of its mystic powers, and melting down the silver, transferred the strings to an old Cremona fiddle. The strings still retain something of their magic virtues. A word in the reader's ear, but let it go no further—that fiddle is now bewitching the whole world,—it is the fiddle of Paganini!

1832

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
1789–1851

FROM THE PILOT
OUT TO SEA [1]

I

'Behold the threaden sails,
Borne with the invisible and creeping winds,
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,
Breasting the lofty surge.'

SHAKESPEARE.

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is Chapters 4–5 from *The Pilot*(N.Y.,1823). The mysterious pilot is John Paul Jones, who was engaged in patriotic high-jacking off the British coast.

It has been already explained to the reader, that there were threatening symptoms in the appearance of the weather to create serious forebodings of evil in the breast of a seaman. When removed from the shadows of the cliffs, the night was not so dark but objects could be discerned at some little distance, and in the eastern horizon there was a streak of fearful light impending over the gloomy waters, in which the swelling outline formed by the rising waves was becoming each moment more distinct, and, consequently, more alarming. Several dark clouds overhung the vessel, whose towering masts apparently propped the black vapor,

while a few stars were seen twinkling, with a sickly flame, in the streak of clear sky that skirted the ocean. Still, light currents of air, occasionally, swept across the bay, bringing with them the fresh odor from the shore, but their flitting irregularity too surely foretold them to be the expiring breath of the land breeze. The roaring of the surf, as it rolled on the margin of the bay, produced a dull, monotonous sound, that was only interrupted, at times, by a hollow bellowing, as a larger wave than usual broke violently against some cavity in the rock. Everything, in short, united to render the scene gloomy and portentous, without creating instant terror, for the ship rose easily on the long billows, without even straightening the heavy cable that held her to her anchor.

The higher officers were collected around the capstan, engaged in earnest discourse about their situation and prospects, while some of the oldest and most favored seamen would extend their short walk to the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, to catch, with greedy ears, the opinions that fell from their superiors. Numberless were the uneasy glances that were thrown from both officers and men at their commander and the pilot, who still continued their secret communion in a distant part of the vessel. Once, an ungovernable curiosity, or the heedlessness of his years, led one of the youthful midshipmen near them, but a stern rebuke from his captain sent the boy, abashed and cowering, to hide his mortification among his fellows. This reprimand was received by the elder officers as an intimation that the consultation which they beheld was to be strictly inviolate; and, though it by no means suppresssed the repeated expressions of their impatience, it effectually prevented an interruption to the communications, which all, however, thought were unreasonably protracted for the occasion.

'This is no time to be talking over bearings and distances,' observed the officer next in rank to Griffith; 'but we should call the hands up, and try to kedge her off while the sea will suffer a boat to live.'

' 'Twould be a tedious and bootless job to attempt warping a ship for miles against a head-beating sea,' returned the first lieutenant; 'but the land breeze yet flutters aloft, and if our light sails would draw, with the aid of this ebb tide we might be able to shove her from the shore.'

'Hail the tops, Griffith,' said the other, 'and ask if they feel the air above; 'twill be a hint at least to set the old man and that lubberly pilot in motion.'

Griffith laughed as he complied with the request, and when he received the customary reply to his call, he demanded in a loud voice—

'Which way have you the wind, aloft?'

'We feel a light cat's-paw, now and then, from the land, sir,' returned the sturdy captain of the top; 'but our top-sail hangs in the clew-lines, sir, without winking.'

Captain Munson and his companion suspended their discourse while this question and answer were exchanged, and then resumed their dialogue as earnestly as if it had received no interruption.

'If it did wink, the hint would be lost on our betters,' said the officer of the marines, whose ignorance of seamanship added greatly to his perception of the danger, but who, from pure idleness, made more jokes than any other man in the ship. 'That pilot would not receive a delicate intimation through his ears, Mr. Griffith; suppose you try him by the nose.'

'Faith, there was a flash of gunpowder between us in the barge,' returned the first-lieutenant, 'and he does not seem a man to stomach such hints as you advise. Although he looks so meek and quiet, I doubt whether he has paid much attention to the book of Job.'

'Why should he?' exclaimed the chaplain, whose apprehensions at least equalled those of the marine, and with a much more disheartening effect; 'I am sure it would have been a great waste of time: there are so many charts of the coast, and books on the navigation of these seas, for him to study, that I sincerely hope he has been much better employed.'

A loud laugh was created at this speech among the listeners, and it apparently produced the effect that was so long anxiously desired, by putting an end to the mysterious conference between their captain and the pilot. As the former came forward towards his expecting crew, he said, in the composed, steady manner that formed the principal trait in his character.—

'Get the anchor, Mr. Griffith, and make sail on the ship; the hour has arrived when we must be moving.'

The cheerful 'Ay, ay, sir!' of the young lieutenant was hardly uttered, before the cries of half a dozen midshipmen were heard summoning the boatswain and his mates to their duty.

There was a general movement in the living masses that clustered around the mainmast, on the booms, and in the gangways, though their habits of discipline held the crew a moment longer in suspense. The silence was first broken by the sound of the boatswain's whistle, followed by the hoarse cry of 'All hands, up anchor, ahoy!'—the former rising on the night air from its first low mellow notes to a piercing shrillness that gradually died away on the waters; and the latter bellowing through every cranny of the ship, like the hollow murmurs of distant thunder.

The change produced by the customary summons was magical. Human beings sprang out from between the guns, rushed up the hatches, threw themselves with careless activity from the booms, and gathered from every quarter so rapidly, that in an instant, the deck of the frigate was alive with men. The profound silence, that had hitherto been only interrupted by the low dialogue of the officers, was now changed for the stern orders of the lieutenants, mingled with the shriller cries of the midshipmen, and the hoarse bawling of the boatswain's crew, rising above the tumult of preparation and general bustle.

The captain and the pilot alone remained passive, in this scene of general exertion; for apprehension had even stimulated that class of officers which is called 'idlers' to unusual activity, though frequently reminded by their more experienced messmates that, instead of aiding, they retarded the duty of the vessel. The bustle, however, gradually ceased, and in a few minutes, the same silence pervaded the ship as before.

'We are brought-to, sir,' said Griffith, who stood overlooking the scene, holding in one hand a short speaking-trumpet, and grasping with the other one of the shrouds of the ship, to steady himself in the position he had taken on a gun.

'Heave round, sir,' was the calm reply.

'Heave round!' repeated Griffith, aloud.

'Heave round!' echoed a dozen eager voices at once, and the lively strains of a fife struck up a brisk air, to enliven the labor. The capstan was instantly set in motion, and the measured tread of the seamen was heard, as they stamped the deck in the circle of their march. For a few minutes no other sounds were heard, if we except the voice of an officer, occasionally cheering the sailors, when it was announced that they 'were short'; or, in other words, that the ship was nearly over her anchor.

'Heave and pull,' cried Griffith; when the quivering notes of the whistle were again succeeded by a general stillness in the vessel.

'What is to be done now, sir?' continued the lieutenant; 'shall we trip the anchor? There seems not a breath of air; and as the tide runs slack, I doubt whether the sea do not heave the ship ashore.'

There was so much obvious truth in this conjecture, that all eyes turned from the light and animation afforded by the decks of the frigate, to look abroad on the waters, in a vain desire to pierce the darkness, as if to read the fate of their apparently devoted ship, from the aspect of nature.

'I leave all to the pilot,' said the captain, after he had stood a short time by the side of Griffith, anxiously studying the heavens and the ocean. 'What say you, Mr. Gray?'

The man who was thus first addressed by name was leaning over the bulwarks, with his eyes bent in the same direction as the others; but as he answered he turned his face towards the speaker, and the light from the deck fell full upon his quiet features, which exhibited a calmness bordering on the supernatural, considering his station and responsibility.

'There is much to fear from this heavy ground-swell,' he said, in the same unmoved tones as before; 'but there is certain destruction to us, if the gale that is brewing in the east finds us waiting its fury in this wild anchorage. All the hemp that ever was spun into cordage would not hold a ship an hour, chafing on these rocks, with a north-easter pouring its fury on her. If the powers of man can compass it, gentlemen, we must get an offing, and that speedily.'

'You say no more, sir, than the youngest boy in the ship can see for himself,' said Griffith; 'ha! here comes the schooner!'

The dashing of the long sweeps in the water was now plainly audible, and the little Ariel was seen through the gloom, moving heavily under their feeble impulse. As she passed slowly under the stern of the frigate, the cheerful voice of Barnstable was first heard, opening the communications between them.

'Here's a night for spectacles, Captain Munson!' he cried; 'but I thought I heard your fife, sir. I trust in God, you do not mean to ride it out here till morning?'

'I like the berth as little as yourself, Mr. Barnstable,' returned the veteran seaman, in his calm manner, in which anxiety was, however, beginning to grow evident. 'We are short; but are afraid to let go our hold of the bottom, lest the sea cast us ashore. How make you out the wind?'

'Wind!' echoed the other; 'there is not enough to blow a lady's curl aside. If you wait, sir, till the land breeze fills your sails, you will wait another moon. I believe I've got my egg-shell out of that nest of gray-caps; but how it has been done in the dark, a better man than myself must explain.'

'Take your directions from the pilot, Mr. Barnstable,' returned his commanding officer, 'and follow them strictly and to the letter.'

A deathlike silence, in both vessels, succeeded this order; for all seemed to listen eagerly to catch the words that fell from the man on whom, even the boys now felt, depended their only hopes for safety. A short time was suffered to elapse, before his voice was heard, in the same low but distinct tones as before—

'Your sweeps will soon be of no service to you,' he said, 'against the sea that begins to heave in; but your light sails will help them to get you out. So long as you can head east-and-by-north, you are doing well, and you can stand on till you open the light from that northern headland, when you can heave to, and fire a gun; but if, as I dread, you are struck aback before you open the light, you may trust to your lead on the larboard tack; but beware, with your head to the southward, for no lead will serve you there.'

'I can walk over the same ground on one tack as on the other,' said Barnstable, 'and make both legs of a length.'

'It will not do,' returned the pilot. 'If you fall off a point to starboard from east-and-by-north, in going large, you will find both rocks and points of shoals to bring you up; and beware, as I tell you, of the starboard tack.'

'And how shall I find my way? you will let me trust to neither time, lead, nor log.'

'You must trust to a quick eye and a ready hand. The breakers only will show you the dangers, when you are not able to make out the bearings of the land. Tack in season, sir, and don't spare the lead when you head to port.'

'Ay, ay,' returned Barnstable, in a low muttering voice. 'This is a sort of blind navigation with a vengeance, and all for no purpose that I can see—see! damme, eyesight is of about as much use now as a man's nose would be in reading the Bible.'

'Softly, softly, Mr. Barnstable,' interrupted his commander,—for such was the anxious stillness in both vessels that even the rattling of the schooner's rigging was heard, as she rolled in the trough of the sea,—'the duty on which Congress has sent us must be performed, at the hazard of our lives.'

'I don't mind my life, Captain Munson,' said Barnstable, 'but there is a great want of conscience in trusting a vessel in such a place as this. However, it is a time to do, and not to talk. But if there be such danger to an easy draught of water, what will become of the frigate? had I not better play jackal, and try and feel the way for you?'

'I thank you,' said the pilot; 'the offer is generous, but would avail us nothing. I have the advantage of knowing the ground well, and must trust to my memory and God's good favor. Make sail, make sail, sir, and if you succeed, we will venture to break ground.'

The order was promptly obeyed, and in a very short time the Ariel was covered with canvas. Though no air was perceptible on the decks of the frigate, the little schooner was so light, that she succeeded in stemming her way over the rising waves, aided a little by the tide; and in a few minutes her low hull was just discernible in the streak of light along the horizon, with the dark outline of her sails rising above the sea, until their fanciful summits were lost in the shadows of the clouds.

Griffith had listened to the foregoing

dialogue, like the rest of the junior officers, in profound silence; but when the Ariel began to grow indistinct to the eye, he jumped lightly from the gun to the deck, and cried—

'She slips off, like a vessel from the stocks! shall I trip the anchor, sir, and follow?'

'We have no choice,' replied his captain. 'You hear the question, Mr. Gray? shall we let go the bottom?'

'It must be done, Captain Munson; we may want more drift than the rest of this tide to get us to a place of safety,' said the pilot, 'I would give five years from a life that I know will be short, if the ship lay one mile further seaward.'

This remark was unheard by all, except the commander of the frigate, who again walked aside with the pilot, where they resumed their mysterious communications. The words of assent were no sooner uttered, however, than Griffith gave forth from his trumpet the command to 'Heave away!' Again the strains of the fife were followed by the tread of the men at the capstan. At the same time that the anchor was heaving up, the sails were loosened from the yards, and opened to invite the breeze. In effecting this duty, orders were thundered through the trumpet of the first lieutenant, and executed with the rapidity of thought. Men were to be seen, like spots in the dim light from the heavens, lying on every yard, or hanging as in air, while strange cries were heard issuing from every part of the rigging, and each spar of the vessel. 'Ready the fore-royal,' cried a shrill voice, as if from the clouds; 'Ready the fore-yard,' uttered the hoarser tones of a seaman beneath him; 'All ready aft, sir,' cried a third, from another quarter; and in a few moments the order was given to 'let fall.'

The little light which fell from the sky was now excluded by the falling canvas, and a deeper gloom was cast athwart the decks of the ship, that served to render the brilliancy of the lanterns even vivid, while it gave to objects outboard a more appalling and dreary appearance than before.

Every individual, excepting the commander and his associate, was now earnestly engaged in getting the ship under way. The sounds of 'We're away,' were repeated by a burst from fifty voices, and the rapid evolutions of the capstan announced that nothing but the weight of the anchor was to be lifted. The hauling of cordage, the rattling of blocks, blended with the shrill calls of the boatswain and his mates, succeeded; and though to a landsman all would have appeared confusion and hurry, long practice and strict discipline enabled the crew to exhibit their ship under a cloud of canvas, from her deck to the trucks, in less time than we have consumed in relating it.

For a few minutes, the officers were not disappointed by the result; for though the heavy sails flapped lazily against the masts, the light duck on the loftier spars swelled outwardly, and the ship began sensibly to yield to their influence.

'She travels! she travels!' exclaimed Griffith, joyously; 'ah, the hussy! she has as much antipathy to the land as any fish that swims; it blows a little gale aloft yet!'

'We feel its dying breath,' said the pilot, in low, soothing tones, but in a manner so sudden as to startle Griffith, at whose elbow they were unexpectedly uttered. 'Let us forget, young man, everything but the number of lives that depend, this night, on your exertions and my knowledge.'

'If you be but half as able to exhibit the one, as I am willing to make the other, we shall do well,' returned the lieutenant, in the same tone. 'Remember, whatever may be your feelings, that *we* are on an enemy's coast, and love it not enough to wish to lay our bones there.'

With this brief explanation they separated, the vessel requiring the constant and close attention of the officer to her movements.

The exultation produced in the crew by the progress of their ship through the water was of short duration; for the breeze that had seemed to await their motions, after forcing the vessel for a quarter of a mile, fluttered for a few minutes amid their light canvas, and then left them entirely. The quartermaster, whose duty it was to superintend the helm, soon announced that he was losing the command of the vessel, as she was no longer obedient to her rudder. This ungrateful intelligence was promptly communicated to his commander by Griffith, who suggested the propriety of again dropping an anchor.

'I refer you to Mr. Gray,' returned the captain; 'he is the pilot, sir, and with him rests the safety of the vessel.'

'Pilots sometimes lose ships as well as save them,' said Griffith: 'know you the man well, Captain Munson, who holds all our lives in his keeping, and so coolly as if he cared but little for the venture?'

'Mr. Griffith, I do know him; he is, in my opinion, both competent and faithful. Thus much I tell you, to relieve your anxiety; more you must not ask;—but is there not a shift of wind?'

'God forbid!' exclaimed his lieutenant; 'if that north-easter catches us within the shoals, our case will be desperate indeed!'

The heavy rolling of the vessel caused an occasional expansion, and as sudden a reaction, in their sails, which left the oldest seaman in the ship in doubt which way the currents of air were passing, or whether there existed any that were not created by the flapping of their own canvas. The head of the ship, however, began to fall off from the sea, and notwithstanding the darkness, it soon became apparent that she was driving in, bodily, towards the shore.

During these few minutes of gloomy doubt, Griffith, by one of those sudden revulsions of the mind, that connect the opposite extremes of feeling, lost his animated anxiety, and relapsed into the listless apathy that so often came over him, even in the most critical moments of trial and danger. He was standing with one elbow resting on his capstan, shading his eyes from the light of the battle-lantern that stood near him with one hand, when he felt a gentle pressure of the other, that recalled his recollection. Looking affectionately, though still recklessly, at the boy who stood at his side, he said—

'Dull music, Mr. Merry.'

'So dull, sir, that I can't dance to it,' returned the midshipman. 'Nor do I believe there is a man in the ship who would not rather hear "The girl I left behind me," than those execrable sounds.'

'What sounds, boy? The ship is as quiet as the Quaker meeting in the Jerseys, before your good old grandfather used to break the charm of silence with his sonorous voice.'

'Ah! laugh at my peaceable blood, if thou wilt, Mr. Griffith,' said the arch youngster; 'but remember, there is a mixture of it in all sorts of veins. I wish I could hear one of the old gentleman's chants now, sir; I could always sleep to them, like a gull in the surf. But he that sleeps to-night, with that lullaby, will make a nap of it.'

'Sounds! I hear no sounds, boy, but the flapping aloft; even that pilot, who struts the quarter-deck like an admiral, has nothing to say.'

'Is not that a sound to open a seaman's ear?'

'It is in truth a heavy roll of the surf, lad, but the night air carries it heavily to our ears. Know you not the sounds of the surf yet, younker?'

'I know it too well, Mr. Griffith, and do not wish to know it better. How fast are we tumbling in towards that surf, sir?'

'I think we hold our own,' said Griffith, rousing again; 'though we had better anchor. Luff, fellow, luff; you are broadside to the sea!'

The man at the wheel repeated his former inteligence, adding a suggestion, that he thought the ship 'was gathering sternway.'

'Haul up your courses, Mr. Griffith,' said Captain Munson, 'and let us feel the wind.'

The rattling of the blocks was soon heard, and the enormous sheets of canvas that hung from the lower yards were instantly suspended 'in the brails.' When this change was effected, all on board stood silent and breathless, as if expecting to learn their fate by the result. Several contradictory opinions were, at length, hazarded among the officers, when Griffith seized the candle from the lantern, and springing on one of the guns, held it on high, exposed to the action of the air. The little flame waved, with uncertain glimmering, for a moment, and then burned steadily, in a line with the masts. Griffith was about to lower his extended arm, when, feeling a slight sensation of coolness on his hand, he paused, and the light turned slowly towards the land, flared, flickered, and finally deserted the wick.

'Lose not a moment, Mr. Griffith,' cried the pilot, aloud; 'clew up and furl everything but your three top-sails, and let them be double-reefed. Now is the time to fulfill your promise.'

The young man paused one moment in

astonishment, as the clear, distinct tones of the stranger struck his ears so unexpectedly; but turning his eyes to seaward, he sprang on the deck, and proceeded to obey the order, as if life and death depended on his despatch.

2

'She rights! she rights, boys! wear off shore!'

SONG.

THE extraordinary activity of Griffith, which communicated itself with promptitude to the crew, was produced by a sudden alteration in the weather. In place of the well-defined streak along the horizon, that has been already described, an immense body of misty light appeared to be moving in, with rapidity, from the ocean, while a distinct but distant roaring announced the sure approach of the tempest that had so long troubled the waters. Even Griffith, while thundering his orders through the trumpet, and urging the men, by his cries, to expedition, would pause, for instants, to cast anxious glances in the direction of the coming storm; and the faces of the sailors who lay on the yards were turned, instinctively, towards the same quarter of the heavens, while they knotted the reef-points, or passed the gaskets, that were to confine the unruly canvas to the prescribed limits.

The pilot alone, in that confused and busy throng, where voice rose above voice, and cry echoed cry, in quick succession, appeared as if he held no interest in the important stake. With his eyes steadily fixed on the approaching mist, and his arms folded together in composure, he stood calmly waiting the result.

The ship had fallen off, with her broadside to the sea, and was become unmanageable, and the sails were already brought into the folds necessary to her security, when the quick and heavy fluttering of canvas was thrown across the water, with all the gloomy and chilling sensations that such sounds produce, where darkness and danger unite to appal the seaman.

'The schooner has it!' cried Griffith; 'Barnstable has held on, like himself, to the last moment. God send that the squall leave him cloth enough to keep him from the shore!'

'His sails are easily handled,' the commander observed, 'and she must be over the principal danger. We are falling off before it, Mr. Gray; shall we try a cast of the lead?'

The pilot turned from his contemplative posture, and moved slowly across the deck before he returned any reply to this question—like a man who not only felt that everything depended on himself, but that he was equal to the emergency.

' 'Tis unnecessary,' he at length said; ' 'twould be certain destruction to be taken aback; and it is difficult to say, within several points, how the wind may strike us.'

' 'Tis difficult no longer,' cried Griffith; 'for here it comes, and in right earnest!'

The rushing sounds of the wind were now, indeed, heard at hand; and the words were hardly past the lips of the young lieutenant, before the vessel bowed down heavily to one side, and then, as she began to move through the water, rose again majestically to her upright position, as if saluting, like a courteous champion, the powerful antagonist with which she was about to contend. Not another minute elapsed, before the ship was throwing the waters aside, with a lively progress, and, obedient to her helm, was brought as near to the desired course as the direction of the wind would allow. The hurry and bustle on the yards gradually subsided, and the men slowly descended to the deck, all straining their eyes to pierce the gloom in which they were enveloped, and some shaking their heads, in melancholy doubt, afraid to express the apprehensions they really entertained. All on board anxiously waited for the fury of the gale; for there were none so ignorant or inexperienced in that gallant frigate, as not to know that as yet they only felt the infant effects of the wind. Each moment, however, it increased in power, though so gradual was the alteration, that the relieved mariners began to believe that all their gloomy forebodings were not to be realized. During this short interval of uncertainty, no other sounds were heard than the whistling of the breeze, as it passed quickly through the mass of rigging that belonged to the vessel, and the dashing of the spray that began to fly from her bows, like the foam of a cataract.

'It blows fresh,' cried Griffith, who was the first to speak in that moment of doubt and anxiety; 'but it is no more than a cap-full of wind after all. Give us elbow-room, and the right canvas, Mr. Pilot, and I'll handle the ship like a gentleman's yacht, in this breeze.'

'Will she stay, think ye, under this sail?' said the low voice of the stranger.

'She will do all that man, in reason, can ask of wood and iron,' returned the lieutenant; 'but the vessel don't float the ocean that will tack under double-reefed top-sails alone, against a heavy sea. Help her with the courses, pilot, and you shall see her come round like a dancing-master.'

'Let us feel the strength of the gale first,' returned the man who was called Mr. Gray, moving from the side of Griffith to the weather gangway of the vessel, where he stood in silence, looking ahead of the ship, with an air of singular coolness and abstraction.

All the lanterns had been extinguished on the deck of the frigate, when her anchor was secured, and as the first mist of the gale had passed over, it was succeeded by a faint light that was a good deal aided by the glittering foam of the waters, which now broke in white curls around the vessel in every direction. The land could be faintly discerned, rising like a heavy bank of black fog, above the margin of the waters, and was only distinguishable from the heavens by its deeper gloom and obscurity. The last rope was coiled, and deposited in its proper place, by the seamen, and for several minutes the stillness of death pervaded the crowded decks. It was evident to every one, that their ship was dashing at a prodigious rate through the waves; and as she was approaching, with such velocity, the quarter of the bay where the shoals and dangers were known to be situated, nothing but the habits of the most exact discipline could suppress the uneasiness of the officers and men within their own bosoms. At length the voice of Captain Munson was heard, calling to the pilot.

'Shall I send a hand into the chains, Mr. Gray,' he said, ' and try our water?'

Although this question was asked aloud, and the interest it excited drew many of the officers and men around him, in eager impatience for his answer, it was unheeded by the man to whom it was addressed. His head rested on his hand, as he leaned over the hammock-cloths of the vessel, and his whole air was that of one whose thoughts wandered from the pressing necessity of their situation. Griffith was among those who had approached the pilot; and after waiting a moment, from respect, to hear the answer to his commander's question, he presumed on his own rank, and leaving the circle that stood at a little distance, stepped to the side of the mysterious guardian of their lives.

'Captain Munson desires to know whether you wish a cast of the lead?' said the young officer, with a little impatience of manner. No immediate answer was made to this repetition of the question, and Griffith laid his hand unceremoniously on the shoulder of the other, with an intent to rouse him before he made another application for a reply, but the convulsive start of the pilot held him silent in amazement.

'Fall back there,' said the lieutenant, sternly, to the men, who were closing around them in a compact circle; 'away with you to your stations, and see all clear for stays.' The dense mass of heads dissolved, at this order, like the water of one of the waves commingling with the ocean, and the lieutenant and his companions were left by themselves.

'This is not a time for musing, Mr. Gray,' continued Griffith; 'remember our compact, and look to your charge—is it not time to put the vessel in stays? of what are you dreaming?'

The pilot laid his hand on the extended arm of the lieutenant, and grasped it with a convulsive pressure, as he answered,—

' 'Tis a dream of reality. You are young, Mr. Griffith, nor am I past the noon of life; but should you live fifty years longer, you never can see and experience what I have encountered in my little period of three-and-thirty years!'

A good deal astonished at this burst of feeling, so singular at such a moment, the young sailor was at a loss for a reply; but as his duty was uppermost in his thoughts, he still dwelt on the theme that most interested him.

'I hope much of your experience has been on this coast, for the ship travels lively,' he said, 'and the daylight showed us

so much to dread, that we do not feel overvaliant in the dark. How much longer shall we stand on, upon this tack?'

The pilot turned slowly from the side of the vessel, and walked towards the commander of the frigate, as he replied, in a tone that seemed deeply agitated by his melancholy reflections,—

'You have your wish, then; much, very much of my early life was passed on this dreaded coast. What to you is all darkness and gloom, to me is as light as if a noon-day sun shone upon it. But tack your ship, sir, tack your ship; I would see how she works before we reach the point where she *must* behave well, or we perish.'

Griffith gazed after him in wonder, while the pilot slowly paced the quarter-deck, and then, rousing from his trance, gave forth the cheering order that called each man to his station, to perform the desired evolution. The confident assurances which the young officer had given to the pilot respecting the qualities of his vessel, and his own ability to manage her, were fully realized by the result. The helm was no sooner put a-lee, than the huge ship bore up gallantly against the wind, and, dashing directly through the waves, threw the foam high into the air, as she looked boldly into the very eye of the wind; and then, yielding gracefully to its power, she fell off on the other tack, with her head pointed from those dangerous shoals that she had so recently approached with such terrifying velocity. The heavy yards swung round, as if they had been vanes to indicate the currents of the air; and in a few moments the frigate again moved, with stately progress, through the water, leaving the rocks and shoals behind her on one side of the bay, but advancing towards those that offered equal danger on the other.

During this time the sea was becoming more agitated, and the violence of the wind was gradually increasing. The latter no longer whistled amid the cordage of the vessel, but it seemed to howl, surlily, as it passed the complicated machinery that the frigate obtruded on its path. An endless succession of white surges rose above the heavy billows, and the very air was glittering with the light that was disengaged from the ocean. The ship yielded, each moment, more and more before the storm, and in less than half an hour from the time that she had lifted her anchor, she was driven along with tremendous fury by the full power of a gale of wind. Still the hardy and experienced mariners who directed her movements, held her to the course that was necessary to their preservation, and still Griffith gave forth, when directed by their unknown pilot, those orders that turned her in the narrow channel where alone safety was to be found.

So far, the performance of his duty appeared easy to the stranger, and he gave the required directions in those still, calm tones, that formed so remarkable a contrast to the responsibility of his situation. But when the land was becoming dim, in distance as well as darkness, and the agitated sea alone was to be discovered as it swept by them in foam, he broke in upon the monotonous roaring of the tempest with the sounds of his voice, seeming to shake off his apathy, and rouse himself to the occasion.

'Now is the time to watch her closely, Mr. Griffith,' he cried; 'here we get the true tide and the real danger. Place the best quartermaster of your ship in those chains, and let an officer stand by him, and see that he gives us the right water.'

'I will take that office on myself,' said the captain; 'pass a light into the weather main-chains.'

'Stand by your braces!' exclaimed the pilot, with startling quickness. 'Heave away that lead!'

These preparations taught the crew to expect the crisis, and every officer and man stood in fearful silence, at his assigned station, awaiting the issue of the trial. Even the quartermaster at the gun gave out his orders to the men at the wheel, in deeper and hoarser tones than usual, as if anxious not to disturb the quiet and order of the vessel.

While this deep expectation pervaded the frigate, the piercing cry of the leadsman, as he called 'by the mark seven,' rose above the tempest, crossed over the decks, and appeared to pass away to leeward, borne on the blast like the warnings of some water spirit.

''Tis well,' returned the pilot, calmly; 'try it again.'

The short pause was succeeded by another cry, 'And a half-five!'

'She shoals! she shoals!' exclaimed Griffith; 'keep her a good full.'

'Ay! you must hold the vessel in command, now,' said the pilot, with those cool tones that are most appalling in critical moments, because they seem to denote most preparation and care.

The third call 'by the deep four!' was followed by a prompt direction from the stranger to tack.

Griffith seemed to emulate the coolness of the pilot, in issuing the necessary orders to execute this manœuvre.

The vessel rose slowly from the inclined position into which she had been forced by the tempest, and the sails were shaking violently, as if to release themselves from their confinement, while the ship stemmed the billows, when the well-known voice of the sailing-master was heard shouting from the forecastle,—

'Breakers! breakers, dead ahead!'

This appalling sound seemed yet to be lingering about the ship, when a second voice cried,—

'Breakers on our lee-bow!'

'We are in a bight of the shoals, Mr. Gray,' cried the commander. 'She loses her way; perhaps an anchor might hold her.'

'Clear away that best bower!' shouted Griffith through his trumpet.

'Hold on!' cried the pilot, in a voice that reached the very hearts of all who heard him; 'hold on everything.'

The young man turned fiercely to the daring stranger who thus defied the discipline of his vessel, and at once demanded,—

'Who is it that dares to countermand my orders? is it not enough that you run the ship into danger, but you must interfere to keep her there? If another word—'

'Peace, Mr. Griffith,' interrupted the captain, bending from the rigging, his gray locks blowing about in the wind, and adding a look of wildness to the haggard care that he exhibited by the light of his lantern; 'yield the trumpet to Mr. Gray; he alone can save us.'

Griffith threw his speaking-trumpet on the deck, and as he walked proudly away, muttered in bitterness of feeling,—

'Then all is lost, indeed! and among the rest, the foolish hopes with which I visited this coast.'

There was, however, no time for reply; the ship had been rapidly running into the wind, and as the efforts of the crew were paralyzed by the contradictory orders they had heard, she gradually lost her way, and in a few seconds all her sails were taken aback.

Before the crew understood their situation the pilot had applied the trumpet to his mouth, and in a voice that rose above the tempest, he thundered forth his orders. Each command was given distinctly, and with a precision that showed him to be master of his profession. The helm was kept fast, the head-yards swung up heavily against the wind, and the vessel was soon whirling round on her heel, with a retrograde movement.

Griffith was too much of a seaman not to perceive that the pilot had seized, with a perception almost intuitive, the only method that promised to extricate the vessel from her situation. He was young, impetuous, and proud—but he was also generous. Forgetting his resentment and his mortification, he rushed forward among the men, and, by his presence and example, added certainty to the experiment. The ship fell off slowly before the gale, and bowed her yards nearly to the water, as she felt the blast pouring its fury on her broadside, while the surly waves beat violently against her stern, as if in reproach at departing from her usual manner of moving.

The voice of the pilot, however, was still heard, steady and calm, and yet so clear and high as to reach every ear; and the obedient seamen whirled the yards at his bidding, in despite of the tempest, as if they handled the toys of their childhood. When the ship had fallen off dead before the wind, her head-sails were shaken, her after-yards trimmed, and her helm shifted, before she had time to run upon the danger that had threatened, as well to leeward as to windward. The beautiful fabric, obedient to her government, threw her bows up gracefully towards the wind again; and, as her sails were trimmed, moved out from amongst the dangerous shoals, in which she had been embayed, as steadily and swiftly as she had approached them.

A moment of breathless astonishment succeeded the accomplishment of this nice manœuvre, but there was no time for the usual expressions of surprise. The stranger

still held the trumpet, and continued to lift his voice amid the howlings of the blast, whenever prudence or skill required any change in the management of the ship. For an hour longer there was a fearful struggle for their preservation, the channel becoming at each step more complicated, and the shoals thickening around the mariners on every side. The lead was cast rapidly, and the quick eye of the pilot seemed to pierce the darkness with a keenness of vision that exceeded human power. It was apparent to all in the vessel that they were under the guidance of one who understood the navigation thoroughly, and their exertions kept pace with their reviving confidence. Again and again the frigate appeared to be rushing blindly on shoals where the sea was covered with foam, and where destruction would have been as sudden as it was certain, when the clear voice of the stranger was heard warning them of the danger, and inciting them to their duty. The vessel was implicitly yielded to his government; and during those anxious moments when she was dashing the waters aside, throwing the spray over her enormous yards, each ear would listen eagerly for those sounds that had obtained a command over the crew, that can only be acquired, under such circumstances, by great steadiness and consummate skill. The ship was recovering from the inaction of changing her course, in one of those critical tacks that she had made so often, when the pilot, for the first time, addressed the commander of the frigate, who still continued to superintend the all-important duty of the leadsman.

'Now is the pinch,' he said, 'and if the ship behaves well, we are safe; but if otherwise, all we have yet done will be useless.'

The veteran seaman whom he addressed, left the chains at this portentous notice, and calling to his first lieutenant, required of the stranger an explanation of his warning.

'See you yon light on the southern headland?' returned the pilot; 'you may know it from the star near it—by its sinking, at times, in the ocean. Now observe the hummock—a little north of it, looking like a shadow in the horizon—'tis a hill far inland. If we keep that light open from the hill, we shall do well—but if not, we surely go to pieces.'

'Let us tack again!' exclaimed the lieutenant.

The pilot shook his head as he replied,—

'There is no more tacking or box-hauling to be done to-night. We have barely room to pass out of the shoals on this course; and if we can weather the "Devil's Grip," we clear their outermost point—but if not, as I said before, there is but an alternative.'

'If we had beaten out the way we entered,' exclaimed Griffith, 'we should have done well.'

'Say, also, if the tide would have let us do so,' returned the pilot, calmly. 'Gentlemen, we must be prompt; we have but a mile to go, and the ship appears to fly. That top-sail is not enough to keep her up to the wind; we want both jib and mainsail.'

' 'Tis a perilous thing to loosen canvas in such a tempest!' observed the doubtful captain.

'It must be done,' returned the collected stranger; 'we perish without it—see! the light already touches the edge of the hummock; the sea casts us to leeward!'

'It shall be done!' cried Griffith, seizing the trumpet from the hand of the pilot.

The orders of the lieutenant were executed almost as soon as issued; and, everything being ready, the enormous folds of the mainsail were trusted loose to the blast. There was an instant when the result was doubtful; the tremendous threshing of the heavy sail seemed to bid defiance to all restraint, shaking the ship to her centre; but art and strength prevailed, and gradually the canvas was distended, and bellying as it filled, was drawn down to its usual place by the power of a hundred men. The vessel yielded to this immense addition of force, and bowed before it like a reed bending to a breeze. But the success of the measure was announced by a joyful cry from the stranger, that seemed to burst from his inmost soul.

'She feels it! she springs her luff! observe,' he said, 'the light opens from the hummock already: if she will only bear her canvas, we shall go clear!'

A report, like that of a cannon, interrupted his exclamation, and something resembling a white cloud was seen drifting before the wind from the head of the ship, till it was driven into the gloom far to leeward.

'"Tis the jib, blown from the bolt-ropes,' said the commander of the frigate. 'This is no time to spread light duck—but the mainsail may stand it yet.'

'The sail would laugh at a tornado,' returned the lieutenant; 'but the mast springs like a piece of steel.'

'Silence all!' cried the pilot. 'Now, gentlemen, we shall soon know our fate. Let her luff—luff you can!'

This warning effectually closed all discourse, and the hardy mariners, knowing that they had already done all in the power of man to insure their safety, stood in breathless anxiety, awaiting the result. At a short distance ahead of them the whole ocean was white with foam, and the waves, instead of rolling on in regular succession, appeared to be tossing about in mad gambols. A single streak of dark billows, not half a cable's length in width, could be discerned running into this chaos of water; but it was soon lost to the eye amid the confusion of the disturbed element. Along this narrow path the vessel moved more heavily than before, being brought so near the wind as to keep her sails touching. The pilot silently proceeded to the wheel, and, with his own hands, he undertook the steerage of the ship. No noise proceeded from the frigate to interrupt the horrid tumult of the ocean; and she entered the channel among the breakers, with the silence of a desperate calmness. Twenty times, as the foam rolled away to leeward, the crew were on the eve of uttering their joy, as they supposed the vessel past the danger; but breaker after breaker would still heave up before them, following each other into the general mass, to check their exultation. Occasionally, the fluttering of the sails would be heard; and when the looks of the startled seamen were turned to the wheel, they beheld the stranger grasping its spokes, with his quick eye glancing from the water to the canvas. At length the ship reached a point, where she appeared to be rushing directly into the jaws of destruction, when, suddenly her course was changed, and her head receded rapidly from the wind. At the same instant the voice of the pilot was heard shouting,—

'Square away the yards!—in mainsail!'

A general burst from the crew echoed, 'square away the yards!' and, quick as thought, the frigate was seen gliding along the channel before the wind. The eye had hardly time to dwell on the foam, which seemed like clouds driving in the heavens, and directly the gallant vessel issued from her perils, and rose and fell on the heavy waves of the sea.

The seamen were yet drawing long breaths, and gazing about them like men recovered from a trance, when Griffith approached the man who had so successfully conducted them through their perils. The lieutenant grasped the hand of the other, as he said,—

'You have this night proved yourself a faithful pilot, and such a seaman as the world cannot equal.'

The pressure of the hand was warmly returned by the unknown mariner, who replied,—

'I am no stranger to the seas, and I may yet find my grave in them. But you, too, have deceived me; you have acted nobly, young man, and Congress—'

'What of Congress?' asked Griffith, observing him to pause.

'Why, Congress is fortunate if it has many such ships as this,' said the stranger, coldly, walking away toward the commander.

Griffith gazed after him a moment in surprise; but, as his duty required his attention, other thoughts soon engaged his mind.

The vessel was pronounced to be in safety. The gale was heavy and increasing, but there was a clear sea before them; and, as she slowly stretched out into the bosom of the ocean, preparations were made for her security during its continuance. Before midnight, everything was in order.

A gun from the Ariel soon announced the safety of the schooner also, which had gone out by another and an easier channel, that the frigate had not dared to attempt; when the commander directed the usual watch to be set, and the remainder of the crew to seek their necessary repose.

The captain withdrew with the mysterious pilot to his own cabin. Griffith gave his last order; and renewing his charge to the officer instructed with the care of the vessel, he wished him a pleasant watch, and sought the refreshment of his own cot. For an hour the young lieutenant lay musing on

the events of the day. The remark of Barnstable would occur to him, in connection with the singular comment of the boy; and then his thoughts would recur to the pilot, who, taken from the hostile shores of Britain, and with her accent on his tongue, had served them so faithfully and so well. He remembered the anxiety of Captain Munson to procure this stranger, at the very hazard from which they had just been relieved, and puzzled himself with conjecturing why a pilot was to be sought at such a risk. His more private feelings would then resume their sway, and the recollection of America, his mistress, and his home, mingled with the confused images of the drowsy youth. The dashing of the billows against the side of the ship, the creaking of guns and bulk-heads, with the roaring of the tempest, however, became gradually less and less distinct, until nature yielded to necessity, and the young man forgot even the romantic images of his love, in the deep sleep of a seaman.

1823

PREFACE TO THE LEATHER-STOCKING TALES

THIS series of Stories, which has obtained the name of *The Leather-Stocking Tales*, has been written in a very desultory and inartificial manner. The order in which the several books appeared was essentially different from that in which they would have been presented to the world, had the regular course of their incidents been consulted. In *The Pioneers*, the first of the series written, the Leather-Stocking is represented as already old, and driven from his early haunts in the forest, by the sound of the axe, and the smoke of the settler. *The Last of the Mohicans*, the next book in the order of publication, carried the readers back to a much earlier period in the history of our hero, representing him as middle-aged, and in the fullest vigor of manhood. In *The Prairie*, his career terminates, and he is laid in his grave. There, it was originally the intention to leave him, in the expectation that, as in the case of the human mass, he would soon be forgotten. But a latent regard for this character induced the author to resuscitate him in *The Pathfinder*, a book that was not long after succeeded by *The Deerslayer*, thus completing the series as it now exists.

While the five books that have been written were originally published in the order just mentioned, that of the incidents, insomuch as they are connected with the career of their principal character, is, as has been stated, very different. Taking the life of the Leather-Stocking as a guide, *The Deerslayer* should have been the opening book, for in that work he is seen just emerging into manhood; to be succeeded by *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Prairie*. This arrangement embraces the order of events, though far from being that in which the books at first appeared. *The Pioneers* was published in 1822; *The Deerslayer* in 1841; making the interval between them nineteen years. Whether these progressive years have had a tendency to lessen the value of the last-named book by lessening the native fire of its author, or of adding somewhat in the way of improved taste and a more matured judgment, is for others to decide.

If anything from the pen of the writer of these romances is at all to outlive himself, it is, unquestionably, the series of *The Leather-Stocking Tales*. To say this, is not to predict a very lasting reputation for the series itself, but simply to express the belief it will outlast any, or all, of the works from the same hand.

It is undeniable that the desultory manner in which *The Leather-Stocking Tales* were written, has, in a measure, impaired their harmony, and otherwise lessened their interest. This is proved by the fate of the two books last published, though probably the two most worthy an enlightened and cultivated reader's notice. If the facts could be ascertained, it is probable the result would show that of all those (in America, in particular) who have read the three first books of the series, not one in ten has a knowledge of the existence even of the two last. Several causes have tended to produce this result. The long interval of time between the appearance of *The Prairie* and that of *The Pathfinder*, was itself a reason why the later books of the series should be overlooked. There was no longer novelty to attract attention, and the interest was materially impaired by the manner in which

events were necessarily anticipated, in laying the last of the series first before the world. With the generation that is now coming on the stage this fault will be partially removed by the edition contained in the present work, in which the several tales will be arranged solely in reference to their connexion with each other.

The author has often been asked if he had any original in his mind, for the character of Leather-Stocking. In a physical sense, different individuals known to the writer in early life, certainly presented themselves as models, through his recollections; but in a moral sense this man of the forest is purely a creation. The idea of delineating a character that possessed little of civilization but its highest principles as they are exhibited in the uneducated, and all of savage life that is not incompatible with these great rules of conduct, is perhaps natural to the situation in which Natty was placed. He is too proud of his origin to sink into the condition of the wild Indian, and too much a man of the woods not to imbibe as much as was at all desirable, from his friends and companions. In a moral point of view it was the intention to illustrate the effect of seed scattered by the way side. To use his own language, his 'gifts' were 'white gifts,' and he was not disposed to bring on them discredit. On the other hand, removed from nearly all the temptations of civilized life, placed in the best associations of that which is deemed savage, and favorably disposed by nature to improve such advantages, it appeared to the writer that his hero was a fit subject to represent the better qualities of both conditions, without pushing either to extremes.

There was no violent stretch of the imagination, perhaps, in supposing one of civilized associations in childhood, retaining many of his earliest lessons amid the scenes of the forest. Had these early impressions, however, not been sustained by continued, though casual connexion with men of his own color, if not of his own caste, all our information goes to show he would soon have lost every trace of his origin. It is believed that sufficient attention was paid to the particular circumstances in which this individual was placed to justify the picture of his qualities that has been drawn. The Delawares early attracted the attention of missionaries, and were a tribe unusually influenced by their precepts and example. In many instances they became Christians, and cases occurred in which their subsequent lives gave proof of the efficacy of the great moral changes that had taken place within them.

A leading character in a work of fiction has a fair right to the aid which can be obtained from a poetical view of the subject. It is in this view, rather than in one more strictly circumstantial, that Leather-Stocking has been drawn. The imagination has no great task in portraying to itself a being removed from the every-day inducements to err, which abound in civilized life, while he retains the best and simplest of his early impressions; who sees God in the forest; hears him in the winds; bows to him in the firmament that o'ercanopies all; submits to his sway in a humble belief of his justice and mercy; in a word, a being who finds the impress of the Deity in all the works of nature, without any of the blots produced by the expedients, and passion, and mistakes of man. This is the most that has been attempted in the character of Leather-Stocking. Had this been done without any of the drawbacks of humanity, the picture would have been, in all probability, more pleasing than just. In order to preserve the *vraisemblable*, therefore, traits derived from the prejudices, tastes, and even the weaknesses of his youth, have been mixed up with these higher qualities and longings, in a way, it is hoped, to represent a reasonable picture of human nature, without offering to the spectator a 'monster of goodness.'

It has been objected to these books that they give a more favorable picture of the red man than he deserves. The writer apprehends that much of this objection arises from the habits of those who have made it. One of his critics, on the appearance of the first work in which Indian character was portrayed, objected that its 'characters were Indians of the school of Heckewelder, rather than of the school of nature.' These words quite probably contain the substance of the true answer to the objection. Heckewelder was an ardent, benevolent missionary, bent on the good of the red man, and seeing in him one who had the soul, reason, and characteristics of a fellow-being. The critic is understood to have been a very distin-

guished agent of the government, one very familiar with Indians, as they are seen at the councils to treat for the sale of their lands, where little or none of their domestic qualities come in play, and where, indeed, their evil passions are known to have the fullest scope. As just would it be to draw conclusions of the general state of American society from the scenes of the capital, as to suppose that the negotiating of one of these treaties is a fair picture of Indian life.

It is the privilege of all writers of fiction, more particularly when their works aspire to the elevation of romances, to present the *beau-idéal* of their characters to the reader. This it is which constitutes poetry, and to suppose that the red man is to be represented only in the squalid misery or in the degraded moral state that certainly more or less belongs to his condition, is, we apprehend, taking a very narrow view of an author's privileges. Such criticism would have deprived the world of even Homer.

1850

FROM THE DEERSLAYER

DEERSLAYER'S CAPTIVITY [1]

I

'Thou hast been busy, Death, this day, and yet
But half thy work is done! The gates of hell
Are thronged, yet twice ten thousand spirits more,
Who, from their warm and healthful tenements,
Fear no divorce, must, ere the sun go down,
Enter the world of woe!'—

SOUTHEY.

ONE experienced in the signs of the heavens, would have seen that the sun wanted but two or three minutes of the zenith, when Deerslayer landed on the point where the Hurons were now encamped, nearly abreast of the castle. This spot was similar to the one already described, with the exception that the surface of the land was less broken and less crowded with trees. Owing to these two circumstances it was all the better suited to the purpose for which it had been selected, the space beneath the branches bearing some resemblance to a densely wooded lawn. Favored by its position and its spring, it had been much resorted to by savages and hunters, and the natural grasses had succeeded their fires, leaving an appearance of sward in places, a very unusual accompaniment of the virgin forest. Nor was the margin of water fringed with bushes, as on so much of its shore, but the eye penetrated the woods immediately on reaching the strand, commanding nearly the whole area of the projection.

If it was a point of honor with the Indian warrior to redeem his word, when pledged to return and meet his death at a given hour, so was it a point of characteristic pride to show no womanish impatience, but to re-appear as nearly as possible at the appointed moment. It was well not to exceed the grace accorded by the generosity of the enemy, but it was better to meet it to a minute. Something of this dramatic effect mingles with most of the graver usages of the American aborigines, and no doubt, like the prevalence of a similar feeling among people more sophisticated and refined, may be referred to a principle of nature. We all love the wonderful, and when it comes attended by chivalrous self-devotion and a rigid regard to honor, it presents itself to our admiration in a shape doubly attractive. As respects Deerslayer, though he took a pride in showing his white blood, by often deviating from the usages of the red-men, he frequently dropped into their customs, and oftener into their feelings, unconsciously to himself, in consequence of having no other arbiters to appeal to than their judgments and tastes. On the present occasion, he would have abstained from betraying a feverish haste by a too speedy return, since it would have contained a tacit admission that the time asked for was more than had been wanted; but, on the other hand, had the idea occurred to him, he would have quickened his movements a little, in order to avoid the dramatic appearance of returning at the precise instant set as the utmost limit of his absence. Still, accident had interfered to defeat the last intention, for when the young man put his foot on the point, and advanced with a steady tread towards the group of chiefs that was seated in grave array on a fallen tree, the oldest of their num-

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is Chapters 27–30 of *The Deerslayer* (N.Y., 1841).

ber cast his eye upwards at an opening in the trees, and pointed out to his companions the startling fact that the sun was just entering a space that was known to mark the zenith. A common, but low exclamation of surprise and admiration escaped every mouth, and the grim warriors looked at each other; some with envy and disappointment, some with astonishment, at the precise accuracy of their victim, and others with a more generous and liberal feeling. The American Indian always deemed his moral victories the noblest, prizing the groans and yielding of his victim under torture more than the trophy of his scalp; and the trophy itself more than his life. To slay, and not to bring off the proof of victory, indeed, was scarcely deemed honorable; even these rude and fierce tenants of the forest, like their more nurtured brethren of the court and the camp, having set up for themselves imaginary and arbitrary points of honor, to supplant the conclusions of the right, and the decisions of reason.

The Hurons had been divided in their opinions concerning the probability of their captive's return. Most among them, indeed, had not expected it possible for a pale-face to come back voluntarily and meet the known penalties of an Indian torture; but a few of the seniors expected better things from one who had already shown himself so singularly cool, brave, and upright. The party had come to its decision, however, less in the expectation of finding the pledge redeemed, than in the hope of disgracing the Delawares by casting into their teeth the delinquency of one bred in their villages. They would have greatly preferred that Chingachgook should be their prisoner, and prove the traitor; but the pale-face scion of the hated stock was no bad substitute, for their purposes, failing in their designs against the ancient stem. With a view to render the triumph as signal as possible, in the event of the hour's passing without the re-appearance of the hunter, all the warriors and scouts of the party had been called in; and the whole band, men, women, and children, was now assembled at this single point to be a witness of the expected scene. As the castle was in plain view, and by no means distant, it was easily watched by daylight; and it being thought that its inmates were now limited to Hurry, the Delaware, and the two girls, no apprehensions were felt of their being able to escape unseen. A large raft, having a breast-work of logs, had been prepared, and was in actual readiness to be used against either ark or castle, as occasion might require, so soon as the fate of Deerslayer was determined; the seniors of the party having come to the opinion that it was getting to be hazardous to delay their departure for Canada, beyond the coming night. In short, the band waited merely to dispose of this single affair, ere it brought matters to a crisis, and prepared to commence its retreat towards the distant waters of Ontario.

It was an imposing scene, into which Deerslayer now found himself advancing. All the older warriors were seated on the trunk of the fallen tree, waiting his approach with grave decorum. On the right stood the young men, armed, while the left was occupied by the women and children. In the centre was an open space of considerable extent, always canopied by leaves, but from which the underbrush, dead wood, and other obstacles had been carefully removed. The more open area had probably been much used by former parties, for this was the place where the appearance of a sward was the most decided. The arches of the woods, even at high noon, cast their sombre shadows on the spot, which the brilliant rays of the sun that struggled through the leaves contributed to mellow, and, if such an expression can be used, to illuminate. It was probably from a similar scene that the mind of man first got its idea of the effects of Gothic tracery and churchly hues; this temple of nature producing some such effect, so far as light and shadows were concerned, as the well-known offspring of human invention.

As was not unusual among the tribes and wandering bands of the aborigines, two chiefs shared, in nearly equal degrees, the principal and primitive authority that was wielded over these children of the forest. There were several who might claim the distinction of being chief men, but the two in question were so much superior to all the rest in influence, that, when they agreed, no one disputed their mandates; and when they were divided, the band hesitated, like men who had lost their governing principle of action. It was also in conformity with

practice—perhaps we might add, in conformity with nature, that one of the chiefs was indebted to his mind for his influence, whereas the other owed his distinction altogether to qualities that were physical. One was a senior, well known for eloquence in debate, wisdom in council, and prudence in measures; while his great competitor, if not his rival, was a brave, distinguished in war, notorious for ferocity, and remarkable, in the way of intellect, for nothing but the cunning and expedients of the war-path. The first was Rivenoak, who has already been introduced to the reader, while the last was called le Panthère, in the language of the Canadas; or the Panther, to resort to the vernacular of the English colonies. The appellation of the fighting chief was supposed to indicate the qualities of the warrior, agreeably to a practice of the red-man's nomenclature; ferocity, cunning, and treachery, being, perhaps, the distinctive features of his character. The title had been received from the French, and was prized so much the more from that circumstance, the Indian submitting profoundly to the greater intelligence of his pale-face allies, in most things of this nature. How well the *sobriquet* was merited, will be seen in the sequel.

Rivenoak and the Panther sat side by side, awaiting the approach of their prisoner, as Deerslayer put his moccasined foot on the strand; nor did either move or utter a syllable until the young man had advanced into the centre of the area, and proclaimed his presence with his voice. This was done firmly, though in the simple manner that marked the character of the individual.

'Here I am, Mingos,' he said, in the dialect of the Delawares, a language that most present understood; 'here I am, and there is the sun. One is not more true to the laws of natur', than the other has proved true to his word. I am your prisoner; do with me what you please. My business with man and 'arth is settled; nothing remains now but to meet the white man's God, accordin' to a white man's duties and gifts.'

A murmur of approbation escaped even the women at this address, and for an instant there was a strong and pretty general desire to adopt into the tribe one who owned so brave a spirit. Still there were dissenters from this wish, among the principal of whom might be classed the Panther, and his sister, le Sumach, so called from the number of her children, who was the widow of le Loup Cervier, now known to have fallen by the hand of the captive. Native ferocity held one in subjection, while the corroding passion of revenge prevented the other from admitting any gentler feeling at the moment. Not so with Rivenoak. This chief arose, stretched his arm before him, in a gesture of courtesy, and paid his compliments with an ease and dignity that a prince might have envied. As, in that band, his wisdom and eloquence were confessedly without rivals, he knew that on himself would properly fall the duty of first replying to the speech of the pale-face.

'Pale-face, you are honest,' said the Huron orator. 'My people are happy in having captured a man, and not a skulking fox. We now know you; we shall treat you like a brave. If you have slain one of our warriors, and helped to kill others, you have a life of your own ready to give away in return. Some of my young men thought that the blood of a pale-face was too thin; that it would refuse to run under the Huron knife. You will show them it is not so; your heart is stout as well as your body. It is a pleasure to make such a prisoner; should my warriors say that the death of le Loup Cervier ought not to be forgotten, and that he cannot travel towards the land of spirits alone, that his enemy must be sent to overtake him, they will remember that he fell by the hand of a brave, and send you after him with such signs of our friendship as shall not make him ashamed to keep your company. I have spoken; you know what I have said.'

'True enough, Mingo, all true as the gospel,' returned the simple-minded hunter; 'you *have* spoken, and I *do* know not only what you have *said*, but, what is still more important, what you *mean*. I dare to say your warrior the Lynx, was a stout-hearted brave, and worthy of your fri'ndship and respect, but I do not feel unworthy to keep his company, without any passport from your hands. Nevertheless, here I am, ready to receive judgment from your council, if, indeed, the matter was not detarmined among you, afore I got back.'

'My old men would not sit in council over

a pale-face until they saw him among them,' answered Rivenoak, looking around him a little ironically; 'they said it would be like sitting in council over the winds; they go where they will, and come back as they see fit, and not otherwise. There was one voice that spoke in your favor, Deerslayer, but it was alone, like the song of the wren whose mate has been struck by the hawk.'

'I thank that voice whos'ever it may have been, Mingo, and will say it was as true a voice as the rest were lying voices. A furlough is as binding on a pale-face, if he be honest, as it is on a red-skin; and was it not so, I would never bring disgrace on the Delawares, among whom I may be said to have received my edication. But words are useless, and lead to braggin' feelin's; here I am; act your will on me.'

Rivenoak made a sign of acquiescence, and then a short conference was privately held among the chiefs. As soon as the latter ended, three or four young men fell back from among the armed group, and disappeared. Then it was signified to the prisoner that he was at liberty to go at large on the point, until a council was held concerning his fate. There was more of seeming, than of real confidence, however, in this apparent liberality, inasmuch as the young men mentioned, already formed a line of sentinels across the breadth of the point, inland, and escape from any other part was out of the question. Even the canoe was removed beyond this line of sentinels, to a spot where it was considered safe from any sudden attempt. These precautions did not proceed from a failure of confidence, but from the circumstance that the prisoner had now complied with all the required conditions of his parole, and it would have been considered a commendable and honorable exploit to escape from his foes. So nice, indeed, were the distinctions drawn by the savages, in cases of this nature, that they often gave their victims a chance to evade the torture, deeming it as creditable to the captors to overtake, or to out-wit a fugitive, when his exertions were supposed to be quickened by the extreme jeopardy of his situation, as it was for him to get clear from so much extraordinary vigilance.

Nor was Deerslayer unconscious of, or forgetful of, his rights, and of his opportunities. Could he now have seen any probable opening for an escape, the attempt would not have been delayed a minute. But the case seemed desperate. He was aware of the line of sentinels, and felt the difficulty of breaking through it, unharmed. The lake offered no advantages, as the canoe would have given his foes the greatest facilities for overtaking him; else would he have found it no difficult task to swim as far as the castle. As he walked about the point, he even examined the spot to ascertain if it offered no place of concealment; but its openness, its size, and the hundred watchful glances that were turned towards him, even while those who made them affected not to see him, prevented any such expedient from succeeding. The dread and disgrace of failure had no influence on Deerslayer, who deemed it ever a point of honor to reason and feel like a white man, rather than as an Indian, and who felt it a sort of duty to do all he could, that did not involve a dereliction from principle, in order to save his life. Still he hesitated about making the effort, for he also felt that he ought to see the chance of success before he committed himself.

In the meantime the business of the camp appeared to proceed in its regular train. The chiefs consulted apart, admitting no one but the Sumach to their councils; for she, the widow of the fallen warrior, had an exclusive right to be heard on such an occasion. The young men strolled about in indolent listlessness, awaiting the result with Indian impatience, while the females prepared the feast that was to celebrate the termination of the affair, whether it proved fortunate or otherwise for our hero. No one betrayed feeling; and an indifferent observer, beyond the extreme watchfulness of the sentinels, would have detected no extraordinary movement or sensation to denote the real state of things. Two or three old women put their heads together, and, it appeared, unfavorably to the prospect of Deerslayer, by their scowling looks and angry gestures; but a group of Indian girls were evidently animated by a different impulse, as was apparent by stolen glances that expressed pity and regret. In this condition of the camp, an hour soon glided away.

Suspense is, perhaps, the feeling, of all

others, that is most difficult to be supported. When Deerslayer landed, he fully expected in the course of a few minutes to undergo the tortures of an Indian revenge, and he was prepared to meet his fate manfully; but the delay proved far more trying than the nearer approach of suffering, and the intended victim began seriously to meditate some desperate effort at escape, as it might be from sheer anxiety to terminate the scene, when he was suddenly summoned to appear, once more, in front of his judges, who had already arranged the band in its former order, in readiness to receive him.

'Killer of the Deer,' commenced Rivenoak, as soon as his captive stood before him, 'my aged men have listened to wise words; they are ready to speak. You are a man whose fathers came from beyond the rising sun; we are children of the setting sun; we turn our faces towards the Great Sweet Lakes when we look towards our villages. It may be a wise country and full of riches towards the morning, but it is very pleasant towards the evening. We love most to look in that direction. When we gaze at the east we feel afraid, canoe after canoe bringing more and more of your people in the track of the sun, as if their land was so full as to run over. The redmen are few already; they have need of help. One of our best lodges has lately been emptied by the death of its master; it will be a long time before his son can grow big enough to sit in his place. There is his widow! she will want venison to feed her and her children, for her sons are yet like the young of the robin before they quit the nest. By your hand has this great calamity befallen her. She has two duties; one to le Loup Cervier, and one to his children. Scalp for scalp, life for life, blood for blood, is one law; to feed her young, another. We know you, Killer of the Deer. You are honest; when you say a thing, it is so. You have but one tongue, and that is not forked like a snake's. Your head is never hid in the grass; all can see it. What you say, that will you do. You are just. When you have done wrong, it is your wish to do right again, as soon as you can. Here is the Sumach; she is alone in her wigwam, with children crying around her for food; yonder is a rifle; it is loaded and ready to be fired. Take the gun; go forth and shoot a deer; bring the venison and lay it before the widow of le Loup Cervier; feed her children; call yourself her husband. After which, your heart will no longer be Delaware, but Huron; le Sumach's ears will not hear the cries of her children; my people will count the proper number of warriors.'

'I feared this, Rivenoak,' answered Deerslayer, when the other had ceased speaking; 'yes, I did dread that it would come to this. Hows'ever, the truth is soon told, and that will put an end to all expectations on this head. Mingo, I'm white, and Christian-born; 'twould ill become me to take a wife, under red-skin forms, from among heathen. That which I wouldn't do in peaceable times, and under a bright sun, still less would I do behind clouds, in order to save my life. I may never marry; most likely Providence, in putting me up here in the woods, has intended I should live single, and without a lodge of my own: but should such a thing come to pass, none but a woman of my own color and gifts shall darken the door of my wigwam. As for feeding the young of your dead warrior, I would do that cheerfully, could it be done without discredit; but it cannot, seeing that I can never live in a Huron village. Your own young men must find the Sumach in venison, and the next time she marries, let her take a husband whose legs are not long enough to overrun territory that don't belong to him. We fou't a fair battle, and he fell; in this there is nothin' but what a brave expects, and should be ready to meet. As for getting a Mingo heart, as well might you expect to see grey hairs on a boy, or the blackberry growing on the pine. No, no, Huron; my gifts are white, so far as wives are consarned; it is Delaware in all things touchin' Indians.'

These words were scarcely out of the mouth of Deerslayer, before a common murmur betrayed the dissatisfaction with which they had been heard. The aged women, in particular, were loud in their expressions of disgust; and the gentle Sumach, herself, a woman quite old enough to be our hero's mother, was not the least pacific in her denunciations. But all the other manifestations of disappointment and discontent were thrown into the background, by the fierce resentment of the

Panther. This grim chief had thought it a degradation to permit his sister to become the wife of a pale-face of the Yengeese, at all, and had only given a reluctant consent to the arrangement—one by no means unusual among the Indians, however—at the earnest solicitations of the bereaved widow; and it goaded him to the quick to find his condescension slighted, the honor he had with so much regret been persuaded to accord, contemned. The animal from which he got his name does not glare on his intended prey with more frightful ferocity, than his eyes gleamed on the captive; nor was his arm backward in seconding the fierce resentment that almost consumed his breast.

'Dog of the pale-faces!' he exclaimed, in Iroquois, 'go yell among the curs of your own evil hunting-grounds!'

The denunciation was accompanied by an appropriate action. Even while speaking, his arm was lifted, and the tomahawk hurled. Luckily the loud tones of the speaker had drawn the eye of Deerslayer towards him, else would that moment have probably closed his career. So great was the dexterity with which this dangerous weapon was thrown, and so deadly the intent, that it would have riven the skull of the prisoner, had he not stretched forth an arm, and caught the handle in one of its turns, with a readiness quite as remarkable as the skill with which the missile had been hurled. The projectile force was so great, notwithstanding, that when Deerslayer's arm was arrested, his hand was raised above and behind his own head, and in the very attitude necessary to return the attack. It is not certain whether the circumstance of finding himself unexpectedly in this menacing posture and armed, tempted the young man to retaliate, or whether sudden resentment overcame his forbearance and prudence. His eye kindled, however, and a small red spot appeared on each cheek, while he cast all his energy into the effort of his arm, and threw back the weapon at his assailant. The unexpectedness of this blow contributed to its success; the Panther neither raising an arm, nor bending his head to avoid it. The keen little axe struck the victim in a perpendicular line with the nose, directly between the eyes, literally braining him on the spot. Sallying forward, as the serpent darts at his enemy even while receiving its own death-wound, this man of powerful frame fell his length into the open area formed by the circle, quivering in death. A common rush to his relief left the captive, for a single instant, quite without the crowd; and, willing to make one desperate effort for life, he bounded off with the activity of a deer. There was but a breathless instant, when the whole band, old and young, women and children, abandoning the lifeless body of the Panther where it lay, raised the yell of alarm, and followed in pursuit.

Sudden as had been the event which induced Deerslayer to make this desperate trial of speed, his mind was not wholly unprepared for the fearful emergency. In the course of the past hour, he had pondered well on the chances of such an experiment, and had shrewdly calculated all the details of success and failure. At the first leap, therefore, his body was completely under the direction of an intelligence that turned all its efforts to the best account, and prevented everything like hesitation or indecision, at the important instant of the start. To this alone was he indebted for the first great advantage, that of getting through the line of sentinels unharmed. The manner in which this was done, though sufficiently simple, merits a description.

Although the shores of the point were not fringed with bushes, as was the case with most of the others on the lake, it was owing altogether to the circumstance that the spot had been so much used by hunters and fishermen. This fringe commenced on what might be termed the main land, and was as dense as usual, extending in long lines both north and south. In the latter direction, then, Deerslayer held his way; and, as the sentinels were a little without the commencement of this thicket, before the alarm was clearly communicated to them, the fugitive had gained its cover. To run among the bushes, however, was out of the question, and Deerslayer held his way for some forty or fifty yards, in the water which was barely knee deep, offering as great an obstacle to the speed of his pursuers as it did to his own. As soon as a favorable spot presented, he darted through the line of bushes, and issued into the open woods.

Several rifles were discharged at Deerslayer while in the water, and more followed as he came out into the comparative exposure of the clear forest. But the direction of his line of flight, which partially crossed that of the fire, the haste with which the weapons had been aimed, and the general confusion that prevailed in the camp, prevented any harm from being done. Bullets whistled past him, and many cut twigs from the branches at his side, but not one touched even his dress. The delay caused by these fruitless attempts was of great service to the fugitive, who had gained more than a hundred yards on even the leading men of the Hurons, ere something like concert and order had entered into the chase. To think of following with rifle in hand was out of the question; and after emptying their pieces in vague hopes of wounding their captive, the best runners of the Indians threw them aside, calling out to the women and boys to recover and load them again, as soon as possible.

Deerslayer knew too well the desperate nature of the struggle in which he was engaged, to lose one of the precious moments. He also knew that his only hope was to run in a straight line, for as soon as he began to turn, or double, the greater number of his pursuers would put escape out of the question. He held his way, therefore, in a diagonal direction up the acclivity, which was neither very high nor very steep, in this part of the mountain, but which was sufficiently toilsome for one contending for life, to render it painfully oppressive. There, however, he slackened his speed, to recover breath, proceeding even at a quick walk, or a slow trot, along the more difficult parts of the way. The Hurons were whooping and leaping behind him; but this he disregarded, well knowing they must overcome the difficulties he had surmounted, ere they could reach the elevation to which he had attained. The summit of the first hill was now quite near him, and he saw, by the formation of the land, that a deep glen intervened, before the base of a second hill could be reached. Walking deliberately to the summit, he glanced eagerly about him, in every direction, in quest of a cover. None offered in the ground; but a fallen tree lay near him, and desperate circumstances require desperate remedies. This tree lay in a line parallel to the glen, at the brow of the hill; to leap on it, and then to force his person as close as possible under its lower side, took but a moment. Previously to disappearing from his pursuers, however, Deerslayer stood on the height, and gave a cry of triumph, as if exulting at the sight of the descent that lay before him.—In the next instant he was stretched beneath the tree.

No sooner was this expedient adopted, than the young man ascertained how desperate had been his own efforts, by the violence of the pulsations in his frame. He could hear his heart beat, and his breathing was like the action of a bellows in quick motion. Breath was gained, however, and the heart soon ceased to throb, as if about to break through its confinement. The footsteps of those who toiled up the opposite side of the acclivity were now audible, and presently voices and treads announced the arrival of the pursuers. The foremost shouted as they reached the height; then, fearful that their enemy would escape under favor of the descent, each leaped upon the fallen tree, and plunged into the ravine, trusting to get a sight of the pursued, ere he reached the bottom. In this manner, Huron followed Huron, until Natty began to hope the whole had passed. Others succeeded, however, until quite forty had leaped over the tree; and then he counted them, as the surest mode of ascertaining how many could be behind. Presently all were in the bottom of the glen, quite a hundred feet below him, and some had even ascended part of the opposite hill, when it became evident an inquiry was making, as to the direction he had taken. This was the critical moment; and one of nerves less steady, or of a training that had been neglected, would have seized it to rise, and fly. Not so with Deerslayer. He still lay quiet, watching with jealous vigilance every movement below, and fast regaining his breath.

The Hurons now resembled a pack of hounds at fault. Little was said, but each man ran about, examining the dead leaves, as the hound hunts for the lost scent. The great number of moccasins that had passed made the examination difficult, though the in-toe of an Indian was easily to be distinguished from the freer and wider step of a white man. Believing that no

more pursuers remained behind, and hoping to steal away unseen, Deerslayer suddenly threw himself over the tree, and fell on the upper side. This achievement appeared to be effected successfully, and hope beat high in the bosom of the fugitive. Rising to his hands and feet, after a moment lost in listening to the sounds in the glen, in order to ascertain if he had been seen, the young man next scrambled to the top of the hill, a distance of only ten yards, in the expectation of getting its brow between him and his pursuers, and himself so far under cover. Even this was effected, and he rose to his feet, walking swiftly but steadily along the summit, in a direction opposite to that in which he had first fled. The nature of the calls in the glen, however, soon made him uneasy, and he sprang upon the summit again, in order to reconnoitre. No sooner did he reach the height than he was seen, and the chase renewed. As it was better footing on the level ground, Deerslayer now avoided the side-hill, holding his flight along the ridge; while the Hurons, judging from the general formation of the land, saw that the ridge would soon melt into the hollow, and kept to the latter, as the easiest mode of heading the fugitive. A few, at the same time, turned south, with a view to prevent his escaping in that direction; while some crossed his trail towards the water, in order to prevent his retreat by the lake, running southerly.

The situation of Deerslayer was now more critical than it ever had been. He was virtually surrounded on three sides, having the lake on the fourth. But he had pondered well on all the chances, and took his measures with coolness, even while at the top of his speed. As is generally the case with the vigorous border-men, he could outrun any single Indian among his pursuers, who were principally formidable to him on account of their numbers, and the advantages they possessed in position; and he would not have hesitated to break off in a straight line, at any spot, could he have got the whole band again fairly behind him. But no such chance did, or indeed could now offer; and when he found that he was descending towards the glen, by the melting away of the ridge, he turned short, at right angles to his previous course, and went down the declivity with tremendous velocity, holding his way towards the shore. Some of his pursuers came panting up the hill, in direct chase, while most still kept on, in the ravine, intending to head him at its termination.

Deerslayer had now a different, though a desperate project in view. Abandoning all thoughts of escape by the woods, he made the best of his way towards the canoe. He knew where it lay: could it be reached, he had only to run the gauntlet of a few rifles, and success would be certain. None of the warriors had kept their weapons, which would have retarded their speed, and the risk would come either from the uncertain hands of the women, or from those of some well-grown boy; though most of the latter were already out in hot pursuit. Everything seemed propitious to the execution of this plan, and the course being a continued descent, the young man went over the ground at a rate that promised a speedy termination to his toil.

As Deerslayer approached the point, several women and children were passed, but, though the former endeavored to cast dried branches between his legs, the terror inspired by his bold retaliation on the redoubted Panther was so great, that none dared come near enough seriously to molest him. He went by all triumphantly, and reached the fringe of bushes. Plunging through these, our hero found himself once more in the lake, and within fifty feet of the canoe. Here he ceased to run, for he well understood that his breath was now all-important to him. He even stooped, as he advanced, and cooled his parched mouth, by scooping up water in his hand to drink. Still the moments pressed, and he soon stood at the side of the canoe. The first glance told him that the paddles had been removed! This was a sore disappointment after all his efforts, and for a single moment he thought of turning, and of facing his foes by walking with dignity into the centre of the camp again. But an infernal yell, such as the American savage alone can raise, proclaimed the quick approach of the nearest of his pursuers, and the instinct of life triumphed. Preparing himself duly, and giving a right direction to its bows, he ran off into the water bearing the canoe before him, threw all his strength and skill into a last effort, and cast himself forward so as to

fall into the bottom of the light craft, without materially impeding its way. Here he remained on his back, both to regain his breath and to cover his person from the deadly rifle. The lightness, which was such an advantage in paddling the canoe, now operated unfavorably. The material was so like a feather that the boat had no momentum; else would the impulse in that smooth and placid sheet have impelled it to a distance from the shore, that would have rendered paddling with the hands safe. Could such a point once be reached, Deerslayer thought he might get far enough out to attract the attention of Chingachgook and Judith, who would not fail to come to his relief with other canoes, a circumstance that promised everything. As the young man lay in the bottom of the canoe, he watched its movements by studying the tops of the trees on the mountain-side, and judged of his distance by the time and the motion. Voices on the shore were now numerous, and he heard something said about manning the raft, which fortunately for the fugitive lay at a considerable distance, on the other side of the point.

Perhaps the situation of Deerslayer had not been more critical that day than it was at this moment. It certainly had not been one half as tantalizing. He lay perfectly quiet for two or three minutes, trusting to the single sense of hearing, confident that the noise in the lake would reach his ears, did any one venture to approach by swimming. Once or twice he fancied that the element was stirred by the cautious movement of an arm, and then he perceived it was the wash of the water on the pebbles of the strand; for, in mimicry of the ocean, it is seldom that those little lakes are so totally tranquil, as not to possess a slight heaving and setting on their shores. Suddenly all the voices ceased, and a death-like stillness pervaded the spot; a quietness as profound as if all lay in the repose of inanimate life. By this time the canoe had drifted so far as to render nothing visible to Deerslayer, as he lay on his back, except the blue void of space, and a few of those brighter rays that proceed from the effulgence of the sun, marked his proximity. It was not possible to endure this uncertainty long. The young man well knew that the profound stillness foreboded evil, the savages never being so silent as when about to strike a blow; resembling the stealthy foot of the panther ere he takes his leap. He took out a knife, and was about to cut a hole through the bark in order to get a view of the shore, when he paused from a dread of being seen in the operation, which would direct the enemy where to aim their bullets. At this instant a rifle *was* fired, and the ball pierced both sides of the canoe, within eighteen inches of the spot where his head lay. This was close work, but our hero had too lately gone through that which was closer, to be appalled. He lay still half a minute longer, and then he saw the summit of an oak coming slowly within his narrow horizon.

Unable to account for this change, Deerslayer could restrain his impatience no longer. Hitching his body along, with the utmost caution, he got his eye at the bullet-hole, and fortunately commanded a very tolerable view of the point. The canoe, by one of those imperceptible impulses that so often decide the fate of men as well as the course of things, had inclined southerly, and was slowly drifting down the lake. It was lucky that Deerslayer had given it a shove sufficiently vigorous to send it past the end of the point ere it took this inclination, or it must have gone ashore again. As it was, it drifted so near it as to bring the tops of two or three trees within the range of the young man's view, as has been mentioned, and, indeed, to come in quite as close proximity with the extremity of the point as was at all safe. The distance could not much have exceeded a hundred feet, though fortunately a light current of air from the south-west began to set it slowly off shore.

Deerslayer now felt the urgent necessity of resorting to some expedient to get further from his foes, and, if possible, to apprise his friends of his situation. The distance rendered the last difficult, while the proximity to the point rendered the first indispensable. As was usual in such craft, a large, round, smooth stone was in each end of the canoe, for the double purposes of seats and ballast; one of these was within reach of his feet. This stone he contrived to get so far between his legs as to reach it with his hands, and then he managed to roll it to the side of its fellow in the bows, where the two served to keep the trim of the light boat,

while he worked his own body as far aft as possible. Before quitting the shore, and as soon as he perceived that the paddles were gone, Deerslayer had thrown a bit of dead branch into the canoe, and this was within reach of his arm. Removing the cap he wore, he put it on the end of this stick, and just let it appear over the edge of the canoe, as far as possible from his own person. This *ruse* was scarcely adopted, before the young man had a proof how much he had underrated the intelligence of his enemies. In contempt of an artifice so shallow and commonplace, a bullet was fired directly through another part of the canoe, which actually razed his skin. He dropped the cap, and instantly raised it immediately over his head as a safeguard. It would seem that this second artifice was unseen, or what was more probable, the Hurons, feeling certain of recovering their captive, wished to take him alive.

Deerslayer lay passive a few minutes longer, his eye at the bullet hole, however, and much did he rejoice at seeing that he was drifting gradually further and further from the shore. When he looked upwards, the tree tops had disappeared, but he soon found that the canoe was slowly turning, so as to prevent his getting a view of anything at his peep-hole but of the two extremities of the lake. He now bethought him of the stick, which was crooked and offered some facilities for rowing without the necessity of rising. The experiment succeeded, on trial, better even than he had hoped, though his great embarrassment was to keep the canoe straight. That his present manœuvre was seen soon became apparent by the clamor on the shore, and a bullet entering the stern of the canoe, traversed its length, whistling between the arms of our hero, and passed out at the head. This satisfied the fugitive that he was getting away with tolerable speed, and induced him to increase his efforts. He was making a stronger push than common, when another messenger from the point broke the stick outboard, and at once deprived him of his oar. As the sound of voices seemed to grow more and more distant, however, Deerslayer determined to leave all to the drift until he believed himself beyond the reach of bullets. This was nervous work, but it was the wisest of all the expedients that offered; and the young man was encouraged to persevere in it, by the circumstance that he felt his face fanned by the air, a proof that there was a little more wind.

2

'Nor widow's tears, nor tender orphans' cries
Can stop th' invaders' force;
Nor swelling seas, nor threatening skies,
Prevent the pirate's course:
Their lives to selfish ends decreed,
Through blood and rapine they proceed;
No anxious thoughts of ill-repute,
Suspend the impetuous and unjust pursuit;
But power and wealth obtained, guilty and great,
Their fellow-creatures' fears they raise, or urge their hate.'

CONGREVE.

By this time, Deerslayer had been twenty minutes in the canoe, and he began to grow a little impatient for some signs of relief from his friends. The position of the boat still prevented his seeing in any direction, unless it were up or down the lake; and, though he knew that his line of sight must pass within a hundred yards of the castle, it, in fact, passed that distance to the westward of the buildings. The profound stillness troubled him also, for he knew not whether to ascribe it to the increasing space between him and the Indians, or to some new artifice. At length, wearied with fruitless watchfulness, the young man turned himself on his back, closed his eyes, and awaited the result in determined acquiescence. If the savages could so completely control their thirst for revenge, he was resolved to be as calm as themselves, and to trust his fate to the interposition of the currents and air.

Some additional ten minutes may have passed in this quiescent manner, on both sides, when Deerslayer thought he heard a slight noise like a low rubbing against the bottom of his canoe. He opened his eyes of course, in expectation of seeing the face or arm of an Indian rising from the water, and found that a canopy of leaves was impending directly over his head. Starting to his feet, the first object that met his eye was Rivenoak, who had so far aided the slow progress of the boat, as to draw it on the point, the grating on the strand being the

sound that had first given our hero the alarm. The change in the drift of the canoe had been altogether owing to the baffling nature of the light currents of air, aided by some eddies in the water.

'Come,' said the Huron, with a quiet gesture of authority to order his prisoner to land; 'my young friend has sailed about till he is tired; he will forget how to run again unless he uses his legs.'

'You've the best of it, Huron,' returned Deerslayer, stepping steadily from the canoe, and passively following his leader to the open area of the point; 'Providence has helped you in an onexpected manner. I'm your prisoner ag'in, and I hope you'll allow that I'm as good at breaking gaol as I am at keeping furloughs.'

'My young friend is a moose!' exclaimed the Huron. 'His legs are very long; they have given my young men trouble. But he is not a fish; he cannot find his way in the lake. We did not shoot him; fish are taken in nets, and not killed by bullets. When he turns moose again he will be treated like a moose.'

'Ay, have your talk, Rivenoak; make the most of your advantage. 'Tis your right, I suppose, and I know it is your gift. On that p'int there'll be no words atween us; for all men must and ought to follow their gifts. Hows'ever, when your women begin to ta'nt and abuse me, as I suppose will soon happen, let 'em remember that if a pale-face struggles for life so long as it's lawful and manful, he knows how to loosen his hold on it decently, when he feels that the time has come. I'm your captyve; work your will on me.'

'My brother has had a long run on the hills, and a pleasant sail on the water,' returned Rivenoak more mildly, smiling at the same time, in a way that his listener knew denoted pacific intentions. 'He has seen the woods; he has seen the water; which does he like best? Perhaps he has seen enough to change his mind, and make him hear reason.'

'Speak out, Huron. Something is in your thoughts, and the sooner it is said, the sooner you'll get my answer.'

'That is straight! There is no turning in the talk of my pale-face friend, though he is a fox in running. I will speak to him; his ears are now open wider than before, and his eyes are not shut. The Sumach is poorer than ever. Once she had a brother and a husband. She had children too. The time came, and the husband started for the happy hunting-grounds without saying farewell; he left her alone with his children. This he could not help, or he would not have done it; le Loup Cervier was a good husband. It was pleasant to see the venison, and wild ducks, and geese, and bear's meat, that hung in his lodge in winter. It is now gone; it will not keep in warm weather. Who shall bring it back again? Some thought the brother would not forget his sister, and that next winter he would see that the lodge should not be empty. We thought this; but the Panther yelled, and followed the husband on the path of death. They are now trying which shall first reach the happy hunting-grounds. Some think the Lynx can run fastest, and some think the Panther can jump the furthest. The Sumach thinks both will travel so fast and so far, that neither will ever come back. Who shall feed her and her young? The man who told her husband and her brother to quit her lodge, that there might be room for him to come into it. He is a great hunter, and we know that the woman will never want.'

'Ay, Huron, this is soon settled, according to your notions; but it goes sorely ag'in the grain of a white man's feelin's. I've heard of men's saving their lives this-away, and I've know'd them that would prefer death to such a sort of captivity. For my part, I do not seek my end; nor do I seek matrimony.'

'The pale-face will think of this while my people get ready for the council. He will be told what will happen. Let him remember how hard it is to lose a husband and a brother. Go: when we want him, the name of Deerslayer will be called.'

This conversation had been held with no one near but the speakers. Of all the band that had so lately thronged the place, Rivenoak alone was visible. The rest seemed to have totally abandoned the spot. Even the furniture, clothes, arms, and other property of the camp had entirely disappeared, and the place bore no other proofs of the crowd that had so lately occupied it, than the traces of their fires and resting-places, and the trodden earth that still showed the marks of their feet. So sudden and unex-

pected a change caused Deerslayer a good deal of surprise and some uneasiness, for he had never known it to occur in the course of his experience among the Delawares. He suspected, however, and rightly, that a change of encampment was intended, and that the mystery of the movement was resorted to, in order to work on his apprehensions.

Rivenoak walked up the vista of trees, as soon as he ceased speaking, leaving Deerslayer by himself. The chief disappeared behind the covers of the forest, and one unpractised in such scenes might have believed the prisoner left to the dictates of his own judgment. But the young man, while he felt a little amazement at the dramatic aspect of things, knew his enemies too well to fancy himself at liberty, or a free agent. Still he was ignorant how far the Hurons meant to carry their artifices, and he determined to bring the question, as soon as practicable, to the proof. Affecting an indifference he was far from feeling, he strolled about the area, gradually getting nearer and nearer to the spot where he had landed, when he suddenly quickened his pace, though carefully avoiding all appearance of flight, and pushing aside the bushes he stepped upon the beach. The canoe was gone, nor could he see any traces of it, after walking to the northern and southern verges of the point, and examining the shores in both directions. It was evidently removed beyond his reach and knowledge, and under circumstances to show that such had been the intention of the savages.

Deerslayer now better understood his actual situation. He was a prisoner on the narrow tongue of land, vigilantly watched beyond a question, and with no other means of escape than that of swimming. He again thought of this last expedient, but the certainty that the canoe would be sent in chase, and the desperate nature of the chances of success, deterred him from the undertaking. While on the strand, he came to a spot where the bushes had been cut, and thrown into a small pile. Removing a few of the upper branches, he found beneath them the dead body of the Panther. He knew that it was kept until the savages might find a place to inter it, when it would be beyond the reach of the scalping-knife. He gazed wistfully towards the castle, but there all seemed to be silent and desolate; and a feeling of loneliness and desertion came over him to increase the gloom of the moment.

'God's will be done!' murmured the young man, as he walked sorrowfully away from the beach, entering again beneath the arches of the wood; 'God's will be done, on 'arth as it is in heaven! I did hope that my days would not be numbered so soon! but it matters little, a'ter all. A few more winters, and a few more summers, and 'twould have been over, accordin' to natur'. Ah's me! the young and actyve seldom think death possible, till he grins in their faces and tells 'em the hour is come!'

While this soliloquy was being pronounced, the hunter advanced into the area, where to his surprise he saw Hetty alone, evidently awaiting his return. The girl carried the Bible under her arm, and her face, over which a shadow of gentle melancholy was usually thrown, now seemed sad and downcast. Moving nearer, Deerslayer spoke.

'Poor Hetty,' he said, 'times have been so troublesome of late, that I'd altogether forgotten you; we meet, as it might be, to mourn over what is to happen. I wonder what has become of Chingachgook and Wah!'

'Why did you kill the Huron, Deerslayer?' returned the girl, reproachfully. 'Don't you know your commandments, which say, "Thou shalt not kill!" They tell me you have now slain the woman's husband and brother.'

'It's true, my good Hetty,—'tis gospel truth, and I'll not deny what has come to pass. But you must remember, gal, that many things are lawful in war, which would be onlawful in peace. The husband was shot in open fight; or, open so far as I was consarned, while he had a better cover than common;—and the brother brought his end on himself by casting his tomahawk at an unarmed prisoner. Did you witness that deed, gal?'

'I saw it, and was sorry it happened, Deerslayer; for I hoped you wouldn't have returned blow for blow, but good for evil.'

'Ah, Hetty, that may do among the missionaries, but 'twould make an onsartain life in the woods. The Panther craved my blood, and he was foolish enough to throw

arms into my hands at the very moment he was striving a'ter it. 'Twould have been ag'in natur' not to raise a hand in such a trial, and 'twould have done discredit to my training and gifts. No, no; I'm as willing to give every man his own, as another; and so I hope you'll testify to them that will be likely to question you as to what you've seen this day.'

'Deerslayer, do you mean to marry Sumach, now she has neither husband nor brother to feed her?'

'Are such your idees of matrimony, Hetty? Ought the young to wive with the old—the pale-face with the red-skin—the Christian with the heathen? It's ag'in reason and natur', and so you'll see, if you think of it a moment.'

'I've always heard mother say,' returned Hetty, averting her face, more from a feminine instinct than from any consciousness of wrong, 'that people should never marry until they loved each other better than brothers and sisters; and I suppose that is what you mean. Sumach *is* old, and you *are* young.'

'Ay, and she's red, and I'm white. Besides, Hetty, suppose you was a wife, now, having married some young man of your own years, and state, and color—Hurry Harry, for instance,'—Deerslayer selected this example, simply from the circumstance that he was the only young man known to both,—'and that he had fallen on a war-path, would you wish to take to your bosom, for a husband, the man that slew him?'

'Oh! no, no, no,' returned the girl, shuddering. '*That* would be wicked, as well as heartless! No Christian girl could, or would, do that. I never shall be the wife of Hurry, I know; but were he my husband, no man should ever be it again after his death.'

'I thought it would get to this, Hetty, when you come to understand sarcumstances. 'Tis a moral impossibility that I should ever marry Sumach; and, though Injin weddin's have no priests, and not much religion, a white man who knows his gifts and duties, can't profit by that, and so make his escape at the fitting time. I do think death would be more nat'ral like, and welcome, than wedlock with this woman.'

'Don't say it too loud,' interrupted Hetty, impatiently; 'I suppose she will not like to hear it. I'm sure Hurry would rather marry even me, than suffer torments, though I *am* feeble-minded; and I am sure it would kill me to think he'd prefer death to being my husband.'

'Ay, gal; you an't Sumach, but a comely young Christian, with a good heart, pleasant smile, and kind eye. Hurry might be proud to get you, and that, too, not in misery and sorrow, but in his best and happiest days. Hows'ever, take my advice, and never talk to Hurry about these things; he's only a borderer, at the best.'

'I wouldn't tell him, for the world!' exclaimed the girl, looking about her like one affrighted, and blushing, she knew not why. 'Mother always said young women shouldn't be forward, and speak their minds before they're asked;—oh! I never forget what mother told me. 'Tis a pity Hurry is so handsome, Deerslayer; I do think fewer girls would like him then, and he would sooner know his own mind.'

'Poor gal, poor gal, it's plain enough how it is; but the Lord will bear in mind one of your simple heart and kind feelin's! We'll talk no more of these things; if you had reason, you'd be sorrowful at having let others so much into your secret. Tell me, Hetty, what has become of all the Hurons, and why they let you roam about the p'int, as if you, too, was a prisoner?'

'I'm no prisoner, Deerslayer, but a free girl, and go when and where I please. Nobody dare hurt *me*! If they did, God would be angry—as I can show them in the Bible. No—no—Hetty Hutter is not afraid; *she's* in good hands. The Hurons are up yonder in the woods, and keep a good watch on us both, I'll answer for it, since all the women and children are on the look-out. Some are burying the body of the poor girl who was shot, so that the enemy and the wild beasts can't find it. I told 'em that father and mother lay in the lake, but I wouldn't let them know in what part of it, for Judith and I don't want any of their heathenish company in our burying-ground.'

'Ah's me!—Well, it *is* an awful despatch to be standing here, alive and angry, and with the feelin's up and furious, one hour, and then to be carried away at the next, and put out of sight of mankind in a hole in the 'arth. No one knows what will happen to him on a war-path, that's sartain.'

Here the stirring of leaves and the cracking of dried twigs interrupted the discourse, and apprised Deerslayer of the approach of his enemies. The Hurons closed around the spot that had been prepared for the coming scene, and in the centre of which the intended victim now stood, in a circle—the armed men being so distributed among the feebler members of the band, that there was no safe opening through which the prisoner could break. But the latter no longer contemplated flight; the recent trial having satisfied him of his inability to escape, when pursued so closely by numbers. On the contrary, all his energies were aroused, in order to meet his expected fate with a calmness that should do credit to his color and his manhood; one equally removed from recreant alarm and savage boasting.

When Rivenoak reappeared in the circle, he occupied his old place at the head of the area. Several of the elder warriors stood near him; but, now that the brother of Sumach had fallen, there was no longer any recognized chief present, whose influence and authority offered a dangerous rivalry to his own. Nevertheless, it is well known that little which could be called monarchical, or despotic, entered into the politics of the North American tribes, although the first colonists, bringing with them to this hemisphere the notions and opinions of their own countries, often dignified the chief men of those primitive nations with the titles of kings and princes. Hereditary influence did certainly exist; but there is much reason to believe it existed rather as a consequence of hereditary merit and acquired qualifications, than as a birth-right. Rivenoak, however, had not even this claim—having risen to consideration purely by the force of talents, sagacity, and, as Bacon expresses it, in relation to all distinguished statesmen, 'by a union of great and mean qualities'; a truth of which the career of the profound Englishman himself furnishes so apt an illustration.

Next to arms, eloquence offers the great avenue to popular favor, whether it be in civilized or savage life; and Rivenoak had succeeded, as so many have succeeded before him, quite as much by rendering fallacies acceptable to his listeners, as by any profound or learned expositions of truth, or the accuracy of his logic. Nevertheless, he had influence; and was far from being altogether without just claims to its possession. Like most men who reason more than they feel, the Huron was not addicted to the indulgence of the mere ferocious passions of his people: he had been commonly found on the side of mercy in all the scenes of vindictive torture and revenge that had occurred in his tribe, since his own attainment to power. On the present occasion, he was reluctant to proceed to extremities, although the provocation was so great; still it exceeded his ingenuity to see how that alternative could well be avoided. Sumach resented her rejection more than she did the deaths of her husband and brother, and there was little probability that the woman would pardon a man who had so unequivocally preferred death to her embraces. Without her forgiveness, there was scarce a hope that the tribe could be induced to overlook its loss; and even to Rivenoak himself, much as he was disposed to pardon, the fate of our hero now appeared to be almost hopelessly sealed.

When the whole band was arrayed around the captive, a grave silence, so much the more threatening from its profound quiet, pervaded the place. Deerslayer perceived that the women and boys had been preparing splinters of the fat pine roots, which he well knew were to be stuck into his flesh and set in flames, while two or three of the young men held the thongs of bark with which he was to be bound. The smoke of a distant fire announced that the burning brands were in preparation, and several of the elder warriors passed their fingers over the edges of their tomahawks, as if to prove their keenness and temper. Even the knives seemed loosened in their sheathes, impatient for the bloody and merciless work to begin.

'Killer of the Deer,' recommenced Rivenoak, certainly without any signs of sympathy or pity in his manner, though with calmness and dignity; 'Killer of the Deer, it is time that my people knew their minds. The sun is no longer over our heads; tired of waiting on the Hurons, he has begun to fall near the pines on this side of the valley. He is travelling fast towards the country of our French fathers; it is to

warn his children that their lodges are empty, and that they ought to be at home. The roaming wolf has his den, and he goes to it when he wishes to see his young. The Iroquois are not poorer than the wolves. They have villages, and wigwams, and fields of corn; the good spirits will be tired of watching them alone. My people must go back and see to their own business. There will be joy in the lodges when they hear our whoop from the forest! It will be a sorrowful whoop; when it is understood, grief will come after it. There will be one scalp-whoop, but there will be only one. We have the fur of the Muskrat; his body is among the fishes. Deerslayer must say whether another scalp shall be on our pole. Two lodges are empty; a scalp, living or dead, is wanted at each door.'

'Then take 'em dead, Huron,' firmly, but altogether without dramatic boasting, returned the captive. 'My hour is come, I do suppose; and what must be, must. If you are bent on the tortur', I'll do my indivors to bear up ag'in it, though no man can say how far his natur' will stand pain, until he's been tried.'

'The pale-face cur begins to put his tail between his legs!' cried a young and garrulous savage, who bore the appropriate title of the Corbeau Rouge; a *sobriquet* he had gained from the French, by his facility in making unseasonable noises, and an undue tendency to hear his own voice; 'he is no warrior; he has killed the Loup Cervier when looking behind him not to see the flash of his own rifle. He grunts like a hog already; when the Huron women begin to torment him, he will cry like the young of the catamount. He is a Delaware woman, dressed in the skin of a Yengeese!'

'Have your say, young man; have your say,' returned Deerslayer, unmoved; 'you know no better, and I can overlook it. Talking may aggravate women, but can hardly make knives sharper, fire hotter, or rifles more sartain.'

Rivenoak now interfered, reproving the Red Crow for his premature interference, and then directing the proper persons to bind the captive. This expedient was adopted, not from any apprehensions that he would escape, or from any necessity that was yet apparent, of his being unable to endure the torture with his limbs free, but from an ingenious design of making him feel his helplessness and of gradually sapping his resolution, by undermining it, as it might be, little by little. Deerslayer offered no resistance. He submitted his arms and his legs, freely if not cheerfully, to the ligaments of bark which were bound around them, by order of the chief, in a way to produce as little pain as possible. These directions were secret, and given in a hope that the captive would finally save himself from any serious bodily suffering, by consenting to take the Sumach for a wife. As soon as the body of Deerslayer was withed in bark sufficiently to create a lively sense of helplessness, he was literally carried to a young tree and bound against it, in a way that effectually prevented him from moving, as well as from falling. The hands were laid flat against the legs, and thongs were passed over all, in a way nearly to incorporate the prisoner with the tree. His cap was then removed, and he was left half-standing, half-sustained by his bonds, to face the coming scene in the best manner he could.

Previously to proceeding to anything like extremities, it was the wish of Rivenoak to put his captive's resolution to the proof, by renewing the attempt at a compromise. This could be effected only in one manner, the acquiescence of the Sumach being indispensably necessary to a compromise of her right to be revenged. With this view, then, the woman was next desired to advance, and to look to her own interest; no agent being considered as efficient as the principal herself in this negotiation. The Indian females, when girls, are usually mild and submissive, with musical tones, pleasant voices, and merry laughs; but toil and suffering generally deprive them of most of these advantages by the time they have reached an age which the Sumach had long before passed. To render their voices harsh, it would seem to require active, malignant passions, though, when excited, their screams can rise to a sufficiently conspicuous degree of discordancy to assert their claim to possess this distinctive peculiarity of the sex. The Sumach was not altogether without feminine attraction, however, and had so recently been deemed handsome in her tribe, as not to have yet learned the full influence that time and

exposure produce on man as well as on woman. By an arrangement of Rivenoak's, some of the women around her had been employing the time in endeavoring to persuade the bereaved widow that there was still a hope Deerslayer might be prevailed on to enter her wigwam, in preference to entering the world of spirits, and this, too, with a success that previous symptoms scarcely justified. All this was the result of a resolution on the part of the chief to leave no proper means unemployed, in order to get the greatest hunter that was then thought to exist in all that region transferred to his own nation, as well as a husband for a woman who he felt would be likely to be troublesome, were any of her claims to the attention and care of the tribe overlooked.

In conformity with this scheme the Sumach had been secretly advised to advance into the circle, and to make her appeal to the prisoner's sense of justice before the band had recourse to the last experiment. The woman, nothing loth, consented; for there was some such attraction, in becoming the wife of a noted hunter, among the females of the tribes, as is experienced by the sex in more refined life, when they bestow their hands on the affluent. As the duties of a mother were thought to be paramount to all other considerations, the widow felt none of that embarrassment in preferring her claims, to which even a female fortune-hunter among ourselves might be liable. When she stood forth before the whole party, therefore, the children that she led by the hand fully justified all she did.

'You see me before you, cruel pale-face,' the woman commenced; 'your spirit must tell you my errand. I have found *you*; I cannot find le Loup Cervier, nor the Panther. I have looked for them in the lake, in the woods, in the clouds. I cannot say where they have gone.'

'No man knows, good Sumach, no man knows,' interposed the captive. 'When the spirit leaves the body it passes into a world beyond our knowledge, and the wisest way for them that are left behind is to hope for the best. No doubt both your warriors have gone to the happy hunting-grounds, and at the proper time you will see 'em ag'in in their improved state. The wife and sister of braves must have looked forward to some such tarmination of their 'arthly careers.'

'Cruel pale-face, what had my warriors done that you should slay them? They were the best hunters and the boldest young men of their tribe; the Great Spirit intended that they should live until they withered like the branches of the hemlock, and fell of their own weight.'

'Nay, nay, good Sumach,' interrupted the Deerslayer, whose love of truth was too indomitable to listen to such hyperbole with patience, even though it came from the torn breast of a widow,—'Nay, nay, good Sumach, this is a little out-doing redskin privileges. Young man was neither, any more than you can be called a young woman; and as to the Great Spirit's intending that they should fall otherwise than they did, that's a grievous mistake, inasmuch as what the Great Spirit intends is sartain to come to pass. Then, ag'in, it's plain enough neither of your fri'nds did me any harm: I raised my hand ag'in 'em on account of what they were *striving* to do, rather than what they did. This is nat'ral law, "to do, lest you should be done by." '

'It is so. Sumach has but one tongue; she can tell but one story. The pale-face struck the Hurons, lest the Hurons should strike him. The Hurons are a just nation; they will forget it. The chiefs will shut their eyes, and pretend not to have seen it. The young men will believe the Panther and the Lynx have gone to far-off hunts; and the Sumach will take her children by the hand, and go into the lodge of the pale-face, and say, "See; these are *your* children—they are also mine; feed us, and we will live with you." '

'The tarms are onadmissable, woman; and, though I feel for your losses, which must be hard to bear, the tarms cannot be accepted. As to givin' you ven'son, in case we lived near enough together, that would be no great expl'ite; but as for becomin' your husband, and the father of your children, to be honest with you, I feel no callin' that-a-way.'

'Look at this boy, cruel pale-face; he has no father to teach him to kill the deer, or to take scalps. See this girl; what young man will come to look for a wife in a lodge that has no head? There are more among

my people in the Canadas, and the Killer of Deer will find as many mouths to feed as his heart can wish for.'

'I tell you, woman,' exclaimed Deerslayer, whose imagination was far from seconding the appeal of the widow, and who began to grow restive under the vivid pictures she was drawing, 'all this is nothing to me. People and kindred must take care of their own fatherless, leaving them that have no children to their own loneliness. As for me, I have no offspring, and I want no wife. Now, go away, Sumach; leave me in the hands of your chiefs; for my color, and gifts, and natur' itself, cry out ag'in the idee of taking you for a wife.'

It is unnecessary to expatiate on the effect of this down-right refusal of the woman's proposals. If there was anything like tenderness in her bosom,—and no woman was, probably, ever entirely without that feminine quality,—it all disappeared at this plain announcement. Fury, rage, mortified pride, and a volcano of wrath, burst out at one explosion, converting her into a sort of maniac, as it might be at the touch of a magician's wand. Without deigning a reply in words, she made the arches of the forest ring with screams, and then flew forward at her victim, seizing him by the hair, which she appeared resolute to draw out by the roots. It was some time before her grasp could be loosened. Fortunately for the prisoner, her rage was blind, since his total helplessness left him entirely at her mercy; had it been better directed it might have proved fatal before any relief could have been offered. As it was, she did succeed in wrenching out two or three handfuls of hair, before the young men could tear her away from her victim.

The insult that had been offered to the Sumach was deemed an insult to the whole tribe; not so much, however, on account of any respect that was felt for the woman, as on account of the honor of the Huron nation. Sumach, herself, was generally considered to be as acid as the berry from which she derived her name; and now that her great supporters, her husband and brother, were both gone, few cared about concealing their aversion. Nevertheless, it had become a point of honor to punish the pale-face who disdained a Huron woman, and more particularly one who coolly preferred death to relieving the tribe from the support of a widow and her children. The young men showed an impatience to begin to torture, that Rivenoak understood; and as his elder associates manifested no disposition to permit any longer delay, he was compelled to give the signal for the infernal work to proceed.

3

'The ugly bear now minded not the stake,
Nor how the cruel mastiffs do him tear;
The stag lay still, unroused from the brake,
The foamy boar feared not the hunter's spear:
All thing was still in desert, bush, and briar.'
LORD DORSET.

It was one of the common expedients of the savages, on such occasions, to put the nerves of their victims to the severest proofs. On the other hand, it was a matter of Indian pride to betray no yielding to terror or pain; but for the prisoner to provoke his enemies to such acts of violence as would soonest produce death. Many a warrior had been known to bring his own sufferings to a more speedy termination, by taunting reproaches and reviling language, when he found that his physical system was giving way under the agony of sufferings, produced by a hellish ingenuity, that might well eclipse all that has been said of the infernal devices of religious persecution. This happy expedient of taking refuge from the ferocity of his foes in their passions was denied Deerslayer, however, by his peculiar notions of the duty of a white man; and he had stoutly made up his mind to endure everything, in preference to disgracing his color.

No sooner did the young men understand that they were at liberty to commence, than some of the boldest and most forward among them sprang into the arena, tomahawk in hand. Here they prepared to throw that dangerous weapon, the object being to strike the tree as near as possible to the victim's head, without absolutely hitting him. This was so hazardous an experiment, that none but those who were known to be exceedingly expert with the weapon were allowed to enter the lists at all, lest an early death might interfere with the expected entertainment. In the truest

hands, it was seldom that the captive escaped injury in these trials; and it often happened that death followed, even when the blow was not premeditated. In the particular case of our hero, Rivenoak and the older warriors were apprehensive that the example of the Panther's fate might prove a motive with some fiery spirit, suddenly to sacrifice his conqueror, when the temptation of effecting it in precisely the same manner, and possibly with the identical weapon with which the warrior had fallen, offered. This circumstance, of itself, rendered the ordeal of the tomahawk doubly critical for the Deerslayer.

It would seem, however, that all who now entered what we shall call the lists, were more disposed to exhibit their own dexterity, than to resent the deaths of their comrades. Each prepared himself for the trial, with the feelings of rivalry rather than with the desire for vengeance; and for the first few minutes, the prisoner had little more connection with the result, than grew out of the interest that necessarily attached itself to a living target. The young men were eager, instead of being fierce, and Rivenoak thought he still saw signs of being able to save the life of the captive, when the vanity of the young men had been gratified; always admitting that it was not sacrificed to the delicate experiments that were about to be made.

The first youth who presented himself for the trial, was called the Raven, having as yet had no opportunity of obtaining a more warlike *sobriquet*. He was remarkable for high pretension, rather than for skill or exploits; and those who knew his character thought the captive in imminent danger, when he took his stand, and poised the tomahawk. Nevertheless, the young man was good-natured, and no thought was uppermost in his mind other than the desire to make a better cast, than any of his fellows. Deerslayer got an inkling of this warrior's want of reputation, by the injunctions that he had received from the seniors; who, indeed, would have objected to his appearing in the arena at all, but for an influence derived from his father, an aged warrior of great merit who was then in the lodges of the tribe. Still, our hero maintained an appearance of self-possession. He had made up his mind that his hour was come, and it would have been a mercy, instead of a calamity, to fall by the unsteadiness of the first hand that was raised against him. After a suitable number of flourishes and gesticulations, that promised much more than he could perform, the Raven let the tomahawk quit his hand. The weapon whirled through the air, with the usual evolutions, cut a chip from the sapling to which the prisoner was bound, within a few inches of his cheek, and stuck in a large oak that grew several yards behind him. This was decidedly a bad effort, and a common sneer proclaimed as much, to the great mortification of the young man. On the other hand, there was a general, but suppressed murmur of admiration at the steadiness with which the captive stood the trial. The head was the only part he could move, and this had been purposely left free, that the tormentors might have the amusement, and the tormented endure the shame, of dodging, and otherwise attempting to avoid the blows. Deerslayer disappointed these hopes, by a command of nerve that rendered his whole body as immovable as the tree to which it was bound. Nor did he even adopt the natural and usual expedient of shutting his eyes; the firmest and oldest warrior of the red-men never having more disdainfully denied himself this advantage, under similar circumstances.

The Raven had no sooner made his unsuccessful and puerile effort, than he was succeeded by le Daim-Mose, or the Moose; a middle-aged warrior, who was particularly skilful in the use of the tomahawk, and from whose attempt the spectators confidently looked for gratification. This man had none of the good-nature of the Raven, but he would gladly have sacrificed the captive to his hatred of the palefaces generally, were it not for the greater interest he felt in his own success as one particularly skilful in the use of this weapon. He took his stand quietly, but with an air of confidence, poised his little axe but a single instant, advanced a foot with a quick motion, and threw. Deerslayer saw the keen instrument whirling towards him, and believed all was over; still he was not touched. The tomahawk had actually bound the head of the captive to the tree, by carrying before it some of his hair:

having buried itself deep beneath the soft bark. A general yell expressed the delight of the spectators, and the Moose felt his heart soften a little towards the prisoner, whose steadiness of nerve alone enabled him to give this evidence of his consummate skill.

Le Daim-Mose was succeeded by the Bounding Boy, or le Garçon qui Bondi, who came leaping into the circle like a hound, or a goat at play. This was one of those elastic youths whose muscles seemed always in motion, and who either affected, or who from habit was actually unable to move in any other manner, than by showing the antics just mentioned. Nevertheless he was both brave and skilful, and had gained the respect of his people by deeds in war as well as success in the hunts. A far nobler name would long since have fallen to his share, had not a Frenchman of rank inadvertently given him this *sobriquet*, which he religiously preserved as coming from his great father, who lived beyond the wide salt lake. The Bounding Boy skipped about in front of the captive, menacing him with his tomahawk, now on one side and now on another, and then again in front, in the vain hope of being able to extort some sign of fear by this parade of danger. At length Deerslayer's patience became exhausted by all this mummery, and he spoke for the first time since the trial had actually commenced.

'Throw away, Huron!' he cried, 'or your tomahawk will forget its ar'n'd. Why do you keep loping about like a fa'a'n that's showing its dam how well it can skip, when you're a warrior grown yourself, and a warrior grown defies you and all your silly antics? Throw, or the Huron gals will laugh in your face.'

Although not intended to produce such an effect, the last words aroused the 'Bounding' warrior to fury. The same nervous excitability which rendered him so active in his person, made it difficult to repress his feelings, and the words were scarcely past the lips of the speaker than the tomahawk left the hand of the Indian. Nor was it cast without good-will, and a fierce determination to slay. Had the intention been less deadly, the danger might have been greater. The aim was uncertain, and the weapon glanced near the cheek of the captive, slightly cutting the shoulder in its evolutions. This was the first instance in which any other object, than that of terrifying the prisoner, and of displaying skill had been manifested; and the Bounding Boy was immediately led from the arena, and was warmly rebuked for his intemperate haste, which had come so near defeating all the hopes of the band.

To this irritable person succeeded several other young warriors, who not only hurled the tomahawk but who cast the knife, a far more dangerous experiment, with reckless indifference; yet they always manifested a skill that prevented any injury to the captive. Several times Deerslayer was grazed, but in no instance did he receive what might be termed a wound. The unflinching firmness with which he faced his assailants, more especially in the sort of rally with which this trial terminated, excited a profound respect in the spectators; and when the chiefs announced that the prisoner had well withstood the trials of the knife and the tomahawk, there was not a single individual in the band who really felt any hostility towards him, with the exception of Sumach and the Bounding Boy. These two discontented spirits got together, it is true, feeding each other's ire; but, as yet, their malignant feelings were confined very much to themselves, though there existed the danger that the others, ere long, could not fail to be excited by their own efforts into that demoniacal state which usually accompanied all similar scenes among the red-men.

Rivenoak now told his people that the pale-face had proved himself to be a man. He might live with the Delawares, but he had not been made woman with that tribe. He wished to know whether it was the desire of the Hurons to proceed any further. Even the gentlest of the females, however, had received too much satisfaction in the late trials to forego their expectations of a gratifying exhibition; and there was but one voice in the request to proceed. The politic chief, who had some such desire to receive so celebrated a hunter into his tribe as a European minister has to desire a new and available means of taxation, sought every plausible means of arresting the trial in season; for he well knew, if permitted to go far enough to arouse the more ferocious pas-

sions of the tormentors, it would be as easy to dam the waters of the great lakes of his own region as to attempt to arrest them in their bloody career. He therefore called four or five of the best marksmen to him, and bid them put the captive to the proof of the rifle, while, at the same time, he cautioned them touching the necessity of their maintaining their own credit, by the closest attention to the manner of exhibiting their skill.

When Deerslayer saw the chosen warriors step into the circle, with their arms prepared for service, he felt some such relief as the miserable sufferer, who has long endured the agonies of disease, feels at the certain approach of death. Any trifling variance in the aim of this formidable weapon would prove fatal; since, the head being the target, or rather the point it was desired to graze without injury, an inch or two of difference in the line of projection, must at once determine the question of life or death.

In the torture by the rifle there was none of the latitude permitted that appeared in the case of even Gesler's apple, a hair's-breadth being, in fact, the utmost limits that an expert marksman would allow himself on an occasion like this. Victims were frequently shot through the head by too eager or unskilful hands; and it often occurred that, exasperated by the fortitude and taunts of the prisoner, death was dealt intentionally in a moment of ungovernable irritation. All this Deerslayer well knew, for it was in relating the traditions of such scenes as well as of the battles and victories of their people, that the old men beguiled the long winter evenings in their cabins. He now fully expected the end of his career, and experienced a sort of melancholy pleasure in the idea that he was to fall by a weapon as much beloved as the rifle. A slight interruption, however, took place before the business was allowed to proceed.

Hetty Hutter witnessed all that passed, and the scene at first had pressed upon her feeble mind in a way to paralyze it entirely; but by this time she had rallied, and was growing indignant at the unmerited suffering the Indians were inflicting on her friend. Though timid, and shy as the young of the deer, on so many occasions, this right-feeling girl was always intrepid in the cause of humanity; the lessons of her mother, and the impulses of her own heart,—perhaps we might say the promptings of that unseen and pure spirit that seemed ever to watch over and direct her actions—uniting to keep down the apprehensions of woman, and to impel her to be bold and resolute. She now appeared in the circle, gentle, feminine, even bashful in mien, as usual, but earnest in her words and countenance, speaking like one who knew herself to be sustained by the high authority of God.

'Why do you torment Deerslayer, redmen?' she asked. 'What has he done that you trifle with his life; who has given you the right to be his judges? Suppose one of your knives or tomahawks had hit him; what Indian among you all could cure the wound you would make? Besides, in harming Deerslayer, you injure your own friend; when father and Hurry Harry came after your scalps, he refused to be of the party, and stayed in the canoe by himself. You are tormenting your friend in tormenting this young man!'

The Hurons listened with grave attention, and one among them, who understood English, translated what had been said into their native tongue. As soon as Rivenoak was made acquainted with the purport of her address, he answered it in his own dialect; the interpreter conveying it to the girl in English.

'My daughter is very welcome to speak,' said the stern old orator, using gentle intonations, and smiling as kindly as if addressing a child—'the Hurons are glad to hear her voice; they listen to what she says. The Great Spirit often speaks to men with such tongues. This time her eyes have not been open wide enough to see all that has happened. Deerslayer did not come for our scalps, that is true; why did he not come? Here they are, on our heads; the warlocks are ready to be taken hold of; a bold enemy ought to stretch out his hand to seize them. The Iroquois are too great a nation to punish men that take scalps. What they do themselves, they like to see others do. Let my daughter look around her, and count my warriors. Had I as many hands as four warriors, their fingers would be fewer than my people, when they came into your hunting-grounds. Now, a whole hand is missing. Where are the fingers? Two have been cut off by this pale-face; my Hurons wish to see

if he did this by means of a stout heart, or by treachery; like a skulking fox, or like a leaping panther.'

'You know yourself, Huron, how one of them fell. I saw it, and you all saw it, too. 'Twas too bloody to look at; but it was not Deerslayer's fault. Your warrior sought his life, and he defended himself. I don't know whether the good book says that it was right, but all men will do that. Come, if you want to know which of you can shoot best, give Deerslayer a rifle, and then you will find how much more expert he is than any of your warriors; yes, than *all* of them together!'

Could one have looked upon such a scene with indifference, he would have been amused at the gravity with which the savages listened to the translation of this unusual request. No taunt, no smile mingled with their surprise; for Hetty had a character and manner too saintly to subject her infirmity to the mockings of the rude and ferocious. On the contrary, she was answered with respectful attention.

'My daughter does not always talk like a chief at a council-fire,' returned Rivenoak, 'or she would not have said this. Two of my warriors have fallen by the blows of our prisoner; their grave is too small to hold a third. The Hurons do not like to crowd their dead. If there is another spirit about to set out for the far-off world, it must not be the spirit of a Huron; it must be the spirit of a pale-face. Go, daughter, and sit by Sumach, who is in grief; let the Huron warriors show how well they can shoot; let the pale-face show how little he cares for their bullets.'

Hetty's mind was unequal to a sustained discussion, and, accustomed to defer to the directions of her seniors, she did as told, seating herself passively on a log by the side of the Sumach, and averting her face from the painful scene that was occurring within the circle.

The warriors, as soon as this interruption had ceased, resumed their places, and again prepared to exhibit their skill, as there was a double object in view, that of putting the constancy of the captive to the proof, and that of showing how steady were the hands of the marksmen under circumstances of excitement. The distance was small, and, in one sense, safe. But in diminishing the distance taken by the tormentors, the trial to the nerves of the captive was essentially increased. The face of Deerslayer, indeed, was just removed sufficiently from the ends of the guns to escape the effects of the flash, and his steady eye was enabled to look directly into their muzzles, as it might be, in anticipation of the fatal messenger that was to issue from each. The cunning Hurons well knew this fact; and scarce one levelled his piece without first causing it to point as near as possible at the forehead of the prisoner, in the hope that his fortitude would fail him, and that the band would enjoy the triumph of seeing a victim quail under their ingenious cruelty. Nevertheless, each of the competitors was still careful not to injure; the disgrace of striking prematurely being second only to that of failing altogether in attaining the object. Shot after shot was made; all the bullets coming in close proximity to the Deerslayer's head, without touching it. Still no one could detect even the twitching of a muscle on the part of the captive, or the slightest winking of an eye. This indomitable resolution, which so much exceeded every thing of its kind that any present had before witnessed, might be referred to three distinct causes. The first was resignation to his fate, blended with natural steadiness of deportment; for our hero had calmly made up his mind that he must die, and preferred this mode to any other; the second was his great familiarity with this particular weapon, which deprived it of all the terror that is usually connected with the mere form of the danger; and the third was this familiarity carried out in practice, to a degree so nice as to enable the intended victim to tell, within an inch, the precise spot where each bullet must strike, for he calculated its range by looking in at the bore of the piece. So exact was Deerslayer's estimation of the line of fire, that his pride of feeling finally got the better of his resignation, and, when five or six had discharged their bullets into the tree, he could not refrain from expressing his contempt at their want of hand and eye.

'You may call this shooting, Mingos,' he exclaimed, 'but we've squaws among the Delawares, and I've known Dutch gals on the Mohawk, that could outdo your greatest indivors. Ondo these arms of mine, put a rifle in my hands, and I'll pin the thinnest

warlock in your party to any tree you can show me; and this at a hundred yards; ay, or at two hundred, if the object can be seen, nineteen shots in twenty; or for that matter, twenty in twenty, if the piece is creditable and trusty!'

A low menacing murmur followed this cool taunt; the ire of the warriors kindled at listening to such a reproach from one who so far disdained their efforts as to refuse even to wink, when a rifle was discharged as near his face as could be done without burning it. Rivenoak perceived that the moment was critical, and still retaining his hope of adopting so noted a hunter into his tribe, the politic old chief interposed in time, probably, to prevent an immediate resort to that portion of the torture which must necessarily have produced death, through extreme bodily suffering, if in no other manner. Moving into the centre of the irritated group, he addressed them with his usual wily logic and plausible manner, at once suppressing the fierce movement that had commenced.

'I see how it is,' he said. 'We have been like the pale-faces when they fasten their doors at night, out of fear of the red-man. They use so many bars, that the fire comes and burns them before they can get out. We have bound the Deerslayer too tight; the thongs keep his limbs from shaking, and his eyes from shutting. Loosen him; let us see what his own body is really made of.'

It is often the case, when we are thwarted in a cherished scheme, that any expedient, however unlikely to succeed, is gladly resorted to, in preference to a total abandonment of the project. So it was with the Hurons. The proposal of the chief found instant favor; and several hands were immediately at work, cutting and tearing the ropes of bark from the body of our hero. In half a minute, Deerslayer stood as free from bonds, as when, an hour before, he had commenced his flight on the side of the mountain. Some little time was necessary that he should recover the use of his limbs, the circulation of the blood having been checked by the tightness of the ligatures; and this was accorded to him by the politic Rivenoak, under the pretence that his body would be more likely to submit to apprehension, if its true tone were restored; though really with a view to give time to the fierce passions which had been awakened in the bosoms of his young men, to subside. This *ruse* succeeded; and Deerslayer, by rubbing his limbs, stamping his feet, and moving about, soon regained the circulation;—recovering all his physical powers, as effectually as if nothing had occurred to disturb them.

It is seldom men think of death in the pride of their health and strength. So it was with Deerslayer. Having been helplessly bound, and, as he had every reason to suppose, so lately on the very verge of the other world, to find himself so unexpectedly liberated, in possession of his strength, and with a full command of limb, acted on him like a sudden restoration to life, reanimating hopes that he had once absolutely abandoned. From that instant all his plans changed. In this, he simply obeyed a law of nature; for while we have wished to represent our hero as being resigned to his fate, it has been far from our intention to represent him as anxious to die. From the instant that his buoyancy of feeling revived, his thoughts were keenly bent on the various projects that presented themselves as modes of evading the designs of his enemies; and he again became the quick-witted, ingenious, and determined woodsman, alive to all his own powers and resources. The change was so great that his mind resumed its elasticity; and no longer thinking of submission, it dwelt only on the devices of the sort of warfare in which he was engaged.

As soon as Deerslayer was released, the band divided itself in a circle around him, in order to hedge him in; and the desire to break down his spirit grew in them, precisely as they saw proofs of the difficulty there would be in subduing it. The honor of the band was now involved in the issue; and even the sex lost all its sympathy with suffering, in the desire to save the reputation of the tribe. The voices of the girls, soft and melodious as nature had made them, were heard mingling with the menaces of the men; and the wrongs of Sumach suddenly assumed the character of injuries inflicted on every Huron female. Yielding to this rising tumult, the men drew back a little, signifying to the females that they left the captive for a time in their hands; it being a common practice, on such occasions,

for the women to endeavor to throw the victim into a rage by their taunts and revilings, and then to turn him suddenly over to the men in a state of mind that was little favorable to resisting the agony of bodily suffering. Nor was this party without the proper instruments for effecting such a purpose. Sumach had a notoriety as a scold; and one or two crones, like the She Bear, had come out with the party, most probably as the conservators of its decency and moral discipline; such things occurring in savage as well as civilized life. It is unnecessary to repeat all that ferocity and ignorance could invent for such a purpose; the only difference between this outbreaking of feminine anger, and a similar scene among ourselves, consisting in the figures of speech and the epithets; the Huron women calling their prisoner by the names of the lower and least respected animals that were known to themselves.

But Deerslayer's mind was too much occupied to permit him to be disturbed by the abuse of excited hags; and their rage necessarily increasing with his indifference, as his indifference increased with their rage, the furies soon rendered themselves impotent by their own excesses. Perceiving that the attempt was a complete failure, the warriors interfered to put a stop to this scene; and this so much the more, because preparations were now seriously making for the commencement of the real tortures, or that which would put the fortitude of the sufferer to the test of severe bodily pain. A sudden and unlooked-for announcement, that proceeded from one of the look-outs, a boy of ten or twelve years old, however, put a momentary check to the whole proceedings. As this interruption has a close connection with the *dénouement* of our story, it shall be given in a separate chapter.

4

'So deem'st thou—so each mortal deems
Of that which is from that which seems;
But other harvest here
Than that which peasant's scythe demands,
Was gathered in by sterner hands,
With bayonet, blade, and spear.'

SCOTT.

It exceeded Deerslayer's power to ascertain what had produced the sudden pause in the movements of his enemies, until the fact was revealed in the due course of events. He perceived that much agitation prevailed among the women in particular, while the warriors rested on their arms, in a sort of dignified expectation. It was plain no alarm was excited, though it was not equally apparent that a friendly occurrence produced the delay. Rivenoak was evidently apprised of all, and by a gesture of his arm he appeared to direct the circle to remain unbroken, and for each person to await the issue in the situation he, or she, then occupied. It required but a minute or two to bring an explanation of this singular and mysterious pause, which was soon terminated by the appearance of Judith, on the exterior of the line of bodies, and her ready admission within its circle.

If Deerslayer was startled by this unexpected arrival, well knowing that the quick-witted girl could claim none of that exemption from the penalties of captivity, that was so cheerfully accorded to her feeble-minded sister, he was equally astonished at the guise in which she came. All her ordinary forest attire, neat and becoming as this usually was, had been laid aside for the brocade, that has been already mentioned, and which had once before wrought so great and magical an effect in her appearance. Nor was this all. Accustomed to see the ladies of the garrison, in the formal, gala attire of the day, and familiar with the more critical niceties of these matters, the girl had managed to complete her dress, in a way to leave nothing strikingly defective in its details, or even to betray an incongruity that would have been detected by one practised in the mysteries of the toilet. Head, feet, arms, hands, bust, and drapery, were all in harmony, as female attire was then deemed attractive and harmonious; and the end she aimed at, that of imposing on the uninstructed senses of the savages, by causing them to believe their guest was a woman of rank and importance, might well have succeeded with those whose habits had taught them to discriminate between persons. Judith, in addition to her rare native beauty, had a singular grace of person, and her mother had imparted enough of her own deportment, to prevent any striking or offensive vulgarity of manner; so that, sooth to say, the gorgeous dress might have been

worse bestowed in nearly every particular. Had it been displayed in a capital, a thousand might have worn it, before one could have been found to do more credit to its gay colors, glossy satins, and rich laces, than the beautiful creature whose person it now aided to adorn.

The effect of such an apparition had not been miscalculated. The instant Judith found herself within the circle, she was, in a degree, compensated for the fearful personal risk she ran, by the unequivocal sensation of surprise and admiration produced by her appearance. The grim old warriors uttered their favorite exclamation, 'Hugh!' The younger men were still more sensibly overcome, and even the women were not backward in letting open manifestations of pleasure escape them. It was seldom that these untutored children of the forest had ever seen any white female above the commonest sort, and, as to dress, never before had so much splendor shone before their eyes. The gayest uniforms of both French and English seemed dull, compared with the lustre of the brocade; and while the rare personal beauty of the wearer added to the effect produced by its hues, the attire did not fail to adorn that beauty in a way which surpassed even the hopes of its wearer. Deerslayer himself was astounded, and this quite as much by the brilliant picture the girl presented, as at the indifference to consequences with which she had braved the danger of the step she had taken. Under such circumstances, all waited for the visitor to explain her object, which to most of the spectators seemed as inexplicable as her appearance.

'Which of these warriors is the principal chief?' demanded Judith of Deerslayer, as soon as she found it was expected that she should open the communication; 'my errand is too important to be delivered to any of inferior rank. First explain to the Hurons what I say; then give an answer to the question I have put.'

Deerslayer quietly complied, his auditors greedily listening to the interpretation of the first words that fell from so extraordinary a vision. The demand seemed perfectly in character for one who had every appearance of an exalted rank herself. Rivenoak gave an appropriate reply, by presenting himself before his fair visitor in a way to leave no doubt that he was entitled to all the consideration he claimed.

'I can believe this, Huron,' resumed Judith, enacting her assumed part with a steadiness and dignity that did credit to her powers of imitation, for she strove to impart to her manner the condescending courtesy she had once observed in the wife of a general officer at a similar, though a more amicable scene: 'I can believe you to be the principal person of this party; I see in your countenance the marks of thought and reflection. To you, then, I must make my communication.'

'Let the Flower of the Woods speak,' returned the old chief, courteously, as soon as her address had been translated so that all might understand it. 'If her words are as pleasant as her looks, they will never quit my ears; I shall hear them long after the winter in Canada has killed the flowers, and frozen all the speeches of summer.'

This admiration was grateful to one constituted like Judith, and it contributed to aid her self-possession, quite as much as it fed her vanity. Smiling involuntarily, or in spite of her wish to seem reserved, she proceeded in her plot.

'Now, Huron,' she continued, 'listen to my words. Your eyes tell you that I am no common woman. I will not say I am the queen of this country; *she* is afar off, in a distant land; but under our gracious monarchs there are many degrees of rank: one of these I fill. What that rank is precisely, it is unnecessary for me to say, since you would not understand it. For that information you must trust your eyes. You *see* what I am; you must *feel* that in listening to my words, you listen to one who can be your friend or your enemy, as you treat her.'

This was well uttered, with a due attention to manner and a steadiness of tone that was really surprising, considering all the circumstances of the case. It was well, though simply rendered into the Indian dialect, too, and it was received with a respect and gravity that augured favorably for the girl's success. But Indian thought is not easily traced to its sources. Judith waited with anxiety to hear the answer, filled with hope even while she doubted. Rivenoak was a ready speaker, and he answered as promptly as comported with the notions of Indian decorum; that peculiar

people seeming to think a short delay respectful, inasmuch as it manifests that the words already heard have been duly weighed.

'My daughter is handsomer than the wild roses of Ontario; her voice is pleasant to the ear as the song of the wren,' answered the cautious and wily chief, who of all the band stood alone in not being fully imposed on by the magnificent and unusual appearance of Judith; but who distrusted even while he wondered: 'the humming bird is not much larger than the bee; yet its feathers are as gay as the tail of the peacock. The Great Spirit sometimes puts very bright clothes on very little animals. Still, He covers the moose with coarse hair. These things are beyond the understanding of poor Indians, who can only comprehend what they see and hear. No doubt my daughter has a very large wigwam, somewhere about the lake; the Hurons have not found it, on account of their ignorance?'

'I have told you, chief, that it would be useless to state my rank and residence, inasmuch as you would not comprehend them. You must trust to your eyes for this knowledge; what red-man is there that cannot see? This blanket that I wear is not the blanket of a common squaw; these ornaments are such as the wives and daughters of chiefs only appear in. Now, listen and hear why I have come alone among your people, and hearken to the errand that has brought me here. The Yengeese have young men as well as the Hurons; and plenty of them, too; this you well know.'

'The Yengeese are as plenty as the leaves on the trees! This every Huron knows and feels.'

'I understand you, chief. Had I brought a party with me, it might have caused trouble. My young men and your young men would have looked angrily at each other; especially had my young men seen that pale-face bound for the tortures. He is a great hunter, and is much loved by all the garrisons, far and near. There would have been blows about him, and the trail of the Iroquois back to the Canadas would have been marked with blood.'

'There is so much blood on it now,' returned the chief, gloomily, 'that it blinds our eyes. My young men see that it is all Huron.'

'No doubt; and more Huron blood would be spilt, had I come surrounded with pale-faces. I have heard of Rivenoak, and have thought it would be better to send him back in peace to his village, that he might leave his women and children behind him; if he then wished to come for our scalps, we would meet him. He loves animals made of ivory, and little rifles. See; I have brought some with me to show him. I am his friend. When he has packed up these things among his goods, he will start for his village, before any of my young men can overtake him; and then he will show his people in Canada what riches they can come to seek, now that our great fathers, across the salt lake, have sent each other the war-hatchet. I will lead back with me this great hunter, of whom I have need to keep my house in venison.'

Judith, who was sufficiently familiar with Indian phraseology, endeavored to express her ideas in the sententious manner common to those people; and she succeeded even beyond her own expectations. Deer-slayer did her full justice in the translation, and this so much the more readily, since the girl carefully abstained from uttering any direct untruth; a homage she paid to the young man's known aversion to falsehood, which he deemed a meanness altogether unworthy of a white man's gifts. The offering of the two remaining elephants, and of the pistols already mentioned, one of which was all the worse for the recent accident, produced a lively sensation among the Hurons generally, though Rivenoak received it coldly, notwithstanding the delight with which he had first discovered the probable existence of a creature with two tails. In a word, this cool and sagacious savage was not so easily imposed on as his followers; and with a sentiment of honor, that half the civilized world would have deemed supererogatory, he declined the acceptance of a bribe that he felt no disposition to earn by a compliance with the donor's wishes.

'Let my daughter keep her two-tailed hog to eat when venison is scarce,' he drily answered, 'and the little gun, which has two muzzles. The Hurons will kill deer when they are hungry; and they have long rifles to fight with. This hunter cannot quit my young men now; they wish to know if he is as stout-hearted as he boasts himself to be.'

'That I deny, Huron,' interrupted Deerslayer, with warmth; 'yes, that I downright deny, as ag'in truth and reason. No man has heard me *boast*, and no man shall, though ye flay me alive, and then roast the quivering flesh, with your own infarnal devices and cruelties! I may be humble, and misfortunate, and your prisoner; but I'm no boaster, by my very gifts.'

'My young pale-face *boasts* he is *no* boaster,' returned the crafty chief; 'he *must* be right. I hear a strange bird singing. It has very rich feathers. No Huron ever before saw such feathers. They will be ashamed to go back to their village, and tell their people that they let their prisoner go on account of the song of this strange bird, and not be able to give the *name* of the bird. They do not know how to say whether it is a wren or a cat-bird. This would be a great disgrace; my young men would not be allowed to travel in the woods, without taking their mothers with them to tell them the names of the birds.'

'You can ask my name of your prisoner,' returned the girl. 'It is Judith; and there is a great deal of the history of Judith in the pale-face's best book, the Bible. If I am a bird of fine feathers, I have also my name.'

'No,' answered the wily Huron, betraying the artifice he had so long practised, by speaking in English, with tolerable accuracy; 'I not ask prisoner. He tired; he want rest. I ask my daughter, with feeble-mind. She speak truth. Come here, daughter; you answer. *Your* name, Hetty?'

'Yes, that's what they call me,' returned the girl; 'though it's written Esther, in the Bible.'

'He write *him* in Bible, too? All write in Bible. No matter—what *her* name?'

'That's Judith, and it's so written in the Bible, though father sometimes called her Jude. That's my sister Judith, Thomas Hutter's daughter—Thomas Hutter, whom you called the Muskrat; though he was *no* muskrat, but a man, like yourselves—he lived in a house on the water, and that was enough for *you*!'

A smile of triumph gleamed on the hard-wrinkled countenance of the chief, when he found how completely his appeal to the truth-loving Hetty had succeeded. As for Judith herself, the moment her sister was questioned, she saw that all was lost; for no sign, or even entreaty, could have induced the right-feeling girl to utter a falsehood. To attempt to impose a daughter of the Muskrat on the savages, as a princess or a great lady, she knew would be idle; and she saw her bold and ingenious expedient for liberating the captive fail, through one of the simplest and most natural causes that could be imagined. She turned her eye on Deerslayer, therefore, as if imploring him to interfere, to save them both.

'It will not do, Judith,' said the young man, in answer to this appeal, which he understood, though he saw its uselessness; 'it will not do. 'Twas a bold idee, and fit for a general's lady; but yonder Mingo—' Rivenoak had withdrawn to a little distance, and was out of ear-shot—'but yonder Mingo is an oncommon man, and not to be deceived by any unnat'ral sarcumventions. Things must come afore him in their right order to draw a cloud afore *his* eyes! 'Twas too much to attempt making him fancy that a queen or a great lady lived in these mountains; and no doubt he thinks the fine clothes you wear are some of the plunder of your own father—or, at least, of him who once passed for your father; as quite likely it was, if all they say is true.'

'At all events, Deerslayer, my presence here will save you for a time. They will hardly attempt torturing you before my face!'

'Why not, Judith? Do you think they will treat a woman of the pale-faces more tenderly than they treat their own? It's true that your sex will most likely save you from the torments, but it will not save your liberty, and may not save your scalp. I wish you hadn't come, my good Judith; it can do no good to me, while it may do great harm to yourself.'

'I can share your fate,' the girl answered, with generous enthusiasm. 'They shall not injure you while I stand by, if in my power to prevent it—besides——'

'Besides what, Judith? What means have you to stop Injin cruelty, or to avart Injin deviltries?'

'None, perhaps, Deerslayer,' answered the girl, with firmness; 'but I can suffer with my friends—die with them if necessary.'

'Ah! Judith—suffer you may; but die you will not until the Lord's time shall come.

It's little likely that one of your sex and beauty will meet with a harder fate than to become the wife of a chief, if indeed your white inclinations can stoop to match with an Injin. 'Twould have been better had you stayed in the ark, or the castle:—but what has been done, is done. You was about to say something, when you stopped at "besides"? '

'It might not be safe to mention it here, Deerslayer,' the girl hurriedly answered, moving past him carelessly, that she might speak in a low tone; 'half an hour is all in all to us. None of your friends are idle.'

The hunter replied merely by a grateful look. Then he turned towards his enemies, as if ready again to face the torments. A short consultation had passed among the elders of the band, and by this time they also were prepared with their decision. The merciful purpose of Rivenoak had been much weakened by the artifice of Judith, which, failing of its real object, was likely to produce results the very opposite of those she had anticipated. This was natural; the feeling being aided by the resentment of an Indian, who found how near he had been to becoming the dupe of an inexperienced girl. By this time Judith's real character was fully understood—the widespread reputation of her beauty contributed to the exposure. As for the unusual attire, it was confounded with the profound mystery of the animals with two tails, and, for the moment, lost its influence.

When Rivenoak, therefore, faced the captive again, it was with an altered countenance. He had abandoned the wish of saving him, and was no longer disposed to retard the more serious part of the torture. This change of sentiment was, in effect, communicated to the young men, who were already eagerly engaged in making their preparations for the contemplated scene. Fragments of dried wood were rapidly collected near the sapling—the splinters which it was intended to thrust into the flesh of the victim, previously to lighting, were all collected, and the thongs were already produced that were again to bind him to the tree. All this was done in profound silence, Judith watching every movement with breathless expectation, while Deerslayer himself stood seemingly as unmoved as one of the pines of the hills. When the warriors advanced to bind him, however, the young man glanced at Judith, as if to inquire whether resistance or submission were most advisable. By a significant gesture she counselled the last; and, in a minute, he was once more fastened to the tree, a helpless object of any insult or wrong that might be offered. So eagerly did every one now act, that nothing was said. The fire was immediately lighted in the pile, and the end of all was anxiously expected.

It was not the intention of the Hurons absolutely to destroy the life of their victim by means of fire. They designed merely to put his physical fortitude to the severest proofs it could endure short of that extremity. In the end, they fully intended to carry his scalp with them into their village, but it was their wish first to break down his resolution, and to reduce him to the level of a complaining sufferer. With this view, the pile of brush and branches had been placed at a proper distance, or one at which it was thought the heat would soon become intolerable, though it might not be immediately dangerous. As often happened, however, on these occasions, this distance had been miscalculated, and the flames began to wave their forked tongues in a proximity to the face of the victim that would have proved fatal in another instant, had not Hetty rushed through the crowd, armed with a stick, and scattered the blazing pile in a dozen directions. More than one hand was raised to strike the presumptuous intruder to the earth; but the chiefs prevented the blows, by reminding their irritated followers of the state of her mind. Hetty, herself, was insensible to the risk she ran; but, as soon as she had performed this bold act, she stood looking about her in frowning resentment, as if to rebuke the crowd of attentive savages for their cruelty.

'God bless you, dearest sister, for that brave and ready act!' murmured Judith, herself unnerved so much as to be incapable of exertion; 'Heaven itself has sent you on its holy errand.'

' 'Twas well-meant, Judith,' rejoined the victim; ' 'twas excellently meant, and 'twas timely, though it may prove ontimely in the ind! What is to come to pass must come to pass soon, or 'twill quickly be too late. Had

I drawn in one mouthful of that flame in breathing, the power of man couldn't save my life; and you see that this time they've so bound my forehead as not to leave my head the smallest chance. 'Twas well meant; but it might have been more merciful to let the flames act their part.'

'Cruel, heartless Hurons!' exclaimed the still indignant Hetty; 'would you burn a man and a Christian, as you would burn a log of wood! Do you never read your Bibles? or do you think God will forget such things?'

A gesture from Rivenoak caused the scattered brands to be collected; fresh wood was brought, even the women and children busying themselves eagerly in the gathering of dried sticks. The flame was just kindling a second time, when an *Indian* female pushed through the circle, advanced to the heap, and with her foot dashed aside the lighted twigs in time to prevent the conflagration. A yell followed this second disappointment; but when the offender turned towards the circle, and presented the countenance of Hist, it was succeeded by a common exclamation of pleasure and surprise. For a minute all thought of pursuing the business in hand was forgotten, and young and old crowded around the girl, in haste, to demand an explanation of her sudden and unlooked-for return. It was at this critical instant that Hist spoke to Judith in a low voice, placed some small object, unseen, in her hand, and then turned to meet the salutations of the Huron girls, with whom she was personally a great favorite. Judith recovered her self-possession and acted promptly. The small, keen-edged knife, that Hist had given to the other, was passed by the latter into the hands of Hetty, as the safest and least-suspected medium of transferring it to Deerslayer. But the feeble intellect of the last defeated the well-grounded hopes of all three. Instead of first cutting loose the hands of the victim, and then concealing the knife in his clothes, in readiness for action at the most available instant, she went to work herself, with earnestness and simplicity, to cut the thongs that bound his head, that he might not again be in danger of inhaling flames. Of course this deliberate procedure was seen, and the hands of Hetty were arrested ere she had more than liberated the upper portion of the captive's body, not including his arms, below the elbows. This discovery at once pointed distrust towards Hist; and, to Judith's surprise, when questioned on the subject, that spirited girl was not disposed to deny her agency in what had passed.

'Why should I not help the Deerslayer?' the girl demanded, in the tones of a firm-minded woman. 'He is the brother of a Delaware chief; my heart is all Delaware. Come forth, miserable Briarthorn, and wash the Iroquois paint from your face; stand before the Hurons, the crow that you are; you would eat the carrion of your own dead rather than starve. Put him face to face with Deerslayer, chiefs and warriors; I will show you how great a knave you have been keeping in your tribe.'

This bold language, uttered in their own dialect, and with a manner full of confidence, produced a deep sensation among the Hurons. Treachery is always liable to distrust; and though the recreant Briarthorn had endeavored to serve the enemy well, his exertions and assiduities had gained for him little more than toleration. His wish to obtain Hist for a wife had first induced him to betray her and his own people; but serious rivals to his first project had risen up among his new friends, weakening still more their sympathies with treason. In a word, Briarthorn had been barely permitted to remain in the Huron encampment, where he was as closely and as jealously watched as Hist herself; seldom appearing before the chiefs, and sedulously keeping out of view of Deerslayer, who, until this moment, was ignorant even of his presence. Thus summoned, however, it was impossible to remain in the background. 'Wash the Iroquois paint from his face,' he did not; for when he stood in the centre of the circle, he was so disguised in these new colors, that, at first, the hunter did not recognize him. He assumed an air of defiance, notwithstanding, and haughtily demanded what any could say against 'Briarthorn.'

'Ask yourself that,' continued Hist, with spirit, though her manner grew less concentrated; and there was a slight air of abstraction that became observable to Deerslayer and Judith, if to no others. 'Ask that of your own heart, sneaking woodchuck of

the Delawares; come not here with the face of an innocent man. Go look in the spring; see the colors of your enemies on your lying skin; and then come back and boast how you ran from your tribe, and took the blanket of the French for your covering! Paint yourself as bright as the humming-bird, you will still be black as the crow.'

Hist had been so uniformly gentle while living with the Hurons, that they now listened to her language with surprise. As for the delinquent, his blood boiled in his veins; and it was well for the pretty speaker that it was not in his power to execute the revenge he burned to inflict on her, in spite of his pretended love.

'Who wishes Briarthorn?' he sternly asked. 'If this pale-face is tired of life; if afraid of Indian torments, speak, Rivenoak; I will send him after the warriors we have lost.'

'No, chief; no, Rivenoak,' eagerly interrupted Hist. 'The Deerslayer fears nothing; least of all a crow! Unbind him—cut his withes—place him face to face with this cawing bird; then let us see which is tired of life.'

Hist made a forward movement, as if to take a knife from a young man, and perform the office she had mentioned, in person; but an aged warrior interposed, at a sign from Rivenoak. This chief watched all the girl did, with distrust; for, even while speaking in her most boastful language and in the steadiest manner, there was an air of uncertainty and expectation about her, that could not escape so close an observer. She acted well; but two or three of the old men were equally satisfied that it was merely acting. Her proposal to release Deerslayer, therefore, was rejected; and the disappointed Hist found herself driven back from the sapling at the very moment she fancied herself about to be successful. At the same time, the circle, which had got to be crowded and confused, was enlarged, and brought once more into order. Rivenoak now announced the intention of the old men again to proceed; the delay having been continued long enough, and leading to no result.

'Stop, Huron; stay, chiefs!' exclaimed Judith, scarce knowing what she said, or why she interposed, unless to obtain time; 'For God's sake, a single minute longer—'

The words were cut short by another and a still more extraordinary interruption. A young Indian came bounding through the Huron ranks, leaping into the very centre of the circle, in a way to denote the utmost confidence, or a temerity bordering on fool-hardiness. Five or six sentinels were still watching the lake at different and distant points; and it was the first impression of Rivenoak that one of these had come in with tidings of import. Still, the movements of the stranger were so rapid, and his war-dress, which scarcely left him more drapery than an antique statue, had so little distinguishing about it, that, at the first moment, it was impossible to ascertain whether he were friend or foe. Three leaps carried this warrior to the side of Deerslayer, whose withes were cut in the twinkling of an eye, with a quickness and precision that left the prisoner perfect master of his limbs. Not till this was effected, did the stranger bestow a glance on any other object; then he turned and showed the astonished Hurons the noble brow, fine person, and eagle eye of a young warrior, in the paint and panoply of a Delaware. He held a rifle in each hand, the butts of both resting on the earth, while from one dangled its proper pouch and horn. This was Killdeer, which, even as he looked boldly and in defiance on the crowd around him, he suffered to fall back into the hands of its proper owner. The presence of two armed men, though it was in their midst, startled the Hurons. Their rifles were scattered about against the different trees, and their only weapons were their knives and tomahawks. Still, they had too much self-possession to betray fear. It was little likely that so small a force would assail so strong a band; and each man expected some extraordinary proposition to succeed so decisive a step. The stranger did not seem disposed to disappoint them; he prepared to speak.

'Hurons,' he said, 'this earth is very big. The great lakes are big, too; there is room beyond them for the Iroquois; there is room for the Delawares on this side. I am Chingachgook, the son of Uncas; the kinsman of Tamenund. This is my betrothed; that pale-face is my friend. My heart was heavy when I missed him; I followed him to your camp to see that no harm hap-

pened to him. All the Delaware girls are waiting for Wah; they wonder that she stays away so long. Come, let us say farewell, and go on our path.'

'Hurons, this is your mortal enemy, the Great Serpent of them you hate!' cried Briarthorn. 'If he escape, blood will be in your moccasin prints from this spot to the Canadas. *I* am *all* Huron!'

As the last words were uttered, the traitor cast his knife at the naked breast of the Delaware. A quick movement of the arm on the part of Hist, who stood near, turned aside the blow, the dangerous weapon burying its point in a pine. At the next instant, a similar weapon glanced from the hand of the Serpent, and quivered in the recreant's heart. A minute had scarcely elapsed from the moment in which Chingachgook bounded into the circle, and that in which Briarthorn fell, like a log, dead in his tracks. The rapidity of events prevented the Hurons from acting; but this catastrophe permitted no further delay. A common exclamation followed, and the whole party was in motion. At this instant, a sound unusual to the woods was heard, and every Huron, male and female, paused to listen, with ears erect and faces filled with expectation. The sound was regular and heavy, as if the earth were struck with beetles. Objects became visible among the trees of the back-ground, and a body of troops was seen advancing with measured tread. They came upon the charge, the scarlet of the king's livery shining among the bright green foliage of the forest.

The scene that followed is not easily described. It was one in which wild confusion, despair, and frenzied efforts were so blended as to destroy the unity and distinctness of the action. A general yell burst from the enclosed Hurons; it was succeeded by the hearty cheers of England. Still, not a musket or rifle was fired, though that steady, measured tramp continued, and the bayonet was seen gleaming in advance of a line that counted nearly sixty men. The Hurons were taken at a fearful disadvantage. On three sides was the water, while their formidable and trained foes cut them off from flight on the fourth. Each warrior rushed for his arms, and then all on the point, man, woman, and child, eagerly sought the covers. In this scene of confusion and dismay, however, nothing could surpass the discretion and coolness of Deerslayer. His first care was to place Judith and Hist behind trees, and he looked for Hetty; but she had been hurried away in a crowd of Huron women. This effected, he threw himself on a flank of the retiring Hurons, who were inclining off towards the southern margin of the point, in the hope of escaping through the water. Deerslayer watched his opportunity, and finding two of his recent tormenters in a range, his rifle first broke the silence of the terrific scene. The bullet brought down both at one discharge. This drew a general fire from the Hurons, and the rifle and war-cry of the Serpent were heard in the clamor. Still the trained men returned no answering volley, the whoop and piece of Hurry alone being heard on their side, if we except the short, prompt word of authority, and that heavy, measured, and menacing tread. Presently, however, the shrieks, groans, and denunciations that usually accompany the use of the bayonet, followed. That terrible and deadly weapon was glutted in vengeance. The scene that succeeded was one of those, of which so many have occurred in our own times, in which neither age nor sex forms an exemption to the lot of a savage warfare.

1841

AUGUSTUS B. LONGSTREET

1790–1870

THE HORSE-SWAP

DURING the session of the Supreme Court, in the village of ——, about three weeks ago, when a number of people were collected in the principal street of the village, I observed a young man riding up and down the street, as I supposed, in a violent passion. He galloped this way, then that, and then the other; spurred his horse to

one group of citizens, then to another; then dashed off at half speed, as if fleeing from danger; and, suddenly checking his horse, returned first in a pace, then in a trot, and then in a canter. While he was performing these various evolutions, he cursed, swore, whooped, screamed, and tossed himself in every attitude which man could assume on horseback. In short, he *cavorted* most magnanimously (a term which, in our tongue, expresses all that I have described, and a little more), and seemed to be setting all creation at defiance. As I like to see all that is passing, I determined to take a position a little nearer to him, and to ascertain, if possible, what it was that affected him so sensibly. Accordingly, I approached a crowd before which he had stopped for a moment, and examined it with the strictest scrutiny. But I could see nothing in it that seemed to have anything to do with the cavorter. Every man appeared to be in good humour, and all minding their own business. Not one so much as noticed the principal figure. Still he went on. After a semicolon pause, which my appearance seemed to produce (for he eyed me closely as I approached), he fetched a whoop, and swore that 'he could out-swap any live man, woman, or child that ever walked these hills, or that ever straddled horseflesh since the days of old daddy Adam. Stranger,' said he to me, 'did you ever see the *Yallow* Blossom from Jasper?'

'No,' said I, 'but I have often heard of him.'

'I'm the boy,' continued he; 'perhaps a *leetle*, jist a *leetle*, of the best man at a horse-swap that ever trod shoe-leather.'

I began to feel my situation a little awkward, when I was relieved by a man somewhat advanced in years, who stepped up and began to survey the *Yallow Blossom's* horse with much apparent interest. This drew the rider's attention, and he turned the conversation from me to the stranger.

'Well, my old coon,' said he, 'do you want to swap *hosses*?'

'Why, I don't know,' replied the stranger; 'I believe I've got a beast I'd trade with you for that one, if you like him.'

'Well, fetch up your nag, my old cock; you're jist the lark I wanted to get hold of. I am perhaps a *leetle*, jist a *leetle*, of the best man at a horse-swap that ever stole *cracklins* out of his mammy's fat gourd. Where's your *hoss*?'

'I'll bring him presently; but I want to examine your horse a little.'

'Oh! look at him,' said the Blossom, alighting and hitting him a cut—'look at him! He's the best piece of *hoss*flesh in the thirteen united univarsal worlds. There's no sort o' mistake in little Bullet. He can pick up miles on his feet, and fling 'em behind him as fast as the next man's *hoss*, I don't care where he comes from. And he can keep at it as long as the sun can shine without resting.'

During this harangue, little Bullet looked as if he understood it all, believed it, and was ready at any moment to verify it. He was a horse of goodly countenance, rather expressive of vigilance than fire; though an unnatural appearance of fierceness was thrown into it by the loss of his ears, which had been cropped pretty close to his head. Nature had done but little for Bullet's head and neck; but he managed, in a great measure, to hide their defects by bowing perpetually. He had obviously suffered severely for corn; but if his ribs and hip bones had not disclosed the fact, *he* never would have done it; for he was in all respects as cheerful and happy as if he commanded all the corn-cribs and fodder-stacks in Georgia. His height was about twelve hands; but as his shape partook somewhat of that of the giraffe, his haunches stood much lower. They were short, strait, peaked, and concave. Bullet's tail, however, made amends for all his defects. All that the artist could do to beautify it had been done; and all that horse could do to compliment the artist, Bullet did. His tail was nicked in superior style, and exhibited the line of beauty in so many directions, that it could not fail to hit the most fastidious taste in some of them. From the root it dropped into a graceful festoon, then rose in a handsome curve, then resumed its first direction, and then mounted suddenly upward like a cypress knee to a perpendicular of about two and a half inches. The whole had a careless and bewitching inclination to the right. Bullet obviously knew where his beauty lay, and took all occasions to display it to the best advantage. If a stick cracked, or if any one moved suddenly about him, or coughed,

or hawked, or spoke a little louder than common, up went Bullet's tail like lightning; and if the *going up* did not please, the *coming down* must of necessity, for it was as different from the other movement as was its direction. The first was a bold and rapid flight upward, usually to an angle of forty-five degrees. In this position he kept his interesting appendage until he satisfied himself that nothing in particular was to be done; when he commenced dropping it by half inches, in second beats, then in triple time, then faster and shorter, and faster and shorter still, until it finally died away imperceptibly into its natural position. If I might compare sights to sounds, I should say its *settling* was more like the note of a locust than anything else in nature.

Either from native sprightliness of disposition, from uncontrollable activity, or from an unconquerable habit of removing flies by the stamping of the feet, Bullet never stood still; but always kept up a gentle fly-scaring movement of his limbs, which was peculiarly interesting.

'I tell you, man,' proceeded the Yellow Blossom, 'he's the best live hoss that ever trod the grit of Georgia. Bob Smart knows the hoss. Come here, Bob, and mount this hoss, and show Bullet's motions.' Here Bullet bristled up, and looked as if he had been hunting for Bob all day long, and had just found him. Bob sprang on his back. 'Boo-oo-oo!' said Bob, with a fluttering noise of the lips, and away went Bullet, as if in a quarter race, with all his beauties spread in handsome style.

'Now fetch him back,' said Blossom. Bullet turned and came in pretty much as he went out.

'Now trot him by.' Bullet reduced his tail to '*customary*'; sidled to the right and left airily, and exhibited at least three varieties of trot in the short space of fifty yards.

'Make him pace!' Bob commenced twitching the bridle and kicking at the same time. These inconsistent movements obviously (and most naturally) disconcerted Bullet; for it was impossible for him to learn, from them, whether he was to proceed or stand still. He started to trot, and was told that wouldn't do. He attempted a canter, and was checked again. He stopped, and was urged to go on. Bullet now rushed into the wide field of experiment, and struck out a gait of his own, that completely turned the tables upon his rider, and certainly deserved a patent. It seemed to have derived its elements from the jig, the minuet, and the cotillon. If it was not a pace, it certainly had *pace* in it, and no man would venture to call it anything else; so it passed off to the satisfaction of the owner.

'Walk him!' Bullet was now at home again, and he walked as if money were staked on him.

The stranger, whose name I afterwards learned was Peter Ketch, having examined Bullet to his heart's content, ordered his son Neddy to go and bring up Kit. Neddy soon appeared upon Kit, a well-formed sorrel of the middle size, and in good order. His *tout ensemble* threw Bullet entirely in the shade, though a glance was sufficient to satisfy any one that Bullet had the decided advantage of him in point of intellect.

'Why, man,' said Blossom, 'do you bring such a hoss as that to trade for Bullet? Oh, I see, you've no notion of trading.'

'Ride him off, Neddy!' said Peter. Kit put off at a handsome lope.

'Trot him back!' Kit came in at a long, sweeping trot, and stopped suddenly at the crowd.

'Well,' said Blossom, 'let me look at him; maybe he'll do to plough.'

'Examine him!' said Peter, taking hold of the bridle close to the mouth; 'he's nothing but a tacky. He an't as *pretty* a horse as Bullet, I know; but he'll do. Start 'em together for a hundred and fifty *mile*; and if Kit an't twenty mile ahead of him at the coming out, any man may take Kit for nothing. But he's a monstrous mean horse, gentlemen; any man may see that. He's the scariest horse, too, you ever saw. He won't do to hunt on, no how. Stranger, will you let Neddy have your rifle to shoot off him? Lay the rifle between his ears, Neddy, and shoot at the blaze in that stump. Tell me when his head is high enough.'

Ned fired and hit the blaze; and Kit did not move a hair's breadth.

'Neddy, take a couple of sticks, and beat on that hogshead at Kit's tail.'

Ned made a tremendous rattling, at which Bullet took fright, broke his bridle, and dashed off in grand style; and would

have stopped all further negotiations by going home in disgust, had not a traveller arrested him and brought him back; but Kit did not move.

'I tell you, gentlemen,' continued Peter, 'he's the scariest horse you ever saw. He an't as gentle as Bullet, but he won't do any harm if you watch him. Shall I put him in a cart, gig, or wagon for you, stranger? He'll cut the same capers there he does here. He's a monstrous mean horse.'

During all this time Blossom was examining him with the nicest scrutiny. Having examined his frame and limbs, he now looked at his eyes.

'He's got a curious look out of his eyes,' said Blossom.

'Oh yes, sir,' said Peter, 'just as blind as a bat. Blind horses always have clear eyes. Make a motion at his eyes, if you please, sir.'

Blossom did so, and Kit threw up his head rather as if something pricked him under the chin than as if fearing a blow. Blossom repeated the experiment, and Kit jerked back in considerable astonishment.

'Stone blind, you see, gentlemen,' proceeded Peter; 'but he's just as good to travel of a dark night as if he had eyes.'

'Blame my buttons,' said Blossom, 'if I like them eyes.'

'No,' said Peter, 'nor I neither. I'd rather have 'em made of diamonds; but they'll do—if they don't show as much white as Bullet's.'

'Well,' said Blossom, 'make a pass at me.'

'No,' said Peter; 'you made the banter, now make your pass.'

'Well, I'm never afraid to price my hosses. You must give me twenty-five dollars boot.'

'Oh, certainly; say fifty, and my saddle and bridle in. Here, Neddy, my son, take away daddy's horse.'

'Well,' said Blossom, 'I've made my pass, now you make yours.'

'I'm for short talk in a horse-swap, and therefore always tell a gentleman at once what I mean to do. You must give me ten dollars.'

Blossom swore absolutely, roundly, and profanely that he never would give boot.

'Well,' said Peter, 'I didn't care about trading; but you cut such high shines that I thought I'd like to back you out, and I've done it. Gentlemen, you see I've brought him to a hack.'

'Come, old man,' said Blossom, 'I've been joking with you. I begin to think you do want to trade; therefore, give me five dollars and take Bullet. I'd rather lose ten dollars any time than not make a trade, though I hate to fling away a good hoss.'

'Well,' said Peter, 'I'll be as clever as you are. Just put the five dollars on Bullet's back, and hand him over; it's a trade.'

Blossom swore again, as roundly as before, that he would not give boot; and, said he, 'Bullet wouldn't hold five dollars on his back, no how. But, as I bantered you, if you say an even swap, here's at you.'

'I told you,' said Peter, 'I'd be as clever as you, therefore, here goes two dollars more, just for trade sake. Give me three dollars, and it's a bargain.'

Blossom repeated his former assertion; and here the parties stood for a long time, and the by-standers (for many were now collected) began to taunt both parties. After some time, however, it was pretty unanimously decided that the old man had backed Blossom out.

At length Blossom swore he 'never would be backed out for three dollars after bantering a man'; and, accordingly, they closed the trade.

'Now,' said Blossom, as he handed Peter the three dollars, 'I'm a man that, when he makes a bad trade, makes the most of it until he can make a better. I'm for no rues and after-claps.'

'That's just my way,' said Peter; 'I never goes to law to mend my bargains.'

'Ah, you're the kind of boy I love to trade with. Here's your hoss, old man. Take the saddle and bridle off him, and I'll strip yours; but lift up the blanket easy from Bullet's back, for he's a mighty tender-backed hoss.'

The old man removed the saddle, but the blanket stuck fast. He attempted to raise it, and Bullet bowed himself, switched his tail, danced a little, and gave signs of biting.

'Don't hurt him, old man,' said Blossom, archly; 'take it off easy. I am, perhaps, a leetle of the best man at a horse-swap that ever catched a coon.'

Peter continued to pull at the blanket more and more roughly, and Bullet became

more and more *cavortish*: insomuch that, when the blanket came off, he had reached the *kicking* point in good earnest.

The removal of the blanket disclosed a sore on Bullet's back-bone that seemed to have defied all medical skill. It measured six full inches in length and four in breadth, and had as many features as Bullet had motions. My heart sickened at the sight; and I felt that the brute who had been riding him in that situation deserved the halter.

The prevailing feeling, however, was that of mirth. The laugh became loud and general at the old man's expense, and rustic witticisms were liberally bestowed upon him and his late purchase. These Blossom continued to provoke by various remarks. He asked the old man 'if he thought Bullet would let five dollars lie on his back.' He declared most seriously that he had owned that horse three months, and had never discovered before that he had a sore back, 'or he never should have thought of trading him,' &c., &c.

The old man bore it all with the most philosophic composure. He evinced no astonishment at his late discovery, and made no replies. But his son Neddy had not disciplined his feelings quite so well. His eyes opened wider and wider from the first to the last pull of the blanket; and, when the whole sore burst upon his view, astonishment and fright seemed to contend for the mastery of his countenance. As the blanket disappeared, he stuck his hands in his breeches pockets, heaved a deep sigh, and lapsed into a profound revery, from which he was only roused by the cuts at his father. He bore them as long as he could; and, when he could contain himself no longer, he began, with a certain wildness of expression which gave a peculiar interest to what he uttered: 'His back's mighty bad off; but dod drot my soul if he's put it to daddy as bad as he thinks he has, for old Kit's both blind and *deef*, I'll be dod drot if he eint.'

'The devil he is,' said Blossom.

'Yes, dod drot my soul if he *eint*. You walk him, and see if he *eint*. His eyes don't look like it; but he'd *jist as leve go agin* the house with you, or in a ditch, as any how. Now you go try him.' The laugh was now turned on Blossom; and many rushed to test the fidelity of the little boy's report. A few experiments established its truth beyond controversy.

'Neddy,' said the old man, 'you oughtn't to try and make people discontented with their things. Stranger, don't mind what the little boy says. If you can only get Kit rid of them little failings, you'll find him all sorts of a horse. You are a *leetle* the best man at a horse-swap that ever I got hold of; but don't fool away Kit. Come, Neddy, my son, let's be moving; the stranger seems to be getting snappish.'

1835

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS

1806–1870

FROM WOODCRAFT

PORGY AND THE ARM OF THE LAW [1]

I

The Sheriff in Limbo

EVENTS continued to ripen fast. Porgy's visage grew gloomier with their progress, and a stern expression settled upon his features. He smoked and drank more freely than ever. His conversation grew more and more brief daily. He heard the sergeant without heed, and seldom responded, except by a brief sarcasm, to his prolix exhortations. He was apprised from the city that his danger could not be any longer averted; that there was no longer any barrier between him and the sheriff. Col. Pinckney wrote him an affectionate letter, full of sympathy, but cutting him off from all farther hope of escape. Pinckney did not stop at this. He sought the sheriff, who was a well-known army man, of good nature, something of a humorist, indeed, and with quite

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from Chapters 56–58 of the revised edition of *Woodcraft* (N.Y., 1882), 415–39. Capt. Porgy, returning from the Revolutionary border-warfare, has attempted to rehabilitate his plantation with the help of his friends, but with the opposition of M'Kewn, a turn-coat, who holds fraudulent claims on his estate.

a friendly regard for Porgy, whom he had met more than once during the war, and whom he very well knew. The object of Pinckney now was to persuade the sheriff to as much indulgence as possible. To 'do his spiriting gently.' To this the latter was naturally inclined. But, on the other hand, there was the impatient creditor, M'Kewn, urging the rapid execution of the proceedings. The law! The law! He claimed the benefit of the law in its utmost rigor, and waited, with intense appetite for the news of the execution of his processes, the sale of the lands of Porgy, and the seizure of the negroes. Pinckney wrote the captain all these particulars. He had tried the inflexible creditor in vain. He was resolved on his pound of flesh, and as much blood as he could draw along with it.

Porgy read the letter to Millhouse. The latter, by a private despatch, summoned Lance Frampton to the council. He came over to Glen-Eberley armed to the teeth, with rifle on his shoulder, sabre at his side, pistols in holster, just as he had gone through the wars. The requisitions of the sergeant had been to this effect. He had expressly enjoined the lieutenant to come in war-fashion. He met him at the entrance, armed in like manner though not on horseback; and with an ominous shaking of the head and the hand, in answer to Frampton's inquiries, he said—

'The inimy is in motion, lieutenant; we've got to stand an assault, maybe a siege, and I know'd you warn't a-guine to stand by and see the cappin bombarded and invaded, without being ready to jine at the first sound of the trumpet. You'll see the cappin's mightily changed in the last week. He's more down in the mouth than I ever seed him. He kain't talk, and when a man kain't talk, that's been so used to it, it's about the worst sign in his sarcumstances. But, don't you say nothing of what you sees. Jest you listen to me, and when I pushes on one p'int, be ready to follow up the push. We must purtect the property from the inimy. Ef they gits the place, thar's not much use for the niggers, and ef they gits the niggers, thar's not much use for the place. The two stands together pretty much like gun and gunpowder. What's the use of the gunpowder if thar's no gun, and what's the use of the gun if thar's no powder? You sees! Now, we must purtect the niggers and plantation against siege and storm. That's the first needcessity; the next is to open the cappin's eyes to the needcessity of marrying the widow. His sarcumstances ain't to be put off any longer. We must, both on us, argufy him into the sense of this needcessity.'

Having, as he thought, sufficiently given the lieutenant his cue, the latter was allowed to enter the dwelling, and to see his old commander. He found Porgy sombre enough, but glad to see him. He put on a cheerful countenance when he beheld the youth, gave him his hand, and, for a little while, seemed to recover this spirits. But Frampton remarked that, though he entered the room, armed *cap-a-pie*, the captain never seemed to observe it; and that, even while he spoke to him of familiar things, and with a smile upon his face, his mind yet seemed to wander. After a while, he lapsed into moody silence, never once taking the pipe from his mouth in the course of half an hour, even though its fires had gone out. The lieutenant took his place in the household quietly, as if he had never left it. He had his bed there that night. After supper, Tom being warned to be in attendance as an auxiliary, the sergeant opened by degrees upon the subject of embarrassment before them.

'Ef you has no dejection, cappin, I wish you'd read to the lieutenant that 'ere letter of Col. Pinckney.'

'Oh! to be sure. You've not heard, Lance, that the Philistines are about to descend upon us. Writs are out, and executions, levies, and arrests, Ca Sa's and Fi Fa's and I suppose *ne exeats*, and whatever other diabolical inventions of the law can be brought to bear upon a man whom the devil has determined to destroy. I told you of my fears before we got home. I was then better prepared for the disaster than I am now. The respite I have had, the restoration of my negroes, and the help in money afforded me by Mrs. Eveleigh, have helped to spoil me for vicissitudes; and, in getting a new taste of my old mode of life, I am much more reluctant than ever to give it up. But the thing seems inevitable now. This letter of Colonel Pinckney, which I will read to you, will show you how the land lies, and from what quarter, and in what force, the enemy will probably make his approaches.'

And he read the letter.

'The case you see, is hopeless. The wolves will have their victim. Nothing can be done.'

'Well, cappin, I doesn't edzactly see that. Here's Lance, and me both, and Tom, all ready to have a fight on it, and beat off the inimy, ef they don't come on us too many at once. We three, and you, cappin—'

'Pooh, pooh, sergeant! That's all nonsense. There's no fighting to be done in the matter, and no flying, that I can see. All that is left to me now, or is likely to be left to me, is my philosophy, and that of my little Frenchman. I am trying to school myself to the trial with the best grace in the world, though by the powers, if a good fight would help the matter, I'd be pretty quick to man the fortress; but that's out of the question. The notion of the sergeant is simply absurd. The case, look whichever way you please, is absolutely hopeless.'

'You're clean wrong; jest bekaise you refuses to look the right way. Now, I've been seeing, a mighty long while past, that thar was a way of saving all, and blocking the game on the inimy, and that, you see, was jes' by coming down upon the widow Eb'leigh, and storming her premises. I show'd you, long ago, how a widow was a sort of post which had been afore taken by the inimy, and so was to be taken ag'in; and where the storming was conducted by a good off'cer, from the line of the army, that the thing mout be done easily. This widow Eb'leigh, now—'

'Hush up, Millhouse. No more of that. It must not be thought of. How will it look for me—I who have been borrowing the widow's money—to propose to pay my debts to her, by making her my wife?'

'And the most ixcellentest way for settling a debt that ever was invented on this airth.'

'Why, man, I've gone to her as a beggar. I owe her six hundred guineas. Shall I go to her and offer her payment in a bankrupt husband?'

'But ef she likes you, cappin, won't she jump at it?'

'Ah! but that is all very doubtful.'

'A man what's doubtful, I may say, is a'most d——d a'ready. Thar must not be no doubt when you're a-guine to storm a fortress. Now, I see that this here widow is a'most ready to surrender at the first blow of the bugle. I knows it, cappin; I sees it in everything she does for you, and in every look she gives you; and the best thing you kin do is jest to make a trial of the sarcumstances of the case.'

Porgy shook his head.

'Now, don't you be a-shaking of your head as ef thar was nothing in it. But jest you hear what I'm guine to ax you.—S'pose, now, the thing is jest as I'm a-saying it. S'pose she's ready to give in the moment you are ready to make the attack? Won't you be a most bloody fool—pardon me, cappin; I doesn't mean to be onrespectful—but I ax, won't you be a bloody fool, not to give her a chaince to surrender handsome, and save her feelin's, and save this fine property, and save your niggers, only bekaise you are so mealy-mouthed. Won't you feel most mean and vicious, and onhappy, ef so be you keeps hanging off, and she has to come and pop the question to you? I declar', cappin, it seems a most pitiful and cruel thing for you not to help her out a leetle, by jest axing her in time to save her feelin's.'

'Ha! ha! ha! Delightful! 'Pon my soul, Millhouse, you put the case in quite a new and striking point of view. You think I should speak in time to prevent the widow from addressing me, and so spare her blushes.'

'In course, I does! That's jest the thing—spar' her blushes!'

'But, suppose she were to propose to me, and I were to—refuse her?'

'Lord love you, cappin, and be merciful to your onderstanding; but you wouldn't be so onkind and outright redickilous, as to do that—and after all that's she's been a-doing for you.'

'It would be rather hard-hearted, I confess.'

' 'Twould be most monstrous redickilous! But, cappin, you mus'n't wait for her to do the axing. It mout-be she'd come arter awhile, and when she couldn't stan' keepin' in her feelin's any longer; but then it mout-be—it would be—too late, then, to help your sarcumstances. Ef the property was to be sold by the sheriff, what would it bring, I want to know, now, when thar's so little money guine about. Not enough, by half, to pay this warmint, M'Kewn. But, ef 'twas only on account of the lady, it's your

business to speak quick. The man has no right to keep the poor woman a-waiting on him. He has no right to keep a-thinking, with pipe in his mouth, while she's a-weeping and pining away a-most to nothin'.'

'But I don't see that Mrs. Eveleigh shows any such signs of suffering, Millhouse.'

'It's all innard, cappin. She's got too proud a stomach, to show outside, in her flesh and sperrits, how much she suffers innardly. Many's the woman that's looked fat and hearty, while her heart's been a-breaking in her buzzum. I don't mean to say that the widow Eb'leigh is so far gone, cappin, 'kaise, you see, she's had ixper'ence in heart affairs, being a widow; but she's got her feelin's and sufferin's, cappin, in the heart, that keeps it sore and bleedin' all over, though it's too strong to break. She oughtn't to hev' any sufferin's and bleedin's at all, ef so be you kin help her; and I say, and I'm sure on it, that you *kin* help her, jes' by the same thing that helps you'-self. I'll leave it to the lieutenant here, and to Tom, ef they don't 'gree with me, that the widow Eb'leigh has a nateral right to marry you, considerin' your sarcumstances.'

Tom nodded his head affirmatively.

'You hab for marry 'em, maussa. He bin too much good to you, maussa. You can't 'scuse 'em—you can't 'fuse [refuse] 'em. You hab for do it, den we all t'ree b'long to one anudder, maussa.'

Frampton was of opinion that the proceeding would certainly relieve the captain of all his present difficulties, and was for this reason quite advisable.

'That's it, cappin! considerin' the sarcumstances! It's the sarcumstances you've got to consider; and I say it again, considerin' them, and the sarcumstances of the widow, she's got a nateral right to marry you.'

'But have I any natural right to marry her?'

'In course! Ef she's got a right to you, thar's no help for it, and you must jine your right to her'n. You've got no right to refuse to hev' *her*, seein' it's her needcessity to hev' *you*; and the true way for an honest man, and a gentleman, and a good sodger, is to put it to her manful, at once, and not keep her a-waiting, and a-longing and a-sorrowin', till the poor woman gits sick from her needcessity.'

'Really, Millhouse, you make a new case of it. You are making it clearly a duty and a charity that I should marry a lady of fortune, and so save myself from the sheriff.'

'That's the how! That's the very thing.'

'Now, Millhouse, if I could only be sure that the excellent lady whom you so freely discuss, labored under any such feelings as you describe—'

'Aix Lance—aix Tom!' responded the sergeant, appealing to each of them in turn.

Lance certainly had seen the very favorable glances, which the widow had cast upon the captain.

'Sheep's eyes, they calls 'em, cappin,' quoth the sergeant.

Tom gave his opinion with solemnity and confidence.

'Miss Eb'leigh hab eyes, enty, for see, maussa? Well, who dat say maussa ain't man 'nough for please any woman? Da's it! I see 'em how he look at maussa. He fire up, he mouth 'tan' open and sweet, and when he talk to 'em, it's jest like any bud [bird] dah sing to 'nudder bud, and axing 'em wha' for we kain't buil' nest togedder dis spring?'

'Well,' said the more liberal sergeant, ' 'twould be all mighty great nonsense to talk of building nests in spring, when here we are jest on the edge, as I may say, of winter. But what Tom says would be quite right, ef he'd make the nest buildin' together about Christmas. I like a marriage, Christmas time, better than any other; and ef the cappin does the right thing, like a man, we'll have a raal blow-out this coming Christmas. You've hearn, cappin. Me, and the lieutenant, and Tom, all agrees that the widow looks on you with mighty sweet eyes; and I say she's got a nateral right to you, and you've got a nateral right to her; and you must jine your rights, and give us a blow-out this Christmas; and ef the sheriff, or M'Kewn, or any other warmint, comes sharking about these primises, I've got a nateral right to give him a h—ll of a licking, and I'll hev' my rights, by blazes, whenever I gits a chaince!'

We are not prepared to say that the captain was convinced by this argument, which was continued for sometime after this, and was wound up by a stoup of Jamaica, when the parties all retired for the night. Millhouse congratulated himself and compan-

ions that a favorable impression had been made, but Frampton was doubtful. His sympathies had taught him better how to see into the captain's heart, and to comprehend his mysteries. The sergeant judged only of what *should* be the effect of arguments, and an eloquence, so potent as his own.

The next morning, at sunrise, found the two subordinates astir. Frampton and Millhouse went forth together in consultation, the latter looking exceedingly ominous, like some great bull-dog on duty, and having a keen-scent in his nostrils of some intruder. At breakfast, the subject of the last night was resumed by the sergeant, but the captain made no response. He expressed no surprise to see Frampton linger away from his young wife. The lieutenant said nothing of the object of his visit, or of the summons which induced it, but quietly assumed the air and attitude of one on duty. The good youth, accustomed to military authority, and trained up in great measure by Porgy, was prepared to obey at every peril. Of law, he had only vague notions. So far as his experience went, civil authority had been only a name—a venerable thing, perhaps—but which men every where plucked by the beard, without fear, and with impunity. He had yet to learn that it could prove more potent now than during the seven years previous, when each man did the thing that was best in his own sight, and when there were no judges in the land, however numerous might be the executioners. He had come to stand up beside, and for, his feudal lord—such was really the sort of relation between the parties—and to break spear for him, and peril life, against all comers. It is possible that Porgy understood the purport of his visit, but he forebore all remark upon it. The youth was simply welcomed, as of old; and, as of old, he went at once on duty. The sergeant soon showed him that the duty was to be a vigilant one, and was quite necessary. The two mounted guard alternately. Certain favorite negroes were selected as scouts and videttes, who watched all the approaches to the plantation. One was chosen to ascend through the scuttle to the housetop, and keep his eyes at once on every point of the compass. And thus matters stood, without any event to excite alarm, until the third day after Frampton's arrival.

On this day, some little after noon, and just when Porgy was beginning to think of dinner, the scouts came in bringing intelligence of the approach, in the direction of Glen-Eberley, of a very stylish looking gentleman, in black habit, driving the vehicle, then in fashionable use for one or two persons, called the 'chaise,' a heavy lumbering sort of gig, with a capacious top to it. This *was* the sheriff, the well-known, amiable, graceful and accomplished Colonel ——, whose solicitude to do an unpleasant duty pleasantly, had prompted him to undertake a task which is now-a-days commonly confided to a deputy. At the gate of the avenue of Glen-Eberley, the sheriff found himself suddenly arrested by a person in military habit. Before he knew where he was, a huge horseman's pistol was clapped to his head, and he was required to give an account of himself. The sheriff was confounded.

'Why, young man,' said he, 'what does all this mean? Why are you armed to the teeth, and why am I arrested with violence on the peaceful highway? Who are you, and what do you take me for?'

'For a person that's after no good, stranger!' was the answer of Lance Frampton. 'We hear that there's some enemies of Captain Porgy after him, who want to seize him and his negroes, and we are jest here to see that they do no such thing!'

'Why, who is there to take his property?'

'Who! I don't know; but they are enemies, and varmints, sheriffs, and such like tory people!'

Frampton's mode of cataloguing, showed considerable inexperience, by which the sheriff was amused rather than annoyed.

'You do not mean to say, my friend, that you would resist a sheriff in the execution of his lawful duties?'

'Let him only try it here!' was the indignant answer.

'Well, my good friend, my business here is to see Captain Porgy.'

'But you're not the sheriff?'

'Sheriff, indeed! I'm Col. ——, formerly of the army. I know Captain Porgy well. He'll be glad to see me, I've no doubt.'

'And you're not one of the sheriff's fellows, then?' demanded Frampton, doubtfully.

'Do I look like any one's fellow?' asked the sheriff, laughing.

'I don't know! I'm on duty here to see

that no sheriff, or any of his fellows, get into the place; and I'm bound to examine closely. But I'll take you in, where you can see another person that's on duty, and that knows better what's to be done than I do. Get out boy'—to the sheriff's driver—'get up behind.'

In a moment, Frampton had changed places with the negro.—This done, he took the reins, saying as he drove—

'If you were to drive up this avenue, stranger, except under my charge, you'd be most like to have a bullet through your jacket.'

'The devil! You have then converted Glen-Eberley into a fortified place?'

'Yes, indeed! And we can make a pretty stiff fight against a good troop of sheriffs.'

'Humph! The captain's at home, I suppose?'

'Yes indeed! But it's a chance you won't get a sight of him. It all depends upon Sergeant Millhouse. He's the officer on duty. You must make it all clear to him, that you don't come for any evil, before he'll let you 'light.'

'Indeed!' and, with his secret meditations, the sheriff smiled pleasantly enough; but his smiles were arrested as suddenly as he himself had been before, as, almost in the middle of the avenue, Frampton drew up the horses.

'Here's the sergeant!' said he.

The sheriff, at the same moment, saw approaching, from the head of the horses, a stalwart figure, with pistols in belt, and sabre waving in his left hand. A cap made of the skins of a pair of gray-squirrels, with the tails flapping on both sides, covered his head. His uniform was of strange military mixture, altogether indescribable, but propriety requires that we should describe it as a uniform. His eye was fiercely suspicious, and his mouth was compressed with most rigid determination.

'Who's he?' was the stern demand of the sergeant as the vehicle was stopped, and he presented himself, waving his sabre, in front of the visitor.

'He calls himself Col. ——, of the army; says he's not the sheriff, or any of his fellows, and wants to see the captain.'

The sergeant glared at him with eyes of piercing inquiry; and, after a moment's pause, said—

'Take off your hat, stranger, that I may see what sort of a head you've got of your own!'

The sheriff, smilingly civil, complied with the requisition.

'He looks onharmful enough, Lance, but there's no knowing. I never haird of any Col. —— in the army; I've hearn of a cappin with some sich name, but I never haird that he did anything much. He warn't no great shakes. You say, stranger, that our cappin knows you?'

'Yes!' said the sheriff, meekly, beginning to feel somewhat dubious of his securities.

'Well, hev' you any way to let him hear from you, by any writing or letter. For, as for seeing him afore he hears all about you, that's onpossible!'

The sheriff produced a pencil, tore off a bit of paper, from a letter, wrote his name upon it, and offered it to the sergeant.

'Stick it on the eend of my sabre,' said the wary soldier, not knowing how such a talisman, taken into his hands, might compromise his relations with the captain or the enemy.

'Now, Lance, git out, and take out the horse; then you carry this paper, jest as it stands, to the cappin; I'll keep guard on this pusson, in the meantime, when you're gone.'

A few moments sufficed for this performance, and Frampton set off, bearing the missive at the point of the sword, and leaving Millhouse, pistol in hand, confronting the visitor. The latter made a movement as if to get out; but the sergeant, with a horrid voice of war, cried out—

'Don't you stir a peg, onless you wants me to blow a winder through your buzzum! Jes' keep quiet whar you air, ef you wants an easy time of it!'

And he followed up the terrible threat by a wilful obtrusion of the huge pistol, jaws wide open, full into the gaping jaws of the doubtful visitor. The sheriff recoiled, as well he might. He was half afraid now to move a limb, although, just then, it occurred to him that the ends of certain legal documents, of considerable size, were peering too conspicuously from a breast pocket; and he feared, if remarked, it would scarcely be possible for him to escape the imputation of being the much-hated officer for the hostile reception of whom these men

were in arms. He finally attempted the thing once, but, as he lifted his hand to his bosom, Millhouse mistook it for an attempt to get at his weapons, and he instantly applied his own. Again was the huge muzzle of the pistol clapped to the sheriff's head with an awful injunction—

'Ef you lifts a hand, or stirs a peg, stranger, you swallows a bullet that no white man can chaw. I've been in the army, too long, my friend, to let the inimy git his hand fairly into his buzzum. Jest you try it ef you wants to see how I manages in sich a case. Jest you try it, ef you'd see blazes to shet up both your eyes.'

The sheriff resigned himself submissively to the necessity. The sergeant, clearly, was not a sentinel to be trifled with; and the prisoner, beginning honestly to wish himself well out of the present predicament, was now afraid to relax the stiffened limb, to ease out leg or arm, knee or elbow, lest he should incur the sudden penalty of blow or bullet. He remained thus in a most uneasy state of rest, which was anything but repose, waiting, with anxiety, for the return of the more civil of his two captors.

2

Coup de Théâtre

WHEN Lance Frampton entered the house with the paper of the sheriff, addressed to Porgy, and which contained only the name of the former, the captain of partisans was preparing himself for dinner, which Tom, the cook, was himself about to place upon the table.

'Where's Pomp, Tom?' demanded the captain.

'Pomp dey somewhere; dey tak' care ob hese'f, I 'speck,' replied Tom, with a significant jerk of the head.

'Somewhere! Taking care of himself! Why, what the d—l is he after, and why don't you call him in to his duty? You should see, Tom, that the scamp does not skulk too frequently. He has too much taste for it, as is, perhaps, the case with all fiddlers. Halloo for the scamp, and see that he is at his post. Take care of himself, indeed! I'll see that he takes care of me.'

'He no guine yer holler dis time, maussa!' answered Tom. 'Nebber you min' maussa; he will come jis when we wants 'em; only jis now, he sca'ce [scarce]!'

'But we want him *now*!'

'Can't come *now*, maussa! Pomp in de swamp, safe shet up. Nobody for sh'um [see him]!'

'In the swamp! What the d—l is he after in the swamp?'

But the farther dialogue was arrested by the appearance of Frampton, very much to Tom's relief, since he could not much longer have evaded the direct demands of his master, while Millhouse had enjoined upon him silence. To let the reader into a secret, all the negroes had taken to the swamp, except Tom, from the moment when the sheriff's chaise had been arrested at the entrance of the avenue!

'Well, Lance; in armor still? What's the matter?'

'We've captured a man here, captain, who calls himself Col. ——, and says you know him. He sends you this.'

Porgy read the slip.

'Col. ——; and you've captured him, you say? How?— Why?'

Frampton told his story briefly.

'Why, you see, we're on duty; and we thought he was the sheriff, and so we took him into captivity. The sergeant's standing guard over him, while I brought you the paper.'

'Captured him! And where is he?'

'In the avenue. You can see him through the window, where the sergeant has him under guard.'

Porgy looked out, and burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

'Ha! ha! ha! Good, i'faith! excellent! The captor in captivity! Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is promising! The game begins well. We shall have a laugh on our side, at least, whether we lose or not in the long run. Ha! ha! ha!'

The captain made the lieutenant repeat the details—the dialogue—every particular; and the merriment of the captain was renewed. The whole thing struck him amusingly. It appealed to his leading passion for practical jokes. He determined to humor it to the end.

'So, you thought Col. —— the sheriff did you? Ha! ha! ha! admirable! What a story to tell! But, I will go out to him. I must only put a few extra dishes on the table. Here, Tom!—And now, Lance, step out to the

sergeant; tell him to watch his prisoner closely. I will come out and see if he is really the colonel, whom I know very well! We must not be imposed upon, Lance! By no means! Ha! ha! ha! The captor in captivity! Very good, by Mercury, very good!'

Lance Frampton disappeared; perfectly satisfied that the captain approved of all his proceedings; a matter of which he had not been quite sure previously. When he was gone, Porgy, with Tom's assistance, proceeded to put himself in caparison of war. His uniform was hastily hustled on, his belt girded about his waist, sword slung at his side, pistols stuck in his belt, and in his hand he carried a long rifle. This done, he proceeded to arrange certain mysteriously-covered dishes upon the table. Tom was also made to equip himself in armor—that is, with a light tomahawk over his shoulder, a huge *couteau de chasse* in one side of his belt, and a great horseman's pistol in the other. Porgy gave him some final directions, and then sallied forth to examine the prisoner.

Before he appeared, the sheriff had begun to meditate the propriety of declaring his indignation, in very strong language, at the treatment he received; but, at the approach of Porgy, looking swords, bayonets, and blunderbusses, his purpose changed.—Was the captain crazy? Could he really mean to defy the laws? The colonel began to have his doubts. He had heard of the mad freaks of which Porgy had been occasionally guilty; he had heard that he was very free in his potations; he saw nothing but savage defiance in the features of Millhouse, and nothing but sober soldier resolution, and dogged adherence to authority, in the aspect of Frampton. The gown began to tremble in the presence of the sword. 'I must temporize!' was the unspoken decision of the sheriff, 'I must see how the land lies first! Who knows what desperate actions these mad fellows may not commit.'

Porgy came on slowly, as became his size and state. As he approached, the sheriff made a movement as if to rise.

'Not a step, stranger!' cried the vigilant Millhouse, holding up the yawning pistols. 'Wait tell the cappin gives the word.'

The captain seemed slow to give the word. He drew nigh with the air of a man who felt that he might, at any moment, be required to pull the trigger. His rifle was held in readiness, his finger near the trigger. He walked up to Millhouse, and looked suspiciously at the vehicle.

'Who have you got here, sergeant?'

The sergeant saluted, in military style, flourishing the pistol instead of the sword, as he answered—

'A fellow who calls himself Col. ——, but I don't know. He mout-be, and mout-be not, the colonel. But he says he knows you, and you knows him.'

Porgy advanced a pace, and peered suspiciously into the vehicle, still keeping a very deliberate step, and a severe suspicious aspect. The sheriff cried out—

'What, Capt. Porgy, don't you know me?'

'Bless me, so it is! It is Col.——. My dear colonel, I am truly rejoiced to see you, and greatly regret that my fellows should have subjected you to "durance vile" for a single moment. It was all a mistake. Get out, if you please. They took you for some d——d harpy of the law—the sheriff or some one of his vile myrmidons. Get out, my dear fellow, and let us hurry in to dinner. You are just in pudding-time.'

'He evidently does not know that I have been made sheriff,' was the silent whisper of the colonel to himself, as, accepting the invitation, he descended from the vehicle, which Porgy immediately told Frampton to drive up to the house.

'We have but one single negro on the place,' said Porgy; 'at sight of you, supposing you the sheriff, every two-legged animal, of dark complexion, took to the swamp. You gave them a scare, I assure you. But come, I am really glad to see you at Glen-Eberley, and just at this moment.'

And he shook hands with the sheriff, with the cordial army shake, which threatened to dislocate a member in order to compel remembrance. The sheriff felt a little relieved, even while the usage was so rough. They walked toward the house arm in arm.

'Let me carry your rifle, captain,' said the sheriff.

'My rifle! No, indeed, colonel, no! I never part with it. I know not at what moment I may have to use it. There is a skunk of a Scotchman in my neighborhood, who may cross my path some day, and, as I tell you, I am in momentary expectation of th-

visits of the sheriff, or some of his satellite harpies.'

'But you certainly would not draw trigger upon an officer of the law?'

'Would I not!' exclaimed the captain, suddenly stopping in his march, withdrawing his own arm from that of the other, and confronting him with a stern expression. 'Would I not?—Will I consent, after fighting the battles of my country for seven years, to be driven from my estates by a d—d civilian—a fellow, probably, who never smelt gunpowder in his life. No! indeed! I will die in harness and in *possession*! They may conquer me—I suppose they will, in time; but I will hold on while I can, do battle to the last, and when they do take possession, they shall walk into it only over my dead body.'

'And here's the man to baick you, cappin, by the Lord Harry!'

Such was the speech, delivered with stentor-lungs, from the rear; the sergeant at the same moment amusing himself with thrusting back his sabre into the steel sheath, with such an emphasis, as to make it ring again. The sheriff was startled from his propriety, for a moment, by the sudden illustration which followed the captain's fierce determination.

'They are all mad together,' he again whispered to himself; and it might be observed that his deportment became more conciliatory than ever.

'Come, colonel, let us in, now, and see what dinner we shall find awaiting us. A stoup of Jamaica will refresh you after your ride, and me after my scare. The very idea of a sheriff makes me thirst; and to be relieved of this idea, I must drink. Come! In!'

And the captain seized his guest goodnaturedly by the arm, and the two ascended to the piazza, the sergeant thundering with heavy tread behind, his sabre sheath rattling against the steps at every stride, and reminding the sheriff, momently, of the military nature of the escort. When in the house, he threw off his hat, and Porgy discarded his military cap; the squirrel-skin covering of Millhouse was doffed also, and the three joined in a devout draught of Jamaica. But neither of the two latter laid aside his weapons. The swords still swinging at their sides, and the pistols at their belts.

Meanwhile, dinner was announced, and the captain of partisans motioned the sheriff to a seat at one end of the table, he preparing to take the place opposite. The sergeant sank into a seat on one side. Once seated, the captain unsheathed his sabre, which he laid across the table, the hilt convenient to his grasp. The sergeant followed the example, only substituting his lap for the table. Lance Frampton came in at this moment, took a place opposite the sergeant, and, seeing what the latter had done with his weapon, made a similar disposition of his own.

The sheriff saw these proceedings, which seemed habitual, with increasing surprise. 'Certainly,' he again whispered to himself, 'these people are all mad!' The reflection increased his observances, and made him studious to maintain the utmost propriety of demeanor. He looked about him, and curiously surveyed all that came within the range of his vision. We have not hitherto thought it necessary to mention that, with the borrowed money of Mrs. Eveleigh, the captain had succeeded in furnishing his house with some regard equally to comfort and display. The want of money in the city when he entered the market, and the number of families who were selling out, had enabled him to procure a complete outfit at small cost. He no longer dined upon the floor, carpeted with blanket. He had now ample supplies of chairs and tables; there were mirrors against his walls and fine linen upon his table. There was no display of plate, it is true, beyond the necessary allowance of spoons, but his china was quite imposing, and would be considered so now. His decanters and tumblers were of cut-glass, and the covers to his dishes were of very handsome plating.

When the dishes were uncovered, it was with increasing surprise that the sheriff beheld one, within reach of Porgy, containing a pair of highly-polished pistols. He attempted something of a jest when he saw them.

'Really, captain, you can not design that dish for the digestion of any visitor.'

'The digestion must depend upon himself,' was the cool reply; 'but there *are* parties, who might sometimes intrude upon me, for whose special feeding they are provided.'

'What! the sheriff, eh?' with a faint chuckle.

'Exactly! Shall I help you to soup, colonel?'

'If you please.'

'Bouillé?'

'Thank you—a little.'

'You will find it more manageable than bullet.'

'Yes, indeed!'

'Try a little of that Madeira with your soup. It improves it wonderfully to my taste. Tom!'—tasting—'you have not put quite enough salt in your soup?'

'Who say so? Enty I know? Tas'e 'em 'gen, maussa! I 'speck you fin' salt 'nough in 'em next time. Heh! Ef I ain't know, by dis time, how for salt de soup, I t'row 'way heap of my life for not'ing.'

'Hear the rascal. He knows that he doesn't belong to me, or he would never be so impudent. How are negroes selling now, colonel? I got a hundred guineas for that fellow.'

'You were well paid, captain. At his time of life, unless a fellow had some rare qualities, he could scarcely command more than half that money.'

'Tom *has* rare qualities. He *can* cook a good dinner; can make and season soup to perfection, and would have done so today—would certainly never have thrown in too little salt—but that he heard some talk of the sheriff, and in his agitation and the hurry with which he armed himself with his favorite weapons—see the knife and the hatchet—he has been careless with his salt—has probably spilt half of that in the fire which he intended for the soup. How does it taste to you, colonel?'

'Right, sir; very good soup, and well seasoned. I should say that your cook has salted it sufficiently.'

'T'ank you, sah,' quoth Tom. 'I mos' bin 'fear'd I spill some ob de salt, when I yer 'bout dem warmint, de sheriff; but ef you tas'e 'em, da's 'nough. Salt mus'n't be too sharp in soup for de good seas'ning.'

From the soups they passed to the solids. There was a round of beef. There was a pair of wild ducks. The sheriff began to recover his confidence with his appetite, and to praise Tom's cooking. Porgy watched and listened to him with a grim pleasure. Occasionally, the sergeant put in, with some of his philosophies, whenever anything particularly provocative had been said, but it may be stated that he was particularly taciturn that day. The fact is, the conduct of the captain was somewhat mysterious. The guest was inoffensive—was clearly not the sheriff—yet he saw that Porgy was playing out a game upon him—whether for the purpose of alarming the stranger's fears, or amusing himself, he could not determine; but the doubt kept him fiercely suspicious, and watchful of every look and movement of the guest.

The sheriff noted the man's air and manner, and was impressed accordingly. The conduct of Lance Frampton, who was singularly quiet, was yet of a sort to fix his attention. In this young man he beheld a fixed confidence in his superior, and a readiness to obey orders, which showed that, at a wink, he would be prepared to act, and without any regard to responsibilities. After awhile the wine began to circulate, though the sergeant still confined himself to the Jamaica. Even when, at the summons of the captain, he emptied his glass of Madeira, he was sure to swallow a good mouthful of the rum after it, as if to prevent any evil consequences from the more aristocratic liquor. The dishes were cleared away, and Tom gave the party a rice-pudding, which was voted good on all hands. Its removal was followed by the introduction of raisins, ground-nuts (*peanuts* or *pindars*), and black walnuts. Over the wine and walnuts, the chat grew more and more lively. It passed from topic to topic; the town and country; the camp and court; civil life and that of the soldier; but there was one lurking trouble in the mind of the sheriff which invariably brought him back to the peculiar condition in which he found the household.

'Really,' said he, 'captain, I find it impossible to realize the assurance that you make me, that you are all armed and equipped here to resist the operations of the law.'

'Indeed!' said Porgy, looking grave. 'You find it difficult to understand, and why? Is it so strange that I should be unwilling to surrender all my possessions, at the first demand, and without a struggle?'

'But you could scarcely expect to make resistance to the laws of the land. The sheriff is armed with a sovereign power for the

time. How would you hope to hold out against him?'

'You mean to say that he would overwhelm me with the *posse comitatus*?'

'Ay, and if need, call out the military!'

'To be sure he may, and certainly there is a power to which my own must succumb. What then? If I am to yield up all the goods of life, why not life also? What is life to me? You know my tastes and habits. You know how I have lived and how I still live. Some men will tell you that I am a glutton, others, that I imbue my appetites equally with my taste and philosophies; all agree that I am, essentially, a good deal of an animal—that I was profligate in youth that I might enjoy life, and that in the good things of this life, I find life itself. I won't deny the charge. Be it so. Am I to survive the good things, and yet cherish the life? Wherefore? What does Shylock say—whom, by-the-way, I take to be a very shrewd and sensible fellow, and a greatly ill-used rascal—

——"You take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live!"

And, when I have perilled my life a thousand times for the benefit of other people's goods, shall I not venture it for the protection of my own?'

'But, my dear captain, there is a material difference between doing a thing with the sanction of the law, and in defiance of it.'

'None to me! Don't you see, my dear colonel, that I am prepared to sacrifice my life with my property, and that law can in no way, exact a higher forfeit? But d—n the law! We've had enough of it for the present. Fill up your glass. You will find that Madeira prime. It is from an ancient cellar!'

'Thank you! (Fills.) Well, my dear captain, suffer me to hope for you an escape from the clutches of the law by legitimate means!'

'I'm obliged to you, my dear colonel; but we army men don't care much about the means, so that we effect the escape. I am for stratagem or fight, sap or storm, just as the best policy councils. Life, after all, is a constant warfare. Rogues are only enemies in lambskins, or ermine. They do not care to cut my throat so long as I have a purse to cut; they will not care to drive me to desperation, so long as it is profitable to them that I should live. I know them! I defy them! I can die without a grunt tomorrow. I have neither wife, nor child, nor mother, nor sister, to deplore my fate, or to profit by my departure. I am, with the exception of these two faithful comrades of mine, utterly alone in the world. They shall live with me while I live. They would die for me tomorrow. Were a man but to lift a finger against me, to assail my life, or my meanest fortunes, they would be into him with bullet and bayonet, and need not a signal from me.'

'That's a rightious truth, by the Hokies!' exclaimed the sergeant, with his one fist thundering down upon the table. The lieutenant's eyes brightened keenly, and he looked to the captain, but he said nothing.

'I have no doubt they are true and faithful friends, captain,' said the sheriff; 'but suppose now, only suppose, I say, the sheriff was suddenly to appear among you, just as I am here now, and were to—'

He was stopped! Stopped in an instant, as by a thunderbolt, by the prompt reply and action of Porgy.

'Suppose the sheriff in you! Ha! suppose the rest for yourself.—See!'

And with the wild but determined look and action of a desperate man, he seized both pistols lying in the dish before him, stood up, reached as far over the table as he could, and covered the figure of the amiable but indiscreet sheriff with both muzzles cocking the weapons as he did so. The sheriff involuntarily dodged and threw up his hands. At the same instant, and as soon as the purpose of the superior had been understood by Millhouse and the lieutenant, they were both upon their feet—the sergeant swinging his sabre over the head of the supposed offender; while Frampton, more silent, but quite as decided, while he swung his sword aloft with one hand, grasped with the other the well-powdered shock of the sheriff, in an attitude very like that which we see employed by the ferocious Blue Beard in the opera, when the poor wife is tremblingly crying out for her brother. Here was an unpremeditated *coup de théâtre*! Two swords crossed in air above the victim,—two pistols, with each broad muzzle almost jammed against his own;

every eye savagely fixed upon him, and all parties seeming to await only the farther word of provocation from his lips. Nothing had been more instantaneous. The subordinates were machines, to whom Porgy furnished all the impulse. Their action followed his will, as soon as it was expressed. There was no questioning it, and the amiable sheriff was so much paralyzed by the display, that it was only with much effort that he could cry out—'But, my dear captain, don't suppose me the enemy—the assailant—the d—d sheriff or any of his myrmidons.'

'By no means, colonel; but you supposed a case in order to see whether, and how, we were prepared for it; and it was essential that you should have a proper demonstration. You have seen; be easy; fill up your glass, my dear sir, and forgive my merry men here for the earnestness with which they performed their parts. They had no reason, indeed, to suppose that I was not serious. You see what chance a *bona-fide* sheriff would stand, if he aimed at any showing here!'

Porgy had resumed his seat, and restored the pistols to the dish as coolly as the actor, who takes his brandy and water, equal parts, after strangling his wife, stabbing the traitor, and dying famously in the person of Othello. It was not so easy for Millhouse to throw off his tragic aspect. He resumed his seat slowly, never once taking his eyes from the colonel's face, as he did so; and during the whole progress of the feast, he continued to regard him with only half-reconciled senses.

3

Legal Regimen

THE excellent sheriff no longer felt any call to trespass in experiments upon the legal antipathies of the captain of partisans and his observant follower. He steered wide of all allusions from thenceforth to the officer of the law, and his possible appearance in the precincts. He felt really impressed with the danger of any one who should, with *malice prepense*, do so, in the evidently diseased condition of mind and mood prevailing at Glen-Eberley. That he should thus forbear, however, was by no means agreeable to his self-esteem or his sense of duty. He was uncomfortable when he thought of his official station, and the sealed documents in his pockets. He had come there to make a levy on land and negroes, without dreaming that he should encounter any opposition. Resistance, with force of arms, was entirely beyond his imaginings; and to depart, having done nothing was at once a *lachesse* of duty and a personal mortification. More than once he felt like plucking up his drowning courage, and perilling his life upon his manhood—boldly challenging the danger, and facing it with folded arms of defiance; but, on all such occasions, as if Porgy and his followers knew, by instinct, his emotions, there would occur some explosion, or some symptom of explosion, which would remind him vividly of the smouldering volcano upon which he sat. For example, he once made an allusion, deliberately designed, to M'Kewn; and Millhouse flared up, and fumbled his sabre, and gnashed his teeth, even as the Frenchman when he cries, 'Sacre!' through his mustache, or the Spaniard when he growls 'Demonios!' and flourishes his dagger. Frampton showed similar signs of impatience—while Porgy exclaimed aloud, striking his fist down upon the table:—

'Don't mention that scoundrel's name in my hearing, colonel! I feel wolfish when I hear of him. Let him but cross my path; let any of his myrmidons but put themselves in my way, and if I do not crop their ears, close to the head, then there's no edge to any weapon in my household.'

'But is he not a neighbor, captain?'

'Neighbor! Well, sir, I suppose you may call him a neighbor, even as the devil is a neighbor, and is said to take free lodgings in every man's dwelling; but such neighborhood does not prevent us from flinging the wretch out of the windows, whenever our good saints give us the necessary succor. Don't speak of such a scoundrel to my ears, or I may do you the injustice to suppose you are his friend.'

The sheriff took the warning, and M'Kewn was dropped, and all subjects were dropped which were likely to stir up the bile and black blood in the bosoms of the host and his companions. The sheriff resigned himself to his fate, and to the policy of doing nothing with as much grace

as possible. He was not only frightened from the purpose for which he came, but the feeling of good fellowship momently grew stronger with the circulation of the wine, and the excellent spirits of the captain. The latter, in all respects, except the one, was on his best behavior, and in most amiable temper. He never showed himself more really humorous and delightful as a companion in all his life. The sheriff was charmed and listened. He was soothed and satisfied. His philosophy came into the support of his necessity. He reasoned thus, accordingly:—

'There is no need to push the matter! Porgy's estate is good, at any moment, for this debt. Every day increases the value of both lands and negroes. Were I to seize and sell now, the property would be sacrificed. It would pay the debt, but leave nothing over to the good fellow, who has been serving his country in a long and honorable warfare. D—n the fellow! I like him, and he shall have indulgence as long as I can grant it!'

As soon as he had reached this conclusion, and resolved that his visit should no longer have a professional object, the play was easy. He yielded himself up to the society in which he found himself. He felt the charm of his host's fun and philosophy; and he, too, had good things in his keeping. When he had once resolved to sink the sheriff, he gave himself free scope, let himself out, and became, what he was known to be in the army, a really good fellow, of no savage inclinations, fond of a jovial circle, and capable of making himself the life of it. The day passed and the party of four had not left the table. They had raised their clouds around it; all being smokers except the lieutenant. Coffee was served by Tom, in the midst of the cloud. When the coffee disappeared, the Jamaica and the Madeira were restored. Cards followed, and at twelve o'clock at night, the sheriff rose a loser of some thirty shillings to Sergeant Millhouse, who played through the hands of Frampton, and who became more and more reconciled to the suspicious guest with every shilling which the latter yielded. When, next morning, after the colonel's departure,—which took place soon after an early breakfast—he was discoursing of his good qualities, his companionable virtues, and so forth, the captain of partisans laid his hand on his shoulder—

'Ah! Millhouse, but you don't know the man.'

'What! he's Col. ——, ain't he?'

'Yes.'

'And a main good fellow, I say.'

'Well enough;—well enough; but—your ear, sergeant.'

The latter yielded it; the captain stooped as if to whisper—then in deep, solemn accents, as if drawn up from immeasurable depths, he cried out:—

'THE COLONEL IS THE SHERIFF!'

The sergeant made but one bounce, and was across the room; his countenance wobegone with surprise amounting to terror. His involuntary utterance, occasioned equally by what he had heard, and the tone of voice employed in telling it, was characteristic of his early attention when at church service.

'Hairk from the tombs! The sheriff, cappin!'

'The sheriff!'

'What! *our* sheriff, what's a-coming a'ter *our* goods and chattels.'

'The same!'

'Oh! ef I'd ha' knowed it!—I'll be a'ter him!—Lance!'

'No! Do nothing of the kind! We've got off, thus far, very well. The joke is a good one, upon which I can feed fat with laughter for a month. I must ride over and tell the widow. How her sides will shake!'

1854

THE SWAMP FOX [1]

WE follow where the Swamp Fox guides,
His friends and merry men are we;
And when the troop of Tarleton rides,
We burrow in the cypress tree.
The turfy hammock is our bed,
Our home is in the red-deer's den,
Our roof, the tree-top overhead,
For we are wild and hunted men.

We fly by day and shun its light,
But, prompt to strike the sudden blow,
We mount, and start with early night,
And through the forest track our foe.

1 'The Swamp Fox' is General Francis Marion, a South Carolinian leader in the border-warfare of the Revolution.

And soon he hears our chargers leap,
The flashing sabre blinds his eyes,
And ere he drives away his sleep,
And rushes from his camp, he dies.

Free bridle-bit, good gallant steed,
That will not ask a kind caress,
To swim the Santee at our need,
When on his heels the foemen press—
The true heart and the ready hand,
The spirit stubborn to be free,
The twisted bore, the smiting brand—
And we are Marion's men, you see.

Now light the fire and cook the meal,
The last, perhaps, that we shall taste;
I hear the Swamp Fox round us steal,
And that's a sign we move in haste.
He whistles to the scouts, and hark!
You hear his order calm and low.
Come, wave your torch across the dark,
And let us see the boys that go.

We may not see their forms again,
God help 'em, should they find the strife!
For they are strong and fearless men,
And make no coward terms for life:
They'll fight as long as Marion bids,
And when he speaks the word to shy,
Then, not till then, they turn their steeds,
Through thickening shade and swamp to fly.

Now stir the fire, and lie at ease—
The scouts are gone, and on the brush
I see the Colonel bend his knees,
To take his slumbers too. But hush!
He's praying, comrades: 'tis not strange;
The man that's fighting day by day
May well, when night comes, take a change,
And down upon his knees to pray.

Break up that hoe-cake, boys, and hand
The sly and silent jug that's there;
I love not it should idly stand,
When Marion's men have need of cheer.
'Tis seldom that our luck affords
A stuff like this we just have quaffed,
And dry potatoes on our boards
May always call for such a draught.

Now pile the brush and roll the log:
Hard pillow, but a soldier's head,
That's half the time in brake and bog,
Must never think of softer bed.
The owl is hooting to the night,
The cooter crawling o'er the bank,
And in that pond the plashing light,
Tells where the alligator sank.

What! 'tis the signal! start so soon,
And through the Santee swamp so deep,
Without the aid of friendly moon,
And we, Heaven help us! half asleep!
But courage, comrades! Marion leads,
The Swamp Fox takes us out tonight;
So clear your swords, and spur your steeds,
There's goodly chance, I think, of fight.

We follow where the Swamp Fox guides,
We leave the swamp and cypress tree,
Our spurs are in our coursers' sides,
And ready for the strife are we.
The Tory camp is now in sight,
And there he cowers within his den;
He hears our shout, he dreads the fight,
He fears, and flies from Marion's men.

1832

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

1794–1878

ON THE VALUE AND USES OF POETRY [1]

IN my last lecture I attempted to give some notion of the nature of poetry.[2] In the present I intend to examine its value and uses, to inquire into its effects upon human welfare and happiness, and to consider some of the objections that have been urged against an indulgence in its delights. It is of no little consequence that we should satisfy ourselves of the tendency of a class of compositions which forms so large a part of the literature of all nations and times, so that, if it is found beneficial, we may estimate the degree in which it is worthy of encouragement; if pernicious, that we may bethink ourselves of a remedy. In what I have to say on this head I cannot by any means be certain that my partiality for the art will permit me to treat the subject with that coolness of judgment and freedom from prejudice which might be desirable. I only ask your frank assent to whatever may be true in the apology I shall make for it. It is not for my hands to hold the balance in which it is weighed.

I shall consider the influence of poetry on the welfare and happiness of our race in the three points of view in which I placed it in my last lecture—namely, as it addresses itself to the imagination, to the passions, and to the intelligence. As it respects the imagination, I believe the question may be soon and easily disposed of; for, so far as that faculty merely is excited by poetry without taking into account the effect produced on the passions, its activity is an amusement, an agreeable intellectual exercise—no more. A great deal of poetry, doubtless, has no higher object than this, and excites no stronger emotion than that complacency which proceeds from being agreeably employed. This is something in a world whose inhabitants are perpetually complaining of its labors, fatigues, and miseries. It has, however, a still higher value when regarded as in some sort the support of our innocence, for there is ever something pure and elevated in the creations of poetry. Its spirit is an aspiration after superhuman beauty and majesty, which, if it has no affinity with, has at least some likeness to, virtue. We cannot eradicate the imagination, but we may cultivate and regulate it; we cannot keep it from continual action, but we can give it a salutary direction. Certainly it is a noble occupation to shape the creations of the mind into perfect forms according to those laws which man learns from observing the works of his Maker.

There are exercises of the imagination, it must be confessed, of too gross and sordid a nature to be comprised within the confines of any divine art—revellings of the fancy amid the images of base appetites and petty and ridiculous passions. These are the hidden sins of the heart, that lurk in its darkest recesses, where shame and the opinion of men cannot come to drive them out, and which pollute and debase it the more because they work in secrecy and at leisure. Is it not well, therefore, to substitute something better in the place of these, or, at least, to preoccupy the mind with what may prevent their entrance, and to create imaginative habits that may lead us

1 This is the second of a series of four lectures given by Bryant in 1825, shortly after quitting Great Barrington for New York. It was first published in *Prose Works* (N.Y., 1884),I,14–24.

2 'When we speak of a poem, we do not mean merely a tissue of striking images. The most beautiful poetry is that which takes the strongest hold of the feelings, and, if it is really the most beautiful, then it is poetry in the highest sense. Poetry is constantly resorting to the language of the passions to heighten the effect of her pictures; and, if this be not enough to entitle that language to the appellation of poetical, I am not aware of the meaning of the term. . . . The truth is, that poetry which does not find its way to the heart is scarcely deserving of the name; it may be brilliant and ingenious, but it soon wearies the attention. . . . But poetry not only addresses the passions and the imagination; it appeals to the understanding also. . . . Remember that it does not concern itself with abstract reasonings, nor with any course of investigation that fatigues the mind. Nor is it merely didactic; but this does not prevent it from teaching truths which the mind instinctively acknowledges. The elements of moral truth are few and simple, but their combinations with human actions are as innumerable and diversified as the combinations of language. . . . Nor are these of less value because they require no laborious research to discover them. The best riches of the earth are produced on its surface. . . .' Bryant, 'On the Nature of Poetry,' ibid.,I,8–11.

to regard them with contempt and disgust? Poetry is well fitted for this office. It has no community with degradation, nor with things that degrade. It utters nothing that cannot be spoken without shame. Into the window of his bosom who relishes its pleasures, all the world may freely look. The tastes from which it springs, the sentiments it awakens, the objects on which it dwells with fondness, and which it labors to communicate to mankind, are related to the best and most universal sympathies of our nature.

In speaking of the influences of poetry on the happiness of mankind as connected with its effects on the imagination, I have been obliged to anticipate a part of what I had to say in regard to its power over the passions. These two topics, indeed, are closely connected; they may be separated in classification, but it is difficult to speculate upon them separately; for, as I observed in my last lecture, the excitement of the imagination awakens the feelings, and the excitement of the feelings kindles the imagination. It is the dominion of poetry over the feelings and passions of men that gives it its most important bearing upon the virtue and the welfare of society. Everything that affects our sensibilities is a part of our moral education, and the habit of being rightly affected by all the circumstances by which we are surrounded is the perfection of the moral character. The purest of all religions agrees with the soundest philosophy in referring the practice of virtue to the affections. Every good action has its correspondent emotion of the heart given to impel us to our duty, and to reward us for doing it. Now, it is admitted that poetry moves these springs of moral conduct powerfully; but it has sometimes been disputed whether it moves them in a salutary way, or whether it perverts them to evil. This question may be settled by inquiring what kind of sentiments it ordinarily tends to encourage. Has it any direct connection with vice? for, if it has not, the emotions it inspires must be innocent, and innocent emotions are emphatically healthful. Is there any poetry in cruelty? are the vivid descriptions of human and animal suffering it sets before us such as make us to rejoice in that suffering, or even such as leave us unmoved? Is there any poetry in injustice? Is there any poetry in fraud and treachery? The stronger the colors in which the former is painted, the more thoroughly do we detest it; the more forcibly the latter is presented to our minds, the more cordially do we despise it. Has poetry any kindred with covetousness and selfishness? or, rather, are they not a blight, and death itself, to that enthusiasm to which poetry owes its birth? On the other hand, do we not know that poetry delights in inspiring compassion, the parent of all kind offices? Does it not glory in sentiments of fortitude and magnanimity, the fountain of disinterested sacrifices? It cherishes patriotism, the incitement to vigorous toils endured for the welfare of communities. It luxuriates among the natural affections, the springs of all the gentle charities of domestic life. It has so refined and transformed and hallowed the love of the sexes that piety itself has sometimes taken the language of that passion to clothe its most fervent aspirations. It delights to infold not only the whole human race, but all the creatures of God, in the wide circle of its sympathies. It loves to point man to the beginning and end of his days, and to the short and swift passage between; to linger about the cradle and about the grave, and to lift the veil of another life. All moral lessons which are uninteresting and unimpressive, and, therefore, worthless, it leaves to prose; but all those which touch the heart, and are, therefore, important and effectual, are its own. One passion, indeed, is excited by poetry, about the worth of which moralists differ—the love of glory. I cannot stay to inquire into the moral quality of this passion; but this I will say, that, if it be not a virtue, it is frequently an excellent substitute for one, and becomes the motive of great and generous actions. At all events, a regard for the good opinion of our fellow-creatures is so interwoven with our natures, is of so much value to the order and welfare of society, does so much good and prevents so much evil, that I cannot bring myself to think ill of anything that encourages and directs it. None the less, poetry teaches us, also, lessons of profoundest humility. Reverence for that boundless goodness and infinite power which pervade and uphold all things that exist is one of its elements, and is the

source of some of its loftiest meditations and deepest emotions. Much as we all glory in the power that is our own, the mind delights quite as naturally to raise its view to power that is above it, and to lose itself in the contemplation of strength and wisdom without bound. The poet who wrote atheist after his name knew not of what manner of spirit he was. He, too, paid a willing and undissembled homage to the Divinity. He called it Nature, but it was the Great First Cause whom we all worship, whatever its essence, and whatever its name.

One of the great recommendations of poetry in that point of view in which I am now considering it is, that it withdraws us from the despotism of many of those circumstances which mislead the moral judgment. It is dangerous to be absorbed continuously in our own immediate concerns. Self-interest is the most ingenious and persuasive of all the agents that deceive our consciences, while by means of it our unhappy and stubborn prejudices operate in their greatest force. But poetry lifts us to a sphere where self-interest cannot exist, and where the prejudices that perplex our every-day life can hardly enter. It restores us to our unperverted feelings, and leaves us at liberty to compare the issues of life with our unsophisticated notions of good and evil. We are taught to look at them as they are in themselves, and not as they may affect our present convenience, and then we are sent back to the world with our moral perceptions cleared and invigorated.

Among the most remarkable of the influences of poetry is the exhibition of those analogies and correspondences which it beholds between the things of the moral and of the natural world. I refer to its adorning and illustrating each by the other—infusing a moral sentiment into natural objects, and bringing images of visible beauty and majesty to heighten the effect of moral sentiment. Thus it binds into one all the passages of human life and connects all the varieties of human feeling with the works of creation. Any one who will make the experiment for himself will see how exceedingly difficult it is to pervert this process into an excitement of the bad passions of the soul. There are a purity and innocence in the appearances of Nature that make them refuse to be allied to the suggestions of guilty emotion. We discern no sin in her grander operations and vicissitudes, and no lessons of immorality are to be learned from them, as there are from the examples of the world. They cannot be studied without inducing the love, if they fail of giving the habit, of virtue. In so far as poetry directly addresses the understanding, it would be preposterous to apprehend any injurious consequences from it, which in my last lecture I said was by means of those moral truths which the mind instinctively acknowledges, and of which it immediately feels the force. The simplicity and clearness of the truths with which it deals prevent any mistake in regard to their meanings or tendencies. They strike the mind by their own brightness, and win its assent by their manifest and beautiful agreement with the lessons of our own experience. It belongs to more subtle and abstruse speculations than any into which poetry can enter, to unsettle the notions of men respecting right and wrong. Ingenious casuistry and labored sophistry may confuse and puzzle the understanding, and lead it through their own darkness to false conclusions; but poetry abhors their assistance. It may be said, however, that the power which poetry exercises over the mind is liable to abuse. It is so, undoubtedly, like all power. Its influences may be, and unquestionably have been, perverted; but my aim has been to show that they are beneficial in their nature, intrinsically good, and, if so, not to be rejected because accidentally mischievous. To confound the abuses of a thing with the thing itself is to sophisticate. Why do not they who set up this objection to poetry talk in the same manner of the common and universal sources of human enjoyment? When you tell them of the element which diffuses comfort through our habitations, when the earth and the air are frozen, and enables us to support life through the inclemency of the season, do they deny its utility, or endeavor to convince you of your error, by pointing you to dwellings laid waste by conflagrations, or by telling you tales of martyrs roasted at the stake? When you speak of the beneficent influences of the sun, why do they not meet you with the scorched and barren deserts of Africa, with

diseases born under his heat, the plague of Europe, and the yellow fever of America? When you are simple enough to rejoice in the kind provision of rains for the refreshment of the earth and the growth of its plants, why do they not silence you with stories of harvest and cattle and human beings swept away by inundations? Well, when we are persuaded to part with our hearth-fires, and to refuse the fruits which sunshine and showers have ripened for our sustenance, let us give up poetry. In the mean time, instead of putting it by with scorn, let us cherish it as we do the other gifts of Heaven.

In those works which have met with merited reprehension on account of their pernicious tendencies, it is not of the poetry that the friends of virtue have reason to complain; it is of the foul ingredients mingled with it; it is of the leaven of corruption interspersed with what is in itself pure and innocent. The elements of poetry are the beautiful and noble in the creation and in man's nature; and, so far as anything vicious is mingled with these, the compound is incongruous. Indeed, I am apt to think that those poems which are objectionable on account of their immoral character have won for their authors the reputation of greater powers than they really possessed. The passages of real beauty and excellence which they contain appear the more beautiful and excellent from the contrast they offer to the grossness by which they are surrounded. Those bursts of true feeling, those fine moral touches, those apprehensions of the glory and beauty of the universe, and the language it speaks to the heart of man, delight us there by a certain unexpectedness. Their innocence appears more spotless, their pathos more touching, because such qualities refresh the mind in the midst of its horror and disgust.

The heroic poems of the ancients are said to inspire a sanguinary spirit, the love of war, and an indifference to the miseries of which war is the cause; but I cannot believe that they produce this effect to the extent which many suppose, and, so far as they do produce it, it is from an imperfection in the poetry. Poetry that is unfeeling and indifferent to suffering is no poetry at all. It is but justice, however, to these writers to say that, if they do encourage a fondness for war, it is rather by what they leave undone than what they do. War, like all other situations of danger and of change, calls forth the exertion of admirable intellectual qualities and great virtues, and it is only by dwelling on these, and keeping out of sight the sufferings and sorrows, and all the crimes and evils that follow in its train, that it has its glory in the eyes of men. We do not admire the heroes of Homer because they shed blood and cut throats—any highwayman may do this—but we admire them for the greatness of mind they show in the dreadful scenes in which they are engaged. We reverence that hardy spirit that faces danger without shrinking, and voluntarily exposes the body to pain, for it is a modification of that noble principle which gives birth to all virtue and all greatness—the endurance of present toils and submission to present sacrifices, in order to insure great good for the future. We love, also, to contemplate strong and skilful action of the body, which in the personal combats he describes is prompted and ordered by strong action of the mind, by intense emotion, and clear sagacity. But the purer and gentler spirit of the Father of Verse and the humanizing influences of poetry show themselves strongly in his great works, and set him far in advance of the age in which he wrote. The poet often stops to lament those whom his favorite heroes slew without remorse—old men cut off in the honors of a blameless age, young men in the bloom of their years and the promise of their virtues—and to sympathize with the unavailing and unappeasable sorrow of those to whom they were dear. Nay, it would seem that his mind was ever haunted with a secret sentiment of the emptiness of the very glory he was celebrating, for not only the Odyssey, but the Iliad itself, is full of allusions to the final fate of those who earned renown at the siege of Troy, to their wanderings, their hardships, their domestic calamities, and their violent and unhonored deaths.

I shall close this lecture with an extract from an eloquent writer, who has replied to some other objections that have been raised against poetry in such a manner that I should not feel myself justified in using any other words than his own: 'It is objected to poetry,' he says, 'that it gives wrong views

and excites false expectations of life, peoples the mind with shadows and illusions, and builds up imaginations on ruins of wisdom. That there is a wisdom against which poetry wars—the wisdom of the senses, which makes physical comfort the chief good, and wealth the chief interest of life—is not denied; nor can it be denied, the least service which poetry renders to mankind, that it redeems them from the thraldom of this earth-born prudence. But, passing over this topic, it may be observed that the complaint against poetry as abounding in illusion and deception is in the main groundless. In many poems there is more of truth than in many histories and philosophic theories. The fictions of genius are often the vehicles of the sublimest verities, and its flashes often open new regions of thought, and throw new light on the mysteries of our being. In poetry the letter is falsehood, but the spirit is often the profoundest wisdom. And, if truth thus dwells in the boldest fictions of the poet, much more may it be expected in his delineations of life; for the present life, which is the first stage of the immortal mind, abounds in the materials of poetry, and it is the high office of the bard to detect this divine element among the grosser labors and pleasures of our earthly being. The present life is not wholly prosaic, precise, tame, and finite. To the gifted eye it abounds in the poetic. The affections, which spread beyond ourselves and stretch far into futurity; the workings of mighty passions, which seem to arm the soul with an almost superhuman energy; the innocent and irrepressible joy of infancy; the bloom and buoyancy and dazzling hopes of youth; the throbbings of the heart when it first wakes to love, and dreams of a happiness too vast for earth; woman, with her beauty and grace and gentleness and freshness of feeling and depth of affection, and her blushes of purity, and the tones and looks which only a mother's heart can inspire—these are all poetical. It is not true that a poet paints a life which does not exist. He only extracts and concentrates, as it were, life's ethereal essence, arrests and condenses its volatile fragrance, brings together its scattered beauties, and prolongs its more refined but evanescent joys; and in this he does well; for it is good to feel that life is not wholly usurped by cares for subsistence and physical gratification, but admits, in measures which may be indefinitely enlarged, sentiments and delights worthy of a higher being. This power of poetry to refine our views of life and happiness is more and more needed as society advances. It is needed to withstand the encroachments of heartless and artificial manners which make civilization so tame and uninteresting. It is needed to counteract the tendency of physical science, which—being now sought, not, as formerly, for intellectual gratification, but for multiplying bodily comforts—requires a new development of imagination, taste, and poetry to preserve men from sinking into an earthly, material, epicurean life.'

1825 1884

THANATOPSIS [1]

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks

1 Bryant wrote of his early reading: 'About this time my father brought home, I think from one of his visits to Boston, the *Remains of Henry Kirke White*, which had been republished in this country. I read the poems with great eagerness, and so often that I had committed several of them to memory, particularly the ode to the Rosemary. The melancholy tone which prevails in them deepened the interest with which I read them, for about that time I had, as young poets are apt to have, a liking for poetry of a querulous caste. I remember reading, at this time, that remarkable poem Blair's "Grave," and dwelling with great satisfaction upon its finer passages. I had the opportunity of comparing it with a poem on a kindred subject, also in blank verse, that of Bishop Porteus on "Death," and of observing how much the verse of the obscure Scottish minister excelled in originality of thought and vigor of expression that of the English prelate. In my father's library I found a small, thin volume of the miscellaneous poems of Southey, to which he had not called my attention, containing some of the finest of Southey's shorter poems. I read it greedily. Cowper's poems had been in my hands from an early age, and I now passed from his shorter poems, which are generally mere rhymed prose, to his "Task," the finer passages of which supplied a form of blank verse that captivated my admiration.' Godwin, *A Biography of William Cullen Bryant*(N.Y., 1883),I,37.

'At the present day . . . a writer of poems writes in a language which preceding poets have polished, refined, and filled with forcible, graceful, and musical expressions. He is not only taught by them to overcome the difficulties of rhythmical construction, but he is shown . . . the secrets of the mechanism by which he moves the mind of his reader; he is shown ways of kindling the imagination and of interesting the passions which his own sagacity might never have dis-

A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice.— Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix for ever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods—rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.—Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
Save his own dashings—yet the dead are there:
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

covered; his mind is filled with the beauty of their sentiments, and their enthusiasm is breathed into his soul.' Bryant, 'On Originality and Imitation,' *Prose Works* (N Y., 1884), I, 39.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

1811 1821

INSCRIPTION FOR THE ENTRANCE TO A WOOD

STRANGER, if thou hast learned a truth which needs
No school of long experience, that the world
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares,
To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood
And view the haunts of Nature. The calm shade
Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze
That makes the green leaves dance, shall waft a balm
To thy sick heart. Thou wilt find nothing here
Of all that pained thee in the haunts of men,
And made thee loathe thy life. The primal curse
Fell, it is true, upon the unsinning earth,
But not in vengeance. God hath yoked to guilt
Her pale tormentor, misery. Hence, these shades
Are still the abodes of gladness; the thick roof
Of green and stirring branches is alive
And musical with birds, that sing and sport
In wantonness of spirit; while below
The squirrel, with raised paws and form erect,
Chirps merrily. Throngs of insects in the shade
Try their thin wings and dance in the warm beam
That waked them into life. Even the green trees
Partake the deep contentment; as they bend
To the soft winds, the sun from the blue sky
Looks in and sheds a blessing on the scene.
Scarce less the cleft-born wild-flower seems to enjoy
Existence than the wingèd plunderer
That sucks its sweets. The mossy rocks themselves,
And the old and ponderous trunks of prostrate trees
That lead from knoll to knoll a causey rude
Or bridge the sunken brook, and their dark roots,
With all their earth upon them, twisting high,
Breathe fixed tranquillity. The rivulet
Sends forth glad sounds, and tripping o'er its bed
Of pebbly sands, or leaping down the rocks,
Seems, with continuous laughter, to rejoice
In its own being. Softly tread the marge,
Lest from her midway perch thou scare the wren
That dips her bill in water. The cool wind,
That stirs the stream in play, shall come to thee,
Like one that loves thee nor will let thee pass
Ungreeted, and shall give its light embrace.

1815 1821

TO A WATERFOWL

WHITHER, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

1815 1821

SUMMER WIND

It is a sultry day; the sun has drunk
The dew that lay upon the morning grass;
There is no rustling in the lofty elm
That canopies my dwelling, and its shade
Scarce cools me. All is silent, save the faint
And interrupted murmur of the bee,
Settling on the sick flowers, and then again
Instantly on the wing. The plants around
Feel the too potent fervors: the tall maize
Rolls up its long green leaves; the clover droops
Its tender foliage, and declines its blooms.
But far in the fierce sunshine tower the hills,
With all their growth of woods, silent and stern,
As if the scorching heat and dazzling light
Were but an element they loved. Bright clouds,
Motionless pillars of the brazen heaven—
Their bases on the mountains—their white tops
Shining in the far ether—fire the air
With a reflected radiance, and make turn
The gazer's eye away. For me, I lie
Languidly in the shade, where the thick turf,
Yet virgin from the kisses of the sun,
Retains some freshness, and I woo the wind
That still delays his coming. Why so slow,
Gentle and voluble spirit of the air?
Oh, come and breathe upon the fainting earth
Coolness and life. Is it that in his caves
He hears me? See, on yonder woody ridge,
The pine is bending his proud top, and now
Among the nearer groves, chestnut and oak
Are tossing their green boughs about. He comes;
Lo, where the grassy meadow runs in waves!
The deep distressful silence of the scene
Breaks up with mingling of unnumbered sounds
And universal motion. He is come,
Shaking a shower of blossoms from the shrubs,
And bearing on their fragrance; and he brings
Music of birds, and rustling of young boughs,
And sound of swaying branches, and the voice
Of distant waterfalls. All the green herbs
Are stirring in his breath; a thousand flowers,
By the road-side and the borders of the brook,
Nod gayly to each other; glossy leaves
Are twinkling in the sun, as if the dew
Were on them yet, and silver waters break
Into small waves and sparkle as he comes.

1824 1832

I BROKE THE SPELL THAT HELD ME LONG

I broke the spell that held me long,
The dear, dear witchery of song.
I said, the poet's idle lore
Shall waste my prime of years no more,
For Poetry, though heavenly born,
Consorts with poverty and scorn.

I broke the spell—nor deemed its power
Could fetter me another hour.

Ah, thoughtless! how could I forget
Its causes were around me yet?
For wheresoe'er I looked, the while,
Was Nature's everlasting smile.

Still came and lingered on my sight
Of flowers and streams the bloom and light,
And glory of the stars and sun;—
And these and poetry are one.
They, ere the world had held me long,
Recalled me to the love of song.
1824 1832

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN

THOU who wouldst see the lovely and the wild
Mingled in harmony on Nature's face,
Ascend our rocky mountains. Let thy foot
Fail not with weariness, for on their tops
The beauty and the majesty of earth,
Spread wide beneath, shall make thee to forget
The steep and toilsome way. There, as thou stand'st,
The haunts of men below thee, and around
The mountain-summits, thy expanding heart
Shall feel a kindred with that loftier world
To which thou art translated, and partake
The enlargement of thy vision. Thou shalt look
Upon the green and rolling forest-tops,
And down into the secrets of the glens,
And streams that with their bordering thickets strive
To hide their windings. Thou shalt gaze, at once,
Here on white villages, and tilth, and herds,
And swarming roads, and there on solitudes
That only hear the torrent, and the wind,
And eagle's shriek. There is a precipice
That seems a fragment of some mighty wall,
Built by the hand that fashioned the old world,
To separate its nations, and thrown down
When the flood drowned them. To the north, a path
Conducts you up the narrow battlement.
Steep is the western side, shaggy and wild
With mossy trees, and pinnacles of flint,
And many a hanging crag. But, to the east,
Sheer to the vale go down the bare old cliffs—
Huge pillars, that in middle heaven upbear
Their weather-beaten capitals, here dark
With moss, the growth of centuries, and there
Of chalky whiteness where the thunderbolt
Has splintered them. It is a fearful thing
To stand upon the beetling verge, and see
Where storm and lightning, from that huge gray wall,
Have tumbled down vast blocks, and at the base
Dashed them in fragments, and to lay thine ear
Over the dizzy depth, and hear the sound
Of winds, that struggle with the woods below,
Come up like ocean murmurs. But the scene
Is lovely round; a beautiful river there
Wanders amid the fresh and fertile meads,
The paradise he made unto himself,
Mining the soil for ages. On each side
The fields swell upward to the hills; beyond,
Above the hills, in the blue distance, rise
The mountain-columns with which earth props heaven.

There is a tale about these reverend rocks,
A sad tradition of unhappy love,
And sorrows borne and ended, long ago,
When over these fair vales the savage sought
His game in the thick woods. There was a maid,
The fairest of the Indian maids, bright-eyed,
With wealth of raven tresses, a light form,
And a gay heart. About her cabin-door
The wide old woods resounded with her song
And fairy laughter all the summer day.
She loved her cousin; such a love was deemed,
By the morality of those stern tribes,
Incestuous, and she struggled hard and long
Against her love, and reasoned with her heart,
As simple Indian maiden might. In vain.
Then her eye lost its lustre, and her step
Its lightness, and the gray-haired men that passed
Her dwelling, wondered that they heard no more

The accustomed song and laugh of her, whose looks
Were like the cheerful smile of Spring, they said,
Upon the Winter of their age. She went
To weep where no eye saw, and was not found
When all the merry girls were met to dance,
And all the hunters of the tribe were out;
Nor when they gathered from the rustling husk
The shining ear; nor when, by the river's side,
They pulled the grape and startled the wild shades
With sounds of mirth. The keen-eyed Indian dames
Would whisper to each other, as they saw
Her wasting form, and say, *The girl will die.*

One day into the bosom of a friend,
A playmate of her young and innocent years,
She poured her griefs. 'Thou know'st, and thou alone,'
She said, 'for I have told thee all my love,
And guilt, and sorrow. I am sick of life.
All night I weep in darkness, and the morn
Glares on me, as upon a thing accursed,
That has no business on the earth. I hate
The pastimes and the pleasant toils that once
I loved; the cheerful voices of my friends
Sound in my ear like mockings, and, at night,
In dreams, my mother, from the land of souls,
Calls me and chides me. All that look on me
Do seem to know my shame; I cannot bear
Their eyes; I cannot from my heart root out
The love that wrings it so, and I must die.'

It was a summer morning, and they went
To this old precipice. About the cliffs
Lay garlands, ears of maize, and shaggy skins
Of wolf and bear, the offerings of the tribe
Here made to the Great Spirit, for they deemed,
Like worshippers of the elder time, that God
Doth walk on the high places and affect
The earth-o'erlooking mountains. She had on
The ornaments with which her father loved
To deck the beauty of his bright-eyed girl,
And bade her wear when stranger warriors came
To be his guests. Here the friends sat them down,
And sang, all day, old songs of love and death,
And decked the poor wan victim's hair with flowers,
And prayed that safe and swift might be her way
To the calm world of sunshine, where no grief
Makes the heart heavy and the eyelids red.
Beautiful lay the region of her tribe
Below her—waters resting in the embrace
Of the wide forest, and maize-planted glades
Opening amid the leafy wilderness.
She gazed upon it long, and at the sight
Of her own village peeping through the trees,
And her own dwelling, and the cabin roof
Of him she loved with an unlawful love,
And came to die for, a warm gush of tears
Ran from her eyes. But when the sun grew low
And the hill shadows long, she threw herself
From the steep rock and perished. There was scooped,
Upon the mountain's southern slope, a grave;
And there they laid her, in the very garb
With which the maiden decked herself for death,
With the same withering wild-flowers in her hair.
And o'er the mould that covered her, the tribe
Built up simple monument, a cone
Of small loose stones. Thenceforward all who passed,
Hunter, and dame, and virgin, laid a stone
In silence on the pile. It stands there yet.
And Indians from the distant West, who come
To visit where their fathers' bones are laid,
Yet tell the sorrowful tale, and to this day
The mountain where the hapless maiden died
Is called the Mountain of the Monument.

1824 1832

MUTATION

THEY talk of short-lived pleasure—be it so—
Pain dies as quickly: stern, hard-featured pain
Expires, and lets her weary prisoner go.
The fiercest agonies have shortest reign;
And after dreams of horror, comes again
The welcome morning with its rays of peace.
Oblivion, softly wiping out the stain,
Makes the strong secret pangs of shame to cease:
Remorse is virtue's root; its fair increase
Are fruits of innocence and blessedness:
Thus joy, o'erborne and bound, doth still release
His young limbs from the chains that round him press.
Weep not that the world changes—did it keep
A stable, changeless state, 'twere cause indeed to weep.

1824 1832

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

THE melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hills the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side,
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forests cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief:
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

1825 1832

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

THOU blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,

And frost and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

1829 1832

THE FLOOD OF YEARS

A MIGHTY Hand, from an exhaustless Urn,
Pours forth the never-ending Flood of Years,
Among the nations. How the rushing waves
Bear all before them! On their foremost edge,
And there alone, is Life. The Present there
Tosses and foams, and fills the air with roar
Of mingled noises. There are they who toil,
And they who strive, and they who feast, and they
Who hurry to and fro. The sturdy swain—
Woodman and delver with the spade—is there,
And busy artisan beside his bench,
And pallid student with his written roll.
A moment on the mounting billow seen,
The flood sweeps over them and they are gone.
There groups of revellers whose brows are twined
With roses, ride the topmost swell awhile,
And as they raise their flowing cups and touch
The clinking brim to brim, are whirled beneath
The waves and disappear. I hear the jar
Of beaten drums, and thunders that break forth
From cannon, where the advancing billow sends
Up to the sight long files of armèd men,
That hurry to the charge through flame and smoke.
The torrent bears them under, whelmed and hid
Slayer and slain, in heaps of bloody foam.
Down go the steed and rider, the plumed chief
Sinks with his followers; the head that wears
The imperial diadem goes down beside
The felon's with cropped ear and branded cheek.
A funeral-train—the torrent sweeps away
Bearers and bier and mourners. By the bed
Of one who dies men gather sorrowing,
And women weep aloud; the flood rolls on;
The wail is stifled and the sobbing group
Borne under. Hark to that shrill, sudden shout,
The cry of an applauding multitude,
Swayed by some loud-voiced orator who wields
The living mass as if he were its soul!
The waters choke the shout and all is still.
Lo! next a kneeling crowd, and one who spreads
The hands in prayer—the engulfing wave o'ertakes
And swallows them and him. A sculptor wields
The chisel, and the stricken marble grows
To beauty; at his easel, eager-eyed,
A painter stands, and sunshine at his touch
Gathers upon his canvas, and life glows;
A poet, as he paces to and fro,
Murmurs his sounding lines. Awhile they ride
The advancing billow, till its tossing crest
Strikes them and flings them under, while their tasks
Are yet unfinished. See a mother smile
On her young babe that smiles to her again;
The torrent wrests it from her arms; she shrieks
And weeps, and midst her tears is carried down.
A beam like that of moonlight turns the spray
To glistening pearls; two lovers, hand in hand,
Rise on the billowy swell and fondly look
Into each other's eyes. The rushing flood
Flings them apart: the youth goes down; the maid
With hands outstretched in vain, and streaming eyes,
Waits for the next high wave to follow him.
An agèd man succeeds; his bending form
Sinks slowly. Mingling with the sullen stream

Gleam the white locks, and then are seen no more.
Lo! wider grows the stream—a sea-like flood
Saps earth's walled cities; massive palaces
Crumble before it; fortresses and towers
Dissolve in the swift waters; populous realms
Swept by the torrent see their ancient tribes
Engulfed and lost; their very languages
Stifled, and never to be uttered more.
I pause and turn my eyes, and looking back
Where that tumultuous flood has been, I see
The silent ocean of the Past, a waste
Of waters weltering over graves, its shores
Strewn with the wreck of fleets where mast and hull
Drop away piecemeal; battlemented walls
Frown idly, green with moss, and temples stand
Unroofed, forsaken by the worshipper.
There lie memorial stones, whence time has gnawed
The graven legends, thrones of kings o'erturned,
The broken altars of forgotten gods,
Foundations of old cities and long streets
Where never fall of human foot is heard,
On all the desolate pavement. I behold
Dim glimmerings of lost jewels, far within
The sleeping waters, diamond, sardonyx,
Ruby and topaz, pearl and chrysolite,
Once glittering at the banquet on fair brows
That long ago were dust, and all around
Strewn on the surface of that silent sea
Are withering bridal wreaths, and glossy locks
Shorn from dear brows, by loving hands, and scrolls
O'er written, haply with fond words of love
And vows of friendship, and fair pages flung
Fresh from the printer's engine. There they lie
A moment, and then sink away from sight.
I look, and the quick tears are in my eyes,
For I behold in every one of these
A blighted hope, a separate history
Of human sorrows, telling of dear ties
Suddenly broken, dreams of happiness
Dissolved in air, and happy days too brief
That sorrowfully ended, and I think
How painfully must the poor heart have beat
In bosoms without number, as the blow
Was struck that slew their hope and broke their peace.
Sadly I turn and look before, where yet
The Flood must pass, and I behold a mist
Where swarm dissolving forms, the brood of Hope,
Divinely fair, that rest on banks of flowers,
Or wander among rainbows, fading soon
And reappearing, haply giving place
To forms of grisly aspect such as Fear
Shapes from the idle air—where serpents lift
The head to strike, and skeletons stretch forth
The bony arm in menace. Further on
A belt of darkness seems to bar the way
Long, low, and distant, where the Life to come
Touches the Life that is. The Flood of Years
Rolls toward it near and nearer. It must pass
That dismal barrier. What is there beyond?
Hear what the wise and good have said. Beyond
That belt of darkness, still the Years roll on
More gently, but with not less mighty sweep.
They gather up again and softly bear
All the sweet lives that late were overwhelmed
And lost to sight, all that in them was good,
Noble, and truly great, and worthy of love—
The lives of infants and ingenuous youths,
Sages and saintly women who have made
Their households happy; all are raised and borne
By that great current in its onward sweep,
Wandering and rippling with caressing waves
Around green islands with the breath
Of flowers that never wither. So they pass
From stage to stage along the shining course
Of that bright river, broadening like a sea.
As its smooth eddies curl along their way
They bring old friends together; hands are clasped
In joy unspeakable; the mother's arms
Again are folded round the child she loved
And lost. Old sorrows are forgotten now,

Or but remembered to make sweet the hour
That overpays them; wounded hearts that bled
Or broke are healed forever. In the room
Of this grief-shadowed present, there shall be
A Present in whose reign no grief shall gnaw
The heart, and never shall a tender tie
Be broken; in whose reign the eternal Change
That waits on growth and action shall proceed
With everlasting Concord hand in hand:
1876 1876

THE POET

THOU, who wouldst wear the name
Of poet mid thy brethren of mankind,
And clothe in words of flame
Thoughts that shall live within the general mind!
Deem not the framing of a deathless lay
The pastime of a drowsy summer day.

But gather all thy powers,
And wreak them on the verse that thou dost weave,
And in thy lonely hours,
At silent morning or at wakeful eve,
While the warm current tingles through thy veins,
Set forth the burning words in fluent strains.

No smooth array of phrase,
Artfully sought and ordered though it be,
Which the cold rhymer lays
Upon his page with languid industry,
Can wake the listless pulse to livelier speed,
Or fill with sudden tears the eyes that read.

The secret wouldst thou know
To touch the heart or fire the blood at will?
Let thine own eyes o'erflow;
Let thy lips quiver with the passionate thrill;
Seize the great thought, ere yet its power be past,
And bind, in words, the fleet emotion fast.

Then, should thy verse appear
Halting and harsh, and all unaptly wrought,
Touch the crude line with fear,
Save in the moment of impassioned thought;
Then summon back the original glow, and mend
The strain with rapture that with fire was penned.

Yet let no empty gust
Of passion find an utterance in thy lay,
A blast that whirls the dust
Along the howling street and dies away;
But feelings of calm power and mighty sweep,
Like currents journeying through the windless deep.

Seek'st thou, in living lays,
To limn the beauty of the earth and sky?
Before thine inner gaze
Let all that beauty in clear vision lie;
Look on it with exceeding love, and write
The words inspired by wonder and delight.

Of tempests wouldst thou sing,
Or tell of battles—make thyself a part
Of the great tumult; cling
To the tossed wreck with terror in thy heart;
Scale, with the assaulting host, the rampart's height,
And strike and struggle in the thickest fight.

So shalt thou frame a lay
That haply may endure from age to age,
And they who read shall say:
'What witchery hangs upon this poet's page!
What art is his the written spells to find
That sway from mood to mood the willing mind!'
1863 1864

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL

1795–1856

THE CORAL GROVE

DEEP in the wave is a coral grove,
Where the purple mullet, and gold-fish rove,
Where the sea-flower spreads its leaves of blue,
That never are wet with falling dew,
But in bright and changeful beauty shine,
Far down in the green and glassy brine.
The floor is of sand, like the mountain drift,
And the pearl shells spangle the flinty snow;
From coral rocks the sea plants lift
Their boughs, where the tides and billows flow;
The water is calm and still below,
For the winds and waves are absent there,
And the sands are bright as the stars that glow
In the motionless fields of upper air:
There with its waving blade of green,
The sea-flag streams through the silent water,
And the crimson leaf of the dulse is seen
To blush, like a banner bathed in slaughter:
There with a light and easy motion,
The fan-coral sweeps through the clear deep sea;
And the yellow and scarlet tufts of ocean,
Are bending like corn on the upland lea:
And life, in rare and beautiful forms,
Is sporting amid those bowers of stone,
And is safe, when the wrathful spirit of storms,
Has made the top of the wave his own:
And when the ship from his fury flies,
Where the myriad voices of ocean roar,
When the wind-god frowns in the murky skies,
And demons are waiting the wreck on shore;
Then far below in the peaceful sea,
The purple mullet, and gold-fish rove,
Where the waters murmur tranquilly,
Through the bending twigs of the coral grove.

1822

GRENVILLE MELLEN

1799–1841

FROM ODE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

IN vain—the trump hath blown—
And now upon that reeking hill
Slaughter rides screaming on the vengeful ball;
While with terrific signal shrill,
The vultures, from their bloody eyries flown,
Hang o'er them like a pall.
Now deeper roll the maddening drums,
And the mingling host like the ocean heaves:
While from the midst a horrid wailing comes,
And high above the fight the lonely bugle grieves!

. . . .

1825

1825

EDWARD COOTE PINKNEY

1802–1828

SERENADE [1]

LOOK out upon the stars, my love,
And shame them with thine eyes,
On which, than on the lights above,
There hang more destinies.
Night's beauty is the harmony
Of blending shades and light;
Then, Lady, up,—look out, and be
A sister to the night!—

Sleep not!—thine image wakes for aye,
Within my watching breast:
Sleep not!—from her soft sleep should fly,
Who robs all hearts of rest.
Nay, Lady, from thy slumbers break,
And make this darkness gay,
With looks, whose brightness well might make
Of darker nights a day.

c.1822 1825

A HEALTH

I FILL this cup to one made up of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex the seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements and kindly stars have given,
A form so fair, that, like the air, 'tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own, like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they, and from her lips each flows
As one may see the burthened bee forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her, the measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy, the freshness, of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft, so fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,—the idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace a picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts a sound must long remain,
But memory such as mine of her so very much endears,
When death is nigh my latest sigh will not be life's but hers.

I filled this cup to one made up of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex the seeming paragon—
Her health! and would on earth there stood some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry, and weariness a name.

1824 1825

THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS

1809–1858

AVALON

I will open my dark saying upon the Harp.
DAVID.

All thy waves and billows are gone over me. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing!
PSALMS.

There be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon.
MILTON.

I

DEATH'S pale cold orb has turned to an eclipse
My Son of Love!
The worms are feeding on thy lily-lips,
My milk-white Dove!

[1] First published, set to music, in 1823.

Pale purple tinges thy soft finger-tips!
While nectar thy pure soul in glory sips,
As Death's cold frost mine own forever nips!
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

2

Wake up, oh! Avalon! my son! my son!
And come from Death!
Heave off the clod that lies so heavy on
Thy breast beneath
In that cold grave, my more than Precious One!
And come to me! for I am here alone—
With none to comfort me!—my hopes are gone
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

3

Forever more must I, on this damp sod,
Renew and keep
My Covenant of Sorrows with my God,
And weep, weep, weep!
Writhing in pain beneath Death's iron rod!
Till I shall go to that *Divine Abode*—
Treading the path that thy dear feet have trod—
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

4

Oh! precious Saviour! gracious heavenly Lord!
Refresh my soul!
Here, with the healings of thy heavenly Word,
Make my heart whole!
My little Lambs are scattered now abroad
In Death's dark Valley, where they bleat unheard!
Dear Shepherd! give their Shepherd his reward
Where they are lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
With *Avalon!* my son! my son!

5

For thou didst tread with fire-ensandaled feet,
Star-crowned, forgiven,
The burning diapason of the stars so sweet,
To God in Heaven!
And, walking on the sapphire-paven street,
Didst take upon the highest Sill thy seat—
Waiting in glory there my soul to meet,
When I am lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

6

Thou wert my Micro-Uranos below—
My Little Heaven!
My Micro-Cosmos in this world of wo,
From morn till even!
A living Lyre of God who charmed me so
With thy sweet songs, that I did seem to g-
Out of this world where thou art shining now,
But without lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

7

Thou wert my son of Melody alway,
Oh! Child Divine!
Whose golden radiance filled the world with Day!
For thou didst shine
A lustrous Diadem of Song for aye,
Whose Divertisments, through Heaven's Holyday,
Now ravish Angel's ears—as well they may—
While I am crying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

8

Thy soul did soar up to the Gates of God,
Oh! Lark-like Child!
And through Heaven's Bowers of Bliss, by Angels trod,
Poured Wood-notes wild!
In emulation of that Bird, which stood,
In solemn silence, listening to thy flood
Of golden Melody deluge the wood

Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

10

The redolent quintessence of thy tongue,
Oh! *Avalon!*
Embowered by Angels Heaven's sweet Bowers among—
Many in one—
Is gathered from the choicest of the throng,
In an Æonian Hymn forever young,
Thou Philomelian Eclecticist of Song!
While I am sighing
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
For *Avalon!* my son! my son!

15

Thou wert like Taleisin, 'full of eyes,' [1]
Bardling of Love!
My beautiful Divine Eumenides!
My gentle Dove!
Thou silver Swan of Golden Elegies!
Whose Mendelsohnian Songs now fill the skies!
While I am weeping where my Lily lies!
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

16

Kindling the high-uplifted stars at even
With thy sweet song,
The Angels, on the Sapphire Sills of Heaven,
In rapturous throng,
Melted to milder meekness, with the Seven
Bright Lamps of God to glory given,
Leant down to hear thy voice roll up the leven,
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

17

Can any thing that Christ has ever said,
Make my heart whole?
Can less than bringing back the early dead,
Restore my soul?
No! this alone can make my Heavenly bread—
Christ's Bread of Life brought down from Heaven, instead
Of this sad Song, on which my soul has fed,
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

18

Have I not need to weep from Morn till Even,
Far bitterer tears
Than cruel Earth, the unforgiven,
Through his long years—
Inquisitorial Hell, or strictest Heaven,
Wrung from Christ's bleeding heart when riven?
Thus from one grief unto another driven,
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh! *Avalon!* my son! my son!

1851

SONNET,—TO ISA SLEEPING

Sleep on, and dream of Heaven awhile!
ROGERS.

As graceful as the Babylonian willow
Bending, at noontide, over some clear stream
In Palestine, in beauty did she seem
Upon the cygnet-down of her soft pillow;
And now her breast heaved like some gentle billow
Swayed by the presence of the full round moon—
Voluptuous as the summer South at noon—
Her cheeks as rosy as the radiant dawn,
When heaven is cloudless! When she breathed, the air
Around was perfume! Timid as the fawn,
And meeker than the dove, her soft words were
Like gentle music heard at night, when all
Around is still—until the soul of care
Was soothed, as noontime by some waterfall.

1838 1845

1 'Taleisin, the Druidical High Priest, or Bard. Ezekiel in describing the great knowledge of the Cherubim, says, that they were "full of eyes." ' Author's note, *Eonchs of Ruby*(N.Y., 1851),54.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

1809–1849

FROM HAWTHORNE'S TWICE-TOLD TALES

THE TALE PROPER [1]

THE tale proper, in our opinion, affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent, which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose. Were we bidden to say how the highest genius could be most advantageously employed for the best display of its own powers, we should answer, without hesitation—in the composition of a rhymed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour. Within this limit alone can the highest order of true poetry exist. We need only here say, upon this topic, that, in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting. We may continue the reading of a prose composition, from the very nature of prose itself, much longer than we can persevere, to any good purpose, in the perusal of a poem. This latter, if truly fulfilling the demands of the poetic sentiment, induces an exaltation of the soul which cannot be long sustained. All high excitements are necessarily transient. Thus a long poem is a paradox. And, without unity of impression, the deepest effects cannot be brought about. Epics were the offspring of an imperfect sense of Art, and their reign is no more. A poem *too* brief may produce a vivid, but never an intense or enduring impression. Without a certain continuity of effort—without a certain duration or repetition of purpose—the soul is never deeply moved. There must be the dropping of the water upon the rock. De Béranger has wrought brilliant things—pungent and spirit-stirring—but, like all immassive bodies, they lack *momentum*, and thus fail to satisfy the Poetic Sentiment. They sparkle and excite, but, from want of continuity, fail deeply to impress. Extreme brevity will degenerate into epigrammatism; but the sin of extreme length is even more unpardonable. *In medio tutissimus ibis.*[2]

Were we called upon, however, to designate that class of composition which, next to such a poem as we have suggested, should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—we should unhesitatingly speak of the prose tale, as Mr. Hawthorne has here exemplified it. We allude to the short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal. The ordinary novel is objectionable, from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from *totality*. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal, modify, annul, or counteract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But simple cessation in reading would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fulness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences—resulting from weariness or interruption.

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from Poe's review of the second edition of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, which appeared in *Graham's Magazine* for May 1842. Harrison, ed., *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*(N.Y., 1902),XI, 106–09.

2 'The middle course is the safest for you to steer.'

kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

We have said that the tale has a point of superiority even over the poem. In fact, while the *rhythm* of this latter is an essential aid in the development of the poem's highest idea—the idea of the Beautiful—the artificialities of this rhythm are an inseparable bar to the development of all points of thought or expression which have their basis in *Truth*. But Truth is often, and in very great degree, the aim of the tale. Some of the finest tales are tales of ratiocination. Thus the field of this species of composition, if not in so elevated a region on the mountain of Mind, is a table-land of far vaster extent than the domain of the mere poem. Its products are never so rich, but infinitely more numerous, and more appreciable by the mass of mankind. The writer of the prose tale, in short, may bring to his theme a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression—(the ratiocinative, for example, the sarcastic, or the humorous) which are not only antagonistical to the nature of the poem, but absolutely forbidden by one of its most peculiar and indispensable adjuncts; we allude, of course, to rhythm. It may be added here, *par parenthèse*, that the author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is laboring at a great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude of such other points. And here it will be seen how full of prejudice are the usual animadversions against those *tales of effect*, many fine examples of which were found in the earlier numbers of *Blackwood*. The impressions produced were wrought in a legitimate sphere of action, and constituted a legitimate although sometimes an exaggerated interest. They were relished by every man of genius: although there were found many men of genius who condemned them without just ground. The true critic will but demand that the design intended be accomplished, to the fullest extent, by the means most advantageously applicable.

'842 1850

LIGEIA [1]

And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.

JOSEPH GLANVILL.

I CANNOT, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the lady Ligeia. Long years have since elapsed, and my memory is feeble through much suffering. Or, perhaps, I cannot *now* bring these points to mind, because, in truth, the character of my beloved, her rare learning, her singular yet placid cast of beauty, and the thrilling and enthralling eloquence of her low musical language, made their way into my heart by paces so steadily and stealthily progressive that they have been unnoticed and unknown. Yet I believe that I met her first and most frequently in some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine. Of her family—I have surely heard her speak. That it is of

1 Poe wrote, 21 Sept. 1839, to P.P.Cooke: 'Touching "Ligeia" you are right—all right—throughout. The *gradual* perception of the fact that Ligeia lives again in the person of Rowena is a far loftier and more thrilling idea than the one I have embodied. It offers in my opinion, the widest possible scope to the imagination—it might be rendered even more sublime. And this idea was mine—had I never written before I should have adopted it—but then there is "Morella." Do you remember there the *gradual* conviction on the part of the parent that the spirit of the first Morella tenants the person of the second? It was necessary, since "Morella" was written, to modify "Ligeia." I was forced to be content with a sudden half-consciousness, on the part of the narrator, that Ligeia stood before him. One point I have not fully carried out—I should have intimated that the will did not perfect its intention—there should have been a relapse—a final one—and Ligeia (who had only succeeded in so much as to convey an idea of the truth to the narrator) should be at length entombed as Rowena—the bodily alterations having gradually faded away. But since "Morella" is upon record I will suffer "Ligeia" to remain as it is.' Ibid.,XVII,52–53.

Somewhat later, probably in 1846, Poe wrote to Griswold: 'You will be surprised to hear me say that, (omitting one or two of my first efforts), I do not consider any one of my stories *better* than another. There is a vast variety of kinds, and, in degree of value, the kinds vary—but each tale is equally good of its *kind*. The loftiest kind is that of the highest imagination—and for this reason only "Ligeia" may be called my best tale.' Ibid.,XVII,228.

a remotely ancient date cannot be doubted. Ligeia! Ligeia! Buried in studies of a nature more than all else adapted to deaden impressions of the outward world, it is by that sweet word alone—by Ligeia—that I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more. And now, while I write, a recollection flashes upon me that I have *never known* the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom. Was it a playful charge on the part of my Ligeia? or was it a test of my strength of affection, that I should institute no inquiries upon this point? or was it rather a caprice of my own —a wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate devotion? I but indistinctly recall the fact itself—what wonder that I have utterly forgotten the circumstances which originated or attended it? And, indeed, if ever that spirit which is entitled *Romance*—if ever she, the wan and the misty-winged *Ashtophet* of idolatrous Egypt, presided, as they tell, over marriages ill-omened, then most surely she presided over mine.

There is one dear topic, however, on which my memory fails me not. It is the *person* of Ligeia. In stature she was tall, somewhat slender, and, in her latter days, even emaciated. I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease, of her demeanor, or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study save by the dear music of her low sweet voice, as she placed her marble hand upon my shoulder. In beauty of face no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of an opium-dream—an airy and spirit-lifting vision more wildly divine than the fantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos. Yet her features were not of that regular mould which we have been falsely taught to worship in the classical labors of the heathen. 'There is no exquisite beauty,' says Bacon, Lord Verulam, speaking truly of all the forms and *genera* of beauty, 'without some *strangeness* in the proportion.' Yet, although I saw that the features of Ligeia were not of a classic regularity—although I perceived that her loveliness was indeed 'exquisite,' and felt that there was much of 'strangeness' pervading it, yet I have tried in vain to detect the irregularity and to trace home my own perception of 'the strange.' I examined the contour of the lofty and pale forehead: it was faultless—how cold indeed that word when applied to a majesty so divine!—the skin rivalling the purest ivory, the commanding extent and repose, the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples; and then the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant and naturally-curling tresses, setting forth the full force of the Homeric epithet, 'hyacinthine!' I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose—and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There were the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same scarcely perceptible tendency to the aquiline, the same harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit. I regarded the sweet mouth. Here was indeed the triumph of all things heavenly—the magnificent turn of the short upper lip—the soft, voluptuous slumber of the under—the dimples which sported, and the color which spoke—the teeth glancing back, with a brilliancy almost startling, every ray of the holy light which fell upon them in her serene and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. I scrutinized the formation of the chin: and here, too, I found the gentleness of breadth, the softness and the majesty, the fullness and the spirituality, of the Greek—the contour which the god Apollo revealed but in a dream, to Cleomenes, the son of the Athenian. And then I peered into the large eyes of Ligeia.

For eyes we have no models in the remotely antique. It might have been, too, that in these eyes of my beloved lay the secret to which Lord Verulam alludes. They were, I must believe, far larger than the ordinary eyes of our own race. They were even fuller than the fullest of the gazelle eyes of the tribe of the valley of Nourjahad. Yet it was only at intervals—in moments of intense excitement—that this peculiarity became more than slightly noticeable in Ligeia. And at such moments was her beauty—in my heated fancy thus it appeared perhaps—the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth, the beauty of the fabulous Houri of the Turk.

The hue of the orbs was the most brilliant of black, and, far over them, hung jetty lashes of great length. The brows, slightly irregular in outline, had the same tint. The 'strangeness,' however, which I found in the eyes, was of a nature distinct from the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features, and must, after all, be referred to the *expression*. Ah, word of no meaning! behind whose vast latitude of mere sound we intrench our ignorance of so much of the spiritual. The expression of the eyes of Ligeia! How for long hours have I pondered upon it! How have I, through the whole of a midsummer night, struggled to fathom it! What was it—that something more profound than the well of Democritus—which lay far within the pupils of my beloved? What *was* it? I was possessed with a passion to discover. Those eyes! those large, those shining, those divine orbs! they became to me twin stars of Leda, and I to them devoutest of astrologers.

There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact—never, I believe, noticed in the schools—that, in our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember. And thus how frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia's eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching, yet not quite be mine, and so at length entirely depart! And (strange, oh strangest mystery of all!) I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression. I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shrine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused within me by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, or analyze, or even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the survey of a rapidly-growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean; in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven, (one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star in Lyra) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not unfrequently by passages from books. Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanvill, which (perhaps merely from its quaintness—who shall say?) never failed to inspire me with the sentiment: 'And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.'

Length of years and subsequent reflection have enabled me to trace, indeed, some remote connection between this passage in the English moralist and a portion of the character of Ligeia. An *intensity* in thought, action, or speech, was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes which at once so delighted and appalled me—by the almost magical melody, modulation, distinctness and placidity of her very low voice—and by the fierce energy (rendered doubly effective by contrast with her manner of utterance) of the wild words which she habitually uttered.

I have spoken of the learning of Ligeia: it was immense—such as I have never known in woman. In the classical tongues was she deeply proficient, and as far as my own acquaintance extended in regard to the modern dialects of Europe, I have never known her at fault. Indeed upon any theme of the most admired, because simply the most abstruse of the boasted erudition of the academy, have I *ever* found Ligeia at fault? How singularly, how thrillingly, this one point in the nature of my wife has forced itself, at this late period only, upon

my attention! I said her knowledge was such as I have never known in woman—but where breathes the man who has traversed, and successfully, *all* the wide areas of moral, physical, and mathematical science? I saw not then what I now clearly perceive, that the acquisitions of Ligeia were gigantic, were astounding; yet I was sufficiently aware of her infinite supremacy to resign myself, with a child-like confidence, to her guidance through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation at which I was most busily occupied during the earlier years of our marriage. With how vast a triumph, with how vivid a delight, with how much of all that is ethereal in hope, did I *feel*, as she bent over me in studies but little sought—but less known—that delicious vista by slow degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path, I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden!

How poignant, then, must have been the grief with which, after some years, I beheld my well-grounded expectations take wings to themselves and fly away! Without Ligeia I was but as a child groping benighted. Her presence, her readings alone, rendered vividly luminous the many mysteries of the transcendentalism in which we were immersed. Wanting the radiant lustre of her eyes, letters, lambent and golden, grew duller than Saturnian lead. And now those eyes shone less and less frequently upon the pages over which I pored. Ligeia grew ill. The wild eyes blazed with a too—too glorious effulgence; the pale fingers became of the transparent waxen hue of the grave, and the blue veins upon the lofty forehead swelled and sank impetuously with the tides of the most gentle emotion. I saw that she must die—and I struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael. And the struggles of the passionate wife were, to my astonishment, even more energetic than my own. There had been much in her stern nature to impress me with the belief that, to her, death would have come without its terrors; but not so. Words are impotent to convey any just idea of the fierceness of resistance with which she wrestled with the Shadow. I groaned in anguish at the pitiable spectacle. I would have soothed—I would have reasoned; but, in the intensity of her wild desire for life—for life—*but* for life—solace and reason were alike the uttermost of folly. Yet not until the last instance, amid the most convulsive writhings of her fierce spirit, was shaken the external placidity of her demeanor. Her voice grew more gentle—grew more low—yet I would not wish to dwell upon the wild meaning of the quietly uttered words. My brain reeled as I hearkened, entranced, to a melody more than mortal—to assumptions and aspirations which mortality had never before known.

That she loved me I should not have doubted; and I might have been easily aware that, in a bosom such as hers, love would have reigned no ordinary passion. But in death only, was I fully impressed with the strength of her affection. For long hours, detaining my hand, would she pour out before me the overflowing of a heart whose more than passionate devotion amounted to idolatry. How had I deserved to be so blessed by such confessions? How had I deserved to be so cursed with the removal of my beloved in the hour of her making them? But upon this subject I cannot bear to dilate. Let me say only, that in Ligeia's more than womanly abandonment to a love, alas! all unmerited, all unworthily bestowed, I at length recognized the principle of her longing with so wildly earnest a desire for the life which was now fleeing so rapidly away. It is this wild longing, it is this eager vehemence of desire for life—*but* for life, that I have no power to portray, no utterance capable of expressing.

At high noon of the night in which she departed, beckoning me peremptorily to her side, she bade me repeat certain verses composed by herself not many days before. I obeyed her. They were these:

Lo! 'tis a gala night
  Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
  In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
  A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
  The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
  Mutter and mumble low,

And hither and thither fly—
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their condor wings
Invisible Wo!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout,
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, 'Man,'
And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

'O God!' half shrieked Ligeia, leaping to her feet and extending her arms aloft with a spasmodic movement, as I made an end of these lines—'O God! O Divine Father! shall these things be undeviatingly so? shall this Conqueror be not once conquered? Are we not part and parcel in Thee? Who—who knoweth the mysteries of the will with its vigor? Man doth not yield him to the angels, *nor unto death utterly*, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.'

And now, as if exhausted with emotion, she suffered her white arms to fall, and returned solemnly to her bed of death. And as she breathed her last sighs, there came mingled with them a low murmur from her lips. I bent to them my ear and distinguished, again, the concluding words of the passage in Glanvill: '*Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*'

She died;—and I, crushed into the very dust with sorrow, could no longer endure the lonely desolation of my dwelling in the dim and decaying city by the Rhine. I had no lack of what the world calls wealth. Ligeia had brought me far more, very far more than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals. After a few months, therefore, of weary and aimless wandering, I purchased, and put in some repair, an abbey, which I shall not name, in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England. The gloomy and dreary grandeur of the building, the almost savage aspect of the domain, the many melancholy and time-honored memories connected with both, had much in unison with the feelings of utter abandonment which had driven me into that remote and unsocial region of the country. Yet although the external abbey, with its verdant decay hanging about it, suffered but little alteration, I gave way, with a child-like perversity, and perchance with a faint hope of alleviating my sorrows, to a display of more than regal magnificence within. For such follies, even in childhood, I had imbibed a taste, and now they came back to me as if in the dotage of grief. Alas, I feel how much even of incipient madness might have been discovered in the gorgeous and fantastic draperies, in the solemn carvings of Egypt, in the wild cornices and furniture, in the Bedlam patterns of the carpets of tufted gold! I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labors and my orders had taken a coloring from my dreams. But these absurdities I must not pause to detail. Let me speak only of that one chamber, ever accursed, whither, in a moment of mental alienation, I led from the altar as my bride—as the successor of the unforgotten Ligeia—the fair-haired and blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine.

There is no individual portion of the architecture and decoration of that bridal chamber which is not now visibly before me. Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment *so* bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved? I have said that I minutely remember the details of the chamber—yet I am sadly forgetful on topics of deep moment; and here there was no sys-

tem, no keeping, in the fantastic display, to take hold upon the memory. The room lay in a high turret of the castellated abbey, was pentagonal in shape, and of capacious size. Occupying the whole southern face of the pentagon was the sole window—an immense sheet of unbroken glass from Venice—a single pane, and tinted of a leaden hue, so that the rays of either the sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly lustre on the objects within. Over the upper portion of this huge window extended the trellise-work of an aged vine, which clambered up the massy walls of the turret. The ceiling, of gloomy-looking oak, was excessively lofty, vaulted, and elaborately fretted with the wildest and most grotesque specimens of a semi-Gothic, semi-Druidical device. From out the most central recess of this melancholy vaulting depended, by a single chain of gold with long links, a huge censer of the same metal, Saracenic in pattern, and with many perforations so contrived that there writhed in and out of them, as if endued with a serpent vitality, a continual succession of parti-colored fires.

Some few ottomans and golden candelabra, of Eastern figure, were in various stations about; and there was the couch, too—the bridal couch—of an Indian model, and low, and sculptured of solid ebony, with a pall-like canopy above. In each of the angles of the chamber stood on end a gigantic sarcophagus of black granite, from the tombs of the kings over against Luxor, with their aged lids full of immemorial sculpture. But in the draping of the apartment lay, alas! the chief fantasy of all. The lofty walls, gigantic in height, even unproportionably so, were hung from summit to foot, in vast folds, with a heavy and massive-looking tapestry—tapestry of a material which was found alike as a carpet on the floor, as a covering for the ottomans and the ebony bed, as a canopy for the bed, and as the gorgeous volutes of the curtains which partially shaded the window. The material was the richest cloth of gold. It was spotted all over, at irregular intervals, with arabesque figures, about a foot in diameter, and wrought upon the cloth in patterns of the most jetty black. But these figures partook of the true character of the arabesque only when regarded from a single point of view. By a contrivance now common, and indeed traceable to a very remote period of antiquity, they were made changeable in aspect. To one entering the room, they bore the appearance of simple monstrosities; but upon a farther advance, this appearance gradually departed; and step by step, as the visitor moved his station in the chamber, he saw himself surrounded by an endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk. The phantasmagoric effect was vastly heightened by the artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind behind the draperies, giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole.

In halls such as these, in a bridal chamber such as this, I passed, with the Lady of Tremaine, the unhallowed hours of the first month of our marriage—passed them with but little disquietude. That my wife dreaded the fierce moodiness of my temper —that she shunned me and loved me but little—I could not help perceiving; but it gave me rather pleasure than otherwise. I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man. My memory flew back (oh, with what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the august, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollections of her purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty, her ethereal nature, of her passionate, her idolatrous love. Now, then, did my spirit fully and freely burn with more than all the fires of her own. In the excitement of my opium dreams (for I was habitually fettered in the shackles of the drug) I would call aloud upon her name, during the silence of the night, or among the sheltered recesses of the glens by day, as if, through the wild eagerness, the solemn passion, the consuming ardor of my longing for the departed, I could restore her to the pathway she had abandoned—ah, *could* it be forever?—upon the earth.

About the commencement of the second month of the marriage, the Lady Rowena was attacked with sudden illness, from which her recovery was slow. The fever which consumed her rendered her nights uneasy; and in her perturbed state of half-slumber, she spoke of sounds, and of motions, in and about the chamber of the turret, which I concluded had no origin

save in the distemper of her fancy, or perhaps in the phantasmagoric influences of the chamber itself. She became at length convalescent—finally well. Yet but a brief period elapsed, ere a second more violent disorder again threw her upon a bed of suffering; and from this attack her frame, at all times feeble, never altogether recovered. Her illnesses were, after this epoch, of alarming character, and of more alarming recurrence, defying alike the knowledge and the great exertions of her physicians. With the increase of the chronic disease, which had thus apparently taken too sure hold upon her constitution to be eradicated by human means, I could not fail to observe a similar increase in the nervous irritation of her temperament, and in her excitability by trivial causes of fear. She spoke again, and now more frequently and pertinaciously, of the sounds—of the slight sounds—and of the unusual motions among the tapestries, to which she had formerly alluded.

One night, near the closing in of September, she pressed this distressing subject with more than usual emphasis upon my attention. She had just awakened from an unquiet slumber, and I had been watching, with feelings half of anxiety, half of vague terror, the workings of her emaciated countenance. I sat by the side of her ebony bed, upon one of the ottomans of India. She partly arose, and spoke, in an earnest low whisper, of sounds which she *then* heard, but which I could not hear—of motions which she *then* saw, but which I could not perceive. The wind was rushing hurriedly behind the tapestries, and I wished to show her (what, let me confess it, I could not *all* believe) that those almost inarticulate breathings, and those very gentle variations of the figures upon the wall, were but the natural effects of that customary rushing of the wind. But a deadly pallor, overspreading her face, had proved to me that my exertions to reassure her would be fruitless. She appeared to be fainting, and no attendants were within call. I remembered where was deposited a decanter of light wine which had been ordered by her physicians, and hastened across the chamber to procure it. But, as I stepped beneath the light of the censer, two circumstances of a startling nature attracted my attention. I had felt that some palpable although invisible object had passed lightly by my person; and I saw that there lay upon the golden carpet, in the very middle of the rich lustre thrown from the censer, a shadow—a faint, indefinite shadow of angelic aspect—such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade. But I was wild with the excitement of an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena. Having found the wine, I recrossed the chamber, and poured out a gobletful, which I held to the lips of the fainting lady. She had now partially recovered, however, and took the vessel herself, while I sank upon an ottoman near me, with my eyes fastened upon her person. It was then that I became distinctly aware of a gentle footfall upon the carpet, and near the couch; and in a second thereafter, as Rowena was in the act of raising the wine to her lips, I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby-colored fluid. If this I saw—not so Rowena. She swallowed the wine unhesitatingly, and I forbore to speak to her of a circumstance which must after all, I considered, have been but the suggestion of a vivid imagination, rendered morbidly active by the terror of the lady, by the opium, and by the hour.

Yet I cannot conceal it from my own perception that, immediately subsequent to the fall of the ruby-drops, a rapid change for the worse took place in the disorder of my wife; so that, on the third subsequent night, the hands of her menials prepared her for the tomb, and on the fourth, I sat alone, with her shrouded body, in that fantastic chamber which had received her as my bride. Wild visions, opium-engendered, flitted, shadow-like, before me. I gazed with unquiet eye upon the sarcophagi in the angles of the room, upon the varying figures of the drapery, and upon the writhing of the parti-colored fires in the censer overhead. My eyes then fell, as I called to mind the circumstances of a former night, to the spot beneath the glare of the censer where I had seen the faint traces of the shadow. It was there, however, no longer; and breathing with greater freedom, I turned my glances to the pallid and rigid figure upon the bed. Then rushed upon me a thousand

memories of Ligeia—and then came back upon my heart, with the turbulent violence of a flood, the whole of that unutterable woe with which I had regarded *her* thus enshrouded. The night waned; and still, with a bosom full of bitter thoughts of the one only and supremely beloved, I remained gazing upon the body of Rowena.

It might have been midnight, or perhaps earlier, or later, for I had taken no note of time, when a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct, startled me from my revery. I *felt* that it came from the bed of ebony—the bed of death. I listened in an agony of superstitious terror—but there was no repetition of the sound. I strained my vision to detect any motion in the corpse—but there was not the slightest perceptible. Yet I could not have been deceived. I *had* heard the noise, however faint, and my soul was awakened within me. I resolutely and perseveringly kept my attention riveted upon the body. Many minutes elapsed before any circumstance occurred tending to throw light upon the mystery. At length it became evident that a slight, a very feeble, and barely noticeable tinge of color had flushed up within the cheeks, and along the sunken small veins of the eyelids. Through a species of unutterable horror and awe, for which the language of mortality has no sufficiently energetic expression, I felt my heart cease to beat, my limbs grow rigid where I sat. Yet a sense of duty finally operated to restore my self-possession. I could no longer doubt that we had been precipitate in our preparations—that Rowena still lived. It was necessary that some immediate exertion be made; yet the turret was altogether apart from the portion of the abbey tenanted by the servants—there were none within call—I had no means of summoning them to my aid without leaving the room for many minutes—and this I could not venture to do. I therefore struggled alone in my endeavors to call back the spirit still hovering. In a short period it was certain, however, that a relapse had taken place; the color disappeared from both eyelid and cheek, leaving a wanness even more than that of marble; the lips became doubly shrivelled and pinched up in the ghastly expression of death; a repulsive clamminess and coldness overspread rapidly the surface of the body; and all the usual rigorous stiffness immediately supervened. I fell back with a shudder upon the couch from which I had been so startlingly aroused, and again gave myself up to passionate waking visions of Ligeia.

An hour thus elapsed when (could it be possible?) I was a second time aware of some vague sound issuing from the region of the bed. I listened—in extremity of horror. The sound came again—it was a sigh. Rushing to the corpse, I saw—distinctly saw—a tremor upon the lips. In a minute afterwards they relaxed, disclosing a bright line of the pearly teeth. Amazement now struggled in my bosom with the profound awe which had hitherto reigned there alone. I felt that my vision grew dim, that my reason wandered; and it was only by a violent effort that I at length succeeded in nerving myself to the task which duty thus once more had pointed out. There was now a partial glow upon the forehead and upon the cheek and throat; a perceptible warmth pervaded the whole frame; there was even a slight pulsation at the heart. The lady *lived*; and with redoubled ardor I betook myself to the task of restoration. I chafed and bathed the temples and the hands, and used every exertion which experience, and no little medical reading, could suggest. But in vain. Suddenly, the color fled, the pulsation ceased, the lips resumed the expression of the dead, and, in an instant afterward, the whole body took upon itself the icy chilliness, the livid hue, the intense rigidity, the sunken outline, and all the loathsome peculiarities of that which has been, for many days, a tenant of the tomb.

And again I sunk into visions of Ligeia—and again, (what marvel that I shudder while I write?) *again* there reached my ears a low sob from the region of the ebony bed. But why shall I minutely detail the unspeakable horrors of that night? Why shall I pause to relate how, time after time, until near the period of the gray dawn, this hideous drama of revivification was repeated; how each terrific relapse was only into a sterner and apparently more irredeemable death; how each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe; and how each struggle was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appear-

ance of the corpse? Let me hurry to a conclusion.

The greater part of the fearful night had worn away, and she who had been dead, once again stirred—and now more vigorously than hitherto, although arousing from a dissolution more appalling in its utter helplessness than any. I had long ceased to struggle or to move, and remained sitting rigidly upon the ottoman, a helpless prey to a whirl of violent emotions, of which extreme awe was perhaps the least terrible, the least consuming. The corpse, I repeat, stirred, and now more vigorously than before. The hues of life flushed up with unwonted energy into the countenance—the limbs relaxed—and, save that the eyelids were yet pressed heavily together, and that the bandages and draperies of the grave still imparted their charnel character to the figure, I might have dreamed that Rowena had indeed shaken off, utterly, the fetters of Death. But if this idea was not, even then, altogether adopted, I could at least doubt no longer, when, arising from the bed, tottering, with feeble steps, with closed eyes, and with the manner of one bewildered in a dream, the thing that was enshrouded advanced boldly and palpably into the middle of the apartment.

I trembled not—I stirred not—for a crowd of unutterable fancies connected with the air, the stature, the demeanor of the figure, rushing hurriedly through my brain, had paralyzed—had chilled me into stone. I stirred not—but gazed upon the apparition. There was a mad disorder in my thoughts—a tumult unappeasable. Could it, indeed, be the *living* Rowena who confronted me? Could it indeed be Rowena *at all*—the fair-haired, the blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine? Why, *why* should I doubt it? The bandage lay heavily about the mouth—but then might it not be the mouth of the breathing Lady of Tremaine? And the cheeks—there were the roses as in her noon of life—yes, these might indeed be the fair cheeks of the living Lady of Tremaine. And the chin, with its dimples, as in health, might it not be hers? but *had she then grown taller since her malady*? What inexpressible madness seized me with that thought? One bound, and I had reached her feet! Shrinking from my touch, she let fall from her head, unloosened, the ghastly cerements which had confined it, and there streamed forth, into the rushing atmosphere of the chamber, huge masses of long and dishevelled hair; *it was blacker than the raven wings of the midnight*! And now slowly opened *the eyes* of the figure which stood before me. 'Here then, at least,' I shrieked aloud, 'can I never—can I never be mistaken—these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—of my lost love—of the lady—of the LADY LIGEIA.'

c.1838 1840

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

Son cœur est un luth suspendu;
Sitôt qu'on le touche il rèsonne.[1]
DE BÉRANGER.

DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain, upon the bleak walls, upon the vacant eye-like windows, upon a few rank sedges, and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium: the bitter lapse into everyday life, the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart, an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so un-

1 'His heart a hanging lute;
A touch—and it resounds.'

nerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there *are* combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country—a letter from him—which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness, of a mental disorder which oppressed him, and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said—it was the apparent *heart* that went with his request—which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other—it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission, from sire to son, of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the 'House of Usher'—an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment, that of looking down within the tarn, had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition—for why should I not so term it?—served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity: an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn: a pestilent and mystic vapor,

dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the *studio* of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this—I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality—of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé* man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now

ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence, an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy, an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision—that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation—that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance, which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy—a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms, and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. 'I shall perish,' said he, 'I *must* perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror. In this unnerved —in this pitiable condition, I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR.'

I learned, moreover, at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth—in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be re-stated—an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit—an effect which the *physique* of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the *morale* of his existence.

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin—to the severe and long-continued illness, indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution, of a tenderly beloved sister—his sole companion for long years, his last and only relative on earth. 'Her decease,' he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, 'would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers.' While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread, and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length,

closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother; but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain—that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself: and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavors to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why;—from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least, in the circumstances then surrounding me, there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.

One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch, or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid *facility* of his *impromptus* could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasias (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these

rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled 'The Haunted Palace,'[1] ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:

I

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

2

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

3

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene!
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

4

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing,
flowing
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

5

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

6

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more.

I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad, led us into a train of thought wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so much on account of its novelty, (for other men[2] have thought thus), as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But, in his disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest *abandon* of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones—in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many *fungi* which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around—above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence—the evidence of the sentience—was to be seen, he said, (and I here started as he spoke), in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result

1 Poe wrote, 29 March 1841, to R.W.Griswold: 'By "The Haunted Palace" I mean to imply a mind haunted by phantoms—a disordered brain. . . .' Ibid.,XVII,83–84.

2 'Watson, Dr. Percival, Spallanzani, and especially the Bishop of Landaff.—See *Chemical Essays*, vol.V.' Author's note, ibid.,III,286.

was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made *him* what I now saw him—what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

Our books—the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid—were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the *Ververt et Chartreuse* of Gresset; the *Belphegor* of Machiavelli; the *Heaven and Hell* of Swedenborg; the *Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm* by Holberg; the *Chiromancy* of Robert Flud, of Jean D'Indaginé, and of De la Chambre; the *Journey into the Blue Distance* of Tieck; and the *City of the Sun* of Campanella. One favorite volume was a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and Ægipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic—the manual of a forgotten church—the *Vigiliæ Mortuorum Secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ*.

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when, one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment), in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and, in later days, as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead—for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house.

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had van-

ished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue—but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was laboring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified—that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch, while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavored to believe that much, if not all of what I felt, was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room—of the dark and tattered draperies, which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremor gradually pervaded my frame; and, at length, there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened—I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me—to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped, with a gentle touch, at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained *hysteria* in his whole demeanor. His air appalled me—but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

'And you have not seen it?' he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—'you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall.' Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this; yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars, nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion.

'You must not—you shall not behold this!' said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him, with a gentle violence, from the window to a seat. 'These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical

phenomena not uncommon—or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement; the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favorite romances. I will read, and you shall listen; —and so we will pass away this terrible night together.'

The antique volume which I had taken up was the *Mad Trist* of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favorite of Usher's more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the *Trist*, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:

> 'And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and maliceful turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and, with blows, made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest.'

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment, paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me)—it appeared to me that, from some very remote portion of the mansion, there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story:

> 'But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the maliceful hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanor, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten—
>
> *Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;*
> *Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win;*
>
> And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard.'

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement—for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound—the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for the dragon's unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of the second and most extraor-

dinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had, during the last few minutes, taken place in his demeanor. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast—yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea—for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:

> 'And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound.'

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than—as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver—I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic and clangorous yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

'Not hear it?—yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am!—I dared not—I *dared* not speak! *We have put her living in the tomb!* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them—many, many days ago—yet I dared not—*I dared not speak!* And now—to-night—Ethelred—ha! ha!—the breaking of the hermit's door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield!—say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? MADMAN!' here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul—*'Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!'*

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell, the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed, threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust—but then without those doors there DID stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold—then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself

crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the HOUSE OF USHER.'

c.1839 1840

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionaires*. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially;—I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him—'My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day. But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts.'

'How?' said he. 'Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!'

'I have my doubts,' I replied; 'and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain.'

'Amontillado!'

'I have my doubts.'

'Amontillado!'

'And I must satisfy them.'

'Amontillado!'

'As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me—'

'Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry.'

'And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own.'

'Come, let us go.'

'Whither?'

'To your vaults.'

'My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi—'

'I have no engagement;—come.'

'My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre.'

'Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi,

he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.'

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a *roquelaire* [1] closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

'The pipe,' he said.

'It is farther on,' said I; 'but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls.'

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

'Nitre?' he asked, at length.

'Nitre,' I replied. 'How long have you had that cough?'

'Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!'

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

'It is nothing,' he said, at last.

'Come,' I said, with decision, 'we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi—'

'Enough,' he said; 'the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.'

'True—true,' I replied; 'and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps.'

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

'Drink,' I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

'I drink,' he said, 'to the buried that repose around us.'

'And I to your long life.'

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

'These vaults,' he said, 'are extensive.'

'The Montresors,' I replied, 'were a great and numerous family.'

'I forget your arms.'

'A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel.'

'And the motto?'

'*Nemo me impune lacessit.*' [2]

'Good!' he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

'The nitre!' I said; 'see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—'

'It is nothing,' he said; 'let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc.'

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

'You do not comprehend?' he said.

'Not I,' I replied.

'Then you are not of the brotherhood.'

'How?'

'You are not of the masons.'

'Yes, yes,' I said; 'yes, yes.'

'You? Impossible! A mason?'

1 A cloak worn in the seventeenth century.

2 'No one can harm me with impunity.'

'A mason,' I replied.

'A sign,' he said, 'a sign.'

'It is this,' I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my *roquelaire* a trowel.

'You jest,' he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. 'But let us proceed to the Amontillado.'

'Be it so,' I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

'Proceed,' I said; 'herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi—'

'He is an ignoramus,' interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

'Pass your hand,' I said, 'over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power.'

'The Amontillado!' ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

'True,' I replied; 'the Amontillado.'

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the

eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

'Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke, indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!'

'The Amontillado!' I said.

'He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.'

'Yes,' I said, 'let us be gone.'

'*For the love of God, Montresor!*'

'Yes,' I said, 'for the love of God!'

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

'Fortunato!'

No answer. I called again—

'Fortunato!'

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*

c.1846 1850

THE PURLOINED LETTER

Nil sapientiae odiosius acumine nimio.[1]

SENECA.

AT Paris, just after dark one gusty evening in the autumn of 18—, I was enjoying the twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum, in company with my friend C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library, or book-closet, *au troisième, No.* 33, *Rue Dunôt, Faubourg St. Germain.* For one hour at least we had maintained a profound silence; while each, to any casual observer, might have seemed intently and exclusively occupied with the curling eddies of smoke that oppressed the atmosphere of the chamber. For myself, however, I was mentally discussing certain topics which had formed matter for conversation between us at an earlier period of the evening; I mean the affair of the Rue Morgue, and the mystery attending the murder of Marie Rogêt. I looked upon it, therefore, as something of a coincidence, when the door of our apartment was thrown open and admitted our old acquaintance, Monsieur G—, the Prefect of the Parisian police.

We gave him a hearty welcome; for there was nearly half as much of the entertaining as of the contemptible about the man, and we had not seen him for several years. We had been sitting in the dark, and Dupin now arose for the purpose of lighting a lamp, but sat down again, without doing so, upon G.'s saying that he had called to consult us, or rather to ask the opinion of my friend, about some official business which had occasioned a great deal of trouble.

'If it is any point requiring reflection,' observed Dupin, as he forebore to enkindle the wick, 'we shall examine it to better purpose in the dark.'

'That is another of your odd notions,' said the Prefect, who had a fashion of calling every thing 'odd' that was beyond his comprehension, and thus lived amid an absolute legion of 'oddities.'

'Very true,' said Dupin, as he supplied his visitor with a pipe, and rolled towards him a comfortable chair.

'And what is the difficulty now?' I asked. 'Nothing more in the assassination way, I hope?'

'Oh no; nothing of that nature. The fact is, the business is *very* simple indeed, and I make no doubt that we can manage it sufficiently well ourselves; but then I thought Dupin would like to hear the details of it, because it is so excessively *odd.*'

'Simple and odd,' said Dupin.

'Why, yes; and not exactly that, either. The fact is, we have all been a good deal

1 'No part of wisdom is more odious than too great acumen.'

puzzled because the affair *is* so simple, and yet baffles us altogether.'

'Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault,' said my friend.

'What nonsense you *do* talk!' replied the Prefect, laughing heartily.

'Perhaps the mystery is a little *too* plain,' said Dupin.

'Oh, good heavens! who ever heard of such an idea?'

'A little *too* self-evident.'

'Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!'—roared our visitor, profoundly amused, 'oh, Dupin, you will be the death of me yet!'

'And what, after all, *is* the matter on hand?' I asked.

'Why, I will tell you,' replied the Prefect, as he gave a long, steady, and contemplative puff, and settled himself in his chair. 'I will tell you in a few words; but, before I begin, let me caution you that this is an affair demanding the greatest secrecy, and that I should most probably lose the position I now hold, were it known that I confided it to any one.'

'Proceed,' said I.

'Or not,' said Dupin.

'Well, then; I have received personal information, from a very high quarter, that a certain document of the last importance has been purloined from the royal apartments. The individual who purloined it is known; this beyond a doubt; he was seen to take it. It is known, also, that it still remains in his possession.'

'How is this known?' asked Dupin.

'It is clearly inferred,' replied the Prefect, 'from the nature of the document, and from the non-appearance of certain results which would at once arise from its passing *out* of the robber's possession;—that is to say, from his employing it as he must design in the end to employ it.'

'Be a little more explicit,' I said.

'Well, I may venture so far as to say that the paper gives its holder a certain power in a certain quarter where such power is immensely valuable.' The Prefect was fond of the cant of diplomacy.

'Still I do not quite understand,' said Dupin.

'No? Well; the disclosure of the document to a third person who shall be nameless would bring in question the honor of a personage of most exalted station; and this fact gives the holder of the document an ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honor and peace are so jeopardized.'

'But this ascendancy,' I interposed, 'would depend upon the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber. Who would dare—'

'The thief,' said G—, 'is the Minister D—, who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man. The method of the theft was not less ingenious than bold. The document in question—a letter, to be frank—had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal *boudoir*. During its perusal she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the other exalted personage from whom especially it was her wish to conceal it. After a hurried and vain endeavor to thrust it in a drawer, she was forced to place it, open as it was, upon a table. The address, however, was uppermost, and, the contents thus unexposed, the letter escaped notice. At this juncture enters the Minister D—. His lynx eye immediately perceives the paper, recognizes the handwriting of the address, observes the confusion of the personage addressed, and fathoms her secret. After some business transactions, hurried through in his ordinary manner, he produces a letter somewhat similar to the one in question, opens it, pretends to read it, and then places it in close juxtaposition to the other. Again he converses, for some fifteen minutes, upon the public affairs. At length, in taking leave, he takes also from the table the letter to which he had no claim. It's rightful owner saw, but, of course, dared not call attention to the act, in the presence of the third personage who stood at her elbow. The Minister decamped; leaving his own letter—one of no importance—upon the table.'

'Here, then,' said Dupin to me, 'you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy complete—the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber.'

'Yes,' replied the Prefect; 'and the power thus attained has, for some months past, been wielded, for political purposes, to a very dangerous extent. The personage robbed is more thoroughly convinced.

every day, of the necessity of reclaiming her letter. But this, of course, cannot be done openly. In fine, driven to despair, she has committed the matter to me.'

'Than whom,' said Dupin, amid a perfect whirlwind of smoke, 'no more sagacious agent could, I suppose, be desired, or even imagined.'

'You flatter me,' replied the Prefect; 'but it is possible that some such opinion may have been entertained.'

'It is clear,' said I, 'as you observe, that the letter is still in possession of the Minister; since it is this possession, and not any employment of the letter, which bestows the power. With the employment the power departs.'

'True,' said G—; 'and upon this conviction I proceeded. My first care was to make thorough search of the Minister's hotel; and here my chief embarrassment lay in the necessity of searching without his knowledge. Beyond all things, I have been warned of the danger which would result from giving him reason to suspect our design.'

'But,' said I, 'you are quite *au fait* in these investigations. The Parisian police have done this thing often before.'

'Oh yes; and for this reason I did not despair. The habits of the Minister gave me, too, a great advantage. He is frequently absent from home all night. His servants are by no means numerous. They sleep at a distance from their master's apartment, and, being chiefly Neapolitans, are readily made drunk. I have keys, as you know, with which I can open any chamber or cabinet in Paris. For three months a night has not passed, during the greater part of which I have not been engaged, personally, in ransacking the D— Hôtel. My honor is interested, and, to mention a great secret, the reward is enormous. So I did not abandon the search until I had become fully satisfied that the thief is a more astute man than myself. I fancy that I have investigated every nook and corner of the premises in which it is possible that the paper can be concealed.'

'But is it not possible,' I suggested, 'that although the letter may be in the possession of the Minister, as it unquestionably is, he may have concealed it elsewhere than upon his own premises?'

'This is barely possible,' said Dupin. 'The present peculiar condition of affairs at court, and especially of those intrigues in which D— is known to be involved, would render the instant availability of the document—its susceptibility of being produced at a moment's notice—a point of nearly equal importance with its possession.'

'Its susceptibility of being produced?' said I.

'That is to say, of being *destroyed*,' said Dupin.

'True,' I observed; 'the paper is clearly then upon the premises. As for its being upon the person of the Minister, we may consider that as out of the question.'

'Entirely,' said the Prefect. 'He has been twice waylaid, as if by footpads, and his person rigorously searched under my own inspection.'

'You might have spared yourself this trouble,' said Dupin. 'D—, I presume, is not altogether a fool, and, if not, must have anticipated these waylayings, as a matter of course.'

'Not *altogether* a fool,' said G—, 'but then he's a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool.'

'True,' said Dupin, after a long and thoughtful whiff from his meerschaum, 'although I have been guilty of certain doggerel myself.'

'Suppose you detail,' said I, 'the particulars of your search.'

'Why the fact is, we took our time, and we searched *every where*. I have had long experience in these affairs. I took the entire building, room by room; devoting the nights of a whole week to each. We examined, first, the furniture of each apartment. We opened every possible drawer; and I presume you know that, to a properly trained police agent, such a thing as a *secret* drawer is impossible. Any man is a dolt who permits a "secret" drawer to escape him in a search of this kind. The thing is *so* plain. There is a certain amount of bulk—of space—to be accounted for in every cabinet. Then we have accurate rules. The fiftieth part of a line could not escape us. After the cabinets we took the chairs. The cushions we probed with the fine long needles you have seen me employ. From the tables we removed the tops.'

'Why so?'

'Sometimes the top of a table, or other similarly arranged piece of furniture, is removed by the person wishing to conceal an article; then the leg is excavated, the article deposited within the cavity, and the top replaced. The bottoms and tops of bed-posts are employed in the same way.'

'But could not the cavity be detected by sounding?' I asked.

'By no means, if, when the article is deposited, a sufficient wadding of cotton be placed around it. Besides, in our case, we were obliged to proceed without noise.'

'But you could not have removed—you could not have taken to pieces *all* articles of furniture in which it would have been possible to make a deposit in the manner you mention. A letter may be compressed into a thin spiral roll, not differing much in shape or bulk from a large knitting-needle, and in this form it might be inserted into the rung of a chair, for example. You did not take to pieces all the chairs?'

'Certainly not; but we did better—we examined the rungs of every chair in the hotel, and, indeed, the jointings of every description of furniture, by the aid of a most powerful microscope. Had there been any traces of recent disturbance we should not have failed to detect it instantly. A single grain of gimlet-dust, for example, would have been as obvious as an apple. Any disorder in the glueing—any unusual gaping in the joints—would have sufficed to insure detection.'

'I presume you looked to the mirrors, between the boards and the plates, and you probed the beds and the bed-clothes, as well as the curtains and carpets.'

'That of course; and when we had absolutely completed every particle of the furniture in this way, then we examined the house itself. We divided its entire surface into compartments, which we numbered, so that none might be missed; then we scrutinized each individual square inch throughout the premises, including the two houses immediately adjoining, with the microscope, as before.'

'The two houses adjoining!' I exclaimed; 'you must have had a great deal of trouble.'

'We had; but the reward offered is prodigious.'

'You include the *grounds* about the houses?'

'All the grounds are paved with brick. They gave us comparatively little trouble. We examined the moss between the bricks, and found it undisturbed.'

'You looked among D—'s papers, of course, and into the books of the library?'

'Certainly; we opened every package and parcel; we not only opened every book, but we turned over every leaf in each volume, not contenting ourselves with a mere shake, according to the fashion of some of our police officers. We also measured the thickness of every book-*cover*, with the most accurate admeasurement, and applied to each the most jealous scrutiny of the microscope. Had any of the bindings been recently meddled with, it would have been utterly impossible that the fact should have escaped observation. Some five or six volumes, just from the hands of the binder, we carefully probed, longitudinally, with the needles.'

'You explored the floors beneath the carpets?'

'Beyond doubt. We removed every carpet, and examined the boards with the microscope.'

'And the paper on the walls?'

'Yes.'

'You looked into the cellars?'

'We did.'

'Then,' I said, 'you have been making a miscalculation, and the letter is *not* upon the premises, as you suppose.'

'I fear you are right there,' said the Prefect. 'And now, Dupin, what would you advise me to do?'

'To make a thorough re-search of the premises.'

'That is absolutely needless,' replied G—. 'I am not more sure that I breathe than I am that the letter is not at the Hôtel.'

'I have no better advice to give you,' said Dupin. 'You have, of course, an accurate description of the letter?'

'Oh yes!'—And here the Prefect, producing a memorandum-book, proceeded to read aloud a minute account of the internal, and especially of the external appearance of the missing document. Soon after finishing the perusal of this description, he took his departure, more entirely depressed in spirits than I had ever known the good gentleman before.

In about a month afterwards he paid us another visit, and found us occupied very

nearly as before. He took a pipe and a chair and entered into some ordinary conversation. At length I said,—

'Well, but G—, what of the purloined letter? I presume you have at last made up your mind that there is no such thing as overreaching the Minister?'

'Confound him, say I—yes; I made the re-examination, however, as Dupin suggested—but it was all labor lost, as I knew it would be.'

'How much was the reward offered, did you say?' asked Dupin.

'Why, a very great deal—a *very* liberal reward—I don't like to say how much, precisely; but one thing I *will* say, that I wouldn't mind giving my individual cheque for fifty thousand francs to any one who could obtain me that letter. The fact is, it is becoming of more and more importance every day; and the reward has been lately doubled. If it were trebled, however, I could do no more than I have done.'

'Why, yes,' said Dupin, drawlingly, between the whiffs of his meerschaum, 'I really—think, G—, you have not exerted yourself—to the utmost in this matter. You might—do a little more, I think, eh?'

'How?—in what way?'

'Why—puff, puff—you might—puff, puff—employ counsel in the matter, eh?—puff, puff, puff. Do you remember the story they tell of Abernethy?'

'No; hang Abernethy!'

'To be sure! hang him and welcome. But, once upon a time, a certain rich miser conceived the design of sponging upon this Abernethy for a medical opinion. Getting up, for this purpose, an ordinary conversation in a private company, he insinuated his case to his physician, as that of an imaginary individual.

' "We will suppose," said the miser, "that his symptoms are such and such; now, doctor, what would *you* have directed him to take?" '

' "Take!" said Abernethy, "why, take *advice*, to be sure." '

'But,' said the Prefect, a little discomposed, '*I* am *perfectly* willing to take advice, and to pay for it. I would *really* give fifty thousand francs to any one who would aid me in the matter.'

'In that case,' replied Dupin, opening a drawer, and producing a cheque-book, 'you may as well fill me up a cheque for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it, I will hand you the letter.'

I was astounded. The Prefect appeared absolutely thunder-stricken. For some minutes he remained speechless and motionless, looking incredulously at my friend with open mouth, and eyes that seemed starting from their sockets; then, apparently recovering himself in some measure, he seized a pen, and after several pauses and vacant stares, finally filled up and signed a cheque for fifty thousand francs, and handed it across the table to Dupin. The latter examined it carefully and deposited it in his pocket-book; then, unlocking an *escritoire*, took thence a letter and gave it to the Prefect. This functionary grasped it in a perfect agony of joy, opened it with a trembling hand, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and then, scrambling and struggling to the door, rushed at length unceremoniously from the room and from the house, without having uttered a syllable since Dupin had requested him to fill up the cheque.

When he had gone, my friend entered into some explanations.

'The Parisian police,' he said, 'are exceedingly able in their way. They are persevering, ingenious, cunning, and thoroughly versed in the knowledge which their duties seem chiefly to demand. Thus, when G— detailed to us his mode of searching the premises at the Hôtel D—, I felt entire confidence in his having made a satisfactory investigation—so far as his labors extended.'

'So far as his labors extended?' said I.

'Yes,' said Dupin. 'The measures adopted were not only the best of their kind, but carried out to absolute perfection. Had the letter been deposited within the range of their search, these fellows would, beyond a question, have found it.'

I merely laughed—but he seemed quite serious in all that he said.

'The measures, then,' he continued, 'were good in their kind, and well executed; their defect lay in their being inapplicable to the case, and to the man. A certain set of highly ingenious resources are, with the Prefect, a sort of Procrustean bed, to which he forcibly adapts his designs. But he perpetually errs by being too deep or too shallow, for the matter in hand; and many a

schoolboy is a better reasoner than he. I knew one about eight years of age, whose success at guessing in the game of "even and odd" attracted universal admiration. This game is simple, and is played with marbles. One player holds in his hand a number of these toys, and demands of another whether that number is even or odd. If the guess is right, the guesser wins one; if wrong, he loses one. The boy to whom I allude won all the marbles of the school. Of course he had some principle of guessing; and this lay in mere observation and admeasurement of the astuteness of his opponents. For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent, and, holding up his closed hand, asks, "are they even or odd?" Our schoolboy replies, "odd," and loses; but upon the second trial he wins, for he then says to himself, "the simpleton had them even upon the first trial, and his amount of cunning is just sufficient to make him have them odd upon the second; I will therefore guess odd;"—he guesses odd, and wins. Now, with a simpleton a degree above the first, he would have reasoned thus: "This fellow finds that in the first instance I guessed odd, and, in the second, he will propose to himself upon the first impulse, a simple variation from even to odd, as did the first simpleton; but then a second thought will suggest that this is too simple a variation, and finally he will decide upon putting it even as before. I will therefore guess even;"—he guesses even, and wins. Now this mode of reasoning in the schoolboy, whom his fellows termed "lucky," —what, in its last analysis, is it?'

'It is merely,' I said, 'an identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent.'

'It is,' said Dupin; 'and, upon inquiring of the boy by what means he effected the *thorough* identification in which his success consisted, I received answer as follows: "When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression." This response of the schoolboy lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucauld, to La Bougive, to Machiavelli, and to Campanella.'

'And the identification,' I said, 'of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent, depends, if I understand you aright, upon the accuracy with which the opponent's intellect is admeasured.'

'For its practical value it depends upon this,' replied Dupin; 'and the Prefect and his cohort fail so frequently, first, by default of this identification, and, secondly, by ill-admeasurement, or rather through non-admeasurement of the intellect with which they are engaged. They consider only their *own* ideas of ingenuity; and, in searching for anything hidden, advert only to the modes in which *they* would have hidden it. They are right in this much—that their own ingenuity is a faithful representative of that of *the mass*; but when the cunning of the individual felon is diverse in character from their own, the felon foils them, of course. This always happens when it is above their own, and very usually when it is below. They have no variation of principle in their investigations; at best, when urged by some unusual emergency—by some extraordinary reward—they extend or exaggerate their old modes of *practice*, without touching their principles. What, for example, in this case of D—, has been done to vary the principle of action? What is all this boring, and probing, and sounding, and scrutinizing with the microscope, and dividing the surface of the building into registered square inches—what is it all but an exaggeration *of the application* of the one principle or set of principles of search, which are based upon the one set of notions regarding human ingenuity, to which the Prefect, in the long routine of his duty, has been accustomed? Do you not see he has taken it for granted that *all* men proceed to conceal a letter—not exactly in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg—but, at least, in *some* out-of-the-way hole or corner suggested by the same tenor of thought which would urge a man to secrete a letter in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg? And do you not see also, that such *recherchés* nooks for concealment are adapted only for ordinary occasions, and would be adopted only by ordinary intellects; for, in all cases of concealment, a disposal of the article con-

cealed—a disposal of it in this *recherché* manner—is, in the very first instance, presumable and presumed; and thus its discovery depends, not at all upon the acumen, but altogether upon the mere care, patience, and determination of the seekers; and where the case is of importance—or, what amounts to the same thing in the policial eyes, when the reward is of magnitude,—the qualities in question have *never* been known to fail? You will now understand what I meant in suggesting that, had the purloined letter been hidden any where within the limits of the Prefect's examination—in other words, had the principle of its concealment been comprehended within the principles of the Prefect—its discovery would have been a matter altogether beyond question. This functionary, however, has been thoroughly mystified; and the remote source of his defeat lies in the supposition that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet. All fools are poets; this the Prefect *feels*; and he is merely guilty of a *non distributio medii* [1] in thence inferring that all poets are fools.'

'But is this really the poet?' I asked. 'There are two brothers, I know; and both have attained reputation in letters. The Minister I believe has written learnedly on the Differential Calculus. He is a mathematician, and no poet.'

'You are mistaken; I know him well; he is both. As poet *and* mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all, and thus would have been at the mercy of the Prefect.'

'You surprise me,' I said, 'by these opinions, which have been contradicted by the voice of the world. You do not mean to set at naught the well-digested idea of centuries. The mathematical reason has long been regarded as *the* reason *par excellence*.'

' "*Il y a à parier*," ' replied Dupin, quoting from Chamfort, ' "*que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenu au plus grand nombre.*" [2] The mathematicians, I grant you, have done their best to promulgate the popular error to which you allude, and which is none the less an error for its promulgation as truth. With an art worthy a better cause, for example, they have insinuated the term "analysis" into application to algebra. The French are the originators of this particular deception; but if a term is of any importance—if words derive any value from applicability—then "analysis" conveys "algebra" about as much as, in Latin, "*ambitus*" implies "ambition," "*religio*" "religion," or "*homines honesti*" a set of *honorable* men.'

'You have a quarrel on hand, I see,' said I, 'with some of the algebraists of Paris; but proceed.'

'I dispute the availability, and thus the value, of that reason which is cultivated in any especial form other than the abstractly logical. I dispute, in particular, the reason educed by mathematical study. The mathematics are the science of form and quantity; mathematical reasoning is merely logic applied to observation upon form and quantity. The great error lies in supposing that even the truths of what is called *pure* algebra, are abstract or general truths. And this error is so egregious that I am confounded at the universality with which it has been received. Mathematical axioms are *not* axioms of general truth. What is true of *relation*—of form and quantity—is often grossly false in regard to morals, for example. In this latter science it is very usually *un*true that the aggregated parts are equal to the whole. In chemistry also the axiom fails. In the consideration of motive it fails; for two motives, each of a given value, have not, necessarily, a value when united, equal to the sum of their values apart. There are numerous other mathematical truths which are only truths within the limits of *relation*. But the mathematician argues, from his *finite truths*, through habit, as if they were of an absolutely general applicability—as the world indeed imagines them to be. Bryant, in his very learned "Mythology," mentions an analogous source of error, when he says that "although the Pagan fables are not believed, yet we forget ourselves continually, and make inferences from them as existing realities." With the algebraists, however, who are Pagans themselves, the "Pagan fables" *are* believed, and the inferences are made, not so much through lapse of memory, as through an unaccountable addling

1 In logic: 'the undistributed middle.'

2 'I'll bet, that every idea which is common property, every set convention, is a stupidity; for it has suited the majority.'

of the brains. In short, I never yet encountered the mere mathematician who could be trusted out of equal roots, or one who did not clandestinely hold it as a point of his faith that $x^2 + px$ was absolutely and unconditionally equal to q. Say to one of these gentlemen, by way of experiment, if you please, that you believe occasions may occur where $x^2 + px$ is *not* altogether equal to q, and, having made him understand what you mean, get out of his reach as speedily as convenient, for, beyond doubt, he will endeavor to knock you down.

'I mean to say,' continued Dupin, while I merely laughed at his last observations, 'that if the Minister had been no more than a mathematician, the Prefect would have been under no necessity of giving me this check. I knew him, however, as both mathematician and poet, and my measures were adapted to his capacity, with reference to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. I knew him as a courtier, too, and as a bold *intriguant*. Such a man, I considered, could not fail to be aware of the ordinary policial modes of action. He could not have failed to anticipate—and events have proved that he did not fail to anticipate—the waylayings to which he was subjected. He must have foreseen, I reflected, the secret investigations of his premises. His frequent absences from home at night, which were hailed by the Prefect as certain aids to his success, I regarded only as *ruses*, to afford opportunity for thorough search to the police, and thus the sooner to impress them with the conviction to which G—, in fact, did finally arrive—the conviction that the letter was not upon the premises. I felt, also, that the whole train of thought, which I was at some pains in detailing to you just now, concerning the invariable principle of policial action in searches for articles concealed—I felt that this whole train of thought would necessarily pass through the mind of the Minister. It would imperatively lead him to despise all the ordinary *nooks* of concealment. *He* could not, I reflected, be so weak as not to see that the most intricate and remote recess of his hotel would be as open as his commonest closets to the eyes, to the probes, to the gimlets, and to the microscopes of the Prefect. I saw, in fine, that he would be driven, as a matter of course, to *simplicity*, if not deliberately induced to it as a matter of choice. You will remember, perhaps, how desperately the Prefect laughed when I suggested, upon our first interview, that it was just possible this mystery troubled him so much on account of its being so *very* self-evident.'

'Yes,' said I, 'I remember his merriment well. I really thought he would have fallen into convulsions.'

'The material world,' continued Dupin, 'abounds with the very strict analogies to the immaterial; and thus some color of truth has been given to the rhetorical dogma, that metaphor, or simile, may be made to strengthen an argument, as well as to embellish a description. The principle of the *vis inertiæ*, for example, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics. It is not more true in the former, that a large body is with more difficulty set in motion than a smaller one, and that its subsequent *momentum* is commensurate with this difficulty, than it is, in the latter, that intellects of the vaster capacity, while more forcible, more constant, and more eventful in their movements than those of inferior grade, are yet the less readily moved, and more embarrassed and full of hesitation in the first few steps of their progress. Again: have you ever noticed which of the street signs, over the shop doors, are the most attractive of attention?'

'I have never given the matter a thought,' I said.

'There is a game of puzzles,' he resumed, 'which is played upon a map. One party playing requires another to find a given word—the name of town, river, state or empire—any word, in short, upon the motley and perplexed surface of the chart. A novice in the game generally seeks to embarrass his opponents by giving them the most minutely lettered names; but the adept selects such words as stretch, in large characters, from one end of the chart to the other. These, like the over-largely lettered signs and placards of the street, escape observation by dint of being excessively obvious; and here the physical oversight is precisely analogous with the moral inapprehension by which the intellect suffers to pass unnoticed those considerations which are too obtrusively and too palpably self-evident. But this is a point, it appears,

somewhat above or beneath the understanding of the Prefect. He never once thought it probable, or possible, that the Minister had deposited the letter immediately beneath the nose of the whole world, by way of best preventing any portion of that world from perceiving it.

'But the more I reflected upon the daring, dashing, and discriminating ingenuity of D—; upon the fact that the document must always have been *at hand*, if he intended to use it to good purpose; and upon the decisive evidence, obtained by the Prefect, that it was not hidden within the limits of that dignitary's ordinary search—the more satisfied I became that, to conceal this letter, the Minister had resorted to the comprehensive and sagacious expedient of not attempting to conceal it at all.

'Full of these ideas, I prepared myself with a pair of green spectacles, and called one fine morning, quite by accident, at the Ministerial hotel. I found D— at home, yawning, lounging, and dawdling, as usual, and pretending to be in the last extremity of *ennui*. He is, perhaps, the most really energetic human being now alive—but that is only when nobody sees him.

'To be even with him, I complained of my weak eyes, and lamented the necessity of the spectacles, under cover of which I cautiously and thoroughly surveyed the apartment, while seemingly intent only upon the conversation of my host.

'I paid especial attention to a large writing-table near which he sat, and upon which lay confusedly some miscellaneous letters and other papers, with one or two musical instruments and a few books. Here, however, after a long and very deliberate scrutiny, I saw nothing to excite particular suspicion.

'At length my eyes, in going the circuit of the room, fell upon a trumpery filigree card-rack of pasteboard, that hung dangling by a dirty blue ribbon, from a little brass knob just beneath the middle of the mantelpiece. In this rack, which had three or four compartments, were five or six visiting cards and a solitary letter. This last was much soiled and crumpled. It was torn nearly in two, across the middle—as if a design, in the first instance, to tear it entirely up as worthless, had been altered, or stayed, in the second. It had a large black seal, bearing the D— cipher *very* conspicuously, and was addressed, in a diminutive female hand, to D—, the Minister, himself. It was thrust carelessly, and even, as it seemed, contemptuously, into one of the upper divisions of the rack.

'No sooner had I glanced at this letter, than I concluded it to be that of which I was in search. To be sure, it was, to all appearance, radically different from the one of which the Prefect had read us so minute a description. Here the seal was large and black, with the D— cipher; there it was small and red, with the ducal arms of the S— family. Here, the address, to the Minister, was diminutive and feminine; there the superscription, to a certain royal personage, was markedly bold and decided; the size alone formed a point of correspondence. But, then, the *radicalness* of these differences, which was excessive; the dirt; the soiled and torn condition of the paper, so inconsistent with the *true* methodical habits of D—, and so suggestive of a design to delude the beholder into an idea of the worthlessness of the document;—these things, together with the hyperobtrusive situation of this document, full in the view of every visitor, and thus exactly in accordance with the conclusions to which I had previously arrived; these things, I say, were strongly corroborative of suspicion, in one who came with the intention to suspect.

'I protracted my visit as long as possible, and, while I maintained a most animated discussion with the Minister, on a topic which I knew well had never failed to interest and excite him, I kept my attention really riveted upon the letter. In this examination, I committed to memory its external appearance and arrangement in the rack; and also fell, at length, upon a discovery which set at rest whatever trivial doubt I might have entertained. In scrutinizing the edges of the paper, I observed them to be more *chafed* than seemed necessary. They presented the *broken* appearance which is manifested when a stiff paper, having been once folded and pressed with a folder, is refolded in a reversed direction, in the same creases or edges which had formed the original fold. This discovery was sufficient. It was clear to me that the letter had been turned, as a glove, inside out, re-di-

rected, and re-sealed. I bade the Minister good morning, and took my departure at once, leaving a gold snuff-box upon the table.

'The next morning I called for the snuff-box, when we resumed, quite eagerly, the conversation of the preceding day. While thus engaged, however, a loud report, as if of a pistol, was heard immediately beneath the windows of the hotel, and was succeeded by a series of fearful screams, and the shoutings of a mob. D— rushed to a casement, threw it open, and looked out. In the meantime, I stepped to the card-rack, took the letter, put it in my pocket, and replaced it by a *fac-simile* (so far as regards externals), which I had carefully prepared at my lodgings; imitating the D— cipher, very readily, by means of a seal formed of bread.

'The disturbance in the street had been occasioned by the frantic behavior of a man with a musket. He had fired it among a crowd of women and children. It proved, however, to have been without ball, and the fellow was suffered to go his way as a lunatic or a drunkard. When he had gone, D— came from the window, whither I had followed him immediately upon securing the object in view. Soon afterwards I bade him farewell. The pretended lunatic was a man in my own pay.'

'But what purpose had you,' I asked, 'in replacing the letter by a *fac-simile*? Would it not have been better, at the first visit, to have seized it openly, and departed?'

'D—,' replied Dupin, 'is a desperate man, and a man of nerve. His hotel, too, is not without attendants devoted to his interests. Had I made the wild attempt you suggest, I might never have left the Ministerial presence alive. The good people of Paris might have heard of me no more. But I had an object apart from these considerations. You know my political prepossessions. In this matter, I act as a partisan of the lady concerned. For eighteen months the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers—since, being unaware that the letter is not in his possession, he will proceed with his exactions as if it was. Thus will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction. His downfall, too, will not be more precipitate than awkward. It is all very well to talk about the *facilis descensus Averni*;[1] but in all kinds of climbing, as Catalani said of singing, it is far more easy to get up than to come down. In the present instance I have no sympathy —at least no pity—for him who descends. He is that *monstrum horrendum*,[2] an unprincipled man of genius. I confess, however, that I should like very well to know the precise character of his thoughts, when, being defied by her whom the Prefect terms "a certain personage," he is reduced to opening the letter which I left for him in the card-rack.'

'How? did you put any thing particular in it?'

'Why—it did not seem altogether right to leave the interior blank—that would have been insulting. D—, at Vienna once, did me an evil turn, which I told him, quite good-humoredly, that I should remember. So, as I knew he would feel some curiosity in regard to the identity of the person who had outwitted him, I thought it a pity not to give him a clue. He is well acquainted with my MS., and I just copied into the middle of the blank sheet the words—

> '—*Un dessein si funeste,*
> *S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de*
> *Thyeste.*[3]

They are to be found in Crébillon's "Atrée." '

c.1845 1845

THE TELL-TALE HEART

TRUE!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved

1 'Easy descent to Hades.'
2 'Horrible monster.'
3 'So deadly a scheme, if it is not worthy of Atreus is at least of Thyestes.'

the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen *me*. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha!—would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked) —I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night, had I *felt* the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back—but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in the bed, crying out—'Who's there?'

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed, listening; —just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief—oh, no! —it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself—'It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor,' or 'it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.' Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. *All in vain;* because Death, in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to *feel* the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I re-

solved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily—until, at length, a single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye.

It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over acuteness of the senses?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew *that* sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror *must* have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment!—do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once—once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even *his*—could have detected any thing wrong. There was nothing to wash out—no stain of any kind—no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all—ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock—still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart,—for what had I *now* to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled,—for *what* had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search *well*. I led them, at length, to *his* chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them *here* to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My *manner* had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct:

—it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definitiveness —until, at length, I found that the noise was *not* within my ears.

No doubt I now grew *very* pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was *a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.* I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why *would* they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what *could* I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—*louder*! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they *knew*! —they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was more tolerable than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder*!—

'Villains!' I shrieked, 'dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!'

c.1843 1850

LETTER TO B—[1]

IT has been said that a good critique on a poem may be written by one who is no poet himself. This, according to *your* idea and *mine* of poetry, I feel to be false—the less poetical the critic, the less just the critique, and the converse. On this account, and because there are but few B—s in the world, I would be as much ashamed of the world's good opinion as proud of your own. Another than yourself might here observe, 'Shakspeare is in possession of the world's good opinion, and yet Shakspeare is the greatest of poets. It appears then that the world judge correctly, why should you be ashamed of their favorable judgment?' The difficulty lies in the interpretation of the word 'judgment' or 'opinion.' The opinion is the world's, truly, but it may be called theirs as a man would call a book his, having bought it; he did not write the book, but it is his; they did not originate the opinion, but it is theirs. A fool, for example, thinks Shakspeare a great poet—yet the fool has never read Shakspeare. But the fool's neighbor, who is a step higher on the Andes of the mind, whose head (that is to say, his more exalted thought) is too far above the fool to be seen or understood, but whose feet (by which I mean his every-day actions) are sufficiently near to be discerned, and by means of which that superiority is ascertained, which *but* for them would never have been discovered—this neighbor asserts that Shakspeare is a great poet—the fool believes him, and it is henceforward his *opinion*. This neighbor's own opinion has, in like manner, been adopted from one above *him*, and so, ascendingly, to a few gifted individuals who kneel around the summit, beholding, face to face, the master spirit who stands upon the pinnacle.

You are aware of the great barrier in the path of an American writer. He is read, if at all, in preference to the combined and established wit of the world. I say established; for it is with literature as with law or empire —an established name is an estate in tenure, or a throne in possession. Besides, one might suppose that books, like their authors, improve by travel—their having crossed the sea is, with us, so great a distinction. Our antiquaries abandon time for distance; our very fops glance from the binding to the bottom of the title-page, where the mystic characters which spell London, Paris, or Genoa, are precisely so many letters of recommendation.

I mentioned just now a vulgar error as regards criticism. I think the notion that no poet can form a correct estimate of his own writings is another. I remarked before, that

1 The selection first appeared as the introduction to Poe's *Poems, Second Edition*(N.Y., 1831). The version printed above is that of five years later in the *Southern Literary Messenger*,II,viii,501–03.

in proportion to the poetical talent, would be the justice of a critique upon poetry. Therefore, a bad poet would, I grant, make a false critique, and his self-love would infallibly bias his little judgment in his favor; but a poet, who is indeed a poet, could not, I think, fail of making a just critique. Whatever should be deducted on the score of self-love, might be replaced on account of his intimate acquaintance with the subject; in short, we have more instances of false criticism than of just, where one's own writings are the test, simply because we have more bad poets than good. There are of course many objections to what I say: Milton is a great example of the contrary; but his opinion with respect to the *Paradise Regained* is by no means fairly ascertained. By what trivial circumstances men are often led to assert what they do not really believe! Perhaps an inadvertent word has descended to posterity. But, in fact, the *Paradise Regained* is little, if at all, inferior to the *Paradise Lost*, and is only supposed so to be, because men do not like epics, whatever they may say to the contrary, and reading those of Milton in their natural order, are too much wearied with the first to derive any pleasure from the second.

I dare say Milton preferred *Comus* to either—if so—justly.

As I am speaking of poetry, it will not be amiss to touch slightly upon the most singular heresy in its modern history—the heresy of what is called very foolishly, the Lake School. Some years ago I might have been induced, by an occasion like the present, to attempt a formal refutation of their doctrine; at present it would be a work of supererogation. The wise must bow to the wisdom of such men as Coleridge and Southey, but being wise, have laughed at poetical theories so prosaically exemplified.

Aristotle, with singular assurance, has declared poetry the most philosophical of all writing; but it required a Wordsworth to pronounce it the most metaphysical. He seems to think that the end of poetry is, or should be, instruction—yet it is a truism that the end of our existence is happiness; if so, the end of every separate part of our existence—every thing connected with our existence should be still happiness. Therefore the end of instruction should be happiness; and happiness is another name for pleasure;—therefore the end of instruction should be pleasure: yet we see the above mentioned opinion implies precisely the reverse.

To proceed: *ceteris paribus*,[1] he who pleases, is of more importance to his fellow men than he who instructs, since utility is happiness, and pleasure is the end already obtained which instruction is merely the means of obtaining.

I see no reason, then, why our metaphysical poets should plume themselves so much on the utility of their works, unless indeed they refer to instruction with eternity in view; in which case, sincere respect for their piety would not allow me to express my contempt for their judgment; contempt which it would be difficult to conceal, since their writings are professedly to be understood by the few, and it is the many who stand in need of salvation. In such case I should no doubt be tempted to think of the devil in *Melmoth*, who labors indefatigably through three octavo volumes, to accomplish the destruction of one or two souls, while any common devil would have demolished one or two thousand.

Against the subtleties which would make poetry a study—not a passion—it becomes the metaphysician to reason—but the poet to protest. Yet Wordsworth and Coleridge are men in years; the one imbued in contemplation from his childhood, the other a giant in intellect and learning. The diffidence, then, with which I venture to dispute their authority, would be overwhelming, did I not feel, from the bottom of my heart, that learning has little to do with the imagination—intellect with the passions—or age with poetry.

'Trifles, like straws, upon the surface flow,
He who would search for pearls must dive below,'

are lines which have done much mischief. As regards the greater truths, men oftener err by seeking them at the bottom than at the top; the depth lies in the huge abysses where wisdom is sought—not in the palpable palaces where she is found. The ancients were not always right in hiding the goddess in a well: witness the light which Bacon has thrown upon philosophy; witness the prin-

1 'Other things being equal.'

ciples of our divine faith—that moral mechanism by which the simplicity of a child may overbalance the wisdom of a man.

We see an instance of Coleridge's liability to err, in his *Biographia Literaria*—professedly his literary life and opinions, but, in fact, a treatise *de omni scibili et quibusdam aliis.*[1] He goes wrong by reason of his very profundity, and of his error we have a natural type in the contemplation of a star. He who regards it directly and intensely sees, it is true, the star, but it is the star without a ray—while he who surveys it less inquisitively is conscious of all for which the star is useful to us below—its brilliancy and its beauty.

As to Wordsworth, I have no faith in him. That he had, in youth, the feelings of a poet I believe—for there are glimpses of extreme delicacy in his writings—(and delicacy is the poet's own kingdom—his *El Dorado*)—but they have the appearance of a better day recollected; and glimpses, at best, are little evidence of present poetic fire—we know that a few straggling flowers spring up daily in the crevices of the glacier.

He was to blame in wearing away his youth in contemplation with the end of poetizing in his manhood. With the increase of his judgment the light which should make it apparent has faded away. His judgment consequently is too correct. This may not be understood,—but the old Goths of Germany would have understood it, who used to debate matters of importance to their State twice, once when drunk, and once when sober—sober that they might not be deficient in formality—drunk lest they should be destitute of vigor.

The long wordy discussions by which he tries to reason us into admiration of his poetry, speak very little in his favor: they are full of such assertions as this—(I have opened one of his volumes at random) 'Of genius the only proof is the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before'—indeed! then it follows that in doing what is *un*worthy to be done, or what *has* been done before, no genius can be evinced; yet the picking of pockets is an unworthy act, pockets having been picked time immemorial, and Barrington, the pickpocket, in point of genius, would have thought hard of a comparison with William Wordsworth, the poet.

Again—in estimating the merit of certain poems, whether they be Ossian's or M' Pherson's, can surely be of little consequence, yet, in order to prove their worthlessness, Mr. W. has expended many pages in the controversy. *Tantæne animis?*[2] Can great minds descend to such absurdity? But worse still: that he may bear down every argument in favor of these poems, he triumphantly drags forward a passage, in his abomination of which he expects the reader to sympathize. It is the beginning of the epic poem *Temora.* 'The blue waves of Ullin roll in light; the green hills are covered with day; trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze.' And this—this gorgeous, yet simple imagery, where all is alive and panting with immortality—this, William Wordsworth, the author of *Peter Bell*, has *selected* for his contempt. We shall see what better he, in his own person, has to offer. *Imprimis:*

> 'And now she's at the pony's head,
> And now she's at the pony's tail,
> On that side now, and now on this,
> And almost stifled her with bliss—
> A few sad tears does Betty shed,
> She pats the pony where or when
> She knows not: happy Betty Foy!
> O, Johnny! never mind the Doctor!'

Secondly:

> 'The dew was falling fast, the—stars began
> to blink
> I heard a voice; it said—drink, pretty
> creature, drink;
> And, looking o'er the hedge, be—fore me I
> espied
> A snow-white mountain lamb, with a—
> maiden at its side.
> No other sheep were near, the lamb was all
> alone,
> And by a slender cord was—tether'd to a
> stone.'

Now we have no doubt this is all true; we *will* believe it, indeed, we will, Mr. W. Is it sympathy for the sheep you wish to excite? I love a sheep from the bottom of my heart.

1 'On every thing knowable, and a number of other things.'

2 Sc. *cœlestibus iræ*, *Æneid*, I,11. 'Can heavenly hearts hold such wrath?'

But there *are* occasions, dear B—, there are occasions when even Wordsworth is reasonable. Even Stamboul, it is said, shall have an end, and the most unlucky blunders must come to a conclusion. Here is an extract from his preface—

'Those who have been accustomed to the phraseology of modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to a conclusion (*impossible!*) will, no doubt, have to struggle with feelings of awkwardness; (ha! ha! ha!) they will look round for poetry (ha! ha! ha! ha!) and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts have been permitted to assume that title.' Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Yet let not Mr. W. despair; he has given immortality to a wagon, and the bee Sophocles has transmitted to eternity a sore toe, and dignified a tragedy with a chorus of turkeys.

Of Coleridge I cannot speak but with reverence. His towering intellect! his gigantic power! He is one more evidence of the fact '*que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient.*'[1] He has imprisoned his own conceptions by the barrier he has erected against those of others. It is lamentable to think that such a mind should be buried in metaphysics, and, like the Nyctanthes, waste its perfume upon the night alone. In reading his poetry I tremble —like one who stands upon a volcano, conscious, from the very darkness bursting from the crater, of the fire and the light that are weltering below.

What is Poetry?—Poetry! that Proteus-like idea, with as many appellations as the nine-title Corcyra! Give me, I demanded of a scholar some time ago, give me a definition of poetry. '*Très volontiers*,' and he proceeded to his library, brought me a Dr. Johnson, and overwhelmed me with a definition. Shade of the immortal Shakspeare! I imagined to myself the scowl of your spiritual eye upon the profanity of that scurrilous Ursa Major. Think of poetry, dear B—, think of poetry, and then think of—Dr. Samuel Johnson! Think of all that is airy and fairy-like, and then of all that is hideous and unwieldy; think of his huge bulk, the Elephant! and then—and then think of the Tempest—the Midsummer Night's Dream—Prospero—Oberon—and Titania!

A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object, pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having for its object an *indefinite* instead of a *definite* pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *in*definite sensations, to which end music is an *essential*, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definitiveness.

What was meant by the invective against him who had no music in his soul?

To sum up this long rigmarole, I have, dear B—, what you no doubt perceive, for the metaphysical poets, *as* poets, the most sovereign contempt. That they have followers proves nothing—

No Indian prince has to his palace
More followers than a thief to the gallows.

1831

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION[2]

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of *Barnaby Rudge*, says—'By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his *Caleb Williams* backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done.'

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens' idea—but the author of *Caleb Williams* was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear

1 'Most sects are right in a good deal of what they affirm, but wrong in what they deny.'

2 Whether Poe actually composed 'The Raven' as self-consciously as this essay would have us believe hardly matters. It is the most readable of his essays on his theory of poetry, and a remarkably effective analysis of his poem. It first appeared in *Graham's Magazine*, April 1846.

than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or autorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place, 'Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?' Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrio*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select 'The Raven,' as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referrible either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, *per se*, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing *a* poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and every thing like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense

with *any thing* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones —that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the *Paradise Lost* is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as *Robinson Crusoe* (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect:—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem—a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul*—*not* of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating 'the beautiful.' Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from any thing here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation *of the application* of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary: the *refrain* forming the close of each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word 'Nevermore.' In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word 'nevermore.' In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by a *human* being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non*-reasoning creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven—the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, 'Nevermore,' at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself—'Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?' Death—was the obvious reply. 'And when,' I said, 'is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?' From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious—'When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty*: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover.'

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word 'Nevermore.'—I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the *application* of the word re-

peated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending—that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application*. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply 'Nevermore'—that I could make this first query a commonplace one—the second less so—the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself—by its frequent repetition—and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it—is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote) but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modeling his questions as to receive from the *expected* 'Nevermore' the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query—that query to which 'Nevermore' should be in the last place an answer—that in reply to which this word 'Nevermore' should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

'Prophet,' said I, 'thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.'
Quoth the raven 'Nevermore.'

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover—and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite—and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing*. The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the 'Raven.' The former is trochaic—the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short: the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds)—the third of eight—the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth the same—the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality

the 'Raven' has, is in their *combination into stanza*; nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident:—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window, was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a 'tapping' at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic—approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible—is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in 'with many a flirt and flutter.'

Not the *least obeisance made he*—not a
moment stopped or stayed he,
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above
my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out:—

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad
fancy into smiling
By the *grave and stern decorum of the
countenance it wore*,
'Though thy *crest be shorn and shaven* thou,'
I said, 'art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering
from the nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the
Night's Plutonian shore?'
Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear
discourse so plainly
Though its answer little meaning—little
relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living
human being
*Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above
his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above
his chamber door*,
With such name as 'Nevermore.'

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness:—this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid
bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees any thing even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a 'grim, ungainly, ghastly,

gaunt, and ominous bird of yore,' and feels the 'fiery eyes' burning into his 'bosom's core.' This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement*—which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper—with the Raven's reply, 'Nevermore,' to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, every thing is within the limits of the accountable —of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word 'Nevermore,' and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, 'Nevermore'—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of 'Nevermore.' The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer 'Nevermore.' With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some undercurrent, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal*. It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under-current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so called poetry of the so called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines—

> 'Take thy beak from out *my heart*, and take
> thy form from off my door!'
> Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore!'

It will be observed that the words, 'from out my heart,' involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, 'Nevermore,' dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen:

> And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting,
> still is sitting,
> On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my
> chamber door;
> And his eyes have all the seeming of a
> demon's that is dreaming,
> And the lamplight o'er him streaming
> throws his shadow on the floor;
> And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies
> floating on the floor
> Shall be lifted—nevermore.

c.1846 1850

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

> TAKE this kiss upon the brow!
> And, in parting from you now,

Thus much let me avow:
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if Hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone*?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

1850

SONNET—TO SCIENCE

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

1829

FROM AL AARAAF

'NEATH blue-bell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,
The moonbeam away—
Bright beings! that ponder,
With half closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro' the shade, and
Come down to your brow
Like—eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now—
Arise! from your dreaming
In violet bowers,
To duty beseeming
These star-litten hours—
And shake from your tresses
Encumber'd with dew
The breath of those kisses
That cumber them too
(O, how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)—
Those kisses of true love
That lull'd ye to rest!
Up!—shake from your wing
Each hindering thing:
The dew of the night—
It would weigh down your flight;
And true love caresses—
O! leave them apart:
They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
O! is it thy will
On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
Like the lone Albatross,
Incumbent on night
(As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?

Ligeia! wherever
Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
In a dreamy sleep—

But the strains still arise
  Which *thy* vigilance keep:
The sound of the rain
  Which leaps down to the flower,
And dances again
  In the rhythm of the shower—
The murmur that springs
  From the growing of grass
Are the music of things—
  But are modell'd, alas!—
Away, then my dearest,
  O! hie thee away
To springs that lie clearest
  Beneath the moon-ray—
To lone lake that smiles,
  In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
  That enjewel its breast—
Where wild flowers, creeping,
  Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping
  Full many a maid—
Some have left the cool glade, and
  Have slept wi'h the bee—
Arouse them, my maiden,
  On moorland and lea—
Go! breathe on their slumber,
  All softly in ear,
The musical number
  They slumber'd to hear—
For what can awaken
  An angel so soon
Whose sleep hath been taken
  Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber
  Of witchery may test,
The rhythmical number
  Which lull'd him to rest?

1829

ROMANCE

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say,
To lisp my very earliest word,
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

1829

TO HELEN [1]

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicéan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand,
  The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
  Are Holy Land!

1831

ISRAFEL

And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.

KORAN.

IN Heaven a spirit doth dwell
  'Whose heart-strings are a lute';
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
  Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
  In her highest noon,
  The enamored moon
Blushes with love,

1 The poem was, said Poe, written 'in my passionate boyhood, to the first purely ideal love of my soul—to . . . Helen Stannard.' Mrs. Stannard, the mother of one of Poe's friends, died in 1824. Harrison, ed., *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*(N.Y., 1902), XVII,294.

While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven,)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings—
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,
Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervor of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
Is a world of sweets and sours;
Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

1831

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gayly-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

1831

THE SLEEPER

At midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
Irene, with her Destinies!

Oh, lady bright! can it be right—
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop—
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully—so fearfully—
Above the closed and fringèd lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And wingèd pannels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls
Of her grand family funerals—

Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!
It was the dead who groaned within.

1831

LENORE [1]

Ah, broken is the golden bowl!—the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river:—
And, Guy De Vere, has *thou* no tear?—weep now or never more!
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come, let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung!—
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young—
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

'Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth, and ye hated her for her pride;
And, when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her—that she died:—
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read—the requiem how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?'

Peccavimus; yet rave not thus! but let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong!

1 In reviewing the poems of a contemporary, in 1844, Poe wrote: 'Her tone is not so much the tone of passion, as of a gentle and melancholy regret, interwoven with a pleasant sense of the natural loveliness surrounding the lost in the tomb, and a memory of her beauty while alive—Elegiac poems should either assume this character, or dwell purely on the beauty (moral or physical) of the departed, or better still, utter the note of triumph. I have endeavored to carry out this idea in some verses which I have called "Lenore."' Ibid.,XVI,56.

The sweet Lenore hath gone before, with
Hope that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that
should have been thy bride—
For her, the fair and debonair, that now so
lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair, but not
within her eyes—
The life still there upon her hair, the death
upon her eyes.

'Avaunt!—avaunt! to friends from fiends
the indignant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate within the
utmost Heaven—
From moan and groan to a golden throne
beside the King of Heaven:—
Let *no* bell toll, then, lest her soul, amid its
hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note as it doth float up
from the damnèd Earth!
And I—to-night my heart is light:—no
dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a
Pæan of old days!'

1831

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

ONCE it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant
tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

1831

TO ONE IN PARADISE

THOU wast that all to me, love,
For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
'On! on!'—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
No more—no more—no more—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy grey eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.

c.1835 1845

DREAM-LAND

BY a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan
woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the tears that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore;

Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their still waters, still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily,—
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—
By the grey woods,—by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp,—
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls,—
By each spot the most unholy—
In each nook most melancholy,—
There the traveller meets, aghast,
Sheeted Memories of the Past—
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by—
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region—
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis—oh 'tis an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it;
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringèd lid;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

1845

THE RAVEN [1]

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I
pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of
forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly
there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at
my chamber door.
' 'Tis some visitor,' I muttered, 'tapping at
my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more.'

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the
bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its
ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I
had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—
sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the
angels name Lenore—
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of
each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic
terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart,
I stood repeating
' 'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at
my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door;—
This it is and nothing more.'

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating
then no longer,
'Sir,' said I, 'or Madam, truly your
forgiveness I implore;

1 To an unknown correspondent, n.d., Poe wrote: 'What you say about the blundering criticism of "the *Hartford Review* man" is just. For the purposes of poetry it is quite sufficient that a thing is possible, or at least that the improbability be not offensively glaring. It is true that in several ways, as you say, the lamp might have thrown the bird's shadow on the floor. My conception was that of the bracket candelabrum affixed against the wall, high up above the door and bust, as is often seen in the English palaces, and even in some of the better houses of New York.

'Your objection to the *tinkling* of the footfalls is far more pointed, and in the course of composition occurred so forcibly to myself that I hesitated to use the term. I finally used it, because I saw that it had, in its first conception, been suggested to my mind by the sense of the *supernatural* with which it was, at the moment, filled. No human or physical foot could tinkle on a soft carpet, therefore, the tinkling of feet would vividly convey the supernatural impression. This was the idea, and it is good within itself; but if it fails, (as I fear it does), to make itself immediately and generally *felt*, according to my intention, then in so much is it badly conveyed, or expressed.'Ibid.,XVII,206–07.

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently
you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping
at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you'—here
I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I
stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever
dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the
stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the
whispered word, 'Lenore?'
This I whispered, and an echo murmured
back the word, 'Lenore!'
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul
within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat
louder than before.
'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is something at
my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this
mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this
mystery explore;—
'Tis the wind and nothing more!'

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with
many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the
saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a
minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched
above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my
chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad
fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the
countenance it wore,
'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven,
thou,' I said, 'art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering
from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the
Night's Plutonian shore!'
Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to
hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little
relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living
human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above
his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust
above his chamber door,
With such name as 'Nevermore.'

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid
bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one
word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered—not a
feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered 'Other
friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my
Hopes have flown before.'
Then the bird said 'Nevermore.'

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so
aptly spoken,
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its only
stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master whom
unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his
songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy
burden bore
Of "Never—nevermore." '

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy
into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in
front of bird, and bust and
door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook
myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this
ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt,
and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking 'Nevermore.'

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no
syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned
into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head
at ease reclining

On the cushion's velvet lining that the
lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet-violet lining with the
lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser,
perfumed from an unseen
censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled
on the tufted floor.
'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent thee—
by these angels he hath sent
thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy
memories of Lenore;
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and
forget this lost Lenore!'
Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil!—prophet
still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest
tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert
land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me
truly, I implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me
—tell me, I implore!'
Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil!—prophet
still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by
that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within
the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the
angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the
angels name Lenore.'
Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

'Be that word our sign of parting, bird or
fiend!' I shrieked, upstarting—
'Get thee back into the tempest and the
Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie
thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the
bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take
thy form from off my door!'
Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting,
still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my
chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a
demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming
throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that
lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

1842–44 1845

ULALUME—A BALLAD [1]

THE skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crispèd and
sere—
The leaves they were withering and
sere:
It was night, in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year:
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of
Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was
volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll—
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the Pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount
Yaanek
In the realms of the Boreal Pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied
and sere—
Our memories were treacherous and
sere;

1 'On transcribing "Ulalume" for a friend, Poe wrote to her: "I would endeavor to explain to you what I really meant—or what I fancied I meant by the poem, if it were not that I remembered Dr. Johnson's bitter and rather just remark about the folly of explaining what, if worth explanation, would explain itself. He has a happy witticism, too, about some book which he calls 'as obscure as an explanatory note.' " ' Whitty, ed., *The Complete Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*(Boston, 1911), 247.

For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)—
We noted not the dim lake of Auber
(Though once we had journeyed down here)—
We remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said: 'She is warmer than Dian;
She rolls through an ether of sighs—
She revels in a region of sighs.
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion,
To point us the path to the skies—
To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes.'

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said: 'Sadly this star I mistrust—
Her pallor I strangely mistrust:
Ah, hasten!—ah, let us not linger!
Ah, fly!—let us fly!—for we must.'
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings till they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied: 'This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
With Hope and in Beauty to-night:—
See!—it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright—
We surely may trust to a gleaming,
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night.'

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said: 'What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?'
She replied: 'Ulalume—Ulalume!—
'T is the vault of thy lost Ulalume!'

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispèd and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere;
And I cried: 'It was surely October
On *this* very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here!—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon hath tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.'

Said we, then—the two, then: 'Ah, can it
Have been that the woodlandish ghouls—
The pitiful, the merciful ghouls—
To bar up our way and to ban it
From the secret that lies in these wolds—
From the thing that lies hidden in these wolds—
Have drawn up the spectre of a planet
From the limbo of lunary souls—
This sinfully scintillant planet
From the Hell of the planetary souls?'

1847 1850

THE BELLS

1

HEAR the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

2

Hear the mellow wedding bells—
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!—
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the Future!—how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

3

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear, it fully knows,
By the twanging
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling
And wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells,—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

4

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people—ah, the people—
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—
They are Ghouls:—

And their king it is who tolls:—
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells—
Of the bells:—
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells:—
To the tolling of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of
the bells.

1849 1850

ELDORADO

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

1849 1850

FOR ANNIE

THANK Heaven! the crisis,
The danger, is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last—
And the fever called 'Living'
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length—
But no matter!—I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead—
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart:—ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing!

The sickness—the nausea—
The pitiless pain—
Have ceased with the fever
That maddened my brain—
With the fever called 'Living'
That burned in my brain.

And oh! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
Torture of thirst
For the napthaline river
Of Passion accurst:—
I have drank of a water
That quenches all thirst:—

Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground—

From a cavern not very far
  Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
  Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
  And narrow my bed;
For a man never slept
  In a different bed—
And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
  In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
  Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
  Regretting, its roses—
Its old agitations
  Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
  Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
  About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
  Commingled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
  Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
  Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
  And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
  Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
  She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
  To sleep on her breast—
Deeply to sleep
  From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
  She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
  To keep me from harm—
To the queen of the angels
  To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
  Now, in my bed
(Knowing her love),
  That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
  Now, in my bed
(With her love at my breast),
  That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me,
  Thinking me dead:—

But my heart it is brighter
  Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
  For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
  Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
  Of the eyes of my Annie.

1849 1850

TO MY MOTHER

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
  The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
  None so devotional as that of 'Mother',
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you—
  You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you
  In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
  Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
  And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
  Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

1849 1850

ANNABEL LEE [1]

It was many and many a year ago,
  In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
  By the name of Annabel Lee;—
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
  Than to love and be loved by me.

She was a child and *I* was a child,
  In this kingdom by the sea,

1 The poem is generally considered the last of Poe's compositions, and to have been written in memory of his child-wife, Virginia.

But we loved with a love that was more
than love—
I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of
Heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud by night
Chilling my Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
Went envying her and me:—
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud,
chilling
And killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the
love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in Heaven above
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:—

For the moon never beams without bringing
me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I see the bright
eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the
side
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my
bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the side of the sea.

1849 1850

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

1804–1864

THE OLD MANSE

THE AUTHOR MAKES THE READER ACQUAINTED WITH HIS ABODE.

BETWEEN two tall gateposts of rough-hewn stone (the gate itself having fallen from its hinges at some unknown epoch) we beheld the gray front of the old parsonage terminating the vista of an avenue of black ash-trees. It was now a twelvemonth since the funeral procession of the venerable clergyman, its last inhabitant, had turned from that gateway towards the village burying-ground. The wheel-track leading to the door, as well as the whole breadth of the avenue, was almost overgrown with grass, affording dainty mouthfuls to two or three vagrant cows and an old white horse who had his own living to pick up along the roadside. The glimmering shadows that lay half asleep between the door of the house and the public highway were a kind of spiritual medium, seen through which the edifice had not quite the aspect of belonging to the material world. Certainly it had little in common with those ordinary abodes which stand so imminent upon the road that every passer-by can thrust his head, as it were, into the domestic circle. From these quiet windows the figures of passing travellers looked too remote and dim to disturb the sense of privacy. In its near retirement and accessible seclusion it was the very spot for the residence of a clergyman,—a man not estranged from human life, yet enveloped in the midst of it with a veil woven of intermingled gloom and brightness. It was worthy to have been one of the time-honored parsonages of England in which, through many generations, a succession of holy occupants pass from youth to age, and bequeath each an inheritance of sanctity to pervade the house and hover over it as with an atmosphere.

Nor, in truth, had the Old Manse ever been profaned by a lay occupant until that memorable summer afternoon when I entered it as my home. A priest had built it; a priest had succeeded to it; other priestly men from time to time had dwelt in it; and children born in its chambers had grown up to assume the priestly character. It was aw-

ful to reflect how many sermons must have been written there. The latest inhabitant alone—he by whose translation to Paradise the dwelling was left vacant—had penned nearly three thousand discourses, besides the better, if not the greater, number that gushed living from his lips. How often, no doubt, had he paced to and fro along the avenue, attuning his meditations to the sighs and gentle murmurs, and deep and solemn peals of the wind among the lofty tops of the trees! In that variety of natural utterances he could find something accordant with every passage of his sermon, were it of tenderness or reverential fear. The boughs over my head seemed shadowy with solemn thoughts as well as with rustling leaves. I took shame to myself for having been so long a writer of idle stories, and ventured to hope that wisdom would descend upon me with the falling leaves of the avenue, and that I should light upon an intellectual treasure in the Old Manse well worth those hoards of long-hidden gold which people seek for in moss-grown houses. Profound treatises of morality; a layman's unprofessional and therefore unprejudiced views of religion; histories (such as Bancroft might have written had he taken up his abode here as he once purposed) bright with picture, gleaming over a depth of philosophic thought,—these were the works that might fitly have flowed from such a retirement. In the humblest event I resolved at least to achieve a novel that should evolve some deep lesson and should possess physical substance enough to stand alone.

In furtherance of my design, and as if to leave me no pretext for not fulfilling it, there was in the rear of the house the most delightful little nook of a study that ever afforded its snug seclusion to a scholar. It was here that Emerson wrote Nature; for he was then an inhabitant of the Manse, and used to watch the Assyrian dawn and Paphian sunset and moonrise from the summit of our eastern hill. When I first saw the room its walls were blackened with the smoke of unnumbered years, and made still blacker by the grim prints of Puritan ministers that hung around. These worthies looked strangely like bad angels, or at least like men who had wrestled so continually and so sternly with the devil that somewhat of his sooty fierceness had been imparted to their own visages. They had all vanished now; a cheerful coat of paint and golden-tinted paper-hangings lighted up the small apartment; while the shadow of a willow-tree that swept against the overhanging eaves attempered the cheery western sunshine. In place of the grim prints there was the sweet and lovely head of one of Raphael's Madonnas and two pleasant little pictures of the Lake of Como. The only other decorations were a purple vase of flowers, always fresh, and a bronze one containing graceful ferns. My books (few, and by no means choice; for they were chiefly such waifs as chance had thrown in my way) stood in order about the room, seldom to be disturbed.

The study had three windows, set with little, old-fashioned panes of glass, each with a crack across it. The two on the western side looked, or rather peeped, between the willow branches down into the orchard, with glimpses of the river through the trees. The third, facing northward, commanded a broader view of the river at a spot where its hitherto obscure waters gleam forth into the light of history. It was at this window that the clergyman who then dwelt in the Manse stood watching the outbreak of a long and deadly struggle between two nations; he saw the irregular array of his parishioners on the farther side of the river and the glittering line of the British on the hither bank. He awaited in an agony of suspense the rattle of the musketry. It came, and there needed but a gentle wind to sweep the battle smoke around this quiet house.

Perhaps the reader, whom I cannot help considering as my guest in the Old Manse and entitled to all courtesy in the way of sight-showing,—perhaps he will choose to take a nearer view of the memorable spot. We stand now on the river's brink. It may well be called the Concord, the river of peace and quietness; for it is certainly the most unexcitable and sluggish stream that ever loitered imperceptibly towards its eternity—the sea. Positively, I had lived three weeks beside it before it grew quite clear to my perception which way the current flowed. It never has a vivacious aspect except when a northwestern breeze is vexing its surface on a sunshiny day. From the incurable indolence of its nature, the stream

is happily incapable of becoming the slave of human ingenuity, as is the fate of so many a wild, free mountain torrent. While all things else are compelled to subserve some useful purpose, it idles its sluggish life away in lazy liberty, without turning a solitary spindle or affording even water-power enough to grind the corn that grows upon its banks. The torpor of its movement allows it nowhere a bright, pebbly shore, nor so much as a narrow strip of glistening sand, in any part of its course. It slumbers between broad prairies, kissing the long meadow grass, and bathes the overhanging boughs of elder bushes and willows or the roots of elms and ash-trees and clumps of maples. Flags and rushes grow along its plashy shore; the yellow water-lily spreads its broad, flat leaves on the margin; and the fragrant white pond-lily abounds, generally selecting a position just so far from the river's brink that it cannot be grasped save at the hazard of plunging in.

It is a marvel whence this perfect flower derives its loveliness and perfume, springing as it does from the black mud over which the river sleeps, and where lurk the slimy eel and speckled frog and the mud turtle, whom continual washing cannot cleanse. It is the very same black mud out of which the yellow lily sucks its obscene life and noisome odor. Thus we see, too, in the world that some persons assimilate only what is ugly and evil from the same moral circumstances which supply good and beautified results—the fragrance of celestial flowers—to the daily life of others.

The reader must not, from any testimony of mine, contract a dislike towards our slumberous stream. In the light of a calm and golden sunset it becomes lovely beyond expression; the more lovely for the quietude that so well accords with the hour, when even the wind, after blustering all day long, usually hushes itself to rest. Each tree and rock, and every blade of grass, is distinctly imaged, and, however unsightly in reality, assumes ideal beauty in the reflection. The minutest things of earth and the broad aspect of the firmament are pictured equally without effort and with the same felicity of success. All the sky glows downward at our feet; the rich clouds float through the unruffled bosom of the stream like heavenly thoughts through a peaceful heart. We will not, then, malign our river as gross and impure while it can glorify itself with so adequate a picture of the heaven that broods above it; or, if we remember its tawny hue and the muddiness of its bed, let it be a symbol that the earthliest human soul has an infinite spiritual capacity and may contain the better world within its depths. But, indeed, the same lesson might be drawn out of any mud puddle in the streets of a city; and, being taught us everywhere, it must be true.

Come, we have pursued a somewhat devious track in our walk to the battle-ground. Here we are, at the point where the river was crossed by the old bridge, the possession of which was the immediate object of the contest. On the hither side grow two or three elms, throwing a wide circumference of shade, but which must have been planted at some period within the three-score years and ten that have passed since the battle day. On the farther shore, overhung by a clump of elder-bushes, we discern the stone abutment of the bridge. Looking down into the river, I once discovered some heavy fragments of the timbers, all green with half a century's growth of water-moss; for during that length of time the tramp of horses and human footsteps have ceased along this ancient highway. The stream has here about the breadth of twenty strokes of a swimmer's arm,—a space not too wide when the bullets were whistling across. Old people who dwell hereabouts will point out the very spots on the western bank where our countrymen fell down and died; and on this side of the river an obelisk of granite has grown up from the soil that was fertilized with British blood. The monument, not more than twenty feet in height, is such as it befitted the inhabitants of a village to erect in illustration of a matter of local interest rather than what was suitable to commemorate an epoch of national history. Still, by the fathers of the village this famous deed was done; and their descendants might rightfully claim the privilege of building a memorial.

A humbler token of the fight, yet a more interesting one than the granite obelisk, may be seen close under the stone-wall which separates the battle-ground from the precincts of the parsonage. It is the

grave—marked by a small, mossgrown fragment of stone at the head and another at the foot—the grave of two British soldiers who were slain in the skirmish, and have ever since slept peacefully where Zechariah Brown and Thomas Davis buried them. Soon was their warfare ended; a weary night march from Boston, a rattling volley of musketry across the river, and then these many years of rest. In the long procession of slain invaders who passed into eternity from the battle-fields of the revolution, these two nameless soldiers led the way.

Lowell, the poet, as we were once standing over this grave, told me a tradition in reference to one of the inhabitants below. The story has something deeply impressive, though its circumstances cannot altogether be reconciled with probability. A youth in the service of the clergyman happened to be chopping wood, that April morning, at the back door of the Manse, and when the noise of battle rang from side to side of the bridge he hastened across the intervening field to see what might be going forward. It is rather strange, by the way, that this lad should have been so diligently at work when the whole population of town and country were startled out of their customary business by the advance of the British troops. Be that as it might, the tradition says that the lad now left his task and hurried to the battle-field with the axe still in his hand. The British had by this time retreated, the Americans were in pursuit; and the late scene of strife was thus deserted by both parties. Two soldiers lay on the ground—one was a corpse; but, as the young New Englander drew nigh, the other Briton raised himself painfully upon his hands and knees and gave a ghastly stare into his face. The boy,—it must have been a nervous impulse, without purpose, without thought, and betokening a sensitive and impressible nature rather than a hardened one,—the boy uplifted his axe and dealt the wounded soldier a fierce and fatal blow upon the head.

I could wish that the grave might be opened; for I would fain know whether either of the skeleton soldiers has the mark of an axe in his skull. The story comes home to me like truth. Oftentimes, as an intellectual and moral exercise, I have sought to follow that poor youth through his subsequent career, and observe how his soul was tortured by the blood stain, contracted as it had been before the long custom of war had robbed human life of its sanctity, and while it still seemed murderous to slay a brother-man. This one circumstance has borne more fruit for me than all that history tells us of the fight.

Many strangers come in the summer time to view the battle-ground. For my own part, I have never found my imagination much excited by this or any other scene of historic celebrity; nor would the placid margin of the river have lost any of its charm for me had men never fought and died there. There is a wilder interest in the tract of land—perhaps a hundred yards in breadth—which extends between the battle-field and the northern face of our Old Manse, with its contiguous avenue and orchard. Here, in some unknown age, before the white man came, stood an Indian village, convenient to the river, whence its inhabitants must have drawn so large a part of their subsistence. The site is identified by the spear and arrowheads, the chisels, and other implements of war, labor, and the chase, which the plough turns up from the soil. You see a splinter of stone, half hidden beneath a sod; it looks like nothing worthy of note; but, if you have faith enough to pick it up, behold a relic! Thoreau, who has a strange faculty of finding what the Indians have left behind them, first set me on the search; and I afterwards enriched myself with some very perfect specimens, so rudely wrought that it seemed almost as if chance had fashioned them. Their great charm consists in this rudeness and in the individuality of each article, so different from the productions of civilized machinery, which shapes everything on one pattern. There is exquisite delight, too, in picking up for one's self an arrowhead that was dropped centuries ago and has never been handled since, and which we thus receive directly from the hand of the red hunter, who purposed to shoot it at his game or at an enemy. Such an incident builds up again the Indian village and its encircling forest, and recalls to life the painted chiefs and warriors, the squaws at their household toil, and the children sporting among the wigwams, while

the little wind-rocked pappoose swings from the branch of the tree. It can hardly be told whether it is a joy or a pain, after such a momentary vision, to gaze around in the broad daylight of reality and see stone fences, white houses, potato fields, and men doggedly hoeing in their shirt-sleeves and homespun pantaloons. But this is nonsense. The Old Manse is better than a thousand wigwams.

The Old Manse! We had almost forgotten it, but will return thither through the orchard. This was set out by the last clergyman, in the decline of his life, when the neighbors laughed at the hoary-headed man for planting trees from which he could have no prospect of gathering fruit. Even had that been the case, there was only so much the better motive for planting them, in the pure and unselfish hope of benefiting his successors,—an end so seldom achieved by more ambitious efforts. But the old minister, before reaching his patriarchal age of ninety, ate the apples from this orchard during many years, and added silver and gold to his annual stipend by disposing of the superfluity. It is pleasant to think of him walking among the trees in the quiet afternoons of early autumn and picking up here and there a windfall, while he observes how heavily the branches are weighed down, and computes the number of empty flour barrels that will be filled by their burden. He loved each tree, doubtless, as if it had been his own child. An orchard has a relation to mankind, and readily connects itself with matters of the heart. The trees possess a domestic character; they have lost the wild nature of their forest kindred, and have grown humanized by receiving the care of man as well as by contributing to his wants. There is so much individuality of character, too, among apple-trees that it gives them an additional claim to be the objects of human interest. One is harsh and crabbed in its manifestations; another gives us fruit as mild as charity. One is churlish and illiberal, evidently grudging the few apples that it bears; another exhausts itself in free-hearted benevolence. The variety of grotesque shapes into which apple-trees contort themselves has its effect on those who get acquainted with them: they stretch out their crooked branches, and take such hold of the imagination that we remember them as humorists and odd-fellows. And what is more melancholy than the old apple-trees that linger about the spot where once stood a homestead, but where there is now only a ruined chimney rising out of a grassy and weed-grown cellar? They offer their fruit to every wayfarer,—apples that are bitter sweet with the moral of Time's vicissitude.

I have met with no other such pleasant trouble in the world as that of finding myself, with only the two or three mouths which it was my privilege to feed, the sole inheritor of the old clergyman's wealth of fruits. Throughout the summer there were cherries and currants; and then came autumn, with his immense burden of apples, dropping them continually from his overladen shoulders as he trudged along. In the stillest afternoon, if I listened, the thump of a great apple was audible, falling without a breath of wind, from the mere necessity of perfect ripeness. And, besides, there were pear-trees, that flung down bushels upon bushels of heavy pears; and peach-trees, which, in a good year, tormented me with peaches, neither to be eaten nor kept, nor, without labor and perplexity, to be given away. The idea of an infinite generosity and exhaustless bounty on the part of our Mother Nature was well worth obtaining through such cares as these. That feeling can be enjoyed in perfection only by the natives of summer islands, where the bread-fruit, the cocoa, the palm, and the orange grow spontaneously and hold forth the ever-ready meal; but likewise almost as well by a man long habituated to city life, who plunges into such a solitude as that of the Old Manse, where he plucks the fruit of trees that he did not plant, and which therefore, to my heterodox taste, bear the closest resemblance to those that grew in Eden. It has been an apothegm these five thousand years, that toil sweetens the bread it earns. For my part (speaking from hard experience, acquired while belaboring the rugged furrows of Brook Farm), I relish best the free gifts of Providence.

Not that it can be disputed that the light toil requisite to cultivate a moderately-sized garden imparts such zest to kitchen vegetables as is never found in those of the market gardener. Childless men, if they

would know something of the bliss of paternity, should plant a seed,—be it squash, bean, Indian corn, or perhaps a mere flower or worthless weed,—should plant it with their own hands, and nurse it from infancy to maturity altogether by their own care. If there be not too many of them, each individual plant becomes an object of separate interest. My garden, that skirted the avenue of the Manse, was of precisely the right extent. An hour or two of morning labor was all that it required. But I used to visit and revisit it a dozen times a day, and stand in deep contemplation over my vegetable progeny with a love that nobody could share or conceive of who had never taken part in the process of creation. It was one of the most bewitching sights in the world to observe a hill of beans thrusting aside the soil, or a row of early peas just peeping forth sufficiently to trace a line of delicate green. Later in the season the humming-birds were attracted by the blossoms of a peculiar variety of bean; and they were a joy to me, those little spiritual visitants, for deigning to sip airy food out of my nectar cups. Multitudes of bees used to bury themselves in the yellow blossoms of the summer squashes. This, too, was a deep satisfaction; although when they had laden themselves with sweets they flew away to some unknown hive, which would give back nothing in requital of what my garden had contributed. But I was glad thus to fling a benefaction upon the passing breeze with the certainty that somebody must profit by it, and that there would be a little more honey in the world to allay the sourness and bitterness which mankind is always complaining of. Yes, indeed; my life was the sweeter for that honey.

Speaking of summer squashes, I must say a word of their beautiful and varied forms. They presented an endless diversity of urns and vases, shallow or deep, scalloped or plain, moulded in patterns which a sculptor would do well to copy, since Art has never invented anything more graceful. A hundred squashes in the garden were worthy, in my eyes at least, of being rendered indestructible in marble. If ever Providence (but I know it never will) should assign me a superfluity of gold, part of it shall be expended for a service of plate, or most delicate porcelain, to be wrought into the shapes of summer squashes gathered from vines which I will plant with my own hands. As dishes for containing vegetables they would be peculiarly appropriate.

But not merely the squeamish love of the beautiful was gratified by my toil in the kitchen garden. There was a hearty enjoyment, likewise, in observing the growth of the crook-necked winter squashes, from the first little bulb, with the withered blossom adhering to it, until they lay strewn upon the soil, big, round fellows, hiding their heads beneath the leaves, but turning up their great yellow rotundities to the noontide sun. Gazing at them, I felt that by my agency something worth living for had been done. A new substance was born into the world. They were real and tangible existences, which the mind could seize hold of and rejoice in. A cabbage, too,—especially the early Dutch cabbage, which swells to a monstrous circumference, until its ambitious heart often bursts asunder,—is a matter to be proud of when we can claim a share with the earth and sky in producing it. But, after all, the hugest pleasure is reserved until these vegetable children of ours are smoking on the table, and we, like Saturn, make a meal of them.

What with the river, the battle-field, the orchard and the garden, the reader begins to despair of finding his way back into the Old Manse. But in agreeable weather it is the truest hospitality to keep him out-of-doors. I never grew quite acquainted with my habitation till a long spell of sulky rain had confined me beneath its roof. There could not be a more sombre aspect of external nature than as then seen from the windows of my study. The great willow-tree had caught and retained among its leaves a whole cataract of water, to be shaken down at intervals by the frequent gusts of wind. All day long, and for a week together, the rain was drip-drip-dripping and splash-splash-splashing from the eaves, and bubbling and foaming into the tubs beneath the spouts. The old, unpainted shingles of the house and out-buildings were black with moisture; and the mosses of ancient growth upon the walls looked green and fresh, as if they were the newest things and afterthought of Time. The usually mirrored surface of the river was blurred by an infinity of raindrops; the whole land-

scape had a completely water-soaked appearance, conveying the impression that the earth was wet through like a sponge; while the summit of a wooded hill, about a mile distant, was enveloped in a dense mist, where the demon of the tempest seemed to have his abiding-place and to be plotting still direr inclemencies.

Nature has no kindness, no hospitality, during a rain. In the fiercest heat of sunny days she retains a secret mercy, and welcomes the wayfarer to shady nooks of the woods whither the sun cannot penetrate; but she provides no shelter against her storms. It makes us shiver to think of those deep, umbrageous recesses, those overshadowing banks, where we found such enjoyment during the sultry afternoons. Not a twig of foliage there but would dash a little shower into our faces. Looking reproachfully towards the impenetrable sky,—if sky there be above that dismal uniformity of cloud,—we are apt to murmur against the whole system of the universe, since it involves the extinction of so many summer days in so short a life by the hissing and spluttering rain. In such spells of weather—and it is to be supposed such weather came —Eve's bower in Paradise must have been but a cheerless and aguish kind of shelter, nowise comparable to the old parsonage, which had resources of its own to beguile the week's imprisonment. The idea of sleeping on a couch of wet roses!

Happy the man who in a rainy day can betake himself to a huge garret, stored, like that of the Manse, with lumber that each generation has left behind it from a period before the revolution. Our garret was an arched hall, dimly illuminated through small and dusty windows; it was but a twilight at the best; and there were nooks, or rather caverns, of deep obscurity, the secrets of which I never learned, being too reverent of their dust and cobwebs. The beams and rafters, roughly hewn and with strips of bark still on them, and the rude masonry of the chimneys, made the garret look wild and uncivilized,—an aspect unlike what was seen elsewhere in the quiet and decorous old house. But on one side there was a little whitewashed apartment which bore the traditionary title of the Saint's Chamber, because holy men in their youth had slept and studied and prayed there. With its elevated retirement, its one window, its small fireplace, and its closet, convenient for an oratory, it was the very spot where a young man might inspire himself with solemn enthusiasm and cherish saintly dreams. The occupants, at various epochs, had left brief records and ejaculations inscribed upon the walls. There, too, hung a tattered and shrivelled roll of canvas, which on inspection proved to be the forcibly wrought picture of a clergyman, in wig, band, and gown, holding a Bible in his hand. As I turned his face towards the light he eyed me with an air of authority such as men of his profession seldom assume in our days. The original had been pastor of the parish more than a century ago, a friend of Whitefield, and almost his equal in fervid eloquence. I bowed before the effigy of the dignified divine, and felt as if I had now met face to face with the ghost by whom, as there was reason to apprehend, the Manse was haunted.

Houses of any antiquity in New England are so invariably possessed with spirits that the matter seems hardly worth alluding to. Our ghost used to heave deep sighs in a particular corner of the parlor, and sometimes rustled paper, as if he were turning over a sermon in the long upper entry,—where nevertheless he was invisible in spite of the bright moonshine that fell through the eastern window. Not improbably he wished me to edit and publish a selection from a chest full of manuscript discourses that stood in the garret. Once, while Hillard and other friends sat talking with us in the twilight, there came a rustling noise as of a minister's silk gown, sweeping through the very midst of the company so closely as almost to brush against the chairs. Still there was nothing visible. A yet stranger business was that of a ghostly servant-maid, who used to be heard in the kitchen at deepest midnight grinding coffee, cooking, ironing,—performing, in short, all kinds of domestic labor,—although no traces of anything accomplished could be detected the next morning. Some neglected duty of her servitude—some ill-starched ministerial band—disturbed the poor damsel in her grave and kept her at work without any wages.

But to return from this digression. A

part of my predecessor's library was stored in the garret,—no unfit receptacle indeed for such dreary trash as comprised the greater number of volumes. The old books would have been worth nothing at an auction. In this venerable garret, however, they possessed an interest, quite apart from their literary value, as heirlooms, many of which had been transmitted down through a series of consecrated hands from the days of the mighty Puritan divines. Autographs of famous names were to be seen in faded ink on some of their fly-leaves; and there were marginal observations or interpolated pages closely covered with manuscript in illegible shorthand, perhaps concealing matter of profound truth and wisdom. The world will never be the better for it. A few of the books were Latin folios, written by Catholic authors; others demolished Papistry, as with a sledge-hammer, in plain English. A dissertation on the book of Job —which only Job himself could have had patience to read—filled at least a score of small, thickset quartos, at the rate of two or three volumes to a chapter. Then there was a vast folio body of divinity—too corpulent a body, it might be feared, to comprehend the spiritual element of religion. Volumes of this form dated back two hundred years or more, and were generally bound in black leather, exhibiting precisely such an appearance as we should attribute to books of enchantment. Others equally antique were of a size proper to be carried in the large waistcoat pockets of old times,—diminutive, but as black as their bulkier brethren, and abundantly interfused with Greek and Latin quotations. These little old volumes impressed me as if they had been intended for very large ones, but had been unfortunately blighted at an early stage of their growth.

The rain pattered upon the roof and the sky gloomed through the dusty garret windows, while I burrowed among these venerable books in search of any living thought which should burn like a coal of fire, or glow like an inextinguishable gem, beneath the dead trumpery that had long hidden it. But I found no such treasure; all was dead alike; and I could not but muse deeply and wonderingly upon the humiliating fact that the works of man's intellect decay like those of his hands. Thought grows mouldy. What was good and nourishing food for the spirits of one generation affords no sustenance for the next. Books of religion, however, cannot be considered a fair test of the enduring and vivacious properties of human thought, because such books so seldom really touch upon their ostensible subject, and have, therefore, so little business to be written at all. So long as an unlettered soul can attain to saving grace, there would seem to be no deadly error in holding theological libraries to be accumulations of, for the most part, stupendous impertinence.

Many of the books had accrued in the latter years of the last clergyman's lifetime. These threatened to be of even less interest than the elder works, a century hence, to any curious inquirer who should then rummage them as I was doing now. Volumes of the *Liberal Preacher* and *Christian Examiner*, occasional sermons, controversial pamphlets, tracts, and other productions of a like fugitive nature took the place of the thick and heavy volumes of past time. In a physical point of view there was much the same difference as between a feather and a lump of lead; but, intellectually regarded, the specific gravity of old and new was about upon a par. Both also were alike frigid. The elder books, nevertheless, seemed to have been earnestly written, and might be conceived to have possessed warmth at some former period; although, with the lapse of time, the heated masses had cooled down even to the freezing-point. The frigidity of the modern productions, on the other hand, was characteristic and inherent, and evidently had little to do with the writer's qualities of mind and heart. In fine, of this whole dusty heap of literature I tossed aside all the sacred part, and felt myself none the less a Christian for eschewing it. There appeared no hope of either mounting to the better world on a Gothic staircase of ancient folios or of flying thither on the wings of a modern tract.

Nothing, strange to say, retained any sap except what had been written for the passing day and year without the remotest pretension or idea of permanence. There were a few old newspapers, and still older almanacs, which reproduced to my mental eye the epochs when they had issued from the

press with a distinctness that was altogether unaccountable. It was as if I had found bits of magic looking-glass among the books, with the images of a vanished century in them. I turned my eyes towards the tattered picture above mentioned, and asked of the austere divine wherefore it was that he and his brethren, after the most painful rummaging and groping into their minds, had been able to produce nothing half so real as these newspaper scribblers and almanac makers had thrown off in the effervescence of a moment. The portrait responded not; so I sought an answer for myself. It is the age itself that writes newspapers and almanacs, which, therefore, have a distinct purpose and meaning at the time, and a kind of intelligible truth for all times; whereas most other works—being written by men who, in the very act, set themselves apart from their age—are likely to possess little significance when new, and none at all when old. Genius, indeed, melts many ages into one, and thus effects something permanent, yet still with a similarity of office to that of the more ephemeral writer. A work of genius is but the newspaper of a century, or perchance of a hundred centuries.

Lightly as I have spoken of these old books, there yet lingers with me a superstitious reverence for literature of all kinds. A bound volume has a charm in my eyes similar to what scraps of manuscript possess for the good Mussulman. He imagines that those wind-wafted records are perhaps hallowed by some sacred verse; and I, that every new book or antique one may contain the 'open sesame,'—the spell to disclose treasures hidden in some unsuspected cave of Truth. Thus it was not without sadness that I turned away from the library of the Old Manse.

Blessed was the sunshine when it came again at the close of another stormy day, beaming from the edge of the western horizon; while the massive firmament of clouds threw down all the gloom it could, but served only to kindle the golden light into a more brilliant glow by the strongly contrasted shadows. Heaven smiled at the earth, so long unseen, from beneath its heavy eyelid. To-morrow for the hill-tops and the wood-paths.

Or it might be that Ellery Channing came up the avenue to join me in a fishing excursion on the river. Strange and happy times were those when we cast aside all irksome forms and strait-laced habitudes, and delivered ourselves up to the free air, to live like the Indians or any less conventional race during one bright semicircle of the sun. Rowing our boat against the current, between wide meadows, we turned aside into the Assabeth. A more lovely stream than this, for a mile above its junction with the Concord, has never flowed on earth,—nowhere, indeed, except to lave the interior regions of a poet's imagination. It is sheltered from the breeze by woods and a hillside; so that elsewhere there might be a hurricane, and here scarcely a ripple across the shaded water. The current lingers along so gently that the mere force of the boatman's will seems sufficient to propel his craft against it. It comes flowing softly through the midmost privacy and deepest heart of a wood which whispers it to be quiet; while the stream whispers back again from its sedgy borders, as if river and wood were hushing one another to sleep. Yes; the river sleeps along its course and dreams of the sky and of the clustering foliage, amid which fall showers of broken sunlight, imparting specks of vivid cheerfulness, in contrast with the quiet depth of the prevailing tint. Of all this scene, the slumbering river has a dream picture in its bosom. Which, after all, was the most real—the picture, or the original?—the objects palpable to our grosser senses, or their apotheosis in the stream beneath? Surely the disembodied images stand in closer relation to the soul. But both the original and the reflection had here an ideal charm; and, had it been a thought more wild, I could have fancied that this river had strayed forth out of the rich scenery of my companion's inner world; only the vegetation along its banks should then have had an Oriental character.

Gentle and unobtrusive as the river is, yet the tranquil woods seem hardly satisfied to allow its passage. The trees are rooted on the very verge of the water, and dip their pendent branches into it. At one spot there is a lofty bank, on the slope of which grow some hemlocks, declining across the stream with outstretched arms, as if resolute to take the plunge. In other

places the banks are almost on a level with the water; so that the quiet congregation of trees set their feet in the flood, and are fringed with foliage down to the surface. Cardinal flowers kindle their spiral flames and illuminate the dark nooks among the shrubbery. The pond-lily grows abundantly along the margin—that delicious flower, which, as Thoreau tells me, opens its virgin bosom to the first sunlight and perfects its being through the magic of that genial kiss. He has beheld beds of them unfolding in due succession as the sunrise stole gradually from flower to flower—a sight not to be hoped for unless when a poet adjusts his inward eye to a proper focus with the outward organ. Grape-vines here and there twine themselves around shrub and tree and hang their clusters over the water within reach of the boatman's hand. Oftentimes they unite two trees of alien race in an inextricable twine, marrying the hemlock and the maple against their will, and enriching them with a purple offspring of which neither is the parent. One of these ambitious parasites has climbed into the upper branches of a tall, white pine, and is still ascending from bough to bough, unsatisfied till it shall crown the tree's airy summit with a wreath of its broad foliage and a cluster of its grapes.

The winding course of the stream continually shut out the scene behind us, and revealed as calm and lovely a one before. We glided from depth to depth, and breathed new seclusion at every turn. The shy kingfisher flew from the withered branch close at hand to another at a distance, uttering a shrill cry of anger or alarm. Ducks that had been floating there since the preceding eve were startled at our approach, and skimmed along the glassy river, breaking its dark surface with a bright streak. The pickerel leaped from among the lily-pads. The turtle, sunning itself upon a rock or at the root of a tree, slid suddenly into the water with a plunge. The painted Indian who paddled his canoe along the Assabeth three hundred years ago could hardly have seen a wilder gentleness displayed upon its banks and reflected in its bosom than we did. Nor could the same Indian have prepared his noontide meal with more simplicity. We drew up our skiff at some point where the overarching shade formed a natural bower, and there kindled a fire with the pine cones and decayed branches that lay strewn plentifully around. Soon the smoke ascended among the trees, impregnated with a savory incense, not heavy, dull, and surfeiting, like the steam of cookery within doors, but sprightly and piquant. The smell of our feast was akin to the woodland odors with which it mingled: there was no sacrilege committed by our intrusion there: the sacred solitude was hospitable, and granted us free leave to cook and eat in the recess that was at once our kitchen and banqueting hall. It is strange what humble offices may be performed in a beautiful scene without destroying its poetry. Our fire, red gleaming among the trees, and we beside it, busied with culinary rites and spreading out our meal on a mossgrown log, all seemed in unison with the river gliding by and the foliage rustling over us. And, what was strangest, neither did our mirth seem to disturb the propriety of the solemn woods; although the hobgoblins of the old wilderness and the will-of-the-wisps that glimmered in the marshy places might have come trooping to share our table-talk, and have added their shrill laughter to our merriment. It was the very spot in which to utter the extremest nonsense or the profoundest wisdom, or that ethereal product of the mind which partakes of both, and may become one or the other, in correspondence with the faith and insight of the auditor.

So amid sunshine and shadow, rustling leaves and sighing waters, up gushed our talk like the babble of a fountain. The evanescent spray was Ellery's; and his, too, the lumps of golden thought that lay glimmering in the fountain's bed and brightened both our faces by the reflection. Could he have drawn out that virgin gold and stamped it with the mint mark that alone gives currency, the world might have had the profit, and he the fame. My mind was the richer merely by the knowledge that it was there. But the chief profit of those wild days to him and me, lay, not in any definite idea, not in any angular or rounded truth, which we dug out of the shapeless mass of problematical stuff, but in the freedom which we thereby won from

all custom and conventionalism and fettering influences of man on man. We were so free to-day that it was impossible to be slaves again to-morrow. When we crossed the threshold of the house or trod the thronged pavements of a city, still the leaves of the trees that overhang the Assabeth were whispering to us, 'Be free! be free!' Therefore along that shady riverbank there are spots, marked with a heap of ashes and half-consumed brands, only less sacred in my remembrance than the hearth of a household fire.

And yet how sweet, as we floated homeward adown the golden river at sunset,—how sweet was it to return within the system of human society, not as to a dungeon and a chain, but as to a stately edifice, whence we could go forth at will into statelier simplicity! How gently, too, did the sight of the Old Manse, best seen from the river, overshadowed with its willow and all environed about with the foliage of its orchard and avenue,—how gently did its gray, homely aspect rebuke the speculative extravagances of the day! It had grown sacred in connection with the artificial life against which we inveighed; it had been a home for many years in spite of all; it was my home too; and, with these thoughts, it seemed to me that all the artifice and conventionalism of life was but an impalpable thinness upon its surface, and that the depth below was none the worse for it. Once, as we turned our boat to the bank, there was a cloud, in the shape of an immensely gigantic figure of a hound, couched above the house, as if keeping guard over it. Gazing at this symbol, I prayed that the upper influences might long protect the institutions that had grown out of the heart of mankind.

If ever my readers should decide to give up civilized life, cities, houses, and whatever moral or material enormities in addition to these the perverted ingenuity of our race has contrived, let it be in the early autumn. Then Nature will love him better than at any other season, and will take him to her bosom with a more motherly tenderness. I could scarcely endure the roof of the old house above me in those first autumnal days. How early in the summer, too, the prophecy of autumn comes! Earlier in some years than in others; sometimes even in the first weeks of July. There is no other feeling like what is caused by this faint, doubtful, yet real perception—if it be not rather a foreboding—of the year's decay, so blessedly sweet and sad in the same breath.

Did I say that there was no feeling like it? Ah, but there is a half-acknowledged melancholy like to this when we stand in the perfected vigor of our life and feel that Time has now given us all his flowers, and that the next work of his never idle fingers must be to steal them one by one away.

I have forgotten whether the song of the cricket be not as early a token of autumn's approach as any other,—that song which may be called an audible stillness; for though very loud and heard afar, yet the mind does not take note of it as a sound, so completely is its individual existence merged among the accompanying characteristics of the season. Alas for the pleasant summer time! In August the grass is still verdant on the hills and in the valleys; the foliage of the trees is as dense as ever, and as green; the flowers gleam forth in richer abundance along the margin of the river, and by the stone walls, and deep among the woods; the days, too, are as fervid now as they were a month ago; and yet in every breath of wind and in every beam of sunshine we hear the whispered farewell and behold the parting smile of a dear friend. There is a coolness amid all the heat, a mildness in the blazing noon. Not a breeze can stir but it thrills us with the breath of autumn. A pensive glory is seen in the far golden gleams, among the shadows of the trees. The flowers—even the brightest of them, and they are the most gorgeous of the year—have this gentle sadness wedded to their pomp, and typify the character of the delicious time each within itself. The brilliant cardinal flower has never seemed gay to me.

Still later in the season Nature's tenderness waxes stronger. It is impossible not to be fond of our mother now; for she is so fond of us! At other periods she does not make this impression on me, or only at rare intervals; but in those genial days of autumn, when she has perfected her harvests and accomplished every needful thing that was given her to do, then she overflows with a blessed superfluity of

love. She has leisure to caress her children now. It is good to be alive at such times. Thank Heaven for breath—yes, for mere breath—when it is made up of a heavenly breeze like this! It comes with a real kiss upon our cheeks; it would linger fondly around us if it might; but, since it must be gone, it embraces us with its whole kindly heart and passes onward to embrace likewise the next thing that it meets. A blessing is flung abroad and scattered far and wide over the earth, to be gathered up by all who choose. I recline upon the still unwithered grass and whisper to myself, 'O perfect day! O beautiful world! O beneficent God!' And it is the promise of a blessed eternity; for our Creator would never have made such lovely days and have given us the deep hearts to enjoy them, above and beyond all thought, unless we were meant to be immortal. This sunshine is the golden pledge thereof. It beams through the gates of paradise and shows us glimpses far inward.

By and by, in a little time, the outward world puts on a drear austerity. On some October morning there is a heavy hoarfrost on the grass and along the tops of the fences; and at sunrise the leaves fall from the trees of our avenue without a breath of wind, quietly descending by their own weight. All summer long they have murmured like the noise of waters; they have roared loudly while the branches were wrestling with the thunder gust; they have made music both glad and solemn; they have attuned my thoughts by their quiet sound as I paced to and fro beneath the arch of intermingling boughs. Now they can only rustle under my feet. Henceforth the gray parsonage begins to assume a larger importance, and draws to its fireside,—for the abomination of the air-tight stove is reserved till wintry weather,—draws closer and closer to its fireside the vagrant impulses that had gone wandering about through the summer.

When summer was dead and buried the Old Manse became as lonely as a hermitage. Not that ever—in my time at least—it had been thronged with company; but, at no rare intervals, we welcomed some friend out of the dusty glare and tumult of the world, and rejoiced to share with him the transparent obscurity that was floating over us. In one respect our precincts were like the Enchanted Ground through which the pilgrim travelled on his way to the Celestial City! The guests, each and all, felt a slumberous influence upon them; they fell asleep in chairs, or took a more deliberate siesta on the sofa, or were seen stretched among the shadows of the orchard, looking up dreamily through the boughs. They could not have paid a more acceptable compliment to my abode, nor to my own qualities as a host. I held it as a proof that they left their cares behind them as they passed between the stone gate-posts at the entrance of our avenue, and that the so powerful opiate was the abundance of peace and quiet within and all around us. Others could give them pleasure and amusement or instruction—these could be picked up anywhere; but it was for me to give them rest—rest in a life of trouble. What better could be done for those weary and world-worn spirits?—for him whose career of perpetual action was impeded and harassed by the rarest of his powers and the richest of his acquirements?—for another who had thrown his ardent heart from earliest youth into the strife of politics, and now, perchance, began to suspect that one lifetime is too brief for the accomplishment of any lofty aim?—for her on whose feminine nature had been imposed the heavy gift of intellectual power, such as a strong man might have staggered under, and with it the necessity to act upon the world?—in a word, not to multiply instances, what better could be done for anybody who came within our magic circle than to throw the spell of a tranquil spirit over him? And when it had wrought its full effect, then we dismissed him, with but misty reminiscences, as if he had been dreaming of us.

Were I to adopt a pet idea, as so many people do, and fondle it in my embraces to the exclusion of all others, it would be, that the great want which mankind labors under at this present period is sleep. The world should recline its vast head on the first convenient pillow and take an age-long nap. It has gone distracted through a morbid activity, and, while preternaturally wide-awake, is nevertheless tormented by visions that seem real to it now, but would assume their true aspect and character were all things once set right by an interval of

sound repose. This is the only method of getting rid of old delusions and avoiding new ones; of regenerating our race, so that it might in due time awake as an infant out of dewy slumber; of restoring to us the simple perception of what is right, and the single-hearted desire to achieve it, both of which have long been lost in consequence of this weary activity of brain and torpor or passion of the heart that now afflict the universe. Stimulants, the only mode of treatment hitherto attempted, cannot quell the disease; they do but heighten the delirium.

Let not the above paragraph ever be quoted against the author; for, though tinctured with its modicum of truth, it is the result and expression of what he knew, while he was writing, to be but a distorted survey of the state and prospects of mankind. There were circumstances around me which made it difficult to view the world precisely as it exists; for, severe and sober as was the Old Manse, it was necessary to go but a little way beyond its threshold before meeting with stranger moral shapes of men than might have been encountered elsewhere in a circuit of a thousand miles.

These hobgoblins of flesh and blood were attracted thither by the widespreading influence of a great original thinker, who had his earthly abode at the opposite extremity of our village. His mind acted upon other minds of a certain constitution with wonderful magnetism, and drew many men upon long pilgrimages to speak with him face to face. Young visionaries—to whom just so much of insight had been imparted as to make life all a labyrinth around them—came to seek the clew that should guide them out of their self-involved bewilderment. Gray-headed theorists—whose systems, at first air, had finally imprisoned them in an iron frame-work—travelled painfully to his door, not to ask deliverance, but to invite the free spirit into their own thraldom. People that had lighted on a new thought, or a thought that they fancied new, came to Emerson, as the finder of a glittering gem hastens to a lapidary, to ascertain its quality and value. Uncertain, troubled, earnest wanderers through the midnight of the moral world beheld his intellectual fire as a beacon burning on a hill-top, and, climbing the difficult ascent, looked forth into the surrounding obscurity more hopefully than hitherto. The light revealed objects unseen before,—mountains, gleaming lakes, glimpses of a creation among the chaos; but also, as was unavoidable, it attracted bats and owls and the whole host of night birds, which flapped their dusky wings against the gazer's eyes, and sometimes were mistaken for fowls of angelic feather. Such delusions always hover nigh whenever a beacon fire of truth is kindled.

For myself, there had been epochs of my life when I, too, might have asked of this prophet the master word that should solve me the riddle of the universe; but now, being happy, I felt as if there were no question to be put, and therefore admired Emerson as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher. It was good, nevertheless, to meet him in the wood-paths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one; and he so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart. And, in truth, the heart of many an ordinary man had, perchance, inscriptions which he could not read. But it was impossible to dwell in his vicinity without inhaling more or less the mountain atmosphere of his lofty thought, which, in the brains of some people, wrought a singular giddiness,—new truth being as heady as new wine. Never was a poor little country village infested with such a variety of queer, strangely-dressed, oddly-behaved mortals, most of whom took upon themselves to be important agents of the world's destiny, yet were simply bores of a very intense water. Such, I imagine, is the invariable character of persons who crowd so closely about an original thinker as to draw in his unuttered breath and thus become imbued with a false originality. This triteness of novelty is enough to make any man of common sense blaspheme at all ideas of less than a century's standing, and pray that the world may be petrified and rendered immovable in precisely the worst moral and physical state that it ever yet arrived at, rather than be benefited by such schemes of such philosophers.

And now I begin to feel—and perhaps should have sooner felt—that we have talked enough of the Old Manse. Mine honored reader, it may be, will vilify the poor author as an egotist for babbling through so many pages about a mossgrown country parsonage, and his life within its walls and on the river and in the woods, and the influences that wrought upon him from all these sources. My conscience, however, does not reproach me with betraying anything too sacredly individual to be revealed by a human spirit to its brother or sister spirit. How narrow—how shallow and scanty too—is the stream of thought that has been flowing from my pen, compared with the broad tide of dim emotions, ideas, and associations which swell around me from that portion of my existence! How little have I told! and of that little, how almost nothing is even tinctured with any quality that makes it exclusively my own! Has the reader gone wandering, hand in hand with me, through the inner passages of my being? and have we groped together into all its chambers and examined their treasures or their rubbish? Not so. We have been standing on the greensward, but just within the cavern's mouth, where the common sunshine is free to penetrate, and where every footstep is therefore free to come. I have appealed to no sentiment or sensibilities save such as are diffused among us all. So far as I am a man of really individual attributes I veil my face; nor am I, nor have I ever been, one of those supremely hospitable people who serve up their own hearts, delicately fried, with brain sauce, as a tidbit for their beloved public.

Glancing back over what I have written, it seems but the scattered reminiscences of a single summer. In fairyland there is no measurement of time; and, in a spot so sheltered from the turmoil of life's ocean, three years hastened away with a noiseless flight, as the breezy sunshine chases the cloud shadows across the depths of a still valley. Now came hints, growing more and more distinct, that the owner of the old house was pining for his native air. Carpenters next appeared, making a tremendous racket among the out-buildings, strewing the green grass with pine shavings and chips of chestnut joists, and vexing the whole antiquity of the place with their discordant renovations. Soon, moreover, they divested our abode of the veil of woodbine which had crept over a large portion of its southern face. All the aged mosses were cleared unsparingly away; and there were horrible whispers about brushing up the external walls with a coat of paint—a purpose as little to my taste as might be that of rouging the venerable cheeks of one's grandmother. But the hand that renovates is always more sacrilegious than that which destroys. In fine, we gathered up our household goods, drank a farewell cup of tea in our pleasant little breakfast-room,—delicately fragrant tea, an unpurchasable luxury, one of the many angel gifts that had fallen like dew upon us,—and passed forth between the tall stone gateposts as uncertain as the wandering Arabs where our tent might next be pitched. Providence took me by the hand, and—an oddity of dispensation which, I trust, there is no irreverence in smiling at—has led me, as the newspapers announce while I am writing, from the Old Manse into a custom house. As a story-teller, I have often contrived strange vicissitudes for my imaginary personages, but none like this.

The treasure of intellectual good which I hoped to find in our secluded dwelling had never come to light. No profound treatise of ethics, no philosophic history, no novel even, that could stand unsupported on its edges. All that I had to show, as a man of letters, were these few tales and essays, which had blossomed out like flowers in the calm summer of my heart and mind. Save editing (an easy task) the journal of my friend of many years, the African Cruiser,[1] I had done nothing else. With these idle weeds and withering blossoms I have intermixed some that were produced long ago,—old, faded things, reminding me of flowers pressed between the leaves of a book,—and now offer the bouquet, such as it is, to any whom it may please. These fitful sketches, with so little of external life about them, yet claiming no profundity of purpose,—so reserved,

1 *Journal of an African Cruiser*(N.Y., 1845) was by Horatio Bridge, who had been Hawthorne's closest friend at college, and who had, unknown to Hawthorne, furnished the guaranty for the publication of the *Twice-Told Tales*.

even while they sometimes seem so frank,—often but half in earnest, and never, even when most so, expressing satisfactorily the thoughts which they profess to image,—such trifles, I truly feel, afford no solid basis for a literary reputation. Nevertheless, the public—if my limited number of readers, whom I venture to regard rather as a circle of friends, may be termed a public—will receive them the more kindly, as the last offering, the last collection, of this nature which it is my purpose ever to put forth. Unless I could do better, I have done enough in this kind. For myself the book will always retain one charm—as reminding me of the river, with its delightful solitudes, and of the avenue, the garden, and the orchard, and especially the dear Old Manse, with the little study on its western side, and the sunshine glimmering through the willow branches while I wrote.

Let the reader, if he will do me so much honor, imagine himself my guest, and that, having seen whatever may be worthy of notice within and about the Old Manse, he has finally been ushered into my study. There, after seating him in an antique elbow chair, an heirloom of the house, I take forth a roll of manuscript and entreat his attention to the following tales—an act of personal inhospitality, however, which I never was guilty of, nor ever will be, even to my worst enemy.

1846

THE GRAY CHAMPION

THERE was once a time when New England groaned under the actual pressure of heavier wrongs than those threatened ones which brought on the Revolution. James II., the bigoted successor of Charles the Voluptuous, had annulled the charters of all the colonies, and sent a harsh and unprincipled soldier to take away our liberties and endanger our religion. The administration of Sir Edmund Andros lacked scarcely a single characteristic of tyranny: a Governor and Council, holding office from the King, and wholly independent of the country; laws made and taxes levied without concurrence of the people immediate or by their representatives; the rights of private citizens violated, and the titles of all landed property declared void; the voice of complaint stifled by restrictions on the press; and, finally, disaffection overawed by the first band of mercenary troops that ever marched on our free soil. For two years our ancestors were kept in sullen submission by that filial love which had invariably secured their allegiance to the mother country, whether its head chanced to be a Parliament, Protector, or Popish Monarch. Till these evil times, however, such allegiance had been merely nominal, and the colonists had ruled themselves, enjoying far more freedom than is even yet the privilege of the native subjects of Great Britain.

At length a rumor reached our shores that the Prince of Orange had ventured on an enterprise, the success of which would be the triumph of civil and religious rights and the salvation of New England. It was but a doubtful whisper; it might be false, or the attempt might fail; and, in either case, the man that stirred against King James would lose his head. Still the intelligence produced a marked effect. The people smiled mysteriously in the streets, and threw bold glances at their oppressors; while far and wide there was a subdued and silent agitation, as if the slightest signal would rouse the whole land from its sluggish despondency. Aware of their danger, the rulers resolved to avert it by an imposing display of strength, and perhaps to confirm their despotism by yet harsher measures. One afternoon in April, 1689, Sir Edmund Andros and his favorite councillors, being warm with wine, assembled the red-coats of the Governor's Guard, and made their appearance in the streets of Boston. The sun was near setting when the march commenced.

The roll of the drum at that unquiet crisis seemed to go through the streets, less as the martial music of the soldiers, than as a muster-call to the inhabitants themselves. A multitude, by various avenues, assembled in King Street, which was destined to be the scene, nearly a century afterwards, of another encounter between the troops of Britain, and a people struggling against her tyranny. Though more than sixty years had elapsed since the pilgrims came, this crowd of their descendants still showed the strong and sombre features of their character perhaps more strikingly in such a stern emergency than on happier occasions.

There were the sober garb, the general severity of mien, the gloomy but undismayed expression, the scriptural forms of speech, and the confidence in Heaven's blessing on a righteous cause, which would have marked a band of the original Puritans, when threatened by some peril of the wilderness. Indeed, it was not yet time for the old spirit to be extinct; since there were men in the street that day who had worshipped there beneath the trees, before a house was reared to the God for whom they had become exiles. Old soldiers of the Parliament were here, too, smiling grimly at the thought that their aged arms might strike another blow against the house of Stuart. Here, also, were the veterans of King Philip's war, who had burned villages and slaughtered young and old, with pious fierceness, while the godly souls throughout the land were helping them with prayer. Several ministers were scattered among the crowd, which, unlike all other mobs, regarded them with such reverence, as if there were sanctity in their very garments. These holy men exerted their influence to quiet the people, but not to disperse them. Meantime, the purpose of the Governor, in disturbing the peace of the town at a period when the slightest commotion might throw the country into a ferment, was almost the universal subject of inquiry, and variously explained.

'Satan will strike his master-stroke presently,' cried some, 'because he knoweth that his time is short. All our godly pastors are to be dragged to prison! We shall see them at a Smithfield fire in King Street!'

Hereupon the people of each parish gathered closer round their minister, who looked calmly upwards and assumed a more apostolic dignity, as well befitted a candidate for the highest honor of his profession, the crown of martyrdom. It was actually fancied, at that period, that New England might have a John Rogers of her own to take the place of that worthy in the Primer.

'The Pope of Rome has given orders for a new St. Bartholomew!' cried others. 'We are to be massacred, man and male child!'

Neither was this rumor wholly discredited, although the wiser class believed the Governor's object somewhat less atrocious. His predecessor under the old charter, Bradstreet, a venerable companion of the first settlers, was known to be in town. There were grounds for conjecturing, that Sir Edmund Andros intended at once to strike terror by a parade of military force, and to confound the opposite faction by possessing himself of their chief.

'Stand firm for the old charter Governor!' shouted the crowd, seizing upon the idea. 'The good old Governor Bradstreet!'

While this cry was at the loudest, the people were surprised by the well-known figure of Governor Bradstreet himself, a patriarch of nearly ninety, who appeared on the elevated steps of a door, and, with characteristic mildness, besought them to submit to the constituted authorities.

'My children,' concluded this venerable person, 'do nothing rashly. Cry not aloud, but pray for the welfare of New England, and expect patiently what the Lord will do in this matter!'

The event was soon to be decided. All this time, the roll of the drum had been approaching through Cornhill, louder and deeper, till with reverberations from house to house, and the regular tramp of martial footsteps, it burst into the street. A double rank of soldiers made their appearance, occupying the whole breadth of the passage, with shouldered matchlocks, and matches burning, so as to present a row of fires in the dusk. Their steady march was like the progress of a machine, that would roll irresistibly over everything in its way. Next, moving slowly, with a confused clatter of hoofs on the pavement, rode a party of mounted gentlemen, the central figure being Sir Edmund Andros, elderly, but erect and soldier-like. Those around him were his favorite councillors, and the bitterest foes of New England. At his right hand rode Edward Randolph, our arch-enemy, that 'blasted wretch,' as Cotton Mather calls him, who achieved the downfall of our ancient government, and was followed with a sensible curse, through life and to his grave. On the other side was Bullivant, scattering jests and mockery as he rode along. Dudley came behind, with a downcast look, dreading, as well he might, to meet the indignant gaze of the people, who beheld him, their only countryman by birth, among the oppressors of his native land. The captain of a frigate in the harbor,

and two or three civil officers under the Crown, were also there. But the figure which most attracted the public eye, and stirred up the deepest feeling, was the Episcopal clergyman of King's Chapel, riding haughtily among the magistrates in his priestly vestments, the fitting representative of prelacy and persecution, the union of church and state, and all those abominations which had driven the Puritans to the wilderness. Another guard of soldiers, in double rank, brought up the rear.

The whole scene was a picture of the condition of New England, and its moral, the deformity of any government that does not grow out of the nature of things and the character of the people. On one side the religious multitude, with their sad visages and dark attire, and on the other, the group of despotic rulers, with the high churchman in the midst, and here and there a crucifix at their bosoms, all magnificently clad, flushed with wine, proud of unjust authority, and scoffing at the universal groan. And the mercenary soldiers, waiting but the word to deluge the street with blood, showed the only means by which obedience could be secured.

'Oh! Lord of Hosts,' cried a voice among the crowd, 'provide a Champion for thy people!'

This ejaculation was loudly uttered, and served as a herald's cry, to introduce a remarkable personage. The crowd had rolled back, and were now huddled together nearly at the extremity of the street, while the soldiers had advanced no more than a third of its length. The intervening space was empty—a paved solitude, between lofty edifices, which threw almost a twilight shadow over it. Suddenly, there was seen the figure of an ancient man, who seemed to have emerged from among the people, and was walking by himself along the centre of the street, to confront the armed band. He wore the old Puritan dress, a dark cloak and a steeple-crowned hat, in the fashion of at least fifty years before, with a heavy sword upon his thigh, but a staff in his hand to assist the tremulous gait of age.

When at some distance from the multitude, the old man turned slowly round, displaying a face of antique majesty, rendered doubly venerable by the hoary beard that descended on his breast. He made a gesture at once of encouragement and warning, then turned again, and resumed his way.

'Who is this gray patriarch?' asked the young men of their sires.

'Who is this venerable brother?' asked the old men among themselves.

But none could make reply. The fathers of the people, those of fourscore years and upwards, were disturbed, deeming it strange that they should forget one of such evident authority, whom they must have known in their early days, the associate of Winthrop, and all the old councillors, giving laws, and making prayers, and leading them against the savage. The elderly men ought to have remembered him, too, with locks as gray in their youth, as their own were now. And the young! How could he have passed so utterly from their memories —that hoary sire, the relic of long-departed times, whose awful benediction had surely been bestowed on their uncovered heads, in childhood?

'Whence did he come? What is his purpose? Who can this old man be?' whispered the wondering crowd.

Meanwhile, the venerable stranger, staff in hand, was pursuing his solitary walk along the centre of the street. As he drew near the advancing soldiers, and as the roll of their drum came full upon his ear, the old man raised himself to a loftier mien, while the decrepitude of age seemed to fall from his shoulders, leaving him in gray but unbroken dignity. Now, he marched onward with a warrior's step, keeping time to the military music. Thus the aged form advanced on one side, and the whole parade of soldiers and magistrates on the other, till, when scarcely twenty yards remained between, the old man grasped his staff by the middle, and held it before him like a leader's truncheon.

'Stand!' cried he.

The eye, the face, and attitude of command; the solemn, yet warlike peal of that voice, fit either to rule a host in the battlefield or be raised to God in prayer, were irresistible. At the old man's word and outstretched arm, the roll of the drum was hushed at once, and the advancing line stood still. A tremulous enthusiasm seized upon the multitude. That stately form, com-

bining the leader and the saint, so gray, so dimly seen, in such an ancient garb, could only belong to some old champion of the righteous cause, whom the oppressor's drum had summoned from his grave. They raised a shout of awe and exultation, and looked for the deliverance of New England.

The Governor, and the gentlemen of his party, perceiving themselves brought to an unexpected stand, rode hastily forward, as if they would have pressed their snorting and affrighted horses right against the hoary apparition. He, however, blenched not a step, but glancing his severe eye round the group, which half encompassed him, at last bent it sternly on Sir Edmund Andros. One would have thought that the dark old man was chief ruler there, and that the Governor and Council, with soldiers at their back, representing the whole power and authority of the Crown, had no alternative but obedience.

'What does this old fellow here?' cried Edward Randolph, fiercely. 'On, Sir Edmund! Bid the soldiers forward, and give the dotard the same choice that you give all his countrymen—to stand aside or be trampled on!'

'Nay, nay, let us show respect to the good grandsire,' said Bullivant, laughing. 'See you not, he is some old round-headed dignitary, who hath lain asleep these thirty years, and knows nothing of the change of times? Doubtless, he thinks to put us down with a proclamation in Old Noll's name!'

'Are you mad, old man?' demanded Sir Edmund Andros, in loud and harsh tones. 'How dare you stay the march of King James's Governor?'

'I have stayed the march of a King himself, ere now,' replied the gray figure, with stern composure. 'I am here, Sir Governor, because the cry of an oppressed people hath disturbed me in my secret place; and beseeching this favor earnestly of the Lord, it was vouchsafed me to appear once again on earth, in the good old cause of his saints. And what speak ye of James? There is no longer a Popish tyrant on the throne of England, and by to-morrow noon, his name shall be a byword in this very street, where ye would make it a word of terror. Back, thou that wast a Governor, back! With this night thy power is ended—to-morrow, the prison!—back, lest I foretell the scaffold!'

The people had been drawing nearer and nearer, and drinking in the words of their champion, who spoke in accents long disused, like one unaccustomed to converse, except with the dead of many years ago. But his voice stirred their souls. They confronted the soldiers, not wholly without arms, and ready to convert the very stones of the street into deadly weapons. Sir Edmund Andros looked at the old man; then he cast his hard and cruel eye over the multitude, and beheld them burning with that lurid wrath, so difficult to kindle or to quench; and again he fixed his gaze on the aged form, which stood obscurely in an open space, where neither friend nor foe had thrust himself. What were his thoughts, he uttered no word which might discover. But whether the oppressor were overawed by the Gray Champion's look, or perceived his peril in the threatening attitude of the people, it is certain that he gave back, and ordered his soldiers to commence a slow and guarded retreat. Before another sunset, the Governor, and all that rode so proudly with him, were prisoners, and long ere it was known that James had abdicated, King William was proclaimed throughout New England.

But where was the Gray Champion? Some reported that, when the troops had gone from King Street, and the people were thronging tumultuously in their rear, Bradstreet, the aged Governor, was seen to embrace a form more aged than his own. Others soberly affirmed, that while they marvelled at the venerable grandeur of his aspect, the old man had faded from their eyes, melting slowly into the hues of twilight, till, where he stood, there was an empty space. But all agreed that the hoary shape was gone. The men of that generation watched for his reappearance, in sunshine and in twilight, but never saw him more, nor knew when his funeral passed, nor where his gravestone was.

And who was the Gray Champion? Perhaps his name might be found in the records of that stern Court of Justice, which passed a sentence, too mighty for the age, but glorious in all after-times, for its humbling lesson to the monarch and its high example to the subject. I have heard, that whenever the descendants of the Puritans are to show the spirit of their sires, the

old man appears again. When eighty years had passed, he walked once more in King Street. Five years later, in the twilight of an April morning, he stood on the green, beside the meeting-house, at Lexington, where now the obelisk of granite, with a slab of slate inlaid, commemorates the first fallen of the Revolution. And when our fathers were toiling at the breastwork on Bunker's Hill, all through that night the old warrior walked his rounds. Long, long may it be, ere he comes again! His hour is one of darkness, and adversity, and peril. But should domestic tyranny oppress us, or the invader's step pollute our soil, still may the Gray Champion come, for he is the type of New England's hereditary spirit; and his shadowy march, on the eve of danger, must ever be the pledge, that New England's sons will vindicate their ancestry.

1837

FROM THE SCARLET LETTER

THE LEECH AND HIS PATIENT [1]

OLD Roger Chillingworth, throughout life, had been calm in temperament, kindly, though not of warm affections, but ever, and in all his relations with the world, a pure and upright man. He had begun an investigation, as he imagined, with the severe and equal integrity of a judge, desirous only of truth, even as if the question involved no more than the air-drawn lines and figures of a geometrical problem, instead of human passions, and wrongs inflicted on himself. But, as he proceeded, a terrible fascination, a kind of fierce, though still calm, necessity seized the old man within its gripe, and never set him free again until he had done all its bidding. He now dug into the poor clergyman's heart, like a miner searching for gold; or, rather, like a sexton delving into a grave, possibly in quest of a jewel that had been buried on the dead man's bosom, but likely to find nothing save mortality and corruption. Alas for his own soul, if these were what he sought!

Sometimes a light glimmered out of the physician's eyes, burning blue and ominous, like the reflection of a furnace, or, let us say, like one of those gleams of ghastly fire that darted from Bunyan's awful doorway in the hill-side, and quivered on the pilgrim's face. The soil where this dark miner was working had perchance shown indications that encouraged him.

'This man,' said he, at one such moment, to himself, 'pure as they deem him,—all spiritual as he seems,—hath inherited a strong animal nature from his father or his mother. Let us dig a little further in the direction of this vein!'

Then, after long search into the minister's dim interior, and turning over many precious materials, in the shape of high aspirations for the welfare of his race, warm love of souls, pure sentiments, natural piety, strengthened by thought and study, and illuminated by revelation,—all of which invaluable gold was perhaps no better than rubbish to the seeker,—he would turn back discouraged, and begin his quest towards another point. He groped along as stealthily, with as cautious a tread, and as wary an outlook, as a thief entering a chamber where a man lies only half asleep,—or, it may be, broad awake,—with purpose to steal the very treasure which this man guards as the apple of his eye. In spite of his premeditated carefulness, the floor would now and then creak; his garments would rustle; the shadow of his presence, in a forbidden proximity, would be thrown across his victim. In other words, Mr. Dimmesdale, whose sensibility of nerve often produced the effect of spiritual intuition, would become vaguely aware that something inimical to his peace had thrust itself into relation with him. But old Roger Chillingworth, too, had perceptions that were almost intuitive; and when the minister threw his startled eyes towards him, there the physician sat; his kind, watchful, sympathizing, but never intrusive friend.

Yet Mr. Dimmesdale would perhaps have seen this individual's character more perfectly, if a certain morbidness, to which sick hearts are liable, had not rendered him suspicious of all mankind. Trusting no man as his friend, he could not recognize his enemy when the latter actually appeared. He therefore still kept up a familiar intercourse with him, daily receiving the old physician in his study; or visiting the laboratory, and, for recreation's sake, watching the pro-

1 The selection is Chapter 10 from *The Scarlet Letter* (Boston, 1850).

cesses by which weeds were converted into drugs of potency.

One day, leaning his forehead on his hand, and his elbow on the sill of the open window, that looked towards the graveyard, he talked with Roger Chillingworth, while the old man was examining a bundle of unsightly plants.

'Where,' asked he, with a look askance at them,—for it was the clergyman's peculiarity that he seldom, nowadays, looked straightforth at any object, whether human or inanimate,—'where, my kind doctor, did you gather those herbs, with such a dark, flabby leaf?'

'Even in the graveyard here at hand,' answered the physician continuing his employment. 'They are new to me. I found them growing on a grave, which bore no tombstone, nor other memorial of the dead man, save these ugly weeds, that have taken upon themselves to keep him in remembrance. They grew out of his heart, and typify, it may be, some hideous secret that was buried with him, and which he had done better to confess during his lifetime.'

'Perchance,' said Mr. Dimmesdale, 'he earnestly desired it, but could not.'

'And wherefore?' rejoined the physician. 'Wherefore not; since all the powers of nature call so earnestly for the confession of sin, that these black weeds have sprung up out of a buried heart, to make manifest an unspoken crime?'

'That, good Sir, is but a fantasy of yours,' replied the minister. 'There can be, if I forebode aright, no power, short of the Divine mercy, to disclose, whether by uttered words, or by type or emblem, the secrets that may be buried with a human heart. The heart, making itself guilty of such secrets, must perforce hold them, until the day when all hidden things shall be revealed. Nor have I so read or interpreted Holy Writ, as to understand that the disclosure of human thoughts and deeds, then to be made, is intended as a part of the retribution. That, surely, were a shallow view of it. No; these revelations, unless I greatly err, are meant merely to promote the intellectual satisfaction of all intelligent beings, who will stand waiting, on that day, to see the dark problem of this life made plain. A knowledge of men's hearts will be needful to the completest solution of that problem. And I conceive, moreover, that the hearts holding such miserable secrets as you speak of will yield them up, at that last day, not with reluctance, but with a joy unutterable.'

'Then why not reveal them here?' asked Roger Chillingworth, glancing quietly aside at the minister. 'Why should not the guilty ones sooner avail themselves of this unutterable solace?'

'They mostly do,' said the clergyman, griping hard at his breast as if afflicted with an importunate throb of pain. 'Many, many a poor soul hath given its confidence to me, not only on the death-bed, but while strong in life, and fair in reputation. And ever, after such an outpouring, oh, what a relief have I witnessed in those sinful brethren! even as in one who at last draws free air, after long stifling with his own polluted breath. How can it be otherwise? Why should a wretched man, guilty, we will say, of murder, prefer to keep the dead corpse buried in his own heart, rather than fling it forth at once, and let the universe take care of it!'

'Yet some men bury their secrets thus,' observed the calm physician.

'True; there are such men,' answered Mr. Dimmesdale. 'But, not to suggest more obvious reasons, it may be that they are kept silent by the very constitution of their nature. Or,—can we not suppose it?—guilty as they may be, retaining, nevertheless, a zeal for God's glory and man's welfare, they shrink from displaying themselves black and filthy in the view of men; because, thenceforward, no good can be achieved by them; no evil of the past be redeemed by better service. So, to their own unutterable torment, they go about among their fellow-creatures, looking pure as new-fallen snow while their hearts are all speckled and spotted with iniquity of which they cannot rid themselves.'

'These men deceive themselves,' said Roger Chillingworth, with somewhat more emphasis than usual, and making a slight gesture with his forefinger. 'They fear to take up the shame that rightfully belongs to them. Their love for man, their zeal for God's service,—these holy impulses may or may not coexist in their hearts with the evil inmates to which their guilt has unbarred the door, and which must needs

propagate a hellish breed within them. But, if they seek to glorify God, let them not lift heavenward their unclean hands! If they would serve their fellowmen, let them do it by making manifest the power and reality of conscience, in constraining them to penitential self-abasement! Wouldst thou have me to believe, O wise and pious friend, that a false show can be better—can be more for God's glory, or man's welfare—than God's own truth? Trust me, such men deceive themselves!'

'It may be so,' said the young clergyman, indifferently, as waiving a discussion that he considered irrelevant or unreasonable. He had a ready faculty, indeed, of escaping from any topic that agitated his too sensitive and nervous temperament. 'But, now, I would ask of my well-skilled physician, whether, in good sooth, he deems me to have profited by his kindly care of this weak frame of mine?'

Before Roger Chillingworth could answer, they heard the clear, wild laughter of a young child's voice, proceeding from the adjacent burial-ground. Looking instinctively from the open window,—for it was summer-time,—the minister beheld Hester Prynne and little Pearl passing along the footpath that traversed the enclosure. Pearl looked as beautiful as the day, but was in one of those moods of perverse merriment which, whenever they occurred, seemed to remove her entirely out of the sphere of sympathy or human contact. She now skipped irreverently from one grave to another; until, coming to the broad, flat, armorial tombstone of a departed worthy, —perhaps of Isaac Johnson himself,—she began to dance upon it. In reply to her mother's command and entreaty that she would behave more decorously, little Pearl paused to gather the prickly burrs from a tall burdock which grew beside the tomb. Taking a handful of these, she arranged them along the lines of the scarlet letter that decorated the maternal bosom, to which the burrs, as their nature was, tenaciously adhered. Hester did not pluck them off.

Roger Chillingworth had by this time approached the window, and smiled grimly down.

'There is no law, nor reverence for authority, no regard for human ordinances or opinions, right or wrong, mixed up with that child's composition,' remarked he, as much to himself as to his companion. 'I saw her, the other day, bespatter the Governor himself with water, at the cattle-trough in Spring Lane. What, in Heaven's name, is she? Is the imp altogether evil? Hath she affections? Hath she any discoverable principle of being?'

'None,—save the freedom of a broken law,' answered Mr. Dimmesdale, in a quiet way, as if he had been discussing the point within himself. 'Whether capable of good, I know not.'

The child probably overheard their voices; for, looking up to the window, with a bright, but naughty smile of mirth and intelligence, she threw one of the prickly burrs at the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. The sensitive clergyman shrunk, with nervous dread, from the light missile. Detecting his emotion, Pearl clapped her little hands in the most extravagant ecstasy. Hester Prynne, likewise, had involuntarily looked up; and all these four persons, old and young, regarded one another in silence, till the child laughed aloud; and shouted,—'Come away, mother! Come away, or yonder old Black Man will catch you! He hath got hold of the minister already. Come away, mother, or he will catch you! But he cannot catch little Pearl!'

So she drew her mother away, skipping, dancing, and frisking fantastically, among the hillocks of the dead people, like a creature that had nothing in common with a bygone and buried generation, nor owned herself akin to it. It was as if she had been made afresh, out of new elements, and must perforce be permitted to live her own life, and be a law unto herself, without her eccentricities being reckoned to her for a crime.

'There goes a woman,' resumed Roger Chillingworth, after a pause, 'who, be her demerits what they may, hath none of that mystery of hidden sinfulness which you deem so grievous to be borne. Is Hester Prynne the less miserable, think you, for that scarlet letter on her breast?'

'I do verily believe it,' answered the clergyman. 'Nevertheless I cannot answer for her. There was a look of pain in her face, which I would gladly have been spared the sight of. But still, methinks, it must

needs be better for the sufferer to be free to show his pain, as this poor woman Hester is, than to cover it all up in his heart.'

There was another pause; and the physician began anew to examine and arrange the plants which he had gathered.

'You inquired of me, a little time agone,' said he, at length, 'my judgment as touching your health.'

'I did,' answered the clergyman, 'and would gladly learn it. Speak frankly, I pray you, be it for life or death.'

'Freely, then, and plainly,' said the physician, still busy with his plants, but keeping a wary eye on Mr. Dimmesdale, 'the disorder is a strange one; not so much in itself, nor as outwardly manifested,—in so far, at least, as the symptoms have been laid open to my observation. Looking daily at you, my good Sir, and watching the tokens of your aspect, now for months gone by, I should deem you a man sore sick, it may be, yet not so sick but that an instructed and watchful physician might well hope to cure you. But—I know not what to say—the disease is what I seem to know, yet know it not.'

'You speak in riddles, learned Sir,' said the pale minister, glancing aside out of the window.

'Then to speak more plainly,' continued the physician, 'and I crave pardon, Sir,—should it seem to require pardon,—for this needful plainness of my speech. Let me ask,—as your friend,—as one having charge, under Providence, of your life and physical well-being,—hath all the operation of this disorder been fairly laid open and recounted to me?'

'How can you question it?' asked the minister. 'Surely, it were child's play to call in a physician, and then hide the sore!'

'You would tell me, then, that I know all?' said Roger Chillingworth, deliberately, and fixing an eye, bright with intense and concentrated intelligence, on the minister's face. 'Be it so! But, again! He to whom only the outward and physical evil is laid open, knoweth, oftentimes, but half the evil which he is called upon to cure. A bodily disease, which we look upon as whole and entire within itself, may, after all, be but a symptom of some ailment in the spiritual part. Your pardon, once again, good Sir, if my speech give the shadow of offence. You, Sir, of all men whom I have known, are he whose body is the closest conjoined, and imbued, and identified, so to speak, with the spirit whereof it is the instrument.'

'Then I need ask no further,' said the clergyman, somewhat hastily rising from his chair. 'You deal not, I take it, in medicine for the soul!'

'Thus, a sickness,' continued Roger Chillingworth, going on, in an unaltered tone, without heeding the interruption,—but standing up, and confronting the emaciated and white-cheeked minister, with his low, dark, and misshapen figure,—'a sickness, a sore place, if we may so call it, in your spirit, hath immediately its appropriate manifestation in your bodily frame. Would you, therefore, that your physician heal the bodily evil? How may this be, unless you first lay open to him the wound or trouble in your soul?'

'No!—not to thee!—not to an earthly physician!' cried Mr. Dimmesdale, passionately, and turning his eyes, full and bright, and with a kind of fierceness, on old Roger Chillingworth. 'Not to thee! But, if it be the soul's disease, then do I commit myself to the one Physician of the soul! He, if it stand with his good pleasure, can cure; or he can kill! Let him do with me as, in his justice and wisdom, he shall see good. But who art thou, that meddlest in this matter?—that dares thrust himself between the sufferer and his God?'

With a frantic gesture he rushed out of the room.

'It is as well to have made this step,' said Roger Chillingworth to himself, looking after the minister with a grave smile. 'There is nothing lost. We shall be friends again anon. But see, now, how passion takes hold upon this man, and hurrieth him out of himself! As with one passion, so with another! He hath done a wild thing erenow, this pious Master Dimmesdale, in the hot passion of his heart!'

It proved not difficult to reëstablish the intimacy of the two companions, on the same footing and in the same degree as heretofore. The young clergyman, after a few hours of privacy, was sensible that the disorder of his nerves had hurried him into an unseemly outbreak of temper, which there had been nothing in the physician's

words to excuse or palliate. He marvelled, indeed, at the violence with which he had thrust back the kind old man, when merely proffering the advice which it was his duty to bestow, and which the minister himself had expressly sought. With these remorseful feelings, he lost no time in making the amplest apologies, and besought his friend still to continue the care, which, if not successful in restoring him to health, had, in all probability, been the means of prolonging his feeble existence to that hour. Roger Chillingworth readily assented, and went on with his medical supervision of the minister; doing his best for him, in all good faith, but always quitting the patient's apartment, at the close of a professional interview, with a mysterious and puzzled smile upon his lips. This expression was invisible in Mr. Dimmesdale's presence, but grew strongly evident as the physician crossed the threshold.

'A rare case!' he muttered. 'I must needs look deeper into it. A strange sympathy betwixt soul and body! Were it only for the art's sake, I must search this matter to the bottom!'

It came to pass, not long after the scene above recorded, that the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, at noonday, and entirely unawares, fell into a deep, deep slumber, sitting in his chair, with a large black-letter volume open before him on the table. It must have been a work of vast ability in the somniferous school of literature. The profound depth of the minister's repose was the more remarkable, inasmuch as he was one of those persons whose sleep, ordinarily, is as light, as fitful, and as easily scared away, as a small bird hopping on a twig. To such an unwonted remoteness, however, had his spirit now withdrawn into itself, that he stirred not in his chair when old Roger Chillingworth, without any extraordinary precaution, came into the room. The physician advanced directly in front of his patient, laid his hand upon his bosom, and thrust aside the vestment that, hitherto, had always covered it even from the professional eye.

Then, indeed, Mr. Dimmesdale shuddered, and slightly stirred.

After a brief pause, the physician turned away.

But with what a wild look of wonder, joy, and horror! With what a ghastly rapture, as it were, too mighty to be expressed only by the eye and features, and therefore bursting forth through the whole ugliness of his figure, and making itself even riotously manifest by the extravagant gestures with which he threw up his arms towards the ceiling, and stamped his foot upon the floor! Had a man seen old Roger Chillingworth, at that moment of his ecstasy, he would have had no need to ask how Satan comports himself when a precious human soul is lost to heaven, and won into his kingdom.

But what distinguished the physician's ecstasy from Satan's was the trait of wonder in it!

1850

ETHAN BRAND

BARTRAM the lime-burner, a rough, heavy-looking man, begrimed with charcoal, sat watching his kiln, at nightfall, while his little son played at building houses with the scattered fragments of marble, when, on the hill-side below them, they heard a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest.

'Father, what is that?' asked the little boy, leaving his play, and pressing betwixt his father's knees.

'Oh, some drunken man, I suppose,' answered the lime-burner; 'some merry fellow from the bar-room in the village, who dared not laugh loud enough within doors lest he should blow the roof of the house off. So here he is, shaking his jolly sides at the foot of Graylock.'

'But, father,' said the child, more sensitive than the obtuse, middle-aged clown, 'he does not laugh like a man that is glad. So the noise frightens me!'

'Don't be a fool, child!' cried his father, gruffly. 'You will never make a man, I do believe; there is too much of your mother in you. I have known the rustling of a leaf startle you. Hark! Here comes the merry fellow now. You shall see that there is no harm in him.'

Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus, sat watching the same lime-kiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life, before

he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin. Many years, as we have seen, had now elapsed, since that portentous night when the IDEA was first developed. The kiln, however, on the mountain-side, stood unimpaired, and was in nothing changed since he had thrown his dark thoughts into the intense glow of its furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life. It was a rude, round, tower-like structure about twenty feet high, heavily built of rough stones, and with a hillock of earth heaped about the larger part of its circumference; so that the blocks and fragments of marble might be drawn by cart-loads, and thrown in at the top. There was an opening at the bottom of the tower, like an oven-mouth, but large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture, and provided with a massive iron door. With the smoke and jets of flame issuing from the chinks and crevices of this door, which seemed to give admittance into the hill-side, it resembled nothing so much as the private entrance to the infernal regions, which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains were accustomed to show to pilgrims.

There are many such lime-kilns in that tract of country, for the purpose of burning the white marble which composes a large part of the substance of the hills. Some of them, built years ago, and long deserted, with weeds growing in the vacant round of the interior, which is open to the sky, and grass and wildflowers rooting themselves into the chinks of the stones, look already like relics of antiquity, and may yet be overspread with the lichens of centuries to come. Others, where the lime-burner still feeds his daily and night-long fire, afford points of interest to the wanderer among the hills, who seats himself on a log of wood or a fragment of marble, to hold a chat with the solitary man. It is a lonesome, and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation; as it proved in the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purpose, in days gone by, while the fire in this very kiln was burning.

The man who now watched the fire was of a different order, and troubled himself with no thoughts save the very few that were requisite to his business. At frequent intervals, he flung back the clashing weight of the iron door, and, turning his face from the insufferable glare, thrust in huge logs of oak, or stirred the immense brands with a long pole. Within the furnace were seen the curling and riotous flames, and the burning marble, almost molten with the intensity of heat; while without, the reflection of the fire quivered on the dark intricacy of the surrounding forest, and showed in the foreground a bright and ruddy little picture of the hut, the spring beside its door, the athletic and coal-begrimed figure of the lime-burner, and the half-frightened child, shrinking into the protection of his father's shadow. And when again the iron door was closed, then reappeared the tender light of the half-full moon, which vainly strove to trace out the indistinct shapes of the neighboring mountains; and, in the upper sky, there was a flitting congregation of clouds, still faintly tinged with the rosy sunset, though thus far down into the valley the sunshine had vanished long and long ago.

The little boy now crept still closer to his father, as footsteps were heard ascending the hill-side, and a human form thrust aside the bushes that clustered beneath the trees.

'Halloo! who is it?' cried the lime-burner, vexed at his son's timidity, yet half infected by it. 'Come forward, and show yourself, like a man, or I'll fling this chunk of marble at your head!'

'You offer me a rough welcome,' said a gloomy voice, as the unknown man drew nigh. 'Yet I neither claim nor desire a kinder one, even at my own fireside.'

To obtain a distincter view, Bartram threw open the iron door of the kiln, whence immediately issued a gush of fierce light, that smote full upon the stranger's face and figure. To a careless eye there appeared nothing very remarkable in his aspect, which was that of a man in a coarse, brown, country-made suit of clothes, tall and thin, with the staff and heavy shoes of a wayfarer. As he advanced, he fixed his eyes—which were very bright—intently upon the brightness of the furnace, as if he beheld, or expected to behold, some object worthy of note within it.

'Good evening, stranger,' said the lime-burner; 'whence come you, so late in the day?'

'I come from my search,' answered the wayfarer; 'for, at last, it is finished.'

'Drunk!—or crazy!' muttered Bartram to himself. 'I shall have trouble with the fellow. The sooner I drive him away, the better.'

The little boy, all in a tremble, whispered to his father, and begged him to shut the door of the kiln, so that there might not be so much light; for that there was something in the man's face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from. And, indeed, even the lime-burner's dull and torpid sense began to be impressed by an indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage, with the grizzled hair hanging wildly about it, and those deeply sunken eyes, which gleamed like fires within the entrance of a mysterious cavern. But, as he closed the door, the stranger turned towards him, and spoke in a quiet, familiar way, that made Bartram feel as if he were a sane and sensible man, after all.

'Your task draws to an end, I see,' said he. 'This marble has already been burning three days. A few hours more will convert the stone to lime.'

'Why, who are you?' exclaimed the lime-burner. 'You seem as well acquainted with my business as I am myself.'

'And well I may be,' said the stranger; 'for I followed the same craft many a long year, and here, too, on this very spot. But you are a new-comer in these parts. Did you never hear of Ethan Brand?'

'The man that went in search of the Unpardonable Sin?' asked Bartram, with a laugh.

'The same,' answered the stranger. 'He has found what he sought, and therefore he comes back again.'

'What! then you are Ethan Brand himself?' cried the lime-burner, in amazement. 'I am a new-comer here, as you say, and they call it eighteen years since you left the foot of Graylock. But, I can tell you, the good folks still talk about Ethan Brand, in the village yonder, and what a strange errand took him away from his lime-kiln. Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?'

'Even so!' said the stranger, calmly.

'If the question is a fair one,' proceeded Bartram, 'where might it be?'

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart.

'Here!' replied he.

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into every heart, save his own, for what was hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn. It was the same slow, heavy laugh, that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer's approach.

The solitary mountain-side was made dismal by it. Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child,—the madman's laugh,—the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot,—are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken, as this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.

'Joe,' said he to his little son, 'scamper down to the tavern in the village, and tell the jolly fellows there that Ethan Brand has come back, and that he has found the Unpardonable Sin!'

The boy darted away on his errand, to which Ethan Brand made no objection, nor seemed hardly to notice it. He sat on a log of wood, looking steadfastly at the iron door of the kiln. When the child was out of sight, and his swift and light footsteps ceased to be heard treading first on the fallen leaves and then on the rocky mountain-path, the lime-burner began to regret his departure. He felt that the little fellow's presence had been a barrier between his guest and himself, and that he must now deal, heart to heart, with a man who, on his own confession, had committed the one only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct blackness, seemed to overshadow him. The lime-burner's own sins rose up within him, and

made his memory riotous with a throng of evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin, whatever it might be, which it was within the scope of man's corrupted nature to conceive and cherish. They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand's, and carried dark greetings from one to the other.

Then Bartram remembered the stories which had grown traditionary in reference to this strange man, who had come upon him like a shadow of the night, and was making himself at home in his old place, after so long absence that the dead people, dead and buried for years, would have had more right to be at home, in any familiar spot, than he. Ethan Brand, it was said, had conversed with Satan himself in the lurid blaze of this very kiln. The legend had been matter of mirth heretofore, but looked grisly now. According to this tale, before Ethan Brand departed on his search, he had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the lime-kiln, night after night, in order to confer with him about the Unpardonable Sin; the man and the fiend each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven. And, with the first gleam of light upon the mountain-top, the fiend crept in at the iron door, there to abide the intensest element of fire, until again summoned forth to share in the dreadful task of extending man's possible guilt beyond the scope of Heaven's else infinite mercy.

While the lime-burner was struggling with the horror of these thoughts, Ethan Brand rose from the log, and flung open the door of the kiln. The action was in such accordance with the idea in Bartram's mind, that he almost expected to see the Evil One issue forth, red-hot, from the raging furnace.

'Hold! hold!' cried he, with a tremulous attempt to laugh; for he was ashamed of his fears, although they overmastered him. 'Don't, for mercy's sake, bring out your Devil now!'

'Man!' sternly replied Ethan Brand, 'what need have I of the Devil? I have left him behind me, on my track. It is with such half-way sinners as you that he busies himself. Fear not, because I open the door. I do but act by old custom, and am going to trim your fire, like a lime-burner, as I was once.'

He stirred the vast coals, thrust in more wood, and bent forward to gaze into the hollow prison-house of the fire, regardless of the fierce glow that reddened upon his face. The lime-burner sat watching him, and half suspected this strange guest of a purpose, if not to evoke a fiend, at least to plunge bodily into the flames, and thus vanish from the sight of man. Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back, and closed the door of the kiln.

'I have looked,' said he, 'into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin!'

'What is the Unpardonable Sin?' asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank farther from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered.

'It is a sin that grew within my own breast,' replied Ethan Brand, standing erect, with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. 'A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!'

'The man's head is turned,' muttered the lime-burner to himself. 'He may be a sinner like the rest of us,—nothing more likely,—but, I'll be sworn, he is a madman too.'

Nevertheless, he felt uncomfortable at his situation, alone with Ethan Brand on the wild mountain-side, and was right glad to hear the rough murmur of tongues, and the footsteps of what seemed a pretty numerous party, stumbling over the stones and rustling through the underbrush. Soon appeared the whole lazy regiment that was wont to infest the village tavern, comprehending three or four individuals who had drunk flip beside the bar-room fire through all the winters, and smoked their pipes beneath the stoop through all the summers, since Ethan Brand's departure. Laughing boisterously, and mingling all their voices together in unceremonious talk, they now

burst into the moonshine and narrow streaks of firelight that illuminated the open space before the lime-kiln. Bartram set the door ajar again, flooding the spot with light, that the whole company might get a fair view of Ethan Brand, and he of them.

There, among other old acquaintances, was a once ubiquitous man, now almost extinct, but whom we were formerly sure to encounter at the hotel of every thriving village throughout the country. It was the stage-agent. The present specimen of the genus was a wilted and smoke-dried man, wrinkled and red-nosed, in a smartly cut, brown, bobtailed coat, with brass buttons, who, for a length of time unknown, had kept his desk and corner in the bar-room, and was still puffing what seemed to be the same cigar that he had lighted twenty years before. He had great fame as a dry joker, though, perhaps, less on account of any intrinsic humor than from a certain flavor of brandy-toddy and tobacco-smoke, which impregnated all his ideas and expressions, as well as his person. Another well-remembered though strangely-altered face was that of Lawyer Giles, as people still called him in courtesy; an elderly ragamuffin, in his soiled shirt-sleeves and tow-cloth trousers. This poor fellow had been an attorney, in what he called his better days, a sharp practitioner, and in great vogue among the village litigants; but flip, and sling, and toddy, and cocktails, imbibed at all hours, morning, noon, and night, had caused him to slide from intellectual to various kinds and degrees of bodily labor, till at last, to adopt his own phrase, he slid into a soap-vat. In other words, Giles was now a soap-boiler, in a small way. He had come to be but the fragment of a human being, a part of one foot having been chopped off by an axe, and an entire hand torn away by the devilish grip of a steam-engine. Yet, though the corporeal hand was gone, a spiritual member remained; for, stretching forth the stump, Giles steadfastly averred that he felt an invisible thumb and fingers with as vivid a sensation as before the real ones were amputated. A maimed and miserable wretch he was; but one, nevertheless, whom the world could not trample on, and had no right to scorn, either in this or any previous stage of his misfortunes, since he had still kept up the courage and spirit of a man, asked nothing in charity, and with his one hand—and that the left one—fought a stern battle against want and hostile circumstances.

Among the throng, too, came another personage, who, with certain points of similarity to Lawyer Giles, had many more of difference. It was the village doctor; a man of some fifty years, whom, at an earlier period of his life, we introduced as paying a professional visit to Ethan Brand during the latter's supposed insanity. He was now a purple-visaged, rude, and brutal, yet half-gentlemanly figure, with something wild, ruined, and desperate in his talk, and in all the details of his gesture and manners. Brandy possessed this man like an evil spirit, and made him as surly and savage as a wild beast, and as miserable as a lost soul; but there was supposed to be in him such wonderful skill, such native gifts of healing, beyond any which medical science could impart, that society caught hold of him, and would not let him sink out of its reach. So, swaying to and fro upon his horse, and grumbling thick accents at the bedside, he visited all the sick-chambers for miles about among the mountain towns, and sometimes raised a dying man, as it were, by miracle, or quite as often, no doubt, sent his patient to a grave that was dug many a year too soon. The doctor had an everlasting pipe in his mouth, and, as somebody said, in allusion to his habit of swearing, it was always alight with hell-fire.

These three worthies pressed forward, and greeted Ethan Brand each after his own fashion, earnestly inviting him to partake of the contents of a certain black bottle, in which, as they averred, he would find something far better worth seeking for than the Unpardonable Sin. No mind, which has wrought itself by intense and solitary meditation into a high state of enthusiasm, can endure the kind of contact with low and vulgar modes of thought and feeling to which Ethan Brand was now subjected. It made him doubt—and, strange to say, it was a painful doubt—whether he had indeed found the Unpardonable Sin, and found it within himself. The whole question on which he had exhausted life, and more than life, looked like a delusion.

'Leave me,' he said bitterly, 'ye brute beasts, that have made yourselves so, shriv-

elling up your souls with fiery liquors! I have done with you. Years and years ago, I groped into your hearts, and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!'

'Why, you uncivil scoundrel,' cried the fierce doctor, 'is that the way you respond to the kindness of your best friends? Then let me tell you the truth. You have no more found the Unpardonable Sin than yonder boy Joe has. You are but a crazy fellow,—I told you so twenty years ago,—neither better nor worse than a crazy fellow, and the fit companion of old Humphrey, here!'

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long white hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travellers whom he met for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus-performers; and occasionally tidings of her came to the village, and fine stories were told of her glittering appearance as she rode on horseback in the ring, or performed marvellous feats on the tight-rope.

The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand, and gazed unsteadily into his face.

'They tell me you have been all over the earth,' said he, wringing his hands with earnestness. 'You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand figure in the world, and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?'

Ethan Brand's eye quailed beneath the old man's. That daughter, from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting, was the Esther of our tale, the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process.

'Yes,' murmured he, turning away from the hoary wanderer, 'it is no delusion. There is an Unpardonable Sin!'

While these things were passing, a merry scene was going forward in the area of cheerful light, beside the spring and before the door of the hut. A number of the youth of the village, young men and girls, had hurried up the hill-side, impelled by curiosity to see Ethan Brand, the hero of so many a legend familiar to their childhood. Finding nothing, however, very remarkable in his aspect,—nothing but a sunburnt wayfarer, in plain garb and dusty shoes, who sat looking into the fire as if he fancied pictures among the coals,—these young people speedily grew tired of observing him. As it happened, there was other amusement at hand. An old German Jew, travelling with a diorama on his back, was passing down the mountain-road towards the village just as the party turned aside from it, and, in hopes of eking out the profits of the day, the showman had kept them company to the lime-kiln.

'Come, old Dutchman,' cried one of the young men, 'let us see your pictures, if you can swear they are worth looking at!'

'Oh, yes, Captain,' answered the Jew,—whether as a matter of courtesy or craft, he styled everybody Captain,—'I shall show you, indeed, some very superb pictures!'

So, placing his box in a proper position, he invited the young men and girls to look through the glass orifices of the machine, and proceeded to exhibit a series of the most outrageous scratchings and daubings, as specimens of the fine arts, that ever an itinerant showman had the face to impose upon his circle of spectators. The pictures were worn out, moreover, tattered, full of cracks and wrinkles, dingy with tobacco-smoke, and otherwise in a most pitiable condition. Some purported to be cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe; others represented Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights; and in the midst of these would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand,—which might have been mistaken for the Hand of Destiny, though, in truth, it was only the showman's,—pointing its forefinger to various scenes of the conflict, while its owner gave historical illustrations. When, with much merriment at its abominable deficiency of merit, the exhibition was concluded, the German bade little Joe put his head into the box. Viewed through the magnifying-glasses, the boy's round, rosy visage assumed the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth grinning broadly, and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke. Suddenly, however, that merry face turned pale, and its expression changed to horror, for this easily impressed and excitable child had become

sensible that the eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him through the glass.

'You make the little man to be afraid, Captain,' said the German Jew, turning up the dark and strong outline of his visage, from his stooping posture. 'But look again, and, by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word!'

Ethan Brand gazed into the box for an instant, and then starting back, looked fixedly at the German. What had he seen? Nothing, apparently; for a curious youth, who had peeped in almost at the same moment, beheld only a vacant space of canvas.

'I remember you now,' muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

'Ah, Captain,' whispered the Jew of Nuremburg, with a dark smile, 'I find it to be a heavy matter in my show-box,—this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, Captain, it has wearied my shoulders, this long day, to carry it over the mountain.'

'Peace,' answered Ethan Brand, sternly, 'or get thee into the furnace yonder!'

The Jew's exhibition had scarcely concluded, when a great, elderly dog—who seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him—saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto, he had shown himself a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going round from one to another, and, by way of being sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped, of his own mere motion, and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which, to heighten the absurdity of the proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it should have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping,—as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. Faster and faster, round about went the cur; and faster and still faster fled the unapproachable brevity of his tail; and louder and fiercer grew his yells of rage and animosity; until, utterly exhausted, and as far from the goal as ever, the foolish old dog ceased his performance as suddenly as he had begun it. The next moment he was as mild, quiet, sensible, and respectable in his deportment, as when he first scraped acquaintance with the company.

As may be supposed, the exhibition was greeted with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore, to which the canine performer responded by wagging all that there was to wag of his tail, but appeared totally unable to repeat his very successful effort to amuse the spectators.

Meanwhile, Ethan Brand had resumed his seat upon the log, and moved, it might be, by a perception of some remote analogy between his own case and that of this self-pursuing cur, he broke into the awful laugh, which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment, the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears. Then, whispering one to another that it was late,—that the moon was almost down,—that the August night was growing chill,—they hurried homewards, leaving the lime-burner and little Joe to deal as they might with their unwelcome guest. Save for these three human beings, the open space on the hill-side was a solitude, set in a vast gloom of forest. Beyond that darksome verge, the firelight glimmered on the stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines, intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees, decaying on the leaf-strewn soil. And it seemed to little Joe—a timorous and imaginative child—that the silent forest was holding its breath until some fearful thing should happen.

Ethan Brand thrust more wood into the fire, and closed the door of the kiln; then looking over his shoulder at the lime-burner and his son, he bade, rather than advised, them to retire to rest.

'For myself, I cannot sleep,' said he. 'I have matters that it concerns me to meditate upon. I will watch the fire, as I used to do in the old time.'

'And call the Devil out of the furnace to keep you company, I suppose,' muttered Bartram, who had been making intimate

acquaintance with the black bottle above mentioned. 'But watch, if you like, and call as many devils as you like! For my part, I shall be all the better for a snooze. Come, Joe!'

As the boy followed his father into the hut, he looked back at the wayfarer, and the tears came into his eyes, for his tender spirit had an intuition of the bleak and terrible loneliness in which this man had enveloped himself.

When they had gone, Ethan Brand sat listening to the crackling of the kindled wood, and looking at the little spirts of fire that issued through the chinks of the door. These trifles, however, once so familiar, had but the slightest hold of his attention, while deep within his mind he was reviewing the gradual but marvellous change that had been wrought upon him by the search to which he had devoted himself. He remembered how the night dew had fallen upon him,—how the dark forest had whispered to him,—how the stars had gleamed upon him,—a simple and loving man, watching his fire in the years gone by, and ever musing as it burned. He remembered with what tenderness, with what love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe, he had first begun to contemplate those ideas which afterwards became the inspiration of his life; with what reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine, and, however desecrated, still to be held sacred by a brother; with what awful fear he had deprecated the success of his pursuit, and prayed that the Unpardonable Sin might never be revealed to him. Then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered,—had contracted,—had hardened,—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brotherman, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He began to be so from the moment that his moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect. And now, as his highest effort and inevitable development,—as the bright and gorgeous flower, and rich, delicious fruit of his life's labor,—he had produced the Unpardonable Sin!

'What more have I to seek? what more to achieve?' said Ethan Brand to himself. 'My task is done, and well done!'

Starting from the log with a certain alacrity in his gait and ascending the hillock of earth that was raised against the stone circumference of the lime-kiln, he thus reached the top of the structure. It was a space of perhaps ten feet across, from edge to edge, presenting a view of the upper surface of the immense mass of broken marble with which the kiln was heaped. All these innumerable blocks and fragments of marble were red-hot and vividly on fire, sending up great spouts of blue flame, which quivered aloft and danced madly, as within a magic circle, and sank and rose again, with continual and multitudinous activity. As the lonely man bent forward over this terrible body of fire, the blasting heat smote up against his person with a breath that, it might be supposed, would have scorched and shrivelled him up in a moment.

Ethan Brand stood erect, and raised his arms on high. The blue flames played upon his face, and imparted the wild and ghastly light which alone could have suited its expression; it was that of a fiend on the verge of plunging into his gulf of intensest torment.

'O Mother Earth,' cried he, 'who art no more my Mother, and into whose bosom this frame shall never be resolved! O mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off, and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet! O stars of heaven, that shone on me of

old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and forever. Come, deadly element of Fire,—henceforth my familiar frame! Embrace me, as I do thee!'

That night the sound of a fearful peal of laughter rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son; dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted their dreams, and seemed still present in the rude hovel, when they opened their eyes to the daylight.

'Up, boy, up!' cried the lime-burner, staring about him. 'Thank Heaven, the night is gone, at last; and rather than pass such another, I would watch my lime-kiln, wide awake, for a twelvemonth. This Ethan Brand, with his humbug of an Unpardonable Sin, has done me no such mighty favor, in taking my place!'

He issued from the hut, followed by little Joe, who kept fast hold of his father's hand. The early sunshine was already pouring its gold upon the mountain-tops, and though the valleys were still in shadow, they smiled cheerfully in the promise of the bright day that was hastening onward. The village, completely shut in by hills, which swelled away gently about it, looked as if it had rested peacefully in the hollow of the great hand of Providence. Every dwelling was distinctly visible; the little spires of the two churches pointed upwards, and caught a fore-glimmering of brightness from the sun-gilt skies upon their gilded weather-cocks. The tavern was astir, and the figure of the old, smoke-dried stage-agent, cigar in mouth, was seen beneath the stoop. Old Graylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains, there were heaps of hoary mist, in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up towards the summits, and still others, of the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at it.

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely, which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stage-coach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while Echo caught up the notes, and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony, of which the original performer could lay claim to little share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness.

Little Joe's face brightened at once.

'Dear father,' cried he, skipping cheerily to and fro, 'that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!'

'Yes,' growled the lime-burner, with an oath, 'but he has let the fire go down, and no thanks to him if five hundred bushels of lime are not spoiled. If I catch the fellow hereabouts again, I shall feel like tossing him into the furnace!'

With his long pole in his hand, he ascended to the top of the kiln. After a moment's pause, he called to his son.

'Come up here, Joe!' said he.

So little Joe ran up the hillock, and stood by his father's side. The marble was all burnt into perfect, snow-white lime. But on its surface, in the midst of the circle,—snow-white too, and thoroughly converted into lime,—lay a human skeleton, in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose. Within the ribs—strange to say—was the shape of a human heart.

'Was the fellow's heart made of marble?' cried Bartram, in some perplexity at this phenomenon. 'At any rate, it is burnt into what looks like special good lime; and, taking all the bones together, my kiln is half a bushel the richer for him.'

So saying, the rude lime-burner lifted his pole, and, letting it fall upon the skeleton, the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments.

1852

FROM THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

THE PENNY SHOP [1]

I

The Little Shop-Window

IT still lacked half an hour of sunrise, when Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon—we will not say

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the

awoke, it being doubtful whether the poor lady had so much as closed her eyes during the brief night of midsummer—but, at all events, arose from her solitary pillow, and began what it would be mockery to term the adornment of her person. Far from us be the indecorum of assisting, even in imagination, at a maiden lady's toilet! Our story must therefore await Miss Hepzibah at the threshold of her chamber; only presuming, meanwhile, to note some of the heavy sighs that labored from her bosom, with little restraint as to their lugubrious depth and volume of sound, inasmuch as they could be audible to nobody save a disembodied listener like ourself. The Old Maid was alone in the old house. Alone, except for a certain respectable and orderly young man, an artist in the daguerreotype line, who, for about three months back, had been a lodger in a remote gable,—quite a house by itself, indeed,—with locks, bolts, and oaken bars on all the intervening doors. Inaudible, consequently, were poor Miss Hepzibah's gusty sighs. Inaudible the creaking joints of her stiffened knees, as she knelt down by the bedside. And inaudible, too, by mortal ear, but heard with all-comprehending love and pity in the farthest heaven, that almost agony of prayer—now whispered, now a groan, now a struggling silence—wherewith she besought the Divine assistance through the day! Evidently, this is to be a day of more than ordinary trial to Miss Hepzibah, who, for above a quarter of a century gone by, has dwelt in strict seclusion, taking no part in the business of life, and just as little in its intercourse and pleasures. Not with such fervor prays the torpid recluse, looking forward to the cold, sunless, stagnant calm of a day that is to be like innumerable yesterdays!

The maiden lady's devotions are concluded. Will she now issue forth over the threshold of our story? Not yet, by many moments. First, every drawer in the tall, old-fashioned bureau is to be opened, with difficulty, and with a succession of spasmodic jerks; then, all must close again, with the same fidgety reluctance. There is a rustling of stiff silks; a tread of backward and forward footsteps to and fro across the chamber. We suspect Miss Hepzibah, moreover, of taking a step upward into a chair, in order to give heedful regard to her appearance on all sides, and at full length, in the oval, dingy-framed toilet-glass, that hangs above her table. Truly! well, indeed! who would have thought it! Is all this precious time to be lavished on the matutinal repair and beautifying of an elderly person, who never goes abroad, whom nobody ever visits, and from whom, when she shall have done her utmost, it were the best charity to turn one's eyes another way?

Now she is almost ready. Let us pardon her one other pause; for it is given to the sole sentiment, or, we might better say,—heightened and rendered intense, as it has been, by sorrow and seclusion,—to the strong passion of her life. We heard the turning of a key in a small lock; she has opened a secret drawer of an escritoire, and is probably looking at a certain miniature, done in Malbone's most perfect style, and representing a face worthy of no less delicate a pencil. It was once our good fortune to see this picture. It is a likeness of a young man, in a silken dressing-gown of an old fashion, the soft richness of which is well adapted to the countenance of reverie, with its full, tender lips, and beautiful eyes, that seem to indicate not so much capacity of thought, as gentle and voluptuous emotion. Of the possessor of such features we shall have a right to ask nothing, except that he would take the rude world easily, and make himself happy in it. Can it have been an early lover of Miss Hepzibah? No; she never had a lover—poor thing, how could she?—nor ever knew, by her own experience, what love technically means. And yet, her undying faith and trust, her fresh remembrance, and continual devotedness towards the original of that miniature, have been the only substance for her heart to feed upon.

She seems to have put aside the miniature, and is standing again before the toilet-glass. There are tears to be wiped off. A few more footsteps to and fro; and here, at last, —with another pitiful sigh, like a gust of chill, damp wind out of a long-closed vault, the door of which has accidentally been set ajar,—here comes Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon! Forth she steps into the dusky, time-darkened passage; a tall figure, clad in black silk, with a long and shrunken waist, feel-

editors, is Chapters 2–3 from *The House of the Seven Gables*(Boston, 1851).

ing her way towards the stairs like a near-sighted person, as in truth she is.

The sun, meanwhile, if not already above the horizon, was ascending nearer and nearer to its verge. A few clouds, floating high upward, caught some of the earliest light, and threw down its golden gleam on the windows of all the houses in the street, not forgetting the House of the Seven Gables, which—many such sunrises as it had witnessed—looked cheerfully at the present one. The reflected radiance served to show, pretty distinctly, the aspect and arrangement of the room which Hepzibah entered, after descending the stairs. It was a low-studded room, with a beam across the ceiling, panelled with dark wood, and having a large chimney-piece, set round with pictured tiles, but now closed by an iron fire-board, through which ran the funnel of a modern stove. There was a carpet on the floor, originally of rich texture, but so worn and faded in these latter years that its once brilliant figure had quite vanished into one indistinguishable hue. In the way of furniture, there were two tables: one, constructed with perplexing intricacy and exhibiting as many feet as a centipede; the other, most delicately wrought, with four long and slender legs, so apparently frail that it was almost incredible what a length of time the ancient tea-table had stood upon them. Half a dozen chairs stood about the room, straight and stiff, and so ingeniously contrived for the discomfort of the human person that they were irksome even to sight, and conveyed the ugliest possible idea of the state of society to which they could have been adapted. One exception there was, however, in a very antique elbow-chair, with a high back, carved elaborately in oak, and a roomy depth within its arms, that made up, by its spacious comprehensiveness, for the lack of any of those artistic curves which abound in a modern chair.

As for ornamental articles of furniture, we recollect but two, if such they may be called. One was a map of the Pyncheon territory at the eastward, not engraved, but the handiwork of some skilful old draughtsman, and grotesquely illuminated with pictures of Indians and wild beasts, among which was seen a lion; the natural history of the region being as little known as its geography, which was put down most fantastically awry. The other adornment was the portrait of old Colonel Pyncheon, at two thirds length, representing the stern features of a Puritanic-looking personage, in a skull-cap, with a laced band and a grizzly beard; holding a Bible with one hand, and in the other uplifting an iron sword-hilt. The latter object, being more successfully depicted by the artist, stood out in far greater prominence than the sacred volume. Face to face with this picture, on entering the apartment, Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon came to a pause; regarding it with a singular scowl, a strange contortion of the brow, which, by people who did not know her, would probably have been interpreted as an expression of bitter anger and ill-will. But it was no such thing. She, in fact, felt a reverence for the pictured visage, of which only a far-descended and time-stricken virgin could be susceptible; and this forbidding scowl was the innocent result of her near-sightedness, and an effort so to concentrate her powers of vision as to substitute a firm outline of the object instead of a vague one.

We must linger a moment on this unfortunate expression of poor Hepzibah's brow. Her scowl,—as the world, or such part of it as sometimes caught a transitory glimpse of her at the window, wickedly persisted in calling it,—her scowl had done Miss Hepzibah a very ill office, in establishing her character as an ill-tempered old maid; nor does it appear improbable that, by often gazing at herself in a dim looking-glass, and perpetually encountering her own frown within its ghostly sphere, she had been led to interpret the expression almost as unjustly as the world did. 'How miserably cross I look!' she must often have whispered to herself; and ultimately have fancied herself so, by a sense of inevitable doom. But her heart never frowned. It was naturally tender, sensitive, and full of little tremors and palpitations; all of which weaknesses it retained, while her visage was growing so perversely stern, and even fierce. Nor had Hepzibah ever any hardihood, except what came from the very warmest nook in her affections.

All this time, however, we are loitering faint-heartedly on the threshold of our story. In very truth, we have an invincible

reluctance to disclose what Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon was about to do.

It has already been observed, that, in the basement story of the gable fronting on the street, an unworthy ancestor, nearly a century ago, had fitted up a shop. Ever since the old gentleman retired from trade, and fell asleep under his coffin-lid, not only the shop-door, but the inner arrangements, had been suffered to remain unchanged; while the dust of ages gathered inch-deep over the shelves and counter, and partly filled an old pair of scales, as if it were of value enough to be weighed. It treasured itself up, too, in the half-open till, where there still lingered a base sixpence, worth neither more nor less than the hereditary pride which had here been put to shame. Such had been the state and condition of the little shop in old Hepzibah's childhood, when she and her brother used to play at hide-and-seek in its forsaken precincts. So it had remained, until within a few days past.

But now, though the shop-window was still closely curtained from the public gaze, a remarkable change had taken place in its interior. The rich and heavy festoons of cobweb, which it had cost a long ancestral succession of spiders their life's labor to spin and weave, had been carefully brushed away from the ceiling. The counter, shelves, and floor had all been scoured, and the latter was overstrewn with fresh blue sand. The brown scales, too, had evidently undergone rigid discipline, in an unavailing effort to rub off the rust, which, alas! had eaten through and through their substance. Neither was the little old shop any longer empty of merchantable goods. A curious eye, privileged to take an account of stock, and investigate behind the counter, would have discovered a barrel,—yea, two or three barrels and half ditto,—one containing flour, another apples, and a third, perhaps, Indian meal. There was likewise a square box of pine-wood, full of soap in bars; also, another of the same size, in which were tallow-candles, ten to the pound. A small stock of brown sugar, some white beans and split peas, and a few other commodities of low price, and such as are constantly in demand, made up the bulkier portion of the merchandise. It might have been taken for a ghostly or phantasmagoric reflection of the old shop-keeper Pyncheon's shabbily provided shelves, save that some of the articles were of a description and outward form which could hardly have been known in his day. For instance, there was a glass pickle-jar, filled with fragments of Gibraltar rock; not, indeed, splinters of the veritable stone foundation of the famous fortress, but bits of delectable candy, neatly done up in white paper. Jim Crow, moreover, was seen executing his world-renowned dance, in gingerbread. A party of leaden dragoons were galloping along one of the shelves, in equipments and uniform of modern cut; and there were some sugar figures, with no strong resemblance to the humanity of any epoch, but less unsatisfactorily representing our own fashions than those of a hundred years ago. Another phenomenon, still more strikingly modern, was a package of lucifer matches, which, in old times, would have been thought actually to borrow their instantaneous flame from the nether fires of Tophet.

In short, to bring the matter at once to a point, it was incontrovertibly evident that somebody had taken the shop and fixtures of the long-retired and forgotten Mr. Pyncheon, and was about to renew the enterprise of that departed worthy, with a different set of customers. Who could this bold adventurer be? And, of all places in the world, why had he chosen the House of the Seven Gables as the scene of his commercial speculations?

We return to the elderly maiden. She at length withdrew her eyes from the dark countenance of the Colonel's portrait, heaved a sigh,—indeed, her breast was a very cave of Æolus that morning,—and stept across the room on tiptoe, as is the customary gait of elderly women. Passing through an intervening passage, she opened a door that communicated with the shop, just now so elaborately described. Owing to the projection of the upper story—and still more to the thick shadow of the Pyncheon Elm, which stood almost directly in front of the gable—the twilight, here, was still as much akin to night as morning. Another heavy sigh from Miss Hepzibah! After a moment's pause on the threshold, peering towards the window with her near-sighted scowl, as if frowning down some bitter enemy, she suddenly projected herself into the shop. The haste, and, as it were, the

galvanic impulse of the movement, were really quite startling.

Nervously—in a sort of frenzy, we might almost say—she began to busy herself in arranging some children's playthings, and other little wares, on the shelves and at the shop-window. In the aspect of this dark-arrayed, pale-faced, lady-like old figure there was a deeply tragic character that contrasted irreconcilably with the ludicrous pettiness of her employment. It seemed a queer anomaly, that so gaunt and dismal a personage should take a toy in hand; a miracle, that the toy did not vanish in her grasp; a miserably absurd idea, that she should go on perplexing her stiff and sombre intellect with the question how to tempt little boys into her premises! Yet such is undoubtedly her object. Now she places a gingerbread elephant against the window, but with so tremulous a touch that it tumbles upon the floor, with the dismemberment of three legs and its trunk; it has ceased to be an elephant, and has become a few bits of musty gingerbread. There, again, she has upset a tumbler of marbles, all of which roll different ways, and each individual marble, devil-directed, into the most difficult obscurity that it can find. Heaven help our poor old Hepzibah, and forgive us for taking a ludicrous view of her position! As her rigid and rusty frame goes down upon its hands and knees, in quest of the absconding marbles, we positively feel so much the more inclined to shed tears of sympathy, from the very fact that we must needs turn aside and laugh at her. For here,—and if we fail to impress it suitably upon the reader, it is our own fault, not that of the theme,—here is one of the truest points of melancholy interest that occur in ordinary life. It was the final throe of what called itself old gentility. A lady—who had fed herself from childhood with the shadowy food of aristocratic reminiscences, and whose religion it was that a lady's hand soils itself irremediably by doing aught for bread—this born lady, after sixty years of narrowing means, is fain to step down from her pedestal of imaginary rank. Poverty, treading closely at her heels for a lifetime, has come up with her at last. She must earn her own food, or starve! And we have stolen upon Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon, too irreverently, at the instant of time when the patrician lady is to be transformed into the plebeian woman.

In this republican country, amid the fluctuating waves of our social life, somebody is always at the drowning-point. The tragedy is enacted with as continual a repetition as that of a popular drama on a holiday; and, nevertheless, is felt as deeply, perhaps, as when an hereditary noble sinks below his order. More deeply; since, with us, rank is the grosser substance of wealth and a splendid establishment, and has no spiritual existence after the death of these, but dies hopelessly along with them. And, therefore, since we have been unfortunate enough to introduce our heroine at so inauspicious a juncture, we would entreat for a mood of due solemnity in the spectators of her fate. Let us behold, in poor Hepzibah, the immemorial lady,—two hundred years old, on this side of the water, and thrice as many on the other,—with her antique portraits, pedigrees, coats of arms, records and traditions, and her claim, as joint heiress, to that princely territory at the eastward, no longer a wilderness, but a populous fertility,—born, too, in Pyncheon Street, under the Pyncheon Elm, and in the Pyncheon House, where she has spent all her days,—reduced now, in that very house, to be the hucksteress of a cent-shop.

This business of setting up a petty shop is almost the only resource of women, in circumstances at all similar to those of our unfortunate recluse. With her near-sightedness, and those tremulous fingers of hers, at once inflexible and delicate, she could not be a seamstress; although her sampler, of fifty years gone by, exhibited some of the most recondite specimens of ornamental needlework. A school for little children had been often in her thoughts; and, at one time, she had begun a review of her early studies in the New England Primer, with a view to prepare herself for the office of instructress. But the love of children had never been quickened in Hepzibah's heart, and was now torpid, if not extinct; she watched the little people of the neighborhood from her chamber-window, and doubted whether she could tolerate a more intimate acquaintance with them. Besides, in our day, the very A B C has become a science greatly too abstruse to be any longer taught by pointing a pin from letter to

letter. A modern child could teach old Hepzibah more than old Hepzibah could teach the child. So—with many a cold, deep heart-quake at the idea of at last coming into sordid contact with the world, from which she had so long kept aloof, while every added day of seclusion had rolled another stone against the cavern-door of her hermitage—the poor thing bethought herself of the ancient shop-window, the rusty scales, and dusty till. She might have held back a little longer; but another circumstance, not yet hinted at, had somewhat hastened her decision. Her humble preparations, therefore, were duly made, and the enterprise was now to be commenced. Nor was she entitled to complain of any remarkable singularity in her fate; for, in the town of her nativity, we might point to several little shops of a similar description, some of them in houses as ancient as that of the Seven Gables; and one or two, it may be, where a decayed gentlewoman stands behind the counter, as grim an image of family pride as Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon herself.

It was overpoweringly ridiculous—we must honestly confess it—the deportment of the maiden lady while setting her shop in order for the public eye. She stole on tiptoe to the window, as cautiously as if she conceived some bloody-minded villain to be watching behind the elm-tree, with intent to take her life. Stretching out her long, lank arm, she put a paper of pearl buttons, a jew's-harp, or whatever the small article might be, in its destined place, and straightway vanished back into the dusk, as if the world need never hope for another glimpse of her. It might have been fancied, indeed, that she expected to minister to the wants of the community unseen, like a disembodied divinity or enchantress, holding forth her bargains to the reverential and awe-stricken purchaser in an invisible hand. But Hepzibah had no such flattering dream. She was well aware that she must ultimately come forward, and stand revealed in her proper individuality; but, like other sensitive persons, she could not bear to be observed in the gradual process, and chose rather to flash forth on the world's astonished gaze at once.

The inevitable moment was not much longer to be delayed. The sunshine might now be seen stealing down the front of the opposite house, from the windows of which came a reflected gleam, struggling through the boughs of the elm-tree, and enlightening the interior of the shop more distinctly than heretofore. The town appeared to be waking up. A baker's cart had already rattled through the street, chasing away the latest vestige of night's sanctity with the jingle-jangle of its dissonant bells. A milkman was distributing the contents of his cans from door to door; and the harsh peal of a fisherman's conch-shell was heard far off, around the corner. None of these tokens escaped Hepzibah's notice. The moment had arrived. To delay longer would be only to lengthen out her misery. Nothing remained, except to take down the bar from the shop-door, leaving the entrance free—more than free—welcome, as if all were household friends—to every passer-by, whose eyes might be attracted by the commodities at the window. This last act Hepzibah now performed, letting the bar fall with what smote upon her excited nerves as a most astounding clatter. Then—as if the only barrier betwixt herself and the world had been thrown down, and a flood of evil consequences would come tumbling through the gap—she fled into the inner parlor, threw herself into the ancestral elbow-chair, and wept.

Our miserable old Hepzibah! It is a heavy annoyance to a writer, who endeavors to represent nature, its various attitudes and circumstances, in a reasonably correct outline and true coloring, that so much of the mean and ludicrous should be hopelessly mixed up with the purest pathos which life anywhere supplies to him. What tragic dignity, for example, can be wrought into a scene like this! How can we elevate our history of retribution for the sin of long ago, when, as one of our most prominent figures, we are compelled to introduce—not a young and lovely woman, nor even the stately remains of beauty, storm-shattered by affliction—but a gaunt, sallow, rusty-jointed maiden, in a long-waisted silk gown, and with the strange horror of a turban on her head! Her visage is not even ugly. It is redeemed from insignificance only by the contraction of her eyebrows into a near-sighted scowl. And, finally, her great life-trial seems to be, that, after sixty years of

idleness, she finds it convenient to earn comfortable bread by setting up a shop in a small way. Nevertheless, if we look through all the heroic fortunes of mankind, we shall find this same entanglement of something mean and trivial with whatever is noblest in joy or sorrow. Life is made up of marble and mud. And, without all the deeper trust in a comprehensive sympathy above us, we might hence be led to suspect the insult of a sneer, as well as an immitigable frown, on the iron countenance of fate. What is called poetic insight is the gift of discerning, in this sphere of strangely mingled elements, the beauty and the majesty which are compelled to assume a garb so sordid.

2

The First Customer

MISS HEPZIBAH PYNCHEON sat in the oaken elbow-chair, with her hands over her face, giving way to that heavy down-sinking of the heart which most persons have experienced, when the image of hope itself seems ponderously moulded of lead, on the eve of an enterprise at once doubtful and momentous. She was suddenly startled by the tinkling alarum—high, sharp, and irregular—of a little bell. The maiden lady arose upon her feet, as pale as a ghost at cock-crow; for she was an enslaved spirit, and this the talisman to which she owed obedience. This little bell,—to speak in plainer terms,—being fastened over the shop-door, was so contrived as to vibrate by means of a steel spring, and thus convey notice to the inner regions of the house when any customer should cross the threshold. Its ugly and spiteful little din (heard now for the first time, perhaps, since Hepzibah's periwigged predecessor had retired from trade) at once set every nerve of her body in responsive and tumultuous vibration. The crisis was upon her! Her first customer was at the door!

Without giving herself time for a second thought, she rushed into the shop, pale, wild, desperate in gesture and expression, scowling portentously, and looking far better qualified to do fierce battle with a housebreaker than to stand smiling behind the counter, bartering small wares for a copper recompense. Any ordinary customer, indeed, would have turned his back and fled. And yet there was nothing fierce in Hepzibah's poor old heart; nor had she, at the moment, a single bitter thought against the world at large, or one individual man or woman. She wished them all well, but wished, too, that she herself were done with them, and in her quiet grave.

The applicant, by this time, stood within the door-way. Coming freshly, as he did, out of the morning light, he appeared to have brought some of its cheery influences into the shop along with him. It was a slender young man, not more than one or two and twenty years old, with rather a grave and thoughtful expression for his years, but likewise a springy alacrity and vigor. These qualities were not only perceptible, physically, in his make and motions, but made themselves felt almost immediately in his character. A brown beard, not too silken in its texture, fringed his chin, but as yet without completely hiding it; he wore a short mustache, too, and his dark, high-featured countenance looked all the better for these natural ornaments. As for his dress, it was of the simplest kind; a summer sack of cheap and ordinary material, thin checkered pantaloons, and a straw hat, by no means of the finest braid. Oak Hall might have supplied his entire equipment. He was chiefly marked as a gentleman—if such, indeed, he made any claim to be—by the rather remarkable whiteness and nicety of his clean linen.

He met the scowl of old Hepzibah without apparent alarm, as having heretofore encountered it and found it harmless.

'So, my dear Miss Pyncheon,' said the daguerreotypist,—for it was that sole other occupant of the seven-gabled mansion,—'I am glad to see that you have not shrunk from your good purpose. I merely look in to offer my best wishes, and to ask if I can assist you any further in your preparations.'

People in difficulty and distress, or in any manner at odds with the world, can endure a vast amount of harsh treatment, and perhaps be only the stronger for it; whereas they give way at once before the simplest expression of what they perceive to be genuine sympathy. So it proved with poor Hepzibah; for, when she saw the young man's smile,—looking so much the brighter on a thoughtful face,—and heard his kindly

tone, she broke first into a hysteric giggle and then began to sob.

'Ah, Mr. Holgrave,' cried she, as soon as she could speak, 'I never can go through with it! Never, never, never! I wish I were dead, and in the old family-tomb, with all my forefathers! With my father, and my mother, and my sister! Yes, and with my brother, who had far better find me there than here! The world is too chill and hard, —and I am too old, and too feeble, and too hopeless!'

'Oh, believe me, Miss Hepzibah,' said the young man, quietly, 'these feelings will not trouble you any longer, after you are once fairly in the midst of your enterprise. They are unavoidable at this moment, standing, as you do, on the outer verge of your long seclusion, and peopling the world with ugly shapes, which you will soon find to be as unreal as the giants and ogres of a child's story-book. I find nothing so singular in life, as that everything appears to lose its substance the instant one actually grapples with it. So it will be with what you think so terrible.'

'But I am a woman!' said Hepzibah, piteously. 'I was going to say, a lady,—but I consider that as past.'

'Well; no matter if it be past!' answered the artist, a strange gleam of half-hidden sarcasm flashing through the kindliness of his manner. 'Let it go! You are the better without it. I speak frankly, my dear Miss Pyncheon! for are we not friends? I look upon this as one of the fortunate days of your life. It ends an epoch and begins one. Hitherto, the life-blood has been gradually chilling in your veins as you sat aloof, within your circle of gentility, while the rest of the world was fighting out its battle with one kind of necessity or another. Henceforth, you will at least have the sense of healthy and natural effort for a purpose, and of lending your strength—be it great or small—to the united struggle of mankind. This is success,—all the success that anybody meets with!'

'It is natural enough, Mr. Holgrave, that you should have ideas like these,' rejoined Hepzibah, drawing up her gaunt figure, with slightly offended dignity. 'You are a man, a young man, and brought up, I suppose, as almost everybody is nowadays, with a view to seeking your fortune. But I was born a lady, and have always lived one; no matter in what narrowness of means, always a lady!'

'But I was not born a gentleman; neither have I lived like one,' said Holgrave, slightly smiling; 'so, my dear madam, you will hardly expect me to sympathize with sensibilities of this kind; though, unless I deceive myself, I have some imperfect comprehension of them. These names of gentleman and lady had a meaning, in the past history of the world, and conferred privileges, desirable or otherwise, on those entitled to bear them. In the present—and still more in the future condition of society—they imply, not privilege, but restriction!'

'These are new notions,' said the old gentlewoman, shaking her head. 'I shall never understand them; neither do I wish it.'

'We will cease to speak of them, then,' replied the artist, with a friendlier smile than his last one, 'and I will leave you to feel whether it is not better to be a true woman than a lady. Do you really think, Miss Hepzibah, that any lady of your family has ever done a more heroic thing, since this house was built, than you are performing in it to-day? Never; and if the Pyncheons had always acted so nobly, I doubt whether an old wizard Maule's anathema, of which you told me once, would have had much weight with Providence against them.'

'Ah!—no, no!' said Hepzibah, not displeased at this allusion to the sombre dignity of an inherited curse. 'If old Maule's ghost, or a descendant of his, could see me behind the counter to-day, he would call it the fulfilment of his worst wishes. But I thank you for your kindness, Mr. Holgrave, and will do my utmost to be a good shopkeeper.'

'Pray do,' said Holgrave, 'and let me have the pleasure of being your first customer. I am about taking a walk to the seashore, before going to my rooms, where I misuse Heaven's blessed sunshine by tracing out human features through its agency. A few of those biscuits dipt in sea-water, will be just what I need for breakfast. What is the price of half a dozen?'

'Let me be a lady a moment longer,' replied Hepzibah, with a manner of antique stateliness to which a melancholy smile

lent a kind of grace. She put the biscuits into his hand, but rejected the compensation. 'A Pyncheon must not, at all events under her forefathers' roof, receive money for a morsel of bread from her only friend!'

Holgrave took his departure, leaving her, for the moment, with spirits not quite so much depressed. Soon, however, they had subsided nearly to their former dead level. With a beating heart, she listened to the footsteps of early passengers, which now began to be frequent along the street. Once or twice they seemed to linger; these strangers, or neighbors, as the case might be, were looking at the display of toys and petty commodities in Hepzibah's shop-window. She was doubly tortured; in part, with a sense of overwhelming shame that strange and unloving eyes should have the privilege of gazing, and partly because the idea occurred to her, with ridiculous importunity, that the window was not arranged so skilfully, nor nearly to so much advantage, as it might have been. It seemed as if the whole fortune or failure of her shop might depend on the display of a different set of articles, or substituting a fairer apple for one which appeared to be specked. So she made the change, and straightway fancied that everything was spoiled by it; not recognizing that it was the nervousness of the juncture, and her own native squeamishness as an old maid, that wrought all the seeming mischief.

Anon, there was an encounter, just at the door-step, betwixt two laboring men, as their rough voices denoted them to be. After some slight talk about their own affairs, one of them chanced to notice the shop-window, and directed the other's attention to it.

'See here!' cried he; 'what do you think of this? Trade seems to be looking up in Pyncheon Street!'

'Well, well, this is a sight, to be sure!' exclaimed the other. 'In the old Pyncheon House, and underneath the Pyncheon Elm! Who would have thought it? Old Maid Pyncheon is setting up a cent-shop!'

'Will she make it go, think you, Dixey?' said his friend. 'I don't call it a very good stand. There's another shop just round the corner.'

'Make it go!' cried Dixey, with a most contemptuous expression, as if the very idea were impossible to be conceived. 'Not a bit of it! Why, her face—I've seen it, for I dug her garden for her one year—her face is enough to frighten the Old Nick himself, if he had ever so great a mind to trade with her. People can't stand it, I tell you! She scowls dreadfully, reason or none, out of pure ugliness of temper!'

'Well, that's not so much matter,' remarked the other man. 'These sour-tempered folks are mostly handy at business, and know pretty well what they are about. But, as you say, I don't think she'll do much. This business of keeping cent-shops is overdone, like all other kinds of trade, handicraft, and bodily labor. I know it, to my cost! My wife kept a cent-shop three months, and lost five dollars on her outlay!'

'Poor business!' responded Dixey, in a tone as if he were shaking his head,—'poor business!'

For some reason or other, not very easy to analyze, there had hardly been so bitter a pang in all her previous misery about the matter as what thrilled Hepzibah's heart, on overhearing the above conversation. The testimony in regard to her scowl was frightfully important; it seemed to hold up her image wholly relieved from the false light of her self-partialities, and so hideous that she dared not look at it. She was absurdly hurt, moreover, by the slight and idle effect that her setting up shop—an event of such breathless interest to herself—appeared to have upon the public, of which these two men were the nearest representatives. A glance; a passing word or two; a coarse laugh; and she was doubtless forgotten before they turned the corner! They cared nothing for her dignity, and just as little for her degradation. Then, also, the augury of ill-success, uttered from the sure wisdom of experience, fell upon her half-dead hope like a clod into a grave. The man's wife had already tried the same experiment, and failed! How could the born lady,—the recluse of half a lifetime, utterly unpractised in the world, at sixty years of age,—how could she ever dream of succeeding, when the hard, vulgar, keen, busy, hackneyed New England woman had lost five dollars on her little outlay! Success presented itself as an impossibility, and the hope of it as a wild hallucination.

Some malevolent spirit, doing his utmost

to drive Hepzibah mad, unrolled before her imagination a kind of panorama, representing the great thoroughfare of a city all astir with customers. So many and so magnificent shops as there were! Groceries, toy-shops, dry-goods stores, with their immense panes of plate-glass, their gorgeous fixtures, their vast and complete assortments of merchandise, in which fortunes had been invested; and those noble mirrors at the further end of each establishment, doubling all this wealth by a brightly burnished vista of unrealities! On one side of the street this splendid bazaar, with a multitude of perfumed and glossy salesmen, smirking, smiling, bowing, and measuring out the goods. On the other, the dusky old House of the Seven Gables, with the antiquated shop-window under its projecting story, and Hepzibah herself, in a gown of rusty black silk, behind the counter, scowling at the world as it went by! This mighty contrast thrust itself forward as a fair expression of the odds against which she was to begin her struggle for a subsistence. Success? Preposterous! She would never think of it again! The house might just as well be buried in an eternal fog while all other houses had the sunshine on them; for not a foot would ever cross the threshold, nor a hand so much as try the door!

But, at this instant, the shop-bell, right over her head, tinkled as if it were bewitched. The old gentlewoman's heart seemed to be attached to the same steel spring, for it went through a series of sharp jerks, in unison with the sound. The door was thrust open, although no human form was perceptible on the other side of the half-window. Hepzibah, nevertheless, stood at a gaze, with her hands clasped, looking very much as if she had summoned up an evil spirit, and were afraid, yet resolved, to hazard the encounter.

'Heaven help me!' she groaned, mentally. 'Now is my hour of need!'

The door, which moved with difficulty on its creaking and rusty hinges, being forced quite open, a square and sturdy little urchin became apparent, with cheeks as red as an apple. He was clad rather shabbily (but, as it seemed, more owing to his mother's carelessness than his father's poverty), in a blue apron, very wide and short trousers, shoes somewhat out at the toes, and a chip-hat, with the frizzles of his curly hair sticking through its crevices. A book and a small slate, under his arm, indicated that he was on his way to school. He stared at Hepzibah a moment, as an elder customer than himself would have been likely enough to do, not knowing what to make of the tragic attitude and queer scowl wherewith she regarded him.

'Well, child,' said she, taking heart at sight of a personage so little formidable,—'well, my child, what did you wish for?'

'That Jim Crow there in the window,' answered the urchin, holding out a cent, and pointing to the gingerbread figure that had attracted his notice, as he loitered along to school; 'the one that has not a broken foot.'

So Hepzibah put forth her lank arm, and, taking the effigy from the shop-window, delivered it to her first customer.

'No matter for the money,' said she, giving him a little push towards the door; for her old gentility was contumaciously squeamish at sight of the copper coin, and, besides, it seemed such pitiful meanness to take the child's pocket-money in exchange for a bit of stale gingerbread. 'No matter for the cent. You are welcome to Jim Crow.'

The child, staring with round eyes at this instance of liberality, wholly unprecedented in his large experience of cent-shops, took the man of gingerbread, and quitted the premises. No sooner had he reached the sidewalk (little cannibal that he was!) than Jim Crow's head was in his mouth. As he had not been careful to shut the door, Hepzibah was at the pains of closing it after him, with a pettish ejaculation or two about the troublesomeness of young people, and particularly of small boys. She had just placed another representative of the renowned Jim Crow at the window, when again the shop-bell tinkled clamorously, and again the door being thrust open, with its characteristic jerk and jar, disclosed the same sturdy little urchin who, precisely two minutes ago, had made his exit. The crumbs and discoloration of the cannibal feast, as yet hardly consummated, were exceedingly visible about his mouth.

'What is it now, child?' asked the maiden lady, rather impatiently; 'did you come back to shut the door?'

'No,' answered the urchin, pointing to the figure that had just been put up; 'I want that other Jim Crow.'

'Well, here it is for you,' said Hepzibah, reaching it down; but recognizing that this pertinacious customer would not quit her on any other terms, so long as she had a gingerbread figure in her shop, she partly drew back her extended hand, 'Where is the cent?'

The little boy had the cent ready, but, like a true-born Yankee, would have preferred the better bargain to the worse. Looking somewhat chagrined, he put the coin into Hepzibah's hand, and departed, sending the second Jim Crow in quest of the former one. The new shopkeeper dropped the first solid result of her commercial enterprise into the till. It was done! The sordid stain of that copper coin could never be washed away from her palm. The little school-boy, aided by the impish figure of the negro dancer, had wrought an irreparable ruin. The structure of ancient aristocracy had been demolished by him, even as if his childish gripe had torn down the seven-gabled mansion. Now let Hepzibah turn the old Pyncheon portraits with their faces to the wall, and take the map of her Eastern territory to kindle the kitchen fire, and blow up the flame with the empty breath of her ancestral traditions! What had she to do with ancestry? Nothing; no more than with posterity! No lady, now, but simply Hepzibah Pyncheon, a forlorn old maid, and keeper of a cent-shop!

Nevertheless, even while she paraded these ideas somewhat ostentatiously through her mind, it is altogether surprising what a calmness had come over her. The anxiety and misgivings which had tormented her, whether asleep or in melancholy day-dreams, ever since her project began to take an aspect of solidity, had now vanished quite away. She felt the novelty of her position, indeed, but no longer with disturbance or affright. Now and then, there came a thrill of almost youthful enjoyment. It was the invigorating breath of a fresh outward atmosphere, after the long torpor and monotonous seclusion of her life. So wholesome is effort! So miraculous the strength that we do not know of! The healthiest glow that Hepzibah had known for years had come now in the dreaded crisis, when, for the first time, she had put forth her hand to help herself. The little circlet of the school-boy's copper coin—dim and lustreless though it was, with the small services which it had been doing here and there about the world—had proved a talisman, fragrant with good, and deserving to be set in gold and worn next her heart. It was as potent, and perhaps endowed with the same kind of efficacy, as a galvanic ring! Hepzibah, at all events, was indebted to its subtile operation both in body and spirit; so much the more, as it inspired her with energy to get some breakfast, at which, still the better to keep up her courage, she allowed herself an extra spoonful in her infusion of black tea.

Her introductory day of shop-keeping did not run on, however, without many and serious interruptions of this mood of cheerful vigor. As a general rule, Providence seldom vouchsafes to mortals any more than just that degree of encouragement which suffices to keep them at a reasonably full exertion of their powers. In the case of our old gentlewoman, after the excitement of new effort had subsided, the despondency of her whole life threatened, ever and anon, to return. It was like the heavy mass of clouds which we may often see obscuring the sky, and making a gray twilight everywhere, until, towards nightfall, it yields temporarily to a glimpse of sunshine. But, always, the envious cloud strives to gather again across the streak of celestial azure.

Customers came in, as the forenoon advanced, but rather slowly; in some cases, too, it must be owned, with little satisfaction either to themselves or Miss Hepzibah; nor, on the whole, with an aggregate of very rich emolument to the till. A little girl, sent by her mother to match a skein of cotton thread, of a peculiar hue, took one that the near-sighted old lady pronounced extremely like, but soon came running back, with a blunt and cross message, that it would not do, and, besides, was very rotten! Then, there was a pale, care-wrinkled woman, not old but haggard, and already with streaks of gray among her hair, like silver ribbons; one of those women, naturally delicate, whom you at once recognize as worn to death by a brute—probably a drunken brute—of a husband, and at least

nine children. She wanted a few pounds of flour, and offered the money, which the decayed gentlewoman silently rejected, and gave the poor soul better measure than if she had taken it. Shortly afterwards, a man in a blue cotton frock, much soiled, came in and bought a pipe, filling the whole shop, meanwhile, with the hot odor of strong drink, not only exhaled in the torrid atmosphere of his breath, but oozing out of his entire system, like an inflammable gas. It was impressed on Hepzibah's mind that this was the husband of the care-wrinkled woman. He asked for a paper of tobacco; and as she had neglected to provide herself with the article, her brutal customer dashed down his newly-bought pipe and left the shop, muttering some unintelligible words, which had the tone and bitterness of a curse. Hereupon Hepzibah threw up her eyes, unintentionally scowling in the face of Providence!

No less than five persons, during the forenoon, inquired for ginger-beer, or root-beer, or any drink of a similar brewage, and, obtaining nothing of the kind, went off in an exceedingly bad humor. Three of them left the door open, and the other two pulled it so spitefully in going out that the little bell played the very deuce with Hepzibah's nerves. A round, bustling, fire-ruddy housewife of the neighborhood, burst breathless into the shop, fiercely demanding yeast; and when the poor gentlewoman, with her cold shyness of manner, gave her hot customer to understand that she did not keep the article, this very capable housewife took upon herself to administer a regular rebuke.

'A cent-shop, and no yeast!' quoth she; 'that will never do! Who ever heard of such a thing? Your loaf will never rise, no more than mine will to-day. You had better shut up shop at once.'

'Well,' said Hepzibah, heaving a deep sigh, 'perhaps I had!'

Several times, moreover, besides the above instance, her lady-like sensibilities were seriously infringed upon by the familiar, if not rude, tone with which people addressed her. They evidently considered themselves not merely her equals, but her patrons and superiors. Now, Hepzibah had unconsciously flattered herself with the idea that there would be a gleam or halo, of some kind or other, about her person, which would insure an obeisance to her sterling gentility, or, at least, a tacit recognition of it. On the other hand, nothing tortured her more intolerably than when this recognition was too prominently expressed. To one or two rather officious offers of sympathy, her responses were little short of acrimonious; and, we regret to say, Hepzibah was thrown into a positively unchristian state of mind by the suspicion that one of her customers was drawn to the shop, not by any real need of the article which she pretended to seek, but by a wicked wish to stare at her. The vulgar creature was determined to see for herself what sort of a figure a mildewed piece of aristocracy, after wasting all the bloom and much of the decline of her life apart from the world, would cut behind a counter. In this particular case, however mechanical and innocuous it might be at other times, Hepzibah's contortion of brow served her in good stead.

'I never was so frightened in my life!' said the curious customer, in describing the incident to one of her acquaintances. 'She's a real old vixen, take my word of it! She says little, to be sure; but if you could only see the mischief in her eye!'

On the whole, therefore, her new experience led our decayed gentlewoman to very disagreeable conclusions as to the temper and manners of what she termed the lower classes, whom heretofore she had looked down upon with a gentle and pitying complaisance, as herself occupying a sphere of unquestionable superiority. But, unfortunately, she had likewise to struggle against a bitter emotion of a directly opposite kind: a sentiment of virulence, we mean, towards the idle aristocracy to which it had so recently been her pride to belong. When a lady, in a delicate and costly summer garb, with a floating veil and gracefully swaying gown, and, altogether, an etherial lightness that made you look at her beautifully slippered feet, to see whether she trod on the dust or floated in the air,—when such a vision happened to pass through this retired street, leaving it tenderly and delusively fragrant with her passage, as if a bouquet of tea-roses had been borne along, —then again, it is to be feared, old Hepzibah's scowl could no longer vindicate it-

self entirely on the plea of near-sightedness.

'For what end,' thought she, giving vent to that feeling of hostility which is the only real abasement of the poor in presence of the rich,—'for what good end, in the wisdom of Providence, does that woman live? Must the whole world toil, that the palms of her hands may be kept white and delicate?'

Then, ashamed and penitent, she hid her face.

'May God forgive me!' said she.

Doubtless, God did forgive her. But, taking the inward and outward history of the first half-day into consideration, Hepzibah began to fear that the shop would prove her ruin in a moral and religious point of view, without contributing very essentially towards even her temporal welfare.

1851

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

1803–1882

NATURE [1]

A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.

INTRODUCTION

OUR age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehends it as truth. In like manner, nature is already, in its forms and tendencies, describing its own design. Let us interrogate the great apparition that shines so peacefully around us. Let us inquire, to what end is nature?

All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and of functions, but scarcely yet a remote approach to an idea of creation. We are now so far from the road to truth, that religious teachers dispute and hate each other, and speculative men are esteemed unsound and frivolous. But to a sound judgment, the most abstract truth is the most practical. Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena. Now many are thought not only unexplained but inexplicable; as language, sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, sex.

Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE. In enumerating the values of nature and casting up their sum, I shall use

1 *Nature* was first published anonymously in 1836. In sending a copy to Carlyle, Emerson referred to it as 'an entering wedge, I hope, for something more worthy and significant.' Norton, ed., *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson*(Boston, 1883),I,99. Directly or by implication it contains nearly all of Emerson's idealization.

the word in both senses;—in its common and in its philosophical import. In inquiries so general as our present one, the inaccuracy is not material; no confusion of thought will occur. *Nature*, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf. *Art* is applied to the mixture of his will with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture. But his operations taken together are so insignificant, a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing, that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result.

I. Nature

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says,—he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, —my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the

Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, —master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy to-day. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

2. Commodity

Whoever considers the final cause of the world will discern a multitude of uses that enter as parts into that result. They all admit of being thrown into one of the following classes: Commodity; Beauty; Language; and Discipline.

Under the general name of commodity, I rank all those advantages which our senses owe to nature. This, of course, is a benefit which is temporary and mediate, not ultimate, like its service to the soul. Yet although low, it is perfect in its kind, and is the only use of nature which all men apprehend. The misery of man appears like childish petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens. What angels invented these splendid ornaments, these rich conveniences, this ocean of air above, this ocean of water beneath, this firmament of earth between? this zodiac of lights, this tent of dropping clouds, this striped coat of climates, this fourfold year? Beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn serve him. The field is at once his floor, his work-yard, his play-ground, his garden, and his bed.

> 'More servants wait on man
> Than he'll take notice of.'

Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man.

The useful arts are reproductions or new combinations by the wit of man, of the same natural benefactors. He no longer waits for favoring gales, but by means of steam, he realizes the fable of Æolus's bag, and carries the two and thirty winds in the boiler of his boat. To diminish friction, he paves the road with iron bars, and, mounting a coach with a ship-load of men, animals, and merchandise behind him, he darts through the country, from town to town, like an eagle or a swallow through the air. By the aggregate of these aids, how is the face of the world changed, from the era of Noah to that of Napoleon! The private poor man hath cities, ships, canals, bridges, built for him. He goes to the post-office, and the human race run on his errands; to the book-shop, and the human race read and write of all that happens, for him; to the court-house, and nations repair his wrongs. He sets his house upon the road, and the human race go forth every morning, and shovel out the snow, and cut a path for him.

But there is no need of specifying par-

ticulars in this class of uses. The catalogue is endless, and the examples so obvious, that I shall leave them to the reader's reflection, with the general remark, that this mercenary benefit is one which has respect to a farther good. A man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work.

3. Beauty

A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty.

The ancient Greeks called the world κόσμος, beauty. Such is the constitution of all things, or such the plastic power of the human eye, that the primary forms, as the sky, the mountain, the tree, the animal, give us a delight *in and for themselves*; a pleasure arising from outline, color, motion, and grouping. This seems partly owing to the eye itself. The eye is the best of artists. By the mutual action of its structure and of the laws of light, perspective is produced, which integrates every mass of objects, of what character soever, into a well colored and shaded globe, so that where the particular objects are mean and unaffecting, the landscape which they compose is round and symmetrical. And as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make beautiful. And the stimulus it affords to the sense, and a sort of infinitude which it hath, like space and time, make all matter gay. Even the corpse has its own beauty. But besides this general grace diffused over nature, almost all the individual forms are agreeable to the eye, as is proved by our endless imitations of some of them, as the acorn, the grape, the pine-cone, the wheat-ear, the egg, the wings and forms of most birds, the lion's claw, the serpent, the butterfly, sea-shells, flames, clouds, buds, leaves, and the forms of many trees, as the palm.

For better consideration, we may distribute the aspects of Beauty in a threefold manner.

1. First, the simple perception of natural forms is a delight. The influence of the forms and actions in nature is so needful to man, that, in its lowest functions, it seems to lie on the confines of commodity and beauty. To the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone. The tradesman, the attorney comes out of the din and craft of the street and sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again. In their eternal calm, he finds himself. The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon. We are never tired, so long as we can see far enough.

But in other hours, Nature satisfies by its loveliness, and without any mixture of corporeal benefit. I see the spectacle of morning from the hill-top over against my house, from day-break to sun-rise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does Nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sun-set and moon-rise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.

Not less excellent, except for our less susceptibility in the afternoon, was the charm, last evening, of a January sun-set. The western clouds divided and subdivided themselves into pink flakes modulated with tints of unspeakable softness, and the air had so much life and sweetness that it was a pain to come within doors. What was it that nature would say? Was there no meaning in the live repose of the valley behind the mill, and which Homer or Shakspeare could not re-form for me in words? The leafless trees become spires of flame in the sun-set, with the blue east for their background, and the stars of the dead calices of flowers, and every withered stem and stubble rimed with frost, contribute something to the mute music.

The inhabitants of cities suppose that the country landscape is pleasant only half the year. I please myself with the graces of the winter scenery, and believe that we are as much touched by it as by the genial influences of summer. To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and

which shall never be seen again. The heavens change every moment, and reflect their glory or gloom on the plains beneath. The state of the crop in the surrounding farms alters the expression of the earth from week to week. The succession of native plants in the pastures and roadsides, which makes the silent clock by which time tells the summer hours, will make even the divisions of the day sensible to a keen observer. The tribes of birds and insects, like the plants punctual to their time, follow each other, and the year has room for all. By watercourses, the variety is greater. In July, the blue pontederia or pickerel-weed blooms in large beds in the shallow parts of our pleasant river, and swarms with yellow butterflies in continual motion. Art cannot rival this pomp of purple and gold. Indeed the river is a perpetual gala, and boasts each month a new ornament.

But this beauty of Nature which is seen and felt as beauty, is the least part. The shows of day, the dewy morning, the rainbow, mountains, orchards in blossom, stars, moonlight, shadows in still water, and the like, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. Go out of the house to see the moon, and 't is mere tinsel; it will not please as when its light shines upon your necessary journey. The beauty that shimmers in the yellow afternoons of October, who ever could clutch it? Go forth to find it, and it is gone; 't is only a mirage as you look from the windows of diligence.

2. The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual element is essential to its perfection. The high and divine beauty which can be loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with the human will. Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue. Every natural action is graceful. Every heroic act is also decent, and causes the place and the bystanders to shine. We are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it. Every rational creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his, if he will. He may divest himself of it; he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his kingdom, as most men do, but he is entitled to the world by his constitution. In proportion to the energy of his thought and will, he takes up the world into himself. 'All those things for which men plough, build, or sail, obey virtue'; said Sallust. 'The winds and waves,' said Gibbon, 'are always on the side of the ablest navigators.' So are the sun and moon and all the stars of heaven. When a noble act is done,—perchance in a scene of great natural beauty; when Leonidas and his three hundred martyrs consume one day in dying, and the sun and moon come each and look at them once in the steep defile of Thermopylæ; when Arnold Winkelried, in the high Alps, under the shadow of the avalanche, gathers in his side a sheaf of Austrian spears to break the line for his comrades; are not these heroes entitled to add the beauty of the scene to the beauty of the deed? When the bark of Columbus nears the shore of America;—before it, the beach lined with savages, fleeing out of all their huts of cane; the sea behind; and the purple mountains of the Indian Archipelago around, can we separate the man from the living picture? Does not the New World clothe his form with her palm-groves and savannahs as fit drapery? Ever does natural beauty steal in like air, and envelope great actions. When Sir Harry Vane was dragged up the Towerhill, sitting on a sled, to suffer death as the champion of the English laws, one of the multitude cried out to him, 'You never sate on so glorious a seat!' Charles II., to intimidate the citizens of London, caused the patriot Lord Russell to be drawn in an open coach through the principal streets of the city on his way to the scaffold. 'But,' his biographer says, 'the multitude imagined they saw liberty and virtue sitting by his side.' In private places, among sordid objects, an act of truth or heroism seems at once to draw to itself the sky as its temple, the sun as its candle. Nature stretches out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness. Willingly does she follow his steps with the rose and the violet, and bend her lines of grandeur and grace to the decoration of her darling child. Only let his thoughts be of equal scope, and the frame will suit the picture. A virtuous man is in unison with her works, and makes the central figure of the visible sphere. Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion, associate themselves fitly in our memory with the geography and climate of Greece. The visible heavens and earth sym-

pathize with Jesus. And in common life whosoever has seen a person of powerful character and happy genius, will have remarked how easily he took all things along with him,—the persons, the opinions, and the day, and nature became ancillary to a man.

3. There is still another aspect under which the beauty of the world may be viewed, namely, as it becomes an object of the intellect. Beside the relation of things to virtue, they have a relation to thought. The intellect searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God, and without the colors of affection. The intellectual and the active powers seem to succeed each other, and the exclusive activity of the one generates the exclusive activity of the other. There is something unfriendly in each to the other, but they are like the alternate periods of feeding and working in animals; each prepares and will be followed by the other. Therefore does beauty, which, in relation to actions, as we have seen, comes unsought, and comes because it is unsought, remain for the apprehension and pursuit of the intellect; and then again, in its turn, of the active power. Nothing divine dies. All good is eternally reproductive. The beauty of nature re-forms itself in the mind, and not for barren contemplation, but for new creation.

All men are in some degree impressed by the face of the world; some men even to delight. This love of beauty is Taste. Others have the same love in such excess, that, not content with admiring, they seek to embody it in new forms. The creation of beauty is Art.

The production of a work of art throws a light upon the mystery of humanity. A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world. It is the result or expression of nature, in miniature. For although the works of nature are innumerable and all different, the result or the expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sun-beam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression on the mind. What is common to them all,—that perfectness and harmony, is beauty. The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms,—the totality of nature; which the Italians expressed by defining beauty '*il piu nell' uno.*' Nothing is quite beautiful alone; nothing but is beautiful in the whole. A single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests this universal grace. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the architect, seek each to concentrate this radiance of the world on one point, and each in his several work to satisfy the love of beauty which stimulates him to produce. Thus is Art a nature passed through the alembic of man. Thus in art does Nature work through the will of a man filled with the beauty of her first works.

The world thus exists to the soul to satisfy the desire of beauty. This element I call an ultimate end. No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. God is the all-fair. Truth, and goodness, and beauty, are but different faces of the same All. But beauty in nature is not ultimate. It is the herald of inward and eternal beauty, and is not alone a solid and satisfactory good. It must stand as a part, and not as yet the last or highest expression of the final cause of Nature.

4. Language

Language is a third use which Nature subserves to man. Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a simple, double, and threefold degree.

1. Words are signs of natural facts.

2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.

3. Nature is the symbol of spirit.

1. Words are signs of natural facts. The use of natural history is to give us aid in supernatural history; the use of the outer creation, to give us language for the beings and changes of the inward creation. Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance. *Right* means *straight*; *wrong* means *twisted*. *Spirit* primarily means *wind*; *transgression*, the crossing of a *line*; *supercilious*, the *raising of the eyebrow*. We say the *heart* to express emotion, the *head* to denote thought; and *thought* and *emotion* are words borrowed from sensible things, and now appropriated to spiritual nature. Most of the process by which this trans-

formation is made, is hidden from us in the remote time when language was framed; but the same tendency may be daily observed in children. Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs, and apply to analogous mental acts.

2. But this origin of all words that convey a spiritual import,—so conspicuous a fact in the history of language,—is our least debt to nature. It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections. Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance; and heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, is respectively our image of memory and hope.

Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence. Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm, and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of Reason. That which intellectually considered we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man in all ages and countries embodies it in his language as the FATHER.

It is easily seen that there is nothing lucky or capricious in these analogies, but that they are constant, and pervade nature. These are not the dreams of a few poets, here and there, but man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. He is placed in the centre of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man. All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life. Whole floras, all Linnæus' and Buffon's volumes, are dry catalogues of facts; but the most trivial of these facts, the habit of a plant, the organs, or work, or noise of an insect, applied to the illustration of a fact in intellectual philosophy, or in any way associated to human nature, affects us in the most lively and agreeable manner. The seed of a plant, —to what affecting analogies in the nature of man is that little fruit made use of, in all discourse, up to the voice of Paul, who calls the human corpse a seed,—'It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.' The motion of the earth round its axis and round the sun, makes the day and the year. These are certain amounts of brute light and heat. But is there no intent of an analogy between man's life and the seasons? And do the seasons gain no grandeur or pathos from that analogy? The instincts of the ant are very unimportant considered as the ant's; but the moment a ray of relation is seen to extend from it to man, and the little drudge is seen to be a monitor, a little body with a mighty heart, then all its habits, even that said to be recently observed, that it never sleeps, become sublime.

Because of this radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts, savages, who have only what is necessary, converse in figures. As we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when it is all poetry; or all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols. The same symbols are found to make the original elements of all languages. It has moreover been observed, that the idioms of all languages approach each other in passages of the greatest eloquence and power. And as this is the first language, so is it the last. This immediate dependence of language upon nature, this conversion of an outward phenomenon into a type of somewhat in human life, never loses its power to affect us. It is this which gives that piquancy to the conversation of a strong-natured farmer or backwoodsman, which all men relish.

A man's power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and the sovereignty of ideas is broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires, the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, and of praise,—and duplicity and falsehood take place of simplicity and truth, the power over nature as an interpreter of the will is in a degree lost; new imagery ceases to be created, and old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults. In due time the fraud is manifest, and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affections. Hundreds of writers may be found in every long-civilized nation who for a short time believe and make others believe that they see and utter truths, who do not of themselves clothe one thought in its natural garment, but who feed unconsciously on the language created by the primary writers of the country, those, namely, who hold primarily on nature.

But wise men pierce this rotten diction and fasten words again to visible things; so that picturesque language is at once a commanding certificate that he who employs it is a man in alliance with truth and God. The moment our discourse rises above the ground line of familiar facts and is inflamed with passion or exalted by thought, it clothes itself in images. A man conversing in earnest, if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image more or less luminous arises in his mind, contemporaneous with every thought, which furnishes the vestment of the thought. Hence, good writing and brilliant discourse are perpetual allegories. This imagery is spontaneous. It is the blending of experience with the present action of the mind. It is proper creation. It is the working of the Original Cause through the instruments he has already made.

These facts may suggest the advantage which the country-life possesses, for a powerful mind, over the artificial and curtailed life of cities. We know more from nature than we can at will communicate. Its light flows into the mind evermore, and we forget its presence. The poet, the orator, bred in the woods, whose senses have been nourished by their fair and appeasing changes, year after year, without design and without heed,—shall not lose their lesson altogether, in the roar of cities or the broil of politics. Long hereafter, amidst agitation and terror in national councils,—in the hour of revolution,—these solemn images shall reappear in their morning lustre, as fit symbols and words of the thoughts which the passing events shall awaken. At the call of a noble sentiment, again the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the cattle low upon the mountains, as he saw and heard them in his infancy. And with these forms, the spells of persuasion, the keys of power are put into his hands.

3. We are thus assisted by natural objects in the expression of particular meanings. But how great a language to convey such pepper-corn informations! Did it need such noble races of creatures, this profusion of forms, this host of orbs in heaven, to furnish man with the dictionary and grammar of his municipal speech? Whilst we use this grand cipher to expedite the affairs of our pot and kettle, we feel that we have not yet put it to its use, neither are able. We are like travellers using the cinders of a volcano to roast their eggs. Whilst we see that it always stands ready to clothe what we would say, we cannot avoid the question whether the characters are not significant of themselves. Have mountains, and waves, and skies, no significance but what we consciously give them when we employ them as emblems of our thoughts? The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass. 'The visible world and the relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible.' The axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics. Thus, 'the whole is greater than its part'; 'reaction is equal to action'; 'the smallest weight may be made to lift the greatest, the difference of weight being compensated by time'; and many the like propositions, which have an ethical as well as physical sense. These propositions have a much more extensive

and universal sense when applied to human life, than when confined to technical use.

In like manner, the memorable words of history and the proverbs of nations consist usually of a natural fact, selected as a picture or parable of a moral truth. Thus; A rolling stone gathers no moss; A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; A cripple in the right way will beat a racer in the wrong; Make hay while the sun shines; 'T is hard to carry a full cup even; Vinegar is the son of wine; The last ounce broke the camel's back; Long-lived trees make roots first;—and the like. In their primary sense these are trivial facts, but we repeat them for the value of their analogical import. What is true of proverbs, is true of all fables, parables, and allegories.

This relation between the mind and matter is not fancied by some poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men. It appears to men, or it does not appear. When in fortunate hours we ponder this miracle, the wise man doubts if at all other times he is not blind and deaf;

> 'Can these things be,
> And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
> Without our special wonder?'

for the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it. It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and the study of every fine genius since the world began; from the era of the Egyptians and the Brahmins to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of Swedenborg. There sits the Sphinx at the roadside, and from age to age, as each prophet comes by, he tries his fortune at reading her riddle. There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, preëxist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit. A Fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world. 'Material objects,' said a French philosopher, 'are necessarily kinds of *scoriæ* of the substantial thoughts of the Creator, which must always preserve an exact relation to their first origin; in other words, visible nature must have a spiritual and moral side.'

This doctrine is abstruse, and though the images of 'garment,' 'scoriæ,' 'mirror,' &c., may stimulate the fancy, we must summon the aid of subtler and more vital expositors to make it plain. 'Every scripture is to be interpreted by the same spirit which gave it forth,'—is the fundamental law of criticism. A life in harmony with Nature, the love of truth and of virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text. By degrees we may come to know the primitive sense of the permanent objects of nature, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause.

A new interest surprises us, whilst, under the view now suggested, we contemplate the fearful extent and multitude of objects; since 'every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul.' That which was unconscious truth, becomes, when interpreted and defined in an object, a part of the domain of knowledge,—a new weapon in the magazine of power.

5. Discipline

In view of the significance of nature, we arrive at once at a new fact, that nature is a discipline. This use of the world includes the preceding uses, as parts of itself.

Space, time, society, labor, climate, food, locomotion, the animals, the mechanical forces, give us sincerest lessons, day by day, whose meaning is unlimited. They educate both the Understanding and the Reason. Every property of matter is a school for the understanding,—its solidity or resistance, its inertia, its extension, its figure, its divisibility. The understanding adds, divides, combines, measures, and finds nutriment and room for its activity in this worthy scene. Meantime, Reason transfers all these lessons into its own world of thought, by perceiving the analogy that marries Matter and Mind.

1. Nature is a discipline of the understanding in intellectual truths. Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from particular to general; of combination to one

end of manifold forces. Proportioned to the importance of the organ to be formed, is the extreme care with which its tuition is provided,—a care pretermitted in no single case. What tedious training, day after day, year after year, never ending, to form the common sense; what continual reproduction of annoyances, inconveniences, dilemmas; what rejoicing over us of little men; what disputing of prices, what reckonings of interest,—and all to form the Hand of the mind;—to instruct us that 'good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed!'

The same good office is performed by Property and its filial systems of debt and credit. Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate;—debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be forgone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most. Moreover, property, which has been well compared to snow,—'if it fall level to-day, it will be blown into drifts to-morrow,'—is the surface action of internal machinery, like the index on the face of a clock. Whilst now it is the gymnastics of the understanding, it is hiving, in the foresight of the spirit, experience in profounder laws.

The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequalities in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception of differences. Therefore is Space, and therefore Time, that man may know that things are not huddled and lumped, but sundered and individual. A bell and a plough have each their use, and neither can do the office of the other. Water is good to drink, coal to burn, wool to wear; but wool cannot be drunk, nor water spun, nor coal eaten. The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best.

In like manner, what good heed Nature forms in us! She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay.

The first steps in Agriculture, Astronomy, Zoology (those first steps which the farmer, the hunter, and the sailor take), teach that Nature's dice are always loaded; that in her heaps and rubbish are concealed sure and useful results.

How calmly and genially the mind apprehends one after another the laws of physics! What noble emotions dilate the mortal as he enters into the counsels of the creation, and feels by knowledge the privilege to BE! His insight refines him. The beauty of nature shines in his own breast. Man is greater that he can see this, and the universe less, because Time and Space relations vanish as laws are known.

Here again we are impressed and even daunted by the immense Universe to be explored. 'What we know is a point to what we do not know.' Open any recent journal of science, and weigh the problems suggested concerning Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Physiology, Geology, and judge whether the interest of natural science is likely to be soon exhausted.

Passing by many particulars of the discipline of nature, we must not omit to specify two.

The exercise of the Will, or the lesson of power, is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, 'Thy will be done!' he is learning the secret that he can reduce under his will, not only particular events but great classes, nay, the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mould into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. He forges the subtile and delicate air into wise and melodious words, and gives them wing as angels of persuasion and command. One after another his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realized will,—the double of the man.

2. Sensible objects conform to the premonitions of Reason and reflect the conscience. All things are moral; and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion—

that every globe in the remotest heaven, every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life, every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal-mine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is Nature ever the ally of Religion—lends all her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment. Prophet and priest, David, Isaiah, Jesus, have drawn deeply from this source. This ethical character so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made. Whatever private purpose is answered by any member or part, this is its public and universal function, and is never omitted. Nothing in nature is exhausted in its first use. When a thing has served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service. In God, every end is converted into a new means. Thus the use of commodity, regarded by itself, is mean and squalid. But it is to the mind an education in the doctrine of Use, namely, that a thing is good only so far as it serves; that a conspiring of parts and efforts to the production of an end is essential to any being. The first and gross manifestation of this truth is our inevitable and hated training in values and wants, in corn and meat.

It has already been illustrated, that every natural process is a version of a moral sentence. The moral law lies at the centre of nature and radiates to the circumference. It is the pith and marrow of every substance, every relation, and every process. All things with which we deal, preach to us. What is a farm but a mute gospel? The chaff and the wheat, weeds and plants, blight, rain, insects, sun,—it is a sacred emblem from the first furrow of spring to the last stack which the snow of winter overtakes in the fields. But the sailor, the shepherd, the miner, the merchant, in their several resorts, have each an experience precisely parallel, and leading to the same conclusion: because all organizations are radically alike. Nor can it be doubted that this moral sentiment which thus scents the air, grows in the grain, and impregnates the waters of the world, is caught by man and sinks into his soul. The moral influence of nature upon every individual is that amount of truth which it illustrates to him. Who can estimate this? Who can guess how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? how much tranquillity has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over whose unspotted deeps the winds forevermore drive flocks of stormy clouds, and leave no wrinkle or stain? how much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes? What a searching preacher of self-command is the varying phenomenon of Health!

Herein is especially apprehended the unity of Nature,—the unity in variety,—which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things make an identical impression. Xenophanes complained in his old age, that, look where he would, all things hastened back to Unity. He was weary of seeing the same entity in the tedious variety of forms. The fable of Proteus has a cordial truth. A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world.

Not only resemblances exist in things whose analogy is obvious, as when we detect the type of the human hand in the flipper of the fossil saurus, but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness. Thus architecture is called 'frozen music,' by De Staël and Goethe. Vitruvius thought an architect should be a musician. 'A Gothic church,' said Coleridge, 'is a petrified religion.' Michael Angelo maintained that, to an architect, a knowledge of anatomy is essential. In Haydn's oratorios, the notes present to the imagination not only motions, as of the snake, the stag, and the elephant, but colors also; as the green grass. The law of harmonic sounds reappears in the harmonic colors. The granite is differenced in its laws only by the more or less of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resembles the air that flows over it; the air resembles the light which traverses it with more subtile currents; the light resembles the heat which rides with it through Space. Each creature is only a modification of the other; the likeness in them is more than the difference, and their radical law is one and the same. A rule of one art, or a law of one organiza

tion, holds true throughout nature. So intimate is this Unity, that, it is easily seen, it lies under the undermost garment of nature, and betrays its source in Universal Spirit. For it pervades Thought also. Every universal truth which we express in words, implies or supposes every other truth. *Omne verum vero consonat.* It is like a great circle on a sphere, comprising all possible circles; which, however, may be drawn and comprise it in like manner. Every such truth is the absolute Ens seen from one side. But it has innumerable sides.

The central Unity is still more conspicuous in actions. Words are finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the dimensions of what is in truth. They break, chop, and impoverish it. An action is the perfection and publication of thought. A right action seems to fill the eye, and to be related to all nature. 'The wise man, in doing one thing, does all; or, in the one thing he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all which is done rightly.'

Words and actions are not the attributes of brute nature. They introduce us to the human form, of which all other organizations appear to be degradations. When this appears among so many that surround it, the spirit prefers it to all others. It says, 'From such as this have I drawn joy and knowledge; in such as this have I found and beheld myself; I will speak to it; it can speak again; it can yield me thought already formed and alive.' In fact, the eye,—the mind,—is always accompanied by these forms, male and female; and these are incomparably the richest informations of the power and order that lie at the heart of things. Unfortunately every one of them bears the marks as of some injury; is marred and superficially defective. Nevertheless, far different from the deaf and dumb nature around them, these all rest like fountain-pipes on the unfathomed sea of thought and virtue whereto they alone, of all organizations, are the entrances.

It were a pleasant inquiry to follow into detail their ministry to our education, but where would it stop? We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are coextensive with our idea; who, answering each to a certain affection of the soul, satisfy our desire on that side; whom we lack power to put at such focal distance from us, that we can mend or even analyze them. We cannot choose but love them. When much intercourse with a friend has supplied us with a standard of excellence, and has increased our respect for the resources of God who thus sends a real person to outgo our ideal; when he has, moreover, become an object of thought, and, whilst his character retains all its unconscious effect, is converted in the mind into solid and sweet wisdom,—it is a sign to us that his office is closing, and he is commonly withdrawn from our sight in a short time.

6. Idealism

Thus is the unspeakable but intelligible and practicable meaning of the world conveyed to man, the immortal pupil, in every object of sense. To this one end of Discipline, all parts of nature conspire.

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself, —whether this end be not the Final Cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? The relations of parts and the end of the whole remaining the same, what is the difference, whether land and sea interact, and worlds revolve and intermingle without number or end,—deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy, throughout absolute space,—or whether, without relations of time and space, the same appearances are inscribed in the constant faith of man? Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses.

The frivolous make themselves merry with the Ideal theory, as if its consequences were burlesque; as if it affected the stability

of nature. It surely does not. God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith therein is perfect. The wheels and springs of man are all set to the hypothesis of the permanence of nature. We are not built like a ship to be tossed, but like a house to stand. It is a natural consequence of this structure, that so long as the active powers predominate over the reflective, we resist with indignation any hint that nature is more short-lived or mutable than spirit. The broker, the wheelwright, the carpenter, the tollman, are much displeased at the intimation.

But whilst we acquiesce entirely in the permanence of natural laws, the question of the absolute existence of nature still remains open. It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind, not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena, as of heat, water, azote; but to lead us to regard nature as phenomenon, not a substance; to attribute necessary existence to spirit; to esteem nature as an accident and an effect.

To the senses and the unrenewed understanding, belongs a sort of instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature. In their view man and nature are indissolubly joined. Things are ultimates, and they never look beyond their sphere. The presence of Reason mars this faith. The first effort of thought tends to relax this despotism of the senses which binds us to nature as if we were a part of it, and shows us nature aloof, and, as it were, afloat. Until this higher agency intervened, the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces. When the eye of Reason opens, to outline and surface are at once added grace and expression. These proceed from imagination and affection, and abate somewhat of the angular distinctness of objects. If the Reason be stimulated to more earnest vision, outlines and surfaces become transparent, and are no longer seen; causes and spirits are seen through them. The best moments of life are these delicious awakenings of the higher powers, and the reverential withdrawing of nature before its God.

Let us proceed to indicate the effects of culture.

1. Our first institution in the Ideal philosophy is a hint from Nature herself.

Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position, apprizes us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view gives the whole world a pictorial air. A man who seldom rides, needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show. The men, the women,—talking, running, bartering, fighting,—the earnest mechanic, the lounger, the beggar, the boys, the dogs, are unrealized at once, or, at least, wholly detached from all relation to the observer, and seen as apparent, not substantial beings. What new thoughts are suggested by seeing a face of country quite familiar, in the rapid movement of the railroad car! Nay, the most wonted objects, (make a very slight change in the point of vision,) please us most. In a camera obscura, the butcher's cart, and the figure of one of our own family amuse us. So a portrait of a well-known face gratifies us. Turn the eyes upside down, by looking at the landscape through your legs, and how agreeable is the picture, though you have seen it any time these twenty years!

In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle,—between man and nature. Hence arises a pleasure mixed with awe; I may say, a low degree of the sublime is felt, from the fact, probably, that man is hereby apprised that whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable.

2. In a higher manner the poet communicates the same pleasure. By a few strokes he delineates, as on air, the sun, the mountain, the camp, the city, the hero, the maiden, not different from what we know them, but only lifted from the ground and afloat before the eye. He unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposes them anew. Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to

things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts. The one esteems nature as rooted and fast; the other, as fluid, and impresses his being thereon. To him, the refractory world is ductile and flexible; he invests dust and stones with humanity, and makes them the words of the Reason. The Imagination may be defined to be the use which the Reason makes of the material world. Shakspeare possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression, beyond all poets. His imperial muse tosses the creation like a bauble from hand to hand, and uses it to embody any caprice of thought that is uppermost in his mind. The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and the farthest sundered things are brought together, by a subtile spiritual connection. We are made aware that magnitude of material things is relative, and all objects shrink and expand to serve the passion of the poet. Thus in his sonnets, the lays of birds, the scents and dyes of flowers he finds to be the *shadow* of his beloved; time, which keeps her from him, is his *chest*; the suspicion she has awakened, is her *ornament*:

'The ornament of beauty is Suspect,
A crow which flies in heaven's sweetest air.'

His passion is not the fruit of chance; it swells, as he speaks, to a city, or a state:

'No, it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the brow of thralling discontent;
It fears not policy, that heretic,
That works on leases of short numbered hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic.'

In the strength of his constancy, the Pyramids seem to him recent and transitory. The freshness of youth and love dazzles him with its resemblance to morning:

'Take those lips away
Which so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes,—the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn.'

The wild beauty of this hyperbole, I may say in passing, it would not be easy to match in literature.

This transfiguration which all material objects undergo through the passion of the poet,—this power which he exerts to dwarf the great, to magnify the small,—might be illustrated by a thousand examples from his Plays. I have before me *The Tempest*, and will cite only these few lines:

'ARIEL. The strong based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar.'

Prospero calls for music to soothe the frantic Alonzo, and his companions:

'A solemn air, and the best comforter
To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains
Now useless, boiled within thy skull.'

Again:

'The charm dissolves apace,
And, as the morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason.
Their understanding
Begins to swell: and the approaching tide
Will shortly fill the reasonable shores
That now lie foul and muddy.'

The perception of real affinities between events (that is to say, of *ideal* affinities, for those only are real), enables the poet thus to make free with the most imposing forms and phenomena of the world, and to assert the predominance of the soul.

3. Whilst thus the poet animates nature with his own thoughts, he differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes Beauty as his main end; the other Truth. But the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. 'The problem of philosophy,' according to Plato, 'is, for all that exists conditionally, to find a ground unconditioned and absolute.' It proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which being known, the phenomena can be predicted. That law, when in the mind, is an idea. Its beauty is infinite. The true philosopher and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth,

and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both. Is not the charm of one of Plato's or Aristotle's definitions strictly like that of the Antigone of Sophocles? It is, in both cases, that a spiritual life has been imparted to nature; that the solid seeming block of matter has been pervaded and dissolved by a thought; that this feeble human being has penetrated the vast masses of nature with an informing soul, and recognized itself in their harmony, that is, seized their law. In physics, when this is attained, the memory disburthens itself of its cumbrous catalogues of particulars, and carries centuries of observation in a single formula.

Thus even in physics, the material is degraded before the spiritual. The astronomer, the geometer, rely on their irrefragable analysis, and disdain the results of observation. The sublime remark of Euler on his law of arches, 'This will be found contrary to all experience, yet is true'; had already transferred nature into the mind, and left matter like an outcast corpse.

4. Intellectual science has been observed to beget invariably a doubt of the existence of matter. Turgot said, 'He that has never doubted the existence of matter, may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries.' It fastens the attention upon immortal necessary uncreated natures, that is, upon Ideas; and in their presence we feel that the outward circumstance is a dream and a shade. Whilst we wait in this Olympus of gods, we think of nature as an appendix to the soul. We ascend into their region, and know that these are the thoughts of the Supreme Being. 'These are they who were set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, they were there; when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep. Then they were by him, as one brought up with him. Of them took he counsel.'

Their influence is proportionate. As objects of science they are accessible to few men. Yet all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion, into their region. And no man touches these divine natures, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. Like a new soul, they renew the body. We become physically nimble and lightsome; we tread on air; life is no longer irksome, and we think it will never be so. No man fears age or misfortune or death in their serene company, for he is transported out of the district of change. Whilst we behold unveiled the nature of Justice and Truth, we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative. We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, *we exist*. We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that with a perception of truth or a virtuous will they have no affinity.

5. Finally, religion and ethics, which may be fitly called the practice of ideas, or the introduction of ideas into life, have an analogous effect with all lower culture, in degrading nature and suggesting its dependence on spirit. Ethics and religion differ herein; that the one is the system of human duties commencing from man; the other, from God. Religion includes the personality of God; Ethics does not. They are one to our present design. They both put nature under foot. The first and last lesson of religion is, 'The things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal.' It puts an affront upon nature. It does that for the unschooled, which philosophy does for Berkeley and Viasa. The uniform language that may be heard in the churches of the most ignorant sects is,—'Contemn the unsubstantial shows of the world; they are vanities, dreams, shadows, unrealities; seek the realities of religion.' The devotee flouts nature. Some theosophists have arrived at a certain hostility and indignation towards matter, as the Manichean and Plotinus. They distrusted in themselves any looking back to these flesh-pots of Egypt. Plotinus was ashamed of his body. In short, they might all say of matter, what Michael Angelo said of external beauty, 'It is the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul which he has called into time.'

It appears that motion, poetry, physical and intellectual science, and religion, all tend to affect our convictions of the reality of the external world. But I own there is something ungrateful in expanding too curiously the particulars of the general proposition, that all culture tends to imbue us with idealism. I have no hostility to nature, but a child's love to it. I expand and live in the warm day like corn and melons.

Let us speak her fair. I do not wish to fling stones at my beautiful mother, nor soil my gentle nest. I only wish to indicate the true position of nature in regard to man, wherein to establish man all right education tends; as the ground which to attain is the object of human life, that is, of man's connection with nature. Culture inverts the vulgar views of nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent which it uses to call real, and that real which it uses to call visionary. Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only, is an afterthought, but with culture this faith will as surely arise on the mind as did the first.

The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind. It is, in fact, the view which Reason, both speculative and practical, that is, philosophy and virtue, take. For seen in the light of thought, the world always is phenomenal; and virtue subordinates it to the mind. Idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping Past, but as one vast picture which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul. Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet. It respects the end too much to immerse itself in the means. It sees something more important in Christianity than the scandals of ecclesiastical history or the niceties of criticism; and, very incurious concerning persons or miracles, and not at all disturbed by chasms of historical evidence, it accepts from God the phenomenon, as it finds it, as the pure and awful form of religion in the world. It is not hot and passionate at the appearance of what it calls its own good or bad fortune, at the union or opposition of other persons. No man is its enemy. It accepts whatsoever befalls, as part of its lesson. It is a watcher more than a doer, and it is a doer, only that it may the better watch.

7. Spirit

It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored, and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope. Through all its kingdoms, to the suburbs and outskirts of things, it is faithful to the cause whence it had its origin. It always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.

The aspect of Nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

Of that ineffable essence which we call Spirit, he that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshipped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it.

When we consider Spirit, we see that the views already presented do not include the whole circumference of man. We must add some related thoughts.

Three problems are put by nature to the mind; What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto? The first of these questions only, the ideal theory answers. Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. Idealism acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being and the evidence of the world's being. The one is perfect; the other, incapable of any assurance; the mind is a part of the nature of things; the world is a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day. Idealism is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my

perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in all and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.

Let it stand then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprise us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world.

But when, following the invisible steps of thought, we come to inquire, Whence is matter? and Whereto? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws at his need inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which admonishes me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to

> 'The golden key
> Which opes the palace of eternity,'

carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine. Is not the landscape, every glimpse of which hath a grandeur, a face of him? Yet this may show us what discord is between man and nature, for you cannot freely admire a noble landscape if laborers are digging in the field hard by. The poet finds something ridiculous in his delight until he is out of the sight of men.

8. Prospects

In inquiries respecting the laws of the world and the frame of things, the highest reason is always the truest. That which seems faintly possible, it is so refined, is often faint and dim because it is deepest seated in the mind among the eternal verities. Empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and by the very knowledge of functions and processes to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole. The savant becomes unpoetic. But the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility. He will perceive that there are far more excellent qualities in the student than preciseness and infallibility; that a guess is often more fruitful than an indisputable affirmation, and that a dream may let us deeper into the secret of nature than a hundred concerted experiments.

For the problems to be solved are precisely those which the physiologist and the naturalist omit to state. It is not so perti-

nent to man to know all the individuals of the animal kingdom, as it is to know whence and whereto is this tyrannizing unity in his constitution, which evermore separates and classifies things, endeavoring to reduce the most diverse to one form. When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and superposition of the strata, than to know why all thought of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the *metaphysics* of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture, to the mind, and build science upon ideas. In a cabinet of natural history, we become sensible of a certain occult recognition and sympathy in regard to the most unwieldly and eccentric forms of beast, fish, and insect. The American who has been confined, in his own country, to the sight of buildings designed after foreign models, is surprised on entering York Minster or St. Peter's at Rome, by the feeling that these structures are imitations also,—faint copies of an invisible archetype. Nor has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is lord, not because he is the most subtile inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lays open. A perception of this mystery inspires the muse of George Herbert, the beautiful psalmist of the seventeenth century. The following lines are part of his little poem on Man.

'Man is all symmetry,
Full of proportions, one limb to another,
And to all the world besides.
Each part may call the farthest, brother;
For head with foot hath private amity,
And both with moons and tides.

'Nothing hath got so far
But man hath caught and kept it as his prey;
His eyes dismount the highest star:
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

'For us, the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see, but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

'The stars have us to bed:
Night draws the curtain; which the sun withdraws
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind,
In their descent and being; to our mind,
In their ascent and cause.

'More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of. In every path,
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.'

The perception of this class of truths makes the attraction which draws men to science, but the end is lost sight of in attention to the means. In view of this half-sight of science, we accept the sentence of Plato, that 'poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history.' Every surmise and vatication of the mind is entitled to a certain respect, and we learn to prefer imperfect theories, and sentences which contain glimpses of truth, to digested systems which have no one valuable suggestion. A wise writer will feel that the ends of study and composition are best answered by announcing undiscovered regions of thought, and so communicating, through hope, new activity to the torpid spirit.

I shall therefore conclude this essay with some traditions of man and nature, which a certain poet sang to me; and which, as they have always been in the world, and perhaps reappear to every bard, may be both history and prophecy.

'The foundations of man are not in mat-

ter, but in spirit. But the element of spirit is eternity. To it, therefore, the longest series of events, the oldest chronologies are young and recent. In the cycle of the universal man, from whom the known individuals proceed, centuries are points, and all history is but the epoch of one degradation.

'We distrust and deny inwardly our sympathy with nature. We own and disown our relation to it, by turns. We are like Nebuchadnezzar, dethroned, bereft of reason, and eating grass like an ox. But who can set limits to the remedial force of spirit?

'A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the immortal as gently as we awake from dreams. Now, the world would be insane and rabid, if these disorganizations should last for hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death and infancy. Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise.

'Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out from him sprang the sun and moon; from man the sun, from woman the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externized themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. But, having made for himself this huge shell, his waters retired; he no longer fills the veins and veinlets; he is shrunk to a drop. He sees that the structure still fits him, but fits him colossally. Say, rather, once it fitted him, now it corresponds to him from far and on high. He adores timidly his own work. Now is man the follower of the sun, and woman the follower of the moon. Yet sometimes he starts in his slumber, and wonders at himself and his house, and muses strangely at the resemblance betwixt him and it. He perceives that if his law is still paramount, if still he have elemental power, if his word is sterling yet in nature, it is not conscious power, it is not inferior but superior to his will. It is instinct.' Thus my Orphic poet sang.

At present, man applies to nature but half his force. He works on the world with his understanding alone. He lives in it and masters it by a penny-wisdom; and he that works most in it is but a half-man, and whilst his arms are strong and his digestion good, his mind is imbruted, and he is a selfish savage. His relation to nature, his power over it, is through the understanding, as by manure; the economic use of fire, wind, water, and the mariner's needle; steam, coal, chemical agriculture; the repairs of the human body by the dentist and the surgeon. This is such a resumption of power as if a banished king should buy his territories inch by inch, instead of vaulting at once into his throne. Meantime, in the thick darkness, there are not wanting gleams of a better light,—occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with his entire force,—with reason as well as understanding. Such examples are: the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations; the history of Jesus Christ; the achievements of a principle, as in religious and political revolutions, and in the abolition of the slave-trade; the miracles of enthusiasm, as those reported of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe, and the Shakers; many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged under the name of Animal Magnetism; prayer; eloquence; self-healing; and the wisdom of children. These are examples of Reason's momentary grasp of the sceptre; the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous in-streaming causing power. The difference between the actual and the ideal force of man is happily figured by the schoolmen, in saying, that the knowledge of man is an evening knowledge, *vespertina cognitio*, but that of God is a morning knowledge, *matutina cognitio*.

The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and so they appear not transparent but opaque. The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception. Indeed, neither can be perfect without the other. In the uttermost meaning of the words, thought is devout, and devotion is thought. Deep calls unto deep. But in actual life, the marriage is not cele-

brated. There are innocent men who worship God after the tradition of their fathers, but their sense of duty has not yet extended to the use of all their faculties. And there are patient naturalists, but they freeze their subject under the wintry light of the understanding. Is not prayer also a study of truth,—a sally of the soul into the unfound infinite? No man ever prayed heartily without learning something. But when a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations and see it in the light of thought, shall, at the same time, kindle science with the fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into the creation.

It will not need, when the mind is prepared for study, to search for objects. The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common. What is a day? What is a year? What is summer? What is woman? What is a child? What is sleep? To our blindness, these things seem unaffecting. We make fables to hide the baldness of the fact and conform it, as we say, to the higher law of the mind. But when the fact is seen under the light of an idea, the gaudy fable fades and shrivels. We behold the real higher law. To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. These wonders are brought to our own door. You also are a man. Man and woman and their social life, poverty, labor, sleep, fear, fortune, are known to you. Learn that none of these things is superficial, but that each phenomenon has its roots in the faculties and affections of the mind. Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands. It were a wise inquiry for the closet, to compare, point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind.

So shall we come to look at the world with new eyes. It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect,—What is truth? and of the affections,—What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will. Then shall come to pass what my poet said: 'Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house and beyond its house a world and beyond its world a heaven. Know then that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Cæsar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house, heaven and earth; Cæsar called his house, Rome; you perhaps call yours, a cobbler's trade; a hundred acres of ploughed land; or a scholar's garret. Yet line for line and point for point your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build therefore your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, madhouses, prisons, enemies, vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more seen. The sordor and filths of nature, the sun shall dry up and the wind exhale. As when the summer comes from the south the snowbanks melt and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty it visits and the song which enchants it; it shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts, around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with observation,—a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God,—he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to perfect sight.'

1833–36 1836

SELF-RELIANCE [1]

I READ the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your

1 'Self-Reliance' forms an apex from which the following three essays may be read: 'The American Scholar,' as Man Thinking; 'The Poet,' as Man Creating; and 'Napoleon,' as Man Acting. The last, with its significant conclusion, serves as the test of self-reliance put into practice.

private heart is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without preëstablished harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary

way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat* he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence,—must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, 'What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?' my friend suggested,—'But these impulses may be from below, not from above.' I replied, 'They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil.' No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if every thing were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him, 'Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home.' Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it,—else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim.* I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee thou foolish philanthropist that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousandfold Relief Societies;—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is

called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world,—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers, —under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blindman's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean the 'foolish face of praise,' the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversation had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant

and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day.—'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.'—Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed an united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemera. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the

last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, everybody in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design;—and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Cæsar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called 'the height of Rome'; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, 'Who are you, Sir?' Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead-drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred and Scanderbeg and Gustavus? Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the lustre will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of

beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom and which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving;—the idlest reverie, the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind,—although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away,—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. If therefore a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light: where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be any thing more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think,' 'I am,' but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speaks the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see,—painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid; probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; long intervals of time, years, centuries, are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates; that the soul *becomes*; for that forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why then do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic, the resolution of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is, in nature, the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demonstrations of the self-sufficing and therefore self-relying soul.

Thus all concentrates: let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books and institutions by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our docility to our own law dem-

onstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct or sanctuary! So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friend, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood and I have all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechanical, but spiritual, that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at thy closet door and say,—'Come out unto us.' But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. 'What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love.'

If we cannot at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war and wake Thor and Woden, courage and constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, 'O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavor to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife,—but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me and the heart appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth it will bring us out safe at last.'—But so may you give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute truth; then will they justify me and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfil your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct*, or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbor, town, cat and dog; whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlor soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it*, *farms it*, *peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not 'studying a profession,' for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries and customs out of the window, we pity him no more but thank and revere him;—and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendor and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's Bonduca, when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies,—

'His hidden meaning lies in our endeavors;
Our valors are our best gods.'

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically

caress and celebrate him because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. 'To the persevering mortal,' said Zoraster, 'the blessed Immortals are swift.'

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, 'Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey.' Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors and recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification. If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating every thing to the new terminology as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds the classification is idolized, passes for the end and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see,—how you can see; 'It must be somehow that you stole the light from us.' They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it their own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young and joyful, million-orbed, million-colored, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flour-

ished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart and thou shall reproduce the Foreworld again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For every thing that is given something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad axe and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His notebooks impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

There is no more deviation in the moral standard than in the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were. A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not

be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume and do not invigorate men. The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Behring accomplished so much in their fishing-boats as to astonish Parry and Franklin, whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical disuse and perishing of means and machinery which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before. The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted of falling back on naked valor and disencumbering it of all aids. The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army, says Las Casas, 'without abolishing our arms, magazines, commissaries, and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his hand-mill, and bake his bread himself.'

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long that they have come to esteem the religious, learned and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he see that it is accidental,—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it is not having; it does not belong to him, has no root in him and merely lies there because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is, does always by necessity acquire; and what the man acquires, is living property, which does not wait the beck of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. 'Thy lot or portion of life,' said the Caliph Ali, 'is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it.' Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions; the greater the concourse and with each new uproar of announcement, The delegation from Essex! The Democrats from New Hampshire! The Whigs of Maine! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner the reformers summon conventions and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so O friends! will the God deign to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shalt sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Noth-

ing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

1841

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR [1]

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN, I greet you on the recommencement of our literary year. Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labor. We do not meet for games of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies, and odes, like the ancient Greeks; for parliaments of love and poesy, like the Troubadours; nor for the advancement of science, like our contemporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. As such it is precious as the sign of an indestructible instinct. Perhaps the time is already come when it ought to be, and will be, something else; when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?

In this hope I accept the topic which not only usage but the nature of our association seem to prescribe to this day,—the AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Year by year we come up hither to read one more chapter of his biography. Let us inquire what light new days and events have thrown on his character and his hopes.

It is one of those fables which out of an unknown antiquity convey an unlooked-for wisdom, that the gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men, that he might be more helpful to himself; just as the hand was divided into fingers, the better to answer its end.

The old fable covers a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man,—present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the *divided* or social state these functions are parcelled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his. The fable implies that the individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labor to embrace all the other laborers. But, unfortunately, this original unit, this fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered. The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters,—a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man.

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft, and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statute-book; the mechanic a machine; the sailor a rope of the ship.

In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society,

1 'The American Scholar' was delivered before the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Society on 31 August 1837. Lowell described it as 'an event without any former parallel in our literary annals, a scene to be always treasured in the memory for its picturesqueness and its inspiration. What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what enthusiasm of approval, what grim silence of foregone dissent! It was our Yankee version of a lecture by Abelard, our Harvard parallel to the last public appearances of Schelling.' *The Writings of James Russell Lowell*(Boston, 1892),I,366–67. Holmes called it 'our intellectual Declaration of Independence.' *The Writings of Oliver Wendell Holmes*(Boston, 1891),XI,88.

he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking.

In this view of him, as Man Thinking, the theory of his office is contained. Him nature solicits with all her placid, all her monitory pictures; him the past instructs; him the future invites. Is not indeed every man a student, and do not all things exist for the student's behoof? And, finally, is not the true scholar the only true master? But the old oracle said, 'All things have two handles: beware of the wrong one.' In life, too often, the scholar errs with mankind and forfeits his privilege. Let us see him in his school, and consider him in reference to the main influences he receives.

I. The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of nature. Every day, the sun; and, after sunset, Night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows. Every day, men and women, conversing, beholding and beholden. The scholar is he of all men whom this spectacle most engages. He must settle its value in his mind. What is nature to him? There is never a beginning, there is never an end, to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always circular power returning into itself. Therein it resembles his own spirit, whose beginning, whose ending, he never can find,—so entire, so boundless. Far too as her splendors shine, system on system shooting like rays, upward, downward, without centre, without circumference,—in the mass and in the particle, nature hastens to render account of herself to the mind. Classification begins. To the young mind every thing is individual, stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things and see in them one nature; then three, then three thousand; and so, tyrannized over by its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing anomalies, discovering roots running under ground whereby contrary and remote things cohere and flower out from one stem. It presently learns that since the dawn of history there has been a constant accumulation and classifying of facts. But what is classification but the perceiving that these objects are not chaotic, and are not foreign, but have a law which is also a law of the human mind? The astronomer discovers that geometry, a pure abstraction of the human mind, is the measure of planetary motion. The chemist finds proportions and intelligible method throughout matter; and science is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts. The ambitious soul sits down before each refractory fact; one after another reduces all strange constitutions, all new powers, to their class and their law, and goes on forever to animate the last fibre of organization, the outskirts of nature, by insight.

Thus to him, to this school-boy under the bending dome of day, is suggested that he and it proceed from one root; one is leaf and one is flower; relation, sympathy, stirring in every vein. And what is that root? Is not that the soul of his soul? A thought too bold; a dream too wild. Yet when this spiritual light shall have revealed the law of more earthly natures,—when he has learned to worship the soul, and to see that the natural philosophy that now is, is only the first gropings of its gigantic hand, he shall look forward to an ever expanding knowledge as to a becoming creator. He shall see that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind. Nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments. So much of nature as he is ignorant of, so much of his own mind does he not yet possess. And, in fine, the ancient precept, 'Know thyself,' and the modern precept, 'Study nature,' become at last one maxim.

II. The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar is the mind of the Past, —in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed. Books are the best type of the influence of the past, and perhaps we shall get at the truth,—learn the amount of this influence more conveniently,—by considering their value alone.

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him business; it went

from him poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.

Or, I might say, it depends on how far the process had gone, of transmuting life into truth. In proportion to the completeness of the distillation, so will the purity and imperishableness of the product be. But none is quite perfect. As no air-pump can by any means make a perfect vacuum, so neither can any artist entirely exclude the conventional, the local, the perishable from his book, or write a book of pure thought, that shall be as efficient, in all respects, to a remote posterity, as to contemporaries, or rather to the second age. Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this.

Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. The poet chanting was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outery if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.

Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence the book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence the restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees.

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed, and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they,—let us hold by this. They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his; —cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

On the other part, instead of being its own seer, let it receive from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest, and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice is done. Genius is always sufficiently the enemy of genius by over-influence. The literature of every nation bears me witness. The English dramatic poets have Shakspearized now for two hundred years.

Undoubtedly there is a right way of reading, so it be sternly subordinated. Man Thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings. But when the intervals of darkness come, as come they must,—when the sun is hid and the stars withdraw their shining,—we re-

pair to the lamps which were kindled by their ray, to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is. We hear, that we may speak. The Arabian proverb says, 'A fig tree, looking on a fig tree, becometh fruitful.'

It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us with the conviction that one nature wrote and the same reads. We read the verses of one of the great English poets, of Chaucer, of Marvell, of Dryden, with the most modern joy,—with a pleasure, I mean, which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all *time* from their verses. There is some awe mixed with the joy of our surprise, when this poet, who lived in some past world, two or three hundred years ago, says that which lies close to my own soul, that which I also had wellnigh thought and said. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should suppose some preëstablished harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.

I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any exaggeration of instincts, to underrate the Book. We all know, that as the human body can be nourished on any food, though it were boiled grass and the broth of shoes, so the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I only would say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, 'He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies.' There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world. We then see, what is always true, that as the seer's hour of vision is short and rare among heavy days and months, so is its record, perchance, the least part of his volume. The discerning will read, in his Plato or Shakspeare, only that least part,—only the authentic utterances of the oracle;—all the rest he rejects, were it never so many times Plato's and Shakspeare's.

Of course there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office,—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame. Thought and knowledge are natures in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns and pecuniary foundations, though of towns of gold, can never countervail the least sentence or syllable of wit. Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year.

III. There goes in the world a notion that the scholar should be a recluse, a valetudinarian,—as unfit for any handiwork or public labor as a penknife for an axe. The so-called 'practical men' sneer at speculative men, as if, because they speculate or *see*, they could do nothing. I have heard it said that the clergy,—who are always, more universally than any other class, the scholars of their day,—are addressed as women; that the rough, spontaneous conversation of men they do not hear, but only a mincing and diluted speech. They are often virtually disfranchised; and indeed there are advocates for their celibacy. As far as this is true of the studious classes, it is not just and wise. Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man. Without it thought can never ripen into truth. Whilst the world hangs before the eye as a cloud of beauty, we cannot even see its beauty. Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind. The preamble of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious to the conscious, is action. Only so much do I know, as I have lived. Instantly we know whose words are loaded with life, and whose not.

The world,—this shadow of the soul, or *other me*,—lies wide around. Its attractions

are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. I run eagerly into this resounding tumult. I grasp the hands of those next me, and take my place in the ring to suffer and to work, taught by an instinct that so shall the dumb abyss be vocal with speech. I pierce its order; I dissipate its fear; I dispose of it within the circuit of my expanding life. So much only of life as I know by experience, so much of the wilderness have I vanquished and planted, or so far have I extended my being, my dominion. I do not see how any man can afford, for the sake of his nerves and his nap, to spare any action in which he can partake. It is pearls and rubies to his discourse. Drudgery, calamity, exasperation, want, are instructors in eloquence and wisdom. The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action past by, as a loss of power. It is the raw material out of which the intellect moulds her splendid products. A strange process too, this by which experience is converted into thought, as a mulberry leaf is converted into satin. The manufacture goes forward at all hours.

The actions and events of our childhood and youth are now matters of calmest observation. They lie like fair pictures in the air. Not so with our recent actions,—with the business which we now have in hand. On this we are quite unable to speculate. Our affections as yet circulate through it. We no more feel or know it than we feel the feet, or the hand, or the brain of our body. The new deed is yet a part of life,—remains for a time immersed in our unconscious life. In some contemplative hour it detaches itself from the life like a ripe fruit, to become a thought of the mind. Instantly it is raised, transfigured; the corruptible has put on incorruption. Henceforth it is an object of beauty, however base its origin and neighborhood. Observe too the impossibility of antedating this act. In its grub state, it cannot fly, it cannot shine, it is a dull grub. But suddenly, without observation, the selfsame thing unfurls beautiful wings, and is an angel of wisdom. So is there no fact, no event, in our private history, which shall not, sooner or later, lose its adhesive, inert form, and astonish us by soaring from our body into the empyrean. Cradle and infancy, school and playground, the fear of boys, and dogs, and ferules, the love of little maids and berries, and many another fact that once filled the whole sky, are gone already; friend and relative, profession and party, town and country, nation and world, must also soar and sing.

Of course, he who has put forth his total strength in fit actions has the richest return of wisdom. I will not shut myself out of this globe of action, and transplant an oak into a flower-pot, there to hunger and pine; nor trust the revenue of some single faculty, and exhaust one vein of thought, much like those Savoyards, who, getting their livelihood by carving shepherds, shepherdesses, and smoking Dutchmen, for all Europe, went out one day to the mountain to find stock, and discovered that they had whittled up the last of their pine-trees. Authors we have, in numbers, who have written out their vein, and who, moved by a commendable prudence, sail for Greece or Palestine, follow the trapper into the prairie, or ramble round Algiers, to replenish their merchantable stock.

If it were only for a vocabulary, the scholar would be covetous of action. Life is our dictionary. Years are well spent in country labors; in town; in the insight into trades and manufactures; in frank intercourse with many men and women; in science; in art; to the one end of mastering in all their facts a language by which to illustrate and embody our perceptions. I learn immediately from any speaker how much he has already lived, through the poverty or the splendor of his speech. Life lies behind us as the quarry from whence we get tiles and copestones for the masonry of today. This is the way to learn grammar. Colleges and books only copy the language which the field and the work-yard made.

But the final value of action, like that of books, and better than books, is that it is a resource. That great principle of Undulation in nature, that shows itself in the inspiring and expiring of the breath; in desire and satiety; in the ebb and flow of the sea; in day and night; in heat and cold; and, as yet more deeply ingrained in every atom and every fluid, is known to us under the name of Polarity,—these 'fits of easy transmission and reflection,' as Newton called them, are the law of nature because they are the law of spirit.

The mind now thinks, now acts, and each fit reproduces the other. When the artist has exhausted his materials, when the fancy no longer paints, when thoughts are no longer apprehended and books are a weariness,—he has always the resource *to live.* Character is higher than intellect. Thinking is the function. Living is the functionary. The stream retreats to its source. A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think. Does he lack organ or medium to impart his truth? He can still fall back on this elemental force of living them. This is a total act. Thinking is a partial act. Let the grandeur of justice shine in his affairs. Let the beauty of affection cheer his lowly roof. Those 'far from fame,' who dwell and act with him, will feel the force of his constitution in the doings and passages of the day better than it can be measured by any public and designed display. Time shall teach him that the scholar loses no hour which the man lives. Herein he unfolds the sacred germ of his instinct, screened from influence. What is lost in seemliness is gained in strength. Not out of those on whom systems of education have exhausted their culture, comes the helpful giant to destroy the old or to build the new, but out of unhandselled savage nature; out of terrible Druids and Berserkers come at last Alfred and Shakspeare.

I hear therefore with joy whatever is beginning to be said of the dignity and necessity of labor to every citizen. There is virtue yet in the hoe and the spade, for learned as well as for unlearned hands. And labor is everywhere welcome; always we are invited to work; only be this limitation observed, that a man shall not for the sake of wider activity sacrifice any opinion to the popular judgments and modes of action.

I have now spoken of the education of the scholar by nature, by books, and by action. It remains to say somewhat of his duties.

They are such as become Man Thinking. They may all be comprised in self-trust. The office of the scholar is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances. He plies the slow, unhonored, and unpaid task of observation. Flamsteed and Herschel, in their glazed observatories, may catalogue the stars with the praise of all men, and the results being splendid and useful, honor is sure. But he, in his private observatory, cataloguing obscure and nebulous stars of the human mind, which as yet no man has thought of as such,—watching days and months sometimes for a few facts; correcting still his old records;—must relinquish display and immediate fame. In the long period of his preparation he must betray often an ignorance and shiftlessness in popular arts, incurring the disdain of the able who shoulder him aside. Long he must stammer in his speech; often forego the living for the dead. Worse yet, he must accept,—how often!—poverty and solitude. For the ease and pleasure of treading the old road, accepting the fashions, the education, the religion of society, he takes the cross of making his own, and, of course, the self-accusation, the faint heart, the frequent uncertainty and loss of time, which are the nettles and tangling vines in the way of the self-relying and self-directed; and the state of virtual hostility in which he seems to stand to society, and especially to educated society. For all this loss and scorn, what offset? He is to find consolation in exercising the highest functions of human nature. He is one who raises himself from private considerations and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world's eye. He is the world's heart. He is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism, by preserving and communicating heroic sentiments, noble biographies, melodious verse, and the conclusions of history. Whatsoever oracles the human heart, in all emergencies, in all solemn hours, has uttered as its commentary on the world of actions,—these he shall receive and impart. And whatsoever new verdict Reason from her inviolable seat pronounces on the passing men and events of to-day,—this he shall hear and promulgate.

These being his functions, it becomes him to feel all confidence in himself, and to defer never to the popular cry. He and he only knows the world. The world of any moment is the merest appearance. Some great decorum, some fetish of a government, some ephemeral trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. The odds are that the whole question is not worth

the poorest thought which the scholar has lost in listening to the controversy. Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun, though the ancient and honorable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom. In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself; add observation to observation, patient of neglect, patient of reproach, and bide his own time,—happy enough if he can satisfy himself alone that this day he has seen something truly. Success treads on every right step. For the instinct is sure, that prompts him to tell his brother what he thinks. He then learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind he has descended into the secrets of all minds. He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts, is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks, and of all into whose language his own can be translated. The poet, in utter solitude remembering his spontaneous thoughts and recording them, is found to have recorded that which men in crowded cities find true for them also. The orator distrusts at first the fitness of his frank confessions, his want of knowledge of the persons he addresses, until he finds that he is the complement of his hearers;—that they drink his words because he fulfils for them their own nature; the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels, This is my music; this myself.

In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended. Free should the scholar be,—free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom, 'without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution.' Brave; for fear is a thing which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance. It is a shame to him if his tranquillity, amid dangerous times, arise from the presumption that like children and women his is a protected class; or if he seek a temporary peace by the diversion of his thoughts from politics or vexed questions, hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes, peeping into microscopes, and turning rhymes, as a boy whistles to keep his courage up. So is the danger a danger still; so is the fear worse. Manlike let him turn and face it. Let him look into its eye and search its nature, inspect its origin,—see the whelping of this lion,—which lies no great way back; he will then find in himself a perfect comprehension of its nature and extent; he will have made his hands meet on the other side, and can henceforth defy it and pass on superior. The world is his who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold is there only by sufferance,—by your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.

Yes, we are the cowed,—we the trustless. It is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature; that the world was finished a long time ago. As the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so it is ever to so much of his attributes as we bring to it. To ignorance and sin, it is flint. They adapt themselves to it as they may; but in proportion as a man has any thing in him divine, the firmament flows before him and takes his signet and form. Not he is great who can alter matter, but he who can alter my state of mind. They are the kings of the world who give the color of their present thought to all nature and all art, and persuade men by the cheerful serenity of their carrying the matter, that this thing which they do is the apple which the ages have desired to pluck, now at last ripe, and inviting nations to the harvest. The great man makes the great thing. Wherever Macdonald sits, there is the head of the table. Linnæus makes botany the most alluring of studies, and wins it from the farmer and the herb-woman; Davy, chemistry; and Cuvier, fossils. The day is always his who works in it with serenity and great aims. The unstable estimates of men crowd to him whose mind is filled with a truth, as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon.

For this self-trust, the reason is deeper than can be fathomed,—darker than can be enlightened. I might not carry with me the feeling of my audience in stating my own belief. But I have already shown the ground of my hope, in adverting to the doctrine that man is one. I believe man has been wronged; he has wronged himself. He has almost lost the light that can lead him back

to his prerogatives. Men are become of no account. Men in history, men in the world of to-day, are bugs, are spawn, and are called 'the mass' and 'the herd.' In a century, in a millennium, one or two men; that is to say, one or two approximations to the right state of every man. All the rest behold in the hero or the poet their own green and crude being,—ripened; yes, and are content to be less, so *that* may attain to its full stature. What a testimony, full of grandeur, full of pity, is borne to the demands of his own nature, by the poor clansman, the poor partisan, who rejoices in the glory of his chief. The poor and the low find some amends to their immense moral capacity, for their acquiescence in a political and social inferiority. They are content to be brushed like flies from the path of a great person, so that justice shall be done by him to that common nature which it is the dearest desire of all to see enlarged and glorified. They sun themselves in the great man's light, and feel it to be their own element. They cast the dignity of man from their downtrod selves upon the shoulders of a hero, and will perish to add one drop of blood to make that great heart beat, those giant sinews combat and conquer. He lives for us, and we live in him.

Men such as they are, very naturally seek money or power; and power because it is as good as money,—the 'spoils,' so called, 'of office.' And why not? for they aspire to the highest, and this, in their sleep-walking, they dream is highest. Wake them and they shall quit the false good and leap to the true, and leave governments to clerks and desks. This revolution is to be wrought by the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture. The main enterprise of the world for splendor, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man. Here are the materials strewn along the ground. The private life of one man shall be a more illustrious monarchy, more formidable to its enemy, more sweet and serene in its influence to its friend, than any kingdom in history. For a man, rightly viewed, comprehendeth the particular natures of all men. Each philosopher, each bard, each actor has only done for me, as by a delegate, what one day I can do for myself. The books which once we valued more than the apple of the eye, we have quite exhausted. What is that but saying that we have come up with the point of view which the universal mind took through the eyes of one scribe; we have been that man, and have passed on. First, one, then another, we drain all cisterns, and waxing greater by all these supplies, we crave a better and more abundant food. The man has never lived that can feed us ever. The human mind cannot be enshrined in a person who shall set a barrier on any one side to this unbounded, unboundable empire. It is one central fire, which, flaming now out of the lips of Etna, lightens the capes of Sicily, and now out of the throat of Vesuvius, illuminates the towers and vineyards of Naples. It is one light which beams out of a thousand stars. It is one soul which animates all men.

But I have dwelt perhaps tediously upon this abstraction of the Scholar. I ought not to delay longer to add what I have to say of nearer reference to the time and to this country.

Historically, there is thought to be a difference in the ideas which predominate over successive epochs, and there are data for marking the genius of the Classic, of the Romantic, and now of the Reflective or Philosophical age. With the views I have intimated of the oneness or the identity of the mind through all individuals, I do not much dwell on these differences. In fact, I believe each individual passes through all three. The boy is a Greek; the youth, romantic; the adult, reflective. I deny not, however, that a revolution in the leading idea may be distinctly enough traced.

Our age is bewailed as the age of Introversion. Must that needs be evil? We, it seems, are critical; we are embarrassed with second thoughts; we cannot enjoy any thing for hankering to know whereof the pleasure consists; we are lined with eyes; we see with our feet; the time is infected with Hamlet's unhappiness,—

'Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'

It is so bad then? Sight is the last thing to be pitied. Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should outsee nature and God, and drink truth dry? I look upon the discontent of the literary class as a mere announcement of the fact that they find themselves not in

the state of mind of their fathers, and regret the coming state as untried; as a boy dreads the water before he has learned that he can swim. If there is any period one would desire to be born in, is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

I read with some joy of the auspicious signs of the coming days, as they glimmer already through poetry and art, through philosophy and science, through church and state.

One of these signs is the fact that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state, assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful, the near, the low, the common, was explored and poetized. That which had been negligently trodden under foot by those who were harnessing and provisioning themselves for long journeys into far countries, is suddenly found to be richer than all foreign parts. The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. It is a sign,—is it not?—of new vigor when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and the feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body;—show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as always it does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the ledger referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing;—and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle, there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.

This idea has inspired the genius of Goldsmith, Burns, Cowper, and, in a newer time, of Goethe, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. This idea they have differently followed and with various success. In contrast with their writing, the style of Pope, of Johnson, of Gibbon, looks cold and pedantic. This writing is blood-warm. Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote. The near explains the far. The drop is a small ocean. A man is related to all nature. This perception of the worth of the vulgar is fruitful in discoveries. Goethe, in this very thing the most modern of the moderns, has shown us, as none ever did, the genius of the ancients.

There is one man of genius who has done much for this philosophy of life, whose literary value has never yet been rightly estimated;—I mean Emanuel Swedenborg. The most imaginative of men, yet writing with the precision of a mathematician, he endeavored to engraft a purely philosophical Ethics on the popular Christianity of his time. Such an attempt of course must have difficulty which no genius could surmount. But he saw and showed the connection between nature and the affections of the soul. He pierced the emblematic or spiritual character of the visible, audible, tangible world. Especially did his shade-loving muse hover over and interpret the lower parts of nature; he showed the mysterious bond that allies moral evil to the foul material forms, and has given in epical parables a theory of insanity, of beasts, of unclean and fearful things.

Another sign of our times, also marked by an analogous political movement, is the new importance given to the single person. Every thing that tends to insulate the individual,—to surround him with barriers of natural respect, so that each man shall feel the world is his, and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state with a sovereign state,—tends to true union as well as

greatness. 'I learned,' said the melancholy Pestalozzi, 'that no man in God's wide earth is either willing or able to help any other man.' Help must come from the bosom alone. The scholar is that man who must take up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all the hopes of the future. He must be an university of knowledges. If there be one lesson more than another which should pierce his ear, it is, The world is nothing, the man is all; in yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a globule of sap ascends; in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all; it is for you to dare all. Mr. President and Gentlemen, this confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation, to the American Scholar. We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant. See already the tragic consequence. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself. There is no work for any but the decorous and the complaisant. Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust, some of them suicides. What is the remedy? They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers for the career do not yet see, that if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him. Patience,—patience; with the shades of all the good and great for company; and for solace the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work the study and the communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world. Is it not the chief disgrace in the world, not to be an unit;—not to be reckoned one character;—not to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred, or the thousand, of the party, the section, to which we belong; and our opinion predicted geographically, as the north, or the south? Not so, brothers and friends,—please God, ours shall not be so. We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. The study of letters shall be no longer a name for pity, for doubt, and for sensual indulgence. The dread of man and the love of man shall be a wall of defence and a wreath of joy around all. A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men.

1837

THE POET

THOSE who are esteemed umpires of taste are often persons who have acquired some knowledge of admired pictures or sculptures, and have an inclination for whatever is elegant; but if you inquire whether they are beautiful souls, and whether their own acts are like fair pictures, you learn that they are selfish and sensual. Their cultivation is local, as if you should rub a log of dry wood in one spot to produce fire, all the rest remaining cold. Their knowledge of the fine arts is some study of rules and particulars, or some limited judgment of color or form, which is exercised for amusement or for show. It is a proof of the shallowness of the doctrine of beauty as it lies in the minds of our amateurs, that men seem to have lost the perception of the instant dependence of form upon soul. There is no doctrine of forms in our philosophy. We were put into our bodies, as fire is put into a pan to be carried about; but there is no accurate adjustment between the spirit and the organ, much less is the latter the germination of the former. So in regard to other forms, the intellectual men do not believe in any essential dependence of the material world on thought and volition. Theologians think it a pretty air-castle to talk of the spiritual meaning of a ship or a cloud, of a city or a contract, but they prefer to come again to the solid ground of historical evidence; and even the poets are contented with a civil and conformed manner of living, and to write poems from the fancy, at a safe distance from their own experience.

But the highest minds of the world have never ceased to explore the double meaning, or, shall I say, the quadruple, or the centuple, or much more manifold meaning, of every sensuous fact: Orpheus, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Plato, Plutarch, Dante, Swedenborg, and the masters of sculpture, picture, and poetry. For we are not pans and barrows, nor even porters of the fire and torch-bearers, but children of the fire, made of it, and only the same divinity transmuted, and at two or three removes, when we know least about it. And this hidden truth, that the fountains whence all this river of Time, and its creatures, floweth, are intrinsically ideal and beautiful, draws us to the consideration of the nature and functions of the Poet, or the man of Beauty, to the means and materials he uses, and to the general aspect of the art in the present time.

The breadth of the problem is great, for the poet is representative. He stands among partial men for the complete man, and apprises us not of his wealth, but of the common wealth. The young man reveres men of genius, because, to speak truly, they are more himself than he is. They receive of the soul as he also receives, but they more. Nature enhances her beauty, to the eye of loving men, from their belief that the poet is beholding her shows at the same time. He is isolated among his contemporaries, by truth and by his art, but with this consolation in his pursuits, that they will draw all men sooner or later. For all men live by truth, and stand in need of expression. In love, in art, in avarice, in politics, in labor, in games, we study to utter our painful secret. The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression.

Notwithstanding this necessity to be published, adequate expression is rare. I know not how it is that we need an interpreter; but the great majority of men seem to be minors, who have not yet come into possession of their own, or mutes, who cannot report the conversation they have had with nature. There is no man who does not anticipate a supersensual utility in the sun and stars, earth and water. These stand and wait to render him a peculiar service. But there is some obstruction or some excess of phlegm in our constitution, which does not suffer them to yield the due effect. Too feeble fall the impressions of nature on us to make us artists. Every touch should thrill. Every man should be so much an artist that he could report in conversation what had befallen him. Yet, in our experience, the rays or appulses have sufficient force to arrive at the senses, but not enough to reach the quick and compel the reproduction of themselves in speech. The poet is the person in whom these powers are in balance, the man without impediment, who sees and handles that which others dream of, traverses the whole scale of experience, and is representative of man, in virtue of being the largest power to receive and to impart.

For the Universe has three children, born at one time, which reappear, under different names, in every system of thought, whether they be called cause, operation, and effect; or, more poetically, Jove, Pluto, Neptune; or, theologically, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son; but which we will call here the Knower, the Doer, and the Sayer. These stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty. These three are equal. Each is that which he is essentially, so that he cannot be surmounted or analyzed, and each of these three has the power of the others latent in him, and his own, patent.

The poet is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty. He is a sovereign, and stands on the centre. For the world is not painted or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe. Therefore the poet is not any permissive potentate, but is emperor in his own right. Criticism is infested with a cant of materialism, which assumes that manual skill and activity is the first merit of all men, and disparages such as say and do not, overlooking the fact that some men, namely, poets, are natural sayers, sent into the world to the end of expression, and confounds them with those whose province is action, but who quit it to imitate the sayers. But Homer's words are as costly and admirable to Homer, as Agamemnon's victories are to Agamemnon. The poet does not wait for the hero or the sage, but, as they act and think primarily, so he writes primarily what will and must be spoken, reckoning the others, though primaries also,

yet, in respect to him, secondaries and servants; as sitters or models in the studio of a painter, or as assistants who bring building materials to an architect.

For poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word, or a verse, and substitute something of our own, and thus miswrite the poem. The men of more delicate ear write down these cadences more faithfully, and these transcripts, though imperfect, become the songs of the nations. For nature is as truly beautiful as it is good, or as it is reasonable, and must as much appear, as it must be done, or be known. Words and deeds are quite indifferent modes of the divine energy. Words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words.

The sign and credentials of the poet are, that he announces that which no man foretold. He is the true and only doctor; he knows and tells; he is the only teller of news, for he was present and privy to the appearance which he describes. He is a beholder of ideas, and an utterer of the necessary and causal. We do not speak now of men of poetical talents, or of industry and skill in metre, but of the true poet. I took part in a conversation the other day concerning a recent writer of lyrics, a man of subtle mind, whose head appeared to be a music-box of delicate tunes and rhythms, and whose skill, and command of language, we could not sufficiently praise. But when the question arose, whether he was not only a lyrist, but a poet, we were obliged to confess that he is plainly a contemporary, not an eternal man. He does not stand out of our low limitations, like a Chimborazo under the line, running up from the torrid base through all the climates of the globe, with belts of the herbage of every latitude on its high and mottled sides; but this genius is the landscape-garden of a modern house, adorned with fountains and statues, with well-bred men and women standing and sitting in the walks and terraces. We hear, through all the varied music, the ground-tone of conventional life. Our poets are men of talents who sing, and not the children of music. The argument is secondary, the finish of the verses is primary.

For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem,—a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing. The thought and the form are equal in the order of time, but in the order of genesis the thought is prior to the form. The poet has a new thought: he has a whole new experience to unfold; he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be the richer in his fortune. For, the experience of each new age requires a new confession, and the world seems always waiting for its poet. I remember, when I was young, how much I was moved one morning by tidings that genius had appeared in a youth who sat near me at table. He had left his work, and gone rambling none knew whither, and had written hundreds of lines, but could not tell whether that which was in him was therein told; he could tell nothing but that all was changed,—man, beast, heaven, earth, and sea. How gladly we listened! how credulous! Society seemed to be compromised. We sat in the aurora of a sun-rise which was to put out all the stars. Boston seemed to be at twice the distance it had the night before, or was much farther than that. Rome,—what was Rome? Plutarch and Shakspeare were in the yellow leaf, and Homer no more should be heard of. It is much to know that poetry has been written this very day, under this very roof, by your side. What! that wonderful spirit has not expired! these stony moments are still sparkling and animated! I had fancied that the oracles were all silent, and nature had spent her fires; and behold! all night, from every pore, these fine auroras have been streaming. Every one has some interest in the advent of the poet, and no one knows how much it may concern him. We know that the secret of the world is profound, but who or what shall be our interpreter, we know not. A mountain ramble, a new style of face, a new person, may put the key into our hands. Of course, the value of genius to us is in the veracity of its report. Talent may frolic and juggle; genius realizes and adds. Mankind, in good earnest, have availed so far in understanding themselves and their work, that the foremost watchman on the peak announces his news. It is the truest word ever spoken, and the phrase

will be the fittest, most musical, and the unerring voice of the world for that time.

All that we call sacred history attests that the birth of a poet is the principal event in chronology. Man, never so often deceived, still watches for the arrival of a brother who can hold him steady to a truth until he has made it his own. With what joy I begin to read a poem, which I confide in as an inspiration! And now my chains are to be broken; I shall mount above these clouds and opaque airs in which I live,—opaque, though they seem transparent,—and from the heaven of truth I shall see and comprehend my relations. That will reconcile me to life, and renovate nature, to see trifles animated by a tendency, and to know what I am doing. Life will no more be a noise; now I shall see men and women, and know the signs by which they may be discerned from fools and satans. This day shall be better than my birth-day: then I became an animal; now I am invited into the science of the real. Such is the hope, but the fruition is postponed. Oftener it falls that this winged man, who will carry me into the heaven, whirls me into mists, then leaps and frisks about with me as it were from cloud to cloud, still affirming that he is bound heavenward; and I, being myself a novice, am slow in perceiving that he does not know the way into the heavens, and is merely bent that I should admire his skill to rise, like a fowl or a flying fish, a little way from the ground or the water; but the all-piercing, all-feeding, and ocular air of heaven, that man shall never inhabit. I tumble down again soon into my old nooks, and lead the life of exaggerations as before, and have lost my faith in the possibility of any guide who can lead me thither where I would be.

But leaving these victims of vanity, let us, with new hope, observe how nature, by worthier impulses, has insured the poet's fidelity to his office of announcement and affirming, namely, by the beauty of things, which becomes a new and higher beauty when expressed. Nature offers all her creatures to him as a picture-language. Being used as a type, a second wonderful value appears in the object, far better than its old value, as the carpenter's stretched cord, if you hold your ear close enough, is musical in the breeze. 'Things more excellent than every image,' says Jamblichus, 'are expressed through images.' Things admit of being used as symbols, because nature is a symbol, in the whole, and in every part. Every line we can draw in the sand has expression; and there is no body without its spirit or genius. All form is an effect of character; all condition, of the quality of the life; all harmony, of health; and, for this reason, a perception of beauty should be sympathetic, or proper only to the good. The beautiful rests on the foundations of the necessary. The soul makes the body, as the wise Spenser teaches:

'So every spirit, as it is most pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it the fairer body doth procure
To habit in, and it more fairly dight,
With cheerful grace and amiable sight.
For, of the soul, the body form doth take,
For soul is form, and doth the body make.'

Here we find ourselves, suddenly, not in a critical speculation, but in a holy place, and should go very warily and reverently. We stand before the secret of the world, there where Being passes into Appearance and Unity into Variety.

The Universe is the externization of the soul. Wherever the life is, that bursts into appearance around it. Our science is sensual, and therefore superficial. The earth and the heavenly bodies, physics, and chemistry, we sensually treat, as if they were self-existent; but these are the retinue of that Being we have. 'The mighty heaven,' said Proclus, 'exhibits, in its transfigurations, clear images of the splendor of intellectual perceptions; being moved in conjunction with the unapparent periods of intellectual natures.' Therefore science always goes abreast with the just elevation of the man, keeping step with religion and metaphysics; or the state of science is an index of our self-knowledge. Since everything in nature answers to a moral power, if any phenomenon remains brute and dark, it is because the corresponding faculty in the observer is not yet active.

No wonder, then, if these waters be so deep, that we hover over them with a religious regard. The beauty of the fable proves the importance of the sense; to the poet, and to all others; or, if you please,

every man is so far a poet as to be susceptible of these enchantments of nature: for all men have the thoughts whereof the universe is the celebration. I find that the fascination resides in the symbol. Who loves nature? Who does not? Is it only poets, and men of leisure and cultivation, who live with her? No; but also hunters, farmers, grooms, and butchers, though they express their affection in their choice of life and not in their choice of words. The writer wonders what the coachman or the hunter values in riding, in horses, and dogs. It is not superficial qualities. When you talk with him, he holds these at as slight a rate as you. His worship is sympathetic; he has no definitions, but he is commanded in nature, by the living power which he feels to be there present. No imitation, or playing of these things, would content him; he loves the earnest of the northwind, of rain, of stone, and wood, and iron. A beauty not explicable is dearer than a beauty which we can see to the end of. It is nature the symbol, nature certifying the supernatural, body overflowed by life, which he worships with coarse, but sincere rites.

The inwardness and mystery of this attachment, drives men of every class to the use of emblems. The schools of poets and philosophers are not more intoxicated with their symbols, than the populace with theirs. In our political parties, compute the power of badges and emblems. See the great ball which they roll from Baltimore to Bunker Hill! In the political processions, Lowell goes in a loom, and Lynn in a shoe, and Salem in a ship. Witness the cider-barrel, the log-cabin, the hickory-stick, the palmetto, and all the cognizances of party. See the power of national emblems. Some stars, lilies, leopards, a crescent, a lion, an eagle, or other figure, which came into credit God knows how, on an old rag of bunting, blowing in the wind on a fort at the ends of the earth, shall make the blood tingle under the rudest or the most conventional exterior. The people fancy they hate poetry, and they are all poets and mystics!

Beyond this universality of the symbolic language, we are apprised of the divineness of this superior use of things, whereby the world is a temple whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures, and commandments of the Deity, in this, that there is no fact in nature which does not carry the whole sense of nature; and the distinctions which we make in events and in affairs, of low and high, honest and base, disappear when nature is used as a symbol. Thought makes every thing fit for use. The vocabulary of an omniscient man would embrace words and images excluded from polite conversation. What would be base, or even obscene, to the obscene, becomes illustrious, spoken in a new connection of thought. The piety of the Hebrew prophets purges their grossness. The circumcision is an example of the power of poetry to raise the low and offensive. Small and mean things serve as well as great symbols. The meaner the type by which a law is expressed, the more pungent it is, and the more lasting in the memories of men; just as we choose the smallest box or case in which any needful utensil can be carried. Bare lists of words are found suggestive to an imaginative and excited mind; as it is related of Lord Chatham, that he was accustomed to read in Bailey's Dictionary when he was preparing to speak in Parliament. The poorest experience is rich enough for all the purposes of expressing thought. Why covet a knowledge of new facts? Day and night, house and garden, a few books, a few actions, serve us as well as would all trades and all spectacles. We are far from having exhausted the significance of the few symbols we use. We can come to use them yet with a terrible simplicity. It does not need that a poem should be long. Every word was once a poem. Every new relation is a new word. Also, we use defects and deformities to a sacred purpose, so expressing our sense that the evils of the world are such only to the evil eye. In the old mythology, mythologists observe, defects are ascribed to divine natures, as lameness to Vulcan, blindness to Cupid, and the like, to signify exuberances.

For as it is dislocation and detachment from the life of God that makes things ugly, the poet, who re-attaches things to nature and the Whole,—re-attaching even artificial things, and violations of nature, to nature, by a deeper insight,—disposes very easily of the most disagreeable facts. Readers of poetry see the factory-village and the railway, and fancy that the poetry of the

landscape is broken up by these; for these works of art are not yet consecrated in their reading; but the poet sees them fall within the great Order not less than the bee-hive or the spider's geometrical web. Nature adopts them very fast into her vital circles, and the gliding train of cars she loves like her own. Besides, in a centred mind, it signifies nothing how many mechanical inventions you exhibit. Though you add millions, and never so surprising, the fact of mechanics has not gained a grain's weight. The spiritual fact remains unalterable, by many or by few particulars; as no mountain is of any appreciable height to break the curve of the sphere. A shrewd country-boy goes to the city for the first time, and the complacent citizen is not satisfied with his little wonder. It is not that he does not see all the fine houses, and know that he never saw such before, but he disposes of them as easily as the poet finds place for the railway. The chief value of the new fact, is to enhance the great and constant fact of Life, which can dwarf any and every circumstance, and to which the belt of wampum, and the commerce of America, are alike.

The world being thus put under the mind for verb and noun, the poet is he who can articulate it. For though life is great, and fascinates, and absorbs,—and though all men are intelligent of the symbols through which it is named,—yet they cannot originally use them. We are symbols, and inhabit symbols; workmen, work, and tools, words and things, birth and death, all are emblems; but we sympathize with the symbols, and, being infatuated with the economical uses of things, we do not know that they are thoughts. The poet, by an ulterior intellectual perception, gives them a power which makes their old use forgotten, and puts eyes and a tongue into every dumb and inanimate object. He perceives the independence of the thought on the symbol, the stability of the thought, the accidency and fugacity of the symbol. As the eyes of Lyncæus were said to see through the earth, so the poet turns the world to glass, and shows us all things in their right series and procession. For, through that better perception, he stands one step nearer to things, and sees the flowing or metamorphosis; perceives that thought is multiform; that within the form of every creature is a force impelling it to ascend into a higher form; and, following with his eyes the life, uses the forms which express that life, and so his speech flows with the flowing of nature. All the facts of the animal economy, sex, nutriment, gestation, birth, growth, are symbols of the passage of the world into the soul of man, to suffer there a change, and reappear a new and higher fact. He uses forms according to the life, and not according to the form. This is true science. The poet alone knows astronomy, chemistry, vegetation, and animation, for he does not stop at these facts, but employs them as signs. He knows why the plain or meadow of space was strown with these flowers we call suns and moons and stars; why the great deep is adorned with animals, with men, and gods; for in every word he speaks he rides on them as the horses of thought.

By virtue of this science the poet is the Namer or Language-maker, naming things sometimes after their appearance, sometimes after their essence, and giving to every one its own name and not another's, thereby rejoicing the intellect, which delights in detachment or boundary. The poets made all the words, and therefore language is the archives of history, and, if we must say it, a sort of tomb of the muses. For, though the origin of most of our words is forgotten, each word was at first a stroke of genius, and obtained currency, because for the moment it symbolized the world to the first speaker and to the hearer. The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry. As the limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images, or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin. But the poet names the thing because he sees it, or comes one step nearer to it than any other. This expression, or naming, is not art, but a second nature, grown out of the first, as a leaf out of a tree. What we call nature is a certain self-regulated motion or change; and nature does all things by her own hands, and does not leave another to baptize her, but baptizes herself; and this through the metamorphosis again. I re-

member that a certain poet described it to me thus:—

Genius is the activity which repairs the decays of things, whether wholly or partly of a material and finite kind. Nature, through all her kingdoms, insures herself. Nobody cares for planting the poor fungus: so she shakes down from the gills of one agaric countless spores, any one of which, being preserved, transmits new billions of spores to-morrow or next day. The new agaric of this hour has a chance which the old one had not. This atom of seed is thrown into a new place, not subject to the accidents which destroyed its parent two rods off. She makes a man; and having brought him to ripe age, she will no longer run the risk of losing this wonder at a blow, but she detaches from him a new self, that the kind may be safe from accidents to which the individual is exposed. So when the soul of the poet has come to ripeness of thought, she detaches and sends away from it its poems or songs,—a fearless, sleepless, deathless progeny, which is not exposed to the accidents of the weary kingdom of time: a fearless, vivacious offspring, clad with wings (such was the virtue of the soul out of which they came), which carry them fast and far, and infix them irrevocably into the hearts of men. These wings are the beauty of the poet's soul. The songs, thus flying immortal from their mortal parent, are pursued by clamorous flights of censures, which swarm in far greater numbers, and threaten to devour them; but these last are not winged. At the end of a very short leap they fall plump down, and rot, having received from the souls out of which they came no beautiful wings. But the melodies of the poet ascend, and leap, and pierce into the deeps of infinite time.

So far the bard taught me, using his freer speech. But nature has a higher end, in the production of new individuals, than security, namely, *ascension*, or, the passage of the soul into higher forms. I knew, in my younger days, the sculptor who made the statue of the youth which stands in the public garden. He was, as I remember, unable to tell, directly, what made him happy, or unhappy, but by wonderful indirections he could tell. He rose one day, according to his habit, before the dawn, and saw the morning break, grand as the eternity out of which it came, and, for many days after, he strove to express this tranquillity, and, lo! his chisel had fashioned out of marble the form of a beautiful youth, Phosphorus, whose aspect is such that, it is said, all persons who look on it become silent. The poet also resigns himself to his mood, and that thought which agitated him is expressed, but *alter idem*, in a manner totally new. The expression is organic, or, the new type which things themselves take when liberated. As, in the sun, objects paint their images on the retina of the eye, so they, sharing the aspiration of the whole universe, tend to paint a far more delicate copy of their essence in his mind. Like the metamorphosis of things into higher organic forms, is their change into melodies. Over everything stands its dæmon, or soul, and, as the form of the thing is reflected by the eye, so the soul of the thing is reflected by a melody. The sea, the mountain-ridge, Niagara, and every flower-bed, pre-exist, or super-exist, in pre-cantations, which sail like odors in the air, and when any man goes by with an ear sufficiently fine, he overhears them, and endeavors to write down the notes, without diluting or depraving them. And herein is the legitimation of criticism, in the mind's faith that the poems are a corrupt version of some text in nature, with which they ought to be made to tally. A rhyme in one of our sonnets should not be less pleasing than the iterated nodes of a sea-shell, or the resembling difference of a group of flowers. The pairing of the birds is an idyl, not tedious as our idyls are; a tempest is a rough ode without falsehood or rant; a summer, with its harvest sown, reaped, and stored, is an epic song, subordinating how many admirably executed parts. Why should not the symmetry and truth that modulate these, glide into our spirits, and we participate the invention of nature?

This insight, which expresses itself by what is called Imagination, is a very high sort of seeing, which does not come by study, but by the intellect being where and what it sees; by sharing the path, or circuit of things through forms, and so making them translucid to others. The path of things is silent. Will they suffer a speaker

to go with them? A spy they will not suffer; a lover, a poet, is the transcendency of their own nature,—him they will suffer. The condition of true naming, on the poet's part, is his resigning himself to the divine *aura* which breathes through forms, and accompanying that.

It is a secret which every intellectual man quickly learns, that, beyond the energy of his possessed and conscious intellect, he is capable of a new energy (as of an intellect doubled on itself), by abandonment to the nature of things; that, beside his privacy of power as an individual man, there is a great public power, on which he can draw, by unlocking, at all risks, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him: then he is caught up into the life of the Universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law, and his words are universally intelligible as the plants and animals. The poet knows that he speaks adequately, then only when he speaks somewhat wildly, or, 'with the flower of the mind'; not with the intellect, used as an organ, but with the intellect released from all service, and suffered to take its direction from its celestial life; or, as the ancients were wont to express themselves, not with intellect alone, but with the intellect inebriated by nectar. As the traveller who has lost his way, throws his reins on his horse's neck, and trusts to the instinct of the animal to find his road, so must we do with the divine animal who carries us through this world. For if in any manner we can stimulate this instinct, new passages are opened for us into nature, the mind flows into and through things hardest and highest, and the metamorphosis is possible.

This is the reason why bards love wine, mead, narcotics, coffee, tea, opium, the fumes of sandal-wood and tobacco, or whatever other procurers of animal exhilaration. All men avail themselves of such means as they can, to add this extraordinary power to their normal powers; and to this end they prize conversation, music, pictures, sculpture, dancing, theatres, travelling, war, mobs, fires, gaming, politics, or love, or science, or animal intoxication, which are several coarser or finer *quasi*-mechanical substitutes for the true nectar, which is the ravishment of the intellect by coming nearer to the fact. These are auxiliaries to the centrifugal tendency of a man, to his passage out into free space, and they help him to escape the custody of that body in which he is pent up, and of that jail-yard of individual relations in which he is enclosed. Hence a great number of such as were professionally expressers of Beauty, as painters, poets, musicians, and actors, have been more than others wont to lead a life of pleasure and indulgence; all but the few who received the true nectar; and, as it was a spurious mode of attaining freedom, as it was an emancipation not into the heavens, but into the freedom of baser places, they were punished for that advantage they won, by a dissipation and deterioration. But never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or of wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body. That is not an inspiration, which we owe to narcotics, but some counterfeit excitement and fury. Milton says that the lyric poet may drink wine and live generously, but the epic poet, he who shall sing of the gods, and their descent unto men, must drink water out of a wooden bowl. For poetry is not 'Devil's wine,' but God's wine. It is with this as it is with toys. We fill the hands and nurseries of our children with all manner of dolls, drums, and horses, withdrawing their eyes from the plain face and sufficing objects of nature, the sun, and moon, the animals, the water and stones, which should be their toys. So the poet's habit of living should be set on a key so low that the common influences should delight him. His cheerfulness should be the gift of the sunlight; the air should suffice for his inspiration, and he should be tipsy with water. That spirit which suffices quiet hearts, which seems to come forth to such from every dry knoll of sere grass, from every pine-stump and half-imbedded stone, on which the dull March sun shines, comes forth to the poor and hungry, and such as are of simple taste. If thou fill thy brain with Boston and New York, with fashion and covetousness, and wilt stimulate thy jaded senses with wine and French coffee, thou shalt find no radiance of wisdom in the lonely waste of the pinewoods.

If the imagination intoxicates the poet, it

is not inactive in other men. The metamorphosis excites in the beholder an emotion of joy. The use of symbols has a certain power of emancipation and exhilaration for all men. We seem to be touched by a wand, which makes us dance and run about happily, like children. We are like persons who come out of a cave or cellar into the open air. This is the effect on us of tropes, fables, oracles, and all poetic forms. Poets are thus liberating gods. Men have really got a new sense, and found within their world another world, or nest of worlds; for, the metamorphosis once seen, we divine that it does not stop. I will not now consider how much this makes the charm of algebra and the mathematics, which also have their tropes, but it is felt in every definition; as when Aristotle defines *space* to be an immovable vessel, in which things are contained; or when Plato defines a *line* to be a flowing point; or *figure* to be a bound of solid; and many the like. What a joyful sense of freedom we have, when Vitruvius announces the old opinion of artists that no architect can build any house well who does not know something of anatomy. When Socrates, in Charmides, tells us that the soul is cured of its maladies by certain incantations, and that these incantations are beautiful reasons, from which temperance is generated in souls; when Plato calls the world an animal, and Timæus affirms that the plants also are animals; or affirms a man to be a heavenly tree, growing with his root, which is his head, upward; and, as George Chapman, following him, writes,—

'So in our tree of man, whose nervie root
Springs in his top';

when Orpheus speaks of hoariness as 'that white flower which marks extreme old age'; when Proclus calls the universe the statue of the intellect; when Chaucer, in his praise of 'Gentilesse,' compares good blood in mean condition to fire, which, though carried to the darkest house betwixt this and the mount of Caucasus, will yet hold its natural office, and burn as bright as if twenty thousand men did it behold; when John saw, in the Apocalypse, the ruin of the world through evil, and the stars fall from heaven, as the figtree casteth her untimely fruit; when Æsop reports the whole catalogue of common daily relations through the masquerade of birds and beasts;—we take the cheerful hint of the immortality of our essence, and its versatile habits and escapes, as when the gypsies say of themselves 'it is in vain to hang them, they cannot die.'

The poets are thus liberating gods. The ancient British bards had for the title of their order, 'Those who are free throughout the world.' They are free, and they make free. An imaginative book renders us much more service at first, by stimulating us through its tropes, than afterward, when we arrive at the precise sense of the author. I think nothing is of any value in books, excepting the transcendental and extraordinary. If a man is inflamed and carried away by his thought, to that degree that he forgets the authors and the public, and heeds only this one dream, which holds him like an insanity, let me read his paper, and you may have all the arguments and histories and criticism. All the value which attaches to Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Cardan, Kepler, Swedenborg, Schelling, Oken, or any other who introduces questionable facts into his cosmogony, as angels, devils, magic, astrology, palmistry, mesmerism, and so on, is the certificate we have of departure from routine, and that here is a new witness. That also is the best success in conversation, the magic of liberty, which puts the world, like a ball, in our hands. How cheap even the liberty then seems; how mean to study, when an emotion communicates to the intellect the power to sap and upheave nature: how great the perspective! nations, times, systems, enter and disappear, like threads in tapestry of large figure and many colors; dream delivers us to dream, and, while the drunkenness lasts, we will sell our bed, our philosophy, our religion, in our opulence.

There is good reason why we should prize this liberation. The fate of the poor shepherd, who, blinded and lost in the snowstorm, perishes in a drift within a few feet of his cottage door, is an emblem of the state of man. On the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying. The inaccessibleness of every thought but that we are in, is wonderful. What if you come near to it,—you are as remote when

you are nearest as when you are farthest. Every thought is also a prison; every heaven is also a prison. Therefore we love the poet, the inventor, who in any form, whether in an ode, or in an action, or in looks and behavior, has yielded us a new thought. He unlocks our chains, and admits us to a new scene.

This emancipation is dear to all men, and the power to impart it, as it must come from greater depth and scope of thought, is a measure of intellect. Therefore all books of the imagination endure, all which ascend to that truth, that the writer sees nature beneath him, and uses it as his exponent. Every verse or sentence, possessing this virtue, will take care of its own immortality. The religions of the world are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men.

But the quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze. The poet did not stop at the color, or the form, but read their meaning; neither may he rest in this meaning, but he makes the same objects exponents of his new thought. Here is the difference betwixt the poet and the mystic, that the last nails a symbol to one sense, which was a true sense for a moment, but soon becomes old and false. For all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead. Mysticism consists in the mistake of an accidental and individual symbol for an universal one. The morning-redness happens to be the favorite meteor to the eyes of Jacob Behmen, and comes to stand to him for truth and faith; and, he believes, it should stand for the same realities to every reader. But the first reader prefers as naturally the symbol of a mother and child, or a gardener and his bulb, or a jeweller polishing a gem. Either of these, or of a myriad more, are equally good to the person to whom they are significant. Only they must be held lightly, and be very willingly translated into the equivalent terms which others use. And the mystic must be steadily told,—All that you say is just as true without the tedious use of that symbol as with it. Let us have a little algebra, instead of this trite rhetoric,—universal signs, instead of these village symbols,—and we shall both be gainers. The history of hierarchies seems to show that all religious error consisted in making the symbol too stark and solid, and, at last, nothing but an excess of the organ of language.

Swedenborg, of all men in the recent ages, stands eminently for the translator of nature into thought. I do not know the man in history to whom things stood so uniformly for words. Before him the metamorphosis continually plays. Every thing on which his eye rests, obeys the impulses of moral nature. The figs become grapes whilst he eats them. When some of his angels affirmed a truth, the laurel twig which they held blossomed in their hands. The noise which at a distance appeared like gnashing and thumping, on coming nearer was found to be the voice of disputants. The men, in one of his visions, seen in heavenly light, appeared like dragons, and seemed in darkness; but to each other they appeared as men, and, when the light from heaven shone into their cabin, they complained of the darkness, and were compelled to shut the window that they might see.

There was this perception in him, which makes the poet or seer an object of awe and terror, namely, that the same man, or society of men, may wear one aspect to themselves and their companions, and a different aspect to higher intelligences. Certain priests, whom he describes as conversing very learnedly together, appeared to the children, who were at some distance, like dead horses; and many the like misappearances. And instantly the mind inquires, whether these fishes under the bridge, yonder oxen in the pasture, those dogs in the yard, are immutably fishes, oxen, and dogs, or only so appear to me, and perchance to themselves appear upright men; and whether I appear as a man to all eyes. The Brahmins and Pythagoras propounded the same question, and if any poet has witnessed the transformation, he doubtless found it in harmony with various experiences. We have all seen changes as considerable in wheat and caterpillars. He is the poet, and shall draw us with love and terror, who sees, through the flowing vest, the firm nature, and can declare it.

I look in vain for the poet whom I describe. We do not with sufficient plainness, or sufficient profoundness, address our-

selves to life, nor dare we chaunt our own times and social circumstance. If we filled the day with bravery, we should not shrink from celebrating it. Time and nature yield us many gifts, but not yet the timely man, the new religion, the reconciler, whom all things await. Dante's praise is, that he dared to write his autobiography in colossal cipher, or into universality. We have yet had no genius in America, with tyrannous eye, which knew the value of our incomparable materials, and saw, in the barbarism and materialism of the times, another carnival of the same gods whose picture he so much admires in Homer; then in the middle age; then in Calvinism. Banks and tariffs, the newspaper and caucus, Methodism and Unitarianism, are flat and dull to dull people, but rest on the same foundations of wonder as the town of Troy and the temple of Delphos, and are as swiftly passing away. Our logrolling, our stumps and their politics, our fisheries, our Negroes and Indians, our boats, and our repudiations, the wrath of rogues, and the pusillanimity of honest men, the northern trade, the southern planting, the western clearing, Oregon and Texas, are yet unsung. Yet America is a poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for metres. If I have not found that excellent combination of gifts in my countrymen which I seek, neither could I aid myself to fix the idea of the poet by reading now and then in Chalmers's collection of five centuries of English poets. These are wits, more than poets, though there have been poets among them. But when we adhere to the ideal of the poet, we have our difficulties even with Milton and Homer. Milton is too literary, and Homer too literal and historical.

But I am not wise enough for a national criticism, and must use the old largeness a little longer, to discharge my errand from the muse to the poet concerning his art.

Art is the path of the creator to his work. The paths, or methods, are ideal and eternal, though few men ever see them,—not the artist himself for years, or for a lifetime, unless he come into the conditions. The painter, the sculptor, the composer, the epic rhapsodist, the orator, all partake one desire, namely, to express themselves symmetrically and abundantly, not dwarfishly and fragmentarily. They found or put themselves in certain conditions, as, the painter and sculptor before some impressive human figures; the orator, into the assembly of the people; and the others, in such scenes as each has found exciting to his intellect; and each presently feels the new desire. He hears a voice, he sees a beckoning. Then he is apprised, with wonder, what herds of dæmons hem him in. He can no more rest; he says, with the old painter, 'By God, it is in me, and must go forth of me.' He pursues a beauty, half seen, which flies before him. The poet pours out verses in every solitude. Most of the things he says are conventional, no doubt; but by and by he says something which is original and beautiful. That charms him. He would say nothing else but such things. In our way of talking, we say, 'That is yours, this is mine'; but the poet knows well that it is not his; that it is as strange and beautiful to him as to you; he would fain hear the like eloquence at length. Once having tasted this immortal ichor, he cannot have enough of it, and, as an admirable creative power exists in these intellections, it is of the last importance that these things get spoken. What a little of all we know is said! What drops of all the sea of our science are baled up! and by what accident it is that these are exposed, when so many secrets sleep in nature! Hence the necessity of speech and song; hence these throbs and heart-beatings in the orator, at the door of the assembly, to the end, namely, that thought may be ejaculated as Logos, or Word.

Doubt not, O poet, but persist. Say, 'It is in me, and shall out.' Stand there, balked and dumb, stuttering and stammering, hissed and hooted, stand and strive, until, at last, rage draw out of thee that *dream*-power which every night shows thee is thine own; a power transcending all limit and privacy, and by virtue of which a man is the conductor of the whole river of electricity. Nothing walks, or creeps, or grows, or exists, which must not in turn arise and walk before him as exponent of his meaning. Comes he to that power, his genius is no longer exhaustible. All the creatures, by pairs and by tribes, pour into his mind as into a Noah's ark, to come forth again to people a new world. This is like the stock

of air for our respiration, or for the combustion of our fireplace, not a measure of gallons, but the entire atmosphere if wanted. And therefore the rich poets, as Homer, Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Raphael, have obviously no limits to their works, except the limits of their lifetime, and resemble a mirror carried through the street, ready to render an image of every created thing.

O poet! a new nobility is conferred in groves and pastures, and not in castles, or by the sword-blade, any longer. The conditions are hard, but equal. Thou shalt leave the world, and know the muse only. Thou shalt not know any longer the time, customs, graces, politics, or opinions of men, but shalt take all from the muse. For the time of towns is tolled from the world by funereal chimes, but in nature the universal hours are counted by succeeding tribes of animals and plants, and by growth of joy on joy. God wills also that thou abdicate a manifold and duplex life, and that thou be content that others speak for thee. Others shall be thy gentlemen, and shall represent all courtesy and worldly life for thee; others shall do the great and resounding actions also. Thou shalt lie close hid with nature, and canst not be afforded to the Capitol or the Exchange. The world is full of renunciations and apprenticeships, and this is thine; thou must pass for a fool and a churl for a long season. This is the screen and sheath in which Pan has protected his well-beloved flower, and thou shalt be known only to thine own, and they shall console thee with tenderest love. And thou shalt not be able to rehearse the names of thy friends in thy verse, for an old shame before the holy ideal. And this is the reward: that the ideal shall be real to thee, and the impressions of the actual world shall fall like summer rain, copious, but not troublesome, to thy invulnerable essence. Thou shalt have the whole land for thy park and manor, the sea for thy bath and navigation, without tax and without envy; the woods and the rivers thou shalt own; and thou shalt possess that wherein others are only tenants and boarders. Thou true land-lord! sea-lord! air-lord! Wherever snow falls, or water flows, or birds fly, wherever day and night meet in twilight, wherever the blue heaven is hung by clouds, or sown with stars, wherever are forms with transparent boundaries, wherever are outlets into celestial space, wherever is danger, and awe, and love, there is Beauty, plenteous as rain, shed for thee, and though thou shouldst walk the world over, thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble.

1844

NAPOLEON; OR, THE MAN OF THE WORLD

AMONG the eminent persons of the nineteenth century, Bonaparte is far the best known and the most powerful; and owes his predominance to the fidelity with which he expresses the tone of thought and belief, the aims of the masses of active and cultivated men. It is Swedenborg's theory that every organ is made up of homogeneous particles; or as it is sometimes expressed, every whole is made of similars; that is, the lungs are composed of infinitely small lungs; the liver, of infinitely small livers; the kidney, of little kidneys, &c. Following this analogy, if any man is found to carry with him the power and affections of vast numbers, if Napoleon is France, if Napoleon is Europe, it is because the people whom he sways are little Napoleons.

In our society there is a standing antagonism between the conservative and the democratic classes; between those who have made their fortunes, and the young and the poor who have fortunes to make; between the interests of dead labor,—that is, the labor of hands long ago still in the grave, which labor is now entombed in money stocks, or in land and buildings owned by idle capitalists,—and the interests of living labor, which seeks to possess itself of land and buildings, and money stocks. The first class is timid, selfish, illiberal, hating innovation, and continually losing numbers by death. The second class is selfish also, encroaching, bold, self-relying, always outnumbering the other and recruiting its numbers every hour by births. It desires to keep open every avenue to the competition of all, and to multiply avenues; the class of business men in America, in England, in France, and throughout Europe; the class of industry and skill. Napoleon is its representative. The instinct of

active, brave, able men, throughout the middle class every where, has pointed out Napoleon as the incarnate Democrat. He had their virtues and their vices; above all, he had their spirit or aim. That tendency is material, pointing at a sensual success and employing the richest and most various means to that end; conversant with mechanical powers, highly intellectual, widely and accurately learned and skilful, but subordinating all intellectual and spiritual forces into means to a material success. To be the rich man, is the end. 'God has granted,' says the Koran, 'to every people a prophet in its own tongue.' Paris and London, and New York, the spirit of commerce, of money and material power, were also to have their prophet; and Bonaparte was qualified and sent.

Every one of the million readers of anecdotes or memoirs or lives of Napoleon, delights in the page, because he studies in it his own history. Napoleon is thoroughly modern, and, at the highest point of his fortunes, has the very spirit of the newspapers. He is no saint,—to use his own word, 'no capuchin,' and he is no hero, in the high sense. The man in the street finds in him the qualities and powers of other men in the street. He finds him, like himself, by birth a citizen, who, by very intelligible merits, arrived at such a commanding position that he could indulge all those tastes which the common man possesses but is obliged to conceal and deny: good society, good books, fast travelling, dress, dinners, servants without number, personal weight, the execution of his ideas, the standing in the attitude of a benefactor to all persons about him, the refined enjoyments of pictures, statues, music, palaces and conventional honors,—precisely what is agreeable to the heart of every man in the nineteenth century,—this powerful man possessed.

It is true that a man of Napoleon's truth of adaptation to the mind of the masses around him, becomes not merely representative but actually a monopolizer and usurper of other minds. Thus Mirabeau plagiarized every good thought, every good word that was spoken in France. Dumont relates that he sat in the gallery of the Convention and heard Mirabeau make a speech. It struck Dumont that he could fit it with a peroration, which he wrote in pencil immediately, and showed it to Lord Elgin, who sat by him. Lord Elgin approved it, and Dumont, in the evening, showed it to Mirabeau. Mirabeau read it, pronounced it admirable, and declared he would incorporate it into his harangue to-morrow, to the Assembly. 'It is impossible,' said Dumont, 'as, unfortunately, I have shown it to Lord Elgin.' 'If you have shown it to Lord Elgin and to fifty persons beside, I shall still speak it to-morrow': and he did speak it, with much effect, at the next day's session. For Mirabeau, with his overpowering personality, felt that these things which his presence inspired were as much his own as if he had said them, and that his adoption of them gave them their weight. Much more absolute and centralizing was the successor to Mirabeau's popularity, and to much more than his predominance in France. Indeed, a man of Napoleon's stamp almost ceases to have a private speech and opinion. He is so largely receptive, and is so placed, that he comes to be a bureau for all the intelligence, wit and power of the age and country. He gains the battle; he makes the code; he makes the system of weights and measures; he levels the Alps; he builds the road. All distinguished engineers, savans, statists, report to him: so likewise do all good heads in every kind: he adopts the best measures, sets his stamp on them, and not these alone, but on every happy and memorable expression. Every sentence spoken by Napoleon and every line of his writing, deserves reading, as it is the sense of France.

Bonaparte was the idol of common men because he had in transcendent degree the qualities and powers of common men. There is a certain satisfaction in coming down to the lowest ground of politics, for we get rid of cant and hypocrisy. Bonaparte wrought, in common with that great class he represented, for power and wealth,—but Bonaparte, specially, without any scruple as to the means. All the sentiments which embarrass men's pursuit of these objects, he set aside. The sentiments were for women and children. Fontanes, in 1804, expressed Napoleon's own sense, when in behalf of the Senate he addressed him,—'Sire, the desire of perfection is the worst disease that ever afflicted the human mind.'

The advocates of liberty and of progress are 'ideologists';—a word of contempt often in his mouth;—'Necker is an ideologist': 'Lafayette is an ideologist.'

An Italian proverb, too well known, declares that 'if you would succeed, you must not be too good.' It is an advantage, within certain limits, to have renounced the dominion of the sentiments of piety, gratitude and generosity; since, what was an impassable bar to us, and still is to others, becomes a convenient weapon for our purposes; just as the river which was a formidable barrier, winter transforms into the smoothest of roads.

Napoleon renounced, once for all, sentiments and affections, and would help himself with his hands and his head. With him is no miracle and no magic. He is a worker in brass, in iron, in wood, in earth, in roads, in buildings, in money and in troops, and a very consistent and wise master-workman. He is never weak and literary, but acts with the solidity and the precision of natural agents. He has not lost his native sense and sympathy with things. Men give way before such a man, as before natural events. To be sure there are men enough who are immersed in things, as farmers, smiths, sailors and mechanics generally; and we know how real and solid such men appear in the presence of scholars and grammarians: but these men ordinarily lack the power of arrangement, and are like hands without a head. But Bonaparte superadded to this mineral and animal force, insight and generalization, so that men saw in him combined the natural and the intellectual power, as if the sea and land had taken flesh and begun to cipher. Therefore the land and sea seem to presuppose him. He came unto his own and they received him. This ciphering operative knows what he is working with and what is the product. He knew the properties of gold and iron, of wheels and ships, of troops and diplomatists, and required that each should do after its kind.

The art of war was the game in which he exerted his arithmetic. It consisted, according to him, in having always more forces than the enemy, on the point where the enemy is attacked, or where he attacks: and his whole talent is strained by endless manœuvre and evolution, to march always on the enemy at an angle, and destroy his forces in detail. It is obvious that a very small force, skilfully and rapidly manœuvring so as always to bring two men against one at the point of engagement, will be an overmatch for a much larger body of men.

The times, his constitution and his early circumstances combined to develop this pattern democrat. He had the virtues of his class and the conditions for their activity. That common-sense which no sooner respects any end than it finds the means to effect it; the delight in the use of means; in the choice, simplification and combining of means; the directness and thoroughness of his work; the prudence with which all was seen and the energy with which all was done, make him the natural organ and head of what I may almost call, from its extent, the *modern* party.

Nature must have far the greatest share in every success, and so in his. Such a man was wanted, and such a man was born; a man of stone and iron, capable of sitting on horseback sixteen or seventeen hours, of going many days together without rest or food except by snatches, and with the speed and spring of a tiger in action; a man not embarrassed by any scruples; compact, instant, selfish, prudent, and of a perception which did not suffer itself to be baulked or misled by any pretences of others, or any superstition or any heat or haste of his own. 'My hand of iron' he said, 'was not at the extremity of my arm, it was immediately connected with my head.' He respected the power of nature and fortune, and ascribed to it his superiority, instead of valuing himself, like inferior men, on his opinionativeness, and waging war with nature. His favorite rhetoric lay in allusion to his star; and he pleased himself, as well as the people, when he styled himself the 'Child of Destiny.' 'They charge me,' he said, 'with the commission of great crimes: men of my stamp do not commit crimes. Nothing has been more simple than my elevation, 'tis in vain to ascribe it to intrigue or crime: it was owing to the peculiarity of the times and to my reputation of having fought well against the enemies of my country. I have always marched with the opinion of great masses and with events. Of what use then would crimes be to me?' Again he said, speaking of his son, 'My son can not re-

place me; I could not replace myself. I am the creature of circumstances.'

He had a directness of action never before combined with so much comprehension. He is a realist, terrific to all talkers and confused truth-obscuring persons. He sees where the matter hinges, throws himself on the precise point of resistance, and slights all other considerations. He is strong in the right manner, namely, by insight. He never blundered into victory, but won his battles in his head before he won them on the field. His principal means are in himself. He asks counsel of no other. In 1796 he writes to the Directory: 'I have conducted the campaign without consulting any one. I should have done no good if I had been under the necessity of conforming to the notions of another person. I have gained some advantages over superior forces and when totally destitute of every thing, because, in the persuasion that your confidence was reposed in me, my actions were as prompt as my thoughts.'

History is full, down to this day, of the imbecility of kings and governors. They are a class of persons much to be pitied, for they know not what they should do. The weavers strike for bread, and the king and his ministers, knowing not what to do, meet them with bayonets. But Napoleon understood his business. Here was a man who in each moment and emergency knew what to do next. It is an immense comfort and refreshment to the spirits, not only of kings, but of citizens. Few men have any next; they live from hand to mouth, without plan, and are ever at the end of their line, and after each action wait for an impulse from abroad. Napoleon had been the first man of the world, if his ends had been purely public. As he is, he inspires confidence and vigor by the extraordinary unity of his action. He is firm, sure, self-denying, self-postponing, sacrificing every thing,—money, troops, generals, and his own safety also, to his aim; not misled, like common adventurers, by the splendor of his own means. 'Incidents ought not to govern policy,' he said, 'but policy, incidents.' 'To be hurried away by every event is to have no political system at all.' His victories were only so many doors, and he never for a moment lost sight of his way onward, in the dazzle and uproar of the present circumstance. He knew what to do, and he flew to his mark. He would shorten a straight line to come at his object. Horrible anecdotes may no doubt be collected from his history, of the price at which he bought his successes; but he must not therefore be set down as cruel; but only as one who knew no impediment to his will; not bloodthirsty, not cruel,—but woe to what thing or person stood in his way! Not bloodthirsty, but not sparing of blood, —and pitiless. He saw only the object: the obstacle must give way. 'Sire, General Clarke can not combine with General Junot, for the dreadful fire of the Austrian battery.'—'Let him carry the battery.'—'Sire, every regiment that approaches the heavy artillery is sacrificed: Sire, what orders?'—'Forward, forward!' Seruzier, a colonel of artillery, gives, in his *Military Memoirs*, the following sketch of a scene after the battle of Austerlitz.—'At the moment in which the Russian army was making its retreat, painfully, but in good order, on the ice of the lake, the Emperor Napoleon came riding at full speed toward the artillery. "You are losing time," he cried; "fire upon those masses; they must be engulfed: fire upon the ice!" The order remained unexecuted for ten minutes. In vain several officers and myself were placed on the slope of a hill to produce the effect: their balls and mine rolled upon the ice without breaking it up. Seeing that, I tried a simple method of elevating light howitzers. The almost perpendicular fall of the heavy projectiles produced the desired effect. My method was immediately followed by the adjoining batteries, and in less than no time we buried' some 'thousands of Russians and Austrians under the waters of the lake.'

In the plenitude of his resources, every obstacle seemed to vanish. 'There shall be no Alps,' he said; and he built his perfect roads, climbing by graded galleries their steepest precipices, until Italy was as open to Paris as any town in France. He laid his bones to, and wrought for his crown. Having decided what was to be done, he did that with might and main. He put out all his strength. He risked every thing, and spared nothing, neither ammunition, nor money, nor troops, nor generals, nor himself.

We like to see every thing do its office after its kind, whether it be a milch-cow or a rattle-snake; and if fighting be the best mode of adjusting national differences, (as large majorities of men seem to agree,) certainly Bonaparte was right in making it thorough. The grand principle of war, he said, was that an army ought always to be ready, by day and by night and at all hours, to make all the resistance it is capable of making. He never economized his ammunition, but, on a hostile position, rained a torrent of iron,—shells, balls, grapeshot,—to annihilate all defence. On any point of resistance he concentrated squadron on squadron in overwhelming numbers until it was swept out of existence. To a regiment of horse-chasseurs at Lobenstein, two days before the battle of Jena, Napoleon said, 'My lads, you must not fear death; when soldiers brave death, they drive him into the enemy's ranks.' In the fury of assault, he no more spared himself. He went to the edge of his possibility. It is plain that in Italy he did what he could, and all that he could. He came, several times, within an inch of ruin; and his own person was all but lost. He was flung into the marsh at Arcola. The Austrians were between him and his troops, in the *mêlée*, and he was brought off with desperate efforts. At Lonato, and at other places, he was on the point of being taken prisoner. He fought sixty battles. He had never enough. Each victory was a new weapon. 'My power would fall, were I not to support it by new achievements. Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me.' He felt, with every wise man, that as much life is needed for conservation as for creation. We are always in peril, always in a bad plight, just on the edge of destruction and only to be saved by invention and courage.

This vigor was guarded and tempered by the coldest prudence and punctuality. A thunderbolt in the attack, he was found invulnerable in his intrenchments. His very attack was never the inspiration of courage, but the result of calculation. His idea of the best defence consists in being still the attacking party. 'My ambition,' he says, 'was great, but was of a cold nature.' In one of his conversations with Las Casas, he remarked, 'As to moral courage, I have rarely met with the two-o'clock-in-the-morning kind: I mean unprepared courage; that which is necessary on an unexpected occasion, and which, in spite of the most unforeseen events, leaves full freedom of judgment and decision': and he did not hesitate to declare that he was himself eminently endowed with this two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, and that he had met with few persons equal to himself in this respect.

Every thing depended on the nicety of his combinations, and the stars were not more punctual than his arithmetic. His personal attention descended to the smallest particulars. 'At Montebello, I ordered Kellermann to attack with eight hundred horse, and with these he separated the six thousand Hungarian grenadiers, before the very eyes of the Austrian cavalry. This cavalry was half a league off and required a quarter of an hour to arrive on the field of action, and I have observed that it is always these quarters of an hour that decide the fate of a battle.' 'Before he fought a battle, Bonaparte thought little about what he should do in case of success, but a great deal about what he should do in case of a reverse of fortune.' The same prudence and good sense mark all his behavior. His instructions to his secretary at the Tuileries are worth remembering. 'During the night, enter my chamber as seldom as possible. Do not awake me when you have any good news to communicate; with that there is no hurry. But when you bring bad news, rouse me instantly, for then there is not a moment to be lost.' It was a whimsical economy of the same kind which dictated his practice, when general in Italy, in regard to his burdensome correspondence. He directed Bourrienne to leave all letters unopened for three weeks, and then observed with satisfaction how large a part of the correspondence had thus disposed of itself and no longer required an answer. His achievement of business was immense, and enlarges the known powers of man. There have been many working kings, from Ulysses to William of Orange, but none who accomplished a tithe of this man's performance.

To these gifts of nature, Napoleon added the advantage of having been born to a private and humble fortune. In his later days he had the weakness of wishing to add to his crowns and badges the prescription of

aristocracy; but he knew his debt to his austere education, and made no secret of his contempt for the born kings, and for 'the hereditary asses,' as he coarsely styled the Bourbons. He said that 'in their exile they had learned nothing, and forgot nothing.' Bonaparte had passed through all the degrees of military service, but also was citizen before he was emperor, and so has the key to citizenship. His remarks and estimates discover the information and justness of measurement of the middle class. Those who had to deal with him found that he was not to be imposed upon, but could cipher as well as another man. This appears in all parts of his *Memoirs*, dictated at St. Helena. When the expenses of the empress, of his household, of his palaces, had accumulated great debts, Napoleon examined the bills of the creditors himself, detected overcharges and errors, and reduced the claims by considerable sums.

His grand weapon, namely the millions whom he directed, he owed to the representative character which clothed him. He interests us as he stands for France and for Europe; and he exists as captain and king only as far as the Revolution, or the interest of the industrious masses, found an organ and a leader in him. In the social interests, he knew the meaning and value of labor, and threw himself naturally on that side. I like an incident mentioned by one of his biographers at St. Helena. 'When walking with Mrs. Balcombe, some servants, carrying heavy boxes, passed by on the road, and Mrs. Balcombe desired them, in rather an angry tone, to keep back. Napoleon interfered, saying, "Respect the burden, Madam." ' In the time of the empire he directed attention to the improvement and embellishment of the markets of the capital. 'The market-place,' he said, 'is the Louvre of the common people.' The principal works that have survived him are his magnificent roads. He filled the troops with his spirit, and a sort of freedom and companionship grew up between him and them, which the forms of his court never permitted between the officers and himself. They performed, under his eye, that which no others could do. The best document of his relation to his troops is the order of the day on the morning of the battle of Austerlitz, in which Napoleon promises the troops that he will keep his person out of reach of fire. This declaration, which is the reverse of that ordinarily made by generals and sovereigns on the eve of a battle, sufficiently explains the devotion of the army to their leader.

But though there is in particulars this identity between Napoleon and the mass of the people, his real strength lay in their conviction that he was their representative in his genius and aims, not only when he courted, but when he controlled, and even when he decimated them by his conscriptions. He knew, as well as any Jacobin in France, how to philosophize on liberty and equality; and when allusion was made to the precious blood of centuries, which was spilled by the killing of the Duc d'Enghien, he suggested, 'Neither is my blood ditchwater.' The people felt that no longer the throne was occupied and the land sucked of its nourishment, by a small class of legitimates, secluded from all community with the children of the soil, and holding the ideas and superstitions of a long-forgotten state of society. Instead of that vampyre, a man of themselves held, in the Tuileries, knowledge and ideas like their own, opening of course to them and their children all places of power and trust. The day of sleepy, selfish policy, ever narrowing the means and opportunities of young men, was ended, and a day of expansion and demand was come. A market for all the powers and productions of man was opened; brilliant prizes glittered in the eyes of youth and talent. The old, iron-bound, feudal France was changed into a young Ohio or New York; and those who smarted under the immediate rigors of the new monarch, pardoned them as the necessary severities of the military system which had driven out the oppressor. And even when the majority of the people had begun to ask whether they had really gained any thing under the exhausting levies of men and money of the new master, the whole talent of the country, in every rank and kindred, took his part and defended him as its natural patron. In 1814, when advised to rely on the higher classes, Napoleon said to those around him, 'Gentlemen, in the situation in which I stand, my only nobility is the rabble of the Faubourgs.'

Napoleon met this natural expectation.

The necessity of his position required a hospitality to every sort of talent, and its appointment to trusts; and his feeling went along with this policy. Like every superior person, he undoubtedly felt a desire for men and compeers, and a wish to measure his power with other masters, and an impatience of fools and underlings. In Italy, he sought for men and found none. 'Good God!' he said, 'how rare men are! There are eighteen millions in Italy, and I have with difficulty found two,—Dandolo and Melzi.' In later years, with larger experience, his respect for mankind was not increased. In a moment of bitterness, he said to one of his oldest friends, 'Men deserve the contempt with which they inspire me. I have only to put some gold-lace on the coat of my virtuous republicans, and they immediately become just what I wish them.' This impatience at levity was, however, an oblique tribute of respect to those able persons who commanded his regard not only when he found them friends and coadjutors but also when they resisted his will. He could not confound Fox and Pitt, Carnot, Lafayette and Bernadotte, with the danglers of his court; and in spite of the detraction which his systematic egotism dictated toward the great captains who conquered with and for him, ample acknowledgments are made by him to Lannes, Duroc, Kleber, Dessaix, Massena, Murat, Ney, and Augereau. If he felt himself their patron and the founder of their fortunes, as when he said, 'I made my generals out of mud,'—he could not hide his satisfaction in receiving from them a seconding and support commensurate with the grandeur of his enterprise. In the Russian campaign he was so much impressed by the courage and resources of Marshal Ney, that he said, 'I have two hundred millions in my coffers, and I would give them all for Ney.' The characters which he has drawn of several of his marshals are discriminating, and though they did not content the insatiable vanity of French officers, are no doubt substantially just. And in fact every species of merit was sought and advanced under his government. 'I know' he said, 'the depth and draught of water of every one of my generals.' Natural power was sure to be well received at his court. Seventeen men in his time were raised from common soldiers to the rank of king, marshal, duke, or general; and the crosses of his Legion of Honor were given to personal valor, and not to family connexion. 'When soldiers have been baptized in the fire of a battle-field, they have all one rank in my eyes.'

When a natural king becomes a titular king, every body is pleased and satisfied. The Revolution entitled the strong populace of the Faubourg St. Antoine, and every horse-boy and powder-monkey in the army, to look on Napoleon as flesh of his flesh and the creature of *his* party: but there is something in the success of grand talent which enlists an universal sympathy. For in the prevalence of sense and spirit over stupidity and malversation, all reasonable men have an interest; and as intellectual beings, we feel the air purified by the electric shock, when material force is overthrown by intellectual energies. As soon as we are removed out of the reach of local and accidental partialities, man feels that Napoleon fights for him; these are honest victories; this strong steam-engine does our work. Whatever appeals to the imagination, by transcending the ordinary limits of human ability, wonderfully encourages and liberates us. This capacious head, revolving and disposing sovereignly trains of affairs, and animating such multitudes of agents; this eye, which looked through Europe; this prompt invention; this inexhaustible resource:—what events! what romantic pictures! what strange situations!—when spying the Alps, by a sunset in the Sicilian sea; drawing up his army for battle in sight of the Pyramids, and saying to his troops, 'From the tops of those pyramids, forty centuries look down on you'; fording the Red Sea; wading in the gulf of the Isthmus of Suez. On the shore of Ptolemais, gigantic projects agitated him. 'Had Acre fallen, I should have changed the face of the world.' His army, on the night of the battle of Austerlitz, which was the anniversary of his inauguration as Emperor, presented him with a bouquet of forty standards taken in the fight. Perhaps it is a little puerile, the pleasure he took in making these contrasts glaring; as when he pleased himself with making kings wait in his antechambers, at Tilsit, at Paris and at Erfurt.

We cannot, in the universal imbecility, indecision, and indolence of men, sufficiently congratulate ourselves on this strong and ready actor, who took occasion by the beard, and showed us how much may be accomplished by the mere force of such virtues as all men possess in less degrees; namely, by punctuality, by personal attention, by courage, and thoroughness. 'The Austrians,' he said, 'do not know the value of time.' I should cite him, in his earlier years, as a model of prudence. His power does not consist in any wild or extravagant force; in any enthusiasm like Mahomet's, or singular power of persuasion; but in the exercise of common-sense on each emergency, instead of abiding by rules and customs. The lesson he teaches is that which vigor always teaches;—that there is always room for it. To what heaps of cowardly doubts is not that man's life an answer. When he appeared it was the belief of all military men that there could be nothing new in war; as it is the belief of men to-day that nothing new can be undertaken in politics, or in church, or in letters, or in trade, or in farming, or in our social manners and customs; and as it is at all times the belief of society that the world is used up. But Bonaparte knew better than society; and moreover knew that he knew better. I think all men know better than they do; know that the institutions we so volubly commend are go-carts and baubles; but they dare not trust their presentiments. Bonaparte relied on his own sense, and did not care a bean for other people's. The world treated his novelties just as it treats everybody's novelties,—made infinite objection; mustered all the impediments; but he snapped his finger at their objections. 'What creates great difficulty,' he remarks, 'in the profession of the land-commander, is the necessity of feeding so many men and animals. If he allows himself to be guided by the commissaries, he will never stir, and all his expeditions will fail.' An example of his common-sense is what he says of the passage of the Alps in winter, which all writers, one repeating after the other, had described as impracticable. 'The winter,' says Napoleon, 'is not the most unfavorable season for the passage of lofty mountains. The snow is then firm, the weather settled, and there is nothing to fear from avalanches, the real and only danger to be apprehended in the Alps. On those high mountains, there are often very fine days in December, of a dry cold, with extreme calmness in the air.' Read his account, too, of the way in which battles are gained. 'In all battles, a moment occurs when the bravest troops, after having made the greatest efforts, feel inclined to run. That terror proceeds from a want of confidence in their own courage, and it only requires a slight opportunity, a pretence, to restore confidence to them. The art is, to give rise to the opportunity and to invent the pretence. At Arcola I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I seized that moment of lassitude, gave every man a trumpet, and gained the day with this handful. You see that two armies are two bodies which meet and endeavor to frighten each other; a moment of panic occurs, and that moment must be turned to advantage. When a man has been present in many actions, he distinguishes that moment without difficulty: it is as easy as casting up an addition.'

This deputy of the nineteenth century added to his gifts a capacity for speculation on general topics. He delighted in running through the range of practical, of literary, and of abstract questions. His opinion is always original, and to the purpose. On the voyage to Egypt, he liked, after dinner, to fix on three or four persons to support a proposition, and as many to oppose it. He gave a subject, and the discussions turned on questions of religion, the different kinds of government and the art of war. One day he asked whether the planets were inhabited? On another, what was the age of the world? Then he proposed to consider the probability of the destruction of the globe, either by water or by fire: at another time, the truth or fallacy of presentiments, and the interpretation of dreams. He was very fond of talking of religion. In 1806 he conversed with Fournier, bishop of Montpellier, on matters of theology. There were two points on which they could not agree, viz. that of hell, and that of salvation out of the pale of the church. The Emperor told Josephine that he disputed like a devil on these two points, on which the bishop was inexorable. To the philosophers he readily yielded all that was proved against religion

as the work of men and time, but he would not hear of materialism. One fine night, on deck, amid a clatter of materialism, Bonaparte pointed to the stars, and said, 'You may talk as long as you please, gentlemen, but who made all that?' He delighted in the conversation of men of science, particularly of Monge and Berthollet; but the men of letters he slighted; they were 'manufacturers of phrases.' Of medicine too he was fond of talking, and with those of its practitioners whom he most esteemed,—with Corvisart at Paris, and with Antonomarchi at St. Helena. 'Believe me,' he said to the last, 'we had better leave off all these remedies: life is a fortress which neither you nor I know anything about. Why throw obstacles in the way of its defence? Its own means are superior to all the apparatus of your laboratories. Corvisart candidly agreed with me that all your filthy mixtures are good for nothing. Medicine is a collection of uncertain prescriptions, the results of which, taken collectively, are more fatal than useful to mankind. Water, air and cleanliness are the chief articles in my pharmacopœia.'

His memoirs, dictated to Count Montholon and General Gourgaud at St. Helena, have great value, after all the deduction that it seems is to be made from them on account of his known disingenuousness. He has the good-nature of strength and conscious superiority. I admire his simple, clear narrative of his battles;—good as Caesar's; his good-natured and sufficiently respectful account of Marshal Wurmser and his other antagonists; and his own equality as a writer to his varying subject. The most agreeable portion is the Campaign in Egypt.

He had hours of thought and wisdom. In intervals of leisure, either in the camp or the palace, Napoleon appears as a man of genius directing on abstract questions the native appetite for truth and the impatience of words he was wont to show in war. He could enjoy every play of invention, a romance, a *bon mot*, as well as a stratagem in a campaign. He delighted to fascinate Josephine and her ladies, in a dim-lighted apartment, by the terrors of a fiction to which his voice and dramatic power lent every addition.

I call Napoleon the agent or attorney of the middle class of modern society; of the throng who fill the markets, shops, counting-houses, manufactories, ships, of the modern world, aiming to be rich. He was the agitator, the destroyer of prescription, the internal improver, the liberal, the radical, the inventor of means, the opener of doors and markets, the subverter of monopoly and abuse. Of course the rich and aristocratic did not like him. England, the centre of capital, and Rome and Austria, centres of tradition and genealogy, opposed him. The consternation of the dull and conservative classes, the terror of the foolish old men and old women of the Roman conclave, who in their despair took hold of any thing, and would cling to red-hot iron, —the vain attempts of statists to amuse and deceive him, of the emperor of Austria to bribe him; and the instinct of the young, ardent, and active men every where, which pointed him out as the giant of the middle class, make his history bright and commanding. He had the virtues of the masses of his constituents: he had also their vices. I am sorry that the brilliant picture has its reverse. But that is the fatal quality which we discover in our pursuit of wealth, that it is treacherous, and is bought by the breaking or weakening of the sentiments; and it is inevitable that we should find the same fact in the history of this champion, who proposed to himself simply a brilliant career, without any stipulation or scruple concerning the means.

Bonaparte was singularly destitute of generous sentiments. The highest-placed individual in the most cultivated age and population of the world,—he has not the merit of common truth and honesty. He is unjust to his generals; egotistic and monopolizing; meanly stealing the credit of their great actions from Kellermann, from Bernadotte; intriguing to involve his faithful Junot in hopeless bankruptcy, in order to drive him to a distance from Paris, because the familiarity of his manners offends the new pride of his throne. He is a boundless liar. The official paper, his *Moniteur*, and all his bulletins, are proverbs for saying what he wished to be believed; and worse, —he sat, in his premature old age, in his lonely island, coldly falsifying facts and dates and characters, and giving to history a theatrical *éclat*. Like all Frenchmen he

has a passion for stage effect. Every action that breathes of generosity is poisoned by this calculation. His star, his love of glory, his doctrine of the immortality of the soul, are all French. 'I must dazzle and astonish. If I were to give the liberty of the press, my power could not last three days.' To make a great noise is his favorite design. 'A great reputation is a great noise: the more there is made, the farther off it is heard. Laws, institutions, monuments, nations, all fall; but the noise continues, and resounds in after ages.' His doctrine of immortality is simply fame. His theory of influence is not flattering. 'There are two levers for moving men,—interest and fear. Love is a silly infatuation, depend upon it. Friendship is but a name. I love nobody. I do not even love my brothers: perhaps Joseph a little, from habit, and because he is my elder; and Duroc, I love him too; but why?—because his character pleases me: he is stern and resolute, and I believe the fellow never shed a tear. For my part I know very well that I have no true friends. As long as I continue to be what I am, I may have as many pretended friends as I please. Leave sensibility to women; but men should be firm in heart and purpose, or they should have nothing to do with war and government.' He was thoroughly unscrupulous. He would steal, slander, assassinate, drown and poison, as his interest dictated. He had no generosity, but mere vulgar hatred; he was intensely selfish; he was perfidious; he cheated at cards; he was a prodigious gossip, and opened letters, and delighted in his infamous police, and rubbed his hands with joy when he had intercepted some morsel of intelligence concerning the men and women about him, boasting that 'he knew every thing'; and interfered with the cutting the dresses of the women; and listened after the hurrahs and the compliments of the street, incognito. His manners were coarse. He treated women with low familiarity. He had the habit of pulling their ears and pinching their cheeks when he was in good humor, and of pulling the ears and whiskers of men, and of striking and horse-play with them, to his last days. It does not appear that he listened at key-holes, or at least that he was caught at it. In short, when you have penetrated through all the circles of power and splendor, you were not dealing with a gentleman, at last; but with an impostor and a rogue; and he fully deserves the epithet of *Jupiter Scapin*, or a sort of Scamp Jupiter.

In describing the two parties into which modern society divides itself,—the democrat and the conservative,—I said, Bonaparte represents the democrat, or the party of men of business, against the stationary or conservative party. I omitted then to say, what is material to the statement, namely that these two parties differ only as young and old. The democrat is a young conservative; the conservative is an old democrat. The aristocrat is the democrat ripe and gone to seed;—because both parties stand on the one ground of the supreme value of property, which one endeavors to get, and the other to keep. Bonaparte may be said to represent the whole history of this party, its youth and its age; yes, and with poetic justice, its fate, in his own. The counter-revolution, the counter-party, still waits for its organ and representative, in a lover and a man of truly public and universal aims.

Here was an experiment, under the most favorable conditions, of the powers of intellect without conscience. Never was such a leader so endowed and so weaponed; never leader found such aids and followers. And what was the result of this vast talent and power, of these immense armies, burned cities, squandered treasures, immolated millions of men, of this demoralized Europe? It came to no result. All passed away like the smoke of his artillery, and left no trace. He left France smaller, poorer, feebler, than he found it; and the whole contest for freedom was to be begun again. The attempt was in principle suicidal. France served him with life and limb and estate, as long as it could identify its interest with him; but when men saw that after victory was another war; after the destruction of armies, new conscriptions; and they who had toiled so desperately were never nearer to the reward,—they could not spend what they had earned, nor repose on their down-beds, nor strut in their chateaux,—they deserted him. Men found that his absorbing egotism was deadly to all other men. It resembled the

torpedo, which inflicts a succession of shocks on any one who takes hold of it, producing spasms which contract the muscles of the hand, so that the man can not open his fingers; and the animal inflicts new and more violent shocks, until he paralyzes and kills his victim. So this exorbitant egotist narrowed, impoverished, and absorbed the power and existence of those who served him; and the universal cry of France and of Europe in 1814 was, 'Enough of him'; '*Assez de Bonaparte.*'

It was not Bonaparte's fault. He did all that in him lay to live and thrive without moral principle. It was the nature of things, the eternal law of man and of the world, which baulked and ruined him; and the result, in a million experiments, will be the same. Every experiment, by multitudes or by individuals, that has a sensual and selfish aim, will fail. The pacific Fourier will be as inefficient as the pernicious Napoleon. As long as our civilization is essentially one of property, of fences, of exclusiveness, it will be mocked by delusions. Our riches will leave us sick; there will be bitterness in our laughter, and our wine will burn our mouth. Only that good profits which we can taste with all doors open, and which serves all men.

1850

GOOD-BYE

GOOD-BYE, proud world! I'm going home:
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
But now, proud world! I'm going home.

Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face;
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;
To upstart Wealth's averted eye;
To supple Office, low and high;
To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go, and those who come;
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

I am going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone,—
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the livelong day,
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?

1824 1847

EACH AND ALL[1]

LITTLE thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.

1 In his journal for 16 May 1834, Emerson wrote: 'I remember when I was a boy going upon the beach and being charmed with the colors and forms of the shells. I picked up many and put them in my pocket. When I got home I could find nothing that I gathered—nothing but some dry, ugly mussel and snail shells. Thence I learned that composition was more important than the beauty of individual forms to effect.' Emerson and Forbes, eds., *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*(Boston, 1909),III,298.

I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.
The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.
Then I said, 'I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth:'—
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird;—
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

1839 1847

THE PROBLEM [1]

I LIKE a church; I like a cowl;
I love a prophet of the soul;
And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles;
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowlèd churchman be.

Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure?

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought;
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle;
Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,—
The canticles of love and woe:
The hand that rounded Peter's dome
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;—
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?
Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone,
And Morning opes with haste her lids
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye;
For out of Thought's interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air;
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

These temples grew as grows the grass;
Art might obey, but not surpass.
The passive Master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned;
And the same power that reared the shrine
Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
Ever the fiery Pentecost
Girds with one flame the countless host,
Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
And through the priest the mind inspires.
The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;

1 In his journal for 28 August 1838, Emerson wrote: 'It is very grateful to my feelings to go into a Roman cathedral, yet I look as my countrymen do at the Roman priesthood. It is very grateful to me to go into an English church and hear the liturgy read. Yet nothing would induce me to be the English priest. I find an unpleasant dilemma in this nearer home. I dislike to be a clergyman and refuse to be one. Yet how rich a music would be to me a holy clergyman in my town. It seems to me he cannot be a man, quite and whole; yet how plain is the need of one, and how high, yes, highest, is the function. Here is a division of labor that I like not. A man must sacrifice his manhood for the social good. Something is wrong, I see not what.' Ibid.,V,29–30.

The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.

I know what say the fathers wise,—
The Book itself before me lies,
Old *Chrysostom*, best Augustine,
And he who blent both in his line,
The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,
Taylor, the Shakspeare of divines,
His words are music in my ear,
I see his cowlèd portrait dear;
And yet, for all his faith could see,
I would not the good bishop be.

1847

URIEL

It fell in the ancient periods
Which the brooding soul surveys,
Or ever the wild Time coined itself
Into calendar months and days.

This was the lapse of Uriel,
Which in Paradise befell.
Once, among the Pleiads walking,
Seyd [1] overheard the young gods talking;
And the treason, too long pent,
To his ears was evident.
The young deities discussed
Laws of form, and metre just,
Orb, quintessence, and sunbeams,
What subsisteth, and what seems.
One, with low tones that decide,
And doubt and reverend use defied,
With a look that solved the sphere,
And stirred the devils everywhere,
Gave his sentiment divine
Against the being of a line.
'Line in nature is not found;
Unit and universe are round;
In vain produced, all rays return;
Evil will bless, and ice will burn.'
As Uriel spoke with piercing eye,
A shudder ran around the sky;
The stern old war-gods shook their heads,
The seraphs frowned from myrtle-beds;
Seemed to the holy festival
The rash word boded ill to all;
The balance-beam of Fate was bent;
The bounds of good and ill were rent;
Strong Hades could not keep his own,
But all slid to confusion.

A sad self-knowledge, withering, fell
On the beauty of Uriel;
In heaven once eminent, the god
Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud;
Whether doomed to long gyration
In the sea of generation,
Or by knowledge grown too bright
To hit the nerve of feebler sight.
Straightway, a forgetting wind
Stole over the celestial kind,
And their lips the secret kept,
If in ashes the fire-seed slept.
But now and then, truth-speaking things
Shamed the angels' veiling wings;
And, shrilling from the solar course,
Or from fruit of chemic force,
Procession of a soul in matter,
Or the speeding change of water,
Or out of the good of evil born,
Came Uriel's voice of cherub scorn,
And a blush tinged the upper sky,
And the gods shook, they knew not why.

1847

THE SPHINX [2]

The Sphinx is drowsy,
Her wings are furled:
Her ear is heavy,
She broods on the world.
'Who'll tell me my secret,
The ages have kept?—
I awaited the seer
While they slumbered and slept:—

'The fate of the man-child,
The meaning of man;
Known fruit of the unknown;
Dædalian plan;

1 'Seyd' and 'Saadi' are Emerson's names for the ideal poet. Saadi (1184–1291), a Persian, was one of the first of the Oriental poets with whose translated works Emerson became familiar.

2 In his journal for 1859, Emerson wrote: 'I have often been asked the meaning of the "Sphinx." It is this,—The perception of identity unites all things and explains one by another, and the most rare and strange is equally facile as the most common. But if the mind live only in particulars, and see only differences (wanting the power to see the whole—all in each), then the world addresses to this mind a question it cannot answer, and each new fact tears it in pieces, and it is vanquished by the distracting variety.' Edward Emerson, ed., *Poems by Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1904), 412.

Out of sleeping a waking,
  Out of waking a sleep;
Life death overtaking;
  Deep underneath deep?

'Erect as a sunbeam,
  Upspringeth the palm;
The elephant browses,
  Undaunted and calm;
In beautiful motion
  The thrush plies his wings;
Kind leaves of his covert,
  Your silence he sings.

'The waves, unashamèd,
  In difference sweet,
Play glad with the breezes,
  Old playfellows meet;
The journeying atoms,
  Primordial wholes,
Firmly draw, firmly drive,
  By their animate poles.

'Sea, earth, air, sound, silence,
  Plant, quadruped, bird,
By one music enchanted,
  One deity stirred,—
Each the other adorning,
  Accompany still;
Night veileth the morning,
  The vapor the hill.

'The babe by its mother
  Lies bathèd in joy;
Glide its hours uncounted,—
  The sun is its toy;
Shines the peace of all being,
  Without cloud, in its eyes;
And the sum of the world
  In soft miniature lies.

'But man crouches and blushes,
  Absconds and conceals;
He creepeth and peepeth,
  He palters and steals;
Infirm, melancholy,
  Jealous glancing around,
An oaf, an accomplice,
  He poisons the ground.

'Out spoke the great mother,
  Beholding his fear;—
At the sound of her accents
  Cold shuddered the sphere:—

"Who has drugged my boy's cup?
  Who has mixed my boy's bread?
Who, with sadness and madness,
  Has turned my child's head?" '

I heard a poet answer
  Aloud and cheerfully,
'Say on, sweet Sphinx! thy dirges
  Are pleasant songs to me.
Deep love lieth under
  These pictures of time;
They fade in the light of
  Their meaning sublime.

'The fiend that man harries
  Is love of the Best;
Yawns the pit of the Dragon,
  Lit by rays from the Blest.
The Lethe of Nature
  Can't trance him again,
Whose soul sees the perfect,
  Which his eyes seek in vain.

'To vision profounder,
  Man's spirit must dive;
His aye-rolling orb
  At no goal will arrive;
The heavens that now draw him
  With sweetness untold,
Once found,—for new heavens
  He spurneth the old.

'Pride ruined the angels,
  Their shame them restores;
Lurks the joy that is sweetest
  In stings of remorse.
Have I a lover
  Who is noble and free?—
I would he were nobler
  Than to love me.

'Eterne alternation
  Now follows, now flies;
And under pain, pleasure,—
  Under pleasure, pain lies.
Love works at the centre,
  Heart-heaving alway;
Forth speed the strong pulses
  To the borders of day.

'Dull Sphinx, Jove keep thy five wits;
  Thy sight is growing blear;
Rue, myrrh and cummin for the Sphinx,
  Her muddy eyes to clear!'

The old Sphinx bit her thick lip,—
  Said, 'Who taught thee me to name?
I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow;
  Of thine eye I am eyebeam.

'Thou art the unanswered question;
  Couldst see thy proper eye,
Alway it asketh, asketh;
  And each answer is a lie.
So take thy quest through nature,
  It through thousand natures ply;
Ask on, thou clothed eternity;
  Time is the false reply.'

Uprose the merry Sphinx,
  And crouched no more in stone;
She melted into purple cloud,
  She silvered in the moon;
She spired into a yellow flame;
  She flowered in blossoms red;
She flowed into a foaming wave:
  She stood Monadnoc's head.

Thorough a thousand voices
  Spoke the universal dame;
'Who telleth one of my meanings
  Is master of all I am.'

1847

MITHRIDATES

I CANNOT spare water or wine,
  Tobacco-leaf, or poppy, or rose;
From the earth-poles to the Line,
  All between that works or grows,
Every thing is kin of mine.

Give me agates for my meat;
Give me cantharids to eat;
From air and ocean bring me foods,
From all zones and altitudes;—

From all natures, sharp and slimy,
  Salt and basalt, wild and tame:
Tree and lichen, ape, sea-lion,
  Bird, and reptile, be my game.

Ivy for my fillet band;
Blinding dog-wood in my hand;
Hemlock for my sherbet cull me,
And the prussic juice to lull me;
Swing me in the upas boughs,
Vampyre-fanned, when I carouse.

Too long shut in strait and few,
Thinly dieted on dew,
I will use the world, and sift it,
To a thousand humors shift it,
As you spin a cherry.
O doleful ghosts, and goblins merry!
O all you virtues, methods, mights,
Means, appliances, delights,
Reputed wrongs and braggart rights,
Smug routine, and things allowed,
Minorities, things under cloud!
Hither! take me, use me, fill me,
Vein and artery, though ye kill me!

1846 1847

DESTINY

THAT you are fair or wise is vain,
Or strong, or rich, or generous;
You must add the untaught strain
That sheds beauty on the rose.
There's a melody born of melody,
Which melts the world into a sea.
Toil could never compass it;
Art its height could never hit;
It came never out of wit;
But a music music-born
Well may Jove and Juno scorn.
Thy beauty, if it lack the fire
Which drives me mad with sweet
  desire,
What boots it? What the soldier's mail,
Unless he conquer and prevail?
What all the goods thy pride which lift,
If thou pine for another's gift?
Alas! that one is born in blight,
Victim of perpetual slight:
When thou lookest on his face,
Thy heart saith, 'Brother, go thy ways!
None shall ask thee what thou doest,
Or care a rush for what thou knowest,
Or listen when thou repliest,
Or remember where thou liest,
Or how thy supper is sodden;'
And another is born
To make the sun forgotten.
Surely he carries a talisman
Under his tongue;
Broad his shoulders are and strong;
And his eye is scornful,
Threatening and young.
I hold it of little matter
Whether your jewel be of pure water,
A rose diamond or a white,
But whether it dazzle me with light.
I care not how you are dressed,
In coarsest weeds or in the best;

Nor whether your name is base or brave:
Nor for the fashion of your behavior;
But whether you charm me,
Bid my bread feed and my fire warm me
And dress up Nature in your favor.
One thing is forever good;
That one thing is Success,—
Dear to the Eumenides,
And to all the heavenly brood.
Who bides at home, nor looks abroad,
Carries the eagles, and masters the sword.

1847

HAMATREYA[1]

BULKELEY, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer,
Meriam, Flint,
Possessed the land which rendered to their toil
Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool, and wood.
Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm,
Saying, ' 'Tis mine, my children's and my name's.
How sweet the west wind sounds in my own trees!
How graceful climb those shadows on my hill!
I fancy these pure waters and the flags
Know me, as does my dog: we sympathize;
And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil.'

Where are these men? Asleep beneath their grounds:
And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.
Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys
Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs;
Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet
Clear of the grave.
They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,
And sighed for all that bounded their domain;

'This suits me for a pasture; that's my park;
We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge,
And misty lowland, where to go for peat.
The land is well,—lies fairly to the south.
'Tis good, when you have crossed the sea and back,
To find the sitfast acres where you left them.'
Ah! the hot owner sees not Death, who adds
Him to his land, a lump of mould the more.
Hear what the Earth says:—

Earth-Song

'Mine and yours;
Mine, not yours.
Earth endures;
Stars abide—
Shine down in the old sea;
Old are the shores;
But where are old men?
I who have seen much,
Such have I never seen.

'The lawyer's deed
Ran sure,
In tail,
To them and to their heirs
Who shall succeed,
Without fail,
Forevermore.

'Here is the land,
Shaggy with wood,
With its old valley,
Mound and flood.
But the heritors?—
Fled like the flood's foam.
The lawyer, and the laws,
And the kingdom,
Clean swept herefrom.

'They called me theirs,
Who so controlled me;
Yet every one
Wished to stay, and is gone,
How am I theirs,
If they cannot hold me,
But I hold them?'

When I heard the Earth-song
I was no longer brave;
My avarice cooled
Like lust in the chill of the grave.

1847

1 'Hamatreya' is an adaptation of a passage from the *Vishnu Purana*, oldest of the sacred scriptures of Vishnu, which Emerson copied into his journal for 1845. The passage ends: 'These were the verses, Maitreya, which Earth recited and by listening to which ambition fades away like snow before the wind.' Emerson and Forbes, eds., *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*(Boston, 1909),VII,127–30. The title is a variation of 'Maitreya.'

THE RHODORA:

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

1834 1847

THE HUMBLE-BEE [1]

Burly, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean of June;
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum,—
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall,
And with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With the color of romance,
And infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodels,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue
And brier-roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and lands so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

1837 1847

1 Emerson wrote in his journal for 9 May 1837: 'Yesterday in the woods I followed the fine humble-bee with rhymes and fancies fine.' On the next page he wrote: 'The humble-bee and pine-warbler seem to me the proper objects of attention in these disastrous times.' Edward Emerson, ed., *Poems by Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1904),418.

THE SNOW-STORM [2]

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,

2 Emerson wrote in his journal for 27 November 1832:

Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

1847

THE BOHEMIAN HYMN

IN many forms we try
To utter God's infinity,
But the boundless hath no form,
And the Universal Friend
Doth as far transcend
An angel as a worm.

'Instead of lectures on Architecture, I will make a lecture on God's architecture, one of his beautiful works, a Day. I will draw a sketch of a winter's day. I will trace as I can a rude outline of the far-assembled influences, the contribution of the universe wherein this magical structure rises like an exhalation, the wonder and charm of the immeasureable deep.' Ibid., 419.

The great Idea baffles wit,
Language falters under it,
It leaves the learned in the lurch;
Nor art, nor power, nor toil can find
The measure of the eternal Mind,
Nor hymn, nor prayer, nor church.

c.1840 1884

FABLE

THE mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter 'Little Prig';
Bun replied,
'You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry.
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track;
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.'

1845 1847

EXPERIENCE

THE lords of life, the lords of life,—
I saw them pass
In their own guise,
Like and unlike,
Portly and grim,—
Use and Surprise,
Surface and Dream,
Succession swift, and spectral Wrong,
Temperament without a tongue,
And the inventor of the game
Omnipresent without name;—
Some to see, some to be guessed,
They marched from east to west:
Little man, least of all,
Among the legs of his guardians tall,
Walked about with puzzled look.
Him by the hand dear Nature took,
Dearest Nature, strong and kind,
Whispered, 'Darling, never mind!
To-morrow they will wear another face,
The founder thou; these are thy race!'

1844

CHARACTER

THE sun set, but set not his hope:
Stars rose; his faith was earlier up:
Fixed on the enormous galaxy,
Deeper and older seemed his eye;
And matched his sufferance sublime
The taciturnity of time.
He spoke, and words more soft than rain
Brought the Age of Gold again:
His action won such reverence sweet
As hid all measure of the feat.

1844

FRIENDSHIP

A RUDDY drop of manly blood
The surging sea outweighs,
The world uncertain comes and goes;
The lover rooted stays.
I fancied he was fled,—
And, after many a year,
Glowed unexhausted kindliness,
Like daily sunrise there.
My careful heart was free again,
O friend, my bosom said,
Through thee alone the sky is arched,
Through thee the rose is red;
All things through thee take nobler form,
And look beyond the earth,
The mill-round of our fate appears
A sun-path in thy worth.
Me too thy nobleness has taught
To master my despair;
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through thy friendship fair.

1841

COMPENSATION

WHY should I keep holiday
When other men have none?
Why but because, when these are gay,
I sit and mourn alone?

And why, when mirth unseals all tongues,
Should mine alone be dumb?
Ah! late I spoke to silent throngs,
And now their hour is come.

1834 1847

FORBEARANCE [1]

HAST thou named all the birds without a gun?
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk?
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?
And loved so well a high behavior,
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,
Nobility more nobly to repay?
O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine!

1847

THE PARK

THE prosperous and beautiful
To me seem not to wear
The yoke of conscience masterful,
Which galls me everywhere.

I cannot shake off the god;
On my neck he makes his seat;
I look at my face in the glass,—
My eyes his eyeballs meet.

Enchanters! Enchantresses!
Your gold makes you seem wise;
The morning mist within your grounds
More proudly rolls, more softly lies.

Yet spake yon purple mountain,
Yet said yon ancient wood,
That Night or Day, that Love or Crime,
Leads all souls to the Good.

1847

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

GIVE all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse,—
Nothing refuse.

'Tis a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent,
Untold intent;
But it is a god,
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky.

[1] It is thought that the poem refers to Thoreau.

It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending,
It will reward,—
They shall return
More than they were,
And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved,
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—
Keep thee to-day,
To-morrow, forever,
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;
But when the surprise,
First vague shadow of surmise
Flits across her bosom young,
Of a joy apart from thee,
Free be she, fancy-free;
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,
Nor the palest rose she flung
From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive;
Heartily know,
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive.

1847

THE APOLOGY

THINK me not unkind and rude
That I walk alone in grove and glen;
I go to the god of the wood
To fetch his word to men.

Tax not my sloth that I
Fold my arms beside the brook;
Each cloud that floated in the sky
Writes a letter in my book.

Chide me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought.

There was never mystery
But 'tis figured in the flowers;
Was never secret history
But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field
Homeward brought the oxen strong;
A second crop thine acres yield,
Which I gather in a song.

1847

BACCHUS [1]

BRING me wine, but wine which never grew
In the belly of the grape,
Or grew on vine whose tap-roots, reaching through
Under the Andes to the Cape,
Suffered no savor of the earth to scape.

Let its grapes the morn salute
From a nocturnal root,
Which feels the acrid juice
Of Styx and Erebus;
And turns the woe of Night,
By its own craft, to a more rich delight.

We buy ashes for bread;
We buy diluted wine;
Give me of the true,—
Whose ample leaves and tendrils curled
Among the silver hills of heaven
Draw everlasting dew;
Wine of wine,
Blood of the world,
Form of forms, and mould of statures,
That I intoxicated,
And by the draught assimilated,
May float at pleasure through all natures;
The bird-language rightly spell,
And that which roses say so well.

Wine that is shed
Like the torrents of the sun
Up the horizon walls,
Or like the Atlantic streams, which run
When the South Sea calls.

1 Emerson wrote, July 1846, to Elizabeth Hoar, 'whom he always considered a sister and confidante. He had been working on some poems . . . which he felt impatient to show her, "especially some verses called Bacchus—not, however, translated from Hafiz." Such a confession of conscious similarity in method is revealing. . . . Wine in the symbolism of the Sufis . . . stood for the intoxication of God. Thus intoxicated, both Emerson and Hafiz write of their mystical sense of oneness with the worlds and divine omnipotence.' Christy, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* (N.Y., 1932), 147–48.

Water and bread,
Food which needs no transmuting,
Rainbow-flowering, wisdom-fruiting,
Wine which is already man,
Food which teach and reason can.

Wine which Music is,—
Music and wine are one,—
That I, drinking this,
Shall hear far Chaos talk with me;
Kings unborn shall walk with me;
And the poor grass shall plot and plan
What it will do when it is man.
Quickened so, will I unlock
Every crypt of every rock.

I thank the joyful juice
For all I know;—
Winds of remembering
Of the ancient being blow,
And seeming-solid walls of use
Open and flow.

Pour, Bacchus! the remembering wine;
Retrieve the loss of me and mine!
Vine for vine be antidote,
And the grape requite the lote!
Haste to cure the old despair,—
Reason in Nature's lotus drenched,
The memory of ages quenched;
Give them again to shine;
Let wine repair what this undid;
And where the infection slid,
A dazzling memory revive;
Refresh the faded tints,
Recut the aged prints,
And write my old adventures with the pen
Which on the first day drew,
Upon the tablets blue,
The dancing Pleiads and eternal men.
1846 1847

CONCORD HYMN

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BATTLE MONUMENT, JULY 4, 1837

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.
1837 1847

BRAHMA [1]

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.
1867

FATE

Deep in the man sits fast his fate
To mould his fortunes, mean or great:
Unknown to Cromwell as to me
Was Cromwell's measure or degree;
Unknown to him as to his horse,
If he than his groom be better or worse.

1 From the *Vishnu Purana*, Emerson copied into his journal for 1845: 'What living creature slays, or is slain? What living creature preserves or is preserved? Each is his own destroyer or preserver, as he follows evil or good.' Emerson and Forbes, eds., *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*(Boston, 1909),VII,127. 'Mr. Emerson, much amused when people found "Brahma" puzzling, said to his daughter, "If you tell them to say Jehovah instead of Brahma they will not feel any perplexity." ' Edward Emerson, ed., *Poems by Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1904),467.

He works, plots, fights, in rude
affairs,
With squires, lords, kings, his craft
compares,
Till late he learned, through doubt and
fear,
Broad England harbored not his peer:
Obeying time, the last to own
The Genius from its cloudy throne.
For the prevision is allied
Unto the thing so signified;
Or say, the foresight that awaits
Is the same Genius that creates.

1867

BOSTON HYMN [1]

READ IN MUSIC HALL, JANUARY 1, 1863

THE word of the Lord by night
To the watching Pilgrims came,
As they sat by the seaside,
And filled their hearts with flame.

God said, I am tired of kings,
I suffer them no more;
Up to my ear the morning brings
The outrage of the poor.

Think ye I made this ball
A field of havoc and war,
Where tyrants great and tyrants small
Might harry the weak and poor?

My angel,—his name is Freedom,—
Choose him to be your king;
He shall cut pathways east and west
And fend you with his wing.

Lo! I uncover the land
Which I hid of old time in the West,
As the sculptor uncovers the statue
When he has wrought his best;

I show Columbia, of the rocks
Which dip their foot in the seas,
And soar to the air-borne flocks
Of clouds and the boreal fleece.

I will divide my goods;
Call in the wretch and slave:
None shall rule but the humble,
And none but Toil shall have.

I will have never a noble,
No lineage counted great;
Fishers and choppers and ploughmen
Shall constitute a state.

Go, cut down trees in the forest
And trim the straightest boughs;
Cut down trees in the forest
And build me a wooden house.

Call the people together,
The young men and the sires,
The digger in the harvest-field,
Hireling and him that hires;

And here in a pine state-house
They shall choose men to rule
In every needful faculty,
In church, and state, and school.

Lo, now! if these poor men
Can govern the land and sea
And make just laws below the sun,
As planets faithful be.

And ye shall succor men;
'Tis nobleness to serve;
Help them who cannot help again:
Beware from right to swerve.

I break your bonds and masterships,
And I unchain the slave:
Free be his heart and hand hence-
forth
As wind and wandering wave.

I cause from every creature
His proper good to flow:
As much as he is and doeth,
So much he shall bestow.

But, laying hands on another
To coin his labor and sweat,
He goes in pawn to his victim
For eternal years in debt.

To-day unbind the captive,
So only are ye unbound;
Lift up a people from the dust,
Trump of their rescue, sound!

Pay ransom to the owner
And fill the bag to the brim.
Who is the owner? The slave is owner,
And ever was. Pay him.

1 The poem was read at celebration of Lincoln's proclamation freeing the slaves.

O North! give him beauty for rags,
And honor, O South! for his shame;
Nevada! coin thy golden crags
With Freedom's image and name.

Up! and the dusky race
That sat in darkness long,—
Be swift their feet as antelopes,
And as behemoth strong.

Come, East and West and North,
By races, as snow-flakes,
And carry my purpose forth,
Which neither halts nor shakes.

My will fulfilled shall be,
For, in daylight or in dark,
My thunderbolt has eyes to see
His way home to the mark.

1862 1867

VOLUNTARIES [1]

I

Low and mournful be the strain,
Haughty thought be far from me;
Tones of penitence and pain,
Moanings of the tropic sea;
Low and tender in the cell
Where a captive sits in chains,
Crooning ditties treasured well
From his Afric's torrid plains.
Sole estate his sire bequeathed,—
Hapless sire to hapless son,—
Was the wailing song he breathed,
And his chain when life was done.

What his fault, or what his crime?
Or what ill planet crossed his prime?
Heart too soft and will too weak
To front the fate that crouches near,—
Dove beneath the vulture's beak;—
Will song dissuade the thirsty spear?
Dragged from his mother's arms and breast,
Displaced, disfurnished here,
His wistful toil to do his best
Chilled by a ribald jeer.

Great men in the Senate sate,
Sage and hero, side by side,
Building for their sons the State,
Which they shall rule with pride.
They forbore to break the chain
Which bound the dusky tribe,
Checked by the owners' fierce disdain,
Lured by 'Union' as the bribe.
Destiny sat by, and said,
'Pang for pang your seed shall pay,
Hide in false peace your coward head,
I bring round the harvest-day.'

2

Freedom all winged expands,
Nor perches in a narrow place;
Her broad van seeks unplanted lands;
She loves a poor and virtuous race.
Clinging to a colder zone
Whose dark sky sheds the snowflake down,
The snowflake is her banner's star,
Her stripes the boreal streamers are.
Long she loved the Northman well;
Now the iron age is done,
She will not refuse to dwell
With the offspring of the Sun;
Foundling of the desert far,
Where palms plume, siroccos blaze,
He roves unhurt the burning ways
In climates of the summer star.
He has avenues to God
Hid from men of Northern brain,
Far beholding, without cloud,
What these with slowest steps attain.
If once the generous chief arrive
To lead him willing to be led,
For freedom he will strike and strive,
And drain his heart till he be dead.

3

In an age of fops and toys,
Wanting wisdom, void of right,
Who shall nerve heroic boys
To hazard all in Freedom's fight,—
Break sharply off their jolly games,
Forsake their comrades gay
And quit proud homes and youthful dames
For famine, toil and fray?
Yet on the nimble air benign
Speed nimbler messages,
That waft the breath of grace divine
To hearts in sloth and ease.
So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,

1 'In July, 1863, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who in face of a half-hostile public opinion had given up his commission in a favorite Massachusetts regiment to take command of one of the first enlisted colored regiments, largely made up of ex-slaves, had been killed with many of his officers and men on the slopes of Fort Wagner. This poem may be regarded as their dirge.' Ibid., 470.

When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*.

4

O, well for the fortunate soul
Which Music's wings infold,
Stealing away the memory
Of sorrows new and old!
Yet happier he whose inward sight,
Stayed on his subtile thought,
Shuts his sense on toys of time,
To vacant bosoms brought.
But best befriended of the God
He who, in evil times,
Warned by an inward voice,
Heeds not the darkness and the dread,
Biding by his rule and choice,
Feeling only the fiery thread
Leading over heroic ground,
Walled with mortal terror round,
To the aim which him allures,
And the sweet heaven his deed secures.
Peril around, all else appalling,
Cannon in front and leaden rain
Him duly through the clarion calling
To the van called not in vain.

Stainless soldier on the walls,
Knowing this,—and knows no more,—
Whoever fights, whoever falls,
Justice conquers evermore,
Justice after as before,—
And he who battles on her side,
God, though he were ten times slain,
Crowns him victor glorified,
Victor over death and pain.

5

Blooms the laurel which belongs
To the valiant chief who fights;
I see the wreath, I hear the songs
Lauding the Eternal Rights,
Victors over daily wrongs:
Awful victors, they misguide
Whom they will destroy,
And their coming triumph hide
In our downfall, or our joy:
They reach no term, they never sleep,
In equal strength through space
abide;
Though, feigning dwarfs, they crouch and
creep,
The strong they slay, the swift outstride:
Fate's grass grows rank in valley clods,
And rankly on the castled steep,—
Speak it firmly, these are gods,
All are ghosts beside.
1863 1867

LETTERS

EVERY day brings a ship,
Every ship brings a word;
Well for those who have no fear,
Looking seaward well assured
That the word the vessel brings
Is the word they wish to hear.
1867

THE ROMANY GIRL [1]

THE sun goes down, and with him takes
The coarseness of my poor attire;
The fair moon mounts, and aye the flame
Of Gypsy beauty blazes higher.

Pale Northern girls! you scorn our race;
You captives of your air-tight halls,
Wear out indoors your sickly days,
But leave us the horizon walls.

And if I take you, dames, to task,
And say it frankly without guile,
Then you are Gypsies in a mask,
And I the lady all the while.

If, on the heath, below the moon,
I court and play with paler blood,
Me false to mine dare whisper none,—
One sallow horseman knows me good.

Go, keep your cheek's rose from the rain,
For teeth and hair with shopmen deal;
My swarthy tint is in the grain,
The rocks and forest know it real.

The wild air bloweth in our lungs,
The keen stars twinkle in our eyes,
The birds gave us our wily tongues,
The panther in our dances flies.

You doubt we read the stars on high,
Nathless we read your fortunes true;
The stars may hide in the upper sky,
But without glass we fathom you.
1855 1867

1 The poem rose from Emerson's interest in George Borrow (1803–1881), author of the picaresque *Bible in Spain* and other books.

DAYS

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.
1852 1878

TWO RIVERS [1]

THY summer voice, Musketaquit,
Repeats the music of the rain;
But sweeter rivers pulsing flit
Through thee, as thou through Concord Plain.

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent:
The stream I love unbounded goes
Through flood and sea and firmament;
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,
I hear the spending of the stream
Through years, through men, through Nature fleet,
Through love and thought, through power and dream.

Musketaquit, a goblin strong,
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay;
They lose their grief who hear his song,
And where he winds is the day of day.

So forth and brighter fares my stream,—
Who drink it shall not thirst again;
No darkness stains its equal gleam,
And ages drop in it like rain.
1856 1867

1 In his journal for the early summer of 1856, Emerson wrote of the stream near his home: 'Thy voice is sweet, Musketaquid, and repeats the music of the rain, but sweeter is the silent stream which flows even through thee, as thou through the land. Thou art shut in thy banks, but the stream I love flows in thy water, and flows through rocks and through the air and through rays of light as well, and through darkness, and through men and women. I hear and see the inundation and the eternal spending of the stream in winter and in summer, in men and animals, in passion and thought. Happy are they who can hear it.' Ibid.,487.

WALDEINSAMKEIT [2]

I DO not count the hours I spend
In wandering by the sea;
The forest is my loyal friend,
Like God it useth me.

In plains that room for shadows make
Of skirting hills to lie,
Bound in by streams which give and take
Their colors from the sky;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,
Or down the oaken glade,
O what have I to do with time?
For this the day was made.

Cities of mortals woe-begone
Fantastic care derides,
But in the serious landscape lone
Stern benefit abides.

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,
And merry is only a mask of sad,
But, sober on a fund of joy,
The woods at heart are glad.

There the great Planter plants
Of fruitful worlds the grain,
And with a million spells enchants
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made
The rose of beauty burns;
Through times that wear and forms that fade,
Immortal youth returns.

The black ducks mounting from the lake,
The pigeon in the pines,
The bittern's boom, a desert make
Which no false art refines.

Down in yon watery nook,
Where bearded mists divide,
The gray old gods whom Chaos knew,
The sires of Nature, hide.

Aloft, in secret veins of air,
Blows the sweet breath of song,

2 'Forest Solitude.'

O, few to scale those uplands dare,
Though they to all belong!

See thou bring not to field or stone
The fancies found in books;
Leave authors' eyes, and fetch your own,
To brave the landscape's looks.

Oblivion here thy wisdom is,
Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;
For a proud idleness like this
Crowns all thy mean affairs.
1857 1867

THE PAST

THE debt is paid,
The verdict said,
The Furies laid,
The plague is stayed,
All fortunes made;
Turn the key and bolt the door,
Sweet is death forevermore.
Nor haughty hope, nor swart chagrin,
Nor murdering hate, can enter in.
All is now secure and fast;
Not the gods can shake the Past;
Flies-to the adamantine door
Bolted down forevermore.
None can reënter there,—
No thief so politic,
No Satan with a royal trick
Steal in by window, chink, or hole,
To bind or unbind, add what lacked,
Insert a leaf, or forge a name,
New-face or finish what is packed,
Alter or mend eternal Fact.
1867

TERMINUS

IT is time to be old,
To take in sail:—
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said: 'No more!
No farther shoot
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.
Fancy departs: no more invent;
Contract thy firmament
To compass of a tent.
There's not enough for this and that,
Make thy option which of two;
Economize the failing river,
Not the less revere the Giver,
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot;
A little while
Still plan and smile,
And,—fault of novel germs,—
Mature the unfallen fruit.
Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,
Bad husbands of their fires,
Who, when they gave thee breath,
Failed to bequeath
The needful sinew stark as once,
The Baresark marrow to thy bones,
But left a legacy of ebbing veins,
Inconstant heat and nerveless reins,—
Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,
Amid the gladiators, halt and numb.'

As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:
'Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed.'
1866 1867

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1817–1862

FROM WALDEN

WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

AT a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it—took everything but a deed of it—took his

word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk —cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms—the refusal was all I wanted—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes—

> 'I am monarch of all I *survey*,
> My right there is none to dispute.'

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders—I never heard what compensation he received for that—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted, if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to

farming on a large scale—I have always cultivated a garden—was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose *De Re Rusticâ* is my *Cultivator*, says—and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage—'When you think of getting a farm turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good.' I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length, for convenience putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within-doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The *Harivansa* says, 'An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning.' Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager —the wood thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface

was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rainstorm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill-top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land.*

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. 'There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,' —said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted—

> 'There was a shepherd that did live,
> And held his thoughts as high
> As were the mounts whereon his flocks
> Did hourly feed him by.'

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of King Tching-thang to this effect: 'Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again.' I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by

the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, 'All intelligences awake with the morning.' Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to 'glorify God and enjoy him forever.'

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the

fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine tomorrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half-hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, 'What's the news?' as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. 'Pray tell me anything new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe'—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls,

that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! 'Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!' The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice, 'Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?'

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that 'there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a for-

ester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul,' continues the Hindoo philosopher, 'from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*.' I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the 'Mill-dam' go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui*, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as

some creatures use their snout and fore paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

Sounds

But while we are confined to books, though the most select and classic, and read only particular written languages, which are themselves but dialects and provincial, we are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard. Much is published, but little printed. The rays which stream through the shutter will be no longer remembered when the shutter is wholly removed. No method nor discipline can supersede the necessity of being forever on the alert. What is a course of history or philosophy, or poetry, no matter how well selected, or the best society, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen? Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer? Read your fate, see what is before you, and walk on into futurity.

I did not read books the first summer; I hoed beans. Nay, I often did better than this. There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sang around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went. The day advanced as if to light some work of mine; it was morning, and lo, now it is evening, and nothing memorable is accomplished. Instead of singing like the birds, I silently smiled at my incessant good fortune. As the sparrow had its trill, sitting on the hickory before my door, so had I my chuckle or suppressed warble which he might hear out of my nest. My days were not days of the week, bearing the stamp of any heathen deity, nor were they minced into hours and fretted by the ticking of a clock; for I lived like the Puri Indians, of whom it is said that 'for yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow they have only one word, and they express the variety of meaning by pointing backward for yesterday, forward for to-morrow, and overhead for the passing day.' This was sheer idleness to my fellow-townsmen, no doubt; but if the birds and flowers had tried me by their standard, I should not have been found wanting. A man must find his occasions in himself, it is true. The natural day is very calm, and will hardly reprove his indolence.

I had this advantage, at least, in my mode of life, over those who were obliged to look abroad for amusement, to society and the theatre, that my life itself was become my amusement and never ceased to be novel. It was a drama of many scenes and without an end. If we were always indeed getting our living, and regulating our lives according to the last and best mode we had learned, we should never be troubled with ennui. Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour. Housework was a pleasant pastime. When my floor was dirty, I rose early, and, setting all my furniture out of doors on the grass, bed and bedstead making but one budget, dashed water on the floor, and sprinkled white sand from the pond on it, and then with a broom scrubbed it clean and white; and by the time the villagers had broken their fast the morning sun had dried my house sufficiently to allow me to move in again, and my meditations were almost uninterrupted. It was pleasant to see my whole household effects out on the grass, making a little pile like a gypsy's pack, and my three-legged table, from which I did not remove the books and pen and ink, standing amid the pines and hick-

ories. They seemed glad to get out themselves, and as if unwilling to be brought in. I was sometimes tempted to stretch an awning over them and take my seat there. It was worth the while to see the sun shine on these things, and hear the free wind blow on them; so much more interesting most familiar objects look out of doors than in the house. A bird sits on the next bough, life-everlasting grows under the table, and blackberry vines run round its legs; pine cones, chestnut burrs, and strawberry leaves are strewn about. It looked as if this was the way these forms came to be transferred to our furniture, to tables, chairs, and bedsteads—because they once stood in their midst.

My house was on the side of a hill, immediately on the edge of the larger wood, in the midst of a young forest of pitch pines and hickories, and half a dozen rods from the pond, to which a narrow footpath led down the hill. In my front yard grew the strawberry, blackberry, and life-everlasting, johnswort and goldenrod, shrub-oaks and sand-cherry, blueberry and groundnut. Near the end of May, the sand-cherry (*cerasus pumila*), adorned the sides of the path with its delicate flowers arranged in umbels cylindrically about its short stems, which last, in the fall, weighed down with good-sized and handsome cherries, fell over in wreaths like rays on every side. I tasted them out of compliment to Nature, though they were scarcely palatable. The sumach (*rhus glabra*) grew luxuriantly about the house, pushing up through the embankment which I had made, and growing five or six feet the first season. Its broad pinnate tropical leaf was pleasant though strange to look on. The large buds, suddenly pushing out late in the spring from dry sticks which had seemed to be dead, developed themselves as by magic into graceful green and tender boughs, an inch in diameter; and sometimes, as I sat at my window, so heedlessly did they grow and tax their weak joints, I heard a fresh and tender bough suddenly fall like a fan to the ground, when there was not a breath of air stirring, broken off by its own weight. In August, the large masses of berries, which, when in flower, had attracted many wild bees, gradually assumed their bright velvety crimson hue, and by their weight again bent down and broke the tender limbs.

As I sit at my window this summer afternoon, hawks are circling about my clearing; the tantivy of wild pigeons, flying by twos and threes athwart my view, or perching restless on the white pine boughs behind my house, gives a voice to the air; a fish-hawk dimples the glassy surface of the pond and brings up a fish; a mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore; the sedge is bending under the weight of the reed-birds flitting hither and thither; and for the last half hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving like the beat of a partridge, conveying travellers from Boston to the country. For I did not live so out of the world as that boy, who, as I hear, was put out to a farmer in the east part of the town, but ere long ran away and came home again, quite down at the heel and homesick. He had never seen such a dull and out-of-the-way place; the folks were all gone off; why, you couldn't even hear the whistle! I doubt if there is such a place in Massachusetts now:—

'In truth, our village has become a butt
For one of those fleet railroad shafts, and o'er
Our peaceful plain its soothing sound is—
Concord.'

The Fitchburg Railroad touches the pond about a hundred rods south of where I dwell. I usually go to the village along its causeway, and am, as it were, related to society by this link. The men on the freight trains, who go over the whole length of the road, bow to me as to an old acquaintance, they pass me so often, and apparently they take me for an employee; and so I am. I too would fain be a track-repairer somewhere in the orbit of the earth.

The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town, or adventurous country traders from the other side. As they come under one horizon, they shout their warning to get off the track to the other,

heard sometimes through the circles of two towns. Here come your groceries, country; your rations, countrymen! Nor is there any man so independent on his farm that he can say them nay. And here's your pay for them! screams the countryman's whistle; timber like long battering-rams going twenty miles an hour against the city's walls, and chairs enough to seat all the weary and heavy-laden that dwell within them. With such huge and lumbering civility the country hands a chair to the city. All the Indian huckleberry hills are stripped, all the cranberry meadows are raked into the city. Up comes the cotton, down goes the woven cloth; up comes the silk, down goes the woollen; up come the books, but down goes the wit that writes them.

When I meet the engine with its train of cars moving off with planetary motion—or, rather, like a comet, for the beholder knows not if with that velocity and with that direction it will ever revisit this system, since its orbit does not look like a returning curve—with its steam cloud like a banner streaming behind in golden and silver wreaths, like many a downy cloud which I have seen, high in the heavens, unfolding its masses to the light—as if this travelling demigod, this cloud-compeller, would ere long take the sunset sky for the livery of his train; when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils (what kind of winged horse or fiery dragon they will put into the new Mythology I don't know), it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it. If all were as it seems, and men made the elements their servants for noble ends! If the cloud that hangs over the engine were the perspiration of heroic deeds, or as beneficent as that which floats over the farmer's fields, then the elements and Nature herself would cheerfully accompany men on their errands and be their escort.

I watch the passage of the morning cars with the same feeling that I do the rising of the sun, which is hardly more regular. Their train of clouds stretching far behind and rising higher and higher, going to heaven while the cars are going to Boston, conceals the sun for a minute and casts my distant field into the shade, a celestial train beside which the petty train of cars which hugs the earth is but the barb of the spear. The stabler of the iron horse was up early this winter morning by the light of the stars amid the mountains, to fodder and harness his steed. Fire, too, was awakened thus early to put the vital heat in him and get him off. If the enterprise were as innocent as it is early! If the snow lies deep, they strap on his snow-shoes, and with the giant plough plough a furrow from the mountains to the sea-board, in which the cars, like a following drill-barrow, sprinkle all the restless men and floating merchandise in the country for seed. All day the fire-steed flies over the country, stopping only that his master may rest, and I am awakened by his tramp and defiant snort at midnight, when in some remote glen in the woods he fronts the elements incased in ice and snow; and he will reach his stall only with the morning star, to start once more on his travels without rest or slumber. Or perchance, at evening, I hear him in his stable blowing off the superfluous energy of the day, that he may calm his nerves and cool his liver and brain for a few hours of iron slumber. If the enterprise were as heroic and commanding as it is protracted and unwearied!

Far through unfrequented woods on the confines of towns, where once only the hunter penetrated by day, in the darkest night dart these bright saloons without the knowledge of their inhabitants; this moment stopping at some brilliant station-house in town or city, where a social crowd is gathered, the next in the Dismal Swamp, scaring the owl and fox. The startings and arrivals of the cars are now the epochs in the village day. They go and come with such regularity and precision, and their whistle can be heard so far, that the farmers set their clocks by them, and thus one well-conducted institution regulates a whole country. Have not men improved somewhat in punctuality since the railroad was invented? Do they not talk and think faster in the depot than they did in the stage-office? There is something electrifying in the atmosphere of the former place. I have been astonished at the miracles it has wrought; that some of my neighbors, who, I should have prophesied, once for all, would never get to Boston by so prompt a

conveyance, are on hand when the bell rings. To do things 'railroad fashion' is now the by-word; and it is worth the while to be warned so often and so sincerely by any power to get off its track. There is no stopping to read the riot act, no firing over the heads of the mob, in this case. We have constructed a fate, an *Atropos*, that never turns aside. (Let that be the name of your engine.) Men are advertised that at a certain hour and minute these bolts will be shot toward particular points of the compass; yet it interferes with no man's business, and the children go to school on the other track. We live the steadier for it. We are all educated thus to be sons of Tell. The air is full of invisible bolts. Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then.

What recommends commerce to me is its enterprise and bravery. It does not clasp its hands and pray to Jupiter. I see these men every day go about their business with more or less courage and content, doing more even than they suspect, and perchance better employed than they could have consciously devised. I am less affected by their heroism who stood up for half an hour in the front line at Buena Vista, than by the steady and cheerful valor of the men who inhabit the snow-plough for their winter quarters; who have not merely the three-o'-clock in the morning courage, which Bonaparte thought was the rarest, but whose courage does not go to rest so early, who go to sleep only when the storm sleeps or the sinews of their iron steed are frozen. On this morning of the Great Snow, perchance, which is still raging and chilling men's blood, I hear the muffled tone of their engine bell from out the fog bank of their chilled breath, which announces that the cars *are coming*, without long delay, notwithstanding the veto of a New England north-east snow-storm, and I behold the ploughmen covered with snow and rime, their heads peering above the mould-board which is turning down other than daisies and the nests of field-mice, like bowlders of the Sierra Nevada, that occupy an outside place in the universe.

Commerce is unexpectedly confident and serene, alert, adventurous, and unwearied. It is very natural in its methods withal, far more so than many fantastic enterprises and sentimental experiments, and hence its singular success. I am refreshed and expanded when the freight train rattles past me, and I smell the stores which go dispensing their odors all the way from Long Wharf to Lake Champlain, reminding me of foreign parts, of coral reefs, and Indian oceans, and tropical climes, and the extent of the globe. I feel more like a citizen of the world at the sight of the palm-leaf which will cover so many flaxen New England heads the next summer, the Manilla hemp and cocoa-nut husks, the old junk, gunny bags, scrap iron, and rusty nails. This car-load of torn sails is more legible and interesting now than if they should be wrought into paper and printed books. Who can write so graphically the history of the storms they have weathered as these rents have done? They are proof-sheets which need no correction. Here goes lumber from the Maine woods, which did not go out to sea in the last freshet, risen four dollars on the thousand because of what did go out or was split up; pine, spruce, cedar—first, second, third, and fourth qualities, so lately all of one quality, to wave over the bear, and moose, and caribou. Next rolls Thomaston lime, a prime lot, which will get far among the hills before it gets slacked. These rags in bales, of all hues and qualities, the lowest condition to which cotton and linen descend, the final result of dress —of patterns which are now no longer cried up, unless it be in Milwaukie, as those splendid articles, English, French, or American prints, ginghams, muslins, etc.— gathered from all quarters both of fashion and poverty, going to become paper of one color or a few shades only, on which, forsooth, will be written tales of real life, high and low, and founded on fact! This closed car smells of salt fish, the strong New England and commercial scent, reminding me of the Grand Banks and the fisheries. Who has not seen a salt fish, thoroughly cured for this world, so that nothing can spoil it, and putting the perseverance of the saints to the blush? with which you may sweep or pave the streets, and split your kindlings, and the teamster shelter himself and his lading against sun, wind, and rain behind it—and the trader, as a Concord trader once did, hang it up by his door for a sign when he commences business, until at last

his oldest customer cannot tell surely whether it be animal, vegetable, or mineral, and yet it shall be as pure as a snowflake, and if it be put into a pot and boiled, will come out an excellent dun fish for a Saturday's dinner. Next Spanish hides, with the tails still preserving their twist and the angle of elevation they had when the oxen that wore them were careering over the pampas of the Spanish main—a type of all obstinacy, and evincing how almost hopeless and incurable are all constitutional vices. I confess, that practically speaking, when I have learned a man's real disposition, I have no hopes of changing it for the better or worse in this state of existence. As the Orientals say, 'A cur's tail may be warmed, and pressed, and bound round with ligatures, and after a twelve years' labor bestowed upon it, still it will retain its natural form.' The only effectual cure for such inveteracies as these tails exhibit is to make glue of them, which I believe is what is usually done with them, and then they will stay put and stick. Here is a hogshead of molasses or of brandy directed to John Smith, Cuttingsville, Vermont, some trader among the Green Mountains, who imports for the farmers near his clearing, and now perchance stands over his bulkhead and thinks of the last arrivals on the coast, how they may affect the price for him, telling his customers this moment, as he has told them twenty times before this morning, that he expects some by the next train of prime quality. It is advertised in the *Cuttingsville Times*.

While these things go up other things come down. Warned by the whizzing sound, I look up from my book and see some tall pine, hewn on far northern hills, which has winged its way over the Green Mountains and the Connecticut, shot like an arrow through the township within ten minutes, and scarce another eye beholds it; going

> 'to be the mast
> Of some great ammiral.'

And hark! here comes the cattle-train bearing the cattle of a thousand hills, sheepcots, stables, and cow-yards in the air, drovers with their sticks, and shepherd boys in the midst of their flocks, all but the mountain pastures, whirled along like leaves blown from the mountains by the September gales. The air is filled with the bleating of calves and sheep, and the hustling of oxen, as if a pastoral valley were going by. When the old bell-wether at the head rattles his bell, the mountains do indeed skip like rams and the little hills like lambs. A carload of drovers, too, in the midst, on a level with their droves now, their vocation gone, but still clinging to their useless sticks as their badge of office. But their dogs, where are they? It is a stampede to them; they are quite thrown out; they have lost the scent. Methinks I hear them barking behind the Peterboro' Hills, or panting up the western slope of the Green Mountains. They will not be in at the death. Their vocation, too, is gone. Their fidelity and sagacity are below par now. They will slink back to their kennels in disgrace, or perchance run wild and strike a league with the wolf and the fox. So is your pastoral life whirled past and away. But the bell rings, and I must get off the track and let the cars go by—

> What's the railroad to me?
> I never go to see
> Where it ends.
> It fills a few hollows,
> And makes banks for the swallows,
> It sets the sand a-blowing,
> And the blackberries a-growing,

but I cross it like a cart-path in the woods. I will not have my eyes put out and my ears spoiled by its smoke and steam and hissing.

Now that the cars are gone by and all the restless world with them, and the fishes in the pond no longer feel their rumbling, I am more alone than ever. For the rest of the long afternoon, perhaps, my meditations are interrupted only by the faint rattle of a carriage or team along the distant highway.

Sometimes, on Sundays, I heard the bells, the Lincoln, Acton, Bedford, or Concord bell, when the wind was favorable, a faint, sweet, and, as it were, natural melody, worth importing into the wilderness. At a sufficient distance over the woods this sound acquires a certain vibratory hum, as if the pine needles in the horizon were the

strings of a harp which it swept. All sound heard at the greatest possible distance produces one and the same effect, a vibration of the universal lyre, just as the intervening atmosphere makes a distant ridge of earth interesting to our eyes by the azure tint it imparts to it. There came to me in this case a melody which the air had strained, and which had conversed with every leaf and needle of the wood, that portion of the sound which the elements had taken up and modulated and echoed from vale to vale. The echo is, to some extent, an original sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of what was worth repeating in the bell, but partly the voice of the wood; the same trivial words and notes sung by a wood-nymph.

At evening, the distant lowing of some cow in the horizon beyond the woods sounded sweet and melodious, and at first I would mistake it for the voices of certain minstrels by whom I was sometimes serenaded, who might be straying over hill and dale; but soon I was not unpleasantly disappointed when it was prolonged into the cheap and natural music of the cow. I do not mean to be satirical, but to express my appreciation of those youths' singing, when I state that I perceived clearly that it was akin to the music of the cow, and they were at length one articulation of Nature.

Regularly at half past seven, in one part of the summer, after the evening train had gone by, the whippoorwills chanted their vespers for half an hour, sitting on a stump by my door, or upon the ridge pole of the house. They would begin to sing almost with as much precision as a clock, within five minutes of a particular time, referred to the setting of the sun, every evening. I had a rare opportunity to become acquainted with their habits. Sometimes I heard four or five at once in different parts of the wood, by accident one a bar behind another, and so near me that I distinguished not only the cluck after each note, but often that singular buzzing sound like a fly in a spider's web, only proportionally louder. Sometimes one would circle round and round me in the woods a few feet distant as if tethered by a string, when probably I was near its eggs. They sang at intervals throughout the night, and were again as musical as ever just before and about dawn.

When other birds are still the screech owls take up the strain, like mourning women their ancient u-lu-lu. Their dismal scream is truly Ben Jonsonian. Wise midnight hags! It is no honest and blunt tu-whit tu-who of the poets, but, without jesting, a most solemn graveyard ditty, the mutual consolations of suicide lovers remembering the pangs and the delights of supernal love in the infernal groves. Yet I love to hear their wailing, their doleful responses, trilled along the woodside; reminding me sometimes of music and singing birds; as if it were the dark and tearful side of music, the regrets and sighs that would fain be sung. They are the spirits, the low spirits and melancholy forebodings, of fallen souls that once in human shape night-walked the earth and did the deeds of darkness, now expiating their sins with their wailing hymns or threnodies in the scenery of their transgressions. They give me a new sense of the variety and capacity of that nature which is our common dwelling. *Oh-o-o-o-o that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!* sighs one on this side of the pond, and circles with the restlessness of despair to some new perch on the gray oaks. Then—*That I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!* echoes another on the farther side with tremulous sincerity, and—*bor-r-r-r-n!* comes faintly from far in the Lincoln woods.

I was also serenaded by a hooting owl. Near at hand you could fancy it the most melancholy sound in Nature, as if she meant by this to stereotype and make permanent in her choir the dying moans of a human being—some poor weak relic of mortality who has left hope behind, and howls like an animal, yet with human sobs, on entering the dark valley, made more awful by a certain gurgling melodiousness —I find myself beginning with the letters gl when I try to imitate it—expressive of a mind which has reached the gelatinous mildewy stage in the mortification of all healthy and courageous thought. It reminded me of ghouls and idiots and insane howlings. But now one answers from far woods in a strain made really melodious by distance—*Hoo hoo hoo, hoorer hoo*; and indeed for the most part it suggested only

pleasing associations, whether heard by day or night, summer or winter.

I rejoice that there are owls. Let them do the idiotic and maniacal hooting for men. It is a sound admirably suited to swamps and twilight woods which no day illustrates, suggesting a vast and undeveloped nature which men have not recognized. They represent the stark twilight and unsatisfied thoughts which all have. All day the sun has shone on the surface of some savage swamp, where the single spruce stands hung with usnea lichens, and small hawks circulate above, and the chickadee lisps amid the evergreens, and the partridge and rabbit skulk beneath; but now a more dismal and fitting day dawns, and a different race of creatures awakes to express the meaning of Nature there.

Late in the evening I heard the distant rumbling of wagons over bridges—a sound heard farther than almost any other at night—the baying of dogs, and sometimes again the lowing of some disconsolate cow in a distant barnyard. In the meanwhile all the shore rang with the trump of bullfrogs, the sturdy spirits of ancient wine-bibbers and wassailers, still unrepentant, trying to sing a catch in their Stygian lake—if the Walden nymphs will pardon the comparison, for though there are almost no weeds, there are frogs there—who would fain keep up the hilarious rules of their old festal tables, though their voices have waxed hoarse and solemnly grave, mocking at mirth, and the wine has lost its flavor, and become only liquor to distend their paunches, and sweet intoxication never comes to drown the memory of the past, but mere saturation and water-loggedness and distention. The most aldermanic, with his chin upon a heart-leaf, which serves for a napkin to his drooling chaps, under this northern shore quaffs a deep draught of the once scorned water, and passes round a cup with the ejaculation *tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-oonk!* and straightway comes over the water from some distant cove the same password repeated, where the next in seniority and girth has gulped down to his mark; and when this observance has made the circuit of the shores, then ejaculates the master of ceremonies, with satisfaction, *tr-r-r-oonk!* and each in his turn repeats the same down to the least distended, leakiest, and flabbiest paunched, that there be no mistake; and then the bowl goes round again and again, until the sun disperses the morning mist, and only the patriarch is not under the pond, but vainly bellowing *troonk* from time to time, and pausing for a reply.

I am not sure that ever I heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing, and I thought that it might be worth the while to keep a cockerel for his music merely, as a singing bird. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly the most remarkable of any bird's, and if they could be naturalized without being domesticated, it would soon become the most famous sound in our woods, surpassing the clangor of the goose and the hooting of the owl; and then imagine the cackling of the hens to fill the pauses when their lords' clarions rested! No wonder that man added this bird to his tame stock—to say nothing of the eggs and drumsticks. To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feebler notes of other birds—think of it! It would put nations on the alert. Who would not be early to rise, and rise earlier and earlier every successive day of his life, till he became unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise? This foreign bird's note is celebrated by the poets of all countries along with the notes of their native songsters. All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag. Even the sailor on the Atlantic and Pacific is awakened by his voice; but its shrill sound never roused me from my slumbers. I kept neither dog, cat, cow, pig, nor hens, so that you would have said there was a deficiency of domestic sounds; neither the churn, nor the spinning-wheel, nor even the singing of the kettle, nor the hissing of the urn, nor children crying, to comfort one. An old-fashioned man would have lost his senses or died of ennui before this. Not even rats in the wall, for they were starved out, or rather were never baited in—only squirrels on the roof and under the floor, a whippoorwill on the ridge-pole, a blue-jay screaming beneath the window, a hare or

woodchuck under the house, a screech-owl or a cat-owl behind it, a flock of wild geese or a laughing loon on the pond, and a fox to bark in the night. Not even a lark or an oriole, those mild plantation birds, ever visited my clearing. No cockerels to crow nor hens to cackle in the yard. No yard! but unfenced Nature reaching up to your very sills. A young forest growing up under your windows, and wild sumachs and blackberry vines breaking through into your cellar; sturdy pitch pines rubbing and creaking against the shingles for want of room, their roots reaching quite under the house. Instead of a scuttle or a blind blown off in the gale—a pine tree snapped off or torn up by the roots behind your house for fuel. Instead of no path to the front-yard gate in the Great Snow—no gate—no front-yard—and no path to the civilized world!

VISITORS

I THINK that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a bloodsucker for the time to any full-blooded man that comes in my way. I am naturally no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room, if my business called me thither.

I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society. When visitors came in larger and unexpected numbers there was but the third chair for them all, but they generally economized the room by standing up. It is surprising how many great men and women a small house will contain. I have had twenty-five or thirty souls, with their bodies, at once under my roof, and yet we often parted without being aware that we had come very near to one another. Many of our houses, both public and private, with their almost innumerable apartments, their huge halls and their cellars for the storage of wines and other munitions of peace, appear to me extravagantly large for their inhabitants. They are so vast and magnificent that the latter seem to be only vermin which infest them. I am surprised when the herald blows his summons before some Tremont, or Astor, or Middlesex House, to see come creeping out over the piazza for all inhabitants a ridiculous mouse, which soon again slinks into some hole in the pavement.

One inconvenience I sometimes experienced in so small a house, the difficulty of getting to a sufficient distance from my guest when we began to utter the big thoughts in big words. You want room for your thoughts to get into sailing trim and run a course or two before they make their port. The bullet of your thought must have overcome its lateral and ricochet motion and fallen into its last and steady course before it reaches the ear of the hearer, else it may plough out again through the side of his head. Also, our sentences wanted room to unfold and form their columns in the interval. Individuals, like nations, must have suitable broad and natural boundaries, even a considerable neutral ground, between them. I have found it a singular luxury to talk across the pond to a companion on the opposite side. In my house we were so near that we could not begin to hear—we could not speak low enough to be heard; as when you throw two stones into calm water so near that they break each other's undulations. If we are merely loquacious and loud talkers, then we can afford to stand very near together, cheek by jowl, and feel each other's breath; but if we speak reservedly and thoughtfully, we want to be farther apart, that all animal heat and moisture may have a chance to evaporate. If we would enjoy the most intimate society with that in each of us which is without, or above, being spoken to, we must not only be silent, but commonly so far apart bodily that we cannot possibly hear each other's voice in any case. Referred to this standard, speech is for the convenience of those who are hard of hearing; but there are many fine things which we cannot say if we have to shout. As the conversation began to assume a loftier and grander tone, we gradually shoved our chairs farther apart till they touched the wall in opposite corners, and then commonly there was not room enough.

My 'best' room, however—my withdrawing room—always ready for company, on whose carpet the sun rarely fell, was the pine wood behind my house. Thither in summer days, when distinguished guests came, I took them, and a priceless domestic swept the floor and dusted the furniture and kept the things in order.

If one guest came he sometimes partook of my frugal meal, and it was no interruption to conversation to be stirring a hasty-pudding, or watching the rising and maturing of a loaf of bread in the ashes, in the meanwhile. But if twenty came and sat in my house there was nothing said about dinner, though there might be bread enough for two, more than if eating were a forsaken habit; but we naturally practised abstinence; and this was never felt to be an offence against hospitality, but the most proper and considerate course. The waste and decay of physical life, which so often needs repair, seemed miraculously retarded in such a case, and the vital vigor stood its ground. I could entertain thus a thousand as well as twenty; and if any ever went away disappointed or hungry from my house when they found me at home, they may depend upon it that I sympathized with them at least. So easy is it, though many housekeepers doubt it, to establish new and better customs in the place of the old. You need not rest your reputation on the dinners you give. For my own part, I was never so effectually deterred from frequenting a man's house, by any kind of Cerberus whatever, as by the parade one made about dining me, which I took to be a very polite and roundabout hint never to trouble him so again. I think I shall never revisit those scenes. I should be proud to have for the motto of my cabin those lines of Spenser which one of my visitors inscribed on a yellow walnut leaf for a card:—

'Arrivèd there, the little house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainment where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will:
The noblest mind the best contentment has.'

When Winslow, afterward governor of the Plymouth Colony, went with a companion on a visit of ceremony to Massassoit on foot through the woods, and arrived tired and hungry at his lodge, they were well received by the king, but nothing was said about eating that day. When the night arrived, to quote their own words—'He laid us on the bed with himself and his wife, they at the one end and we at the other, it being only plank, laid a foot from the ground, and a thin mat upon them. Two more of his chief men, for want of room, pressed by and upon us; so that we were worse weary of our lodging than of our journey.' At one o'clock the next day Massassoit 'brought two fishes that he had shot,' about thrice as big as a bream; 'these being boiled, there were at least forty looked for a share in them. The most ate of them. This meal only we had in two nights and a day; and had not one of us bought a partridge, we had taken our journey fasting.' Fearing that they would be light-headed for want of food and also sleep, owing to 'the savages' barbarous singing, (for they used to sing themselves asleep),' and that they might get home while they had strength to travel, they departed. As for lodging, it is true they were but poorly entertained, though what they found an inconvenience was no doubt intended for an honor; but as far as eating was concerned, I do not see how the Indians could have done better. They had nothing to eat themselves, and they were wiser than to think that apologies could supply the place of food to their guests; so they drew their belts tighter and said nothing about it. Another time when Winslow visited them, it being a season of plenty with them, there was no deficiency in this respect.

As for men, they will hardly fail one anywhere. I had more visitors while I lived in the woods than at any other period of my life; I mean that I had some. I met several there under more favorable circumstances than I could anywhere else. But fewer came to see me upon trivial business. In this respect, my company was winnowed by my mere distance from town. I had withdrawn so far within the great ocean of solitude, into which the rivers of society empty, that for the most part, so far as my needs were concerned, only the finest sediment was deposited around me. Beside, there were wafted to me evidences of unexplored and uncultivated continents on the other side.

Who should come to my lodge this morning but a true Homeric or Paphlagonian man—he had so suitable and poetic a name that I am sorry I cannot print it here—a Canadian, a wood-chopper and post-maker, who can hole fifty posts in a day, who made his last supper on a woodchuck

which his dog caught. He, too, has heard of Homer, and, 'if it were not for books,' would 'not know what to do rainy days,' though perhaps he has not read one wholly through for many rainy seasons. Some priest who could pronounce the Greek itself taught him to read his verse in the testament in his native parish far away; and now I must translate to him, while he holds the book, Achilles' reproof to Patroclus for his sad countenance.—'Why are you in tears, Patroclus, like a young girl?'

'Or have you alone heard some news from Phthia?
They say that Menœtius lives yet, son of Actor,
And Peleus lives, son of Æacus, among the Myrmidons,
Either of whom having died, we should greatly grieve.'

He says, 'That's good.' He has a great bundle of white-oak bark under his arm for a sick man, gathered this Sunday morning. 'I suppose there's no harm in going after such a thing to-day,' says he. To him Homer was a great writer, though what his writing was about he did not know. A more simple and natural man it would be hard to find. Vice and disease, which cast such a sombre moral hue over the world, seemed to have hardly any existence for him. He was about twenty-eight years old, and had left Canada and his father's house a dozen years before to work in the States, and earn money to buy a farm with at last, perhaps in his native country. He was cast in the coarsest mould; a stout but sluggish body, yet gracefully carried, with a thick sunburnt neck, dark bushy hair, and dull, sleepy blue eyes, which were occasionally lit up with expression. He wore a flat gray cloth cap, a dingy wool-colored great-coat, and cowhide boots. He was a great consumer of meat, usually carrying his dinner to his work a couple of miles past my house—for he chopped all summer—in a tin pail; cold meats, often cold woodchucks, and coffee in a stone bottle which dangled by a string from his belt; and sometimes he offered me a drink. He came along early, crossing my bean-field, though without anxiety or haste to get to his work, such as Yankees exhibit. He wasn't a-going to hurt himself. He didn't care if he only earned his board. Frequently he would leave his dinner in the bushes, when his dog had caught a woodchuck by the way, and go back a mile and a half to dress it and leave it in the cellar of the house where he boarded, after deliberating first for half an hour whether he could not sink it in the pond safely till nightfall—loving to dwell long upon these themes. He would say, as he went by in the morning, 'How thick the pigeons are! If working every day were not my trade, I could get all the meat I should want by hunting—pigeons, woodchucks, rabbits, partridges—by gosh! I could get all I should want for a week in one day.'

He was a skilful chopper, and indulged in some flourishes and ornaments in his art. He cut his trees level and close to the ground, that the sprouts which came up afterwards might be more vigorous and a sled might slide over the stumps; and instead of leaving a whole tree to support his corded wood, he would pare it away to a slender stake or splinter which you could break off with your hand at last.

He interested me because he was so quiet and solitary and so happy withal; a well of good humor and contentment which overflowed at his eyes. His mirth was without alloy. Sometimes I saw him at his work in the woods, felling trees, and he would greet me with a laugh of inexpressible satisfaction, and a salutation in Canadian French, though he spoke English as well. When I approached him he would suspend his work, and with half-suppressed mirth lie along the trunk of a pine which he had felled, and, peeling off the inner bark, roll it up into a ball and chew it while he laughed and talked. Such an exuberance of animal spirits had he that he sometimes tumbled down and rolled on the ground with laughter at anything which made him think and tickled him. Looking round upon the trees he would exclaim—'By George! I can enjoy myself well enough here chopping; I want no better sport.' Sometimes, when at leisure, he amused himself all day in the woods with a pocket pistol, firing salutes to himself at regular intervals as he walked. In the winter he had a fire by which at noon he warmed his coffee in a kettle; and as he sat on a log to eat his dinner the chickadees would sometimes come

round and alight on his arm and peck at the potato in his fingers; and he said that he 'liked to have the little *fellers* about him.'

In him the animal man chiefly was developed. In physical endurance and contentment he was cousin to the pine and the rock. I asked him once if he was not sometimes tired at night, after working all day; and he answered, with a sincere and serious look, 'Gorrappit, I never was tired in my life.' But the intellectual and what is called spiritual man in him were slumbering as in an infant. He had been instructed only in that innocent and ineffectual way in which the Catholic priests teach the aborigines, by which the pupil is never educated to the degree of consciousness, but only to the degree of trust and reverence, and a child is not made a man, but kept a child. When Nature made him, she gave him a strong body and contentment for his portion, and propped him on every side with reverence and reliance, that he might live out his threescore years and ten a child. He was so genuine and unsophisticated that no introduction would serve to introduce him, more than if you introduced a woodchuck to your neighbor. He had got to find him out as you did. He would not play any part. Men paid him wages for work, and so helped to feed and clothe him; but he never exchanged opinions with them. He was so simply and naturally humble—if he can be called humble who never aspires—that humility was no distinct quality in him, nor could he conceive of it. Wiser men were demigods to him. If you told him that such a one was coming, he did as if he thought that anything so grand would expect nothing of himself, but take all the responsibility on itself, and let him be forgotten still. He never heard the sound of praise. He particularly reverenced the writer and the preacher. Their performances were miracles. When I told him that I wrote considerably, he thought for a long time that it was merely the handwriting which I meant, for he could write a remarkably good hand himself. I sometimes found the name of his native parish handsomely written in the snow by the highway, with the proper French accent, and knew that he had passed. I asked him if he ever wished to write his thoughts. He said that he had read and written letters for those who could not, but he never tried to write thoughts—no, he could not, he could not tell what to put first, it would kill him, and then there was spelling to be attended to at the same time!

I heard that a distinguished wise man and reformer asked him if he did not want the world to be changed; but he answered with a chuckle of surprise in his Canadian accent, not knowing that the question had ever been entertained before, 'No, I like it well enough.' It would have suggested many things to a philosopher to have dealings with him. To a stranger he appeared to know nothing of things in general; yet I sometimes saw in him a man whom I had not seen before, and I did not know whether he was as wise as Shakespeare or as simply ignorant as a child—whether to suspect him of a fine poetic consciousness or of stupidity. A townsman told me that when he met him sauntering through the village in his small close-fitting cap, and whistling to himself, he reminded him of a prince in disguise.

His only books were an almanac and an arithmetic, in which last he was considerably expert. The former was a sort of cyclopædia to him, which he supposed to contain an abstract of human knowledge, as indeed it does to a considerable extent. I loved to sound him on the various reforms of the day, and he never failed to look at them in the most simple and practical light. He had never heard of such things before. Could he do without factories? I asked. He had worn the home-made Vermont gray, he said, and that was good. Could he dispense with tea and coffee? Did this country afford any beverage beside water? He had soaked hemlock leaves in water and drank it, and thought that was better than water in warm weather. When I asked him if he could do without money, he showed the convenience of money in such a way as to suggest and coincide with the most philosophical accounts of the origin of this institution, and the very derivation of the word *pecunia*. If an ox were his property, and he wished to get needles and thread at the store, he thought it would be inconvenient and impossible soon to go on mortgaging some portion of the creature each time to that amount. He could defend many institutions better than any philosopher, be-

cause, in describing them as they concerned him, he gave the true reason for their prevalence, and speculation had not suggested to him any other. At another time, hearing Plato's definition of a man—a biped without feathers—and that one exhibited a cock plucked and called it Plato's man, he thought it an important difference that the *knees* bent the wrong way. He would sometimes exclaim, 'How I love to talk! By George, I could talk all day!' I asked him once, when I had not seen him for many months, if he had got a new idea this summer. 'Good Lord,' said he, 'a man that has to work as I do, if he does not forget the ideas he has had, he will do well. May be the man you hoe with is inclined to race; then, by gorry, your mind must be there; you think of weeds.' He would sometimes ask me first on such occasions, if I had made any improvement. One winter day I asked him if he was always satisfied with himself, wishing to suggest a substitute within him for the priest without, and some higher motive for living. 'Satisfied!' said he; 'some men are satisfied with one thing, and some with another. One man, perhaps, if he has got enough, will be satisfied to sit all day with his back to the fire and his belly to the table, by George!' Yet I never, by any manœuvring, could get him to take the spiritual view of things; the highest that he appeared to conceive of was a simple expediency, such as you might expect an animal to appreciate; and this, practically, is true of most men. If I suggested any improvement in his mode of life, he merely answered, without expressing any regret, that it was too late. Yet he thoroughly believed in honesty and the like virtues.

There was a certain positive originality, however slight, to be detected in him, and I occasionally observed that he was thinking for himself and expressing his own opinion—a phenomenon so rare that I would any day walk ten miles to observe it, and it amounted to the re-origination of many of the institutions of society. Though he hesitated, and perhaps failed to express himself distinctly, he always had a presentable thought behind. Yet his thinking was so primitive and immersed in his animal life, that, though more promising than a merely learned man's, it rarely ripened to anything which can be reported. He suggested that there might be men of genius in the lowest grades of life, however permanently humble and illiterate, who take their own view always, or do not pretend to see at all—who are as bottomless even as Walden Pond was thought to be, though they may be dark and muddy.

Many a traveller came out of his way to see me and the inside of my house, and, as an excuse for calling, asked for a glass of water. I told them that I drank at the pond, and pointed thither, offering to lend them a dipper. Far off as I lived, I was not exempted from that annual visitation which occurs, methinks, about the first of April, when everybody is on the move; and I had my share of good luck, though there were some curious specimens among my visitors. Half-witted men from the almshouse and elsewhere came to see me; but I endeavored to make them exercise all the wit they had, and make their confessions to me; in such cases making wit the theme of our conversation; and so was compensated. Indeed, I found some of them to be wiser than the so-called *overseers* of the poor and selectmen of the town, and thought it was time that the tables were turned. With respect to wit, I learned that there was not much difference between the half and the whole. One day, in particular, an inoffensive, simple-minded pauper, whom with others I had often seen used as fencing stuff, standing or sitting on a bushel in the fields to keep cattle and himself from straying, visited me, and expressed a wish to live as I did. He told me, with the utmost simplicity and truth, quite superior, or rather *inferior*, to anything that is called humility, that he was 'deficient in intellect.' These were his words. The Lord had made him so, yet he supposed the Lord cared as much for him as for another. 'I have always been so,' said he, 'from my childhood; I never had much mind; I was not like other children; I am weak in the head. It was the Lord's will, I suppose.' And there he was to prove the truth of his words. He was a metaphysical puzzle to me. I have rarely met a fellow-man on such promising ground—it was so simple and sincere, and so true, all that he said. And, true enough, in proportion as he appeared to humble himself was he exalted. I did not

know at first but it was the result of a wise policy. It seemed that from such a basis of truth and frankness as the poor weak-headed pauper had laid, our intercourse might go forward to something better than the intercourse of sages.

I had some guests from those not reckoned commonly among the town's poor, but who should be—who are among the world's poor, at any rate—guests who appeal, not to your hospitality, but to your *hospitalality*; who earnestly wish to be helped, and preface their appeal with the information that they are resolved, for one thing, never to help themselves. I require of a visitor that he be not actually starving, though he may have the very best appetite in the world, however he got it. Objects of charity are not guests. Men who did not know when their visit had terminated, though I went about my business again, answering them from greater and greater remoteness. Men of almost every degree of wit called on me in the migrating season. Some who had more wits than they knew what to do with—runaway slaves, with plantation manners, who listened from time to time, like the fox in the fable, as if they heard the hounds a-baying on their track, and looked at me beseechingly, as much as to say—

'O Christian, will you send me back?'

One real runaway slave, among the rest, whom I had helped to forward toward the north star. Men of one idea, like a hen with one chicken, and that a duckling; men of a thousand ideas, and unkempt heads, like those hens which are made to take charge of a hundred chickens, all in pursuit of one bug, a score of them lost in every morning's dew—and become frizzled and mangy in consequence; men of ideas instead of legs, a sort of intellectual centipede that made you crawl all over. One man proposed a book in which visitors should write their names, as at the White Mountains; but, alas! I have too good a memory to make that necessary.

I could not but notice some of the peculiarities of my visitors. Girls and boys and young women generally seemed glad to be in the woods. They looked in the pond and at the flowers, and improved their time. Men of business, even farmers, thought only of solitude and employment, and of the great distance at which I dwelt from something or other; and though they said that they loved a ramble in the woods occasionally, it was obvious that they did not. Restless, committed men, whose time was all taken up in getting a living or keeping it; ministers who spoke of God as if they enjoyed a monopoly of the subject, who could not bear all kinds of opinions; doctors, lawyers, uneasy housekeepers who pried into my cupboard and bed when I was out—how came Mrs.—— to know that my sheets were not as clean as hers?—young men who had ceased to be young, and had concluded that it was safest to follow the beaten track of the professions—all these generally said that it was not possible to do so much good in my position. Ay! there was the rub. The old and infirm and the timid, of whatever age or sex, thought most of sickness, and sudden accident and death; to them life seemed full of danger—what danger is there if you don't think of any?—and they thought that a prudent man would carefully select the safest position, where Dr. B. might be on hand at a moment's warning. To them the village was literally a *com-munity*, a league for mutual defence, and you would suppose that they would not go a-huckleberrying without a medicine chest. The amount of it is, if a man is alive, there is always *danger* that he may die, though the danger must be allowed to be less in proportion as he is dead-and-alive to begin with. A man sits as many risks as he runs. Finally, there were the self-styled reformers, the greatest bores of all, who thought that I was forever singing—

This is the house that I built;
This is the man that lives in the house that I built;

but they did not know that the third line was—

These are the folks that worry the man
That lives in the house that I built.

I did not fear the hen-harriers, for I kept no chickens; but I feared the men-harriers rather.

I had more cheering visitors than the last. Children come a-berrying, railroad men taking a Sunday morning walk in clean shirts, fishermen and hunters, poets and philosophers, in short, all honest pilgrims, who came out to the woods for freedom's sake, and really left the village behind, I was ready to greet with—'Welcome, Englishmen! welcome, Englishmen!' for I had had communication with that race.

The Ponds

Sometimes, having had a surfeit of human society and gossip, and worn out all my village friends, I rambled still farther westward than I habitually dwell, into yet more unfrequented parts of the town, 'to fresh woods and pastures new,' or, while the sun was setting, made my supper of huckleberries and blueberries on Fair Haven Hill, and laid up a store for several days. The fruits do not yield their true flavor to the purchaser of them, nor to him who raises them for the market. There is but one way to obtain it, yet few take that way. If you would know the flavor of huckleberries, ask the cow-boy or the partridge. It is a vulgar error to suppose that you have tasted huckleberries who never plucked them. A huckleberry never reaches Boston; they have not been known there since they grew on her three hills. The ambrosial and essential part of the fruit is lost with the bloom which is rubbed off in the market cart, and they become mere provender. As long as Eternal Justice reigns, not one innocent huckleberry can be transported thither from the country's hills.

Occasionally, after my hoeing was done for the day, I joined some impatient companion who had been fishing on the pond since morning, as silent and motionless as a duck or a floating leaf, and, after practising various kinds of philosophy, had concluded commonly, by the time I arrived, that he belonged to the ancient sect of Cœnobites. There was one older man, an excellent fisher and skilled in all kinds of woodcraft, who was pleased to look upon my house as a building erected for the convenience of fishermen; and I was equally pleased when he sat in my doorway to arrange his lines. Once in a while we sat together on the pond, he at one end of the boat, and I at the other; but not many words passed between us, for he had grown deaf in his later years, but he occasionally hummed a psalm, which harmonized well enough with my philosophy. Our intercourse was thus altogether one of unbroken harmony, far more pleasing to remember than if it had been carried on by speech. When, as was commonly the case, I had none to commune with, I used to raise the echoes by striking with a paddle on the side of my boat, filling the surrounding woods with circling and dilating sound, stirring them up as the keeper of a menagerie his wild beasts, until I elicited a growl from every wooded vale and hillside.

In warm evenings I frequently sat in the boat playing the flute, and saw the perch, which I seemed to have charmed, hovering around me, and the moon travelling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewed with the wrecks of the forest. Formerly I had come to this pond adventurously, from time to time, in dark summer nights, with a companion, and making a fire close to the water's edge, which we thought attracted the fishes, we caught pouts with a bunch of worms strung on a thread, and when we had done, far in the night, threw the burning brands high into the air like skyrockets, which, coming down into the pond, were quenched with a loud hissing, and we were suddenly groping in total darkness. Through this, whistling a tune, we took our way to the haunts of men again. But now I had made my home by the shore.

Sometimes, after staying in a village parlor till the family had all retired, I have returned to the woods, and, partly with a view to the next day's dinner, spent the hours of midnight fishing from a boat by moonlight, serenaded by owls and foxes, and hearing, from time to time, the creaking note of some unknown bird close at hand. These experiences were very memorable and valuable to me—anchored in forty feet of water, and twenty or thirty rods from the shore, surrounded sometimes by thousands of small perch and shiners, dimpling the surface with their tails in the moonlight, and communicating by a long flaxen line with mysterious nocturnal fishes which had their dwelling forty feet below, or sometimes dragging sixty

feet of line about the pond as I drifted in the gentle night breeze, now and then feeling a slight vibration along it, indicative of some life prowling about its extremity, of dull uncertain blundering purpose there, and slow to make up its mind. At length you slowly raise, pulling hand over hand, some horned pout squeaking and squirming to the upper air. It was very queer, especially in dark nights, when your thoughts had wandered to vast and cosmogonal themes in other spheres, to feel this faint jerk, which came to interrupt your dreams and link you to Nature again. It seemed as if I might next cast my line upward into the air, as well as downward into this element which was scarcely more dense. Thus I caught two fishes as it were with one hook.

The scenery of Walden is on a humble scale, and, though very beautiful, does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it or lived by its shore; yet this pond is so remarkable for its depth and purity as to merit a particular description. It is a clear and deep green well, half a mile long and a mile and three quarters in circumference, and contains about sixty-one and a half acres; a perennial spring in the midst of pine and oak woods, without any visible inlet or outlet except by the clouds and evaporation. The surrounding hills rise abruptly from the water to the height of forty to eighty feet, though on the southeast and east they attain to about one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet respectively, within a quarter and a third of a mile. They are exclusively woodland. All our Concord waters have two colors at least, one when viewed at a distance, and another, more proper, close at hand. The first depends more on the light, and follows the sky. In clear weather, in summer, they appear blue at a little distance, especially if agitated, and at a great distance all appear alike. In stormy weather they are sometimes of a dark slate color. The sea, however, is said to be blue one day and green another without any perceptible change in the atmosphere. I have seen our river, when, the landscape being covered with snow, both water and ice were almost as green as grass. Some consider blue 'to be the color of pure water, whether liquid or solid.' But, looking directly down into our waters from a boat, they are seen to be of very different colors. Walden is blue at one time and green at another, even from the same point of view. Lying between the earth and the heavens, it partakes of the color of both. Viewed from a hilltop it reflects the color of the sky, but near at hand it is of a yellowish tint next the shore where you can see the sand, then a light green, which gradually deepens to a uniform dark green in the body of the pond. In some lights, viewed even from a hilltop, it is of a vivid green next the shore. Some have referred this to the reflection of the verdure; but it is equally green there against the railroad sand-bank, and in the spring, before the leaves are expanded, and it may be simply the result of the prevailing blue mixed with the yellow of the sand. Such is the color of its iris. This is that portion, also, where in the spring, the ice being warmed by the heat of the sun reflected from the bottom, and also transmitted through the earth, melts first and forms a narrow canal about the still frozen middle. Like the rest of our waters, when much agitated, in clear weather, so that the surface of the waves may reflect the sky at the right angle, or because there is more light mixed with it, it appears at a little distance of a darker blue than the sky itself; and at such a time, being on its surface, and looking with divided vision, so as to see the reflection, I have discerned a matchless and indescribable light blue, such as watered or changeable silks and sword blades suggest, more cerulean than the sky itself, alternating with the original dark green on the opposite sides of the waves, which last appeared but muddy in comparison. It is a vitreous greenish blue, as I remember it, like those patches of the winter sky seen through cloud vistas in the west before sundown. Yet a single glass of its water held up to the light is as colorless as an equal quantity of air. It is well known that a large plate of glass will have a green tint, owing, as the makers say, to its 'body,' but a small piece of the same will be colorless. How large a body of Walden water would be required to reflect a green tint I have never proved. The water of our river is black or

a very dark brown to one looking directly down on it, and, like that of most ponds, imparts to the body of one bathing in it a yellowish tinge; but this water is of such crystalline purity that the body of the bather appears of an alabaster whiteness, still more unnatural, which, as the limbs are magnified and distorted withal, produces a monstrous effect, making fit studies for a Michael Angelo.

The water is so transparent that the bottom can easily be discerned at the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet. Paddling over it, you may see many feet beneath the surface the schools of perch and shiners, perhaps only an inch long, yet the former easily distinguished by their transverse bars, and you think that they must be ascetic fish that find a subsistence there. Once, in the winter, many years ago, when I had been cutting holes through the ice in order to catch pickerel, as I stepped ashore I tossed my axe back on to the ice, but, as if some evil genius had directed it, it slid four or five rods directly into one of the holes, where the water was twenty-five feet deep. Out of curiosity, I lay down on the ice and looked through the hole, until I saw the axe a little on one side, standing on its head, with its helve erect and gently swaying to and fro with the pulse of the pond; and there it might have stood erect and swaying till in the course of time the handle rotted off, if I had not disturbed it. Making another hole directly over it with an ice chisel which I had, and cutting down the longest birch which I could find in the neighborhood with my knife, I made a slip noose, which I attached to its end, and, letting it down carefully, passed it over the knob of the handle, and drew it by a line along the birch, and so pulled the axe out again.

The shore is composed of a belt of smooth rounded white stones like paving stones, excepting one or two short sand beaches, and is so steep that in many places a single leap will carry you into the water over your head; and were it not for its remarkable transparency, that would be the last to be seen of its bottom till it rose on the opposite side. Some think it is bottomless. It is nowhere muddy, and a casual observer would say that there were no weeds at all in it; and of noticeable plants, except in the little meadows recently overflowed, which do not properly belong to it, a closer scrutiny does not detect a flag nor a bulrush, nor even a lily, yellow or white, but only a few small heart-leaves and potamogetons, and perhaps a water-target or two; all which however a bather might not perceive; and these plants are clean and bright like the element they grow in. The stones extend a rod or two into the water, and then the bottom is pure sand, except in the deepest parts, where there is usually a little sediment, probably from the decay of the leaves which have been wafted on to it so many successive falls; and a bright green weed is brought up on anchors even in midwinter.

We have one other pond just like this—White Pond in Nine Acre Corner, about two and a half miles westerly; but, though I am acquainted with most of the ponds within a dozen miles of this centre, I do not know a third of this pure and well-like character. Successive nations perchance have drank at, admired, and fathomed it, and passed away, and still its water is green and pellucid as ever. Not an intermitting spring! Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden, Walden Pond was already in existence, and even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain accompanied with mist and a southerly wind, and covered with myriads of ducks and geese, which had not heard of the fall, when still such pure lakes sufficed them. Even then it had commenced to rise and fall, and had clarified its waters and colored them of the hue they now wear, and obtained a patent of heaven to be the only Walden Pond in the world and distiller of celestial dews. Who knows in how many unremembered nations' literatures this has been the Castalian Fountain? or what nymphs presided over it in the Golden Age? It is a gem of the first water which Concord wears in her coronet.

Yet perchance the first who came to this well have left some trace of their footsteps. I have been surprised to detect encircling the pond, even where a thick wood has just been cut down on the shore, a narrow shelf-like path in the steep hill-side, alternately rising and falling, approaching and receding from the water's edge, as old probably as the race of man here, worn

by the feet of aboriginal hunters, and still from time to time unwittingly trodden by the present occupants of the land. This is particularly distinct to one standing on the middle of the pond in winter, just after a light snow has fallen, appearing as a clear undulating white line, unobscured by weeds and twigs, and very obvious a quarter of a mile off in many places where in summer it is hardly distinguishable close at hand. The snow reprints it, as it were, in clear white type alto-relievo. The ornamented grounds of villas which will one day be built here may still preserve some trace of this.

The pond rises and falls, but whether regularly or not, and within what period, nobody knows, though, as usual, many pretend to know. It is commonly higher in the winter and lower in the summer, though not corresponding to the general wet and dryness. I can remember when it was a foot or two lower, and also when it was at least five feet higher, than when I lived by it. There is a narrow sand-bar running into it, with very deep water on one side, on which I helped boil a kettle of chowder, some six rods from the main shore, about the year 1824, which it has not been possible to do for twenty-five years; and on the other hand, my friends used to listen with incredulity when I told them, that a few years later I was accustomed to fish from a boat in a secluded cove in the woods, fifteen rods from the only shore they knew, which place was long since converted into a meadow. But the pond has risen steadily for two years, and now, in the summer of '52, is just five feet higher than when I lived there, or as high as it was thirty years ago, and fishing goes on again in the meadow. This makes a difference of level, at the outside, of six or seven feet; and yet the water shed by the surrounding hills is insignificant in amount, and this overflow must be referred to causes which affect the deep springs. This same summer the pond has begun to fall again. It is remarkable that this fluctuation, whether periodical or not, appears thus to require many years for its accomplishment. I have observed one rise and a part of two falls, and I expect that a dozen or fifteen years hence the water will again be as low as I have ever known it. Flints' Pond, a mile eastward, allowing for the disturbance occasioned by its inlets and outlets, and the smaller intermediate ponds also, sympathize with Walden, and recently attained their greatest height at the same time with the latter. The same is true, as far as my observation goes, of White Pond.

This rise and fall of Walden at long intervals serves this use at least; the water standing at this great height for a year or more, though it makes it difficult to walk round it, kills the shrubs and trees which have sprung up about its edge since the last rise—pitch-pines, birches, alders, aspens, and others—and, falling again, leaves an unobstructed shore; for, unlike many ponds and all waters which are subject to a daily tide, its shore is cleanest when the water is lowest. On the side of the pond next my house a row of pitch-pines fifteen feet high has been killed and tipped over as if by a lever, and thus a stop put to their encroachments; and their size indicates how many years have elapsed since the last rise to this height. By this fluctuation the pond asserts its title to a shore, and thus the *shore* is *shorn*, and the trees cannot hold it by right of possession. These are the lips of the lake, on which no beard grows. It licks its chaps from time to time. When the water is at its height, the alders, willows, and maples send forth a mass of fibrous red roots several feet long from all sides of their stems in the water, and to the height of three or four feet from the ground, in the effort to maintain themselves; and I have known the high blueberry bushes about the shore, which commonly produce no fruit, bear an abundant crop under these circumstances.

Some have been puzzled to tell how the shore became so regularly paved. My townsmen have all heard the tradition—the oldest people tell me that they heard it in their youth—that anciently the Indians were holding a pow-wow upon a hill there, which rose as high into the heavens as the pond now sinks deep into the earth, and they used much profanity, as the story goes, though this vice is one of which the Indians were never guilty, and while they were thus engaged the hill shook and suddenly sank, and only one old squaw, named Walden, escaped, and from her the pond was named. It has been conjectured that when the hill shook, these stones rolled down its side and

became the present shore. It is very certain, at any rate, that once there was no pond here, and now there is one; and this Indian fable does not in any respect conflict with the account of that ancient settler whom I have mentioned, who remembers so well when he first came here with his divining rod, saw a thin vapor rising from the sward, and the hazel pointed steadily downward, and he concluded to dig a well here. As for the stones, many still think that they are hardly to be accounted for by the action of the waves on these hills; but I observe that the surrounding hills are remarkably full of the same kind of stones, so that they have been obliged to pile them up in walls on both sides of the railroad cut nearest the pond; and, moreover, there are most stones where the shore is most abrupt; so that, unfortunately, it is no longer a mystery to me. I detect the paver. If the name was not derived from that of some English locality —Saffron Walden, for instance—one might suppose that it was called, originally, *Walled-in* Pond.

The pond was my well ready dug. For four months in the year its water is as cold as it is pure at all times; and I think that it is then as good as any, if not the best, in the town. In the winter, all water which is exposed to the air is colder than springs and wells which are protected from it. The temperature of the pond water which had stood in the room where I sat from five o'clock in the afternoon till noon the next day, the 6th of March, 1846, the thermometer having been up to 65° or 70° some of the time, owing partly to the sun on the roof, was 42°, or one degree colder than the water of one of the coldest wells in the village just drawn. The temperature of the Boiling Spring the same day was 45°, or the warmest of any water tried, though it is the coldest that I know of in summer, when, beside, shallow and stagnant surface water is not mingled with it. Moreover, in summer, Walden never becomes so warm as most water which is exposed to the sun, on account of its depth. In the warmest weather I usually placed a pailful in my cellar, where it became cool in the night, and remained so during the day; though I also resorted to a spring in the neighborhood. It was as good when a week old as the day it was dipped, and had no taste of the pump. Whoever camps for a week in summer by the shore of a pond, needs only bury a pail of water a few feet deep in the shade of his camp to be independent of the luxury of ice.

There have been caught in Walden pickerel, one weighing seven pounds, to say nothing of another which carried off a reel with great velocity, which the fisherman safely set down at eight pounds because he did not see him, perch and pouts, some of each weighing over two pounds, shiners, chivins or roach (*Leuciscus pulchellus*), a very few breams, and a couple of eels, one weighing four pounds—I am thus particular because the weight of a fish is commonly its only title to fame, and these are the only eels I have heard of here;—also, I have a faint recollection of a little fish some five inches long, with silvery sides and a greenish back, somewhat dace-like in its character, which I mention here chiefly to link my facts to fable. Nevertheless, this pond is not very fertile in fish. Its pickerel, though not abundant, are its chief boast. I have seen at one time lying on the ice pickerel of at least three different kinds; a long and shallow one, steel-colored, most like those caught in the river; a bright golden kind, with greenish reflections and remarkably deep, which is the most common here; and another, golden-colored, and shaped like the last, but peppered on the sides with small dark brown or black spots, intermixed with a few faint blood-red ones, very much like a trout. The specific name *reticulatus* would not apply to this; it should be *guttatus* rather. These are all very firm fish, and weigh more than their size promises. The shiners, pouts, and perch also, and indeed all the fishes which inhabit this pond, are much cleaner, handsomer, and firmer fleshed than those in the river and most other ponds, as the water is purer, and they can easily be distinguished from them. Probably many ichthyologists would make new varieties of some of them. There are also a clean race of frogs and tortoises, and a few mussels in it; muskrats and minks leave their traces about it, and occasionally a travelling mud-turtle visits it. Sometimes, when I pushed off my boat in the morning, I disturbed a great mud-turtle which had secreted himself under the boat in the night. Ducks and

geese frequent it in the spring and fall, the white-bellied swallows (*Hirundo bicolor*) skim over it, and the peetweets (*Totanus macularius*) 'teter' along its stony shores all summer. I have sometimes disturbed a fish-hawk sitting on a white-pine over the water; but I doubt if it is ever profaned by the wing of a gull, like Fair Haven. At most, it tolerates one annual loon. These are all the animals of consequence which frequent it now.

You may see from a boat, in calm weather, near the sandy eastern shore, where the water is eight or ten feet deep, and also in some other parts of the pond, some circular heaps half a dozen feet in diameter by a foot in height, consisting of small stones less than a hen's egg in size, where all around is bare sand. At first you wonder if the Indians could have formed them on the ice for any purpose, and so, when the ice melted, they sank to the bottom; but they are too regular and some of them plainly too fresh for that. They are similar to those found in rivers; but as there are no suckers nor lampreys here, I know not by what fish they could be made. Perhaps they are the nests of the chivin. These lend a pleasing mystery to the bottom.

The shore is irregular enough not to be monotonous. I have in my mind's eye the western indented with deep bays, the bolder northern, and the beautifully scolloped southern shore, where successive capes overlap each other and suggest unexplored coves between. The forest has never so good a setting, nor is so distinctly beautiful, as when seen from the middle of a small lake amid hills which rise from the water's edge; for the water in which it is reflected not only makes the best foreground in such a case, but, with its winding shore, the most natural and agreeable boundary to it. There is no rawness nor imperfection in its edge there, as where the axe has cleared a part, or a cultivated field abuts on it. The trees have ample room to expand on the water side, and each sends forth its most vigorous branch in that direction. There Nature has woven a natural selvage, and the eye rises by just gradations from the low shrubs of the shore to the highest trees. There are few traces of man's hand to be seen. The water laves the shore as it did a thousand years ago.

A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluviatile trees next the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows.

Standing on the smooth sandy beach at the east end of the pond, in a calm September afternoon, when a slight haze makes the opposite shore-line indistinct, I have seen whence came the expression, 'the glassy surface of a lake.' When you invert your head, it looks like a thread of finest gossamer stretched across the valley, and gleaming against the distant pine woods, separating one stratum of the atmosphere from another. You would think that you could walk dry under it to the opposite hills, and that the swallows which skim over might perch on it. Indeed, they sometimes dive below the line, as it were by mistake, and are undeceived. As you look over the pond westward you are obliged to employ both your hands to defend your eyes against the reflected as well as the true sun, for they are equally bright; and if, between the two, you survey its surface critically, it is literally as smooth as glass, except where the skater insects, at equal intervals scattered over its whole extent, by their motions in the sun produce the finest imaginable sparkle on it, or, perchance, a duck plumes itself, or, as I have said, a swallow skims so low as to touch it. It may be that in the distance a fish describes an arc of three or four feet in the air, and there is one bright flash where it emerges, and another where it strikes the water; sometimes the whole silvery arc is revealed; or here and there, perhaps, is a thistle-down floating on its surface, which the fishes dart at and so dimple it again. It is like molten glass cooled but not congealed, and the few motes in it are pure and beautiful, like the imperfections in glass. You may often detect a yet smoother and darker water, separated from the rest as if by an invisible cobweb, boom of the water nymphs, resting on it. From a hilltop you can see a fish leap in almost any part; for not a pickerel or shiner picks an insect from this smooth surface but it manifestly disturbs the equilibrium of the whole lake. It is wonderful with what elaborateness this simple fact is

advertised—this piscine murder will out—and from my distant perch I distinguish the circling undulations when they are half a dozen rods in diameter. You can even detect a water-bug (*Gyrinus*) ceaselessly progressing over the smooth surface a quarter of a mile off; for they furrow the water slightly, making a conspicuous ripple bounded by two diverging lines, but the skaters glide over it without rippling it perceptibly. When the surface is considerably agitated there are no skaters nor water-bugs on it, but apparently, in calm days, they leave their havens and adventurously glide forth from the shore by short impulses till they completely cover it. It is a soothing employment, on one of those fine days in the fall, when all the warmth of the sun is fully appreciated, to sit on a stump on such a height as this, overlooking the pond, and study the dimpling circles which are incessantly inscribed on its otherwise invisible surface amid the reflected skies and trees. Over this great expanse there is no disturbance but it is thus at once gently smoothed away and assuaged, as, when a vase of water is jarred, the trembling circles seek the shore, and all is smooth again. Not a fish can leap or an insect fall on the pond but it is thus reported in circling dimples, in lines of beauty, as it were the constant welling up of its fountain, the gentle pulsing of its life, the heaving of its breast. The thrills of joy and thrills of pain are undistinguishable. How peaceful the phenomena of the lake! Again the works of man shine as in the spring, ay, every leaf and twig and stone and cobweb sparkles now at mid-afternoon as when covered with dew in a spring morning. Every motion of an oar or an insect produces a flash of light; and if an oar falls, how sweet the echo!

In such a day, in September or October, Walden is a perfect forest mirror, set round with stones as precious to my eye as if fewer or rarer. Nothing so fair, so pure, and at the same time so large, as a lake, perchance, lies on the surface of the earth. Sky water. It needs no fence. Nations come and go without defiling it. It is a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off, whose gilding Nature continually repairs; no storms, no dust, can dim its surface ever fresh;—a mirror in which all impurity presented to it sinks, swept and dusted by the sun's hazy brush—this the light dust-cloth—which retains no breath that is breathed on it, but sends its own to float as clouds high above its surface, and be reflected in its bosom still.

A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air. It is continually receiving new life and motion from above. It is intermediate in its nature between land and sky. On land only the grass and trees wave, but the water itself is rippled by the wind. I see where the breeze dashes across it by the streaks or flakes of light. It is remarkable that we can look down on its surface. We shall, perhaps, look down thus on the surface of air at length, and mark where a still subtler spirit sweeps over it.

The skaters and water-bugs finally disappear in the latter part of October, when the severe frosts have come; and then and in November, usually, in a calm day, there is absolutely nothing to ripple the surface. One November afternoon, in the calm at the end of a rain storm of several days' duration, when the sky was still completely overcast and the air was full of mist, I observed that the pond was remarkably smooth, so that it was difficult to distinguish its surface; though it no longer reflected the bright tints of October, but the sombre November colors of the surrounding hills. Though I passed over it as gently as possible, the slight undulations produced by my boat extended almost as far as I could see, and gave a ribbed appearance to the reflections. But, as I was looking over the surface, I saw here and there at a distance a faint glimmer, as if some skater insects which had escaped the frosts might be collected there, or, perchance, the surface, being so smooth, betrayed where a spring welled up from the bottom. Paddling gently to one of these places, I was surprised to find myself surrounded by myriads of small perch, about five inches long, of a rich bronze color in the green water, sporting there and constantly rising to the surface and dimpling it, sometimes leaving bubbles on it. In such transparent and seemingly bottomless water, reflecting the clouds, I seemed to be floating through the air as in a balloon, and their swimming impressed me as a kind of flight or hovering, as if they were a compact flock of birds

passing just beneath my level on the right or left, their fins, like sails, set all around them. There were many such schools in the pond, apparently improving the short season before winter would draw an icy shutter over their broad skylight, sometimes giving to the surface an appearance as if a slight breeze struck it, or a few rain-drops fell there. When I approached carelessly and alarmed them, they made a sudden plash and rippling with their tails, as if one had struck the water with a brushy bough, and instantly took refuge in the depths. At length the wind rose, the mist increased, and the waves began to run, and the perch leaped much higher than before, half out of water, a hundred black points, three inches long, at once above the surface. Even as late as the 5th of December, one year, I saw some dimples on the surface, and thinking it was going to rain hard immediately, the air being full of mist, I made haste to take my place at the oars and row homeward; already the rain seemed rapidly increasing, though I felt none on my cheek, and I anticipated a thorough soaking. But suddenly the dimples ceased, for they were produced by the perch, which the noise of my oars had scared into the depths, and I saw their schools dimly disappearing; so I spent a dry afternoon after all.

An old man who used to frequent this pond nearly sixty years ago, when it was dark with surrounding forests, tells me that in those days he sometimes saw it all alive with ducks and other water-fowl, and that there were many eagles about it. He came here a-fishing, and used an old log canoe which he found on the shore. It was made of two white-pine logs dug out and pinned together, and was cut off square at the ends. It was very clumsy, but lasted a great many years before it became waterlogged and perhaps sank to the bottom. He did not know whose it was; it belonged to the pond. He used to make a cable for his anchor of strips of hickory bark tied together. An old man, a potter, who lived by the pond before the Revolution, told him once that there was an iron chest at the bottom, and that he had seen it. Sometimes it would come floating up to the shore; but when you went toward it, it would go back into deep water and disappear. I was pleased to hear of the old log canoe, which took the place of an Indian one of the same material but more graceful construction, which perchance had first been a tree on the bank, and then, as it were, fell into the water, to float there for a generation, the most proper vessel for the lake. I remember that when I first looked into these depths there were many large trunks to be seen indistinctly lying on the bottom, which had either been blown over formerly, or left on the ice at the last cutting, when wood was cheaper; but now they have mostly disappeared.

When I first paddled a boat on Walden, it was completely surrounded by thick and lofty pine and oak woods, and in some of its coves grape vines had run over the trees next the water and formed bowers under which a boat could pass. The hills which form its shores are so steep, and the woods on them were then so high, that, as you looked down from the west end, it had the appearance of an amphitheatre for some kind of sylvan spectacle. I have spent many an hour, when I was younger, floating over its surface as the zephyr willed, having paddled my boat to the middle, and lying on my back across the seats, in a summer forenoon, dreaming awake, until I was aroused by the boat touching the sand, and I arose to see what shore my fates had impelled me to—days when idleness was the most attractive and productive industry. Many a forenoon have I stolen away, preferring to spend thus the most valued part of the day; for I was rich, if not in money, in sunny hours and summer days, and spent them lavishly; nor do I regret that I did not waste more of them in the workshop or the teacher's desk. But since I left those shores the wood choppers have still further laid them waste, and now for many a year there will be no more rambling through the aisles of the wood, with occasional vistas through which you see the water. My Muse may be excused if she is silent henceforth. How can you expect the birds to sing when their groves are cut down?

Now the trunks of trees on the bottom, and the old log canoe, and the dark surrounding woods, are gone, and the villagers, who scarcely know where it lies, instead of going to the pond to bathe or drink, are thinking to bring its water, which should

be as sacred as the Ganges at least, to the village in a pipe, to wash their dishes with! —to earn their Walden by the turning of a cock or drawing of a plug! That devilish Iron Horse, whose ear-rending neigh is heard throughout the town, has muddied the Boiling Spring with his foot, and he it is that has browsed off all the woods on Walden shore; that Trojan horse, with a thousand men in his belly, introduced by mercenary Greeks! Where is the country's champion, the Moore of Moore Hall, to meet him at the Deep Cut and thrust an avenging lance between the ribs of the bloated pest?

Nevertheless, of all the characters I have known, perhaps Walden wears best, and best preserves its purity. Many men have been likened to it, but few deserve that honor. Though the wood choppers have laid bare first this shore and then that, and the Irish have built their sties by it, and the railroad has infringed on its border, and the ice-men have skimmed it once, it is itself unchanged, the same water which my youthful eyes fell on; all the change is in me. It has not acquired one permanent wrinkle after all its ripples. It is perennially young, and I may stand and see a swallow dip apparently to pick an insect from its surface as of yore. It struck me again to-night, as if I had not seen it almost daily for more than twenty years—Why, here is Walden, the same woodland lake that I discovered so many years ago; where a forest was cut down last winter another is springing up by its shore as lustily as ever; the same thought is welling up to its surface that was then; it is the same liquid joy and happiness to itself and its Maker, ay, and it *may* be to me. It is the work of a brave man surely, in whom there was no guile! He rounded this water with his hand, deepened and clarified it in his thought, and in his will bequeathed it to Concord. I see by its face that it is visited by the same reflection; and I can almost say, Walden, is it you?

It is no dream of mine,
To ornament a line;
I cannot come nearer to God and Heaven
Than I live to Walden even.
I am its stony shore,
And the breeze that passes o'er;
In the hollow of my hand
Are its water and its sand,
And its deepest resort
Lies high in my thought.

The cars never pause to look at it; yet I fancy that the engineers and firemen and brakemen, and those passengers who have a season ticket and see it often, are better men for the sight. The engineer does not forget at night, or his nature does not, that he has beheld this vision of serenity and purity once at least during the day. Though seen but once, it helps to wash out State Street and the engine's soot. One proposes that it be called 'God's Drop.'

I have said that Walden has no visible inlet nor outlet, but it is on the one hand distantly and indirectly related to Flint's Pond, which is more elevated, by a chain of small ponds coming from that quarter, and on the other directly and manifestly to Concord River, which is lower, by a similar chain of ponds through which in some other geological period it may have flowed, and by a little digging, which God forbid, it can be made to flow thither again. If by living thus reserved and austere, like a hermit in the woods, so long, it has acquired such wonderful purity, who would not regret that the comparatively impure waters of Flint's Pond should be mingled with it, or itself should ever go to waste its sweetness in the ocean wave?

Flint's, or Sandy Pond, in Lincoln, our greatest lake and inland sea, lies about a mile east of Walden. It is much larger, being said to contain one hundred and ninety-seven acres, and is more fertile in fish; but it is comparatively shallow, and not remarkably pure. A walk through the woods thither was often my recreation. It was worth the while, if only to feel the wind blow on your cheek freely, and see the waves run, and remember the life of mariners. I went a-chestnutting there in the fall, on windy days, when the nuts were dropping into the water and were washed to my feet; and one day, as I crept along its sedgy shore, the fresh spray blowing in my face, I came upon the mouldering wreck of a boat, the sides gone, and hardly more than the impression of its flat bottom left amid the rushes; yet its model was sharply defined, as if it were a large decayed pad,

with its veins. It was as impressive a wreck as one could imagine on the sea-shore, and had as good a moral. It is by this time mere vegetable mould and undistinguishable pond shore, through which rushes and flags have pushed up. I used to admire the ripple marks on the sandy bottom, at the north end of this pond, made firm and hard to the feet of the wader by the pressure of the water, and the rushes which grew in Indian file, in waving lines, corresponding to these marks, rank behind rank, as if the waves had planted them. There also I have found, in considerable quantities, curious balls, composed apparently of fine grass or roots, of pipewort perhaps, from half an inch to four inches in diameter, and perfectly spherical. These wash back and forth in shallow water on a sandy bottom, and are sometimes cast on the shore. They are either solid grass or have a little sand in the middle. At first you would say that they were formed by the action of the waves, like a pebble; yet the smallest are made of equally coarse materials, half an inch long, and they are produced only at one season of the year. Moreover, the waves, I suspect, do not so much construct as wear down a material which has already acquired consistency. They preserve their form when dry for an indefinite period.

Flints' Pond! Such is the poverty of our nomenclature. What right had the unclean and stupid farmer, whose farm abutted on this sky water, whose shores he has ruthlessly laid bare, to give his name to it? Some skin-flint, who loved better the reflecting surface of a dollar, or a bright cent, in which he could see his own brazen face; who regarded even the wild ducks which settled in it as trespassers; his fingers grown into crooked and horny talons from the long habit of grasping harpy-like;—so it is not named for me. I go not there to see him nor to hear of him; who never *saw* it, who never bathed in it, who never loved it, who never protected it, who never spoke a good word for it, nor thanked God that He had made it. Rather let it be named from the fishes that swim in it, the wild fowl or quadrupeds which frequent it, the wild flowers which grow by its shores, or some wild man or child the thread of whose history is interwoven with its own; not from him who could show no title to it but the deed which a like-minded neighbor or legislature gave him—him who thought only of its money value; whose presence perchance cursed all the shore; who exhausted the land around it, and would fain have exhausted the waters within it; who regretted only that it was not English hay or cranberry meadow—there was nothing to redeem it, forsooth, in his eyes—and would have drained and sold it for the mud at its bottom. It did not turn his mill, and it was no *privilege* to him to behold it. I respect not his labors, his farm where everything has its price, who would carry the landscape, who would carry his God, to market, if he could get anything for him; who goes to market *for* his god as it is; on whose farm nothing grows free, whose fields bear no crops, whose meadows no flowers, whose trees no fruits, but dollars; who loves not the beauty of his fruits, whose fruits are not ripe for him till they are turned to dollars. Give me the poverty that enjoys true wealth. Farmers are respectable and interesting to me in proportion as they are poor—poor farmers. A model farm! where the house stands like a fungus in a muck-heap, chambers for men, horses, oxen, and swine, cleansed and uncleansed, all contiguous to one another! Stocked with men! A great grease-spot, redolent of manures and buttermilk! Under a high state of cultivation, being manured with the hearts and brains of men! As if you were to raise your potatoes in the churchyard! Such is a model farm.

No, no; if the fairest features of the landscape are to be named after men, let them be the noblest and worthiest men alone. Let our lakes receive as true names at least as the Icarian Sea, where 'still the shore' a 'brave attempt resounds.'

Goose Pond, of small extent, is on my way to Flint's; Fair Haven, an expansion of Concord River, said to contain some seventy acres, is a mile south-west; and White Pond, of about forty acres, is a mile and a half beyond Fair Haven. This is my lake country. These, with Concord River, are my water privileges; and night and day, year in year out, they grind such grist as I carry to them.

Since the woodcutters, and the railroad, and I myself have profaned Walden, per-

haps the most attractive, if not the most beautiful, of all our lakes, the gem of the woods, is White Pond;—a poor name from its commonness, whether derived from the remarkable purity of its waters or the color of its sands. In these as in other respects, however, it is a lesser twin of Walden. They are so much alike that you would say they must be connected under ground. It has the same stony shore, and its waters are of the same hue. As at Walden, in sultry dog-day weather, looking down through the woods on some of its bays which are not so deep but that the reflection from the bottom tinges them, its waters are of a misty bluish-green or glaucous color. Many years since I used to go there to collect the sand by cart-loads, to make sand-paper with, and I have continued to visit it ever since. One who frequents it purposes to call it Virid Lake. Perhaps it might be called Yellow Pine Lake, from the following circumstance. About fifteen years ago you could see the top of a pitch-pine, of the kind called yellow pine hereabouts, though it is not a distinct species, projecting above the surface in deep water, many rods from the shore. It was even supposed by some that the pond had sunk, and this was one of the primitive forest that formerly stood there. I find that even so long ago as 1792, in a *Topographical Description of the Town of Concord*, by one of its citizens, in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the author, after speaking of Walden and White Ponds, adds: 'In the middle of the latter may be seen, when the water is very low, a tree which appears as if it grew in the place where it now stands, although the roots are fifty feet below the surface of the water; the top of this tree is broken off, and at that place measures fourteen inches in diameter.' In the spring of '49 I talked with a man who lived nearest the pond in Sudbury, who told me that it was he who got out this tree ten or fifteen years before. As near as he could remember, it stood twelve or fifteen rods from the shore, where the water was thirty or forty feet deep. It was in the winter, and he had been getting out ice in the forenoon, and had resolved that in the afternoon, with the aid of his neighbors, he would take out the old yellow pine. He sawed a channel in the ice toward the shore, and hauled it over and along and out on to the ice with oxen; but, before he had gone far in his work, he was surprised to find that it was wrong end upward, with the stumps of the branches pointing down, and the small end firmly fastened in the sandy bottom. It was about a foot in diameter at the big end, and he had expected to get a good saw-log, but it was so rotten as to be fit only for fuel, if for that. He had some of it in his shed then. There were marks of an axe and of woodpeckers on the butt. He thought that it might have been a dead tree on the shore, but was finally blown over into the pond, and after the top had become water-logged, while the butt-end was still dry and light, had drifted out and sunk wrong end up. His father, eighty years old, could not remember when it was not there. Several pretty large logs may still be seen lying on the bottom, where, owing to the undulation of the surface, they look like huge water snakes in motion.

This pond has rarely been profaned by a boat, for there is little in it to tempt a fisherman. Instead of the white lily, which requires mud, or the common sweet flag, the blue flag (*Iris versicolor*) grows thinly in the pure water, rising from the stony bottom all around the shore, where it is visited by hummingbirds in June, and the color both of its bluish blades and its flowers, and especially their reflections, are in singular harmony with the glaucous water.

White Pond and Walden are great crystals on the surface of the earth, Lakes of Light. If they were permanently congealed, and small enough to be clutched, they would, perchance, be carried off by slaves, like precious stones, to adorn the heads of emperors; but being liquid, and ample, and secured to us and our successors forever, we disregard them, and run after the diamond of Kohinoor. They are too pure to have a market value; they contain no muck. How much more beautiful than our lives, how much more transparent than our characters, are they! We never learned meanness of them. How much fairer than the pool before the farmer's door, in which his ducks swim! Hither the clean wild ducks come. Nature has no human inhabitant who appreciates her. The birds with their plum-

age and their notes are in harmony with the flowers, but what youth or maiden conspires with the wild luxuriant beauty of Nature? She flourishes most alone, far from the towns where they reside. Talk of heaven! ye disgrace earth.

Baker Farm

Sometimes I rambled to pine groves, standing like temples, or like fleets at sea, full-rigged, with wavy boughs, and rippling with light, so soft and green and shady that the Druids would have forsaken their oaks to worship in them; or to the cedar wood beyond Flint's Pond, where the trees, covered with hoary blue berries, spiring higher and higher, are fit to stand before Valhalla, and the creeping juniper covers the ground with wreaths full of fruit; or to swamps where the usnea lichen hangs in festoons from the white spruce trees, and toadstools, round tables of the swamp gods, cover the ground, and more beautiful fungi adorn the stumps, like butterflies or shells, vegetable winkles; where the swamp-pink and dogwood grow, the red alder-berry glows like eyes of imps, the waxwork grooves and crushes the hardest woods in its folds, and the wild holly berries make the beholder forget his home with their beauty, and he is dazzled and tempted by nameless other wild forbidden fruits, too fair for mortal taste. Instead of calling on some scholar, I paid many a visit to particular trees, of kinds which are rare in this neighborhood, standing far away in the middle of some pasture, or in the depths of a wood or swamp, or on a hilltop; such as the black birch, of which we have some handsome specimens two feet in diameter; its cousin, the yellow birch, with its loose golden vest, perfumed like the first; the beech, which has so neat a bole and beautifully lichen-painted, perfect in all its details, of which, excepting scattered specimens, I know but one small grove of sizable trees left in the township, supposed by some to have been planted by the pigeons that were once baited with beech nuts near by; it is worth the while to see the silver grain sparkle when you split this wood; the bass; the horn-beam; the *celtis occidentalis*, or false elm, of which we have but one well-grown; some taller mast of a pine, a shingle tree, or a more perfect hemlock than usual, standing like a pagoda in the midst of the woods; and many others I could mention. These were the shrines I visited both summer and winter.

Once it chanced that I stood in the very abutment of a rainbow's arch, which filled the lower stratum of the atmosphere, tinging the grass and leaves around, and dazzling me as if I looked through colored crystal. It was a lake of rainbow light, in which, for a short while, I lived like a dolphin. If it had lasted longer it might have tinged my employments and life. As I walked on the railroad causeway, I used to wonder at the halo of light around my shadow, and would fain fancy myself one of the elect. One who visited me declared that the shadows of some Irishmen before him had no halo about them, that it was only natives that were so distinguished. Benvenuto Cellini tells us in his memoirs, that, after a certain terrible dream or vision which he had during his confinement in the castle of St. Angelo, a resplendent light appeared over the shadow of his head at morning and evening, whether he was in Italy or France, and it was particularly conspicuous when the grass was moist with dew. This was probably the same phenomenon to which I have referred, which is especially observed in the morning, but also at other times, and even by moonlight. Though a constant one, it is not commonly noticed, and, in the case of an excitable imagination like Cellini's, it would be basis enough for superstition. Beside, he tells us that he showed it to very few. But are they not indeed distinguished who are conscious that they are regarded at all?

I set out one afternoon to go a-fishing to Fair Haven, through the woods, to eke out my scanty fare of vegetables. My way led through Pleasant Meadow, an adjunct of the Baker Farm, that retreat of which a poet has since sung, beginning—

> 'Thy entry is a pleasant field,
> Which some mossy fruit trees yield
> Partly to a ruddy brook,
> By gliding musquash undertook,
> And mercurial trout,
> Darting about.'

I thought of living there before I went to Walden. I 'hooked' the apples, leaped the brook, and scared the musquash and the trout. It was one of those afternoons which seem indefinitely long before one, in which many events may happen, a large portion of our natural life, though it was already half spent when I started. By the way there came up a shower, which compelled me to stand half an hour under a pine, piling boughs over my head, and wearing my handkerchief for a shed; and when at length I had made one cast over the pickerel-weed, standing up to my middle in water, I found myself suddenly in the shadow of a cloud, and the thunder began to rumble with such emphasis that I could do no more than listen to it. The gods must be proud, thought I, with such forked flashes to rout a poor unarmed fisherman. So I made haste for shelter to the nearest hut, which stood half a mile from any road, but so much the nearer to the pond, and had long been uninhabited:—

> 'And here a poet builded,
> In the completed years,
> For behold a trivial cabin
> That to destruction steers.'

So the Muse fables. But therein, as I found, dwelt now John Field, an Irishman, and his wife, and several children, from the broad-faced boy who assisted his father at his work, and now came running by his side from the bog to escape the rain, to the wrinkled, sibyl-like, cone-headed infant that sat upon its father's knee as in the palaces of nobles, and looked out from its home in the midst of wet and hunger inquisitively upon the stranger, with the privilege of infancy, not knowing but it was the last of a noble line, and the hope and cynosure of the world, instead of John Field's poor starveling brat. There we sat together under that part of the roof which leaked the least, while it showered and thundered without. I had sat there many times of old before the ship was built that floated this family to America. An honest, hard-working, but shiftless man plainly was John Field; and his wife—she too was brave to cook so many successive dinners in the recesses of that lofty stove; with round greasy face and bare breast, still thinking to improve her condition one day; with the never absent mop in one hand, and yet no effects of it visible anywhere. The chickens, which had also taken shelter here from the rain, stalked about the room like members of the family, too humanized methought to roast well. They stood and looked in my eye or pecked at my shoe significantly. Meanwhile my host told me his story, how hard he worked 'bogging' for a neighboring farmer, turning up a meadow with a spade or bog hoe at the rate of ten dollars an acre and the use of the land with manure for one year, and his little broad-faced son worked cheerfully at his father's side the while, not knowing how poor a bargain the latter had made. I tried to help him with my experience, telling him that he was one of my nearest neighbors, and that I, too, who came a-fishing here, and looked like a loafer, was getting my living like himself; that I lived in a tight, light, and clean house, which hardly cost more than the annual rent of such a ruin as his commonly amounts to; and how, if he chose, he might in a month or two build himself a palace of his own; that I did not use tea, nor coffee, nor butter, nor milk, nor fresh meat, and so did not have to work to get them; again, as I did not work hard, I did not have to eat hard, and it cost me but a trifle for my food; but as he began with tea, and coffee, and butter, and milk, and beef, he had to work hard to pay for them, and when he had worked hard he had to eat hard again to repair the waste of his system; and so it was as broad as it was long—indeed it was broader than it was long—for he was discontented and wasted his life into the bargain; and yet he had rated it as a gain in coming to America, that here you could get tea, and coffee, and meat every day. But the only true America is that country where you are at liberty to pursue such a mode of life as may enable you to do without these, and where the state does not endeavor to compel you to sustain the slavery and war and other superfluous expenses which directly or indirectly result from the use of such things. For I purposely talked to him as if he were a philosopher, or desired to be one. I should be glad if all the meadows on the earth were left in a wild state, if that were the consequence of men's beginning to redeem

themselves. A man will not need to study history to find out what is best for his own culture. But alas! the culture of an Irishman is an enterprise to be undertaken with a sort of moral bog hoe. I told him, that as he worked so hard at bogging, he required thick boots and stout clothing, which yet were soon soiled and worn out, but I wore light shoes and thin clothing, which cost not half so much, though he might think that I was dressed like a gentleman (which, however, was not the case), and in an hour or two, without labor, but as a recreation, I could, if I wished, catch as many fish as I should want for two days, or earn enough money to support me a week. If he and his family would live simply, they might all go a-huckleberrying in the summer for their amusement. John heaved a sigh at this, and his wife stared with arms a-kimbo, and both appeared to be wondering if they had capital enough to begin such a course with, or arithmetic enough to carry it through. It was sailing by dead reckoning to them, and they saw not clearly how to make their port so; therefore I suppose they still take life bravely, after their fashion, face to face, giving it tooth and nail, not having skill to split its massive columns with any fine entering wedge, and rout it in detail—thinking to deal with it roughly, as one should handle a thistle. But they fight at an overwhelming disadvantage—living, John Field, alas! without arithmetic, and failing so.

'Do you ever fish?' I asked. 'Oh yes, I catch a mess now and then when I am lying by; good perch I catch.' 'What's your bait?' 'I catch shiners with fish-worms, and bait the perch with them.' 'You'd better go now, John,' said his wife with glistening and hopeful face; but John demurred.

The shower was now over, and a rainbow above the eastern woods promised a fair evening; so I took my departure. When I had got without I asked for a dish, hoping to get a sight of the well bottom, to complete my survey of the premises; but there, alas! are shallows and quicksands, and rope broken withal, and bucket irrecoverable. Meanwhile the right culinary vessel was selected, water was seemingly distilled, and after consultation and long delay passed out to the thirsty one—not yet suffered to cool, not yet to settle. Such gruel sustains life here, I thought; so, shutting my eyes, and excluding the motes by a skilfully directed undercurrent, I drank to genuine hospitality the heartiest draught I could. I am not squeamish in such cases when manners are concerned.

As I was leaving the Irishman's roof after the rain, bending my steps again to the pond, my haste to catch pickerel, wading in retired meadows, in sloughs and bog-holes, in forlorn and savage places, appeared for an instant trivial to me who had been sent to school and college; but as I ran down the hill toward the reddening west, with the rainbow over my shoulder, and some faint tinkling sounds borne to my ear through the cleansed air, from I know not what quarter, my Good Genius seemed to say—Go fish and hunt far and wide day by day—farther and wider—and rest thee by many brooks and hearth-sides without misgiving. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Rise free from care before the dawn, and seek adventures. Let the noon find thee by other lakes, and the night overtake thee everywhere at home. There are no larger fields than these, no worthier games than may here be played. Grow wild according to thy nature, like these sedges and brakes, which will never become English hay. Let the thunder rumble; what if it threaten ruin to farmers' crops? that is not its errand to thee. Take shelter under the cloud, while they flee to carts and sheds. Let not to get a living be thy trade, but thy sport. Enjoy the land, but own it not. Through want of enterprise and faith men are where they are, buying and selling, and spending their lives like serfs.

O Baker Farm!

'Landscape where the richest element
Is a little sunshine innocent.' . . .

'No one runs to revel
On thy rail-fenced lea.' . . .

'Debate with no man hast thou,
With questions art never perplexed,
As tame at the first sight as now,
In thy plain russet gabardine
dressed.' . . .

'Come ye who love,
And ye who hate,

Children of the Holy Dove,
And Guy Faux of the state,
And hang conspiracies
From the tough rafters of the trees!'

Men come tamely home at night only from the next field or street, where their household echoes haunt, and their life pines because it breathes its own breath over again; their shadows morning and evening reach farther than their daily steps. We should come home from far, from adventures, and perils, and discoveries every day, with new experience and character.

Before I had reached the pond some fresh impulse had brought out John Field, with altered mind, letting go 'bogging' ere this sunset. But he, poor man, disturbed only a couple of fins while I was catching a fair string, and he said it was his luck; but when we changed seats in the boat luck changed seats too. Poor John Field!—I trust he does not read this, unless he will improve by it—thinking to live by some derivative old country mode in this primitive new country—to catch perch with shiners. It is good bait sometimes, I allow. With his horizon all his own, yet he a poor man, born to be poor, with his inherited Irish poverty or poor life, his Adam's grandmother and boggy ways, not to rise in this world, he nor his posterity, till their wading, webbed, bog-trotting feet get *talaria* to their heels.

Conclusion

To the sick the doctors wisely recommend a change of air and scenery. Thank Heaven, here is not all the world. The buckeye does not grow in New England, and the mocking-bird is rarely heard here. The wild goose is more of a cosmopolite than we; he breaks his fast in Canada, takes a luncheon in the Ohio, and plumes himself for the night in a southern bayou. Even the bison, to some extent, keeps pace with the seasons, cropping the pastures of the Colorado only till a greener and sweeter grass awaits him by the Yellowstone. Yet we think that if rail-fences are pulled down, and stone-walls piled up on our farms, bounds are henceforth set to our lives and our fates decided. If you are chosen town-clerk, forsooth, you cannot go to Tierra del Fuego this summer: but you may go to the land of infernal fire nevertheless. The universe is wider than our views of it.

Yet we should oftener look over the tafferel of our craft, like curious passengers, and not make the voyage like stupid sailors picking oakum. The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent. Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing, and the doctors prescribe for diseases of the skin merely. One hastens to Southern Africa to chase the giraffe; but surely that is not the game he would be after. How long, pray, would a man hunt giraffes if he could? Snipes and woodcocks also may afford rare sport; but I trust it would be nobler game to shoot one's self.

'Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find
A thousand regions in your mind
Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be
Expert in home-cosmography.'

What does Africa—what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? Black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a North-West passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes—with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no *self*-respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South Sea Exploring Expedition,

with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact that there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.

Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.
Plus habet hic vitae, plus habet ille viae.

Let them wander and scrutinize the
outlandish Australians.
I have more of God, they more of the road.

It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar. Yet do this even till you can do better, and you may perhaps find some 'Symmes' Hole' by which to get at the inside at last. England and France, Spain and Portugal, Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all front on this private sea; but no bark from them has ventured out of sight of land, though it is without doubt the direct way to India. If you would learn to speak all tongues and conform to the customs of all nations, if you would travel farther than all travellers, be naturalized in all climes, and cause the Sphinx to dash her head against a stone, even obey the precept of the old philosopher, and Explore thyself. Herein are demanded the eye and the nerve. Only the defeated and deserters go to the wars, cowards that run away and enlist. Start now on that farthest western way, which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific, nor conduct toward a worn-out China or Japan, but leads on direct, a tangent to this sphere, summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon down, and at last earth down too.

It is said that Mirabeau took to highway robbery 'to ascertain what degree of resolution was necessary in order to place one's self in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society.' He declared that 'a soldier who fights in the ranks does not require half so much courage as a foot-pad'—'that honor and religion have never stood in the way of a well-considered and a firm resolve.' This was manly, as the world goes; and yet it was idle, if not desperate. A saner man would have found himself often enough 'in formal opposition' to what are deemed 'the most sacred laws of society,' through obedience to yet more sacred laws, and so have tested his resolution without going out of his way. It is not for a man to put himself in such an attitude to society, but to maintain himself in whatever attitude he find himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government, if he should chance to meet with such.

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world—how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work

need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

It is a ridiculous demand which England and America make, that you shall speak so that they can understand you. Neither men nor toad-stools grow so. As if that were important, and there were not enough to understand you without them. As if Nature could support but one order of understandings, could not sustain birds as well as quadrupeds, flying as well as creeping things, and *hush* and *who*, which Bright can understand, were the best English. As if there were safety in stupidity alone. I fear chiefly lest my expression may not be *extra-vagant* enough—may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limits of my daily experience, so as to be adequate to the truth of which I have been convinced. *Extra vagance!* it depends on how you are yarded. The migrating buffalo, which seeks new pastures in another latitude, is not extravagant like the cow which kicks over the pail, leaps the cow-yard fence, and runs after her calf, in milking time. I desire to speak somewhere *without* bounds; like a man in a waking moment, to men in their waking moments; for I am convinced that I cannot exaggerate enough even to lay the foundation of a true expression. Who that has heard a strain of music feared then lest he should speak extravagantly any more forever? In view of the future or possible, we should live quite laxly and undefined in front, our outlines dim and misty on that side; as our shadows reveal an insensible perspiration toward the sun. The volatile truth of our words should continually betray the inadequacy of the residual statement. Their truth is instantly *translated*; its literal monument alone remains. The words which express our faith and piety are not definite; yet they are significant and fragrant like frankincense to superior natures.

Why level downward to our dullest perception always, and praise that as common sense? The commonest sense is the sense of men asleep, which they express by snoring. Sometimes we are inclined to class those who are once-and-a-half-witted with the half-witted, because we appreciate only a third part of their wit. Some would find fault with the morning red, if they ever got up early enough. 'They pretend,' as I hear, 'that the verses of Kabir have four different senses—illusion, spirit, intellect, and the exoteric doctrine of the Vedas'; but in this part of the world it is considered a ground for complaint if a man's writings admit of more than one interpretation. While England endeavors to cure the potato-rot, will not any endeavor to cure the brain-rot, which prevails so much more widely and fatally?

I do not suppose that I have attained to obscurity, but I should be proud if no more fatal fault were found with my pages on this score than was found with the Walden ice. Southern customers objected to its blue color, which is the evidence of its purity, as if it were muddy, and preferred the Cambridge ice, which is white, but tastes of weeds. The purity men love is like the mists which envelop the earth, and not like the azure ether beyond.

Some are dinning in our ears that we Americans, and moderns generally, are intellectual dwarfs compared with the ancients, or even the Elizabethan men. But what is that to the purpose? A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pigmies, and not be the biggest pigmy that he can? Let every one mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made.

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to

nimself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other than wonderful?

No face which we can give to a matter will stead us so well at last as the truth. This alone wears well. For the most part, we are not where we are, but in a false position. Through an infirmity of our natures, we suppose a case and put ourselves into it, and hence are in two cases at the same time, and it is doubly difficult to get out. In sane moments we regard only the facts, the case that is. Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe. Tom Hyde, the tinker, standing on the gallows, was asked if he had anything to say. 'Tell the tailors,' said he, 'to remember to make a knot in their thread before they take the first stitch.' His companion's prayer is forgotten.

However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poor-house. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the alms-house as brightly as from the rich man's abode; the snow melts before its door as early in the spring. I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts, as in a palace. The town's poor seem to me often to live the most independent lives of any. Maybe they are simply great enough to receive without misgiving. Most think that they are above being supported by the town; but it oftener happens that they are not above supporting themselves by dishonest means, which should be more disreputable. Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage. Do not trouble yourself much to get new things, whether clothes or friends. Turn the old; return to them. Things do not change; we change. Sell your clothes and keep your thoughts. God will see that you do not want society. If I were confined to a corner of a garret all my days, like a spider, the world would be just as large to me while I had my thoughts about me. The philosopher said: 'From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder; from the man the most abject and vulgar one cannot take away his thought.' Do not seek so anxiously to be developed, to subject yourself to many influences to be played on; it is all dissipation. Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights. The shadows of poverty and meanness gather around us, 'and lo! creation widens to our view.' We are often reminded that if there were bestowed on us the wealth of Crœsus, our aims must still be the same, and our means essentially the

same. Moreover, if you are restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspapers, for instance, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences; you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. It is life near the bone where it is sweetest. You are defended from being a trifler. No man loses ever on a lower level by magnanimity on a higher. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul.

I live in the angle of a leaden wall, into whose composition was poured a little alloy of bell metal. Often, in the repose of my mid-day, there reaches my ears a confused *tintinnabulum* from without. It is the noise of my contemporaries. My neighbors tell me of their adventures with famous gentlemen and ladies, what notabilities they met at the dinner-table; but I am no more interested in such things than in the contents of the *Daily Times*. The interest and the conversation are about costume and manners chiefly; but a goose is a goose still, dress it as you will. They tell me of California and Texas, of England and the Indies, of the Hon. Mr. —— of Georgia or of Massachusetts, all transient and fleeting phenomena, till I am ready to leap from their court-yard like the Mameluke bey. I delight to come to my bearings—not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may—not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by. What are men celebrating? They are all on a committee of arrangements, and hourly expect a speech from somebody. God is only the president of the day, and Webster is his orator. I love to weigh, to settle, to gravitate toward that which most strongly and rightfully attracts me;—not hang by the beam of the scale and try to weigh less—not suppose a case, but take the case that is; to travel the only path I can, and that on which no power can resist me. It affords me no satisfaction to commence to spring an arch before I have got a solid foundation. Let us not play at kittlybenders. There is a solid bottom everywhere. We read that the traveller asked the boy if the swamp before him had a hard bottom. The boy replied that it had. But presently the traveller's horse sank in up to the girths, and he observed to the boy, 'I thought you said that this bog had a hard bottom.' 'So it has,' answered the latter, 'but you have not got half way to it yet.' So it is with the bogs and quicksands of society; but he is an old boy that knows it. Only what is thought, said, or done at a certain rare coincidence is good. I would not be one of those who will foolishly drive a nail into mere lath and plastering; such a deed would keep me awake nights. Give me a hammer, and let me feel for the furrowing. Do not depend on the putty. Drive a nail home and clinch it so faithfully that you can wake up in the night and think of your work with satisfaction—a work at which you would not be ashamed to invoke the Muse. So will help you God, and so only. Every nail driven should be as another rivet in the machine of the universe, you carrying on the work.

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board. The hospitality was as cold as the ices. I thought that there was no need of ice to freeze them. They talked to me of the age of the wine and the fame of the vintage; but I thought of an older, a newer, and purer wine, of a more glorious vintage, which they had not got, and could not buy. The style, the house and grounds and 'entertainment' pass for nothing with me. I called on the king, but he made me wait in his hall, and conducted like a man incapacitated for hospitality. There was a man in my neighborhood who lived in a hollow tree. His manners were truly regal. I should have done better had I called on him.

How long shall we sit in our porticoes practising idle and musty virtues, which any work would make impertinent? As if one were to begin the day with long-suffering, and hire a man to hoe his potatoes; and in the afternoon go forth to practise Christian meekness and charity with goodness aforethought! Consider the China pride and stagnant self-complacency of mankind. This generation reclines a little to congratulate it-

self on being the last of an illustrious line; and in Boston and London and Paris and Rome, thinking of its long descent, it speaks of its progress in art and science and literature with satisfaction. There are the Records of the Philosophical Societies, and the public eulogies of *Great Men*! It is the good Adam contemplating his own virtue. 'Yes, we have done great deeds, and sung divine songs, which shall never die'—that is, as long as *we* can remember them. The learned societies and great men of Assyria —where are they? What youthful philosophers and experimentalists we are! There is not one of my readers who has yet lived a whole human life. These may be but the spring months in the life of the race. If we have had the seven-years' itch, we have not seen the seventeen-year locust yet in Concord. We are acquainted with a mere pellicle of the globe on which we live. Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not where we are. Beside, we are sound asleep nearly half our time. Yet we esteem ourselves wise, and have an established order on the surface. Truly, we are deep thinkers, we are ambitious spirits! As I stand over the insect crawling amid the pine needles on the forest floor, and endeavoring to conceal itself from my sight, and ask myself why it will cherish those humble thoughts, and hide its head from me who might, perhaps, be its benefactor, and impart to its race some cheering information, I am reminded of the greater Benefactor and Intelligence that stands over me, the human insect.

There is an incessant influx of novelty into the world, and yet we tolerate incredible dulness. I need only suggest what kind of sermons are still listened to in the most enlightened countries. There are such words as joy and sorrow, but they are only the burden of a psalm, sung with a nasal twang, while we believe in the ordinary and mean. We think that we can change our clothes only. It is said that the British Empire is very large and respectable, and that the United States are a first-rate power. We do not believe that a tide rises and falls behind every man which can float the British Empire like a chip, if he should ever harbor it in his mind. Who knows what sort of seventeen-year locust will next come out of the ground? The government of the world I live in was not framed, like that of Britain, in after-dinner conversations over the wine.

The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before science began to record its freshets. Every one has heard the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years, first in Connecticut, and afterward in Massachusetts—from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it; which was heard gnawing out for several weeks, hatched perchance by the heat of an urn. Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this? Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society, deposited at first in the alburnum of the green and living tree, which has been gradually converted into the semblance of its well-seasoned tomb—heard perchance gnawing out now for years by the astonished family of man, as they sat round the festive board—may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society's most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!

I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

1854

INSPIRATION

WHATE'ER we leave to God, God does,
And blesses us;

The work we choose should be our own,
  God leaves alone.

If with light head erect I sing,
  Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything,
  The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope
  Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
  More anxious to keep back than forward it;

Making my soul accomplice there
  Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse forever wear—
  Time cannot bend the line which God hath writ.

Always the general show of things
  Floats in review before my mind,
And such true love and reverence brings,
  That sometimes I forget that I am blind.

But now there comes unsought, unseen,
  Some clear divine electuary,
And I, who had but sensual been,
  Grow sensible, and as God is, am wary.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
  And sight, who had but eyes before,
I moments live, who lived but years,
  And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

I hear beyond the range of sound,
  I see beyond the range of sight,
New earths and skies and seas around,
  And in my day the sun doth pale his light.

A clear and ancient harmony
  Pierces my soul through all its din,
As through its utmost melody,—
  Farther behind than they, farther within.

More swift its bolt than lightning is,
  Its voice than thunder is more loud,
It doth expand my privacies
  To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

It speaks with such authority,
  With so serene and lofty tone,
That idle Time runs gadding by,
  And leaves me with Eternity alone.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
  And only now my prime of life;
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
  'Tis peace's end and war's beginning strife.

It comes in summer's broadest noon,
  By a grey wall or some chance place,
Unseasoning Time, insulting June,
  And vexing day with its presuming face.

Such fragrance round my couch it makes,
  More rich than are Arabian drugs,
That my soul scents its life and wakes
  The body up beneath its perfumed rugs.

Such is the Muse, the heavenly maid,
  The star that guides our mortal course,
Which shows where life's true kernel's laid,
  Its wheat's fine flour, and its undying force.

She with one breath attunes the spheres,
  And also my poor human heart,
With one impulse propels the years
  Around, and gives my throbbing pulse its start.

I will not doubt for evermore,
  Nor falter from a steadfast faith,
For though the system be turned o'er,
  God takes not back the word which once He saith.

I will not doubt the love untold
  Which not my worth nor want has bought,
Which wooed me young, and wooes me old,
  And to this evening hath me brought.

My memory I'll educate
  To know the one historic truth,
Remembering to the latest date
  The only true and sole immortal youth.

Be but thy inspiration given,
  No matter through what danger sought,
I'll fathom hell or climb to heaven,
  And yet esteem that cheap which love has bought.

Fame cannot tempt the bard
Who's famous with his God,
Nor laurel him reward
Who has his Maker's nod.

1894

MY LIFE IS LIKE A STROLL UPON THE BEACH

My life is like a stroll upon the beach,
As near the ocean's edge as I can go;
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

My sole employment 'tis, and scrupulous care,
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,
Each smoother pebble, and each shell more rare,
Which Ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore;
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea;
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed o'er
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view;
Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew.

1840–1849 1849

FRIENDSHIP

'Friends, Romans, Countrymen, and Lovers.'

Let such pure hate still underprop
Our love, that we may be
Each other's conscience,
And have our sympathy
Mainly from thence.

We'll one another treat like gods,
And all the faith we have
In virtue and in truth, bestow
On either, and suspicion leave
To gods below.

Two solitary stars—
Unmeasured systems far
Between us roll;
But by our conscious light we are
Determined to one pole.

What need confound the sphere?—
Love can afford to wait;
For it no hour's too late
That witnesseth one duty's end,
Or to another doth beginning lend.

It will subserve no use,
More than the tints of flowers;
Only the independent guest
Frequents its bowers,
Inherits its bequest.

No speech, though kind, has it;
But kinder silence doles
Unto its mates;
By night consoles,
By day congratulates.

What saith the tongue to tongue?
What heareth ear of ear?
By the decrees of fate
From year to year,
Does it communicate.

Pathless the gulf of feeling yawns;
No trivial bridge of words,
Or arch of boldest span,
Can leap the moat that girds
The sincere man.

No show of bolts and bars
Can keep the foeman out,
Or 'scape his secret mine,
Who entered with the doubt
That drew the line.

No warder at the gate
Can let the friendly in;
But, like the sun, o'er all
He will the castle win,
And shine along the wall.

There's nothing in the world I know
That can escape from love,
For every depth it goes below,
And every height above.

It waits, as waits the sky,
Until the clouds go by,

Yet shines serenely on
With an eternal day,
Alike when they are gone,
And when they stay.

Implacable is Love,—
Foes may be bought or teased
From their hostile intent,
But he goes unappeased
Who is on kindness bent.

1849

THE SUMMER RAIN

My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read,
'Twixt every page my thoughts go stray at large
Down in the meadow, where is richer feed,
And will not mind to hit their proper targe.

Plutarch was good, and so was Homer too,
Our Shakespeare's life were rich to live again,
What Plutarch read, that was not good nor true,
Nor Shakespeare's books, unless his books were men.

Here while I lie beneath this walnut bough,
What care I for the Greeks or for Troy town,
If juster battles are enacted now
Between the ants upon this hummock's crown?

Bid Homer wait till I the issue learn,
If red or black the gods will favor most,
Or yonder Ajax will the phalanx turn,
Struggling to heave some rock against the host.

Tell Shakespeare to attend some leisure hour,
For now I've business with this drop of dew,
And see you not, the clouds prepare a shower,—
I'll meet him shortly when the sky is blue.

This bed of herdsgrass and wild oats was spread
Last year with nicer skill than monarchs use,
A clover tuft is pillow for my head,
And violets quite overtop my shoes.

And now the cordial clouds have shut all in,
And gently swells the wind to say all's well;
The scattered drops are falling fast and thin,
Some in the pool, some in the flower-bell.

I am well drenched upon my bed of oats;
But see that globe come rolling down its stem,
Now like a lonely planet there it floats,
And now it sinks into my garment's hem.

Drip, drip the trees for all the country round,
And richness rare distills from every bough;
The wind alone it is makes every sound,
Shaking down crystals on the leaves below.

For shame the sun will never show himself,
Who could not with his beams e'er melt me so;
My dripping locks,—they would become an elf,
Who in a beaded coat does gayly go.

1849

HAZE

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze,
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,
Last conquest of the eye;
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth,
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,
Breakers of air, billows of heat,
Fine summer spray on inland seas;
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged,
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,
From heath or stubble rising without song,—
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

1849

SMOKE IN WINTER

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,

The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,
And making slow acquaintance with the day;
Delaying now upon its heavenward course,
In wreathèd loiterings dallying with itself,
With as uncertain purpose and slow deed,
As its half-wakened master by the hearth,
Whose mind, still slumbering, and sluggish thoughts
Have not yet swept into the onward current
Of the new day;—and now it streams afar,
The while the chopper goes with step direct,
And mind intent to wield the early axe.
First in the dusky dawn he sends abroad
His early scout, his emissary, smoke,
The earliest, latest pilgrim from the roof,
To feel the frosty air, inform the day;
And while he crouches still beside the hearth,
Nor musters courage to unbar the door,
It has gone down the glen with the light wind,
And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,
Draped the tree-tops, loitered upon the hill,
And warmed the pinions of the early bird;
And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,
Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,
And greets its master's eye at his low door,
As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.

1863

CONSCIENCE

Conscience is instinct bred in the house,
Feeling and Thinking propagate the sin
By an unnatural breeding in and in.
I say, Turn it out doors,
Into the moors.
I love a life whose plot is simple,
And does not thicken with every pimple,
A soul so sound no sickly conscience binds it,
That makes the universe no worse than 't finds it.
I love an earnest soul,
Whose mighty joy and sorrow
Are not drowned in a bowl,
And brought to life to-morrow;
That lives one tragedy,
And not seventy;
A conscience worth keeping,
Laughing not weeping;
A conscience wise and steady,
And for ever ready;
Not changing with events,
Dealing in compliments;
A conscience exercised about
Large things, where one *may* doubt.
I love a soul not all of wood,
Predestinated to be good,
But true to the backbone
Unto itself alone,
And false to none;
Born to its own affairs,
Its own joys and own cares;
By whom the work which God begun
Is finished, and not undone;
Taken up where he left off,
Whether to worship or to scoff;
If not good, why then evil,
If not good god, good devil.
Goodness!—you hypocrite, come out of that,
Live your life, do your work, then take your hat.
I have no patience towards
Such conscientious cowards.
Give me simple laboring folk,
Who love their work,
Whose virtue is a song
To cheer God along.

1849

INDEPENDENCE

My life more civil is and free
Than any civil polity.

Ye princes, keep your realms
And circumscribèd power,
Not wide as are my dreams,
Nor rich as is this hour.

What can ye give which I have not?
What can ye take which I have got?
Can ye defend the dangerless?
Can ye inherit nakedness?

To all true wants Time's ear is deaf,
Penurious States lend no relief
Out of their pelf:
But a free soul—thank God—
Can help itself.

Be sure your fate
Doth keep apart its state,—

Not linked with any band,
Even the noblest in the land,—

In tented fields with cloth of gold
No place doth hold,
But is more chivalrous than they are,
And sigheth for a nobler war;
A finer strain its trumpet rings,
A brighter gleam its armor flings.

The life that I aspire to live,
No man proposeth me;
No trade upon the street
Wears its emblazonry.

1841 1894

CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH

1813–1892

GNOSIS

THOUGHT is deeper than all speech,
Feeling deeper than all thought;
Souls to souls can never teach
What unto themselves was taught.

We are spirits clad in veils;
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen.

Heart to heart was never known;
Mind with mind did never meet;
We are columns left alone,
Of a temple once complete.

Like the stars that gem the sky,
Far apart, though seeming near,
In our light we scattered lie;
All is thus but starlight here.

What is social company
But a babbling summer stream?
What our wise philosophy
But the glancing of a dream?

Only when the sun of love
Melts the scattered stars of thought;
Only when we live above
What the dim-eyed world hath taught;

Only when our souls are fed
By the Fount which gave them birth,
And by inspiration led,
Which they never drew from earth,

We like parted drops of rain
Swelling till they meet and run,
Shall be all absorbed again,
Melting, flowing into one.

1840 1844

THE PINES AND THE SEA

BEYOND the low marsh-meadows and the beach,
Seen through the hoary trunks of windy pines,
The long blue level of the ocean shines.
The distant surf, with hoarse, complaining speech,
Out from its sandy barrier seems to reach;
And while the sun behind the woods declines,
The moaning sea with sighing boughs combines,
And waves and pines make answer, each to each.
O melancholy soul, whom far and near,
In life, faith, hope, the same sad undertone
Pursues from thought to thought! thou needs must hear
An old refrain, too much, too long thine own:
'Tis thy mortality infects thine ear;
The mournful strain was in thyself alone.

1887

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

1818–1901

FROM THE EARTH SPIRIT

I HAVE WOVEN SHROUDS OF AIR

I HAVE woven shrouds of air
In a loom of hurrying light,
For the trees which blossoms bear,
And gilded them with sheets of bright;
I fall upon the grass like love's first kiss,
I make the golden flies and their fine bliss.
I paint the hedge-rows in the lane,
And clover white and red the pathways bear,
I laugh aloud in sudden gusts of rain,
To see the ocean lash himself in air;
I throw smooth shells and weeds along the beach,
And pour the curling waves far o'er the glassy reach;
Swing birds' nests in the elms, and shake cool moss
Along the agèd beams and hide their loss.
The very broad rough stones I gladden too;
Some willing seeds I drop along their sides,
Nourish the generous plant with freshening dew,
Till there, where all was waste, true joy abides.
The peaks of agèd mountains, with my care
Smile in the red of glowing morn elate;
I bind the caverns of the sea with hair,
Glossy, and long, and rich as king's estate;
I polish the green ice, and gleam the wall
With the white frost, and leaf the brown trees tall.

1843

FROM THE MOUNTAIN

IN THIS SWEET SOLITUDE, THE MOUNTAIN'S LIFE

IN this sweet solitude, the Mountain's life,
At morn and eve, at rise and hush of day,
I heard the wood-thrush sing in the white spruce,
The living water, the enchanted air
So mingling in the crystal clearness there,
A sweet peculiar grace from both,—this song,
Voice of the lovely mountain's favorite bird!
These steeps inviolate by human art,
Centre of awe, raised over all that man
Would fain enjoy and consecrate to one,
Lord of the desert and of all beside,
Consorting with the cloud, the echoing storm,
When like a myriad bowls the mountain wakes
In all its alleys one responsive roar;
And sheeted down the precipice, all light,
Tumble the momentary cataracts,—
The sudden laughter of the mountain-child!
Here haunts the sage of whom I sometime spake,—
Ample Fortunio. On the mountain-peak
I marked him once, at sunset, where he mused,
Forth looking on the continent of hills;
While from his feet the five long granite spurs
That bind the centre to the valley's side
(The spokes from this strange middle to the wheel)
Stretched in the fitful torrent of the gale,
Bleached on the terraces of leaden cloud
And passages of light,—Sierras long
In archipelagoes of mountain sky,
Where it went wandering all the livelong year.
He spoke not; yet methought I heard him say,
'All day and night the same; in sun or shade,
In summer flames and the jagged biting knife
That hardy winter splits upon the cliff,—
From earliest time the same. One mother
And one father brought us forth, thus gazing
On the summits of the days, nor wearied
Yet if all your generations fade:
The crystal air, the hurrying light, the night,
Always the day that never seems to end,
Always the night whose day does never set;
One harvest and one reaper, ne'er too ripe,
Sown by the self-preserver, free from mould,
And builded in these granaries of heaven,

This ever living purity of air,
In these perpetual centres of repose
Still softly rocked.'

And Here the Hermit Sat, and Told His Beads

And here the hermit sat, and told his beads,
And stroked his flowing locks, red as the fire,
Summed up his tale of moon and sun and star:
'How blest are we,' he deemed, 'who so comprise
The essence of the whole, and of ourselves,
As in a Venice flask of lucent shape,
Ornate of gilt Arabic, and inscribed
With Suras from Time's Koran, live and pray,
More than half grateful for the glittering prize,
Human existence! If I note my powers,
So poor and frail a toy, the insect's prey,
Itched by a berry, festered by a plum,
The very air infecting my thin frame
With its malarial trick, whom every day
Rushes upon and hustles to the grave,
Yet raised, by the great love that broods o'er all
Responsive, to a height beyond all thought.'

He ended, as the nightly prayer and fast
Summoned him inward. But I sat and heard
The night-hawks rip the air above my head,
Till midnight o'er the warm, dry, dewless rocks;
And saw the blazing dog-star droop his fire,
And the low comet, trailing to the south,
Bend his reverted gaze, and leave us free.

1871

from FLIGHT OF THE WILD GEESE

Rambling along the Marshes

Rambling along the marshes,
On the bank of the Assabet,
Sounding myself as to how it went,
Praying that I might not forget,
And all uncertain
Whether I was in the right,
Toiling to lift Time's curtain,
And if I burnt the strongest light;
Suddenly,
High in the air,
I heard the travelled geese
Their overture prepare.

Stirred above the patent ball,
The wild geese flew,
Nor near so wild as that doth me befall,
Or, swollen Wisdom, you.

In the front there fetched a leader,
Him behind the line spread out,
And waved about,
As it was near night,
When these air-pilots stop their flight.

Cruising off the shoal dominion
Where we sit,
Depending not on their opinion,
Nor hiving sops of wit;
Geographical in tact,
Naming not a pond or river,
Pulled with twilight down in fact,
In the reeds to quack and quiver,
There they go,
Spectators at the play below,
Southward in a row.

1875

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807–1882

HYMN TO THE NIGHT

'Ασπασίη, τρίλλιστος [1]

I HEARD the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

1 'Welcome! Thrice prayed for!' *Iliad*, viii, 488. The poem was composed, as Longfellow wrote, 'whilst sitting at my chamber window, on one of the balmiest nights of the year. I endeavored to reproduce the impression of the hour and scene.' *The Writings of Longfellow* (Boston, 1886), III, 19.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!
1839 1839

A PSALM OF LIFE [1]

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO THE PSALMIST

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.
1838 1839

1 Of the poem, Longfellow wrote: 'I kept it some time in manuscript, unwilling to show it to any one, it being a voice from my inmost heart, at a time when I was rallying from depression.' Ibid.,III,20. His depression came from the death of his first wife, in 1835.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR [2]

'SPEAK! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?'

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

2 Longfellow wrote, 1 December 1840, to his father: 'I have been hard at work,—for the most part wrapped up in my own dreams. Have written a translation of a German ballad, and prepared for the press another original ballad, which has been lying by me some time. It is called "The Skeleton in Armor", and is connected with the old Round Tower at Newport. This skeleton in armor really exists. It was dug up near Fall River, where I saw it some two years ago. I suppose it to be the remains of one of the old Northern sea-rovers, who came to this country in the tenth century. Of course I make the tradition myself; and I think I have succeeded in giving the whole a Northern air.' Ibid.,III,52.

'I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee!
Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

'Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

'Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

'But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

'Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o'erflowing.

'Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

'I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frighted.

'Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

'While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

'She was a Prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight,
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

'Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armed hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

'Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
Laugh as he hailed us.

'And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
"Death!" was the helmsman's
hail,
"Death without quarter!"
Mid-ships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
Through the black water!

'As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
With his prey laden,—
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
Bore I the maiden.

'Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

'There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another!

'Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
Oh, death was grateful!

'Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *skoal!*'
Thus the tale ended.

1840 1841

FROM THE SPANISH STUDENT

SERENADE

STARS of the summer night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Wind of the summer night!
Where yonder woodbine creeps,
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!
Tell her, her lover keeps
Watch! while in slumbers light
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

1840 1843

MEZZO CAMMIN

HALF of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me and have not
fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth, to build
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret
Of restless passions that would not be
stilled,
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
Kept me from what I may accomplish
yet;
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past
Lying beneath me with its sounds and
sights,—
A city in the twilight dim and vast,
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and
gleaming lights,—
And hear above me on the autumnal blast
The cataract of Death far thundering
from the heights.

1842 1846

TEGNÉR'S DRAPA [1]

I HEARD a voice, that cried,
'Balder the Beautiful
Is dead, is dead!'
And through the misty air
Passed like the mournful cry
Of sunward sailing cranes.

I saw the pallid corpse
Of the dead sun
Borne through the Northern sky.
Blasts from Niffelheim
Lifted the sheeted mists
Around him as he passed.

And the voice forever cried,
'Balder the Beautiful
Is dead, is dead!'
And died away
Through the dreary night,
In accents of despair.

Balder the Beautiful,
God of the summer sun,
Fairest of all the Gods!
Light from his forehead beamed,
Runes were upon his tongue,
As on the warrior's sword.

All things in earth and air
Bound were by magic spell
Never to do him harm;
Even the plants and stones;
All save the mistletoe,
The sacred mistletoe!

Hœder, the blind old God,
Whose feet are shod with silence,
Pierced through that gentle breast
With his sharp spear, by fraud,
Made of the mistletoe,
The accursed mistletoe!

They laid him in his ship,
With horse and harness,
As on a funeral pyre.
Odin placed
A ring upon his finger,
And whispered in his ear.

They launched the burning ship!
It floated far away
Over the misty sea,
Till like the sun it seemed,
Sinking beneath the waves.
Balder returned no more!

So perish the old Gods!
But out of the sea of Time
Rises a new land of song,
Fairer than the old.
Over its meadows green
Walk the young bards and sing.

Build it again,
O ye bards,
Fairer than before!
Ye fathers of the new race,
Feed upon morning dew,
Sing the new Song of Love!

The law of force is dead!
The law of love prevails!
Thor, the thunderer,
Shall rule the earth no more,
No more, with threats,
Challenge the meek Christ.

Sing no more,
O ye bards of the North,
Of Vikings and of Jarls!
Of the days of Eld
Preserve the freedom only,
Not the deeds of blood!

1847 1850

1 Longfellow wrote, 14 October 1847, in his journal: 'Went to town, after finishing a poem on Tegnér's death, in the spirit of the old Norse poetry.' Ibid.,III, 282. Tegnér (1782–1846) was, in Longfellow's words, 'first among the poets of Sweden.' Longfellow translated several of his poems, among them 'The Children of the Lord's Supper' and 'Frithjof's Saga.' The 'drapa' is a dirge.

THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS [2]

A MIST was driving down the British Channel,
The day was just begun,
And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,
Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,

2 The poem was written in October 1852 to commemorate the death, the month before, of the Duke of Wellington, one of whose honorary titles was Warden of the Cinque Ports.

And the white sails of ships;
And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon
Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe, and Dover
Were all alert that day,
To see the French war-steamers speeding over,
When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
Their cannon, through the night,
Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,
The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their stations
On every citadel;
Each answering each, with morning salutations,
That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,
Replied the distant forts,
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden
And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
No drum-beat from the wall,
No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure,
Awaken with its call!

No more, surveying with an eye impartial
The long line of the coast,
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field Marshal
Be seen upon his post!

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
In sombre harness mailed,
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
The rampart wall had scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,
The dark and silent room,
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,
The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,
But smote the Warden hoar;
Ah! what a blow! that made all England tremble
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
The sun rose bright o'erhead;
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
That a great man was dead.

1852 1858

FROM THE SONG OF HIAWATHA [1]

10

HIAWATHA'S WOOING

'As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman,
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows,
Useless each without the other!'
Thus the youthful Hiawatha
Said within himself and pondered,
Much perplexed by various feelings,
Listless, longing, hoping, fearing,
Dreaming still of Minnehaha,
Of the lovely Laughing Water,
In the land of the Dacotahs.

1 'This Indian Edda—if I may so call it—is founded on a tradition, prevalent among the North American Indians, of a personage of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. He was known among different tribes by the several names of Michabou, Chiabo, Manabozo, Tarenyawagon, and Hiawatha. Mr. Schoolcraft gives an account of him in his *Algic Researches*, vol.I, p.134; and in his *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, Part III, p.314, may be found the Iroquois form of the tradition, derived from the verbal narrations of an Onondaga chief.

'Into this old tradition I have woven other curious Indian legends, drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft, to whom the literary world is greatly indebted for his indefatigable zeal in rescuing from oblivion so much of the legendary lore of the Indians.

'The scene of the poem is among the Ojibways on the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the region between the Pictured Rocks and the Grand Sable.' Author's note, ibid.,IV,351–52.

Longfellow had written in his journal for 22 June 1854: 'I have at length hit upon a plan for a poem on the American Indians, which seems to me the right one and the only. It is to weave together their beautiful traditions into a whole. I have hit upon a measure, too, which I think the right and only one for such a theme.' Ibid.,IV,107. The measure was that of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, which Longfellow had been reading a few days previous, and found 'charming.'

'Wed a maiden of your people,'
Warning said the old Nokomis;
'Go not eastward, go not westward,
For a stranger, whom we know not!
Like a fire upon the hearth-stone
Is a neighbor's homely daughter,
Like the starlight or the moonlight
Is the handsomest of strangers!'
Thus dissuading spake Nokomis,
And my Hiawatha answered
Only this: 'Dear old Nokomis,
Very pleasant is the firelight,
But I like the starlight better,
Better do I like the moonlight!'
Gravely then said old Nokomis:
'Bring not here an idle maiden,
Bring not here a useless woman,
Hands unskilful, feet unwilling;
Bring a wife with nimble fingers,
Heart and hand that move together,
Feet that run on willing errands!'
Smiling answered Hiawatha:
'In the land of the Dacotahs
Lives the Arrow-maker's daughter,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsomest of all the women.
I will bring her to your wigwam,
She shall run upon your errands,
Be your starlight, moonlight, firelight,
Be the sunlight of my people!'
Still dissuading said Nokomis:
'Bring not to my lodge a stranger
From the land of the Dacotahs!
Very fierce are the Dacotahs,
Often is there war between us,
There are feuds yet unforgotten,
Wounds that ache and still may open!'
Laughing answered Hiawatha:
'For that reason, if no other,
Would I wed the fair Dacotah,
That our tribes might be united,
That old feuds might be forgotten,
And old wounds be healed forever!'
Thus departed Hiawatha
To the land of the Dacotahs,
To the land of handsome women;
Striding over moor and meadow,
Through interminable forests,
Through uninterrupted silence.
With his moccasins of magic,
At each stride a mile he measured;
Yet the way seemed long before him,
And his heart outran his footsteps;
And he journeyed without resting,
Till he heard the cataract's laughter,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to him through the silence.
'Pleasant is the sound!' he murmured,
'Pleasant is the voice that calls me!'
On the outskirts of the forests,
'Twixt the shadow and the sunshine,
Herds of fallow deer were feeding,
But they saw not Hiawatha;
To his bow he whispered, 'Fail not!'
To his arrow whispered, 'Swerve not!'
Sent it singing on its errand,
To the red heart of the roebuck;
Threw the deer across his shoulder,
And sped forward without pausing.
At the doorway of his wigwam
Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Making arrow-heads of jasper,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony.
At his side, in all her beauty,
Sat the lovely Minnehaha,
Sat his daughter, Laughing Water,
Plaiting mats of flags and rushes;
Of the past the old man's thoughts were,
And the maiden's of the future.
He was thinking, as he sat there,
Of the days when with such arrows
He had struck the deer and bison,
On the Muskoday, the meadow;
Shot the wild goose, flying southward,
On the wing, the clamorous Wawa;
Thinking of the great war-parties,
How they came to buy his arrows,
Could not fight without his arrows.
Ah, no more such noble warriors
Could be found on earth as they were!
Now the men were all like women,
Only used their tongues for weapons!
She was thinking of a hunter,
From another tribe and country,
Young and tall and very handsome,
Who one morning, in the Spring-time,
Came to buy her father's arrows,
Sat and rested in the wigwam,
Lingered long about the doorway,
Looking back as he departed.
She had heard her father praise him,
Praise his courage and his wisdom;
Would he come again for arrows
To the Falls of Minnehaha?
On the mat her hands lay idle,
And her eyes were very dreamy.
Through their thoughts they heard a
footstep,
Heard a rustling in the branches,

And with glowing cheek and forehead,
With the deer upon his shoulders,
Suddenly from out the woodlands
Hiawatha stood before them.
Straight the ancient Arrow-maker
Looked up gravely from his labor,
Laid aside the unfinished arrow,
Bade him enter at the doorway,
Saying, as he rose to meet him,
'Hiawatha, you are welcome!'
At the feet of Laughing Water
Hiawatha laid his burden,
Threw the red deer from his shoulders;
And the maiden looked up at him,
Looked up from her mat of rushes,
Said with gentle look and accent,
'You are welcome, Hiawatha!'
Very spacious was the wigwam,
Made of deer-skins dressed and whitened,
With the Gods of the Dacotahs
Drawn and painted on its curtains,
And so tall the doorway, hardly
Hiawatha stooped to enter,
Hardly touched his eagle-feathers
As he entered at the doorway.
Then uprose the Laughing Water,
From the ground fair Minnehaha,
Laid aside her mat unfinished,
Brought forth food and set before them,
Water brought them from the brooklet,
Gave them food in earthen vessels,
Gave them drink in bowls of bass-wood,
Listened while the guest was speaking,
Listened while her father answered,
But not once her lips she opened,
Not a single word she uttered.
Yes, as in a dream she listened
To the words of Hiawatha,
As he talked of old Nokomis,
Who had nursed him in his childhood,
As he told of his companions,
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind,
And of happiness and plenty
In the land of the Ojibways,
In the pleasant land and peaceful.
'After many years of warfare,
Many years of strife and bloodshed,
There is peace between the Ojibways
And the tribe of the Dacotahs.'
Thus continued Hiawatha,
And then added, speaking slowly,
'That this peace may last forever,
And our hands be clasped more closely,
And our hearts be more united,
Give me as my wife this maiden,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Loveliest of Dacotah women!'
And the ancient Arrow-maker
Paused a moment ere he answered,
Smoked a little while in silence,
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,
And made answer very gravely:
'Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!'
And the lovely Laughing Water
Seemed more lovely as she stood there,
Neither willing nor reluctant,
As she went to Hiawatha,
Softly took the seat beside him,
While she said, and blushed to say it,
'I will follow you, my husband!'
This was Hiawatha's wooing!
Thus it was he won the daughter
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs!
From the wigwam he departed,
Leading with him Laughing Water;
Hand in hand they went together,
Through the woodland and the meadow,
Left the old man standing lonely
At the doorway of his wigwam,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to them from the distance,
Crying to them from afar off,
'Fare thee well, O Minnehaha!'
And the ancient Arrow-maker
Turned again unto his labor,
Sat down by his sunny doorway,
Murmuring to himself, and saying:
'Thus it is our daughters leave us,
Those we love, and those who love us!
Just when they have learned to help us,
When we are old and lean upon them,
Comes a youth with flaunting feathers,
With his flute of reeds, a stranger
Wanders piping through the village,
Beckons to the fairest maiden,
And she follows where he leads her,
Leaving all things for the stranger!'
Pleasant was the journey homeward,
Through interminable forests,
Over meadow, over mountain,
Over river, hill, and hollow.
Short it seemed to Hiawatha,
Though they journeyed very slowly,
Though his pace he checked and slackened
To the steps of Laughing Water.
Over wide and rushing rivers

In his arms he bore the maiden;
Light he thought her as a feather,
As the plume upon his head-gear;
Cleared the tangled pathway for her,
Bent aside the swaying branches,
Made at night a lodge of branches,
And a bed with boughs of hemlock,
And a fire before the doorway
With the dry cones of the pine-tree.
All the travelling winds went with them,
O'er the meadows, through the forest;
All the stars of night looked at them,
Watched with sleepless eyes their slumber;
From his ambush in the oak-tree
Peeped the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Watched with eager eyes the lovers;
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,
Scampered from the path before them,
Peering, peeping from his burrow,
Sat erect upon his haunches,
Watched with curious eyes the lovers.
Pleasant was the journey homeward!
All the birds sang loud and sweetly
Songs of happiness and heart's-ease;
Sang the bluebird, the Owaissa,
'Happy are you, Hiawatha,
Having such a wife to love you!'
Sang the robin, the Opechee,
'Happy are you, Laughing Water,
Having such a noble husband!'
From the sky the sun benignant
Looked upon them through the branches,
Saying to them, 'O my children,
Love is sunshine, hate is shadow,
Life is checkered shade and sunshine,
Rule by love, O Hiawatha!'
From the sky the moon looked at them,
Filled the lodge with mystic splendors,
Whispered to them, 'O my children,
Day is restless, night is quiet,
Man imperious, woman feeble;
Half is mine, although I follow;
Rule by patience, Laughing Water!'
Thus it was they journeyed homeward;
Thus it was that Hiawatha
To the lodge of old Nokomis
Brought the moonlight, starlight, firelight,
Brought the sunshine of his people,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsomest of all the women
In the land of the Dacotahs,
In the land of handsome women.

1854–55 1855

MY LOST YOUTH [1]

Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

1 In his journal for 29 March 1855, Longfellow wrote: 'A day of pain; cowering over the fire. At night, as I lie in bed, a poem comes into my mind,—a memory of Portland,—my native town, the city by the sea.' The next day he entered: 'Wrote the poem; and am rather pleased with it, and with the bringing in of the two lines of the old Lapland song,

A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

Ibid.,V,41.

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye,
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

1855 1858

SANDALPHON

HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the City Celestial he waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
To sounds that ascend from below;—

From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
In the fervor and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
  Into garlands of purple and red;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal
  Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—
A fable, a phantom, a show,
  Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;
Yet the old mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
  But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
  All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
  His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
  The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
  To quiet its fever and pain.

1858 1858

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Between the dark and the daylight,
  When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
  That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
  The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
  And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
  Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
  And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
  Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
  To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
  A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
  They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
  O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
  They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
  Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
  In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
  Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
  Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
  And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
  In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
  Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
  And moulder in dust away!

c.1859 1863

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, 'If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal
    light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm.'

Then he said, 'Good night!' and with
    muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.
Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, 'All is well!'
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,

Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

1860 1863

FROM THE SAGA OF KING OLAF [1]

I

THE CHALLENGE OF THOR

I AM the God Thor,
I am the War God,
I am the Thunderer!
Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever!

Here amid icebergs
Rule I the nations;
This is my hammer,
Miölner the mighty;
Giants and sorcerers
Cannot withstand it!

These are the gauntlets
Wherewith I wield it,
And hurl it afar off;
This is my girdle;
Whenever I brace it,
Strength is redoubled!

The light thou beholdest
Stream through the heavens,
In flashes of crimson,
Is but my red beard
Blown by the night-wind,
Affrighting the nations!

Jove is my brother;
Mine eyes are the lightning;
The wheels of my chariot
Roll in the thunder,
The blows of my hammer
Ring in the earthquake!

Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant,
Over the whole earth
Still is it Thor's-Day!

Thou art a God too,
O Galilean!
And thus single-handed
Unto the combat,
Gauntlet or Gospel,
Here I defy thee!

1849 1863

2

KING OLAF'S RETURN

AND King Olaf heard the cry,
Saw the red light in the sky,
Laid his hand upon his sword,
As he leaned upon the railing,
And his ships went sailing, sailing
Northward into Drontheim fiord.

There he stood as one who dreamed;
And the red light glanced and gleamed
On the armor that he wore;
And he shouted, as the rifted
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,
'I accept thy challenge, Thor!'

To avenge his father slain,
And reconquer realm and reign,
Came the youthful Olaf home,
Through the midnight sailing, sailing,

1 'The Saga of King Olaf' was, like 'Paul Revere's Ride,' one of the stories from *The Tales of a Wayside Inn*. It was based on Longfellow's study of the *Heimskringla*, a history of the kings of Norway up to 1177. The first section of Longfellow's saga was originally written as a part of his *Christus*.

Listening to the wild wind's wailing,
And the dashing of the foam.

To his thoughts the sacred name
Of his mother Astrid came,
And the tale she oft had told
Of her flight by secret passes
Through the mountains and morasses,
To the home of Hakon old.

Then strange memories crowded back
Of Queen Gunhild's wrath and wrack,
And a hurried flight by sea;
Of grim Vikings, and the rapture
Of the sea-fight, and the capture,
And the life of slavery.

How a stranger watched his face
In the Esthonian market-place,
Scanned his features one by one,
Saying, 'We should know each other;
I am Sigurd, Astrid's brother,
Thou art Olaf, Astrid's son!'

Then as Queen Allogia's page,
Old in honors, young in age,
Chief of all her men-at-arms;
Till vague whispers, and mysterious,
Reached King Valdemar, the imperious,
Filling him with strange alarms.

Then his cruisings o'er the seas,
Westward to the Hebrides
And to Scilly's rocky shore;
And the hermit's cavern dismal,
Christ's great name and rites baptismal
In the ocean's rush and roar.

All these thoughts of love and strife
Glimmered through his lurid life,
As the stars' intenser light
Through the red flames o'er him trailing,
As his ships went sailing, sailing
Northward in the summer night.

Trained for either camp or court,
Skilful in each manly sport,
Young and beautiful and tall;
Art of warfare, craft of chases,
Swimming, skating, snow-shoe races,
Excellent alike in all.

When at sea, with all his rowers,
He along the bending oars
Outside of his ship could run.

He the Smalsor Horn ascended,
And his shining shield suspended
On its summit, like a sun.

On the ship-rails he could stand,
Wield his sword with either hand,
And at once two javelins throw;
At all feasts where ale was strongest
Sat the merry monarch longest,
First to come and last to go.

Norway never yet had seen
One so beautiful of mien,
One so royal in attire,
When in arms completely furnished,
Harness gold-inlaid and burnished,
Mantle like a flame of fire.

Thus came Olaf to his own,
When upon the night-wind blown
Passed that cry along the shore;
And he answered, while the rifted
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,
'I accept thy challenge, Thor!'

19

King Olaf's War-Horns

'Strike the sails!' King Olaf said;
'Never shall men of mine take flight;
Never away from battle I fled,
Never away from my foes!
Let God dispose
Of my life in the fight!'

'Sound the horns!' said Olaf the King;
And suddenly through the drifting brume
The blare of the horns began to ring,
Like the terrible trumpet shock
Of Regnarock,
On the Day of Doom!

Louder and louder the war-horns sang
Over the level floor of the flood;
All the sails came down with a clang,
And there in the midst overhead
The sun hung red
As a drop of blood.

Drifting down on the Danish fleet
Three together the ships were lashed,
So that neither should turn and retreat;
In the midst, but in front of the rest,
The burnished crest
Of the Serpent flashed.

King Olaf stood on the quarter-deck,
With bow of ash and arrows of oak,
His gilded shield was without a fleck,
His helmet inlaid with gold,
And in many a fold
Hung his crimson cloak.

On the forecastle Ulf the Red
Watched the lashing of the ships;
'If the Serpent lie so far ahead,
We shall have hard work of it here,'
Said he with a sneer
On his bearded lips.

King Olaf laid an arrow on string,
'Have I a coward on board?' said he.
'Shoot it another way, O King!'
Sullenly answered Ulf,
The old sea-wolf;
'You have need of me!'

In front came Svend, the King of the Danes,
Sweeping down with his fifty rowers;
To the right, the Swedish king with his thanes;
And on board of the Iron Beard
Earl Eric steered
To the left with his oars.

'These soft Danes and Swedes,' said the King,
'At home with their wives had better stay,
Than come within reach of my Serpent's sting:
But where Eric the Norseman leads
Heroic deeds
Will be done to-day!'

Then as together the vessels crashed,
Eric severed the cables of hide,
With which King Olaf's ships were lashed,
And left them to drive and drift
With the currents swift
Of the outward tide.

Louder the war-horns growl and snarl,
Sharper the dragons bite and sting!
Eric the son of Hakon Jarl
A death-drink salt as the sea
Pledges to thee,
Olaf the King!

20

Einar Tamberskelver

It was Einar Tamberskelver
Stood beside the mast;
From his yew-bow, tipped with silver,
Flew the arrows fast;
Aimed at Eric unavailing,
As he sat concealed,
Half behind the quarter-railing,
Half behind his shield.

First an arrow struck the tiller,
Just above his head;
'Sing, O Eyvind Skaldaspiller,'
Then Earl Eric said.
'Sing the song of Hakon dying,
Sing his funeral wail!'
And another arrow flying
Grazed his coat of mail.

Turning to a Lapland yeoman,
As the arrow passed,
Said Earl Eric, 'Shoot that bowman
Standing by the mast.'
Sooner than the word was spoken
Flew the yeoman's shaft;
Einar's bow in twain was broken,
Einar only laughed.

'What was that?' said Olaf, standing
On the quarter-deck.
'Something heard I like the stranding
Of a shattered wreck.'
Einar then, the arrow taking
From the loosened string,
Answered, 'That was Norway breaking
From thy hand, O King!'

'Thou art but a poor diviner,'
Straightway Olaf said;
'Take my bow, and swifter, Einar,
Let thy shafts be sped.'
Of his bows the fairest choosing,
Reached he from above;
Einar saw the blood-drops oozing
Through his iron glove.

But the bow was thin and narrow;
At the first assay,
O'er its head he drew the arrow,
Flung the bow away;
Said, with hot and angry temper
Flushing in his cheek,

'Olaf! for so great a Kämper
Are thy bows too weak!'

Then, with smile of joy defiant
On his beardless lip,
Scaled he, light and self-reliant,
Eric's dragon-ship.
Loose his golden locks were flowing,
Bright his armor gleamed;
Like Saint Michael overthrowing
Lucifer he seemed.

21

KING OLAF'S DEATH-DRINK

ALL day has the battle raged,
All day have the ships engaged,
But not yet is assuaged
The vengeance of Eric the Earl.

The decks with blood are red,
The arrows of death are sped,
The ships are filled with the dead,
And the spears the champions hurl.

They drift as wrecks on the tide,
The grappling-irons are plied,
The boarders climb up the side,
The shouts are feeble and few.

Ah! never shall Norway again
See her sailors come back o'er the main;
They all lie wounded or slain,
Or asleep in the billows blue!

On the deck stands Olaf the King,
Around him whistle and sing
The spears that the foemen fling,
And the stones they hurl with their hands.

In the midst of the stones and the spears,
Kolbiorn, the marshal, appears,
His shield in the air he uprears,
By the side of King Olaf he stands.

Over the slippery wreck
Of the Long Serpent's deck
Sweeps Eric with hardly a check,
His lips with anger are pale;

He hews with his axe at the mast,
Till it falls, with the sails overcast,
Like a snow-covered pine in the vast
Dim forests of Orkadale.

Seeking King Olaf then,
He rushes aft with his men,
As a hunter into the den
Of the bear, when he stands at bay.

'Remember Jarl Hakon!' he cries;
When lo! on his wondering eyes,
Two kingly figures arise,
Two Olafs in warlike array!

Then Kolbiorn speaks in the ear
Of King Olaf a word of cheer,
In a whisper that none may hear,
With a smile on his tremulous lip;

Two shields raised high in the air,
Two flashes of golden hair,
Two scarlet meteors' glare,
And both have leaped from the ship.

Earl Eric's men in the boats
Seize Kolbiorn's shield as it floats,
And cry, from their hairy throats,
'See! it is Olaf the King!'

While far on the opposite side
Floats another shield on the tide,
Like a jewel set in the wide
Sea-current's eddying ring.

There is told a wonderful tale,
How the King stripped off his mail,
Like leaves of the brown sea-kale,
As he swam beneath the main;

But the young grew old and gray,
And never, by night or by day,
In his kingdom of Norroway
Was King Olaf seen again!

1859–60 1863

HAWTHORNE

MAY 23, 1864 [1]

How beautiful it was, that one bright day
In the long week of rain!
Though all its splendor could not chase away
The omnipresent pain.

The lovely town was white with apple-blooms,
And the great elms o'erhead

1 The date is that of Hawthorne's burial in Sleepy Hollow cemetery at Concord.

Dark shadows wove on their aerial looms
Shot through with golden thread.

Across the meadows, by the gray old manse,
The historic river flowed:
I was as one who wanders in a trance,
Unconscious of his road.

The faces of familiar friends seemed strange;
Their voices I could hear,
And yet the words they uttered seemed to change
Their meaning to my ear.

For the one face I looked for was not there,
The one low voice was mute;
Only an unseen presence filled the air,
And baffled my pursuit.

Now I look back, and meadow, manse, and stream
Dimly my thought defines;
I only see—a dream within a dream—
The hill-top hearsed with pines.

I only hear above his place of rest
Their tender undertone,
The infinite longings of a troubled breast,
The voice so like his own.

There in seclusion and remote from men
The wizard hand lies cold,
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,
And left the tale half told.

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain!

1864 1867

DIVINA COMMEDIA [1]

1

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

2

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled caves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

3

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins

[1] The sonnets were written to precede and follow each division of Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

With the pathetic words, 'Although your sins
As scarlet be,' and ends with 'as the snow.'

4

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoë—the remembered dream
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

5

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.
And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love,
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

6

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!
The voices of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy fame is blown abroad from all the heights,
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
In their own language hear thy wondrous word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.

1865–67

FROM THE DIVINE COMEDY

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA [1]

AND I began: 'O Poet, willingly
Speak would I to those two, who go together,
And seem upon the wind to be so light.'
And he to me: 'Thou'lt mark, when they shall be
Nearer to us; and then do thou implore them
By love which leadeth them, and they will come.'
Soon as the wind in our direction sways them,
My voice uplift I: 'Oh ye weary souls!
Come speak to us, if no one interdicts it.'
As turtle-doves, called onward by desire,
With open and steady wings to the sweet nest
Fly through the air by their volition borne,
So came they from the band where Dido is,
Approaching us athwart the air malign,
So strong was the affectionate appeal.
'O living creature gracious and benignant,
Who visiting goest through the purple air
Us, who have stained the world incarnadine,
If were the King of the Universe our friend,

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from Canto 5 of the 'Inferno.' The translation of *The Divine Comedy* was Longfellow's most ambitious work, begun in 1843 and completed for the six-hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth.

We would pray unto him to give thee peace,
Since thou hast pity on our woe perverse.
Of what it pleases thee to hear and speak,
That will we hear, and we will speak to you,
While silent is the wind, as it is now.
Sitteth the city, wherein I was born,
Upon the sea-shore where the Po descends
To rest in peace with all his retinue.
Love, that on gentle heart doth swiftly seize,
Seized this man for the person beautiful
That was ta'en from me, and still the mode offends me.
Love, that exempts no one beloved from loving,
Seized me with pleasure of this man so strongly,
That, as thou seest, it doth not yet desert me;
Love has conducted us unto one death;
Caïna waiteth him who quenched our life!'
These words were borne along from them to us.
As soon as I had heard those souls tormented,
I bowed my face, and so long held it down
Until the Poet said to me: 'What thinkest?'
When I made answer, I began: 'Alas!
How many pleasant thoughts, how much desire,
Conducted these unto the dolorous pass!'
Then unto them I turned me, and I spake,
And I began: 'Thine agonies, Francesca,
Sad and compassionate to weeping make me.
But tell me, at the time of those sweet sighs,
By what and in what manner Love conceded,
That you should know your dubious desires?'
And she to me: 'There is no greater sorrow
Than to be mindful of the happy time
In misery, and that thy Teacher knows.
But, if to recognize the earliest root
Of love in us thou hast so great desire,
I will do even as he who weeps and speaks.
One day we reading were for our delight
Of Launcelot, how Love did him enthrall.
Alone we were and without any fear.
Full many a time our eyes together drew
That reading, and drove the color from our faces;
But one point only was it that o'ercame us.
Whenas we read of the much longed-for smile
Being by such a noble lover kissed,
This one, who ne'er from me shall be divided,
Kissed me upon the mouth all palpitating.
Galeotto was the book and he who wrote it.
That day no farther did we read therein.'
And all the while one spirit uttered this,
The other one did weep so, that, for pity,
I swooned away as if I had been dying,
And fell, even as a dead body falls.

1863 1866

BELISARIUS

I AM poor and old and blind;
The sun burns me, and the wind
Blows through the city gate,
And covers me with dust
From the wheels of the august
Justinian the Great.

It was for him I chased
The Persians o'er wild and waste,
As General of the East;
Night after night I lay
In their camps of yesterday;
Their forage was my feast.

For him, with sails of red,
And torches at mast-head,
Piloting the great fleet,
I swept the Afric coasts
And scattered the Vandal hosts,
Like dust in a windy street.

For him I won again
The Ausonian realm and reign,
Rome and Parthenope;
And all the land was mine
From the summits of Apennine
To the shores of either sea.

For him, in my feeble age,
I dared the battle's rage,

To save Byzantium's state,
When the tents of Zabergan
Like snow-drifts overran
The road of the Golden Gate.

And for this, for this, behold!
Infirm and blind and old,
With gray, uncovered head,
Beneath the very arch
Of my triumphal march,
I stand and beg my bread!

Methinks I still can hear,
Sounding distinct and near,
The Vandal monarch's cry,
As, captive and disgraced,
With majestic step he paced,—
'All, all is Vanity!'

Ah! vainest of all things
Is the gratitude of kings;
The plaudits of the crowd
Are but the clatter of feet
At midnight in the street,
Hollow and restless and loud.

But the bitterest disgrace
Is to see forever the face
Of the Monk of Ephesus!
The unconquerable will
This, too, can bear;—I still
Am Belisarius!

1875 1875

CHAUCER

AN old man in a lodge within a park;
The chamber walls depicted all around
With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, and hound,
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

1873 1875

MILTON

I PACE the sounding sea-beach and behold
How the voluminous billows roll and run,
Upheaving and subsiding, while the sun
Shines through their sheeted emerald far unrolled,
And the ninth wave, slow gathering fold by fold
All its loose-flowing garments into one,
Plunges upon the shore, and floods the dun
Pale reach of sands, and changes them to gold.
So in majestic cadence rise and fall
The mighty undulations of thy song,
O sightless bard, England's Mæonides!
And ever and anon, high over all
Uplifted, a ninth wave superb and strong,
Floods all the soul with its melodious seas.

1873 1875

A DUTCH PICTURE

SIMON DANZ has come home again,
From cruising about with his buccaneers;
He has singed the beard of the King of Spain,
And carried away the Dean of Jaen
And sold him in Algiers.

In his house by the Maese, with its roof of tiles,
And weathercocks flying aloft in air,
There are silver tankards of antique styles,
Plunder of convent and castle, and piles
Of carpets rich and rare.

In his tulip-garden there by the town,
Overlooking the sluggish stream,
With his Moorish cap and dressing-gown,
The old sea-captain, hale and brown,
Walks in a waking dream.

A smile in his gray mustachio lurks
Whenever he thinks of the King of Spain,
And the listed tulips look like Turks,
And the silent gardener as he works
Is changed to the Dean of Jaen.

The windmills on the outermost
Verge of the landscape in the haze,
To him are towers on the Spanish coast,

With whiskered sentinels at their post,
  Though this is the river Maese.

But when the winter rains begin,
  He sits and smokes by the blazing brands,
And old seafaring men come in,
Goat-bearded, gray, and with double chin,
  And rings upon their hands.

They sit there in the shadow and shine
  Of the flickering fire of the winter night;
Figures in color and design
Like those by Rembrandt of the Rhine,
  Half darkness and half light.

And they talk of ventures lost or won,
  And their talk is ever and ever the same,
While they drink the red wine of Tarragon,
From the cellars of some Spanish Don,
  Or convent set on flame.

Restless at times with heavy strides
  He paces his parlor to and fro;
He is like a ship that at anchor rides,
And swings with the rising and falling tides,
  And tugs at her anchor-tow.

Voices mysterious far and near,
  Sound of the wind and sound of the sea,
Are calling and whispering in his ear,
'Simon Danz! Why stayest thou here?
  Come forth and follow me!'

So he thinks he shall take to the sea again
  For one more cruise with his buccaneers,
To singe the beard of the King of Spain,
And capture another Dean of Jaen
  And sell him in Algiers.

1878

VENICE

WHITE swan of cities, slumbering in thy nest
  So wonderfully built among the reeds
  Of the lagoon, that fences thee and feeds,
  As sayeth thy old historian and thy guest!
White water-lily, cradled and caressed
  By ocean streams, and from the silt and weeds
  Lifting thy golden filaments and seeds,
  Thy sun-illumined spires, thy crown and crest!
White phantom city, whose untrodden streets
  Are rivers, and whose pavements are the shifting
  Shadows of palaces and strips of sky;
I wait to see thee vanish like the fleets
  Seen in mirage, or towers of cloud uplifting
  In air their unsubstantial masonry.

1875

THE CROSS OF SNOW [1]

IN the long, sleepless watches of the night,
  A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
  Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
  The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
  Never through martyrdom of fire was led
  To its repose; nor can in books be read
  The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant West
  That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
  Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
  These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
  And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

1879 1886

JUGURTHA [2]

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!
  Cried the African monarch, the splendid,
As down to his death in the hollow
  Dark dungeons of Rome he descended,
  Uncrowned, unthroned, unattended;
How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

1 Longfellow's wife was tragically burned to death in 1861. 'Eighteen years afterward, looking over, one day, an illustrated book of Western scenery, his attention was arrested by a picture of that mysterious mountain [the Mount of the Holy Cross, in Colorado] upon whose lonely, lofty breast the snow lies in long furrows that make a rude but wonderfully clear image of a vast cross. At night, as he looked upon the pictured countenance that hung upon his chambered wall, his thoughts framed themselves into the verses that follow. He put them away in his portfolio, where they were found after his death.' Samuel Longfellow, *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston, 1886),II, 372.

2 Jugurtha, vanquished king of Numidia, was brought to Rome and, after the triumphal procession of his conqueror, thrown into prison and starved to death.

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!
Cried the Poet, unknown, unbefriended,
As the vision, that lured him to follow,
With the mist and the darkness blended,
And the dream of his life was ended;
How cold are thy baths, Apollo!
1879 1880

HELEN OF TYRE

WHAT phantom is this that appears
Through the purple mists of the years,
Itself but a mist like these?
A woman of cloud and of fire;
It is she; it is Helen of Tyre,
The town in the midst of the seas.

O Tyre! in thy crowded streets
The phantom appears and retreats,
And the Israelites that sell
Thy lilies and lions of brass,
Look up as they see her pass,
And murmur 'Jezebel!'

Then another phantom is seen
At her side, in a gray gabardine,
With beard that floats to his waist;
It is Simon Magus, the Seer;
He speaks, and she pauses to hear
The words he utters in haste.

He says: 'From this evil fame,
From this life of sorrow and shame,
I will lift thee and make thee mine;
Thou hast been Queen Candace,
And Helen of Troy, and shalt be
The Intelligence Divine!'

Oh, sweet as the breath of morn,
To the fallen and forlorn
Are whispered words of praise;
For the famished heart believes
The falsehood that tempts and deceives,
And the promise that betrays.

So she follows from land to land
The wizard's beckoning hand,
As a leaf is blown by the gust,
Till she vanishes into night.
O reader, stoop down and write
With thy finger in the dust.

O town in the midst of the seas,
With thy rafts of cedar trees,
Thy merchandise and thy ships,
Thou, too, art become as naught,
A phantom, a shadow, a thought,
A name upon men's lips.
1879 1880

THE BELLS OF SAN BLAS

WHAT say the Bells of San Blas
To the ships that southward pass
From the harbor of Mazatlan?
To them it is nothing more
Than the sound of surf on the shore,—
Nothing more to master or man.

But to me, a dreamer of dreams,
To whom what is and what seems
Are often one and the same,—
The Bells of San Blas to me
Have a strange, wild melody,
And are something more than a name.

For bells are the voice of the church;
They have tones that touch and search
The hearts of young and old;
One sound to all, yet each
Lends a meaning to their speech,
And the meaning is manifold.

They are a voice of the Past,
Of an age that is fading fast,
Of a power austere and grand;
When the flag of Spain unfurled
Its folds o'er this western world,
And the Priest was lord of the land.

The chapel that once looked down
On the little seaport town
Has crumbled into the dust;
And on oaken beams below
The bells swing to and fro,
And are green with mould and rust.

'Is, then, the old faith dead,'
They say, 'and in its stead
Is some new faith proclaimed,
That we are forced to remain
Naked to sun and rain,
Unsheltered and ashamed?

'Once in our tower aloof
We rang over wall and roof
Our warnings and our complaints:
And round about us there
The white doves filled the air,
Like the white souls of the saints.

'The saints! Ah, have they grown
Forgetful of their own?
  Are they asleep, or dead,
That open to the sky
Their ruined Missions lie,
  No longer tenanted?

'Oh, bring us back once more
The vanished days of yore,
  When the world with faith was filled;
Bring back the fervid zeal,
The hearts of fire and steel,
  The hands that believe and build.

'Then from our tower again
We will send over land and main
  Our voices of command,
Like exiled kings who return
To their thrones, and the people learn
  That the Priest is lord of the land!'

O Bells of San Blas, in vain
Ye call back the Past again!
  The Past is deaf to your prayer;
Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
  It is daybreak everywhere.
1882 1882

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

1809–1894

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE [1]

I

I WAS just going to say, when I was interrupted, that one of the many ways of classifying minds is under the heads of arithmetical and algebraical intellects. All economical and practical wisdom is an extension or variation of the following arithmetical formula: $2 + 2 = 4$. Every philosophical proposition has the more general character of the expression $a + b = c$. We are mere operatives, empirics, and egotists, until we learn to think in letters instead of figures.

They all stared. There is a divinity student lately come among us to whom I commonly address remarks like the above, allowing him to take a certain share in the conversation, so far as assent or pertinent questions are involved. He abused his liberty on this occasion by presuming to say that Leibnitz had the same observation.—No, sir, I replied, he has not. But he said a mighty good thing about mathematics, that sounds something like it, and you found it, *not in the original*, but quoted by Dr. Thomas Reid. I will tell the company what he did say, one of these days.

—— If I belong to a Society of Mutual Admiration?—I blush to say that I do not at this present moment. I once did, however. It was the first association to which I ever heard the term applied; a body of scientific young men in a great foreign city who admired their teacher, and to some extent each other. Many of them deserved it; they have become famous since. It amuses me to hear the talk of one of those beings described by Thackeray—

'Letters four do form his name'—

about a social development which belongs to the very noblest stage of civilization. All generous companies of artists, authors, philanthropists, men of science, are, or ought to be, Societies of Mutual Admiration. A man of genius, or any kind of superiority, is not debarred from admiring the same quality in another, nor the other from returning his admiration. They may even associate together and continue to think highly of each other. And so of a dozen such men, if any one place is fortunate enough to hold so many. The being referred to above assumes several false premises. First, that men of talent necessarily hate each other. Secondly, that intimate knowledge or habitual association destroys our admiration of persons whom we esteemed highly at a distance. Thirdly, that a circle of clever fellows, who meet together to dine and have a good time, have signed a constitu-

1 The essay is the first of a series contributed by Holmes to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and appeared in its first number, November, 1857. The opening sentence refers to two similar essays by Holmes, which he wrote for the *New England Magazine* in 1831 and 1832.

tional compact to glorify themselves and to put down him and the fraction of the human race not belonging to their number. Fourthly, that it is an outrage that he is not asked to join them.

Here the company laughed a good deal, and the old gentleman who sits opposite said, 'That's it! that's it!'

I continued, for I was in the talking vein. As to clever people's hating each other, I think *a little* extra talent does sometimes make people jealous. They become irritated by perpetual attempts and failures, and it hurts their tempers and dispositions. Unpretending mediocrity is good, and genius is glorious; but a weak flavor of genius in an essentially common person is detestable. It spoils the grand neutrality of a commonplace character, as the rinsings of an unwashed wine-glass spoil a draught of fair water. No wonder the poor fellow we spoke of, who always belongs to this class of slightly flavored mediocrities, is puzzled and vexed by the strange sight of a dozen men of capacity working and playing together in harmony. He and his fellows are always fighting. With them familiarity naturally breeds contempt. If they ever praise each other's bad drawings, or broken-winded novels, or spavined verses, nobody ever supposed it was from admiration; it was simply a contract between themselves and a publisher or dealer.

If the Mutuals have really nothing among them worth admiring, that alters the question. But if they are men with noble powers and qualities, let me tell you, that, next to youthful love and family affections, there is no human sentiment better than that which unites the Societies of Mutual Admiration. And what would literature or art be without such associations? Who can tell what we owe to the Mutual Admiration Society of which Shakspeare, and Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher were members? Or to that of which Addison and Steele formed the centre, and which gave us the Spectator? Or to that where Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Burke, and Reynolds, and Beauclerk, and Boswell, most admiring among all admirers, met together? Was there any great harm in the fact that the Irvings and Paulding wrote in company? or any unpardonable cabal in the literary union of Verplanck and Bryant and Sands, and as many more as they chose to associate with them?

The poor creature does not know what he is talking about, when he abuses this noblest of institutions. Let him inspect its mysteries through the knot-hole he has secured, but not use that orifice as a medium for his popgun. Such a society is the crown of a literary metropolis; if a town has not material for it, and spirit and good feeling enough to organize it, it is a mere caravansary, fit for a man of genius to lodge in, but not to live in. Foolish people hate and dread and envy such an association of men of varied powers and influence, because it is lofty, serene, impregnable, and, by the necessity of the case, exclusive. Wise ones are prouder of the title M.S.M.A. than of all their other honors put together.

—— All generous minds have a horror of what are commonly called 'facts.' They are the brute beasts of the intellectual domain. Who does not know fellows that always have an ill-conditioned fact or two which they lead after them into decent company like so many bull-dogs, ready to let them slip at every ingenious suggestion, or convenient generalization, or pleasant fancy? I allow no 'facts' at this table. What! Because bread is good and wholesome and necessary and nourishing, shall you thrust a crumb into my windpipe while I am talking? Do not these muscles of mine represent a hundred loaves of bread? and is not my thought the abstract of ten thousand of these crumbs of truth with which you would choke off my speech?

(The above remark must be conditioned and qualified for the vulgar mind. The reader will of course understand the precise amount of seasoning which must be added to it before he adopts it as one of the axioms of his life. The speaker disclaims all responsibility for its abuse in incompetent hands.)

This business of conversation is a very serious matter. There are men whom it weakens one to talk with an hour more than a day's fasting would do. Mark this which I am going to say, for it is as good as a working professional man's advice, and costs you nothing: It is better to lose a pint of blood from your veins than to have a nerve

tapped. Nobody measures your nervous force as it runs away, nor bandages your brain and marrow after the operation.

There are men of *esprit* who are excessively exhausting to some people. They are the talkers who have what may be called *jerky* minds. Their thoughts do not run in the natural order of sequence. They say bright things on all possible subjects, but their zigzags rack you to death. After a jolting half-hour with one of these jerky companions, talking with a dull friend affords great relief. It is like taking the cat in your lap after holding a squirrel.

What a comfort a dull but kindly person is, to be sure, at times! A ground-glass shade over a gas-lamp does not bring more solace to our dazzled eyes than such a one to our minds.

'Do not dull people bore you?' said one of the lady-boarders,—the same who sent me her autograph-book last week with a request for a few original stanzas, not remembering that 'The Pactolian' pays me five dollars a line for every thing I write in its columns.

'Madam,' said I (she and the century were in their teens together), 'all men are bores, except when we want them. There never was but one man whom I would trust with my latch-key.'

'Who might that favored person be?'

'Zimmermann.'

—— The men of genius that I fancy most have erectile heads like the cobra-di-capello. You remember what they tell of William Pinkney, the great pleader; how in his eloquent paroxysms the veins of his neck would swell and his face flush and his eyes glitter, until he seemed on the verge of apoplexy. The hydraulic arrangements for supplying the brain with blood are only second in importance to its own organization. The bulbous-headed fellows who steam well when they are at work are the men that draw big audiences and give us marrowy books and pictures. It is a good sign to have one's feet grow cold when he is writing. A great writer and speaker once told me that he often wrote with his feet in hot water; but for this, *all* his blood would have run into his head, as the mercury sometimes withdraws into the ball of a thermometer.

—— You don't suppose that my remarks made at this table are like so many postage-stamps, do you,—each to be only once uttered? If you do, you are mistaken. He must be a poor creature who does not often repeat himself. Imagine the author of the excellent piece of advice, 'Know thyself,' never alluding to that sentiment again during the course of a protracted existence! Why, the truths a man carries about with him are his tools; and do you think a carpenter is bound to use the same plane but once to smooth a knotty board with, or to hang up his hammer after it has driven its first nail? I shall never repeat a conversation, but an idea often. I shall use the same types when I like, but not commonly the same stereotypes. A thought is often original, though you have uttered it a hundred times. It has come to you over a new route, by a new and express train of associations.

Sometimes, but rarely, one may be caught making the same speech twice over, and yet be held blameless. Thus, a certain lecturer, after performing in an inland city, where dwells a *littératrice* of note, was invited to meet her and others over the social teacup. She pleasantly referred to his many wanderings in his new occupation. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I am like the Huma, the bird that never lights, being always in the cars, as he is always on the wing.'—Years elapsed. The lecturer visited the same place once more for the same purpose. Another social cup after the lecture, and a second meeting with the distinguished lady. 'You are constantly going from place to place,' she said. 'Yes,' he answered, 'I am like the Huma,' —and finished the sentence as before.

What horrors, when it flashed over him that he had made this fine speech, word for word, twice over! Yet it was not true, as the lady might perhaps have fairly inferred, that he had embellished his conversation with the Huma daily during that whole interval of years. On the contrary, he had never once thought of the odious fowl until the recurrence of precisely the same circumstances brought up precisely the same idea. He ought to have been proud of the accuracy of his mental adjustments. Given certain factors, and a sound brain should always evolve the same fixed product with the certainty of Babbage's calculating machine.

—— What a satire, by the way, is that machine on the mere mathematician! A Frankenstein-monster, a thing without brains and without heart, too stupid to make a blunder; which turns out results like a corn-sheller, and never grows any wiser or better, though it grind a thousand bushels of them!

I have an immense respect for a man of talents *plus* 'the mathematics.' But the calculating power alone should seem to be the least human of qualities, and to have the smallest amount of reason in it; since a machine can be made to do the work of three or four calculators, and better than any one of them. Sometimes I have been troubled that I had not a deeper intuitive apprehension of the relations of numbers. But the triumph of the cyphering hand-organ has consoled me. I always fancy I can hear the wheels clicking in a calculator's brain. The power of dealing with numbers is a kind of 'detached lever' arrangement, which may be put into a mighty poor watch. I suppose it is about as common as the power of moving the ears voluntarily, which is a moderately rare endowment.

—— Little localized powers, and little narrow streaks of specialized knowledge, are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise; but for this encouraging principle how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected! Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the ocean; it keeps it sweet, and renders it endurable. Say rather it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him and the wave in which he dips. When one has had *all* his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost *all* his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more.

'So you admire conceited people, do you?' said the young lady who has come to the city to be finished off for—the duties of life.

I am afraid you do not study logic at your school, my dear. It does not follow that I wish to be pickled in brine because I like a salt-water plunge at Nahant. I say that conceit is just as natural a thing to human minds as a centre is to a circle. But little-minded people's thoughts move in such small circles that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc long enough to determine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not sensibly differ from a straight line. Even if it have the third vowel as its centre, it does not soon betray it. The highest thought, that is, is the most seemingly impersonal; it does not obviously imply any individual centre.

Audacious self-esteem, with good ground for it, is always imposing. What resplendent beauty that must have been which could have authorized Phryne to 'peel' in the way she did! What fine speeches are those two: '*Non omnis moriar*,'[1] and 'I have taken all knowledge to be my province'! Even in common people, conceit has the virtue of making them cheerful; the man who thinks his wife, his baby, his house, his horse, his dog, and himself severally unequalled, is almost sure to be a good-humored person, though liable to be tedious at times.

—— What are the great faults of conversation? Want of ideas, want of words, want of manners, are the principal ones, I suppose you think. I don't doubt it, but I will tell you what I have found spoil more good talks than anything else;—long arguments on special points between people who differ on the fundamental principles upon which these points depend. No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain *ultimata* of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source. In short, just as a written constitution is essential to the best social order, so a code of finalities is a necessary condition of profitable talk between two persons. Talking is like playing on the harp; there is as much in laying the hand on the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.

—— Do you mean to say the pun-question is not clearly settled in your minds? Let me lay down the law upon the subject. Life and language are alike sacred. Homicide and *verbicide*—that is, violent treatment of a word with fatal results to its

1 'I shall not entirely die.' Horace, *c.* III, xxx, 6.

legitimate meaning, which is its life—are alike forbidden. Manslaughter, which is the meaning of the one, is the same as man's laughter, which is the end of the other. A pun is *primâ facie* an insult to the person you are talking with. It implies utter indifference to, or sublime contempt for his remarks, no matter how serious. I speak of total depravity, and one says all that is written on the subject is deep raving. I have committed my self-respect by talking with such a person. I should like to commit him, but cannot, because he is a nuisance. Or I speak of geological convulsions, and he asks me what was the cosine of Noah's ark; also, whether the Deluge was not a deal huger than any modern inundation.

A pun does not commonly justify a blow in return. But if a blow were given for such cause, and death ensued, the jury would be judges both of the facts and of the pun, and might, if the latter were of an aggravated character, return a verdict of justifiable homicide. Thus, in a case lately decided before Miller, J., Doe presented Roe a subscription paper, and urged the claims of suffering humanity. Roe replied by asking, When charity was like a top? It was in evidence that Doe preserved a dignified silence. Roe then said, 'When it begins to hum.' Doe then—and not till then—struck Roe, and his head happening to hit a bound volume of the *Monthly Rag-bag* and *Stolen Miscellany*, intense mortification ensued, with a fatal result. The chief laid down his notions of the law to his brother justices, who unanimously replied, 'Jest so.' The chief rejoined, that no man should jest so without being punished for it, and charged for the prisoner, who was acquitted, and the pun ordered to be burned by the sheriff. The bound volume was forfeited as a deodand, but not claimed.

People that make puns are like wanton boys that put coppers on the railroad tracks. They amuse themselves and other children, but their little trick may upset a freight train of conversation for the sake of a battered witticism.

I will thank you, B.F., to bring down two books, of which I will mark the places on this slip of paper. (While he is gone, I may say that this boy, our landlady's youngest, is called BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, after the celebrated philosopher of that name. A highly merited compliment.)

I wish to refer to two eminent authorities. Now be so good as to listen. The great moralist says: 'To trifle with the vocabulary which is the vehicle of social intercourse is to tamper with the currency of human intelligence. He who would violate the sanctities of his mother tongue would invade the recesses of the paternal till without remorse, and repeat the banquet of Saturn without an indigestion.'

And, once more, listen to the historian. 'The Puritans hated puns. The Bishops were notoriously addicted to them. The Lords Temporal carried them to the verge of license. Majesty itself must have its Royal quibble. "Ye be burly, my Lord of Burleigh," said Queen Elizabeth, "but ye shall make less stir in our realm than my Lord of Leicester." The gravest wisdom and the highest breeding lent their sanction to the practice. Lord Bacon playfully declared himself a descendant of 'Og, the King of Bashan. Sir Philip Sidney, with his last breath, reproached the soldier who brought him water, for wasting a casqueful upon a dying man. A courtier, who saw *Othello* performed at the Globe Theatre, remarked, that the blackamoor was a brute, and not a man. "Thou hast reason," replied a great Lord, "according to Plato his saying; for this be a two-legged animal *with* feathers." The fatal habit became universal. The language was corrupted. The infection spread to the national conscience. Political double-dealings naturally grew out of verbal double meanings. The teeth of the new dragon were sown by the Cadmus who introduced the alphabet of equivocation. What was levity in the time of the Tudors grew to regicide and revolution in the age of the Stuarts.'

Who was that boarder that just whispered something about the Macaulay-flowers of literature?—There was a dead silence.—I said calmly, I shall henceforth consider any interruption by a pun as a hint to change my boarding-house. Do not plead my example. If *I* have used any such, it has been only as a Spartan father would show up a drunken helot. We have done with them.

—— If a logical mind ever found out anything with its logic?—I should say that

its most frequent work was to build a *pons asinorum* over chasms which shrewd people can bestride without such a structure. You can hire logic, in the shape of a lawyer, to prove anything that you want to prove. You can buy treatises to show that Napoleon never lived, and that no battle of Bunker-hill was ever fought. The great minds are those with a wide span, which couple truths related to, but far removed from, each other.

Logicians carry the surveyor's chain over the track of which these are the true explorers. I value a man mainly for his primary relations with truth, as I understand truth,—not for any secondary artifice in handling his ideas. Some of the sharpest men in argument are notoriously unsound in judgment. I should not trust the counsel of a clever debater, any more than that of a good chess-player. Either may of course advise wisely, but not necessarily because he wrangles or plays well.

The old gentleman who sits opposite got his hand up, as a pointer lifts his forefoot, at the expression, 'his relations with truth, as I understand truth,' and when I had done, sniffed audibly, and said I talked like a transcendentalist. For his part, common sense was good enough for him.

Precisely so, my dear sir, I replied; common sense, *as you understand it*. We all have to assume a standard of judgment in our own minds, either of things or persons. A man who is willing to take another's opinion has to exercise his judgment in the choice of whom to follow, which is often as nice a matter as to judge of things for one's self. On the whole, I had rather judge men's minds by comparing their thoughts with my own, than judge of thoughts by knowing who utter them. I must do one or the other. It does not follow, of course, that I may not recognize another man's thoughts as broader and deeper than my own; but that does not necessarily change my opinion, otherwise this would be at the mercy of every superior mind that held a different one. How many of our most cherished beliefs are like those drinking-glasses of the ancient pattern, that serve us well so long as we keep them in our hand, but spill all if we attempt to set them down! I have sometimes compared conversation to the Italian game of *mora*, in which one player lifts his hand with so many fingers extended, and the other gives the number if he can. I show my thought, another his; if they agree, well; if they differ, we find the largest common factor, if we can, but at any rate avoid disputing about remainders and fractions, which is to real talk what tuning an instrument is to playing on it.

—— What if, instead of talking this morning, I should read you a copy of verses, with critical remarks by the author? Any of the company can retire that like.

ALBUM VERSES

When Eve had led her lord away,
And Cain had killed his brother,
The stars and flowers, the poets say,
Agreed with one another

To cheat the cunning tempter's art,
And teach the race its duty,
By keeping on its wicked heart
Their eyes of light and beauty.

A million sleepless lids, they say,
Will be at least a warning;
And so the flowers would watch by day,
The stars from eve to morning.

On hill and prairie, field and lawn,
Their dewy eyes upturning,
The flowers still watch from reddening dawn
Till western skies are burning.

Alas! each hour of daylight tells
A tale of shame so crushing,
That some turn white as sea-bleached shells,
And some are always blushing.

But when the patient stars look down
On all their light discovers,
The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,
The lips of lying lovers,

They try to shut their saddening eyes,
And in the vain endeavor
We see them twinkling in the skies,
And so they wink for ever.

What do *you* think of these verses, my friends?—Is that piece an impromptu? said my landlady's daughter. (Æt. 19+.

Tender-eyed blonde. Long ringlets. Cameo pin. Gold pencil-case on a chain. Locket. Bracelet. Album. Autograph-book. Accordeon. Reads Byron, Tupper, and Sylvanus Cobb, junior, while her mother makes the puddings. Says, 'Yes?' when you tell her anything.)—*Oui et non, ma petite,*—Yes and no, my child. Five of the seven verses were written off-hand; the other two took a week,—that is, were hanging round the desk in a ragged, forlorn, unrhymed condition as long as that. All poets will tell you just such stories. *C'est le* DERNIER *pas qui coûte.*[1] Don't you know how hard it is for some people to get out of a room after their visit is really over? They want to be off, and you want to have them off, but they don't know how to manage it. One would think they had been built in your parlor or study, and were waiting to be launched. I have contrived a sort of ceremonial inclined plane for such visitors, which being lubricated with certain smooth phrases, I backed them down, metaphorically speaking, stern-foremost, into their 'native element,' the great ocean of outdoors. Well, now, there are poems as hard to get rid of as these rural visitors. They come in glibly, use up all the serviceable rhymes, *day, ray, beauty, duty, skies, eyes, other, brother, mountain, fountain,* and the like; and so they go on until you think it is time for the wind-up, and the wind-up won't come on any terms. So they lie about until you get sick of the sight of them, and end by thrusting some cold scrap of a final couplet upon them, and turning them out of doors. I suspect a good many 'impromptus' could tell just such a story as the above.—Here turning to our landlady, I used an illustration which pleased the company much at the time, and has since been highly commended. 'Madam,' I said, 'you can pour three gills and three quarters of honey from that pint jug, if it is full, in less than one minute; but, madam, you could not empty that last quarter of a gill, though you were turned into a marble Hebe, and held the vessel upside down for a thousand years.

One gets tired to death of the old, old rhymes, such as you see in that copy of verses,—which I don't mean to abuse, or to praise either. I always feel as if I were a cobbler, putting new top-leathers to an old pair of boot-soles and bodies, when I am fitting sentiments to these venerable jingles.

. . . . . youth
. . . . . morning
. . . . . truth
. . . . . warning.

Nine tenths of the 'Juvenile Poems' written spring out of the above musical and suggestive coincidences.

'Yes?' said our landlady's daughter.

I did not address the following remark to her, and I trust, from her limited range of reading, she will never see it; I said it softly to my next neighbor.

When a young female wears a flat circular side-curl, gummed on each temple,—when she walks with a male, not arm in arm, but his arm against the back of hers,—and when she says 'Yes?' with the note of interrogation, you are generally safe in asking her what wages she gets, and who the 'feller' was you saw her with.

'What were you whispering?' said the daughter of the house, moistening her lips, as she spoke, in a very engaging manner.

'I was only laying down a principle of social diagnosis.'

'Yes?'

—— It is curious to see how the same wants and tastes find the same implements and modes of expression in all times and places. The young ladies of Otaheite, as you may see in *Cook's Voyages*, had a sort of crinoline arrangement fully equal in radius to the largest spread of our own lady-baskets. When I fling a Bay-State shawl over my shoulders, I am only taking a lesson from the climate that the Indian had learned before me. A *blanket*-shawl we call it, and not a plaid; and we wear it like the aborigines, and not like the Highlanders.

—— We are the Romans of the modern world,—the great assimilating people. Conflicts and conquests are of course necessary accidents with us, as with our prototypes. And so we come to their style of weapon. Our army sword is the short, stiff, pointed *gladius* of the Romans; and the American bowie-knife is the same tool, modified to meet the daily wants of civil

1 'It's the *last* step which gives the most trouble.'

society. I announce at this table an axiom not to be found in Montesquieu or the journals of Congress:—

The race that shortens its weapons lengthens its boundaries.

Corollary. It was the Polish *lance* that left Poland at last with nothing of her own to bound.

'Dropped from her nerveless grasp the *shattered spear*!'

What business had Sarmatia to be fighting for liberty with a fifteen-foot pole between her and the breasts of her enemies? If she had but clutched the old Roman and young American weapon, and come to close quarters, there might have been a chance for her; but it would have spoiled the best passage in 'The Pleasures of Hope.'

—— Self-made men?—Well, yes. Of course everybody likes and respects self-made men. It is a great deal better to be made in that way than not to be made at all. Are any of you younger people old enough to remember that Irishman's house on the marsh at Cambridgeport, which house he built from drain to chimney-top with his own hands? It took him a good many years to build it, and one could see that it was a little out of plumb, and a little wavy in outline, and a little queer and uncertain in general aspect. A regular hand could certainly have built a better house; but it was a very good house for a 'self-made' carpenter's house, and people praised it, and said how remarkably well the Irishman had succeeded. They never thought of praising the fine blocks of houses a little farther on.

Your self-made man, whittled into shape with his own jack-knife, deserves more credit, if that is all, than the regular engine-turned article, shaped by the most approved pattern, and French polished by society and travel. But as to saying that one is every way the equal of the other, that is another matter. The right of strict social discrimination of all things and persons, according to their merits, native or acquired, is one of the most precious republican privileges. I take the liberty to exercise it, when I say, that *other things being equal*, in most relations of life I prefer a man of family.

What do I mean by a man of family?—Oh, I'll give you a general idea of what I mean. Let us give him a first-rate fit out; it costs us nothing.

Four or five generations of gentlemen and gentlewomen; among them a member of his Majesty's Council for the Province, a Governor or so, one or two Doctors of Divinity, a member of Congress, not later than the time of long boots with tassels.

Family portraits. The member of the Council, by Smibert. The great merchant-uncle, by Copley, full length, sitting in his arm-chair, in a velvet cap and flowered robe, with a globe by him, to show the range of his commercial transactions, and letters with large red seals lying round, one directed conspicuously to The Honorable, etc., etc. Great-grandmother, by the same artist; brown satin, lace very fine, hands superlative; grand old lady, stiffish, but imposing. Her mother, artist unknown; flat, angular, hanging sleeves; parrot on fist. A pair of Stuarts, viz., 1. A superb full-blown, mediæval gentleman, with a fiery dash of Tory blood in his veins, tempered down with that of a fine old rebel grandmother, and warmed up with the best of old India Madeira; his face is one flame of ruddy sunshine; his ruffled shirt rushes out of his bosom with an impetuous generosity, as if it would drag his heart after it; and his smile is good for twenty thousand dollars to the Hospital, besides ample bequests to all relatives and dependents. 2. Lady of the same; remarkable cap; high waist, as in time of Empire; bust *à la Josephine*; wisps of curls, like celery-tips, at sides of forehead; complexion clear and warm, like rose-cordial. As for the miniatures by Malbone, we don't count them in the gallery.

Books, too, with the names of old college-students in them,—family names;—you will find them at the head of their respective classes in the days when students took rank on the catalogue from their parents' condition. Elzevirs, with the Latinized appellations of youthful progenitors, and *Hic liber est meus* on the title-page. A set of Hogarth's original plates. Pope, original edition, 15 volumes, London, 1717. Barrow on the lower shelves, in folio. Tillotson on the upper, in a little dark platoon of octodecimos.

Some family silver; a string of wedding

and funeral rings; the arms of the family curiously blazoned; the same in worsted, by a maiden aunt.

If the man of family has an old place to keep these things in, furnished with claw-footed chairs and black mahogany tables, and tall bevel-edged mirrors, and stately upright cabinets, his outfit is complete.

No, my friends, I go (always, other things being equal) for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations. Above all things, as a child, he should have tumbled about in the library. All men are afraid of books, who have not handled them from infancy. Do you suppose our dear *didascalos* over there ever read *Poli Synopsis*, or consulted *Castelli Lexicon*, while he was growing up to their stature? Not he; but virtue passed through the hem of their parchment and leather garments whenever he touched them, as the precious drugs sweated through the bat's handle in the Arabian story. I tell you he is at home wherever he smells the invigorating fragrance of Russia leather. No self-made man feels so. One may, it is true, have all the antecedents I have spoken of, and yet be a boor or a shabby fellow. One may have none of them, and yet be fit for councils and courts. Then let them change places. Our social arrangement has this great beauty, that its strata shift up and down as they change specific gravity, without being clogged by layers of prescription. But I still insist on my democratic liberty of choice, and I go for the man with the gallery of family portraits against the one with the twenty-five-cent daguerreotype, unless I find out that the last is the better of the two.

—— I should have felt more nervous about the late comet if I had thought the world was ripe. But it is very green yet, if I am not mistaken; and besides, there is a great deal of coal to use up, which I cannot bring myself to think was made for nothing. If certain things, which seem to me essential to a millennium, had come to pass, I should have been frightened; but they haven't. Perhaps you would like to hear my

LATTER-DAY WARNINGS

When legislators keep the law,
When banks dispense with bolts and locks,
When berries, whortle- rasp- and straw-
Grow bigger *downwards* through the box,—

When he that selleth house or land
Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,—
When haberdashers choose the stand
Whose window hath the broadest light,—

When preachers tell us all they think,
And party leaders all they mean,—
When what we pay for, that we drink,
From real grape and coffee-bean,—

When lawyers take what they would give,
And doctors give what they would take,—
When city fathers eat to live,
Save when they fast for conscience' sake,—

When one that hath a horse on sale
Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
That holds the iron on the hoof,—

When in the usual place for rips
Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips
Where first umbrellas need repair,—

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret-bottles harbor not
Such dimples as would hold your fist,—

When publishers no longer steal,
And pay for what they stole before,—
When the first locomotive's wheel
Rolls through the Hoosac tunnel's bore;—

Till then let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe!

The company seemed to like the verses, and I promised them to read others occasionally, if they had a mind to hear them. Of course they would not expect it every morning. Neither must the reader suppose that all these things I have reported were said at any one breakfast-time. I have not

taken the trouble to date them, as Raspail, *père*, used to date every proof he sent to the printer; but they were scattered over several breakfasts; and I have said a good many more things since, which I shall very possibly print some time or other, if I am urged to do it by judicious friends.

I finish off with reading some verses of my friend the Professor, of whom you may perhaps hear more by and by. The Professor read them, he told me, at a farewell meeting, where the youngest of our great Historians met a few of his many friends at their invitation.

Yes, we knew we must lose him,—though friendship may claim
To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame;
Though fondly, at parting, we call him our own,
'Tis the whisper of love when the bugle has blown.

As the rider who rests with the spur on his heel,—
As the guardsman who sleeps in his corselet of steel,—
As the archer who stands with his shaft on the string,
He stoops from his toil to the garland we bring.

What pictures yet slumber unborn in his loom
Till their warriors shall breathe and their beauties shall bloom,
While the tapestry lengthens the life-glowing dyes
That caught from our sunsets the stain of their skies!

In the alcoves of death, in the charnels of time,
Where flit the gaunt spectres of passion and crime,
There are triumphs untold, there are martyrs unsung,
There are heroes yet silent to speak with his tongue!

Let us hear the proud story which time has bequeathed
From lips that are warm with the freedom they breathed!
Let him summon its tyrants, and tell us their doom,
Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp with his broom!

The dream flashes by, for the west-winds awake
On pampas, on prairie, o'er mountain and lake,
To bathe the swift bark, like a sea-girdled shrine,
With incense they stole from the rose and the pine.

So fill a bright cup with the sunlight that gushed
When the dead summer's jewels were trampled and crushed:
THE TRUE KNIGHT OF LEARNING,—the world holds him dear,—
Love bless him, Joy crown him, God speed his career!

1858

OLD IRONSIDES [1]

AY, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

Oh better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,

1 'This was the popular name by which the frigate *Constitution* was known. The poem was first printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, at the time when it was proposed to break up the old ship as unfit for service. . . .' Author's note, *The Writings of Oliver Wendell Holmes*(Boston, 1891),XII,1.

Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

1830 1836

THE LAST LEAF [1]

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
'They are gone.'

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmama has said—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

1836

THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS

I WROTE some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;
How kind it was of him
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb.

'These to the printer,' I exclaimed,
And, in my humorous way,
I added, (as a trifling jest,)
'There'll be the devil to pay.'

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;
The fifth; his waistband split;
The sixth; he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,

1 'This poem was suggested by the appearance in one of our streets of a venerable relic of the Revolution, said to be one of the party who threw the tea overboard in Boston Harbor. He was a fine monumental specimen in his cocked hat and knee breeches, with his buckled shoes and his sturdy cane. . . .' Author's note, ibid., XII,3. The relic was Major Thomas Melville, grandfather of Herman Melville.

And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

1836

ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL [1]

THIS ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good old times,
Of joyous days and jolly nights, and merry Christmas chimes;
They were a free and jovial race, but honest, brave, and true,
That dipped their ladle in the punch when this old bowl was new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar,—so runs the ancient tale;
'T was hammered by an Antwerp smith, whose arm was like a flail;
And now and then between the strokes, for fear his strength should fail,
He wiped his brow and quaffed a cup of good old Flemish ale.

'T was purchased by an English squire to please his loving dame,
Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a longing for the same;
And oft as on the ancient stock another twig was found,
'T was filled with caudle spiced and hot, and handed smoking round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a Puritan divine,
Who used to follow Timothy, and take a little wine,
But hated punch and prelacy; and so it was, perhaps,
He went to Leyden, where he found conventicles and schnapps.

And then, of course, you know what's next: it left the Dutchman's shore
With those that in the *Mayflower* came,—a hundred souls and more,—
Along with all the furniture, to fill their new abodes,—
To judge by what is still on hand, at least a hundred loads.

'T was on a dreary winter's eve, the night was closing dim,
When brave Miles Standish took the bowl, and filled it to the brim;
The little Captain stood and stirred the posset with his sword,
And all his sturdy men-at-arms were ranged about the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in,—the man that never feared,—
He took a long and solemn draught, and wiped his yellow beard;
And one by one the musketeers—the men that fought and prayed—
All drank as 't were their mother's milk, and not a man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the screaming eagle flew,
He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the soldier's wild halloo;
And there the sachem learned the rule he taught to kith and kin,
'Run from the white man when you find he smells of Hollands gin!'

A hundred years, and fifty more, had spread their leaves and snows,
A thousand rubs had flattened down each little cherub's nose,
When once again the bowl was filled, but not in mirth or joy,—
'T was mingled by a mother's hand to cheer her parting boy.

Drink, John, she said, 't will do you good,
—poor child, you'll never bear
This working in the dismal trench, out in the midnight air;
And if—God bless me!—you were hurt,
't would keep away the chill.
So John *did* drink,—and well he wrought that night at Bunker's Hill!

I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old English cheer;
I tell you, 't was a pleasant thought to bring its symbol here.
'T is but the fool that loves excess; hast thou a drunken soul?
Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver bowl!

1 'This "punch-bowl" was, according to old family tradition, a *caudle-cup*. It is a massive piece of silver, its cherubs and other ornaments of course repoussé work, and has two handles like a loving-cup, by which it was held, or passed from guest to guest.' Author's note, ibid.,XII,69. What Holmes thought was a Dutch bowl was actually made in New England by the famous silversmith John Corey, c.1680.

I love the memory of the past,—its pressed
yet fragrant flowers,—
The moss that clothes its broken walls, the
ivy on its towers;
Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed,—my
eyes grow moist and dim,
To think of all the vanished joys that
danced around its brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it
straight to me;
The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er
the liquid be;
And may the cherubs on its face protect me
from the sin
That dooms one to those dreadful words,—
'My dear, where *have* you been?'

1849

THE MORAL BULLY

YON whey-faced brother, who delights to
wear
A weedy flux of ill-conditioned hair,
Seems of the sort that in a crowded place
One elbows freely into smallest space;
A timid creature, lax of knee and hip,
Whom small disturbance whitens round
the lip;
One of those harmless spectacled machines,
The Holy-Week of Protestants convenes;
Whom school-boys question if their walk
transcends
The last advices of maternal friends;
Whom John, obedient to his master's sign,
Conducts, laborious, up to *ninety-nine*,
While Peter, glistening with luxurious
scorn,
Husks his white ivories like an ear of
corn;
Dark in the brow and bilious in the cheek,
Whose yellowish linen flowers but once a
week,
Conspicuous, annual, in their threadbare
suits,
And the laced high-lows which they call
their boots,
Well mayst thou *shun* that dingy front
severe,
But him, O stranger, him thou canst not
fear!

Be slow to judge, and slower to despise,
Man of broad shoulders and heroic size!
The tiger, writhing from the boa's rings,
Drops at the fountain where the cobra
stings.
In that lean phantom, whose extended
glove
Points to the text of universal love,
Behold the master that can tame thee down
To crouch, the vassal of his Sunday frown;
His velvet throat against thy corded wrist,
His loosened tongue against thy doubled
fist!

The MORAL BULLY, though he never
swears,
Nor kicks intruders down his entry stairs,
Though meekness plants his backward-
sloping hat,
And non-resistance ties his white cravat,
Though his black broadcloth glories to be
seen
In the same plight with Shylock's
gaberdine,
Hugs the same passion to his narrow breast
That heaves the cuirass on the trooper's
chest,
Hears the same hell-hounds yelling in his
rear
That chase from port the maddened
buccaneer,
Feels the same comfort while his acrid words
Turn the sweet milk of kindness into curds,
Or with grim logic prove, beyond debate,
That all we love is worthiest of our hate,
As the scarred ruffian of the pirate's deck,
When his long swivel rakes the staggering
wreck!

Heaven keep us all! Is every rascal clown
Whose arm is stronger free to knock us
down?
Has every scarecrow, whose cachectic soul
Seems fresh from Bedlam, airing on parole,
Who, though he carries but a doubtful trace
Of angel visits on his hungry face,
From lack of marrow or the coins to pay,
Has dodged some vices in a shabby way,
The right to stick us with his cutthroat
terms,
And bait his homilies with his brother
worms?

1862

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—

The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

1858

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE
OR, THE WONDERFUL 'ONE-HOSS SHAY'

A Logical Story

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive!
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will,—
Above or below, or within or without,—
And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an 'I dew vum,' or an 'I tell *yeou*')
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
'Fur,' said the Deacon, ' 't 's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest.'

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke,—
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;

The hubs of logs from the 'Settler's ellum,'—
Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he 'put her through.'
'There!' said the Deacon, 'naow she'll dew!'

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED;—it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten;—
'Hahnsum kerridge' they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the Earthquake-day,—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
'Huddup!' said the parson.—Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the—Moses—was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once,—
All at once, and nothing first,—
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

1858

DOROTHY Q.

A FAMILY PORTRAIT

GRANDMOTHER'S mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less;
Girlish bust, but womanly air;
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair;
Lips that lover has never kissed;
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.

Hold up the canvas full in view,—
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust,—
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell,—
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn,—
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring,—
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES:
Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover,—and here we are,
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone,—
Edward's and Dorothy's—all their own,—
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago!—
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name;
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

1871 1875

AT THE SATURDAY CLUB [1]

THIS is our place of meeting; opposite
That towered and pillared building: look at it;
King's Chapel in the Second George's day,
Rebellion stole its regal name away,—
Stone Chapel sounded better; but at last
The poisoned name of our provincial past
Had lost its ancient venom; then once more
Stone Chapel was King's Chapel as before.
(So let rechristened North Street, when it can,
Bring back the days of Marlborough and Queen Anne!)
Next the old church your wandering eye will meet—
A granite pile that stares upon the street—
Our civic temple; slanderous tongues have said
Its shape was modelled from St. Botolph's head,
Lofty, but narrow; jealous passers-by
Say Boston always held her head too high.
Turn half-way round, and let your look survey

1 'At about the same time as the establishment of the *Atlantic Monthly* there grew up in Boston a literary association which became at last well known as the "Saturday Club," the members dining together on the last Saturday of every month.' Author's note, ibid., XI,171. Every Boston Brahmin attended, as well as many whom God seemed to have created a little lower than the Brahmins.

The white façade that gleams across the way,—
The many-windowed building, tall and wide,
The palace-inn that shows its northern side
In grateful shadow when the sunbeams beat
The granite wall in summer's scorching heat.
This is the place; whether its name you spell
Tavern, or caravansera, or hotel.
Would I could steal its echoes! you should find
Such store of vanished pleasures brought to mind:
Such feasts! the laughs of many a jocund hour
That shook the mortar from King George's tower;
Such guests! What famous names its record boasts,
Whose owners wander in the mob of ghosts!
Such stories! Every beam and plank is filled
With juicy wit the joyous talkers spilled,
Ready to ooze, as once the mountain pine
The floors are laid with oozed its turpentine!
A month had flitted since The Club had met;
The day came round; I found the table set,
The waiters lounging round the marble stairs,
Empty as yet the double row of chairs.
I was a full half hour before the rest,
Alone, the banquet-chamber's single guest.
So from the table's side a chair I took,
And having neither company nor book
To keep me waking, by degrees there crept
A torpor over me,—in short, I slept.
Loosed from its chain, along the wreck-strown track
Of the dead years my soul goes travelling back;
My ghosts take on their robes of flesh; it seems
Dreaming is life; nay, life less life than dreams,
So real are the shapes that meet my eyes.
They bring no sense of wonder, no surprise,
No hint of other than an earth-born source;
All seems plain daylight, everything of course.

How dim the colors are, how poor and faint
This palette of weak words with which I paint!
Here sit my friends; if I could fix them so
As to my eyes they seem, my page would glow
Like a queen's missal, warm as if the brush
Of Titian or Velasquez brought the flush
Of life into their features. *Ay de mi!*
If syllables were pigments, you should see
Such breathing portraitures as never man
Found in the Pitti or the Vatican.

Here sits our POET, Laureate, if you will.
Long has he worn the wreath, and wears it still.
Dead? Nay, not so; and yet they say his bust
Looks down on marbles covering royal dust,
Kings by the Grace of God, or Nature's grace;
Dead! No! Alive! I see him in his place,
Full-featured, with the bloom that heaven denies
Her children, pinched by cold New England skies,
Too often, while the nursery's happier few
Win from a summer cloud its roseate hue.
Kind, soft-voiced, gentle, in his eye there shines
The ray serene that filled Evangeline's.
Modest he seems, not shy; content to wait
Amid the noisy clamor of debate
The looked-for moment when a peaceful word
Smooths the rough ripples louder tongues have stirred.
In every tone I mark his tender grace
And all his poems hinted in his face;
What tranquil joy his friendly presence gives!
How could I think him dead? He lives! He lives!

There, at the table's further end I see
In his old place our Poet's *vis-à-vis*,
The great PROFESSOR, strong, broad-shouldered, square,
In life's rich noontide, joyous, debonair.
His social hour no leaden care alloys,
His laugh rings loud and mirthful as a boy's,—

That lusty laugh the Puritan forgot,—
What ear has heard it and remembers not?
How often, halting at some wide crevasse
Amid the windings of his Alpine pass,
High up the cliffs, the climbing mountaineer,
Listening the far-off avalanche to hear,
Silent, and leaning on his steel-shod staff,
Has heard that cheery voice, that ringing laugh,
From the rude cabin whose nomadic walls
Creep with the moving glacier as it crawls!
How does vast Nature lead her living train
In ordered sequence through that spacious brain,
As in the primal hour when Adam named
The new-born tribes that young creation claimed!—
How will her realm be darkened, losing thee,
Her darling, whom we call *our* AGASSIZ!

But who is he whose massive frame belies
The maiden shyness of his downcast eyes?
Who broods in silence till, by questions pressed,
Some answer struggles from his laboring breast?
An artist Nature meant to dwell apart,
Locked in his studio with a human heart,
Tracking its caverned passions to their lair,
And all its throbbing mysteries laying bare.
Count it no marvel that he broods alone
Over the heart he studies,—'tis his own;
So in his page, whatever shape it wear,
The Essex wizard's shadowed self is there,—
The great ROMANCER, hid beneath his veil
Like the stern preacher of his sombre tale;
Virile in strength, yet bashful as a girl,
Prouder than Hester, sensitive as Pearl.

From his mild throng of worshippers released,
Our Concord Delphi sends its chosen priest,
Prophet or poet, mystic, sage, or seer,
By every title always welcome here.
Why that ethereal spirit's frame describe?
You know the race-marks of the Brahmin tribe,—
The spare, slight form, the sloping shoulders' droop,
The calm, scholastic mien, the clerkly stoop,
The lines of thought the sharpened features wear,
Carved by the edge of keen New England air.
List! for he speaks! As when a king would choose
The jewels for his bride, he might refuse
This diamond for its flaw,—find that less bright
Than those, its fellows, and a pearl less white
Than fits her snowy neck, and yet at last,
The fairest gems are chosen, and made fast
In golden fetters; so, with light delays
He seeks the fittest word to fill his phrase;
Nor vain nor idle his fastidious quest,
His chosen word is sure to prove the best.
Where in the realm of thought, whose air is song,
Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?
He seems a winged Franklin, sweetly wise,
Born to unlock the secrets of the skies;
And which the nobler calling,—if 'tis fair
Terrestrial with celestial to compare,—
To guide the storm-cloud's elemental flame,
Or walk the chambers whence the lightning came,
Amidst the sources of its subtile fire,
And steal their effluence for his lips and lyre?
If lost at times in vague aerial flights,
None treads with firmer footstep when he lights;
A soaring nature, ballasted with sense,
Wisdom without her wrinkles or pretence,
In every Bible he has faith to read,
And every altar helps to shape his creed.
Ask you what name this prisoned spirit bears
While with ourselves this fleeting breath it shares?
Till angels greet him with a sweeter one
In heaven, on earth we call him EMERSON.

I start; I wake; the vision is withdrawn;
Its figures fading like the stars at dawn;
Crossed from the roll of life their cherished names,
And memory's pictures fading in their frames;
Yet life is lovelier for these transient gleams
Of buried friendships; blest is he who dreams!

1888

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

1807–1892

PROEM

I LOVE the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest
morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing
of the sky.

The rigor of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labor's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm
and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed
eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to
find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were
my own.

O Freedom! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on
thy shrine!

1847 1849

MASSACHUSETTS TO VIRGINIA [1]

THE blast from Freedom's Northern hills, upon its Southern way,
Bears greeting to Virginia from Massachusetts Bay:
No word of haughty challenging, nor battle bugle's peal,
Nor steady tread of marching files, nor clang of horsemen's steel.

No trains of deep-mouthed cannon along our highways go;
Around our silent arsenals untrodden lies the snow;
And to the land-breeze of our ports, upon their errands far,
A thousand sails of commerce swell, but none are spread for war.

1 'Written on reading an account of the proceedings of the citizens of Norfolk, Va., in reference to George Latimer, the alleged fugitive slave, who was seized in Boston without warrant at the request of James B. Grey, of Norfolk, claiming to be his master. The case caused great excitement North and South, and led to the presentation of a petition to Congress, signed by more than fifty thousand citizens of Massachusetts, calling for such laws and proposed amendments to the Constitution as should relieve the Commonwealth from all further participation in the crime of oppression. George Latimer himself was finally given free papers for the sum of four hundred dollars.' Author's note, *The Writings of John Greenleaf Whittier*(Boston, 1888),III,80.

'Perhaps a word of explanation may be needed in regard to a class of poems written between the years 1832 and 1865. Of their defects from an artistic point of view it is not necessary to speak. They were the earnest and often vehement expression of the writer's thought and feeling at critical periods in the great conflict between Freedom and Slavery. They were written with no expectation that they would survive the occasions which called them forth: they were protests, alarm signals, trumpet-calls to action, words wrung from the writer's heart, forged at white heat, and of course lacking the finish and careful word-selection which reflection and patient brooding over them might have given. Such as they are, they belong to the history of the Anti-Slavery movement, and may serve as way-marks of its progress. If their language at times seems severe and harsh, the monstrous wrong of Slavery which provoked it must be its excuse, if any is needed. In attacking it, we did not measure our words. "It is," said Garrison, "a waste of politeness to be courteous to the devil." ' Whittier, Introduction, ibid.,I,14–15.

We hear thy threats, Virginia! thy stormy words and high,
Swell harshly on the Southern winds which melt along our sky;
Yet, not one brown, hard hand foregoes its honest labor here,
No hewer of our mountain oaks suspends his axe in fear.

Wild are the waves which lash the reefs along St. George's bank;
Cold on the shore of Labrador the fog lies white and dank;
Through storm, and wave, and blinding mist, stout are the hearts which man
The fishing-smacks of Marblehead, the sea-boats of Cape Ann.

The cold north light and wintry sun glare on their icy forms,
Bent grimly o'er their straining lines or wrestling with the storms;
Free as the winds they drive before, rough as the waves they roam,
They laugh to scorn the slaver's threat against their rocky home.

What means the Old Dominion? Hath she forgot the day
When o'er her conquered valleys swept the Briton's steel array?
How side by side, with sons of hers, the Massachusetts men
Encountered Tarleton's charge of fire, and stout Cornwallis, then?

Forgets she how the Bay State, in answer to the call
Of her old House of Burgesses, spoke out from Faneuil Hall?
When, echoing back her Henry's cry, came pulsing on each breath
Of Northern winds, the thrilling sounds of 'Liberty or Death!'

What asks the Old Dominion? If now her sons have proved
False to their fathers' memory, false to the faith they loved;
If she can scoff at Freedom, and its great charter spurn,
Must we of Massachusetts from truth and duty turn?

We hunt your bondmen, flying from Slavery's hateful hell;
Our voices, at your bidding, take up the bloodhound's yell;
We gather, at your summons, above our fathers' graves,
From Freedom's holy altar-horns to tear your wretched slaves!

Thank God! not yet so vilely can Massachusetts bow;
The spirit of her early time is with her even now;
Dream not because her Pilgrim blood moves slow and calm and cool,
She thus can stoop her chainless neck, a sister's slave and tool!

All that a sister State should do, all that a free State may,
Heart, hand, and purse we proffer, as in our early day;
But that one dark loathsome burden ye must stagger with alone,
And reap the bitter harvest which ye yourselves have sown!

Hold, while ye may, your struggling slaves, and burden God's free air
With woman's shriek beneath the lash, and manhood's wild despair;
Cling closer to the 'cleaving curse' that writes upon your plains
The blasting of Almighty wrath against a land of chains.

Still shame your gallant ancestry, the cavaliers of old,
By watching round the shambles where human flesh is sold;
Gloat o'er the new-born child, and count his market value, when
The maddened mother's cry of woe shall pierce the slaver's den!

Lower than plummet soundeth, sink the Virginia name;
Plant, if ye will, your fathers' graves with rankest weeds of shame;
Be, if ye will, the scandal of God's fair universe;
We wash our hands forever of your sin and shame and curse.

A voice from lips whereon the coal from
Freedom's shrine hath been,
Thrilled, as but yesterday, the hearts of
Berkshire's mountain men:
The echoes of that solemn voice are sadly
lingering still
In all our sunny valleys, on every wind-
swept hill.

And when the prowling man-thief came
hunting for his prey
Beneath the very shadow of Bunker's shaft
of gray,
How, through the free lips of the son, the
father's warning spoke;
How, from its bonds of trade and sect, the
Pilgrim city broke!

A hundred thousand right arms were lifted
up on high,
A hundred thousand voices sent back their
loud reply;
Through the thronged towns of Essex the
startling summons rang,
And up from bench and loom and wheel
her young mechanics sprang!

The voice of free, broad Middlesex, of
thousands as of one,
The shaft of Bunker calling to that of
Lexington;
From Norfolk's ancient villages, from
Plymouth's rocky bound
To where Nantucket feels the arms of ocean
close her round;

From rich and rural Worcester, where
through the calm repose
Of cultured vales and fringing woods the
gentle Nashua flows,
To where Wachuset's wintry blasts the
mountain larches stir,
Swelled up to Heaven the thrilling cry of
'God save Latimer!'

And sandy Barnstable rose up, wet with
the salt sea spray;
And Bristol sent her answering shout down
Narragansett Bay!
Along the broad Connecticut old Hampden
felt the thrill,
And the cheer of Hampshire's woodmen
swept down from Holyoke Hill.

The voice of Massachusetts! Of her free
sons and daughters,
Deep calling unto deep aloud, the sound of
many waters!
Against the burden of that voice what
tyrant power shall stand?
No fetters in the Bay State! No slave upon
her land!

Look to it well, Virginians! In calmness we
have borne,
In answer to our faith and trust, your insult
and your scorn;
You've spurned our kindest counsels;
you've hunted for our lives;
And shaken round our hearths and homes
your manacles and gyves!

We wage no war, we lift no arm, we fling no
torch within
The fire-damps of the quaking mine
beneath your soil of sin;
We leave ye with your bondmen, to
wrestle, while ye can,
With the strong upward tendencies and
godlike soul of man!

But for us and for our children, the vow
which we have given
For freedom and humanity is registered in
heaven;
No slave-hunt in our borders,—no pirate
on our strand!
No fetters in the Bay State,—no slave upon
our land!

1843 1843

SONG OF SLAVES IN THE DESERT

WHERE are we going? where are we going,
Where are we going, Rubee?

Lord of peoples, lord of lands,
Look across these shining sands,
Through the furnace of the noon,
Through the white light of the moon.
Strong the Ghiblee wind is blowing,
Strange and large the world is growing!
Speak and tell us where we are going,
Where are we going, Rubee?

Bornou land was rich and good,
Wells of water, fields of food,

Dourra fields, and bloom of bean,
And the palm-tree cool and green:
Bornou land we see no longer,
Here we thirst and here we hunger,
Here the Moor-man smites in anger:
Where are we going, Rubee?

When we went from Bornou land,
We were like the leaves and sand,
We were many, we are few;
Life has one, and death has two:
Whitened bones our path are showing,
Thou All-seeing, thou All-knowing!
Hear us, tell us, where are we going,
Where are we going, Rubee?

Moons of marches from our eyes
Bornou land behind us lies;
Stranger round us day by day
Bends the desert circle gray;
Wild the waves of sand are flowing,
Hot the winds above them blowing,—
Lord of all things! where are we going?
Where are we going, Rubee?

We are weak, but Thou art strong;
Short our lives, but Thine is long;
We are blind, but Thou hast eyes;
We are fools, but Thou art wise!
Thou, our morrow's pathway knowing
Through the strange world round us growing,
Hear us, tell us where are we going,
Where are we going, Rubee?

1847 1856

ICHABOD [1]

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

Revile him not, the Tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains;
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!

1850 1850

THE BAREFOOT BOY

BLESSINGS on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;

1 'This poem was the outcome of the surprise and grief and forecast of evil consequences which I felt on reading the seventh of March speech of Daniel Webster in support of the "compromise," and the Fugitive Slave Law. No partisan or personal enmity dictated it. On the contrary my admiration of the splendid personality and intellectual power of the great Senator was never stronger than when I laid down his speech, and, in one of the saddest moments of my life, penned my protest. I saw, as I wrote, with painful clearness its sure results,—the Slave Power arrogant and defiant, strengthened and encouraged to carry out its scheme for the extension of its baleful system, or the dissolution of the Union, the guaranties of personal liberty in the free States broken down, and the whole country made the hunting-ground of slave-catchers. In the horror of such a vision, so soon fearfully fulfilled, if one spoke at all, he could only speak in tones of stern and sorrowful rebuke.' Author's note, ibid., IV,61.

From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye,—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy,—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread;
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

1855 1856

FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE

INSCRIBED TO FRIENDS UNDER ARREST FOR TREASON AGAINST THE SLAVE POWER

THE age is dull and mean. Men creep,
Not walk; with blood too pale and tame
To pay the debt they owe to shame;
Buy cheap, sell dear; eat, drink, and sleep
Down-pillowed, deaf to moaning want;

Pay tithes for soul-insurance; keep
Six days to Mammon, one to Cant.

In such a time, give thanks to God,
That somewhat of the holy rage
With which the prophets in their age
On all its decent seemings trod,
Has set your feet upon the lie,
That man and ox and soul and clod
Are market stock to sell and buy!

The hot words from your lips, my own,
To caution trained, might not repeat;
But if some tares among the wheat
Of generous thought and deed were sown,
No common wrong provoked your zeal;
The silken gauntlet that is thrown
In such a quarrel rings like steel.

The brave old strife the fathers saw
For Freedom calls for men again
Like those who battled not in vain
For England's Charter, Alfred's law;
And right of speech and trial just
Wage in your name their ancient war
With venal courts and perjured trust.

God's ways seem dark, but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day;
The evil cannot brook delay,
The good can well afford to wait.
Give ermined knaves their hour of crime;
Ye have the future grand and great,
The safe appeal of Truth to Time!

1855 1856

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE [1]

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rime,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calendar's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
Over and over the Mænads sang:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship, in Chaleur Bay,—
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
'Lay by! lay by!' they called to him.
Back he answered, 'Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!'

1 Under the headline 'Melancholy' the *Salem Gazette* for 4 Nov. 1808 contained the following communication from a Capt. Gibbons: 'Friday, at 11 P.M. sprung a leak, and immediately filled: at 12 P.M. spoke to the sch. *Betsy*, for Marblehead, but who, contrary to the principles of humanity, gave us no assistance!! On Saturday, at 3 P.M. Capt. Gibbons, Capt. Danford, passenger, Joseph Maxwell, of Portland do. and David Stanford, of Brunswick, do. were taken off the wreck by Mr. Hardy, of Truro, in a whale boat, and the tempest increasing so fast, could not return to relieve the four remaining. . . . When the *Betsy* arrived at Marblehead on Sunday last, information was given of the wreck, and two vessels were immediately dispatched to save the people, but alas! too late; they were doubtless swallowed up in the ocean. The shocking indifference of the master (Ireson) to the lives of his fellow creatures has excited the strongest resentment in the people of Marblehead, who have a deservedly high reputation for their exertions in the cause of humanity.'

The form of the resentment became locally traditional, and Whittier wrote in 1857 to James Russell Lowell, as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*: 'I send for December . . . a bit of a Yankee ballad, the spirit of which pleases me more than the execution. Will it do? . . . The incident occurred sometime in the last century. The refrain is the actual song of the women on this march. To relish it, one must understand the peculiar tone and dialect of the ancient Marbleheaders.' Quoted, Pickard, *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston, 1894), 406.

And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

'Hear me, neighbors!' at last he cried,—
'What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!'
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, 'God has touched him! why should we?'
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
'Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!'
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

1857 1860

TELLING THE BEES [1]

HERE is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
Heavy and slow;
And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze;
And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

1 'A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home.' Author's note, *The Writings of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston, 1888), I, 186.

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my Sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed,—
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now,—the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,—
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, 'My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day:
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away.'

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:—
'Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!'

1858 1860

BARBARA FRIETCHIE [1]

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall;

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

'Halt!'—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
'Fire!'—out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

'Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag,' she said.

1 There was much dispute as to the truth of the incident. Whittier wrote: 'That there was a Dame Frietchie in Frederick who loved the old flag is not disputed by any one. As for the rest I do not feel responsible. If there was no such occurrence, so much the worse for Frederick City.' Quoted, Pickard, *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston, 1894), 457.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word:

'Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!' he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

1863 1864

LAUS DEO! [1]

It is done!
Clang of bell and roar of gun
Send the tidings up and down.
How the belfries rock and reel!
How the great guns, peal on peal,
Fling the joy from town to town!

Ring, O bells!
Every stroke exulting tells
Of the burial hour of crime.
Loud and long, that all may hear,
Ring for every listening ear
Of Eternity and Time!

Let us kneel:
God's own voice is in that peal,
And this spot is holy ground.
Lord, forgive us! What are we,
That our eyes this glory see,
That our ears have heard the sound!

For the Lord
On the whirlwind is abroad;
In the earthquake He has spoken;
He has smitten with His thunder
The iron walls asunder,
And the gates of brass are broken!

Loud and long
Lift the old exulting song;
Sing with Miriam by the sea,
He has cast the mighty down;
Horse and rider sink and drown;
'He hath triumphed gloriously!'

Did we dare,
In our agony of prayer,
Ask for more than He has done?
When was ever His right hand
Over any time or land
Stretched as now beneath the sun?

How they pale,
Ancient myth and song and tale,
In this wonder of our days,
When the cruel rod of war
Blossoms white with righteous law,
And the wrath of man is praise!

Blotted out!
All within and all about
Shall a fresher life begin;
Freer breathe the universe
As it rolls its heavy curse
On the dead and buried sin!

It is done!
In the circuit of the sun
Shall the sound thereof go forth.
It shall bid the sad rejoice,
It shall give the dumb a voice,
It shall belt with joy the earth!

Ring and swing,
Bells of joy! On morning's wing
Send the song of praise abroad!

1 'On hearing the bells ring on the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery.' Author's note, *The Writings of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston, 1888), III,254.

With the sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns,
Who alone is Lord and God!
1865 1865

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

O FRIENDS! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal for God
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds:
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God! He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God.

Ye praise His justice; even such
His pitying love I deem:
Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know:
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruisèd reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
  Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
  My human heart on Thee!
1865 1867

SNOW-BOUND [1]

A Winter Idyl

The sun that brief December day
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,
And, darkly circled, gave at noon
A sadder light than waning moon.
Slow tracing down the thickening sky
Its mute and ominous prophecy,
A portent seeming less than threat,
It sank from sight before it set.
A chill no coat, however stout,
Of homespun stuff could quite shut out,
A hard, dull bitterness of cold,
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,
The coming of the snow-storm told.
The wind blew east; we heard the roar
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

Meanwhile we did our nightly chores,—
Brought in the wood from out of doors,
Littered the stalls, and from the mows
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows:
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,
Impatient down the stanchion rows
The cattle shake their walnut bows;
While, peering from his early perch
Upon the scaffold's pole of birch,
The cock his crested helmet bent
And down his querulous challenge sent.

Unwarmed by any sunset light
The gray day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the wingèd snow:
And ere the early bedtime came
The white drift piled the window-frame,
And through the glass the clothes-line posts
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts.

So all night long the storm roared on:
The morning broke without a sun;
In tiny spherule traced with lines
Of Nature's geometric signs,
In starry flake, and pellicle,
All day the hoary meteor fell;
And, when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown,
On nothing we could call our own.
Around the glistening wonder bent
The blue walls of the firmament,
No cloud above, no earth below,—
A universe of sky and snow!
The old familiar sights of ours
Took marvellous shapes; strange domes
  and towers
Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,

1 "The inmates of the family at the Whittier homestead who are referred to in the poem were my father, mother, my brother and two sisters, and my uncle and aunt both unmarried. In addition, there was the district school-master who boarded with us. The "not unfeared, half-welcome guest" was Harriet Livermore, daughter of Judge Livermore, of New Hampshire, a young woman of fine natural ability, enthusiastic, eccentric, with slight control over her violent temper, which sometimes made her religious profession doubtful. She was equally ready to exhort in school-house prayer-meetings and dance in a Washington ball-room, while her father was a member of Congress. She early embraced the doctrine of the Second Advent, and felt it her duty to proclaim the Lord's speedy coming. With this message she crossed the Atlantic and spent the greater part of a long life in travelling over Europe and Asia. She lived some time with Lady Hester Stanhope, a woman as fantastic and mentally strained as herself, on the slope of Mt. Lebanon, but finally quarrelled with her in regard to two white horses with red marks on their backs which suggested the idea of saddles, on which her titled hostess expected to ride into Jerusalem with the Lord. A friend of mine found her, when quite an old woman, wandering in Syria with a tribe of Arabs, who with the Oriental notion that madness is inspiration, accepted her as their prophetess and leader. At the time referred to in *Snow-Bound* she was boarding at the Rocks Village about two miles from us.

'In my boyhood, in our lonely farm-house, we had scanty sources of information; few books and only a small weekly newspaper. Our only annual was the Almanac. Under such circumstances story-telling was a necessary resource in the long winter evenings. My father when a young man had traversed the wilderness to Canada, and could tell us of his adventures with Indians and wild beasts and of his sojourn in the French villages. My uncle was ready with his record of hunting and fishing and, it must be confessed, with stories which he at least half believed, of witchcraft and apparitions. My mother, who was born in the Indian-haunted region of Somerworth, New Hampshire, between Dover and Portsmouth, told us of the inroads of the savages, and the narrow escape of her ancestors. She described strange people who lived on the Piscataqua and Cocheco, among whom was Bantam the sorcerer. I have in my possession the wizard's "conjuring book," which he solemnly opened when consulted. It is a copy of Cornelius Agrippa's *Magic* printed in 1651. . . .' Author's note, ibid.,II,134–35.

Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;
A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed,
A fenceless drift what once was road;
The bridle-post an old man sat
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;
The well-curb had a Chinese roof;
And even the long sweep, high aloof,
In its slant splendor, seemed to tell
Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

A prompt, decisive man, no breath
Our father wasted: 'Boys, a path!'
Well pleased (for when did farmer boy
Count such a summons less than joy?)
Our buskins on our feet we drew;
With mittened hands, and caps drawn low,
To guard our necks and ears from snow,
We cut the solid whiteness through.
And, where the drift was deepest, made
A tunnel walled and overlaid
With dazzling crystal: we had read
Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,
And to our own his name we gave,
With many a wish the luck were ours
To test his lamp's supernal powers.
We reached the barn with merry din,
And roused the prisoned brutes within.
The old horse thrust his long head out,
And grave with wonder gazed about;
The cock his lusty greeting said,
And forth his speckled harem led;
The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,
And mild reproach of hunger looked;
The hornèd patriarch of the sheep,
Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep,
Shook his sage head with gesture mute,
And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore
The loosening drift its breath before;
Low circling round its southern zone,
The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.
No church-bell lent its Christian tone
To the savage air, no social smoke
Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.
A solitude made more intense
By dreary-voicèd elements,
The shrieking of the mindless wind,
The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,
And on the glass the unmeaning beat
Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.
Beyond the circle of our hearth
No welcome sound of toil or mirth
Unbound the spell, and testified
Of human life and thought outside.
We minded that the sharpest ear
The buried brooklet could not hear.
The music of whose liquid lip
Had been to us companionship,
And, in our lonely life, had grown
To have an almost human tone.

As night drew on, and, from the crest
Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,
The sun, a snow-blown traveller, sank
From sight beneath the smothering bank,
We piled, with care, our nightly stack
Of wood against the chimney-back,—
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,
And on its top the stout back-stick;
The knotty forestick laid apart,
And filled between with curious art
The ragged brush; then, hovering near,
We watched the first red blaze appear,
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
Until the old, rude-furnished room
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;
While radiant with a mimic flame
Outside the sparkling drift became,
And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree
Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.
The crane and pendent trammels showed,
The Turks' heads on the andirons glowed;
While childish fancy, prompt to tell
The meaning of the miracle,
Whispered the old rhyme: '*Under the tree,*
When fire outdoors burns merrily,
There the witches are making tea.'

The moon above the eastern wood
Shone at its full; the hill-range stood
Transfigured in the silver flood,
Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,
Dead white, save where some sharp ravine
Took shadow, or the sombre green
Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black
Against the whiteness at their back.
For such a world and such a night
Most fitting that unwarming light,
Which only seemed where'er it fell
To make the coldness visible.

Shut in from all the world without,
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
Content to let the north-wind roar
In baffled rage at pane and door,
While the red logs before us beat
The frost-line back with tropic heat;

And ever, when a louder blast
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,
The merrier up its roaring draught
The great throat of the chimney laughed;
The house-dog on his paws outspread
Laid to the fire his drowsy head,
The cat's dark silhouette on the wall
A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;
And, for the winter fireside meet,
Between the andirons' straddling feet,
The mug of cider simmered slow,
The apples sputtered in a row,
And, close at hand, the basket stood
With nuts from brown October's wood.

What matter how the night behaved?
What matter how the north-wind raved?
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
O Time and Change!—with hair as gray
As was my sire's that winter day,
How strange it seems, with so much gone
Of life and love, to still live on!
Ah, brother! only I and thou
Are left of all that circle now,—
The dear home faces whereupon
That fitful firelight paled and shone.
Henceforward, listen as we will,
The voices of that hearth are still;
Look where we may, the wide earth o'er
Those lighted faces smile no more.
We tread the paths their feet have worn,
We sit beneath their orchard trees,
We hear, like them, the hum of bees
And rustle of the bladed corn;
We turn the pages that they read,
Their written words we linger o'er,
But in the sun they cast no shade,
No voice is heard, no sign is made,
No step is on the conscious floor!
Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust,
(Since He who knows our need is just)
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!

We sped the time with stories old,
Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told,
Or stammered from our school-book lore
'The Chief of Gambia's golden shore.'
How often since, when all the land
Was clay in Slavery's shaping hand,
As if a far-blown trumpet stirred
The languorous sin-sick air, I heard:
'Does not the voice of reason cry,
Claim the first right which Nature gave,
From the red scourge of bondage fly,
Nor deign to live a burdened slave!'
Our father rode again his ride
On Memphremagog's wooded side;
Sat down again to moose and samp
In trapper's hut and Indian camp;
Lived o'er the old idyllic ease
Beneath St. François' hemlock-trees;
Again for him the moonlight shone
On Norman cap and bodiced zone;
Again he heard the violin play
Which led the village dance away,
And mingled in its merry whirl
The grandam and the laughing girl.
Or, nearer home, our steps he led
Where Salisbury's level marshes spread
Mile-wide as flies the laden bee;
Where merry mowers, hale and strong,
Swept, scythe on scythe, their swaths along
The low green prairies of the sea.
We shared the fishing off Boar's Head,
And round the rocky Isles of Shoals
The hake-broil on the drift-wood coals;
The chowder on the sand-beach made,
Dipped by the hungry, steaming hot,
With spoons of clam-shell from the pot.
We heard the tales of witchcraft old,
And dream and sign and marvel told
To sleepy listeners as they lay
Stretched idly on the salted hay,
Adrift along the winding shores,
When favoring breezes deigned to blow
The square sail of the gundelow
And idle lay the useless oars.

Our mother, while she turned her wheel
Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,
Told how the Indian hordes came down
At midnight on Cocheco town,
And how her own great-uncle bore
His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.
Recalling, in her fitting phrase,
So rich and picturesque and free,
(The common unrhymed poetry
Of simple life and country ways),
The story of her early days,—
She made us welcome to her home;

Old hearths grew wide to give us room;
We stole with her a frightened look
At the gray wizard's conjuring-book,
The fame whereof went far and wide
Through all the simple country side;
We heard the hawks at twilight play,
The boat-horn on Piscataqua,
The loon's weird laughter far away;
We fished her little trout-brook, knew
What flowers in wood and meadow grew,
What sunny hillsides autumn-brown
She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,
Saw where in sheltered cove and bay
The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,
And heard the wild-geese calling loud
Beneath the gray November cloud.

Then, haply, with a look more grave,
And soberer tone, some tale she gave
From painful Sewell's ancient tome,
Beloved in every Quaker home,
Of faith fire-winged by martyrdom,
Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint,—
Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint!—
Who, when the dreary calms prevailed,
And water-butt and bread-cask failed,
And cruel, hungry eyes pursued
His portly presence mad for food,
With dark hints muttered under breath
Of casting lots for life or death,
Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies,
To be himself the sacrifice.
Then, suddenly, as if to save
The good man from his living grave,
A ripple on the water grew,
A school of porpoise flashed in view.
'Take, eat,' he said, 'and be content;
These fishes in my stead are sent
By Him who gave the tangled ram
To spare the child of Abraham.'

Our uncle, innocent of books,
Was rich in lore of fields and brooks,
The ancient teachers never dumb
Of Nature's unhoused lyceum.
In moons and tides and weather wise,
He read the clouds as prophecies,
And foul or fair could well divine,
By many an occult hint and sign,
Holding the cunning-warded keys
To all the woodcraft mysteries;
Himself to Nature's heart so near
That all her voices in his ear
Of beast or bird had meanings clear,
Like Apollonius of old,
Who knew the tales the sparrows told,
Or Hermes who interpreted
What the sage cranes of Nilus said;
Content to live where life began;
A simple, guileless, childlike man,
Strong only on his native grounds,
The little world of sights and sounds
Whose girdle was the parish bounds,
Whereof his fondly partial pride
The common features magnified,
As Surrey hills to mountains grew
In White of Selborne's loving view,—
He told how teal and loon he shot,
And how the eagle's eggs he got,
The feats on pond and river done,
The prodigies of rod and gun;
Till, warming with the tales he told,
Forgotten was the outside cold,
The bitter wind unheeded blew,
From ripening corn the pigeons flew,
The partridge drummed i' the wood, the mink
Went fishing down the river-brink.
In fields with bean or clover gay,
The woodchuck, like a hermit gray,
Peered from the doorway of his cell;
The muskrat plied the mason's trade,
And tier by tier his mud-walls laid;
And from the shagbark overhead
The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell.

Next, the dear aunt, whose smile of cheer
And voice in dreams I see and hear,—
The sweetest woman ever Fate
Perverse denied a household mate,
Who, lonely, homeless, not the less
Found peace in love's unselfishness,
And welcome wheresoe'er she went,
A calm and gracious element,
Whose presence seemed the sweet income
And womanly atmosphere of home,—
Called up her girlhood memories,
The huskings and the apple-bees,
The sleigh-rides and the summer sails,
Weaving through all the poor details
And homespun warp of circumstance
A golden woof-thread of romance.
For well she kept her genial mood
And simple faith of maidenhood;
Before her still a cloud-land lay,
The mirage loomed across her way;
The morning dew, that dries so soon
With others, glistened at her noon;
Through years of toil and soil and care,
From glossy tress to thin gray hair.

All unprofaned she held apart
The virgin fancies of the heart.
Be shame to him of woman born
Who hath for such but thought of scorn.

There, too, our elder sister plied
Her evening task the stand beside;
A full, rich nature, free to trust,
Truthful and almost sternly just,
Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,
And make her generous thought a fact,
Keeping with many a light disguise
The secret of self-sacrifice.
O heart sore-tried! thou hast the best
That Heaven itself could give thee,—rest,
Rest from all bitter thoughts and things!
How many a poor one's blessing went
With thee beneath the low green tent
Whose curtain never outward swings!

As one who held herself a part
Of all she saw, and let her heart
Against the household bosom lean,
Upon the motley-braided mat
Our youngest and our dearest sat,
Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,
Now bathed in the unfading green
And holy peace of Paradise.
Oh, looking from some heavenly hill,
Or from the shade of saintly palms,
Or silver reach of river calms,
Do those large eyes behold me still?
With me one little year ago:—
The chill weight of the winter snow
For months upon her grave has lain;
And now, when summer south-winds blow
And brier and harebell bloom again,
I tread the pleasant paths we trod,
I see the violet-sprinkled sod
Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak
The hillside flowers she loved to seek,
Yet following me where'er I went
With dark eyes full of love's content.
The birds are glad; the brier-rose fills
The air with sweetness; all the hills
Stretch green to June's unclouded sky;
But still I wait with ear and eye
For something gone which should be nigh,
A loss in all familiar things,
In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.
And yet, dear heart! remembering thee,
Am I not richer than of old?
Safe in thy immortality,
What change can reach the wealth I hold?
What chance can mar the pearl and gold
Thy love hath left in trust with me?
And while in life's late afternoon,
Where cool and long the shadows grow,
I walk to meet the night that soon
Shall shape and shadow overflow,
I cannot feel that thou art far,
Since near at need the angels are;
And when the sunset gates unbar,
Shall I not see thee waiting stand,
And, white against the evening star,
The welcome of thy beckoning hand?

Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,
The master of the district school
Held at the fire his favored place,
Its warm glow lit a laughing face
Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared
The uncertain prophecy of beard.
He teased the mitten-blinded cat,
Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat,
Sang songs, and told us what befalls
In classic Dartmouth's college halls.
Born the wild Northern hills among,
From whence his yeoman father wrung
By patient toil subsistence scant,
Not competence and yet not want,
He early gained the power to pay
His cheerful, self-reliant way;
Could doff at ease his scholar's gown
To peddle wares from town to town;
Or through the long vacation's reach
In lonely lowland districts teach,
Where all the droll experience found
At stranger hearths in boarding round,
The moonlit skater's keen delight,
The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,
The rustic-party, with its rough
Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff,
And whirling plate, and forfeits paid,
His winter task a pastime made.
Happy the snow-locked homes wherein
He tuned his merry violin,
Or played the athlete in the barn,
Or held the good dame's winding-yarn,
Or mirth-provoking versions told
Of classic legends rare and old,
Wherein the scenes of Greece and Rome
Had all the commonplace of home,
And little seemed at best the odds
'Twixt Yankee pedlers and old gods;
Where Pindus-born Arachthus took
The guise of any grist-mill brook,
And dread Olympus at his will
Became a huckleberry hill.

A careless boy that night he seemed;
  But at his desk he had the look
And air of one who wisely schemed,
  And hostage from the future took
  In trainèd thought and lore of book.
Large-brained, clear-eyed, of such as he
Shall Freedom's young apostles be,
Who, following in War's bloody trail,
Shall every lingering wrong assail;
All chains from limb and spirit strike,
Uplift the black and white alike;
Scatter before their swift advance
The darkness and the ignorance,
The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth,
Which nurtured Treason's monstrous growth,
Made murder pastime, and the hell
Of prison-torture possible;
The cruel lie of caste refute,
Old forms remould, and substitute
For Slavery's lash the freeman's will,
For blind routine, wise-handed skill;
A school-house plant on every hill,
Stretching in radiate nerve-lines thence
The quick wires of intelligence;
Till North and South together brought
Shall own the same electric thought,
In peace a common flag salute,
And, side by side in labor's free
And unresentful rivalry,
Harvest the fields wherein they fought.

Another guest that winter night
Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.
Unmarked by time, and yet not young,
The honeyed music of her tongue
And words of meekness scarcely told
A nature passionate and bold,
Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,
Its milder features dwarfed beside
Her unbent will's majestic pride.
She sat among us, at the best,
A not unfeared, half-welcome guest,
Rebuking with her cultured phrase
Our homeliness of words and ways.
A certain pard-like, treacherous grace
  Swayed the lithe limbs and dropped the lash,
  Lent the white teeth their dazzling flash;
  And under low brows, black with night,
  Rayed out at times a dangerous light;
The sharp heat-lightnings of her face
Presaging ill to him whom Fate
Condemned to share her love or hate.
A woman tropical, intense
In thought and act, in soul and sense,
She blended in a like degree
The vixen and the devotee,
Revealing with each freak or feint
  The temper of Petruchio's Kate,
The raptures of Siena's saint.
Her tapering hand and rounded wrist
Had facile power to form a fist;
The warm, dark languish of her eyes
Was never safe from wrath's surprise.
Brows saintly calm and lips devout
Knew every change of scowl and pout;
And the sweet voice had notes more high
And shrill for social battle-cry.

Since then what old cathedral town
Has missed her pilgrim staff and gown,
What convent-gate has held its lock
Against the challenge of her knock!
Through Smyrna's plague-hushed thoroughfares,
Up sea-set Malta's rocky stairs,
Gray olive slopes of hills that hem
  Thy tombs and shrines, Jerusalem,
Or startling on her desert throne
The crazy Queen of Lebanon
With claims fantastic as her own,
Her tireless feet have held their way;
And still, unrestful, bowed, and gray,
She watches under Eastern skies,
  With hope each day renewed and fresh,
  The Lord's quick coming in the flesh,
Whereof she dreams and prophesies!

Where'er her troubled path may be,
  The Lord's sweet pity with her go!
The outward wayward life we see,
  The hidden springs we may not know.
Nor is it given us to discern
  What threads the fatal sisters spun,
  Through what ancestral years has run
The sorrow with the woman born,
What forged her cruel chain of moods,
What set her feet in solitudes,
  And held the love within her mute,
What mingled madness in the blood,
  A life-long discord and annoy,
  Water of tears with oil of joy,
And hid within the folded bud
  Perversities of flower and fruit.
It is not ours to separate
  The tangled skein of will and fate,
To show what metes and bounds should stand
Upon the soul's debatable land,

And between choice and Providence
Divide the circle of events;
But He who knows our frame is just,
Merciful and compassionate,
And full of sweet assurances
And hope for all the language is,
That He remembereth we are dust!

At last the great logs, crumbling low,
Sent out a dull and duller glow,
The bull's-eye watch that hung in view,
Ticking its weary circuit through,
Pointed with mutely warning sign
Its black hand to the hour of nine.
That sign the pleasant circle broke:
My uncle ceased his pipe to smoke,
Knocked from its bowl the refuse gray,
And laid it tenderly away,
Then roused himself to safely cover
The dull red brands with ashes over.
And while, with care, our mother laid
The work aside, her steps she stayed
One moment, seeking to express
Her grateful sense of happiness
For food and shelter, warmth and health,
And love's contentment more than wealth,
With simple wishes (not the weak,
Vain prayers which no fulfilment seek,
But such as warm the generous heart,
O'er-prompt to do with Heaven its part)
That none might lack, that bitter night,
For bread and clothing, warmth and light.

Within our beds awhile we heard
The wind that round the gables roared,
With now and then a ruder shock,
Which made our very bedsteads rock.
We heard the loosened clapboards tost,
The board-nails snapping in the frost;
And on us, through the unplastered wall,
Felt the light sifted snow-flakes fall.
But sleep stole on, as sleep will do
When hearts are light and life is new;
Faint and more faint the murmurs grew,
Till in the summer-land of dreams
They softened to the sound of streams,
Low stir of leaves, and dip of oars,
And lapsing waves on quiet shores.

Next morn we wakened with the shout
Of merry voices high and clear;
And saw the teamsters drawing near
To break the drifted highways out.
Down the long hillside treading slow
We saw the half-buried oxen go,
Shaking the snow from heads uptost,
Their straining nostrils white with frost.
Before our door the straggling train
Drew up, an added team to gain.
The elders threshed their hands a-cold,
Passed, with the cider-mug, their jokes
From lip to lip; the younger folks
Down the loose snow-banks, wrestling, rolled,
Then toiled again the cavalcade
O'er windy hill, through clogged ravine,
And woodland paths that wound between
Low drooping pine-boughs winter-weighed.
From every barn a team afoot,
At every house a new recruit,
Where, drawn by Nature's subtlest law
Haply the watchful young men saw
Sweet doorway pictures of the curls
And curious eyes of merry girls,
Lifting their hands in mock defence
Against the snow-ball's compliments,
And reading in each missive tost
The charm with Eden never lost.

We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound;
And, following where the teamsters led,
The wise old Doctor went his round,
Just pausing at our door to say,
In the brief autocratic way
Of one who, prompt at Duty's call,
Was free to urge her claim on all,
That some poor neighbor sick abed
At night our mother's aid would need.
For, one in generous thought and deed,
What mattered in the sufferer's sight
The Quaker matron's inward light,
The Doctor's mail of Calvin's creed?
All hearts confess the saints elect
Who, twain in faith, in love agree,
And melt not in an acid sect
The Christian pearl of charity!

So days went on: a week had passed
Since the great world was heard from last.
The Almanac we studied o'er,
Read and reread our little store
Of books and pamphlets, scarce a score;
One harmless novel, mostly hid
From younger eyes, a book forbid,
And poetry, (or good or bad,
A single book was all we had,)
Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted Muse,
A stranger to the heathen Nine,
Sang, with a somewhat nasal whine,

The wars of David and the Jews.
At last the floundering carrier bore
The village paper to our door.
Lo! broadening outward as we read,
To warmer zones the horizon spread;
In panoramic length unrolled
We saw the marvels that it told.
Before us passed the painted Creeks,
And daft McGregor on his raids
In Costa Rica's everglades.
And up Taygetos winding slow
Rode Ypsilanti's Mainote Greeks,
A Turk's head at each saddle-bow!
Welcome to us its week-old news,
Its corner for the rustic Muse,
Its monthly gauge of snow and rain,
Its record, mingling in a breath
The wedding bell and dirge of death;
Jest, anecdote, and love-lorn tale,
The latest culprit sent to jail;
Its hue and cry of stolen and lost,
Its vendue sales and goods at cost,
And traffic calling loud for gain.
We felt the stir of hall and street,
The pulse of life that round us beat;
The chill embargo of the snow
Was melted in the genial glow;
Wide swung again our ice-locked door,
And all the world was ours once more!

Clasp, Angel of the backward look
And folded wings of ashen gray
And voice of echoes far away,
The brazen covers of thy book;
The weird palimpsest old and vast,
Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past;
Where, closely mingling, pale and glow
The characters of joy and woe;
The monographs of outlived years,
Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,
Green hills of life that slope to death,
And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees
Shade off to mournful cypresses
With the white amaranths underneath.
Even while I look, I can but heed
The restless sands' incessant fall,
Importunate hours that hours succeed,
Each clamorous with its own sharp need,
And duty keeping pace with all.
Shut down and clasp the heavy lids;
I hear again the voice that bids
The dreamer leave his dream midway
For larger hopes and graver fears:
Life greatens in these later years,
The century's aloe flowers to-day!

Yet, haply, in some lull of life,
Some Truce of God which breaks its strife,
The worldling's eyes shall gather dew,
Dreaming in throngful city ways
Of winter joys his boyhood knew;
And dear and early friends—the few
Who yet remain—shall pause to view
These Flemish pictures of old days;
Sit with me by the homestead hearth,
And stretch the hands of memory forth
To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze!
And thanks untraced to lips unknown
Shall greet me like the odors blown
From unseen meadows newly mown,
Or lilies floating in some pond,
Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze beyond;
The traveller owns the grateful sense
Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,
And, pausing, takes with forehead bare
The benediction of the air.

1865 1866

OUR MASTER

IMMORTAL Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow
The mists of earth away!
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
How wide and far we stray!

Hush every lip, close every book,
The strife of tongues forbear;
Why forward reach, or backward look,
For love that clasps like air?

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down:
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For Him no depths can drown.

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,
The lineaments restore
Of Him we know in outward shape
And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign;
The world's long hope is dim;
The weary centuries watch in vain
The clouds of heaven for Him.

Death comes, life goes; the asking eye
And ear are answerless;
The grave is dumb, the hollow sky
Is sad with silentness.

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John His smile of love,
With Peter His rebuke.

In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is His own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name.

Our Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

Thou judgest us; Thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn;
The love that draws us nearer Thee
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to Thy sight;
And, naked to Thy glance,
Our secret sins are in the light
Of Thy pure countenance.

Thy healing pains, a keen distress
Thy tender light shines in;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,
Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to Thee,
And Thou rejectest none.

To Thee our full humanity,
Its joys and pains, belong;
The wrong of man to man on Thee
Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates Thee, who loves becomes
Therein to Thee allied;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
In Thee are multiplied.

Deep strike Thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most divine,
The flower of man and God!

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noon-day sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in Thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render Thee
Is still our Father's own;
No jealous claim or rivalry
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do Thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds,
And simple trust can find Thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self Thy service hath,
No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness, death
Our life, apart from Thine.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,
All labor vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy Cross
Is better than the sun.

Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven!

How vain, secure in all Thou art,
Our noisy championship!
The sighing of the contrite heart
Is more than flattering lip.

Not Thine the bigot's partial plea,
Nor Thine the zealot's ban;
Thou well canst spare a love of Thee
Which ends in hate of man.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may Thy service be?—
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,
We pile no graven stone;
He serves thee best who loveth most
His brothers and Thy own.

Thy litanies, sweet offices
Of love and gratitude;
Thy sacramental liturgies,
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
The vaulted nave around,
In vain the minster turret lift
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring Thy Christmas bells,
Thy inward altars raise;
Its faith and hope Thy canticles,
And its obedience praise!

1866 1867

THE PRESSED GENTIAN

THE time of gifts has come again,
And, on my northern window-pane,
Outlined against the day's brief light,
A Christmas token hangs in sight.
The wayside travellers, as they pass,
Mark the gray disk of clouded glass;
And the dull blankness seems, perchance,
Folly to their wise ignorance.

They cannot from their outlook see
The perfect grace it hath for me;
For there the flower, whose fringes through
The frosty breath of autumn blew,
Turns from without its face of bloom
To the warm tropic of my room,
As fair as when beside its brook
The hue of bending skies it took.

So from the trodden ways of earth,
Seem some sweet souls who veil their worth,
And offer to the careless glance
The clouding gray of circumstance.
They blossom best where hearth-fires burn,
To loving eyes alone they turn
The flowers of inward grace, that hide
Their beauty from the world outside.

But deeper meanings come to me,
My half-immortal flower, from thee!
Man judges from a partial view,
None ever yet his brother knew;
The Eternal Eye that sees the whole
May better read the darkened soul,
And find, to outward sense denied,
The flower upon its inmost side!

1872 1878

FROM THE BREWING OF SOMA

DEAR Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all
  Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessing fall
  As fell Thy manna down.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
  Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and
      stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
  The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
  Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and
      fire,
  O still, small voice of calm!

1872 1872

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819–1891

ON A CERTAIN CONDESCENSION IN FOREIGNERS

WALKING one day toward the Village, as we used to call it in the good old days, when almost every dweller in the town had been born in it, I was enjoying that delicious sense of disenthralment from the actual which the deepening twilight brings with it, giving as it does a sort of obscure novelty to things familiar. The coolness, the hush, broken only by the distant bleat of some belated goat, querulous to be disburthened of her milky load, the few faint stars, more guessed as yet than seen, the sense that the coming dark would so soon fold me in the secure privacy of its disguise,—all things combined in a result as near absolute peace as can be hoped for by a man who knows that there is a writ out against him in the hands of the printer's devil. For the moment, I was enjoying the blessed privilege of thinking without being called on to stand and deliver what I thought to the small public who are good enough to take any interest therein. I love old ways, and the path I was walking felt kindly to the feet it had known for almost fifty years. How many fleeting impressions it had shared with me! How many times I had lingered to study the shadows of the leaves mezzotinted upon the turf that edged it by the moon, of the bare boughs etched with a touch beyond Rembrandt by the same unconscious artist on the smooth page of snow! If I turned round, through dusky tree-gaps came the first twinkle of evening lamps in the dear old homestead. On Corey's hill I could see these tiny pharoses of love and home and sweet domestic thoughts flash out one by one across the blackening salt-meadow between. How much has not kerosene added to the cheerfulness of our evening landscape! A pair of night-herons flapped heavily over me toward the hidden river. The war was ended. I might walk townward without that aching dread of bulletins that had darkened the July sunshine and twice made the scarlet leaves of October seem stained with blood. I remembered with a pang, half-proud, half-painful, how, so many years ago, I had walked over the same path and felt round my finger the soft pressure of a little hand that was one day to harden with faithful grip of sabre. On how many paths, leading to how many homes where proud Memory does all she can to fill up the fireside gaps with shining shapes, must not men be walking in just such pensive mood as I? Ah, young heroes, safe in immortal youth as those of Homer, you at least carried your ideal hence untarnished! It is locked for you beyond moth or rust in the treasure-chamber of Death.

Is not a country, I thought, that has had such as they in it, that could give such as they a brave joy in dying for it, worth something, then? And as I felt more and more the soothing magic of evening's cool palm upon my temples, as my fancy came home from its revery, and my senses, with reawakened curiosity, ran to the front windows again from the viewless closet of abstraction, and felt a strange charm in finding the old tree and shabby fence still there under the travesty of falling night, nay, were conscious of an unsuspected newness

in familiar stars and the fading outlines of hills my earliest horizon, I was conscious of an immortal soul, and could not but rejoice in the unwaning goodliness of the world into which I had been born without any merit of my own. I thought of dear Henry Vaughan's rainbow, 'Still young and fine!' I remembered people who had to go over to the Alps to learn what the divine silence of snow was, who must run to Italy before they were conscious of the miracle wrought every day under their very noses by the sunset, who must call upon the Berkshire hills to teach them what a painter autumn was, while close at hand the Fresh Pond meadows made all oriels cheap with hues that showed as if a sunset-cloud had been wrecked among their maples. One might be worse off than even in America, I thought. There are some things so elastic that even the heavy roller of democracy cannot flatten them altogether down. The mind can weave itself warmly in the cocoon of its own thoughts and dwell a hermit anywhere. A country without traditions, without ennobling associations, a scramble of *parvenus*, with a horrible consciousness of shoddy running through politics, manners, art, literature, nay, religion itself? I confess, it did not seem so to me there in that illimitable quiet, that serene self-possession of nature, where Collins might have brooded his 'Ode to Evening,' or where those verses on Solitude in Dodsley's Collection, that Hawthorne liked so much, might have been composed. Traditions? Granting that we had none, all that is worth having in them is the common property of the soul,—an estate in gavel kind for all the sons of Adam,—and, moreover, if a man cannot stand on his two feet (the prime quality of whoever has left any tradition behind him), were it not better for him to be honest about it at once, and go down on all fours? And for associations, if one have not the wit to make them for himself out of native earth, no ready-made ones of other men will avail much. Lexington is none the worse to me for not being in Greece, nor Gettysburg that its name is not Marathon. 'Blessed old fields,' I was just exclaiming to myself, like one of Mrs. Radcliffe's heroes, 'dear acres, innocently secure from history, which these eyes first beheld, may you be also those to which they shall at last slowly darken!' when I was interrupted by a voice which asked me in German whether I was the Herr Professor, Doctor, So-and-so? The 'Doctor' was by brevet or vaticination, to make the grade easier to my pocket.

One feels so intimately assured that one is made up, in part, of shreds and leavings of the past, in part of the interpolations of other people, that an honest man would be slow in saying *yes* to such a question. But 'my name is So-and-so' is a safe answer, and I gave it. While I had been romancing with myself, the street-lamps had been lighted, and it was under one of these detectives that have robbed the Old Road of its privilege of sanctuary after nightfall that I was ambushed by my foe. The inexorable villain had taken my description, it appears, that I might have the less chance to escape him. Dr. Holmes tells us that we change our substance, not every seven years, as was once believed, but with every breath we draw. Why had I not the wit to avail myself of the subterfuge, and, like Peter, to renounce my identity, especially, as in certain moods of mine, I have often more than doubted of it myself? When a man is, as it were, his own front-door, and is thus knocked at, why may he not assume the right of that sacred wood to make every house a castle, by denying himself to all visitations? I was truly not at home when the question was put to me, but had to recall myself from all out-of-doors, and to piece my self-consciousness hastily together as well as I could before I answered it.

I knew perfectly well what was coming. It is seldom that debtors or good Samaritans waylay people under gas-lamps in order to force money upon them, so far as I have seen or heard. I was also aware, from considerable experience, that every foreigner is persuaded that, by doing this country the favor of coming to it, he has laid every native thereof under an obligation, pecuniary or other, as the case may be, whose discharge he is entitled-to on demand duly made in person or by letter. Too much learning (of this kind) had made me mad in the provincial sense of the word. I had begun life with the theory of giving something to every beggar that

came along, though sure of never finding a native-born countryman among them. In a small way, I was resolved to emulate Hatem Tai's tent, with its three hundred and sixty-five entrances, one for every day in the year,—I know not whether he was astronomer enough to add another for leap-years. The beggars were a kind of German-silver aristocracy; not real plate, to be sure, but better than nothing. Where everybody was overworked, they supplied the comfortable equipoise of absolute leisure, so æsthetically needful. Besides, I was but too conscious of a vagrant fibre in myself, which too often thrilled me in my solitary walks with the temptation to wander on into infinite space, and by a single spasm of resolution to emancipate myself from the drudgery of prosaic serfdom to respectability and the regular course of things. This prompting has been at times my familiar demon, and I could not but feel a kind of respectful sympathy for men who had dared what I had only sketched out to myself as a splendid possibility. For seven years I helped maintain one heroic man on an imaginary journey to Portland,—as fine an example as I have ever known of hopeless loyalty to an ideal. I assisted another so long in a fruitless attempt to reach Mecklenburg-Schwerin, that at last we grinned in each other's faces when we met, like a couple of augurs. He was possessed by this harmless mania as some are by the North Pole, and I shall never forget his look of regretful compassion (as for one who was sacrificing his higher life to the fleshpots of Egypt) when I at last advised him somewhat strenuously to go to the D——, whither the road was so much travelled that he could not miss it. General Banks, in his noble zeal for the honor of his country, would confer on the Secretary of State the power of imprisoning, in case of war, all these seekers of the unattainable, thus by a stroke of the pen annihilating the single poetic element in our humdrum life. Alas! not everybody has the genius to be a Bobbin-Boy, or doubtless all these also would have chosen that more prosperous line of life! But moralists, sociologists, political economists, and taxes have slowly convinced me that my beggarly sympathies were a sin against society. Especially was the Buckle doctrine of averages (so flattering to our free-will) persuasive with me; for as there must be in every year a certain number who would bestow an alms on these abridged editions of the Wandering Jew, the withdrawal of my quota could make no possible difference, since some destined proxy must always step forward to fill my gap. Just so many misdirected letters every year and no more! Would it were as easy to reckon up the number of men on whose backs fate has written the wrong address, so that they arrive by mistake in Congress and other places where they do not belong! May not these wanderers of whom I speak have been sent into the world without any proper address at all? Where is our Dead-Letter Office for such? And if wiser social arrangements should furnish us with something of the sort, fancy (horrible thought!) how many a workingman's friend (a kind of industry in which the labor is light and the wages heavy) would be sent thither because not called for in the office where he at present lies!

But I am leaving my new acquaintance too long under the lamp-post. The same Gano which had betrayed me to him revealed to me a well-set young man of about half my own age, as well dressed, so far as I could see, as I was, and with every natural qualification for getting his own livelihood as good, if not better, than my own. He had been reduced to the painful necessity of calling upon me by a series of crosses beginning with the Baden Revolution (for which, I own, he seemed rather young,—but perhaps he referred to a kind of revolution practised every season at Baden-Baden), continued by repeated failures in business, for amounts which must convince me of his entire respectability, and ending with our Civil War. During the latter, he had served with distinction as a soldier, taking a main part in every important battle, with a rapid list of which he favored me, and no doubt would have admitted that, impartial as Jonathan Wild's great ancestor, he had been on both sides, had I baited him with a few hints of conservative opinions on a subject so distressing to a gentleman wishing to profit by one's sympathy and unhappily doubtful as to which way it might lean. For all these reasons, and, as he seemed to imply, for

his merit in consenting to be born in Germany, he considered himself my natural creditor to the extent of five dollars, which he would handsomely consent to accept in greenbacks, though he preferred specie. The offer was certainly a generous one, and the claim presented with an assurance that carried conviction. But, unhappily, I had been led to remark a curious natural phenomenon. If I was ever weak enough to give anything to a petitioner of whatever nationality, it always rained decayed compatriots of his for a month after. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* [1] may not always be safe logic, but here I seemed to perceive a natural connection of cause and effect. Now, a few days before I had been so tickled with a paper (professedly written by a benevolent American clergyman) certifying that the bearer, a hard-working German, had long 'sofered with rheumatic paints in his limps,' that, after copying the passage into my note-book, I thought it but fair to pay a trifling *honorarium* to the author. I had pulled the string of the shower-bath! It had been running shipwrecked sailors for some time, but forthwith it began to pour Teutons, redolent of *lager-bier*. I could not help associating the apparition of my new friend with this series of otherwise unaccountable phenomena. I accordingly made up my mind to deny the debt, and modestly did so, pleading a native bias towards impecuniosity to the full as strong as his own. He took a high tone with me at once, such as an honest man would naturally take with a confessed repudiator. He even brought down his proud stomach so far as to join himself to me for the rest of my townward walk, that he might give me his views of the American people, and thus inclusively of myself.

I know not whether it is because I am pigeon-livered and lack gall, or whether it is from an overmastering sense of drollery, but I am apt to submit to such bastings with a patience which afterwards surprises me, being not without my share of warmth in the blood. Perhaps it is because I so often meet with young persons who know vastly more than I do, and especially with so many foreigners whose knowledge of this country is superior to my own. However it may be, I listened for some time with tolerable composure as my self-appointed lecturer gave me in detail his opinions of my country and its people. America, he informed me, was without arts, science, literature, culture, or any native hope of supplying them. We were a people wholly given to money-getting, and who, having got it, knew no other use for it than to hold it fast. I am fain to confess that I felt a sensible itching of the biceps, and that my fingers closed with such a grip as he had just informed me was one of the effects of our unhappy climate. But happening just then to be where I could avoid temptation by dodging down a by-street, I hastily left him to finish his diatribe to the lamp-post, which could stand it better than I. That young man will never know how near he came to being assaulted by a respectable gentleman of middle age, at the corner of Church Street. I have never felt quite satisfied that I did all my duty by him in not knocking him down. But perhaps he might have knocked *me* down, and then?

The capacity of indignation makes an essential part of the outfit of every honest man, but I am inclined to doubt whether he is a wise one who allows himself to act upon its first hints. It should be rather, I suspect, a *latent* heat in the blood, which makes itself felt in character, a steady reserve for the brain, warming the ovum of thought to life, rather than cooking it by a too hasty enthusiasm in reaching the boiling-point. As my pulse gradually fell back to its normal beat, I reflected that I had been uncomfortably near making a fool of myself,—a handy salve of euphuism for our vanity, though it does not always make a just allowance to Nature for her share in the business. What possible claim had my Teutonic friend to rob me of my composure? I am not, I think, specially thin-skinned as to other people's opinions of myself, having, as I conceive, later and fuller intelligence on that point than anybody else can give me. Life is continually weighing us in very sensitive scales, and telling every one of us precisely what his real weight is to the last grain of dust. Whoever at fifty does not rate himself quite as low as most of his acquaintance would be likely to put him, must be either a fool or a

1 In logic: the assumption that because 'b' comes after 'a,' therefore 'a' is the cause of 'b.'

great man, and I humbly disclaim being either. But if I was not smarting in person from any scattering shot of my late companion's commination, why should I grow hot at any implication of my country therein? Surely *her* shoulders are broad enough, if yours or mine are not, to bear up under a considerable avalanche of this kind. It is the bit of truth in every slander, the hint of likeness in every caricature, that makes us smart. 'Art thou *there*, old Truepenny?' How did your blade know its way so well to that one loose rivet in our armor? I wondered whether Americans were oversensitive in this respect, whether they were more touchy than other folks. On the whole, I thought we were not. Plutarch, who at least had studied philosophy, if he had not mastered it, could not stomach something Herodotus had said of Bœotia, and devoted an essay to showing up the delightful old traveller's malice and ill-breeding. French editors leave out of Montaigne's *Travels* some remarks of his about France, for reasons best known to themselves. Pachydermatous Deutschland, covered with trophies from every field of letters, still winces under that question which Père Bouhours put two centuries ago, *Si un Allemand peut être bel-esprit?* [1] John Bull grew apoplectic with angry amazement at the audacious persiflage of Pückler-Muskau. To be sure, he was a prince,—but that was not all of it, for a chance phrase of gentle Hawthorne sent a spasm through all the journals of England. Then this tenderness is not peculiar to *us*? Console yourself, dear man and brother, whatever else you may be sure of, be sure at least of this, that you are dreadfully like other people. Human nature has a much greater genius for sameness than for originality, or the world would be at a sad pass shortly. The surprising thing is that men have such a taste for this somewhat musty flavor, that an Englishman, for example, should feel himself defrauded, nay, even outraged, when he comes over here and finds a people speaking what he admits to be something like English, and yet so very different from (or, as he would say, to) those he left at home. Nothing, I am sure, equals *my* thankfulness when I meet an Englishman who is *not* like every other, or, I may add, an American of the same odd turn.

Certainly it is no shame to a man that he should be as nice about his country as about his sweetheart, and who ever heard even the friendliest appreciation of that unexpressive she that did not seem to fall infinitely short? Yet it would hardly be wise to hold every one an enemy who could not see her with our own enchanted eyes. It seems to be the common opinion of foreigners that Americans are *too* tender upon this point. Perhaps we are; and if so, there must be a reason for it. Have we had fair play? Could the eyes of what is called Good Society (though it is so seldom true either to the adjective or noun) look upon a nation of democrats with any chance of receiving an undistorted image? Were not those, moreover, who found in the old order of things an earthly paradise, paying them quarterly dividends for the wisdom of their ancestors, with the punctuality of the seasons, unconsciously bribed to misunderstand if not to misrepresent us? Whether at war or at peace, there we were, a standing menace to all earthly paradises of that kind, fatal underminers of the very credit on which the dividends were based, all the more hateful and terrible that our destructive agency was so insidious, working invisible in the elements, as it seemed, active while they slept, and coming upon them in the darkness like an armed man. *Could* Laius have the proper feelings of a father towards Œdipus, announced as his destined destroyer by infallible oracles, and felt to be such by every conscious fibre of his soul? For more than a century the Dutch were the laughing-stock of polite Europe. They were butter-firkins, swillers of beer and schnaps, and their *vrouws* from whom Holbein painted the all-but loveliest of Madonnas, Rembrandt the graceful girl who sits immortal on his knee in Dresden, and Rubens his abounding goddesses, were the synonymes of clumsy vulgarity. Even so late as Irving the ships of the greatest navigators in the world were represented as sailing equally well stern-foremost. That the aristocratic Venetians should have

'Riveted with gigantic piles
Thorough the centre their new-catchëd miles,'

1 'Can a German have true wit?'

was heroic. But the far more marvellous achievement of the Dutch in the same kind was ludicrous even to republican Marvell. Meanwhile, during that very century of scorn, they were the best artists, sailors, merchants, bankers, printers, scholars, jurisconsults, and statesmen in Europe, and the genius of Motley has revealed them to us, earning a right to themselves by the most heroic struggle in human annals. But, alas! they were not merely simple burghers who had fairly made themselves High Mightinesses, and could treat on equal terms with anointed kings, but their commonwealth carried in its bosom the germs of democracy. They even unmuzzled, at least after dark, that dreadful mastiff, the Press, whose scent is, or ought to be, so keen for wolves in sheep's clothing and for certain other animals in lions' skins. They made fun of Sacred Majesty, and, what was worse, managed uncommonly well without it. In an age when periwigs made so large a part of the natural dignity of man, people with such a turn of mind were dangerous. How could they seem other than vulgar and hateful?

In the natural course of things we succeeded to this unenviable position of general butt. The Dutch had thriven under it pretty well, and there was hope that we could at least contrive to worry along. And we certainly did in a very redoubtable fashion. Perhaps we deserved some of the sarcasm more than our Dutch predecessors in office. We had nothing to boast of in arts or letters, and were given to bragging overmuch of our merely material prosperity, due quite as much to the virtue of our continent as to our own. There was some truth in Carlyle's sneer, after all. Till we had succeeded in some higher way than this, we had only the success of physical growth. Our greatness, like that of enormous Russia, was greatness on the map,—barbarian mass only; but had we gone down, like that other Atlantis, in some vast cataclysm, we should have covered but a pin's point on the chart of memory, compared with those ideal spaces occupied by tiny Attica and cramped England. At the same time, our critics somewhat too easily forgot that material must make ready the foundation for ideal triumphs, that the arts have no chance in poor countries. But it must be allowed that democracy stood for a great deal in our shortcoming. The Edinburgh Review never would have thought of asking, 'Who reads a Russian book?' and England was satisfied with iron from Sweden without being impertinently inquisitive after her painters and statuaries. Was it that they expected too much from the mere miracle of Freedom? Is it not the highest art of a Republic to make men of flesh and blood, and not the marble ideals of such? It may be fairly doubted whether we have produced this higher type of man yet. Perhaps it is the collective, not the individual, humanity that is to have a chance of nobler development among us. We shall see. We have a vast amount of imported ignorance, and, still worse, of native ready-made knowledge, to digest before even the preliminaries of such a consummation can be arranged. We have got to learn that statesmanship is the most complicated of all arts, and to come back to the apprenticeship-system too hastily abandoned. At present, we trust a man with making constitutions on less proof of competence than we should demand before we gave him our shoe to patch. We have nearly reached the limit of the reaction from the old notion, which paid too much regard to birth and station as qualifications for office, and have touched the extreme point in the opposite direction, putting the highest of human functions up at auction to be bid for by any creature capable of going upright on two legs. In some places, we have arrived at a point at which civil society is no longer possible, and already another reaction has begun, not backwards to the old system, but towards fitness either from natural aptitude or special training. But will it always be safe to let evils work their own cure by becoming unendurable? Every one of them leaves its taint in the constitution of the body-politic, each in itself, perhaps, trifling, yet all together powerful for evil.

But whatever we might do or leave undone, we were not genteel, and it was uncomfortable to be continually reminded that, though we should boast that we were the Great West till we were black in the face, it did not bring us an inch nearer to the world's West-End. That sacred enclosure of respectability was tabooed to us.

The Holy Alliance did not inscribe us on its visiting-list. The Old World of wigs and orders and liveries would shop with us, but we must ring at the area-bell, and not venture to awaken the more august clamors of the knocker. Our manners, it must be granted, had none of those graces that stamp the caste of Vere de Vere, in whatever museum of British antiquities they may be hidden. In short, we were vulgar.

This was one of those horribly vague accusations, the victim of which has no defence. An umbrella is of no avail against a Scotch mist. It envelops you, it penetrates at every pore, it wets you through without seeming to wet you at all. Vulgarity is an eighth deadly sin, added to the list in these latter days, and worse than all the others put together, since it perils your salvation in *this* world,—far the more important of the two in the minds of most men. It profits nothing to draw nice distinctions between essential and conventional, for the convention in this case *is* the essence, and you may break every command of the decalogue with perfect good-breeding, nay, if you are adroit, without losing caste. We, indeed, had it not to lose, for we had never gained it. '*How* am I vulgar?' asks the culprit, shudderingly. 'Because thou art not like unto Us,' answers Lucifer, Son of the Morning, and there is no more to be said. The god of this world may be a fallen angel, but he has us *there*! We were as clean,—so far as my observation goes, I think we were cleaner, morally and physically, than the English, and therefore, of course, than everybody else. But we did not pronounce the diphthong *ou* as they did, and we said *eether* and not *eyther*, following therein the fashion of our ancestors, who unhappily could bring over no English better than Shakespeare's; and we did not stammer as they had learned to do from the courtiers, who in this way flattered the Hanoverian king, a foreigner among the people he had come to reign over. Worse than all, we might have the noblest ideas and the finest sentiments in the world, but we vented them through that organ by which men are led rather than leaders, though some physiologists would persuade us that Nature furnishes her captains with a fine handle to their faces that Opportunity may get a good purchase on them for dragging them to the front.

This state of things was so painful that excellent people were not wanting who gave their whole genius to reproducing here the original Bull, whether by gaiters, the cut of their whiskers, by a factitious brutality in their tone, or by an accent that was forever tripping and falling flat over the tangled roots of our common tongue. Martyrs to a false ideal, it never occurred to them that nothing is more hateful to gods and men than a second-rate Englishman, and for the very reason that this planet never produced a more splendid creature than the first-rate one, witness Shakespeare and the Indian Mutiny. Witness that truly sublime self-abnegation of those prisoners lately among the bandits of Greece, where average men gave an example of quiet fortitude for which all the stoicism of antiquity can show no match. Witness the wreck of the Birkenhead, an example of disciplined heroism, perhaps the most precious, as the rarest, of all. If we could contrive to be not too unobtrusively our simple selves, we should be the most delightful of human beings, and the most original; whereas, when the plating of Anglicism rubs off, as it always will in points that come to much wear, we are liable to very unpleasing conjectures about the quality of the metal underneath. Perhaps one reason why the average Briton spreads himself here with such an easy air of superiority may be owing to the fact that he meets with so many bad imitations as to conclude himself the only real thing in a wilderness of shams. He fancies himself moving through an endless Bloomsbury, where his mere apparition confers honor as an avatar of the court-end of the universe. Not a Bull of them all but is persuaded he bears Europa upon his back. This is the sort of fellow whose patronage is so divertingly insufferable. Thank Heaven he is not the only specimen of cater-cousinship from the dear old Mother Island that is shown to us! Among genuine things, I know nothing more genuine than the better men whose limbs were made in England. So manly-tender, so brave, so true, so warranted to wear, they make us proud to feel that blood is thicker than water.

But it is not merely the Englishman;

every European candidly admits in himself some right of primogeniture in respect of us, and pats this shaggy continent on the back with a lively sense of generous unbending. The German who plays the bass-viol has a well-founded contempt, which he is not always nice in concealing, for a country so few of whose children ever take that noble instrument between their knees. His cousin, the Ph.D. from Göttingen, cannot help despising a people who do not grow loud and red over Aryans and Turanians, and are indifferent about their descent from either. The Frenchman feels an easy mastery in speaking his mother tongue, and attributes it to some native superiority or parts that lifts him high above us barbarians of the West. The Italian *prima donna* sweeps a curtsy of careless pity to the over-facile pit which unsexes her with the *bravo!* innocently meant to show a familiarity with foreign usage. But all without exception make no secret of regarding us as the goose bound to deliver them a golden egg in return for *their* cackle. Such men as Agassiz, Guyot, and Goldwin Smith come with gifts in their hands; but since it is commonly European failures who bring hither their remarkable gifts and acquirements, this view of the case is sometimes just the least bit in the world provoking. To think what a delicious seclusion of contempt we enjoyed till California and our own ostentatious *parvenus*, flinging gold away in Europe that might have endowed libraries at home, gave us the ill repute of riches! What a shabby downfall from the Arcadia which the French officers of our Revolutionary War fancied they saw here through Rousseau-tinted spectacles! Something of Arcadia there really was, something of the Old Age; and that divine provincialism were cheaply repurchased could we have it back again in exchange for the tawdry upholstery that has taken its place.

For some reason or other, the European has rarely been able to see America except in caricature. Would the first Review of the world have printed the *niaiseries* of M. Maurice Sand as a picture of society in any civilized country? M. Sand, to be sure, has inherited nothing of his famous mother's literary outfit, except the pseudonym. But since the conductors of the *Revue* could not have published his story because it was clever, they must have thought it valuable for its truth. As true as the last-century Englishman's picture of Jean Crapaud! We do not ask to be sprinkled with rosewater, but may perhaps fairly protest against being drenched with the rinsings of an unclean imagination. The next time the *Revue* allows such ill-bred persons to throw their slops out of its first-floor windows, let it honestly preface the discharge with a *gare l'eau!* [1] that we may run from under in season. And M. Duvergier de Hauranne, who knows how to be entertaining! I know that *le Français est plutôt indiscret que confiant*,[2] and the pen slides too easily when indiscretions will fetch so much a page; but should we not have been *tant-soit-peu* [3] more cautious had we been writing about people on the other side of the Channel? But then it is a fact in the natural history of the American long familiar to Europeans, that he abhors privacy, knows not the meaning of reserve, lives in hotels because of their greater publicity, and is never so pleased as when his domestic affairs (if he may be said to have any) are paraded in the newspapers. Barnum, it is well known, represents perfectly the average national sentiment in this respect. However it be, we are not treated like other people, or perhaps I should say like people who are ever likely to be met with in society.

Is it in the climate? Either I have a false notion of European manners, or else the atmosphere affects them strangely when exported hither. Perhaps they suffer from the sea-voyage like some of the more delicate wines. During our Civil War an English gentleman of the highest description was kind enough to call upon me, mainly, as it seemed, to inform me how entirely he sympathized with the Confederates, and how sure he felt that we could never subdue them,—'they were the *gentlemen* of the country, you know.' Another, the first greetings hardly over, asked me how I accounted for the universal meagreness of my countrymen. To a thinner man than I, or from a stouter man than he, the question *might* have been offensive. The

1 'Watch out for the water!'

2 'The Frenchman is more inclined to be indiscreet than presumptuous.'

3 'Ever-so-little.'

Marquis of Hartington [1] wore a secession badge at a public ball in New York. In a civilized country he might have been roughly handled; but here, where the *bienséances* are not so well understood, of course nobody minded it. A French traveller told me he had been a good deal in the British colonies, and had been astonished to see how soon the people became Americanized. He added, with delightful *bonhomie*, and as if he were sure it would charm me, that 'they even began to talk through their noses, just like you!' I was naturally ravished with this testimony to the assimilating power of democracy, and could only reply that I hoped they would never adopt our democratic patent-method of seeming to settle one's honest debts, for they would find it paying through the nose in the long-run. I am a man of the New World, and do not know precisely the present fashion of May-Fair, but I have a kind of feeling that if an American (*mutato nomine, de te* [2] is always frightfully possible) were to do this kind of thing under a European roof, it would induce some disagreeable reflections as to the ethical results of democracy. I read the other day in print the remark of a British tourist who had eaten large quantities of our salt, such as it is (I grant it has not the European savor), that the Americans were hospitable, no doubt, but that it was partly because they longed for foreign visitors to relieve the tedium of their dead-level existence, and partly from ostentation. What shall we do? Shall we close our doors? Not I, for one, if I should so have forfeited the friendship of L.S.,[3] most lovable of men. He somehow seems to find us human, at least, and so did Clough, whose poetry will one of these days, perhaps, be found to have been the best utterance in verse of this generation. And T.H.,[4] the mere grasp of whose manly hand carries with it the pledge of frankness and friendship, of an abiding simplicity of nature as affecting as it is rare!

The fine old Tory aversion of former times was not hard to bear. There was something even refreshing in it, as in a northeaster to a hardy temperament. When a British parson, travelling in Newfoundland while the slash of our separation was still raw, after prophesying a glorious future for an island that continued to dry its fish under the ægis of Saint George, glances disdainfully over his spectacles in parting at the U.S.A., and forebodes for them a 'speedy relapse into barbarism,' now that they have madly cut themselves off from the humanizing influences of Britain, I smile with barbarian self-conceit. But this kind of thing became by degrees an unpleasant anachronism. For meanwhile the young giant was growing, was beginning indeed to feel tight in his clothes, was obliged to let in a gore here and there in Texas, in California, in New Mexico, in Alaska, and had the scissors and needle and thread ready for Canada when the time came. His shadow loomed like a Brocken-spectre over against Europe,—the shadow of what they were coming to, that was the unpleasant part of it. Even in such misty image as they had of him, it was painfully evident that his clothes were not of any cut hitherto fashionable, nor conceivable by a Bond Street tailor,—and this is in an age, too, when everything depends upon clothes, when, if we do not keep up appearances, the seeming-solid frame of this universe, nay, your very God, would slump into himself, like a mockery king of snow, being nothing, after all, but a prevailing mode, a make-believe of believing. From this moment the young giant assumed the respectable aspect of a phenomenon, to be got rid of if possible, but at any rate as legitimate a subject of human study as the glacial period or the silurian what-d'ye-call-ems. If the man of the primeval drift-heaps be so absorbingly interesting, why not the man of the drift that is just beginning, of the drift into whose irresistible current we are just being sucked

1 'One of Mr. Lincoln's neatest strokes of humor was his treatment of this gentleman when a laudable curiosity induced him to be presented to the President of the Broken Bubble. Mr. Lincoln persisted in calling him Mr. Partington. Surely the refinement of good-breeding could go no further. Giving the young man his real name (already notorious in the newspapers) would have made his visit an insult. Had Henri IV. done this, it would have been famous.' Author's note, *The Complete Works of James Russell Lowell* (Boston, 1894), III, 242.

2 'Change the name, and it applies to you.'

3 Sir Leslie Stephen (1832–1904), literary, political, and intellectual essayist and historian.

4 Thomas Hughes (1822–1896), author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and other novels, and a well-known political and religious reformer.

whether we will or no? If I were in their place, I confess I should not be frightened. Man has survived so much, and contrived to be comfortable on this planet after surviving so much! I am something of a protestant in matters of government also, and am willing to get rid of vestments and ceremonies and to come down to bare benches, if only faith in God take the place of a general agreement to profess confidence in ritual and sham. Every mortal man of us holds stock in the only public debt that is absolutely sure of payment, and that is the debt of the Maker of this Universe to the Universe he has made. I have no notion of selling out my shares in a panic.

It was something to have advanced even to the dignity of a phenomenon, and yet I do not know that the relation of the individual American to the individual European was bettered by it; and that, after all, must adjust itself comfortably before there can be a right understanding between the two. We had been a desert, we became a museum. People came hither for scientific and not social ends. The very cockney could not complete his education without taking a vacant stare at us in passing. But the sociologists (I think they call themselves so) were the hardest to bear. There was no escape. I have even known a professor of this fearful science to come disguised in petticoats. We were cross-examined as a chemist cross-examines a new substance. Human? yes, all the elements are present, though abnormally combined. Civilized? Hm! that needs a stricter assay. No entomologist could take a more friendly interest in a strange bug. After a few such experiences, I, for one, have felt as if I were merely one of those horrid things preserved in spirits (and very bad spirits, too) in a cabinet. I was not the fellow-being of these explorers: I was a curiosity; I was a *specimen*. Hath not an American organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions even as a European hath? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? I will not keep on with Shylock to his next question but one.

Till after our Civil War it never seemed to enter the head of any foreigner, especially of any Englishman, that an American had what could be called a country, except as a place to eat, sleep, and trade in. Then it seemed to strike them suddenly. 'By Jove, you know, fellahs don't fight like that for a shop-till!' No, I rather think not. To Americans America is something more than a promise and an expectation. It has a past and traditions of its own. A descent from men who sacrificed everything and came hither, not to better their fortunes, but to plant their idea in virgin soil, should be a good pedigree. There was never colony save this that went forth, not to seek gold, but God. Is it not as well to have sprung from such as these as from some burly beggar who came over with Wilhelmus Conquestor, unless, indeed, a line grow better as it runs farther away from stalwart ancestors? And for our history, it is dry enough, no doubt, in the books, but, for all that, is of a kind that tells in the blood. I have admitted that Carlyle's sneer had a show of truth in it. But what does he himself, like a true Scot, admire in the Hohenzollerns? First of all, that they were *canny*, a thrifty, forehanded race. Next, that they made a good fight from generation to generation with the chaos around them. That is precisely the battle which the English race on this continent has been pushing doughtily forward for two centuries and a half. Doughtily and silently, for you cannot hear in Europe 'that crash, the death-song of the perfect tree,' that has been going on here from sturdy father to sturdy son, and making this continent habitable for the weaker Old World breed that has swarmed to it during the last half-century. If ever men did a good stroke of work on this planet, it was the forefathers of those whom you are wondering whether it would not be prudent to acknowledge as far-off cousins. Alas, man of genius, to whom we owe so much, could you see nothing more than the burning of a foul chimney in that clash of Michael and Satan which flamed up under your very eyes?

Before our war we were to Europe but a huge mob of adventurers and shopkeepers. Leigh Hunt expressed it well enough when he said that he could never think of America without seeing a gigantic counter stretched all along the seaboard. And Leigh Hunt, without knowing it, had been more than half Americanized, too! Feudalism had by degrees made commerce, the great civilizer, contemptible. But a tradesman

with sword on thigh and very prompt of stroke was not only redoubtable, he had become respectable also. Few people, I suspect, alluded twice to a needle in Sir John Hawkwood's presence, after that doughty fighter had exchanged it for a more dangerous tool of the same metal. Democracy had been hitherto only a ludicrous effort to reverse the laws of nature by thrusting Cleon into the place of Pericles. But a democracy that could fight for an abstraction, whose members held life and goods cheap compared with that larger life which we call country, was not merely unheard-of, but portentous. It was the nightmare of the Old World taking upon itself flesh and blood, turning out to be substance and not dream. Since the Norman crusader clanged down upon the throne of the *porphyro-geniti*, carefully-draped appearances had never received such a shock, had never been so rudely called on to produce their titles to the empire of the world. Authority has had its periods not unlike those of geology, and at last comes Man claiming kingship in right of his mere manhood. The world of the Saurians might be in some respects more picturesque, but the march of events is inexorable, and that world is bygone.

The young giant had certainly got out of long-clothes. He had become the *enfant terrible* of the human household. It was not and will not be easy for the world (especially for our British cousins) to look upon us as grown up. The youngest of nations, its people must also be young and to be treated accordingly, was the syllogism,—as if libraries did not make all nations equally old in all those respects, at least, where age is an advantage and not a defect. Youth, no doubt, has its good qualities, as people feel who are losing it, but boyishness is another thing. We had been somewhat boyish as a nation, a little loud, a little pushing, a little braggart. But might it not partly have been because we felt that we had certain claims to respect that were not admitted? The war which established our position as a vigorous nationality has also sobered us. A nation, like a man, cannot look death in the eye for four years without some strange reflections, without arriving at some clearer consciousness of the stuff it is made of, without some great moral change. Such a change, or the beginning of it, no observant person can fail to see here. Our thought and our politics, our bearing as a people, are assuming a manlier tone. We have been compelled to see what was weak in democracy as well as what was strong. We have begun obscurely to recognize that things do not go of themselves, and that popular government is not in itself a panacea, is no better than any other form except as the virtue and wisdom of the people make it so, and that when men undertake to do their own kingship, they enter upon the dangers and responsibilities as well as the privileges of the function. Above all, it looks as if we were on the way to be persuaded that no government can be carried on by declamation. It is noticeable also that facility of communication has made the best English and French thought far more directly operative here than ever before. Without being Europeanized, our discussion of important questions in statesmanship, in political economy, in æsthetics, is taking a broader scope and a higher tone. It had certainly been provincial, one might almost say local, to a very unpleasant extent. Perhaps our experience in soldiership has taught us to value training more than we have been popularly wont. We may possibly come to the conclusion, one of these days, that self-made men may not be always equally skilful in the manufacture of wisdom, may not be divinely commissioned to fabricate the higher qualities of opinion on all possible topics of human interest.

So long as we continue to be the most common-schooled and the least cultivated people in the world, I suppose we must consent to endure this condescending manner of foreigners toward us. The more friendly they mean to be, the more ludicrously prominent it becomes. They can never appreciate the immense amount of silent work that has been done here, making this continent slowly fit for the abode of man, and which will demonstrate itself, let us hope, in the character of the people. Outsiders can only be expected to judge a nation by the amount it has contributed to the civilization of the world; the amount, that is, that can be seen and handled. A great place in history can only be achieved by competitive examinations, nay, by a

long course of them. How much new thought have we contributed to the common stock? Till that question can be triumphantly answered, or needs no answer, we must continue to be simply interesting as an experiment, to be studied as a problem, and not respected as an attained result or an accomplished solution. Perhaps, as I have hinted, their patronizing manner toward us is the fair result of their failing to see here anything more than a poor imitation, a plaster-cast of Europe. And are they not partly right? If the tone of the uncultivated American has too often the arrogance of the barbarian, is not that of the cultivated as often vulgarly apologetic? In the America they meet with is there the simplicity, the manliness, the absence of sham, the sincere human nature, the sensitiveness to duty and implied obligation, that in any way distinguishes us from what our orators call 'the effete civilization of the Old World'? Is there a politician among us daring enough (except a Dana here and there) to risk his future on the chance of our keeping our word with the exactness of superstitious communities like England? Is it certain that we shall be ashamed of a bankruptcy of honor, if we can only keep the letter of our bond? I hope we shall be able to answer all these questions with a frank *yes*. At any rate, we would advise our visitors that we are not merely curious creatures, but belong to the family of man, and that, as individuals, we are not to be always subjected to the competitive examination above mentioned, even if we acknowledged their competence as an examining board. Above all, we beg them to remember that America is not to us, as to them, a mere object of external interest to be discussed and analyzed, but *in* us, part of our very marrow. Let them not suppose that we conceive of ourselves as exiles from the graces and amenities of an older date than we, though very much at home in a state of things not yet all it might be or should be, but which we mean to make so, and which we find both wholesome and pleasant for men (though perhaps not for *dilettanti*) to live in. 'The full tide of human existence' may be felt here as keenly as Johnson felt it at Charing Cross, and in a larger sense. I know one person who is singular enough to think Cambridge the very best spot on the habitable globe. 'Doubtless God *could* have made a better, but doubtless he never did.'

It will take England a great while to get over her airs of patronage toward us, or even passably to conceal them. She cannot help confounding the people with the country, and regarding us as lusty juveniles. She has a conviction that whatever good there is in us is wholly English, when the truth is that we are worth nothing except so far as we have disinfected ourselves of Anglicism. She is especially condescending just now, and lavishes sugar-plums on us as if we had not outgrown them. I am no believer in sudden conversions, especially in sudden conversions to a favorable opinion of people who have just proved you to be mistaken in judgment and therefore unwise in policy. I never blamed her for not wishing well to democracy,—how should she?—but Alabamas are not wishes. Let her not be too hasty in believing Mr. Reverdy Johnson's pleasant words. Though there is no thoughtful man in America who would not consider a war with England the greatest of calamities, yet the feeling towards her here is very far from cordial, whatever our Minister may say in the effusion that comes after ample dining. Mr. Adams, with his famous 'My Lord, this means war,' perfectly represented his country. Justly or not, we have a feeling that we have been wronged, not merely insulted. The only sure way of bringing about a healthy relation between the two countries is for Englishmen to clear their minds of the notion that we are always to be treated as a kind of inferior and deported Englishman whose nature they perfectly understand, and whose back they accordingly stroke the wrong way of the fur with amazing perseverance. Let them learn to treat us naturally on our merits as human beings, as they would a German or a Frenchman, and not as if we were a kind of counterfeit Briton whose crime appeared in every shade of difference, and before long there would come that right feeling which we naturally call a good understanding. The common blood, and still more the common language, are fatal instruments of misapprehension. Let them give up *trying* to understand us, still more thinking that they do, and acting in various

absurd ways as the necessary consequence, for they will never arrive at that devoutly-to-be-wished consummation, till they learn to look at us as we are and not as they suppose us to be. Dear old long-estranged mother-in-law, it is a great many years since we parted. Since 1660, when you married again, you have been a step-mother to us. Put on your spectacles, dear madam. Yes, we *have* grown, and changed likewise. You would not let us darken your doors, if you could help it. We know that perfectly well. But pray, when we look to be treated as men, don't shake that rattle in our faces, nor talk baby to us any longer.

'Do, child, go to it grandam, child;
Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig!'

1868 1871

RHŒCUS

GOD sends his teachers unto every age,
To every clime, and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race:
Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed
The life of man, and given it to grasp
The master-key of knowledge, reverence,
Infolds some germs of goodness and of right;
Else never had the eager soul, which loathes
The slothful down of pampered ignorance,
Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart
Which makes that all the fables it hath coined,
To justify the reign of its belief
And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,
Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful hands,
Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.
For, as in nature naught is made in vain,
But all things have within their hull of use
A wisdom and a meaning which may speak
Of spiritual secrets to the ear
Of spirit; so, in whatsoe'er the heart
Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,
To make its inspirations suit its creed,
And from the niggard hands of falsehood wring
Its needful food of truth, there ever is
A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,
Not less than her own works, pure gleams of light
And earnest parables of inward lore.
Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,
As full of gracious youth, and beauty still
As the immortal freshness of that grace
Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

A youth named Rhœcus, wandering in the wood,
Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,
And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,
He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,
And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on.
But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind
That murmured 'Rhœcus!' 'T was as if the leaves,
Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it,
And, while he paused bewildered, yet again
It murmured 'Rhœcus!' softer than a breeze.
He started and beheld with dizzy eyes
What seemed the substance of a happy dream
Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow
Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak.
It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too fair
To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
For any that were wont to mate with gods.
All naked like a goddess stood she there,
And like a goddess all too beautiful
To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.
'Rhœcus, I am the Dryad of this tree,'
Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words
Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,
'And with it I am doomed to live and die;
The rain and sunshine are my caterers,
Nor have I other bliss than simple life;
Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,
And with a thankful joy it shall be thine.'

Then Rhœcus, with a flutter at the heart,
Yet, by the prompting of such beauty, bold,
Answered: 'What is there that can satisfy
The endless craving of the soul but love?

Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
Which must be evermore my nature's goal.'
After a little pause she said again,
But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
'I give it, Rhœcus, though a perilous gift;
An hour before the sunset meet me here.'
And straightway there was nothing he could see
But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak,
And not a sound came to his straining ears
But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,
And far away upon an emerald slope
The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and faith,
Men did not think that happy things were dreams
Because they overstepped the narrow bourn
Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful
To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
So Rhœcus made no doubt that he was blest,
And all along unto the city's gate
Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked,
The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,
And he could scarce believe he had not wings,
Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins
Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.

Young Rhœcus had a faithful heart enough,
But one that in the present dwelt too much,
And, taking with blithe welcome whatsoe'er
Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that,
Like the contented peasant of a vale,
Deemed it the world, and never looked beyond.
So, haply meeting in the afternoon
Some comrades who were playing at the dice,
He joined them, and forgot all else beside.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,
And Rhœcus, who had met but sorry luck,
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,
When through the room there hummed a yellow bee
That buzzed about his ear with down-dropped legs
As if to light. And Rhœcus laughed and said,
Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss,
'By Venus! does he take me for a rose?'
And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand.
But still the bee came back, and thrice again
Rhœcus did beat him off with growing wrath.
Then through the window flew the wounded bee,
And Rhœcus, tracking him with angry eyes,
Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly
Against the red disk of the setting sun,—
And instantly the blood sank from his heart,
As if its very walls had caved away.
Without a word he turned, and, rushing forth,
Ran madly through the city and the gate,
And o'er the plain, which now the wood's long shade,
By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,
Darkened wellnigh unto the city's wall.

Quite spent and out of breath he reached the tree,
And, listening fearfully, he heard once more
The low voice murmur 'Rhœcus!' close at hand:
Whereat he looked around him, but could see
Naught but the deepening glooms beneath the oak.
Then sighed the voice, 'O Rhœcus! nevermore
Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,
Me, who would fain have blessed thee with a love
More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:
But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,
And sent'st him back to me with bruisèd wings.
We spirits only show to gentle eyes,
We ever ask an undivided love.
And he who scorns the least of Nature's works

Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.
Farewell! for thou canst never see me
more.'

Then Rhœcus beat his breast, and
groaned aloud,
And cried, 'Be pitiful! forgive me yet
This once, and I shall never need it more!'
'Alas!' the voice returned, ' 't is thou art
blind,
Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,
But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;
Only the soul hath power o'er itself.'
With that again there murmured
'Nevermore!'
And Rhœcus after heard no other sound,
Except the rattling of the oak's crisp
leaves,
Like the long surf upon a distant shore,
Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
The night had gathered round him: o'er the
plain
The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,
With all its bright sublimity of stars,
Deepened, and on his forehead smote the
breeze:
Beauty was all around him and delight,
But from that eve he was alone on earth.

1844

FROM THE BIGLOW PAPERS

INTRODUCTION [1]

THOUGH prefaces seem of late to have fallen under some reproach, they have at least this advantage, that they set us again on the feet of our personal consciousness and rescue us from the gregarious mock-modesty or cowardice of that *we* which shrills feebly throughout modern literature like the shrieking of mice in the walls of a house that has passed its prime. Having a few words to say to the many friends whom the 'Biglow Papers' have won me, I shall accordingly take the freedom of the first person singular of the personal pronoun. Let each of the good-natured unknown who have cheered me by the written communication of their sympathy look upon this Introduction as a private letter to himself.

When, more than twenty years ago, I wrote the first of the series, I had no definite plan and no intention of ever writing another. Thinking the Mexican war, as I think it still, a national crime committed in behoof of Slavery, our common sin, and wishing to put the feeling of those who thought as I did in a way that would tell, I imagined to myself such an upcountry man as I had often seen at antislavery gatherings, capable of district-school English, but always instinctively falling back into the natural stronghold of his homely dialect when heated to the point of self-forgetfulness. When I began to carry out my conception and to write in my assumed character, I found myself in a strait between two perils. On the one hand, I was in danger of being carried beyond the limit of my own opinions, or at least of that temper with which every man should speak his mind in print, and on the other I feared the risk of seeming to vulgarize a deep and sacred conviction. I needed on occasion to rise above the level of mere *patois*, and for this purpose conceived the Rev. Mr. Wilbur, who should express the more cautious element of the New England character and its pedantry, as Mr. Biglow should serve for its homely common-sense vivified and heated by conscience. The parson was to be the complement rather than the antithesis of his parishioner, and I felt or fancied a certain humorous element in the real identity of the two under a seeming incongruity. Mr. Wilbur's fondness for scraps of Latin, though drawn from the life, I adopted deliberately to heighten the contrast. . . .

The success of my experiment soon began not only to astonish me, but to make me feel the responsibility of knowing that I held in my hand a weapon instead of the mere fencing-stick I had supposed. Very far from being a popular author under my own name, so far, indeed, as to be almost unread, I found the verses of my pseudonym copied everywhere; I saw them pinned up in workshops; I heard them quoted and their authorship debated; I once even, when rumor had at length caught up my name in one of its eddies, had the satisfaction of overhearing it demonstrated, in the pauses of a concert, that *I* was utterly incompetent to have written anything of the kind.

1 The selection is the beginning of Lowell's introduction to *The Biglow Papers. Second Series*(Boston, 1867). Ibid.,VIII,155–59.

I had read too much not to know the utter worthlessness of contemporary reputation, especially as regards satire, but I knew also that by giving a certain amount of influence it also had its worth, if that influence were used on the right side. I had learned, too, that the first requisite of good writing is to have an earnest and definite purpose, whether æsthetic or moral, and that even good writing, to please long, must have more than an average amount either of imagination or common-sense. The first of these falls to the lot of scarcely one in several generations; the last is within the reach of many in every one that passes; and of this an author may fairly hope to become in part the mouthpiece. If I put on the cap and bells and made myself one of the court-fools of King Demos, it was less to make his majesty laugh than to win a passage to his royal ears for certain serious things which I had deeply at heart. I say this because there is no imputation that could be more galling to any man's self-respect than that of being a mere jester. I endeavored, by generalizing my satire, to give it what value I could beyond the passing moment and the immediate application. How far I have succeeded I cannot tell, but I have had better luck than I ever looked for in seeing my verses survive to pass beyond their nonage.

In choosing the Yankee dialect, I did not act without forethought. It had long seemed to me that the great vice of American writing and speaking was a studied want of simplicity, that we were in danger of coming to look on our mother-tongue as a dead language, to be sought in the grammar and dictionary rather than in the heart, and that our only chance of escape was by seeking it at its living sources among those who were, as Scottowe says of Major-General Gibbons, 'divinely illiterate.' President Lincoln, the only really great public man whom these latter days have seen, was great also in this, that he was master—witness his speech at Gettysburg —of a truly masculine English, classic because it was of no special period, and level at once to the highest and lowest of his countrymen. I learn from the highest authority that his favorite reading was in Shakespeare and Milton, to which, of course, the Bible should be added. But whoever should read the debates in Congress might fancy himself present at a meeting of the city council of some city of Southern Gaul in the decline of the Empire, where barbarians with a Latin varnish emulated each other in being more than Ciceronian. Whether it be want of culture, for the highest outcome of that is simplicity, or for whatever reason, it is certain that very few American writers or speakers wield their native language with the directness, precision, and force that are common as the day in the mother country. We use it like Scotsmen, not as if it belonged to us, but as if we wished to prove that we belonged to it, by showing our intimacy with its written rather than with its spoken dialect. And yet all the while our popular idiom is racy with life and vigor and originality, bucksome (as Milton used the word) to our new occasions, and proves itself no mere graft by sending up new suckers from the old root in spite of us. It is only from its roots in the living generations of men that a language can be reinforced with fresh vigor for its needs; what may be called a literate dialect grows ever more and more pedantic and foreign, till it becomes at last as unfitting a vehicle for living thought as monkish Latin. That we should all be made to talk like books is the danger with which we are threatened by the Universal Schoolmaster, who does his best to enslave the minds and memories of his victims to what he esteems the best models of English composition, that is to say, to the writers whose style is faultily correct and has no blood-warmth in it. No language after it has faded into *diction*, none that cannot suck up the feeding juices secreted for it in the rich mother-earth of common folk, can bring forth a sound and lusty book. True vigor and heartiness of phrase do not pass from page to page, but from man to man, where the brain is kindled and the lips suppled by downright living interests and by passion in its very throe. Language is the soil of thought, and our own especially is a rich leaf-mould, the slow deposit of ages, the shed foliage of feeling, fancy, and imagination, which has suffered an earth-change, that the vocal forest, as Howell called it, may clothe itself anew with living green. There is death in the dictionary; and, where language is too

strictly limited by convention, the ground for expression to grow in is limited also; and we get a *potted* literature, Chinese dwarfs instead of healthy trees. . . .

First Series

No. I

A Letter

FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW OF JAALAM TO THE HON. JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM, EDITOR OF THE BOSTON COURIER, INCLOSING A POEM OF HIS SON, MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

JAYLEM, june 1846.

MISTER EDDYTER:—Our Hosea wuz down to Boston last week, and he see a cruetin Sarjunt [1] a struttin round as popler as a hen with 1 chicking, with 2 fellers a drummin and fifin arter him like all nater. the sarjunt he thout Hosea hedn't gut his i teeth cut cos he looked a kindo's though he'd jest com down, so he cal'lated to hook him in, but Hosy woodn't take none o' his sarse for all he hed much as 20 Rooster's tales stuck onto his hat and eenamost enuf brass a bobbin up and down on his shoulders and figureed onto his coat and trousis, let alone wut nater hed sot in his featers, to make a 6 pounder out on.

wal, Hosea he com home considerabal riled, and arter I'd gone to bed I heern Him a thrashin round like a short-tailed Bull in fli-time. The old Woman ses she to me ses she, Zekle, ses she, our Hosee's gut the chollery or suthin anuther ses she, don't you Bee skeered, ses I, he's oney amakin pottery ses i, he's ollers on hand at that ere busynes like Da & martin, and shure enuf, cum mornin, Hosy he cum down stares full chizzle, hare on eend and cote tales flyin, and sot rite of to go reed his varses to Parson Wilbur bein he haint aney great shows o' book larnin himself, bimeby he cum back and sed the parson wuz dreffle tickled with 'em as i hoop you will Be, and said they wuz True grit.

Hosea ses taint hardly fair to call 'em hisn now, cos the parson kind o' slicked off sum o' the last varses, but he told Hosee he didn't want to put his ore in to tetch to the Rest on 'em, bein they wuz verry well As thay wuz, and then Hosy ses he sed suthin a nuther about Simplex Mundishes or sum sech feller, but I guess Hosea kind o' didn't hear him, for I never hearn o' nobody o' that name in this villadge, and I've lived here man and boy 76 year cum next tater diggin, and thair aint no wheres a kitting spryer'n I be.

If you print 'em I wish you'd jest let folks know who hosy's father is, cos my ant Keziah used to say it's nater to be curus ses she, she aint livin though and he's a likely kind o' lad.

EZEKIEL BIGLOW

Thrash away, you'll *hev* to rattle
On them kittle-drums o' yourn,—
'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle
Thet is ketched with mouldy corn;
Put in stiff, you fifer feller,
Let folks see how spry you be,—
Guess you'll toot till you are yeller
'Fore you git ahold o' me!

Thet air flag's a leetle rotten,
Hope it aint your Sunday's best;—
Fact! it takes a sight o' cotton
To stuff out a soger's chest:
Sence we farmers hev to pay fer 't,
Ef you must wear humps like these,
S'posin' you should try salt hay fer 't,
It would du ez slick ez grease.

'T wouldn't suit them Southun fellers,
They're a dreffle graspin' set,
We must ollers blow the bellers
Wen they want their irons het;
May be it's all right ez preachin',
But *my* narves it kind o' grates,
Wen I see the overreachin'
O' them nigger-driven' States.

Them thet rule us, them slave-traders,
Haint they cut a thunderin' swarth
(Helped by Yankee renegaders),
Thru the vartu o' the North!

1 'The act of May 13, 1846, authorized President Polk to employ the militia, and call out 50,000 volunteers, if necessary. He immediately called for the full number of volunteers, asking Massachusetts for 777 men. On May 26 Governor Briggs issued a proclamation for the enrollment of the regiment. As the President's call was merely a request and not an order, many Whigs and the Abolitionists were for refusing it. *The Liberator* for June 5 severely censured the governor for complying, and accused him of not carrying out the resolutions of the last Whig Convention, which had pledged the party "to present as firm a front of opposition to the institution as was consistent with their allegiance to the Constitution." ' Note, ibid.,VIII,398.

We begin to think it's nater
To take sarse an' not be riled;—
Who'd expect to see a tater
All on eend at bein' biled?

Ez fer war, I call it murder,—
There you hev it plain an' flat;
I don't want to go no furder
Than my Testyment fer that;
God hez sed so plump an' fairly,
It's ez long ez it is broad,
An' you've gut to git up airly
Ef you want to take in God.

'Taint your eppyletts an' feathers
Make the thing a grain more right;
'Taint afollerin' your bell-wethers
Will excuse ye in His sight;
Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment aint to answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you.

Wut's the use o' meetin'-goin'
Every Sabbath, wet or dry,
Ef it's right to go amowin'
Feller-men like oats an' rye?
I dunno but wut it's pooty
Trainin' round in bobtail coats,—
But it's curus Christian dooty
This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

They may talk o' Freedom's airy
Tell they're pupple in the face,—
It's a grand gret cemetary
Fer the barthrights of our race;
They jest want this Californy
So's to lug new slave-states in
To abuse ye, an' to scorn ye,
An' to plunder ye like sin.

Aint it cute to see a Yankee
Take sech everlastin' pains,
All to get the Devil's thankee
Helpin' on 'em weld their chains?
Wy, it's jest ez clear ez figgers,
Clear ez one an' one make two,
Chaps thet make black slaves o' niggers
Want to make wite slaves o' you.

Tell ye jest the eend I've come to
Arter cipherin' plaguy smart,
An' it makes a handy sum, tu,
Any gump could larn by heart;
Laborin' man an' laborin woman
Hev one glory an' one shame.
Ev'y thin' thet's done inhuman
Injers all on 'em the same.

'Taint by turnin' out to hack folks
You're agoin' to git your right,
Nor by lookin' down on black folks
Coz you're put upon by wite;
Slavery aint o' nary color,
'Taint the hide thet makes it wus,
All it keers fer in a feller
'S jest to make him fill its pus.

Want to tackle *me* in, du ye?
I expect you'll hev to wait;
Wen cold lead puts daylight thru ye
You'll begin to kal'late;
S'pose the crows wun't fall to pickin'
All the carkiss from your bones,
Coz you helped to give a lickin'
To them poor half-Spanish drones?

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy
Wether I'd be sech a goose
Ez to jine ye,—guess you'd fancy
The etarnal bung wuz loose!
She wants me fer home consumption,
Let alone the hay's to mow,—
Ef you're arter folks o' gumption,
You've a darned long row to hoe.

Take them editors thet's crowin'
Like a cockerel three months old,—
Don't ketch any on 'em goin',
Though they *be* so blasted bold;
Aint they a prime lot o' fellers?
'Fore they think on 't guess they'll sprout
(Like a peach thet's got the yellers),
With the meanness bustin' out.

Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'
Bigger pens to cram with slaves,
Help the men thet's ollers dealin'
Insults on your fathers' graves;
Help the strong to grind the feeble,
Help the many agin the few,
Help the men thet call your people
Witewashed slaves an' peddlin' crew!

Massachusetts, God forgive her,[1]
She's akneelin' with the rest,
She, thet ough' to ha' clung ferever
In her grand old eagle-nest;

1 'An allusion to the governor's call for troops as well as to the vote on the War Bill. On May 11, 1846, the

She thet ough' to stand so fearless
  W'ile the wracks are round her hurled,
Holdin' up a beacon peerless
  To the oppressed of all the world!

Ha'n't they sold your colored seamen?
  Ha'n't they made your env'ys w'iz?
Wut'll make ye act like freemen?
  Wut'll git your dander riz?
Come, I'll tell ye wut I'm thinkin'
  Is our dooty in this fix,
They'd ha' done 't ez quick ez winkin'
  In the days o' seventy-six.

Clang the bells in every steeple,
  Call all true men to disown
The tradoocers of our people,
  The enslavers o' their own;
Let our dear old Bay State proudly
  Put the trumpet to her mouth,
Let her ring this messidge loudly
  In the ears of all the South:—

'I'll return ye good fer evil
  Much ez we frail mortils can,
But I wun't go help the Devil
  Makin' man the cus o' man;
Call me coward, call me traiter,
  Jest ez suits your mean idees,—
Here I stand a tyrant-hater,
  An' the friend o' God an' Peace!'

Ef I'd *my* way I hed ruther
  We should go to work an' part,
They take one way, we take t' other,
  Guess it would n't break my heart;
Man hed ough' to put asunder
  Them thet God has noways jined;
An' I should n't gretly wonder
  Ef there's thousands o' my mind.

[The first recruiting sergeant on record I conceive to have been that individual who is mentioned in the Book of Job as *going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it*. Bishop Latimer will have him to have been a bishop, but to me that other calling would appear more congenial. The sect of Cainites is not yet extinct, who esteemed the first-born of Adam to be the most worthy, not only because of that privilege of primogeniture, but inasmuch as he was able to overcome and slay his younger brother. That was a wise saying of the famous Marquis Pescara to the Papal Legate, that *it was impossible for men to serve Mars and Christ at the same time*. Yet in time past the profession of arms was judged to be κατ' ἐξοχήν [1] that of a gentleman, nor does this opinion want for strenuous upholders even in our day. Must we suppose, then, that the profession of Christianity was only intended for losels, or, at best, to afford an opening for plebeian ambition? Or shall we hold with that nicely metaphysical Pomeranian, Captain Vratz, who was Count Königsmark's chief instrument in the murder of Mr. Thynne, that the Scheme of Salvation has been arranged with an especial eye to the necessities of the upper classes, and that 'God would consider *a gentleman* and deal with him suitably to the condition and profession he had placed him in'? It may be said of us all, *Exemplo plus quam ratione vivimus*.[2]—H.W.]

1846 1848

President sent to the House of Representatives his well-known message declaring the existence of war brought on "by the act of Mexico," and asking for a supply of $10,000,000. Of the seven members from Massachusetts, all Whigs, two, Robert C. Winthrop, of Boston, and Amos Abbott, of Andover, voted for the bill. The Whigs throughout the country, remembering the fate of the party which had opposed the last war with England, sanctioned the measure as necessary for the preservation of the army, then in peril by the unauthorized acts of the President.' Note, ibid.,VIII,398–99

NO. III

What Mr. Robinson Thinks

[A FEW remarks on the following verses will not be out of place. The satire in them was not meant to have any personal, but only a general, application. Of the gentleman upon whose letter they were intended as a commentary Mr. Biglow had never heard, till he saw the letter itself. The position of the satirist is oftentimes one which he would not have chosen, had the election been left to himself. In attacking bad principles, he is obliged to select some individual who has made himself their exponent, and in whom they are impersonate, to the end that what he says may not, through ambiguity, be dissipated *tenues in auras*.[3] For what says Seneca? *Longum iter per*

1 '*Par excellence*.'
2 'We live more by precedence than by reason.'
3 'Into thin air.'

præcepta, breve et efficace per exempla.[1] A bad principle is comparatively harmless while it continues to be an abstraction, nor can the general mind comprehend it fully till it is printed in that large type which all men can read at sight, namely, the life and character, the sayings and doings, of particular persons. It is one of the cunningest fetches of Satan, that he never exposes himself directly to our arrows, but, still dodging behind this neighbor or that acquaintance, compels us to wound him through them, if at all. He holds our affections as hostages, the while he patches up a truce with our conscience.

Meanwhile, let us not forget that the aim of the true satirist is not to be severe upon persons, but only upon falsehood, and, as Truth and Falsehood start from the same point, and sometimes even go along together for a little way, his business is to follow the path of the latter after it diverges, and to show her floundering in the bog at the end of it. Truth is quite beyond the reach of satire. There is so brave a simplicity in her, that she can no more be made ridiculous than an oak or a pine. The danger of the satirist is, that continual use may deaden his sensibility to the force of language. He becomes more and more liable to strike harder than he knows or intends. He may be careful to put on his boxing-gloves, and yet forget that, the older they grow, the more plainly may the knuckles inside be felt. Morever, in the heat of contest, the eye is insensibly drawn to the crown of victory, whose tawdry tinsel glitters through that dust of the ring which obscures Truth's wreath of simple leaves. I have sometimes thought that my young friend, Mr. Biglow, needed a monitory hand laid on his arm,—*aliquid suffla minandus erat.*[2] I have never thought it good husbandry to water the tender plants of reform with *aqua fortis*, yet, where so much is to do in the beds, he were a sorry gardener who should wage a whole day's war with an iron scuffle on those ill weeds that make the garden-walks of life unsightly, when a sprinkle of Attic salt will wither them up. *Est ars etiam maledicendi*,[3] says Scaliger, and truly it is a hard thing to say where the graceful gentleness of the lamb merges in downright sheepishness. We may conclude with worthy and wise Dr. Fuller, that 'one may be a lamb in private wrongs, but in hearing general affronts to goodness they are asses which are not lions.'—H.W.]

Guvener B.[4] is a sensible man;
He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;
He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,
An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;
But John P.
Robinson [5] he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

My! aint it terrible? Wut shall we du?
We can't never choose him o' course,—thet's flat;
Guess we shall hev to come round (don't you?)
An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;
Fer John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

Gineral C. is a dreffle smart man:
He's ben on all sides thet give places or pelf;
But consistency still wuz a part of his plan,—
He's ben true to *one* party,—an' thet is himself;—
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

1 'By way of principles, the road is long; by example, it is short and effective.'

2 'He needed to have the brake put on a bit.'

3 'There is ever an art to slander.'

4 'George Nixon Briggs was the Whig Governor of Massachusetts from 1844 to 1851. The campaign referred to here is that of 1847. Governor Briggs was renominated by acclamation and supported by his party with great enthusiasm. His opponent was Caleb Cushing, then in Mexico, and raised by President Polk to the rank of Brigadier-General. Cushing was defeated by a majority of 14,060.' Note, ibid., VIII, 401.

5 'John Paul Robinson . . . was a resident of Lowell, a lawyer of considerable ability, and a thorough classical scholar. . . . Late in the gubernatorial contest of 1847 it was rumored that Robinson, heretofore a zealous Whig, and a delegate to the recent Springfield Convention, had gone over to the Democratic . . . camp. The editor of the *Boston Palladium* wrote to him to learn the truth, and Robinson replied in an open letter avowing his intention to vote for Cushing.' Note, ibid., VIII, 401.

Gineral C. he goes in fer the war;
He don't vally princerple more 'n an old cud;
Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,
But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood?
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,
With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut aint,
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,
An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,
An' Presidunt Polk, you know, *he* is our country.
An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book
Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per contry*;
An' John P.
Robinson he
Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;
Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee, faw, fum*;
An' thet all this big talk of our destinies
Is half on it ign'ance, an' t' other half rum;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course, so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life
Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats,
An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,
To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez they did n't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy, we've gut folks to tell us
The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I vow,—
God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fellers,
To start the world's team wen it gits in a slough;
Fer John P.
Robinson he
Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Gee!

[The attentive reader will doubtless have perceived in the foregoing poem an allusion to that pernicious sentiment, 'Our country, right or wrong.' It is an abuse of language to call a certain portion of land, much more, certain personages, elevated for the time being to high station, our country. I would not sever nor loosen a single one of those ties by which we are united to the spot of our birth, nor minish by a tittle the respect due to the Magistrate. I love our own Bay State too well to do the one, and as for the other, I have myself for nigh forty years exercised, however unworthily, the function of Justice of the Peace, having been called thereto by the unsolicited kindness of that most excellent man and upright patriot, Caleb Strong. *Patriæ fumus igne alieno luculentior* [1] is best qualified with this,—*Ubi libertas, ibi patria.*[2] We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, not a divided, allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth exacts a certain loyalty of us, while, in our capacity as spirits, we are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. There is a patriotism of the soul whose claim absolves us from our other and terrene fealty. Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like. Our terrestrial organizations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model, and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert them from this their original intendment. When, therefore, one would have us to fling up our caps and shout with the multitude, '*Our country, however bounded!*' he demands of us that we sacrifice the larger to

1 'The smoke of one's fatherland casts more light than the flame of any other country.'
2 'Where freedom is, there is your fatherland.'

the less, the higher to the lower, and that we yield to the imaginary claims of a few acres of soil our duty and privilege as liegemen of Truth. Our true country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair's-breadth, she ceases to be our mother, and chooses rather to be looked upon *quasi noverca*.[1] That is a hard choice when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread one path and our duty points us to another. We must make as noble and becoming an election as did Penelope between Icarius and Ulysses. Veiling our faces, we must take silently the hand of Duty to follow her . . . H.W.]

1847 1848

Second Series[2]

The Courtin'

GOD makes sech nights, all white an' still
Fur'z you can look or listen,
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,
All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown
An' peeked in thru' the winder,
An' there sot Huldy all alone,
'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side
With half a cord o' wood in—
There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)
To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out
Towards the pootiest, bless her,
An' leetle flames danced all about
The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,
An' in amongst 'em rusted
The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young
Fetched back f 'om Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,
Seemed warm f 'om floor to ceilin',
An' she looked full ez rosy agin
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'T was kin' o' kingdom-come to look
On sech a blessed cretur,
A dogrose blushin' to a brook
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,
Clear grit an' human natur',
None could n't quicker pitch a ton
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells—
All is, he could n't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run
All crinkly like curled maple,
The side she breshed felt full o' sun
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing
Ez hisn in the choir;
My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she 'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,
When her new meetin'-bunnet
Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair
O' blue eyes sot upun it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some*!
She seemed to 've gut a new soul,
For she felt sartin-sure he 'd come,
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,
A-raspin' on the scraper,—
All ways to once her feelins flew
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
Some doubtfle o' the sekle,
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk
Ez though she wished him furder,
An' on her apples kep' to work,
Parin' away like murder.

1 'As a stepmother.'

2 'Clough,' wrote Lowell in the introduction to the Second Series, 'often suggested that I should try my hand at some Yankee Pastorals, which would admit of more sentiment and a higher tone without foregoing the advantage offered by the dialect. I have never completed anything of the kind, but, in this Second Series, both my remembrance of his counsel and the deeper feeling called up by the great interests at stake, led me to venture some passages nearer to what is called poetical than could have been admitted without incongruity into the former series.' Ibid.,VIII,204.

'You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?'
'Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin' '—
'To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es
Agin to-morrer's i'nin'.'

To say why gals acts so or so,
Or don't, 'ould be presumin';
Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
Then stood a spell on t'other,
An' on which one he felt the wust
He could n't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, 'I 'd better call agin';
Says she, 'Think likely, Mister':
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,
An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips
An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind
Whose naturs never vary,
Like streams that keep a summer mind
Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
Too tight for all expressin',
Tell mother see how metters stood,
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,
An' all I know is they was cried
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

1848–66 1867

NO. VI

Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 17th May, 1862.

GENTLEMEN,—At the special request of Mr. Biglow, I intended to inclose, together with his own contribution, (into which, at my suggestion, he has thrown a little more of pastoral sentiment than usual), some passages from my sermon on the day of the National Fast, from the text, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them,' Heb.xiii: 3. But I have not leisure sufficient at present for the copying of them, even were I altogether satisfied with the production as it stands. I should prefer, I confess, to contribute the entire discourse to the pages of your respectable miscellany, if it should be found acceptable upon perusal, especially as I find the difficulty in selection of greater magnitude than I had anticipated. What passes without challenge in the fervour of oral delivery, cannot always stand the colder criticism of the closet. I am not so great an enemy of Eloquence as my friend Mr. Biglow would appear to be from some passages in his contribution for the current month. I would not, indeed, hastily suspect him of covertly glancing at myself in his somewhat caustick animadversions, albeit some of the phrases he girds at are not entire strangers to my lips. I am a more hearty admirer of the Puritans than seems now to be the fashion, and believe, that, if they Hebraized a little too much in their speech, they showed remarkable practical sagacity as statesmen and founders. But such phenomena as Puritanism are the results rather of great religious than of merely social convulsions, and do not long survive them. So soon as an earnest conviction has cooled into a phrase, its work is over, and the best that can be done with it is to bury it. *Ite, missa est.* I am inclined to agree with Mr. Biglow that we cannot settle the great political questions which are now presenting themselves to the nation by the opinions of Jeremiah or Ezekiel as to the wants and duties of the Jews in their time, nor do I believe that an entire community with their feelings and views would be practicable or even agreeable at the present day. At the same time I could wish that their habit of subordinating the actual to the moral, the flesh to the spirit, and this world to the other, were more common. They had found out, at least, the great military secret that soul weighs more than body.—But I am suddenly called to a sick-bed in the household of a valued parishioner.

With esteem and respect,
Your obedient servant,
HOMER WILBUR

Once git a smell o' musk into a draw,
An' it clings hold like precerdents in law:
Your gra'ma'am put it there,—when, goodness knows,—
To jes' this-worldify her Sunday-clo'es;
But the old chist wun't sarve her gran'son's wife,
(For, 'thout new funnitoor, wut good in life?)
An' so ole clawfoot, from the precinks dread
O' the spare chamber, slinks into the shed,
Where, dim with dust, it fust or last subsides
To holdin' seeds an' fifty things besides;
But better days stick fast in heart an' husk,
An' all you keep in 't gits a scent o' musk.

Jes' so with poets: wut they 've airly read
Gits kind o' worked into their heart an' head,
So 's 't they can't seem to write but jest on sheers
With furrin countries or played-out ideers,
Nor hev a feelin', ef it doosn't smack
O' wut some critter chose to feel 'way back:
This makes 'em talk o' daisies, larks, an' things,
Ez though we 'd nothin' here that blows an' sings,—
(Why, I 'd give more for one live bobolink
Than a square mile o' larks in printer's ink,)—
This makes 'em think our fust o' May is May,
Which 't ain't, for all the almanicks can say.

O little city-gals, don't never go it
Blind on the word o' noospaper or poet!
They 're apt to puff, an' May-day seldom looks
Up in the country ez it doos in books;
They 're no more like than hornets'-nests an' hives,
Or printed sarmons be to holy lives.
I, with my trouses perched on cowhide boots,
Tuggin' my foundered feet out by the roots,
Hev seen ye come to fling on April's hearse
Your muslin nosegays from the milliner's,
Puzzlin' to find dry ground your queen to choose,
An' dance your throats sore in morocker shoes:
I 've seen ye an' felt proud, thet, come wut would,
Our Pilgrim stock wuz pethed with hardihood.
Pleasure doos make us Yankees kind o' winch,
Ez though 't wuz sunthin' paid for by the inch;
But yit we du contrive to worry thru,
Ef Dooty tells us thet the thing 's to du,
An' kerry a hollerday, ef we set out,
Ez stiddily ez though 't wuz a redoubt.

I, country-born an' bred, know where to find
Some blooms thet make the season suit the mind,
An' seem to metch the doubtin' bluebird's notes,—
Half-vent'rin' liverworts in furry coats,
Bloodroots, whose rolled-up leaves ef you oncurl,
Each on 'em 's cradle to a baby-pearl,—
But these are jes' Spring's pickets; sure ez sin,
The rebble frosts 'll try to drive 'em in;
For half our May 's so awfully like May n't,
't would rile a Shaker or an evrige saint;
Though I own up I like our back'ard springs
Thet kind o' haggle with their greens an' things,
An' when you 'most give up, 'uthout more words
Toss the fields full o' blossoms, leaves, an' birds:
Thet 's Northun natur', slow an' apt to doubt,
But when it *doos* git stirred, ther' 's no gin-out!

Fust come the blackbirds clatt'rin' in tall trees,
An' settlin' things in windy Congresses,—
Queer politicians, though, for I 'll be skinned
Ef all on 'em don't head against the wind.
'fore long the trees begin to show belief,—
The maple crimsons to a coral-reef,
Then saffern swarms swing off from all the willers
So plump they look like yaller caterpillars,
Then gray hosseches'nuts leetle hands unfold
Softer 'n a baby's be at three days old:
Thet 's robin-redbreast's almanick; he knows

Thet arter this ther' 's only blossom-snows;
So, choosin' out a handy crotch an' spouse,
He goes to plast'rin' his adobë house.

Then seems to come a hitch,—things lag
behind,
Till some fine mornin' Spring makes up her
mind,
An' ez, when snow-swelled rivers cresh
their dams
Heaped-up with ice thet dovetails in an'
jams,
A leak comes spirtin' thru some pin-hole
cleft,
Grows stronger, fercer, tears out right an'
left,
Then all the waters bow themselves an'
come,
Suddin, in one gret slope o' shedderin'
foam,
Jes' so our Spring gits everythin' in tune
An' gives one leap from Aperl into June:
Then all comes crowdin' in; afore you
think,
Young oak-leaves mist the side-hill woods
with pink;
The catbird in the laylock-bush is loud;
The orchards turn to heaps o' rosy cloud;
Red-cedars blossom tu, though few folks
know it,
An' look all dipt in sunshine like a poet;
The lime-trees pile their solid stacks
o' shade
An' drows'ly simmer with the bees' sweet
trade;
In ellum-shrouds the flashin' hangbird
clings
An' for the summer vy'ge his hammock
slings;
All down the loose-walled lanes in archin'
bowers
The barb'ry droops its strings o' golden
flowers,
Whose shrinkin' hearts the school-gals love
to try
With pins,—they'll worry yourn so, boys,
bimeby!
But I don't love your cat'logue style,—do
you?—
Ez ef to sell off Natur' by vendoo;
One word with blood in't's twice ez good ez
two:
'nuff sed, June's bridesman, poet o' the
year,
Gladness on wings, the bobolink, is here;
Half-hid in tip-top apple-blooms he swings,
Or climbs aginst the breeze with quiverin'
wings,
Or, givin' way to 't in a mock despair,
Runs down, a brook o' laughter, thru the
air.

I ollus feel the sap start in my veins
In Spring, with curus heats an' prickly
pains,
Thet drive me, when I git a chance, to
walk
Off by myself to hev a privit talk
With a queer critter thet can't seem to 'gree
Along o' me like most folks,—Mister Me.
Ther' 's times when I'm unsoshle ez a
stone,
An' sort o' suffercate to be alone,—
I'm crowded jes' to think thet folks are
nigh,
An' can't bear nothin' closer than the sky;
Now the wind 's full ez shifty in the mind
Ez wut it is ou'-doors, ef I ain't blind,
An' sometimes, in the fairest sou'west
weather,
My innard vane pints east for weeks
together,
My natur' gits all goose-flesh, an' my sins
Come drizzlin' on my conscience sharp ez
pins:
Wal, et sech times I jes' slip out o' sight
An' take it out in a fair stan'-up fight
With the one cuss I can't lay on the shelf,
The crook'dest stick in all the heap,—
Myself.

'T wuz so las' Sabbath arter meetin'-time:
Findin' my feelin's wouldn't noways
rhyme
With nobody's, but off the hendle flew
An' took things from an east-wind pint o'
view,
I started off to lose me in the hills
Where the pines be, up back o' 'Siah's
Mills:
Pines, ef you're blue, are the best friends I
know,
They mope an' sigh an' sheer your feelin's
so,—
They hesh the ground beneath so, tu, I
swan,
You half-forgit you've gut a body on.
Ther' 's a small school'us' there where four
roads meet,
The door-steps hollered out by little feet,

An' side-posts carved with names whose owners grew
To gret men, some on 'em, an' deacons, tu;
't ain't used no longer, coz the town hez gut
A high-school, where they teach the Lord knows wut:
Three-story larnin' 's pop'lar now; I guess
We thriv' ez wal on jes' two stories less,
For it strikes me ther' 's sech a thing ez sinnin'
By overloadin' children's underpinnin':
Wal, here it wuz I larned my A B C,
An' it's a kind o' favorite spot with me.

We're curus critters: Now ain't jes' the minute
Thet ever fits us easy while we're in it;
Long ez 't wuz futur', 't would be perfect bliss,—
Soon ez it's past, *thet* time's wuth ten o' this;
An' yit there ain't a man thet need be told
Thet Now's the only bird lays eggs o' gold.
A knee-high lad, I used to plot an' plan
An' think 't wuz life's cap-sheaf to be a man;
Now, gittin' gray, there's nothin' I enjoy
Like dreamin' back along into a boy:
So the ole school'us' is a place I choose
Afore all others, ef I want to muse;
I set down where I used to set, an' git
My boyhood back, an' better things with it,—
Faith, Hope, an' sunthin', ef it isn't Cherrity,
It's want o' guile, an' thet's ez gret a rerrity,
While Fancy's cushin', free to Prince and Clown,
Makes the hard bench ez soft ez milk-weed-down.

Now, 'fore I knowed, that Sabbath arternoon
When I sot out to tramp myself in tune,
I found me in the school'us' on my seat,
Drummin' the march to No-wheres with my feet.
Thinkin' o' nothin', I've heerd ole folks say
Is a hard kind o' dooty in its way:
It's thinkin' everythin' you ever knew,
Or ever hearn, to make your feelin's blue.
I sot there tryin' thet on for a spell:
I thought o' the Rebellion, then o' Hell,
Which some folks tell ye now is jest a metterfor
(A the'ry, p'raps, it wun't *feel* none the better for);
I thought o' Reconstruction, wut we'd win
Patchin' our patent self-blow-up agin:
I thought ef this 'ere milkin' o' the wits,
So much a month, warn't givin' Natur' fits,—
Ef folks warn't druv, findin' their own milk fail,
To work the cow thet hez an iron tail,
An' ef idees 'thout ripenin' in the pan
Would send up cream to humor ary man:
From this to thet I let my worryin' creep,
Till finally I must ha' fell asleep.

Our lives in sleep are some like streams thet glide
'twixt flesh an' sperrit boundin' on each side,
Where both shores' shadders kind o' mix an' mingle
In sunthin' thet ain't jes' like either single;
An' when you cast off moorin's from To-day,
An' down towards To-morrer drift away,
The imiges thet tengle on the stream
Make a new upside-down'ard world o' dream:
Sometimes they seem like sunrise-streaks an' warnin's
O' wut'll be in Heaven on Sabbath-mornin's,
An', mixed right in ez ef jest out o' spite,
Sunthin' thet says your supper ain't gone right.
I'm gret on dreams, an' often when I wake,
I've lived so much it makes my mem'ry ache,
An' can't skurce take a cat-nap in my cheer
'thout hevin' 'em, some good, some bad, all queer.

Now I wuz settin' where I'd ben, it seemed,
An' ain't sure yit whether I r'ally dreamed,
Nor, ef I did, how long I might ha' slep',
When I hearn some un stompin' up the step,
An' lookin' round, ef two an' two make four,
I see a Pilgrim Father in the door.
He wore a steeple-hat, tall boots, an' spurs
With rowels to 'em big ez ches'nut-burrs,

An' his gret sword behind him sloped away
Long'z a man's speech thet dunno wut to say.—
'Ef your name's Biglow, an' your given-name
Hosee,' sez he, 'it's arter you I came;
I'm your gret-gran'ther multiplied by three.'—
'My *wut*?' sez I.—'Your gret-gret-gret,' sez he:
'You wouldn't ha' never ben here but for me.
Two hundred an' three year ago this May
The ship I come in sailed up Boston Bay;
I'd been a cunnle in our Civil War,—
But wut on airth hev *you* gut up one for?
Coz we do things in England, 't ain't for you
To git a notion you can du 'em tu:
I'm told you write in public prints: ef true,
It's nateral you should know a thing or two.'—
'Thet air's an argymunt I can't endorse,—
't would prove, coz you wear spurs, you kep' a horse:
For brains,' sez I, 'wutever you may think,
Ain't boun' to cash the drafs o' pen-an'-ink,—
Though mos' folks write ez ef they hoped jes' quickenin'
The churn would argoo skim-milk into thickenin';
But skim-milk ain't a thing to change its view
O' wut it's meant for more'n a smoky flue.
But du pray tell me, 'fore we furder go,
How in all Natur' did you come to know
'bout our affairs,' sez I, 'in Kingdom-Come?'—
'Wal, I worked round at sperrit-rappin' some,
An' danced the tables till their legs wuz gone,
In hopes o' larnin' wut wuz goin' on,'
Sez he, 'but mejums lie so like all-split
Thet I concluded it wuz best to quit.
But, come now, ef you wun't confess to knowin',
You've some conjectures how the thing's a-goin'.'—
'Gran'ther,' sez I, 'a vane warn't never known
Nor asked to hev a jedgment of its own;
An' yit, ef 't ain't gut rusty in the jints,
It's safe to trust its say on certin' pints:
It knows the wind's opinions to a T,
An' the wind settles wut the weather'll be.
'I never thought a scion of our stock
Could grow the wood to make a weather-cock;
When I wuz younger'n you, skurce more'n a shaver,
No airthly wind,' sez he, 'could make me waiver!'
(Ez he said this, he clinched his jaw an' forehead,
Hitchin' his belt to bring his sword-hilt forrard.)—
'Jes so it wuz with me,' sez I, 'I swow,
When *I* wuz younger'n wut you see me now,—
Nothin' from Adam's fall to Huldy's bonnet,
Thet I warn't full-cocked with my jedgment on it;
But now I'm gittin' on in life, I find
It's a sight harder to make up my mind,—
Nor I don't often try tu, when events
Will du it for me free of all expense.
The moral question's ollus plain enough,—
It's jes' the human-natur' side thet's tough;
Wut's best to think mayn't puzzle me nor you,—
The pinch comes in decidin' wut to *du*;
Ef you *read* History, all runs smooth ez grease,
Coz there the men ain't nothin' more'n idees,—
But come to *make* it, ez we must to-day,
Th' idees hev arms an' legs an' stop the way:
It's easy fixin' things in facts an' figgers,—
They can't resist, nor warn't brought up with niggers;
But come to try your the'ry on,—why, then
Your facts an' figgers change to ign'ant men
Actin' ez ugly—'—'Smite 'em hip an' thigh!'
Sez gran'ther, 'and let every man-child die!
Oh for three weeks o' Crommle an' the Lord!
Up, Isr'el, to your tents an' grind the sword!'—
'Thet kind o' thing worked wal in ole Judee,
But you forgit how long it's ben A.D.;
You think thet's ellerkence,—I call it shoddy,
A thing,' sez I, 'wun't cover soul nor body;

I like the plain all-wool o' common-sense,
Thet warms ye now, an' will a twelve-
month hence.
You took to follerin' where the Prophets
beckoned,
An', fust you knowed on, back come
Charles the Second;
Now wut I want's to hev all *we* gain stick,
An' not to start Millennium too quick;
We hain't to punish only, but to keep,
An' the cure's gut to go a cent'ry deep.'
'Wall, milk-an'-water ain't the best o'
glue,'
Sez he, 'an' so you'll find afore you're thru;
Ef reshness venters sunthin', shilly-shally
Loses ez often wut's ten times the vally.
Thet exe of ourn, when Charles's neck gut
split,
Opened a gap thet ain't bridged over yit:
Slav'ry's your Charles, the Lord hez gin
the exe'—
'Our Charles,' sez I, 'hez gut eight million
necks.
The hardest question ain't the black man's
right,
The trouble is to 'mancipate the white;
One's chained in body an' can be sot free,
But t' other's chained in soul to an idee:
It's a long job, but we shall worry thru it;
Ef bagnets fail, the spellin'-book must du
it.'
'Hosee,' sez he, 'I think you're goin' to fail:
The rettlesnake ain't dangerous in the tail;
This 'ere rebellion's nothing but the
rettle,—
You'll stomp on thet an' think you've won
the bettle;
It's Slavery thet's the fangs an' thinkin'
head,
An' ef you want selvation, cresh it dead,—
An' cresh it suddin, or you'll larn by
waitin'
Thet Chance wun't stop to listen to
debatin'!'—
'God's truth!' sez I,—'an' ef *I* held the
club,
An' knowed jes' where to strike,—but
there's the rub!'—
'Strike soon,' sez he, 'or you'll be deadly
ailin',—
Folks thet's afeared to fail are sure o'
failin';
God hates your sneakin' creturs thet
believe
He'll settle things they run away an' leave!'
He brought his foot down fercely, ez he
spoke,
An' give me sech a startle thet I woke.
1862 1867

Beaver Roars Hoarse With Meltin' Snows [1]

BEAVER roars hoarse with meltin' snows,
An' rattles di'mon's from his granite;
Time wuz, he snatched away my prose,
An' into psalms or satires ran it;
But he, nor all the rest thet once
Started my blood to country-dances,
Can't set me goin' more 'n a dunce
Thet hain't no use for dreams an' fancies.

Rat-tat-tat-tattle thru the street
I hear the drummers makin' riot,
An' I set thinkin' o' the feet
Thet follered once an' now are quiet,—
White feet ez snowdrops innercent,
Thet never knowed the paths o' Satan,
Whose comin' step ther' 's ears thet won't,
No, not lifelong, leave off awaitin'.

Why, hain't I held 'em on my knee?
Did n't I love to see 'em growin',
Three likely lads ez wal could be,
Hahnsome an' brave an' not tu knowin'?
I set an' look into the blaze
Whose natur', jes' like theirn, keeps
climbin',
Ez long 'z it lives, in shinin' ways,
An' half despise myself for rhymin'.

Wut's words to them whose faith an' truth
On War's red techstone rang true metal,
Who ventered life an' love an' youth
For the gret prize o' death in battle?
To him who, deadly hurt, agen
Flashed on afore the charge's thunder,
Tippin' with fire the bolt of men
Thet rived the Rebel line asunder?

'T ain't right to hev the young go fust,
All throbbin' full o' gifts an' graces,
Leavin' life's paupers dry ez dust
To try an' make b'lieve fill their places:
Nothin' but tells us wut we miss,
Ther' 's gaps our lives can't never fay in,
An' *thet* world seems so fur from this
Lef' for us loafers to grow gray in!

1 The selection is from Number X, 'Mr. Hosea Biglow to the Editor of the Atlantic Monthly.'

My eyes cloud up for rain; my mouth
  Will take to twitchin' roun' the corners;
I pity mothers, tu, down South,
  For all they sot among the scorners:
I'd sooner take my chance to stan'
  At Jedgment where your meanest slave is,
Than at God's bar hol' up a han'
  Ez drippin' red ez yourn, Jeff Davis!

Come, Peace! not like a mourner bowed
  For honor lost an' dear ones wasted,
But proud, to meet a people proud,
  With eyes thet tell o' triumph tasted!
Come, with han' grippin' on the hilt,
  An' step thet proves ye Victory's daughter!
Longin' for you, our sperits wilt
  Like shipwrecked men's on raf's for water.

Come, while our country feels the lift
  Of a gret instinct shoutin' 'Forwards!'
An' knows thet freedom ain't a gift
  Thet tarries long in han's o' cowards!
Come, sech ez mothers prayed for, when
  They kissed their cross with lips thet quivered,
An' bring fair wages for brave men,
  A nation saved, a race delivered!
1865 1867

HEBE

I SAW the twinkle of white feet,
I saw the flash of robes descending;
  Before her ran an influence fleet,
That bowed my heart like barley bending.

As, in bare fields, the searching bees
Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,
  It led me on, by sweet degrees
Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim Fates;
With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me;
  The long-sought Secret's golden gates
On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp
Thrilling with godhood; like a lover
  I sprang the proffered life to clasp;—
The beaker fell; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up;
What boots it patch the goblet's splinters?
  Can Summer fill the icy cup,
Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's?

O spendthrift haste! await the Gods;
Their nectar crowns the lips of Patience;
  Haste scatters on unthankful sods
The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,
And shuns the hands would seize upon her;
  Follow thy life, and she will sue
To pour for thee the cup of honor.
1848

FROM THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

AND what is so rare as a day in June?
  Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
  And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
  An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
  Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
  Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
  To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
  Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
  With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
  And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
  Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,

We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'T is enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'T is as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'T is the natural way of living:
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal now
Remembered the keeping of his vow?

1848 1848

FROM A FABLE FOR CRITICS

LITERATI [1]

IT being the commonest mode of procedure, I premise a few candid remarks TO THE READER:—

This trifle, begun to please only myself and my own private fancy, was laid on the shelf. But some friends, who had seen it, induced me, by dint of saying they liked it, to put it in print. That is, having come to that very conclusion, I asked their advice when 't would make no confusion. For though (in the gentlest of ways) they had hinted it was scarce worth the while, I should doubtless have printed it. . . .

Having scrawled at full gallop (as far as that goes) in a style that is neither good verse nor bad prose, and being a person whom nobody knows, some people will say I am rather more free with my readers than it is becoming to be, that I seem to expect them to wait on my leisure in following wherever I wander at pleasure, that, in short, I take more than a young author's lawful ease, and laugh in a queer way so like Mephistopheles, that the Public will doubt, as they grope through my rhythm, if in truth I am making fun *of* them or *with* them.

So the excellent Public is hereby assured that the sale of my book is already secured. For there is not a poet throughout the whole land but will purchase a copy or two out of hand, in the fond expectation of being amused in it, by seeing his betters cut up and abused in it. Now, I find, by a pretty exact calculation, there are something like ten thousand bards in the nation, of that special variety whom the Review and Magazine critics call *lofty* and *true*, and about thirty thousand (*this* tribe is increasing) of the kinds who are termed *full of promise* and *pleasing*. The Public will see by a glance at this schedule, that they cannot expect me to be over-sedulous about courting *them*, since it seems I have got enough fuel made sure of for boiling my pot. . . .

One word to such readers (judicious and wise) as read books with something behind the mere eyes, of whom in the country, perhaps, there are two, including myself, gentle reader, and you. All the characters sketched in this slight *jeu d'esprit*, though, it may be, they seem, here and there, rather free, and drawn from a somewhat too cynical standpoint, are *meant* to be faithful, for that is the grand point, and none but an owl would feel sore at a rub from a jester who tells you, without any subterfuge, that he sits in Diogenes' tub. . . .

1 The title is given by the editors.

Now there happened to be among Phœbus's followers,
A gentleman, one of the omnivorous swallowers,
Who bolt every book that comes out of the press,
Without the least question of larger or less,
Whose stomachs are strong at the expense of their head,—
For reading new books is like eating new bread,
One can bear it at first, but by gradual steps he
Is brought to death's door of a mental dyspepsy.
On a previous stage of existence, our Hero
Had ridden outside, with the glass below zero;
He had been, 'tis a fact you may safely rely on,
Of a very old stock a most eminent scion,—
A stock all fresh quacks their fierce boluses ply on,
Who stretch the new boots Earth's unwilling to try on,
Whom humbugs of all shapes and sorts keep their eye on
Whose hair's in the mortar of every new Zion,
Who, when whistles are dear, go directly and buy one,
Who think slavery a crime that we must not say fie on,
Who hunt, if they e'er hunt at all, with the lion
(Though they hunt lions also, whenever they spy one),
Who contrive to make every good fortune a wry one,
And at last choose the hard bed of honor to die on,
Whose pedigree, traced to earth's earliest years,
Is longer than anything else but their ears;—
In short, he was sent into life with the wrong key,
He unlocked the door, and stept forth a poor donkey.
Though kicked and abused by his bipedal betters
Yet he filled no mean place in the kingdom of letters;
Far happier than many a literary hack,
He bore only paper-mill rags on his back
(For it makes a vast difference which side the mill
One expends on the paper his labor and skill);
So, when his soul waited a new transmigration,
And Destiny balanced 'twixt this and that station,
Not having much time to expend upon bothers,
Remembering he'd had some connection with authors,
And considering his four legs had grown paralytic,—
She set him on two, and he came forth a critic.

. . . . . .

'Twould be endless to tell you the things that he knew,
Each a separate fact, undeniably true,
But with him or each other they'd nothing to do;
No power of combining, arranging, discerning,
Digested the masses he learned into learning;
There was one thing in life he had practical knowledge for
(And this, you will think, he need scarce go to college for),—
Not a deed would he do, nor a word would he utter,
Till he'd weighed its relations to plain bread and butter.
When he left Alma Mater, he practised his wits
In compiling the journals' historical bits,—
Of shops broken open, men falling in fits,
Great fortunes in England bequeathed to poor printers,
And cold spells, the coldest for many past winters,—
Then, rising by industry, knack, and address,
Got notices up for an unbiased press,
With a mind so well poised, it seemed equally made for
Applause or abuse, just which chanced to be paid for:
From this point his progress was rapid and sure,
To the post of a regular heavy reviewer.

And here I must say he wrote excellent articles
On Hebraical points, or the force of Greek particles;
They filled up the space nothing else was prepared for,
And nobody read that which nobody cared for;
If any old book reached a fiftieth edition,
He could fill forty pages with safe erudition:
He could gauge the old books by the old set of rules,
And his very old nothings pleased very old fools;
But give him a new book, fresh out of the heart,
And you put him at sea without compass or chart,—
His blunders aspired to the rank of an art;
For his lore was engraft, something foreign that grew in him,
Exhausting the sap of the native and true in him,
So that when a man came with a soul that was new in him,
Carving new forms of truth out of Nature's old granite,
New and old at their birth, like Le Verrier's planet,
Which, to get a true judgment, themselves must create
In the soul of their critic the measure and weight,
Being rather themselves a fresh standard of grace,
To compute their own judge, and assign him his place,
Our reviewer would crawl all about it and round it,
And, reporting each circumstance just as he found it,
Without the least malice,—his record would be
Profoundly æsthetic as that of a flea,
Which, supping on Wordsworth, should print, for our sakes,
Recollections of nights with the Bard of the Lakes,
Or, lodged by an Arab guide, ventured to render a
Comprehensive account of the ruins at Denderah.

As I said, he was never precisely unkind,
The defect in his brain was just absence of mind;
If he boasted, 'twas simply that he was self-made,
A position which I, for one, never gainsaid,
My respect for my Maker supposing a skill
In His works which our Hero would answer but ill;
And I trust that the mould which he used may be cracked, or he,
Made bold by success, may enlarge his phylactery,
And set up a kind of a man-manufactory,—
An event which I shudder to think about, seeing
That Man is a moral, accountable being.

He meant well enough, but was still in the way,
As dunces still are, let them be where they may;
Indeed, they appear to come into existence
To impede other folks with their awkward assistance;
If you set up a dunce on the very North pole
All alone with himself, I believe, on my soul,
He'd manage to get betwixt somebody's shins,
And pitch him down bodily, all in his sins,
To the grave polar bears sitting round on the ice,
All shortening their grace, to be in for a slice;
Or, if he found nobody else there to pother,
Why, one of his legs would just trip up the other,
For there's nothing we read of in torture's inventions,
Like a well-meaning dunce, with the best of intentions.

A terrible fellow to meet in society,
Not the toast that he buttered was ever so dry at tea;
There he'd sit at the table and stir in his sugar,
Crouching close for a spring, all the while, like a cougar;
Be sure of your facts, of your measures and weights,
Of your time,—he's as fond as an Arab of dates;

You'll be telling, perhaps, in your comical way,
Of something you've seen in the course of the day;
And, just as you're tapering out the conclusion,
You venture an ill-fated classic allusion,—
The girls have all got their laughs ready, when, whack!
The cougar comes down on your thunderstruck back!
You had left out a comma,—your Greek's put in joint,
And pointed at cost of your story's whole point.
In the course of the evening, you find chance for certain
Soft speeches to Anne, in the shade of the curtain:
You tell her your heart can be likened to *one* flower,
'And that, O most charming of women's the sunflower,
Which turns'—here a clear nasal voice, to your terror,
From outside the curtain, says, 'That's all an error.'
As for him, he's—no matter, he never grew tender,
Sitting after a ball, with his feet on the fender,
Shaping somebody's sweet features out of cigar smoke
(Though he'd willingly grant you that such doings are smoke);
All women he damns with *mutabile semper*,
And if ever he felt something like love's distemper,
'Twas tow'rds a young lady who spoke ancient Mexican,
And assisted her father in making a lexicon;
Though I recollect hearing him get quite ferocious
About Mary Clausum, the mistress of Grotius,
Or something of that sort,—but, no more to bore ye
With character-painting, I'll turn to my story.

. . . . . .

'But stay, here comes Tityrus Griswold,[1] and leads on
The flocks whom he first plucks alive, and then feeds on,—
A loud-cackling swarm, in whose feathers warm-drest,
He goes for as perfect a—swan as the rest.

'There comes Emerson first, whose rich words, every one,
Are like gold nails in temples to hang trophies on,
Whose prose is grand verse, while his verse, the Lord knows,
Is some of it pr— No, 'tis not even prose;
I 'm speaking of metres; some poems have welled
From those rare depths of soul that have ne'er been excelled;
They're not epics, but that doesn't matter a pin,
In creating, the only hard thing's to begin;
A grass-blade's no easier to make than an oak;
If you've once found the way, you've achieved the grand stroke;
In the worst of his poems are mines of rich matter,
But thrown in a heap with a crash and a clatter;
Now it is not one thing nor another alone
Makes a poem, but rather the general tone,
The something pervading, uniting the whole,
The before unconceived, unconceivable soul,
So that just in removing this trifle or that, you
Take away, as it were, a chief limb of the statue;
Roots, wood, bark, and leaves singly perfect may be,
But, clapt hodge-podge together, they don't make a tree.

'But, to come back to Emerson (whom, by the way,
I believe we left waiting),—his is, we may say,
A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders, whose range
Has Olympus for one pole, for t'other the Exchange;
He seems, to my thinking (although I'm afraid

[1] The Rev. Rufus W. Griswold (1815–1857), who assumed that his work as editor and anthologist gave him a divinely appointed dictatorship of poets, and who is chiefly remembered for his misunderstanding of Poe.

The comparison must, long ere this, have been made),
A Plotinus-Montaigne, where the Egyptian's gold mist
And the Gascon's shrewd wit cheek-by-jowl coexist;
All admire, and yet scarcely six converts he's got
To I don't (nor they either) exactly know what;
For though he builds glorious temples, 'tis odd
He leaves never a doorway to get in a god.
'Tis refreshing to old-fashioned people like me
To meet such a primitive Pagan as he,
In whose mind all creation is duly respected
As parts of himself—just a little projected;
And who's willing to worship the stars and the sun,
A convert to—nothing but Emerson.
So perfect a balance there is in his head,
That he talks of things sometimes as if they were dead;
Life, nature, love, God, and affairs of that sort,
He looks at as merely ideas; in short,
As if they were fossils stuck round in a cabinet,
Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere dab in it;
Composed just as he is inclined to conjecture her,
Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine parts pure lecturer;
You are filled with delight at his clear demonstration,
Each figure, word, gesture, just fits the occasion,
With the quiet precision of science he'll sort 'em,
But you can't help suspecting the whole a *post mortem*.

'There are persons, mole-blind to the soul's make and style,
Who insist on a likeness 'twixt him and Carlyle;
To compare him with Plato would be vastly fairer,
Carlyle's the more burly, but E. is the rarer;
He sees fewer objects, but clearlier, trulier,
If C.'s as original, E.'s more peculiar;
That he's more of a man you might say of the one,
Of the other he's more of an Emerson;
C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of limb,—
E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and slim;
The one's two thirds Norseman, the other half Greek,
Where the one's most abounding, the other's to seek;
C.'s generals require to be seen in the mass,—
E.'s specialties gain if enlarged by the glass;
C. gives nature and God his own fits of the blues,
And rims common-sense things with mystical hues,—
E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,
And looks coolly around him with sharp common-sense;
C. shows you how every-day matters unite
With the dim transdiurnal recesses of night,—
While E., in a plain, preternatural way,
Makes mysteries matters of mere every day;
C. draws all his characters quite *à la* Fuseli,—
Not sketching their bundles of muscles and thews illy,
He paints with a brush so untamed and profuse,
They seem nothing but bundles of muscles and thews;
E. is rather like Flaxman, lines strait and severe,
And a colorless outline, but full, round, and clear;—
To the men he thinks worthy he frankly accords
The design of a white marble statue in words.
C. labors to get at the centre, and then
Take a reckoning from there of his actions and men;
E. calmly assumes the said centre as granted,
And, given himself, has whatever is wanted

'He has imitators in scores, who omit
No part of the man but his wisdom and wit,—
Who go carefully o'er the sky-blue of his brain,
And when he has skimmed it once, skim it again;

If at all they resemble him, you may be sure it is
Because their shoals mirror his mists and obscurities,
As a mud-puddle seems deep as heaven for a minute,
While a cloud that floats o'er is reflected within it.

. . . . . .

'There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,
As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignified,
Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights
With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights.
He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard of your nation
(There's no doubt that he stands in supreme ice-olation),
Your topmost Parnassus he may set his heel on,
But no warm applauses come, peal following peal on,—
He's too smooth and too polished to hang any zeal on:
Unqualified merits, I'll grant, if you choose, he has 'em,
But he lacks the one merit of kindling enthusiasm;
If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,
Like being stirred up with the very North Pole.

'He is very nice reading in summer, but *inter*
Nos, we don't want *extra* freezing in winter;
Take him up in the depth of July, my advice is,
When you feel an Egyptian devotion to ices.
But, deduct all you can, there's enough that's right good in him,
He has a true soul for field, river, and wood in him;
And his heart, in the midst of brick walls, or where'er it is,
Glows, softens, and thrills with the tenderest charities—
To you mortals that delve in this trade-ridden planet?
No, to old Berkshire's hills, with their limestone and granite.

If you're one who *in loco* (add *foco* here) *desipis*,
You will get of his outermost heart (as I guess) a piece;
But you'd get deeper down if you came as a precipice,
And would break the last seal of its inwardest fountain,
If you only could palm yourself off for a mountain.
Mr. Quivis, or somebody quite as discerning,
Some scholar who's hourly expecting his learning,
Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but Wordsworth
May be rated at more than your whole tuneful herd's worth.
No, don't be absurd, he's an excellent Bryant;
But, my friends, you'll endanger the life of your client,
By attempting to stretch him up into a giant:
If you choose to compare him, I think there are two per-
-sons fit for a parallel—Thompson and Cowper; [1]
I don't mean exactly,—there's something of each,
There's T.'s love of nature, C.'s penchant to preach;
Just mix up their minds so that C.'s spice of craziness
Shall balance and neutralize T.'s turn for laziness,
And it gives you a brain cool, quite frictionless, quiet,
Whose internal police nips the buds of all riot,—
A brain like a permanent strait-jacket put on
The heart that strives vainly to burst off a button,—
A brain which, without being slow or mechanic,
Does more than a larger less drilled, more volcanic;
He's a Cowper condensed, with no craziness bitten,

1 'To demonstrate quickly and easily how perversely absurd 'tis to sound this name *Cowper*,
As people in general call him named *super*,
I remark that he rhymes it himself with horse-trooper.'
Author's note, ibid., VIII, 52.

And the advantage that Wordsworth before
him had written.

'But, my dear little bardlings, don't
prick up your ears
Nor suppose I would rank you and Bryant
as peers;
If I call him an iceberg, I don't mean to say
There is nothing in that which is grand in
its way;
He is almost the one of your poets that
knows
How much grace, strength, and dignity lie
in Repose;
If he sometimes fall short, he is too wise to
mar
His thought's modest fulness by going too
far;
'Twould be well if your authors should all
make a trial
Of what virtue there is in severe self-denial
And measure their writings by Hesiod's
staff,
Which teaches that all has less value than
half.

'There is Whittier, whose swelling and
vehement heart
Strains the strait-breasted drab of the
Quaker apart,
And reveals the live Man, still supreme and
erect,
Underneath the bemummying wrappers of
sect;
There was ne'er a man born who had more
of the swing
Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of
thing;
And his failures arise (though he seem not
to know it)
From the very same cause that has made
him a poet,—
A fervor of mind which knows no separation
'Twixt simple excitement and pure
inspiration,
As my Pythoness erst sometimes erred from
not knowing
If 'twere I or mere wind through her
tripod was blowing;
Let his mind once get head in its favorite
direction
And the torrent of verse bursts the dams of
reflection,
While, borne with the rush of the metre
along,
The poet may chance to go right or go
wrong,
Content with the whirl and delirium of
song;
Then his grammar's not always correct, nor
his rhymes,
And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics
sometimes,
Not his best, though, for those are struck off
at white-heats
When the heart in his breast like a trip-
hammer beats,
And can ne'er be repeated again any more
Than they could have been carefully
plotted before:
Like old what's-his-name there at the
battle of Hastings
(Who, however, gave more than mere
rhythmical bastings),
Our Quaker leads off metaphorical fights
For reform and whatever they call human
rights,
Both singing and striking in front of the
war,
And hitting his foes with the mallet of
Thor;
Anne haec, one exclaims, on beholding his
knocks,
Vestis filii tui,[1] O leather-clad Fox?
Can that be thy son, in the battle's mid din,
Preaching brotherly love and then driving
it in
To the brain of the tough old Goliath of sin,
With the smoothest of pebbles from
Castaly's spring
Impressed on his hard moral sense with a
sling?

'All honor and praise to the right-hearted
bard
Who was true to The Voice when such
service was hard,
Who himself was so free he dared sing for
the slave
When to look but a protest in silence was
brave;
All honor and praise to the women and men
Who spoke out for the dumb and the down-
trodden then!
It needs not to name them, already for each
I see History preparing the statue and
niche;
They were harsh, but shall *you* be so
shocked at hard words

1 'Are these the clothes of your son?'

Who have beaten your pruning-hooks up into swords,
Whose rewards and hurrahs men are surer to gain
By the reaping of men and of women than grain?
Why should *you* stand aghast at their fierce wordy war, if
You scalp one another for Bank or for Tariff?
Your calling them cut-throats and knaves all day long
Doesn't prove that the use of hard language is wrong;
While the World's heart beats quicker to think of such men
As signed Tyranny's doom with a bloody steel-pen,
While on Fourth-of-Julys beardless orators fright one
With hints at Harmodius and Aristogeiton,
You need not look shy at your sisters and brothers
Who stab with sharp words for the freedom of others;—
No, a wreath, twine a wreath for the loyal and true
Who, for sake of the many, dared stand with the few,
Not of blood-spattered laurel for enemies braved,
But of broad, peaceful oak-leaves for citizens saved!

. . . . . .

'There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare
That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;
A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,
So earnest, so graceful, so lithe, and so fleet,
Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet;
'Tis as if a rough oak that for ages had stood,
With his gnarled bony branches like ribs of the wood,
Should bloom, after cycles of struggle and scathe,
With a single anemone trembly and rathe;
His strength is so tender, his wildness so meek,
That a suitable parallel sets one to seek,—
He's a John Bunyan Fouqué, a Puritan Tieck;
When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted
For making so full-sized a man as she wanted,
So, to fill out her model, a little she spared
From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared,
And she could not have hit a more excellent plan
For making him fully and perfectly man.
The success of her scheme gave her so much delight,
That she tried it again, shortly after, in Dwight;
Only, while she was kneading and shaping the clay,
She sang to her work in her sweet childish way,
And found, when she'd put the last touch to his soul,
That the music had somehow got mixed with the whole.

'Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show
He's as good as a lord: well, let's grant that he's so;
If a person prefer that description of praise,
Why, a coronet's certainly cheaper than bays;
But he need take no pains to convince us he's not
(As his enemies say) the American Scott.
Choose any twelve men, and let C. read aloud
That one of his novels of which he's most proud,
And I'd lay any bet that, without ever quitting
Their box, they'd be all, to a man, for acquitting.
He has drawn you one character, though, that is new,
One wildflower he's plucked that is wet with the dew
Of this fresh Western world, and, the thing not to mince,
He has done naught but copy it ill ever since;
His Indians, with proper respect be it said,
Are just Natty Bumpo, daubed over with red,
And his very Long Toms are the same useful Nat,

Rigged up in duck pants and a sou'wester hat
(Though once in a Coffin, a good chance was found
To have slipped the old fellow away underground).
All his other men-figures are clothes upon sticks,
The *dernière chemise* [1] of a man in a fix
(As a captain besieged, when his garrison's small,
Sets up caps upon poles to be seen o'er the wall);
And the women he draws from one model don't vary,
All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie.
When a character's wanted, he goes to the task
As a cooper would do in composing a cask;
He picks out the staves, of their qualities heedful,
Just hoops them together as tight as is needful,
And, if the best fortune should crown the attempt, he
Has made at the most something wooden and empty.

'Don't suppose I would underrate Cooper's abilities;
If I thought you'd do that, I should feel very ill at ease;
The men who have given to *one* character life
And objective existence are not very rife;
You may number them all, both prose-writers and singers,
Without overrunning the bounds of your fingers,
And Natty won't go to oblivion quicker
Than Adams the parson or Primrose the vicar.

'There is one thing in Cooper I like, too, and that is
That on manners he lectures his countrymen gratis;
Not precisely so either, because, for a rarity,
He is paid for his tickets in unpopularity.
Now he may overcharge his American pictures,
But you'll grant there's a good deal of truth in his strictures;
And I honor the man who is willing to sink
Half his present repute for the freedom to think,
And, when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,
Will risk t'other half for the freedom to speak,
Caring naught for what vengeance the mob has in store,
Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or lower.

. . . . . .

'There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby Rudge,
Three fifths of him genius and two fifths sheer fudge,
Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,
In a way to make people of common sense damn metres,
Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,
But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind,
Who—But hey-day! What's this? Messieurs Mathews and Poe,
You mustn't fling mud-balls at Longfellow so,
Does it make a man worse that his character's such
As to make his friends love him (as you think) too much?
Why, there is not a bard at this moment alive
More willing than he that his fellows should thrive;
While you are abusing him thus, even now
He would help either one of you out of a slough;
You may say that he's smooth and all that till you're hoarse,
But remember that elegance also is force;
After polishing granite as much as you will,
The heart keeps its tough old persistency still;
Deduct all you can, *that* still keeps you at bay;
Why, he'll live till men weary of Collins and Gray.
I'm not over-fond of Greek metres in English,
To me rhyme's a gain, so it be not too jinglish,

1 'The last shirt.'

And your modern hexameter verses are no more
Like Greek ones than sleek Mr. Pope is like Homer;
As the roar of the sea to the coo of a pigeon is,
So, compared to your moderns, sounds old Melesigenes;
I may be too partial, the reason, perhaps, o't is
That I've heard the old blind man recite his own rhapsodies,
And my ear with that music impregnate may be,
Like the poor exiled shell with the soul of the sea,
Or as one can't bear Strauss when his nature is cloven
To its deeps within deeps by the stroke of Beethoven;
But, set that aside, and 'tis truth that I speak,
Had Theocritus written in English, not Greek,
I believe that his exquisite sense would scarce change a line
In that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral Evangeline.
That's not ancient nor modern, its place is apart
Where time has no sway, in the realm of pure Art,
'Tis a shrine of retreat from Earth's hubbub and strife
As quiet and chaste as the author's own life.

. . . . . .

'There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit;
A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit
The electrical tingles of hit after hit;
In long poems 'tis painful sometimes, and invites
A thought of the way the new Telegraph writes,
Which pricks down its little sharp sentences spitefully
As if you got more than you'd title to rightfully,
And you find yourself hoping its wild father Lightning
Would flame in for a second and give you a fright'ning.
He has perfect sway of what *I* call a sham metre,
But many admire it, the English pentameter,
And Campbell, I think, wrote most commonly worse,
With less nerve, swing, and fire in the same kind of verse,
Nor e'er achieved aught in't so worthy of praise
As the tribute of Holmes to the grand *Marseillaise*.
You went crazy last year over Bulwer's New Timon;—
Why, if B., to the day of his dying, should rhyme on,
Heaping verses on verses and tomes upon tomes,
He could ne'er reach the best point and vigor of Holmes.
His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a lyric
Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satiric
In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes
That are trodden upon are your own or your foes'.

'There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb
With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme,
He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,
But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders,
The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching
Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;
His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,
But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,
And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,
At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem.'

1847–48 1848

AFTER THE BURIAL [1]

Yes, faith is a goodly anchor;
When skies are sweet as a psalm,

1 The poem, begun after the death of his daughter, Rose, in 1850 bears the grief of many deaths within Lowell's family: of two daughters, a son, his wife, his father and his mother. Of it, Lowell wrote to a friend, 6 July

At the bows it lolls so stalwart,
In its bluff, broad-shouldered calm.

And when over breakers to leeward
The tattered surges are hurled,
It may keep our head to the tempest,
With its grip on the base of the world.

But, after the shipwreck, tell me
What help in its iron thews,
Still true to the broken hawser,
Deep down among sea-weed and ooze?

In the breaking gulfs of sorrow,
When the helpless feet stretch out
And find in the deeps of darkness
No footing so solid as doubt,

Then better one spar of Memory,
One broken plank of the Past,
That our human heart may cling to,
Though hopeless of shore at last!

To the spirit its splendid conjectures,
To the flesh its sweet despair,
Its tears o'er the thin-worn locket
With its anguish of deathless hair!

Immortal? I feel it and know it,
Who doubts it of such as she?
But that is the pang's very secret,—
Immortal away from me.

There's a narrow ridge in the graveyard
Would scarce stay a child in his race,
But to me and my thought it is wider
Than the star-sown vague of Space.

Your logic, my friend, is perfect,
Your moral most drearily true;
But, since the earth clashed on *her* coffin,
I keep hearing that, and not you.

Console if you will, I can bear it;
'Tis a well-meant alms of breath;
But not all the preaching since Adam
Has made Death other than Death.

It is pagan; but wait till you feel it,—
That jar of our earth, that dull shock
When the ploughshare of deeper passion
Tears down to our primitive rock.

Communion in spirit! Forgive me,
But I, who am earthly and weak,
Would give all my incomes from dreamland
For a touch of her hand on my cheek.

That little shoe in the corner,
So worn and wrinkled and brown,
With its emptiness confutes you,
And argues your wisdom down.
1850–68 1869

1875: 'Poets get their sorrows and passions out of themselves by carving the lava (grown cold) into pretty forms. I should not be so indiscreet now, I suppose, and yet a living verse can only be made of a living experience—and that our own.' Norton, ed., *Letters of James Russell Lowell*(N.Y., 1894),II,142.

ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION [1]

JULY 21, 1865

I

WEAK-WINGED is song,
Nor aims at that clear-ethered height

1 On the metrical problems of his 'Commemoration Ode' and other similar poems, Lowell wrote, 14 January 1877, to James B. Thayer: 'The poems were all intended for public recitation. That was the first thing to be considered. I suppose my ear (from long and painful practice on Φ.B.K. poems) has more technical experience in this than almost any. The least tedious measure is the rhymed heroic, but this, too, palls unless relieved by passages of wit or even mere fun. A long series of uniform stanzas (I am always speaking of public recitation) with regularly recurring rhymes produces somnolence among the men and a desperate resort to their fans on the part of the women. No method has yet been invented by which the train of thought or feeling can be shunted off from the epical to the lyrical track. My ears have been jolted often enough over the sleepers on such occasions to know that. I know *something* (of course an American can't know much) about Pindar. But *his* odes had the advantage of being chanted. Now, my problem was to contrive a measure which should not be tedious by uniformity, which should vary with varying moods, in which the transitions (including those of the voice) should be managed without jar. I at first thought of mixed rhymed and blank verses of unequal measures, like those in the choruses of "Samson Agonistes," which are in the main masterly. Of course, Milton *deliberately* departed from that stricter form of the Greek Chorus to which it was bound quite as much (I suspect) by the law of its musical accompaniment as by any sense of symmetry. I wrote some stanzas of the "Commemoration Ode" on this theory at first, leaving some verses without a rhyme to match. But my ear was better pleased when the rhyme, coming at a longer interval, as a far-off echo rather than instant reverberation, produced the same effect almost, and yet was grateful by unexpectedly recalling an association and faint reminiscence of consonance. I think I have succeeded pretty well, and if you try reading aloud I believe you would agree with me.' Ibid.,II,189–90.

Whither the brave deed climbs for light:
We seem to do them wrong,
Bringing our robin's-leaf to deck their hearse
Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler verse,
Our trivial song to honor those who come
With ears attuned to strenuous trump and drum,
And shaped in squadron-strophes their desire,
Live battle-odes whose lines were steel and fire:
Yet sometimes feathered words are strong,
A gracious memory to buoy up and save
From Lethe's dreamless ooze, the common grave
Of the unventurous throng.

2

To-day our Reverend Mother welcomes back
Her wisest Scholars, those who understood
The deeper teaching of her mystic tome,
And offered their fresh lives to make it good:
No lore of Greece or Rome,
No science peddling with the names of things,
Or reading stars to find inglorious fates,
Can lift our life with wings
Far from Death's idle gulf that for the many waits,
And lengthen out our dates
With that clear fame whose memory sings
In manly hearts to come, and nerves them and dilates:
Nor such thy teaching, Mother of us all!
Not such the trumpet-call
Of thy diviner mood,
That could thy sons entice
From happy homes and toils, the fruitful nest
Of those half-virtues which the world calls best,
Into War's tumult rude;
But rather far that stern device
The sponsors chose that round thy cradle stood
In the dim, unventured wood,
The VERITAS that lurks beneath
The letter's unprolific sheath,
Life of whate'er makes life worth living,
Seed-grain of high emprise, immortal food,
One heavenly thing whereof earth hath the giving.

3

Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best oil
Amid the dust of books to find her,
Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,
With the cast mantle she hath left behind her.
Many in sad faith sought for her,
Many with crossed hands sighed for her;
But these, our brothers, fought for her,
At life's dear peril wrought for her,
So loved her that they died for her,
Tasting the raptured fleetness
Of her divine completeness:
Their higher instinct knew
Those love her best who to themselves are true,
And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;
They followed her and found her
Where all may hope to find,
Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,
But beautiful, with danger's sweetness round her.
Where faith made whole with deed
Breathes its awakening breath
Into the lifeless creed,
They saw her plumed and mailed,
With sweet, stern face unveiled,
And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them in death.

4

Our slender life runs rippling by, and glides
Into the silent hollow of the past;
What is there that abides
To make the next age better for the last?
Is earth too poor to give us
Something to live for here that shall outlive us?
Some more substantial boon
Than such as flows and ebbs with Fortune's fickle moon?
The little that we see
From doubt is never free;
The little that we do
Is but half-nobly true;
With our laborious hiving
What men call treasure, and the gods call dross,
Life seems a jest of Fate's contriving,

Only secure in every one's conniving,
A long account of nothings paid with loss,
Where we poor puppets, jerked by unseen wires,
After our little hour of strut and rave,
With all our pasteboard passions and desires,
Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires,
Are tossed pell-mell together in the grave.
But stay! no age was e'er degenerate,
Unless men held it at too cheap a rate,
For in our likeness still we shape our fate.
Ah, there is something here
Unfathomed by the cynic's sneer,
Something that gives our feeble light
A high immunity from Night,
Something that leaps life's narrow bars
To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven;
A seed of sunshine that can leaven
Our earthy dulness with the beams of stars,
And glorify our clay
With light from fountains elder than the Day;
A conscience more divine than we,
A gladness fed with secret tears,
A vexing, forward-reaching sense
Of some more noble permanence;
A light across the sea,
Which haunts the soul and will not let it be,
Still beaconing from the heights of undegenerate years.

5

Whither leads the path
To ampler fates that leads?
Not down through flowery meads,
To reap an aftermath
Of youth's vainglorious weeds,
But up the steep, amid the wrath
And shock of deadly-hostile creeds,
Where the world's best hope and stay
By battle's flashes gropes a desperate way,
And every turf the fierce foot clings to bleeds.
Peace hath her not ignoble wreath,
Ere yet the sharp, decisive word
Light the black lips of cannon, and the sword
Dreams in its easeful sheath;
But some day the live coal behind the thought,
Whether from Baäl's stone obscene,
Or from the shrine serene
Of God's pure altar brought,
Bursts up in flame; the war of tongue and pen
Learns with what deadly purpose it was fraught,
And, helpless in the fiery passion caught,
Shakes all the pillared state with shock of men:
Some day the soft Ideal that we wooed
Confronts us fiercely, foe-beset, pursued,
And cries reproachful: 'Was it, then, my praise,
And not myself was loved? Prove now thy truth;
I claim of thee the promise of thy youth;
Give me thy life, or cower in empty phrase,
The victim of thy genius, not its mate!'
Life may be given in many ways,
And loyalty to Truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So bountiful is Fate;
But then to stand beside her,
When craven churls deride her,
To front a lie in arms and not to yield,
This shows, methinks, God's plan
And measure of a stalwart man,
Limbed like the old heroic breeds,
Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid earth,
Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,
Fed from within with all the strength he needs.

6

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late the Nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief:
Forgive me, if from present things I turn
To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,
And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.
Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast

Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface
And thwart her genial will;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

7

Long as man's hope insatiate can discern
Or only guess some more inspiring goal
Outside of Self, enduring as the pole,
Along whose course the flying axles burn
Of spirits bravely-pitched, earth's manlier brood;
Long as below we cannot find
The meed that stills the inexorable mind;
So long this faith to some ideal Good,
Under whatever mortal names it masks,
Freedom, Law, Country, this ethereal mood
That thanks the Fates for their severer tasks,
Feeling its challenged pulses leap,
While others skulk in subterfuges cheap,
And, set in Danger's van, has all the boon it asks,
Shall win man's praise and woman's love,
Shall be a wisdom that we set above
All other skills and gifts to culture dear,
A virtue round whose forehead we inwreathe
Laurels that with a living passion breathe
When other crowns grow, while we twine them, sear.
What brings us thronging these high rites to pay,
And seal these hours the noblest of our year,
Save that our brothers found this better way?

8

We sit here in the Promised Land
That flows with Freedom's honey and milk;
But 't was they won it, sword in hand,
Making the nettle danger soft for us as silk.
We welcome back our bravest and our best;—
Ah me! not all! some come not with the rest,

Who went forth brave and bright as any here!
I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,
But the sad strings complain,
And will not please the ear:
I sweep them for a pæan, but they wane
Again and yet again
Into a dirge, and die away, in pain.
In these brave ranks I only see the gaps,
Thinking of dear ones whom the dumb turf wraps,
Dark to the triumph which they died to gain:
Fitlier may others greet the living,
For me the past is unforgiving;
I with uncovered head
Salute the sacred dead,
Who went, and who return not.—Say not so!
'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,
But the high faith that failed not by the way;
Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave;
No bar of endless night exiles the brave;
And to the saner mind
We rather seem the dead that stayed behind.
Blow, trumpets, all your exultations blow!
For never shall their aureoled presence lack:
I see them muster in a gleaming row,
With ever-youthful brows that nobler show;
We find in our dull road their shining track;
In every nobler mood
We feel the orient of their spirit glow,
Part of our life's unalterable good,
Of all our saintlier aspiration;
They come transfigured back,
Secure from change in their high-hearted ways,
Beautiful evermore, and with the rays
Of morn on their white Shields of Expectation!

9

But is there hope to save
Even this ethereal essence from the grave?
Whatever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle wrong
Save a few clarion names, or golden threads of song?
Before my musing eye
The mighty ones of old sweep by,
Disvoicëd now and insubstantial things,
As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,
Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust,
And many races, nameless long ago,
To darkness driven by that imperious gust
Of ever-rushing Time that here doth blow:
O visionary world, condition strange,
Where naught abiding is but only Change,
Where the deep-bolted stars themselves still shift and range!
Shall we to more continuance make pretence?
Renown builds tombs; a life-estate is Wit;
And, bit by bit,
The cunning years steal all from us but woe;
Leaves are we, whose decays no harvest sow.
But, when we vanish hence,
Shall they lie forceless in the dark below,
Save to make green their little length of sods,
Or deepen pansies for a year or two,
Who now to us are shining-sweet as gods?
Was dying all they had the skill to do?
That were not fruitless: but the Soul resents
Such short-lived service, as if blind events
Ruled without her, or earth could so endure;
She claims a more divine investiture
Of longer tenure than Fame's airy rents;
Whate'er she touches doth her nature share;
Her inspiration haunts the ennobled air,
Gives eyes to mountains blind,
Ears to the deaf earth, voices to the wind,
And her clear trump sings succor everywhere
By lonely bivouacs to the wakeful mind;
For soul inherits all that soul could dare:
Yea, Manhood hath a wider span
And larger privilege of life than man.
The single deed, the private sacrifice,
So radiant now through proudly-hidden tears,
Is covered up erelong from mortal eyes
With thoughtless drift of the deciduous years;

But that high privilege that makes all
men peers,
That leap of heart whereby a people rise
Up to a noble anger's height,
And, flamed on by the Fates, not shrink,
but grow more bright,
That swift validity in noble veins,
Of choosing danger and disdaining
shame,
Of being set on flame
By the pure fire that flies all contact
base,
But wraps its chosen with angelic might,
These are imperishable gains,
Sure as the sun, medicinal as light,
These hold great futures in their lusty
reins
And certify to earth a new imperial race.

10

Who now shall sneer?
Who dare again to say we trace
Our lines to a plebeian race?
Roundhead and Cavalier!
Dumb are those names erewhile in battle
loud;
Dream-footed as the shadow of a cloud,
They flit across the ear:
That is best blood that hath most iron in 't.
To edge resolve with, pouring without stint
For what makes manhood dear.
Tell us not of Plantagenets,
Hapsburgs, and Guelfs, whose thin bloods
crawl
Down from some victor in a border-brawl!
How poor their outworn coronets,
Matched with one leaf of that plain civic
wreath
Our brave for honor's blazon shall
bequeath,
Through whose desert a rescued Nation
sets
Her heel on treason, and the trumpet hears
Shout victory, tingling Europe's sullen
ears
With vain resentments and more vain
regrets!

11

Not in anger, not in pride,
Pure from passion's mixture rude
Ever to base earth allied,
But with far-heard gratitude,
Still with heart and voice renewed,
To heroes living and dear martyrs dead,
The strain should close that consecrates our
brave.
Lift the heart and lift the head!
Lofty be its mood and grave,
Not without a martial ring,
Not without a prouder tread
And a peal of exultation:
Little right has he to sing
Through whose heart in such an
hour
Beats no march of conscious power,
Sweeps no tumult of elation!
'T is no Man we celebrate,
By his country's victories great,
A hero half, and half the whim of Fate,
But the pith and marrow of a
Nation
Drawing force from all her men,
Highest, humblest, weakest, all,
For her time of need, and then
Pulsing it again through them,
Till the basest can no longer cower,
Feeling his soul spring up divinely
tall,
Touched but in passing by her mantle-
hem.
Come back, then, noble pride, for 't is her
dower!
How could poet ever tower,
If his passions, hopes, and fears,
If his triumphs and his tears,
Kept not measure with his people?
Boom, cannon, boom to all the winds and
waves!
Clash out, glad bells, from every rocking
steeple!
Banners, adance with triumph, bend your
staves!
And from every mountain-peak
Let beacon-fire to answering beacon
speak,
Katahdin tell Monadnock, Whiteface
he,
And so leap on in light from sea to sea,
Till the glad news be sent
Across a kindling continent,
Making earth feel more firm and air breathe
braver:
'Be proud! for she is saved, and all have
helped to save her!
She that lifts up the manhood of the
poor,
She of the open soul and open door,
With room about her hearth for all
mankind!

The fire is dreadful in her eyes no more;
From her bold front the helm she doth unbind,
Sends all her handmaid armies back to spin,
And bids her navies, that so lately hurled
Their crashing battle, hold their thunders in,
Swimming like birds of calm along the unharmful shore.
No challenge sends she to the elder world,
That looked askance and hated; a light scorn
Plays o'er her mouth, as round her mighty knees
She calls her children back, and waits the morn
Of nobler day, enthroned between her subject seas.'

12

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found release!
Thy God, in these distempered days,
Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His ways,
And through thine enemies hath wrought thy peace!
Bow down in prayer and praise!
No poorest in thy borders but may now
Lift to the juster skies a man's enfranchised brow.
O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

1865 1865

A FOREBODING

WHAT were the whole void world, if thou wert dead,
Whose briefest absence can eclipse my day,
And make the hours that danced with Time away
Drag their funereal steps with muffled head?
Through thee, meseems, the very rose is red,
From thee the violet steals its breath in May,
From thee draw life all things that grow not gray,
And by thy force the happy stars are sped.
Thou near, the hope of thee to overflow
Fills all my earth and heaven, as when in Spring,
Ere April come, the birds and blossoms know,
And grasses brighten round her feet to cling;
Nay, and this hope delights all nature so
That the dumb turf I tread on seems to sing.

1888

DAS EWIG-WEIBLICHE[1]

How was I worthy so divine a loss,
Deepening my midnights, kindling all my morns?
Why waste such precious wood to make my cross,
Such far-sought roses for my crown of thorns?

And when she came, how earned I such a gift?
Why spend on me, a poor earth-delving mole,
The fireside sweetnesses, the heavenward lift,
The hourly mercy, of a woman's soul?

Ah, did we know to give her all her right,
What wonders even in our poor clay were done!
It is not Woman leaves us to our night,
But our brute earth that grovels from her sun.

Our nobler cultured fields and gracious domes

1 'The Eternal Feminine.'

We whirl too oft from her who still shines
on
To light in vain our caves and clefts, the
homes
Of night-bird instincts pained till she be
gone.

Still must this body starve our souls with
shade;
But when Death makes us what we were
before,
Then shall her sunshine all our depths
invade,
And not a shadow stain heaven's crystal
floor.

1888

AUSPEX

My heart, I cannot still it,
Nest that had song-birds in it;
And when the last shall go,
The dreary days, to fill it,
Instead of lark or linnet,
Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,
Without the passion stronger
That skyward longs and sings,—
Woe's me, I shall be lonely
When I can feel no longer
The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,
Like birds the brown leaves
hover;
But it will not be long
Before their wild confusion
Fall wavering down to cover
The poet and his song.

1888

MARIA LOWELL

1821–1853

AN OPIUM FANTASY

Soft hangs the opiate in the brain,
And lulling soothes the edge of pain,
Till harshest sound, far off or near,
Sings floating in its mellow sphere.

What wakes me from my heavy dream?
Or am I still asleep?
Those long and soft vibrations seem
A slumberous charm to keep.

The graceful play, a moment stopped,
Distance again unrolls,
Like silver balls, that, softly dropped,
Ring into golden bowls.

I question of the poppies red,
The fairy flaunting band,
While I a weed, with drooping head,
Within their phalanx stand.

'Some airy one, with scarlet cap,
The name unfold to me
Of this new minstrel, who can lap
Sleep in his melody?'

Bright grew their scarlet-kerchiefed
heads,
As freshening winds had blown,
And from their gently swaying beds
They sang in undertone,

'Oh, he is but a little owl,
The smallest of his kin,
Who sits beneath the midnight's cowl,
And makes this airy din.'

'Deceitful tongues, of fiery tints,
Far more than this you know,—
That he is your enchanted prince,
Doomed as an owl to go;

'Nor his fond play for years hath stopped,
But nightly he unrolls
His silver balls, that, softly dropped,
Ring into golden bowls.'

1855

WILLIAM PRESCOTT [1]

1796–1859

FROM THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO

THE FOUNDATION OF VERA CRUZ [2]

THERE is no situation which tries so severely the patience and discipline of the soldier, as a life of idleness in camp, where his thoughts, instead of being bent on enterprise and action, are fastened on himself and the inevitable privations and dangers of his condition. This was particularly the case in the present instance, where, in addition to the evils of a scanty subsistence, the troops suffered from excessive heat, swarms of venomous insects, and the other annoyances of a sultry climate. They were, moreover, far from possessing the character of regular forces, trained to subordination under a commander whom they had long been taught to reverence and obey. They were soldiers of fortune, embarked with him in an adventure in which all seemed to have an equal stake, and they regarded their captain—the captain of a day—as little more than an equal.

There was a growing discontent among the men at their longer residence in this strange land. They were still more dissatisfied on learning the general's intention to remove to the neighbourhood of the port discovered by Montejo. 'It was time to return,' they said, 'and report what had been done to the governor of Cuba, and not linger on these barren shores until they had brought the whole Mexican empire on their heads!' Cortés evaded their importunities as well as he could, assuring them there was no cause for despondency. 'Everything so far had gone on prosperously, and, when they had taken up a more favourable position, there was no reason to doubt they might still continue the same profitable intercourse with the natives.'

While this was passing, five Indians made their appearance in the camp one morning, and were brought to the general's tent. Their dress and whole appearance were different from those of the Mexicans. They wore rings of gold and gems of a bright blue stone in their ears and nostrils, while a gold leaf delicately wrought was attached to the under lip. Marina was unable to comprehend their language; but, on her addressing them in Aztec, two of them, it was found, could converse in that tongue. They said they were natives of Cempoalla, the chief town of the Totonacs, a powerful nation who had come upon the great plateau many centuries back, and, descending its eastern slope, settled along the sierras and broad plains which skirt the Mexican Gulf towards the north. Their country was one of the recent conquests of the Aztecs, and they experienced such vexatious oppressions from their conquerors as made them very impatient of the yoke. They informed Cortés of these and other particulars. The fame of the Spaniards had reached their master, who sent these messengers to request the presence of the wonderful strangers in his capital.

This communication was eagerly listened to by the general, who, it will be remembered, was possessed of none of those facts, laid before the reader, respecting the internal condition of the kingdom, which he had no reason to suppose other than strong and united. An important truth now flashed on his mind, as his quick eye descried in this spirit of discontent a potent lever, by the aid of which he might hope to overturn this barbaric empire.—He received the mission of the Totonacs most graciously, and, after informing himself, as far as possible, of their dispositions and resources, dismissed them with presents, promising soon to pay a visit to their lord.

Meanwhile, his personal friends, among whom may be particularly mentioned, Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, Christóval de Olid, Alonso de Avila, Pedro de Alvarado and his brothers, were very busy in persuading the troops to take such measures as should enable Cortés to go forward in those ambitious plans for which he had no warrant from the powers of Velasquez. 'To return now,' they said, 'was to abandon the enterprise on the threshold, which, under such a leader, must conduct to glory

1 *see Biographies*

2 The selection is Book II, Chapter 7, of *The Conquest of Mexico*(Boston, 1843).

and incalculable riches. To return to Cuba would be to surrender to the greedy governor the little gains they had already got. The only way was to persuade the general to establish a permanent colony in the country, the government of which would take the conduct of matters into its own hands, and provide for the interests of its members. It was true, Cortés had no such authority from Velasquez. But the interests of the Sovereigns, which were paramount to every other, imperatively demanded it.'

These conferences could not be conducted so secretly, though held by night, as not to reach the ears of the friends of Velasquez. They remonstrated against the proceedings, as insidious and disloyal. They accused the general of instigating them; and, calling on him to take measures without delay for the return of the troops to Cuba, announced their own intention to depart, with such followers as still remained true to the governor.

Cortés, instead of taking umbrage at this high-handed proceeding, or even answering in the same haughty tone, mildly replied, 'that nothing was further from his desire than to exceed his instructions. He, indeed, preferred to remain in the country and continue his profitable intercourse with the natives. But, since the army thought otherwise, he should defer to their opinion, and give orders to return, as they desired.' On the following morning, proclamation was made for the troops to hold themselves in readiness to embark at once on board the fleet, which was to sail for Cuba.

Great was the sensation caused by their general's order. Even many of those before clamorous for it, with the usual caprice of men whose wishes are too easily gratified, now regretted it. The partisans of Cortés were loud in their remonstrances. 'They were betrayed by the general,' they cried, and, thronging round his tent, called on him to countermand his orders. 'We came here,' said they, 'expecting to form a settlement, if the state of the country authorised it. Now it seems you have no warrant from the governor to make one. But there are interests, higher than those of Velasquez, which demand it. These territories are not his property, but were discovered for the Sovereigns; and it is necessary to plant a colony to watch over their interests, instead of wasting time in idle barter, or, still worse, of returning, in the present state of affairs, to Cuba. If you refuse,' they concluded, 'we shall protest against your conduct as disloyal to their Highnesses.'

Cortés received this remonstrance with the embarrassed air of one by whom it was altogether unexpected. He modestly requested time for deliberation, and promised to give his answer on the following day. At the time appointed, he called the troops together, and made them a brief address. 'There was no one,' he said, 'if he knew his own heart, more deeply devoted than himself to the welfare of his sovereigns, and the glory of the Spanish name. He had not only expended his all, but incurred heavy debts, to meet the charges of this expedition, and had hoped to reimburse himself by continuing his traffic with the Mexicans. But, if the soldiers thought a different course advisable, he was ready to postpone his own advantage to the good of the state.' He concluded by declaring his willingness to take measures for settling a colony *in the name of the Spanish Sovereigns*, and to nominate a magistracy to preside over it.

For the *alcaldes* he selected Puertocarrero and Montejo, the former cavalier his fast friend, and the latter the friend of Velasquez, and chosen for that very reason; a stroke of policy which perfectly succeeded. The *regidores*, *alguacil*, treasurer, and other functionaries, were then appointed, all of them his personal friends and adherents. They were regularly sworn into office, and the new city received the title of *Villa Rica de Vera Cruz*, 'The Rich Town of the True Cross'; a name which was considered as happily intimating that union of spiritual and temporal interests to which the arms of the Spanish adventurers in the New World were to be devoted. Thus, by a single stroke of the pen, as it were, the camp was transformed into a civil community, and the whole framework and even title of the city were arranged, before the site of it had been settled.

The new municipality were not slow in coming together; when Cortés presented himself, cap in hand, before that august body, and, laying the powers of Velasquez

on the table, respectfully tendered the resignation of his office of Captain-General, 'which, indeed,' he said, 'had necessarily expired, since the authority of the governor was now superseded by that of the magistracy of Villa Rica de Vera Cruz.' He then, with a profound obeisance, left the apartment.

The council, after a decent time spent in deliberation, again requested his presence. 'There was no one,' they said, 'who, on mature reflection, appeared to them so well qualified to take charge of the interests of the community, both in peace and in war, as himself; and they unanimously named him, in behalf of their Catholic Highnesses, Captain General and Chief Justice of the colony.' He was further empowered to draw, on his own account, one-fifth of the gold and silver which might hereafter be obtained by commerce or conquest from the natives. Thus clothed with supreme civil and military jurisdiction, Cortés was not backward in exerting his authority. He found speedy occasion for it.

The transactions above described had succeeded each other so rapidly, that the governor's party seemed to be taken by surprise, and had formed no plan of opposition. When the last measure was carried, however, they broke forth into the most indignant and opprobrious invectives, denouncing the whole as a systematic conspiracy against Velasquez. These accusations led to recrimination from the soldiers of the other side, until from words they nearly proceeded to blows. Some of the principal cavaliers, among them Velasquez de Leon, a kinsman of the governor, Escobar his page, and Diego de Ordaz, were so active in instigating these turbulent movements that Cortés took the bold measure of putting them all in irons, and sending them on board the vessels. He then dispersed the common file by detaching many of them, with a strong party under Alvarado, to forage the neighbouring country, and bring home provisions for the destitute camp.

During their absence, every argument that cupidity or ambition could suggest was used to win the refractory to his views. Promises, and even gold, it is said, were liberally lavished; till, by degrees, their understandings were opened to a clearer view of the merits of the case. And when the foraging party re-appeared with abundance of poultry and vegetables, and the cravings of the stomach—that great laboratory of disaffection, whether in camp or capital—were appeased, good-humour returned with good cheer, and the rival factions embraced one another as companions in arms, pledged to a common cause. Even the high-mettled hidalgos on board the vessels did not long withstand the general tide of reconciliation, but one by one gave in their adhesion to the new government. What is more remarkable is that this forced conversion was not a hollow one, but from this time forward several of these very cavaliers became the most steady and devoted partisans of Cortés.

Such was the address of this extraordinary man, and such the ascendency which in a few months he had acquired over these wild and turbulent spirits! By this ingenious transformation of a military into a civil community, he had secured a new and effectual basis for future operations. He might now go forward without fear of check or control from a superior,—at least from any other superior than the Crown, under which alone he held his commission. In accomplishing this, instead of incurring the charge of usurpation, or of transcending his legitimate powers, he had transferred the responsibility, in a great measure, to those who had imposed on him the necessity of action. By this step, moreover, he had linked the fortunes of his followers indissolubly with his own. They had taken their chance with him, and, whether for weal or for woe, must abide the consequences. He was no longer limited to the narrow concerns of a sordid traffic, but, sure of their co-operation, might now boldly meditate, and gradually disclose, those lofty schemes which he had formed in his own bosom for the conquest of an empire.

Harmony being thus restored, Cortés sent his heavy guns on board the fleet, and ordered it to coast along the shore to the north as far as Chiahuitztla, the town near which the destined port of the new city was situated; proposing, himself, at the head of his troops, to visit Cempoalla, on the march. The road lay for some miles across the dreary plains in the neighbourhood of the modern Vera Cruz. In this sandy waste

no signs of vegetation met their eyes, which, however, were occasionally refreshed by glimpses of the blue Atlantic, and by the distant view of the magnificent Orizaba, towering with his spotless diadem of snow far above his colossal brethren of the Andes. As they advanced, the country gradually assumed a greener and richer aspect. They crossed a river, probably a tributary of the *Rio de la Antigua*, with difficulty, on rafts, and on some broken canoes that were lying on the banks. They now came in view of very different scenery, —wide-rolling plains covered with a rich carpet of verdure, and overshadowed by groves of cocoas and feathery palms, among whose tall, slender stems were seen deer, and various wild animals with which the Spaniards were unacquainted. Some of the horsemen gave chase to the deer, and wounded, but did not succeed in killing them. They saw, also, pheasants and other birds; among them the wild turkey, the pride of the American forest, which the Spaniards described as a species of peacock.

On their route they passed through some deserted villages in which were Indian temples, where they found censers, and other sacred utensils, and manuscripts of the *agave* fibre, containing the picture-writing, in which, probably, their religious ceremonies were recorded. They now beheld, also, the hideous spectacle, with which they became afterwards familiar, of the mutilated corpses of victims who had been sacrificed to the accursed deities of the land. The Spaniards turned with loathing and indignation from a display of butchery, which formed so dismal a contrast to the fair scenes of nature by which they were surrounded.

They held their course along the banks of the river, towards its source, when they were met by twelve Indians, sent by the cacique of Cempoalla to show them the way to his residence. At night they bivouacked in an open meadow, where they were well supplied with provisions by their new friends. They left the stream on the following morning, and, striking northerly across the country, came upon a wide expanse of luxuriant plains and woodland, glowing in all the splendour of tropical vegetation. The branches of the stately trees were gaily festooned with clustering vines of the dark-purple grape, variegated convolvuli, and other flowering parasites of the most brilliant dyes. The undergrowth of prickly aloe, matted with wild rose and honeysuckle, made in many places an almost impervious thicket. Amid this wilderness of sweet-smelling buds and blossoms fluttered numerous birds of the parrot tribe, and clouds of butterflies, whose gaudy colours, nowhere so gorgeous as in the *tierra caliente*, rivalled those of the vegetable creation; while birds of exquisite song, the scarlet cardinal and the marvellous mocking-bird, that comprehends in his own notes the whole music of a forest, filled the air with delicious melody.—The hearts of the stern Conquerors were not very sensible to the beauties of nature. But the magical charms of the scenery drew forth unbounded expressions of delight, and as they wandered through this 'terrestrial paradise,' as they called it, they fondly compared it to the fairest regions of their own sunny land.

As they approached the Indian city, they saw abundant signs of cultivation in the trim gardens and orchards that lined both sides of the road. They were now met by parties of the natives of either sex, who increased in numbers with every step of their progress. The women, as well as men, mingled fearlessly among the soldiers, bearing bunches and wreaths of flowers, with which they decorated the neck of the general's charger, and hung a chaplet of roses about his helmet. Flowers were the delight of this people. They bestowed much care in their cultivation, in which they were well seconded by a climate of alternate heat and moisture, stimulating the soil to the spontaneous production of every form of vegetable life. The same refined taste, as we shall see, prevailed among the warlike Aztecs, and has survived the degradation of the nation in their descendants of the present day.

Many of the women appeared, from their richer dress and numerous attendants, to be persons of rank. They were clad in robes of fine cotton, curiously coloured, which reached from the neck—in the inferior orders, from the waist—to the ankles. The men wore a sort of mantle of the same material, *à la Morisca*, in the Moorish

fashion, over their shoulders, and belts or sashes about the loins. Both sexes had jewels and ornaments of gold round their necks, while their ears and nostrils were perforated with rings of the same metal.

Just before reaching the town, some horsemen who had rode in advance returned with the amazing intelligence, 'that they had been near enough to look within the gates, and found the houses all plated with burnished silver!' On entering the place, the silver was found to be nothing more than a brilliant coating of stucco, with which the principal buildings were covered; a circumstance which produced much merriment among the soldiers at the expense of their credulous comrades. Such ready credulity is a proof of the exalted state of their imaginations, which were prepared to see gold and silver in every object around them. The edifices of the better kind were of stone and lime, or bricks dried in the sun; the poorer were of clay and earth. All were thatched with palm-leaves, which, though a flimsy roof, apparently, for such structures, were so nicely interwoven as to form a very effectual protection against the weather.

The city was said to contain from twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants. This is the most moderate computation, and not improbable. Slowly and silently the little army paced the narrow and now crowded streets of Cempoalla, inspiring the natives with no greater wonder than they themselves experienced at the display of a policy and refinement so far superior to anything they had witnessed in the New World. The cacique came out in front of his residence to receive them. He was a tall and very corpulent man, and advanced leaning on two of his attendants. He received Cortés and his followers with great courtesy; and, after a brief interchange of civilities, assigned the army its quarters in a neighbouring temple, into the spacious courtyard of which a number of apartments opened, affording excellent accommodations for the soldiery.

Here the Spaniards were well supplied with provisions, meat cooked after the fashion of the country, and maize made into bread-cakes. The general received, also, a present of considerable value from the cacique, consisting of ornaments of gold and fine cottons. Notwithstanding these friendly demonstrations, Cortés did not relax his habitual vigilance, nor neglect any of the precautions of a good soldier. On his route, indeed, he had always marched in order of battle, well prepared against surprise. In his present quarters, he stationed his sentinels with like care, posted his small artillery so as to command the entrance, and forbade any soldier to leave the camp without orders, under pain of death.

The following morning, Cortés, accompanied by fifty of his men, paid a visit to the lord of Cempoalla in his own residence. It was a building of stone and lime, standing on a steep terrace of earth, and was reached by a flight of stone steps. It may have borne resemblance in its structure to some of the ancient buildings found in Central America. Cortés, leaving his soldiers in the courtyard, entered the mansion with one of his officers, and his fair interpreter, Doña Marina. A long conference ensued, from which the Spanish general gathered much light respecting the state of the country. He first announced to the chief, that he was the subject of a great monarch who dwelt beyond the waters; that he had come to the Aztec shores, to abolish the inhuman worship which prevailed there, and to introduce the knowledge of the true God. The cacique replied, that their gods, who sent them the sunshine and the rain, were good enough for them; that he was the tributary of a powerful monarch also, whose capital stood on a lake far off among the mountains; a stern prince, merciless in his exactions, and, in case of resistance, or any offence, sure to wreak his vengeance by carrying off their young men and maidens to be sacrificed to his deities. Cortés assured him that he would never consent to such enormities; he had been sent by his sovereign to redress abuses and to punish the oppressor; and, if the Totonacs would be true to him, he would enable them to throw off the detested yoke of the Aztecs.

The cacique added, that the Totonac territory contained about thirty towns and villages, which could muster a hundred thousand warriors,—a number much exaggerated. There were other provinces of the empire, he said, where the Aztec rule

was equally odious; and between him and the capital lay the warlike republic of Tlascala, which had always maintained its independence of Mexico. The fame of the Spaniards had gone before them, and he was well acquainted with their terrible victory at Tabasco. But still he looked with doubt and alarm to a rupture with 'the great Montezuma,' as he always styled him; whose armies, on the least provocation, would pour down from the mountain regions of the west, and, rushing over the plains like a whirlwind, sweep off the wretched people to slavery and sacrifice!

Cortés endeavoured to reassure him, by declaring that a single Spaniard was stronger than a host of Aztecs. At the same time, it was desirable to know what nations would co-operate with him, not so much on his account, as theirs, that he might distinguish friend from foe, and know whom he was to spare in this war of extermination. Having raised the confidence of the admiring chief by this comfortable and politic vaunt, he took an affectionate leave, with the assurance that he would shortly return and concert measures for their future operations, when he had visited his ships in the adjoining port, and secured a permanent settlement there.

The intelligence gained by Cortés gave great satisfaction to his mind. It confirmed his former views, and showed, indeed, the interior of the monarchy to be in a state far more distracted than he had supposed. If he had before scarcely shrunk from attacking the Aztec empire in the true spirit of a knight-errant, with his single arm, as it were, what had he now to fear, when one half of the nation could be thus marshalled against the other? In the excitement of the moment, his sanguine spirit kindled with an enthusiasm which overleaped every obstacle. He communicated his own feelings to the officers about him, and, before a blow was struck, they already felt as if the banners of Spain were waving in triumph from the towers of Montezuma! But many a bloody field was to be fought, many a peril and privation to be encountered, before that consummation could be attained.

Taking leave of the hospitable Indian on the following day, the Spaniards took the road to Chiahuitztla, about four leagues distant, near which was the port discovered by Montejo, where their ships were now riding at anchor. They were provided by the cacique with four hundred Indian porters, *tamanes*, as they were called, to transport the baggage. These men easily carried fifty pounds' weight, five or six leagues in a day. They were in use all over the Mexican empire, and the Spaniards found them of great service, henceforth, in relieving the troops from this part of their duty. They passed through a country of the same rich, voluptuous character as that which they had lately traversed; and arrived early next morning at the Indian town, perched like a fortress on a bold, rocky eminence that commanded the Gulf. Most of the inhabitants had fled, but fifteen of the principal men remained, who received them in a friendly manner, offering the usual compliments of flowers and incense. The people of the place, losing their fears, gradually returned. While conversing with the chiefs, the Spaniards were joined by the worthy cacique of Cempoalla, borne by his men on a litter. He eagerly took part in their deliberations. The intelligence gained here by Cortés confirmed the accounts already gathered of the feelings and resources of the Totonac nation.

In the midst of their conference, they were interrupted by a movement among the people, and soon afterwards five men entered the great square or market-place, where they were standing. By their lofty port, their peculiar and much richer dress, they seemed not to be of the same race as these Indians. Their dark, glossy hair was tied in a knot on the top of the head. They had bunches of flowers in their hands, and were followed by several attendants, some bearing wands with cords, others fans, with which they brushed away the flies and insects from their lordly masters. As these persons passed through the place, they cast a haughty look on the Spaniards, scarcely deigning to return their salutations. They were immediately joined, in great confusion, by the Totonac chiefs, who seemed anxious to conciliate them by every kind of attention.

The general, much astonished, inquired of Marina what it meant. She informed him, they were Aztec nobles, empowered to receive the tribute for Montezuma. Soon

after, the chiefs returned with dismay painted on their faces. They confirmed Marina's statement, adding, that the Aztecs greatly resented the entertainment afforded the Spaniards without the Emperor's permission; and demanded in expiation twenty young men and women for sacrifice to the gods. Cortés showed the strongest indignation at this insolence. He required the Totonacs not only to refuse the demand, but to arrest the persons of the collectors, and throw them into prison. The chiefs hesitated, but he insisted on it so peremptorily, that they at length complied, and the Aztecs were seized, bound hand and foot, and placed under a guard.

In the night, the Spanish general procured the escape of two of them, and had them brought secretly before him. He expressed his regret at the indignity they had experienced from the Totonacs; told them, he would provide means for their flight, and to-morrow would endeavour to obtain the release of their companions. He desired them to report this to their master, with assurances of the great regard the Spaniards entertained for him, notwithstanding his ungenerous behaviour in leaving them to perish from want on his barren shores. He then sent the Mexican nobles down to the port, whence they were carried to another part of the coast by water, for fear of the violence of the Totonacs. These were greatly incensed at the escape of the prisoners, and would have sacrificed the remainder at once, but for the Spanish commander, who evinced the utmost horror at the proposal, and ordered them to be sent for safe custody on board the fleet. Soon after, they were permitted to join their companions.—This artful proceeding, so characteristic of the policy of Cortés, had, as we shall see hereafter, all the effect intended on Montezuma. It cannot be commended, certainly, as in the true spirit of chivalry; yet it has not wanted its panegyrist among the national historians!

By order of Cortés, messengers were despatched to the Totonac towns, to report what had been done, calling on them to refuse the payment of further tribute to Montezuma. But there was no need of messengers. The affrighted attendants of the Aztec lords had fled in every direction, bearing the tidings, which spread like wildfire through the country, of the daring insult offered to the majesty of Mexico. The astonished Indians, cheered with the sweet hope of regaining their ancient liberty, came in numbers to Chiahuitztla, to see and confer with the formidable strangers. The more timid, dismayed at the thoughts of encountering the power of Montezuma, recommended an embassy to avert his displeasure by timely concessions. But the dexterous management of Cortés had committed them too far to allow any reasonable expectation of indulgence from this quarter. After some hesitation, therefore, it was determined to embrace the protection of the Spaniards, and to make one bold effort for the recovery of freedom. Oaths of allegiance were taken by the chiefs to the Spanish sovereigns, and duly recorded by Godoy, the royal notary. Cortés, satisfied with the important acquisition of so many vassals to the crown, set out soon after for the destined port, having first promised to revisit Cempoalla, where his business was but partially accomplished.

The spot selected for the new city was only half a league distant, in a wide and fruitful plain, affording a tolerable haven for the shipping. Cortés was not long in determining the circuit of the walls, and the sites of the fort, granary, town-house, temple, and other public buildings. The friendly Indians eagerly assisted, by bringing materials, stone, lime, wood, and bricks dried in the sun. Every man put his hand to the work. The general laboured with the meanest of the soldiers, stimulating their exertions by his example, as well as voice. In a few weeks the task was accomplished, and a town rose up, which, if not quite worthy of the aspiring name it bore, answered most of the purposes for which it was intended. It served as a good *point d'appui* for future operations; a place of retreat for the disabled, as well as for the army in case of reverses; a magazine for stores, and for such articles as might be received from or sent to the mother country; a port for the shipping; a position of sufficient strength to overawe the adjacent country.

It was the first colony—the fruitful parent of so many others—in New Spain. It was hailed with satisfaction by the simple

natives, who hoped to repose in safety under its protecting shadow. Alas! they could not read the future, or they would have found no cause to rejoice in this harbinger of a revolution more tremendous than any predicted by their bards and prophets. It was not the good Quetzalcoatl who had returned to claim his own again, bringing peace, freedom, and civilisation in his train. Their fetters, indeed, would be broken, and their wrongs be amply avenged on the proud head of the Aztec. But it was to be by that strong arm, which should bow down equally the oppressor and the oppressed. The light of civilisation would be poured on their land. But it would be the light of a consuming fire, before which their barbaric glory, their institutions, their very existence and name as a nation, would wither and become extinct! Their doom was sealed when the white man had set his foot on their soil.

1840 1843

FRANCIS PARKMAN

1823–1893

FROM THE OREGON TRAIL

SCENES AT FORT LARAMIE [1]

'Tis true they are a lawless brood,
But rough in form, nor mild in mood.
THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

LOOKING back, after the expiration of a year, upon Fort Laramie and its inmates, they seem less like a reality than like some fanciful picture of the olden time; so different was the scene from any which this tamer side of the world can present. Tall Indians, enveloped in their white buffalo-robes, were striding across the area or reclining at full length on the low roofs of the buildings which inclosed it. Numerous squaws, gayly bedizened, sat grouped in front of the apartments they occupied; their mongrel offspring, restless and vociferous, rambled in every direction through the fort; and the trappers, traders, and *engagés* of the establishment were busy at their labor or their amusements.

We were met at the gate, but by no means cordially welcomed. Indeed, we seemed objects of some distrust and suspicion, until Henry Chatillon explained that we were not traders, and we, in confirmation, handed to the *bourgeois* a letter of introduction from his principals. He took it, turned it upside down, and tried hard to read it; but his literary attainments not being adequate to the task, he applied for relief to the clerk, a sleek, smiling Frenchman, named Montalon. The letter read, Bordeaux (the *bourgeois*) seemed gradually to awaken to a sense of what was expected of him. Though not deficient in hospitable intentions, he was wholly unaccustomed to act as master of ceremonies. Discarding all formalities of reception, he did not honor us with a single word, but walked swiftly across the area, while we followed in some admiration to a railing and a flight of steps opposite the entrance. He signed to us that we had better fasten our horses to the railing; then he walked up the steps, tramped along a rude balcony, and kicking open a door displayed a large room, rather more elaborately finished than a barn. For furniture it had a rough bedstead, but no bed; two chairs, a chest of drawers, a tin pail to hold water, and a board to cut tobacco upon. A brass crucifix hung on the wall, and close at hand a recent scalp, with hair full a yard long, was suspended from a nail. . . .

1 The selection is from Chapter 6 of the revised edition of *The Oregon Trail*(Boston, 1892). As a preface to the first edition of 1849, Parkman wrote: 'The journey which the following narrative describes was undertaken on the writer's part with a view of studying the manners and character of Indians in their primitive state. Although, in the chapters which relate to them, he has only attempted to sketch those features of their wild and picturesque life which fell, in the present instance, under his own eye, yet in doing so he has constantly aimed to leave an impression of their character correct as far as it goes. In justifying his claim to accuracy on this point, it is hardly necessary to advert to the representations given by poets and novelists, which, for the most part, are mere creations of fancy. The Indian is certainly entitled to a high rank among savages, but his good qualities are not those of an Uncas or an Outalissi.'

This apartment, the best in Fort Laramie, was that usually occupied by the legitimate *bourgeois*, Papin; in whose absence the command devolved upon Bordeaux. The latter, a stout, bluff little fellow, much inflated by a sense of his new authority, began to roar for buffalo-robes. These being brought and spread upon the floor formed our beds; much better ones than we had of late been accustomed to. Our arrangements made, we stepped out to the balcony to take a more leisurely survey of the long-looked-for haven at which we had arrived at last. Beneath us was the square area surrounded by little rooms, or rather cells, which opened upon it. These were devoted to various purposes, but served chiefly for the accommodation of the men employed at the fort, or of the equally numerous squaws whom they were allowed to maintain in it. Opposite to us rose the block-house above the gateway; it was adorned with a figure which even now haunts my memory—a horse at full speed, daubed upon the boards with red paint, and exhibiting a degree of skill that might rival that displayed by the Indians in executing similar designs upon their robes and lodges. A busy scene was enacting in the area. The wagons of Vaskiss, an old trader, were about to set out for a remote post in the mountains, and the Canadians were going through their preparations with all possible bustle, while here and there an Indian stood looking on with imperturbable gravity.

Fort Laramie is one of the posts established by the 'American Fur Company,' who well-nigh monopolize the Indian trade of this whole region. Here their officials rule with an absolute sway; the arm of the United States has little force; for when we were there, the extreme outposts of her troops were about seven hundred miles to the eastward. The little fort is built of bricks dried in the sun, and externally is of an oblong form, with bastions of clay, in the form of ordinary blockhouses, at two of the corners. The walls are about fifteen feet high, and surmounted by a slender palisade. The roofs of the apartments within, which are built close against the walls, serve the purpose of a banquette. Within, the fort is divided by a partition; on one side is the square area, surrounded by the store-rooms, offices, and apartments of the inmates; on the other is the *corral*, a narrow place, encompassed by the high clay walls, where at night, or in presence of dangerous Indians, the horses and mules of the fort are crowded for safe keeping. The main entrance has two gates, with an arched passage intervening. A little square window, quite high above the ground, opens laterally from an adjoining chamber into this passage; so that when the inner gate is closed and barred, a person without may still hold communication with those within, through this narrow aperture. This obviates the necessity of admitting suspicious Indians, for purposes of trading, into the body of the fort; for when danger is apprehended, the inner gate is shut fast, and all traffic is carried on by means of the little window. This precaution, though highly necessary at some of the Company's posts, is now seldom resorted to at Fort Laramie; where, though men are frequently killed in its neighborhood, no apprehensions are now entertained of any general designs of hostility from the Indians.

We did not long enjoy our new quarters undisturbed. The door was silently pushed open, and two eyeballs and a visage as black as night looked in upon us; then a red arm and shoulder intruded themselves, and a tall Indian, gliding in, shook us by the hand, grunted his salutation, and sat down on the floor. Others followed, with faces of the natural hue; and letting fall their heavy robes from their shoulders, they took their seats, quite at ease, in a semicircle before us. The pipe was now to be lighted and passed round from one to another; and this was the only entertainment that at present they expected from us. These visitors were fathers, brothers, or other relatives of the squaws in the fort, where they were permitted to remain, loitering about in perfect idleness. All those who smoked with us were men of standing and repute. Two or three others dropped in also; young fellows who neither by their years nor their exploits were entitled to rank with the old men and warriors, and who, abashed in the presence of their superiors, stood aloof, never withdrawing their eyes from us. Their cheeks were adorned with vermilion, their ears with pendants of shell, and their necks with

beads. Never yet having signalized themselves as hunters, or performed the honorable exploit of killing a man, they were held in slight esteem, and were diffident and bashful in proportion. Certain formidable inconveniences attended this influx of visitors. They were bent on inspecting everything in the room; our equipments and our dress alike underwent their scrutiny; for though the contrary has been carelessly asserted, few beings have more curiosity than Indians in regard to subjects within their ordinary range of thought. As to other matters, indeed, they seemed utterly indifferent. They will not trouble themselves to inquire into what they cannot comprehend, but are quite contented to place their hands over their mouths in token of wonder, and exclaim that it is 'great medicine.' With this comprehensive solution, an Indian never is at a loss. He never launches forth into speculation and conjecture; his reason moves in its beaten track. His soul is dormant; and no exertions of the missionaries, Jesuit or Puritan, of the Old World or of the New, have as yet availed to rouse it.

As we were looking, at sunset, from the wall, upon the wild and desolate plains that surround the fort, we observed a cluster of strange objects, like scaffolds, rising in the distance against the red western sky. They bore aloft some singular-looking burdens; and at their foot glimmered something white, like bones. This was the place of sepulture of some Dahcotah chiefs, whose remains their people are fond of placing in the vicinity of the fort, in the hope that they may thus be protected from violation at the hands of their enemies. Yet it has happened more than once, and quite recently, that war-parties of the Crow Indians, ranging through the country, have thrown the bodies from the scaffolds and broken them to pieces, amid the yells of the Dahcotahs, who remained pent up in the fort, too few to defend the honored relics from insult. The white objects upon the ground were buffalo skulls, arranged in the mystic circle commonly seen in Indian places of sepulture upon the prairie.

We soon discovered, in the twilight, a band of fifty or sixty horses approaching the fort. These were the animals belonging to the establishment, who having been sent out to feed, under the care of armed guards, in the meadows below, were now being driven into the *corral* for the night. A little gate opened into this inclosure; by the side of it stood one of the guards, an old Canadian, with gray bushy eyebrows, and a dragoon-pistol stuck into his belt; while his comrade, mounted on horseback, his rifle laid across the saddle in front of him, and his long hair blowing before his swarthy face, rode at the rear of the disorderly troop, urging them up the ascent. In a moment the narrow *corral* was thronged with the half-wild horses, kicking, biting, and crowding restlessly together.

The discordant jingling of a bell, rung by a Canadian in the area, summoned us to supper. This sumptuous repast was served on a rough table in one of the lower apartments of the fort, and consisted of cakes of bread and dried buffalo-meat—an excellent thing for strengthening the teeth. At this meal were seated the *bourgeois* and superior dignitaries of the establishment, among whom Henry Chatillon was worthily included. No sooner was it finished than the table was spread a second time (the luxury of bread being now, however, omitted), for the benefit of certain hunters and trappers of an inferior standing; while the ordinary Canadian *engagés* were regaled on dried meat in one of their lodging rooms. By way of illustrating the domestic economy of Fort Laramie, it may not be amiss to introduce in this place a story current among the men when we were there.

There was an old man named Pierre, whose duty it was to bring the meat from the store-room for the men. Old Pierre, in the kindness of his heart, used to select the fattest and the best pieces for his companions. This did not long escape the keen-eyed *bourgeois*, who was greatly disturbed at such improvidence, and cast about for some means to stop it. At last he hit on a plan that exactly suited him. At the side of the meat-room, and separated from it by a clay partition, was another apartment, used for the storage of furs. It had no other communication with the fort, except through a square hole in the partition; and of course it was perfectly dark. One evening the *bourgeois*, watching for a moment when no one observed him, dodged into the meat-room, clambered through the

hole, and ensconced himself among the furs and buffalo-robes. Soon after, old Pierre came in with his lantern; and, muttering to himself, began to pull over the bales of meat and select the best pieces, as usual. But suddenly a hollow and sepulchral voice proceeded from the inner apartment: 'Pierre! Pierre! Let that fat meat alone! Take nothing but lean!' Pierre dropped his lantern and bolted out into the fort, screaming, in an agony of terror, that the devil was in the store-room; but tripping on the threshold, he pitched over upon the gravel and lay senseless, stunned by the fall. The Canadians ran out to the rescue. Some lifted the unlucky Pierre; and others, making an extempore crucifix out of two sticks, were proceeding to attack the devil in his stronghold, when the *bourgeois*, with a crestfallen countenance, appeared at the door. To add to the *bourgeois*' mortification, he was obliged to explain the whole stratagem to Pierre, in order to bring the latter to his senses.

We were sitting, on the following morning, in the passageway between the gates, conversing with the traders Vaskiss and May. These two men, together with our sleek friend, the clerk Montalon, were, I believe, the only persons then in the fort who could read and write. May was telling a curious story about the traveler Catlin, when an ugly, diminutive Indian, wretchedly mounted, came up at a gallop and rode past us into the fort. On being questioned, he said that Smoke's village was close at hand. Accordingly only a few minutes elapsed before the hills beyond the river were covered with a disorderly swarm of savages, on horseback and on foot. May finished his story; and by that time the whole array had descended to Laramie Creek, and commenced crossing it in a mass. I walked down to the bank. The stream is wide, and was then between three and four feet deep, with a very swift current. For several rods the water was alive with dogs, horses, and Indians. The long poles used in erecting the lodges are carried by the horses, being fastened by the heavier end, two or three on each side, to a rude sort of pack-saddle, while the other end drags on the ground. About a foot behind the horse, a kind of large basket or pannier is suspended between the poles, and firmly lashed in its place. On the back of the horse are piled various articles of luggage; the basket also is well filled with domestic utensils, or, quite as often, with a litter of puppies, a brood of small children, or a superannuated old man. Numbers of these curious vehicles, called, in the bastard language of the country, *travaux*, were now splashing together through the stream. Among them swam countless dogs, often burdened with miniature *travaux*; and dashing forward on horseback through the throng came the superbly formed warriors, the slender figure of some lynx-eyed boy clinging fast behind them. The women sat perched on the pack-saddles, adding not a little to the load of the already overburdened horses. The confusion was prodigious. The dogs yelled and howled in chorus; the puppies in the *travaux* set up a dismal whine as the water invaded their comfortable retreat; the little black-eyed children, from one year of age upward, clung fast with both hands to the edge of their baskets, and looked over in alarm at the water rushing so near them, sputtering and making wry mouths as it splashed against their faces. Some of the dogs, encumbered by their load, were carried down by the current, yelping piteously; and the old squaws would rush into the water, seize their favorites by the neck, and drag them out. As each horse gained the bank, he scrambled up as he could. Stray horses and colts came among the rest, often breaking away at full speed through the crowd, followed by the old hags, screaming, after their fashion, on all occasions of excitement. Buxom young squaws, blooming in all the charms of vermilion, stood here and there on the bank, holding aloft their master's lance as a signal to collect the scattered portions of his household. In a few moments the crowd melted away, each family, with its horses and equipage, filing off to the plain at the rear of the fort; and here, in the space of half an hour, arose sixty or seventy of their tapering lodges. Their horses were feeding by hundreds over the surrounding prairie, and their dogs were roaming everywhere. The fort was full of men, and the children were whooping and yelling incessantly under the walls.

These new-comers were scarcely arrived, when Bordeaux was running across the

fort, shouting to his squaw to bring him his spy-glass. The obedient Marie, the very model of a squaw, produced the instrument, and Bordeaux hurried with it up to the wall. Pointing it to the eastward, he exclaimed, with an oath, that the families were coming. But a few moments elapsed before the heavy caravan of the emigrant wagons could be seen, steadily advancing from the hills. They gained the river, and without turning or pausing plunged in; they passed through, and slowly ascending the opposing bank, kept directly on their way past the fort and the Indian village, until, gaining a spot a quarter of a mile distant, they wheeled into a circle. For some time our tranquillity was undisturbed. The emigrants were preparing their encampment; but no sooner was this accomplished than Fort Laramie was fairly taken by storm. A crowd of broad-brimmed hats, thin visages, and staring eyes appeared suddenly at the gate. Tall, awkward men, in brown homespun, women with cadaverous faces and long lank figures, came thronging in together, and, as if inspired by the very demon of curiosity, ransacked every nook and corner of the fort. Dismayed at this invasion, we withdrew in all speed to our chamber, vainly hoping that it might prove an inviolable sanctuary. The emigrants prosecuted their investigations with untiring vigor. They penetrated the rooms, or rather dens, inhabited by the astonished squaws. They explored the apartments of the men, and even that of Marie and the *bourgeois*. At last a numerous deputation appeared at our door, but were immediately expelled. Being totally devoid of any sense of delicacy or propriety, they seemed resolved to search every mystery to the bottom.

Having at length satisfied their curiosity, they next proceeded to business. The men occupied themselves in procuring supplies for their onward journey, either buying them with money or giving in exchange superfluous articles of their own.

The emigrants felt a violent prejudice against the French Indians, as they called the trappers and traders. They thought, and with some justice, that these men bore them no good will. Many of them were firmly persuaded that the French were instigating the Indians to attack and cut them off. On visiting the encampment we were at once struck with the extraordinary perplexity and indecision that prevailed among the emigrants. They seemed like men totally out of their elements; bewildered and amazed, like a troop of schoolboys lost in the woods. It was impossible to be long among them without being conscious of the high and bold spirit with which most of them were animated. But the *forest* is the home of the backwoodsman. On the remote prairie he is totally at a loss. He differs as much from the genuine 'mountain-man,' the wild prairie hunter, as a Canadian *voyageur*, paddling his canoe on the rapids of the Ottawa, differs from an American sailor among the storms of Cape Horn. Still my companion and I were somewhat at a loss to account for this perturbed state of mind. It could not be cowardice; these men were of the same stock with the volunteers of Monterey and Buena Vista. Yet, for the most part, they were the rudest and most ignorant of the frontier population; they knew absolutely nothing of the country and its inhabitants; they had already experienced much misfortune and apprehended more; they had seen nothing of mankind, and had never put their own resources to the test.

A full proportion of suspicion fell upon us. Being strangers, we were looked upon as enemies. Having occasion for a supply of lead and a few other necessary articles, we used to go over to the emigrant camps to obtain them. After some hesitation, some dubious glances, and fumbling of the hands in the pockets, the terms would be agreed upon, the price tendered, and the emigrant would go off to bring the article in question. After waiting until our patience gave out, we would go in search of him, and find him seated on the tongue of his wagon.

'Well, stranger,' he would observe, as he saw us approach, 'I reckon I won't trade!'

Some friend of his had followed him from the scene of the bargain, and suggested in his ear that clearly we meant to cheat him, and he had better have nothing to do with us.

This timorous mood of the emigrants was doubly unfortunate, as it exposed them to real danger. Assume, in the presence of Indians, a bold bearing, self-confident yet vigilant, and you will find them

tolerably safe neighbors. But your safety depends on the respect and fear you are able to inspire. If you betray timidity or indecision, you convert them from that moment into insidious and dangerous enemies. The Dahcotah saw clearly enough the perturbation of the emigrants, and instantly availed themselves of it. They became extremely insolent and exacting in their demands. It has become an established custom with them to go to the camp of every party, as it arrives in succession at the fort, and demand a feast. Smoke's village had come with this express design, having made several days' journey with no other object than that of enjoying a cup of coffee and two or three biscuits. So the 'feast' was demanded, and the emigrants dared not refuse it.

One evening, about sunset, the village was deserted. We met old men, warriors, squaws, and children in gay attire, trooping off to the encampment, with faces of anticipation; and, arriving here, they seated themselves in a semicircle. Smoke occupied the center, with his warriors on either hand; the young men and boys next succeeded, and the squaws and children formed the horns of the crescent. The biscuit and coffee were most promptly dispatched, the emigrants staring open-mouthed at their savage guests. With each new emigrant party that arrived at Fort Laramie this scene was renewed; and every day the Indians grew more rapacious and presumptuous. One evening they broke to pieces, out of mere wantonness, the cups from which they had been feasted; and this so exasperated the emigrants that many of them seized their rifles and could scarcely be restrained from firing on the insolent mob of Indians. Before we left the country, this dangerous spirit on the part of the Dahcotah had mounted to a yet higher pitch. They began openly to threaten the emigrants with destruction, and actually fired upon one or two parties of whites. A military force and military law are urgently called for in that perilous region; and unless troops are speedily stationed at Fort Laramie, or elsewhere in the neighborhood, both the emigrants and other travelers will be exposed to most imminent risks.

The Ogillallah, the Brulé, and the other western bands of the Dahcotah are thorough savages, unchanged by any contact with civilization. Not one of them can speak an European tongue, or has ever visited an American settlement. Until within a year or two, when the emigrants began to pass through their country on the way to Oregon, they had seen no whites except the handful employed about the Fur Company's posts. They esteemed them a wise people, inferior only to themselves, living in leather lodges, like their own, and subsisting on buffalo. But when the swarm of *Meneaska*, with their oxen and wagons, began to invade them, their astonishment was unbounded. They could scarcely believe that the earth contained such a multitude of white men. Their wonder is now giving way to indignation; and the result, unless vigilantly guarded against, may be lamentable in the extreme.

But to glance at the interior of a lodge. Shaw and I used often to visit them. Indeed, we spent most of our evenings in the Indian village, Shaw's assumption of the medical character giving us a fair pretext. As a sample of the rest I will describe one of these visits. The sun had just set, and the horses were driven into the *corral*. The Prairie Cock, a noted beau, came in at the gate with a bevy of young girls, with whom he began a dance in the area, leading them round and round in a circle, while he jerked up from his chest a succession of monotonous sounds, to which they kept time in a rueful chant. Outside the gate boys and young men were idly frolicking; and close by, looking grimly upon them, stood a warrior in his robe, with his face painted jet-black, in token that he had lately taken a Pawnee scalp. Passing these, the tall dark lodges rose between us and the red western sky. We repaired at once to the lodge of Old Smoke himself. It was by no means better than the others; indeed, it was rather shabby; for in this democratic community the chief never assumes superior state. Smoke sat cross-legged on a buffalo-robe, and his grunt of salutation as we entered was unusually cordial, out of respect, no doubt, to Shaw's medical character. Seated around the lodge were several squaws, and an abundance of children. The complaint of Shaw's patients was, for the most part, a severe inflammation of the eyes, occasioned by exposure to the sun, a species

of disorder which he treated with some success. He had brought with him a homœopathic medicine-chest, and was, I presume, the first who introduced that harmless system of treatment among the Ogillallah. No sooner had a robe been spread at the head of the lodge for our accommodation, and we had seated ourselves upon it, than a patient made her appearance: the chief's daughter herself, who, to do her justice, was the best-looking girl in the village. Being on excellent terms with the physician, she placed herself readily under his hands, and submitted with a good grace to his applications, laughing in his face during the whole process, for a squaw hardly knows how to smile. This case dispatched, another of a different kind succeeded. A hideous, emaciated old woman sat in the darkest corner of the lodge rocking to and fro with pain, and hiding her eyes from the light by pressing the palms of both hands against her face. At Smoke's command she came forward, very unwillingly, and exhibited a pair of eyes that had nearly disappeared from excess of inflammation. No sooner had the doctor fastened his grip upon her than she set up a dismal moaning, and writhed so in his grasp that he lost all patience; but being resolved to carry his point, he succeeded at last in applying his favorite remedies.

'It is strange,' he said, when the operation was finished, 'that I forgot to bring any Spanish flies with me; we must have something here to answer for a counter-irritant!'

So, in the absence of better, he seized upon a red-hot brand from the fire, and clapped it against the temple of the old squaw, who set up an unearthly howl, at which the rest of the family broke out into a laugh.

During these medical operations Smoke's eldest squaw entered the lodge, with a sort of stone mallet in her hand. I had observed some time before a litter of well-grown black puppies, comfortably nestled among some buffalo-robes at one side; but this new-comer speedily disturbed their enjoyment; for, seizing one of them by the hind paw, she dragged him out, and carrying him to the entrance of the lodge, hammered him on the head till she killed him. Being quite conscious to what this preparation tended, I looked through a hole in the back of the lodge to see the next steps of the process. The squaw, holding the puppy by the legs, was swinging him to and fro through the blaze of a fire, until the hair was singed off. This done, she unsheathed her knife and cut him into small pieces, which she dropped into a kettle to boil. In a few moments a large wooden dish was set before us, filled with this delicate preparation. We felt conscious of the honor. A dog-feast is the greatest compliment a Dahcotah can offer to his guest; and knowing that to refuse eating would be an affront, we attacked the little dog and devoured him before the eyes of his unconscious parent. Smoke in the meantime was preparing his great pipe. It was lighted when we had finished our repast, and we passed it from one to another till the bowl was empty. This done, we took our leave without further ceremony, knocked at the gate of the fort, and, after making ourselves known, were admitted.

1846 1849

RICHARD HENRY DANA, JR.

1815–1882

FROM TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST

THE FLOGGING [1]

FOR several days the captain seemed very much out of humor. Nothing went right, or fast enough for him. He quarrelled with the cook, and threatened to flog him for throwing wood on deck; and had a dispute with the mate about reeving a Spanish burton; the mate saying that he was right, and had been taught how to do it by a man *who was a sailor*! This, the captain took in dudgeon, and they were at sword's points at once. But his displeasure was chiefly turned against a large, heavy-moulded fellow from the Middle States, who was called Sam. This man hesitated in his speech, and was rather slow in his motions, but was a pretty good sailor, and always seemed to do his best; but the captain took a dislike to him, thought he was surly, and lazy; and 'if you once give a dog a bad name'—as the sailor-phrase is—'he may as well jump overboard.' The captain found fault with everything this man did, and hazed him for dropping a marlinespike from the main-yard, where he was at work. This, of course, was an accident, but it was set down against him. The captain was on board all day Friday, and everything went on hard and disagreeably. 'The more you drive a man, the less he will do,' was as true with us as with any other people. We worked late Friday night, and were turned-to, early Saturday morning. About ten o'clock the captain ordered our new officer, Russell, who by this time had become thoroughly disliked by all the crew, to get the gig ready to take him ashore. John, the Swede, was sitting in the boat alongside, and Russell and myself were standing by the main hatchway, waiting for the captain, who was down in the hold, where the crew were at work, when we heard his voice raised in violent dispute with somebody, whether it was with the mate, or one of the crew, I could not tell; and then came blows and scuffling. I ran to the side and beckoned to John, who came up, and we leaned down the hatchway; and though we could see no one, yet we knew that the captain had the advantage, for his voice was loud and clear—

'You see your condition! You see your condition! Will you ever give me any more of your *jaw*?' No answer; and then came wrestling and heaving, as though the man was trying to turn him. 'You may as well keep still, for I have got you,' said the captain. Then came the question, 'Will you ever give me any more of your jaw?'

'I never gave you any, sir,' said Sam; for it was his voice that we heard, though low and half choked.

'That's not what I ask you. Will you ever be impudent to me again?'

'I never have been, sir,' said Sam.

'Answer my question, or I'll make a spread eagle of you! I'll flog you.'

'I'm no negro slave,' said Sam.

'Then I'll make you one,' said the captain; and he came to the hatchway, and sprang on deck, threw off his coat, and rolling up his sleeves, called out to the mate—'Seize that man up, Mr. A—! Seize him up! Make a spread eagle of him! I'll teach you all who is master aboard!'

The crew and officers followed the captain up the hatchway, and after repeated orders the mate laid hold of Sam, who made no resistance, and carried him to the gangway.

'What are you going to flog that man for, sir?' said John, the Swede, to the captain.

Upon hearing this, the captain turned upon him, but knowing him to be quick and resolute, he ordered the steward to bring the irons, and calling upon Russell to help him, went up to John.

'Let me alone,' said John. 'I'm willing to be put in irons. You need not use any force;' and putting out his hands, the captain slipped the irons on, and sent him aft to the quarter-deck. Sam by this time was *seized up*, as it is called, that is, placed

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from Chapter 15 of *Two Years Before the Mast*(Boston, 1929),114–121.

against the shrouds, with his wrists made fast to the shrouds, his jacket off, and his back exposed. The captain stood on the break of the deck, a few feet from him, and a little raised, so as to have a good swing at him, and held in his hand the bight of a thick, strong rope. The officers stood round, and the crew grouped together in the waist. All these preparations made me feel sick and almost faint, angry and excited as I was. A man—a human being, made in God's likeness—fastened up and flogged like a beast! A man, too, whom I had lived with and eaten with for months, and knew almost as well as a brother. The first and almost uncontrollable impulse was resistance. But what was to be done? The time for it had gone by. The two best men were fast, and there were only two beside myself, and a small boy of ten or twelve years of age. And then there were (beside the captain) three officers, steward, agent, and clerk. But beside the numbers, what is there for sailors to do? If they resist, it is mutiny; and if they succeed, and take the vessel, it is piracy. If they ever yield again, their punishment must come; and if they do not yield, they are pirates for life. If a sailor resist his commander, he resists the law, and piracy or submission are his only alternatives. Bad as it was, it must be borne. It is what a sailor ships for. Swinging the rope over his head, and bending his body so as to give it full force, the captain brought it down upon the poor fellow's back. Once, twice,—six times. 'Will you ever give me any more of your jaw?' The man writhed with pain, but said not a word. Three times more. This was too much, and he muttered something which I could not hear; this brought as many more as the man could stand; when the captain ordered him to be cut down, and to go forward.

'Now for you,' said the captain, making up to John and taking his irons off. As soon as he was loose, he ran forward to the forecastle. 'Bring that man aft,' shouted the captain. The second mate, who had been a shipmate of John's stood still in the waist, and the mate walked slowly forward; but our third officer, anxious to show his zeal, sprang forward over the windlass, and laid hold of John; but he soon threw him from him. At this moment I would have given worlds for the power to help the poor fellow; but it was all in vain. The captain stood on the quarter-deck, bare-headed, his eyes flashing with rage, and his face as red as blood, swinging the rope, and calling out to his officers, 'Drag him aft!—Lay hold of him! I'll *sweeten* him!' etc. The mate now went forward and told John quietly to go aft; and he, seeing resistance in vain, threw the blackguard third mate from him; said he would go aft of himself; that they should not drag him; and went up to the gangway and held out his hands; but as soon as the captain began to make him fast, the indignity was too much, and he began to resist; but the mate and Russell holding him, he was soon seized up. When he was made fast, he turned to the captain, who stood turning up his sleeves and getting ready for the blow, and asked him what he was to be flogged for. 'Have I ever refused my duty, sir? Have you ever known me to hang back, or to be insolent, or not to know my work?'

'No,' said the captain, 'it is not that that I flog you for; I flog you for your interference—for asking questions.'

'Can't a man ask a question here without being flogged?'

'No,' shouted the captain; 'nobody shall open his mouth aboard this vessel, but myself;' and began laying the blows upon his back, swinging half round between each blow, to give it full effect. As he went on, his passion increased, and he danced about the deck, calling out as he swung the rope, —'If you want to know what I flog you for, I'll tell you. It's because I like to do it!—because I like to do it!—It suits me! That's what I do it for!'

The man writhed under the pain, until he could endure it no longer, when he called out, with an exclamation more common among foreigners than with us—'Oh, Jesus Christ! Oh, Jesus Christ!'

'Don't call on Jesus Christ,' shouted the captain; '*he can't help you. Call on Captain T*—. He's the man! He can help you! Jesus Christ can't help you now!'

At these words, which I never shall forget, my blood ran cold. I could look on no longer. Disgusted, sick, and horror-struck, I turned away and leaned over the rail, and looked down into the water. A few rapid thoughts of my own situation, and of

the prospect of future revenge, crossed my mind; but the falling of the blows and the cries of the man called me back at once. At length they ceased, and turning round, I found that the mate, at a signal from the captain, had cut him down. Almost doubled up with pain, the man walked slowly forward, and went down into the forecastle. Every one else stood still at his post, while the captain, swelling with rage and with the importance of his achievement, walked the quarter-deck, and at each turn, as he came forward, calling out to us,—'You see your condition! You see where I've got you all, and you know what to expect!'—'You've been mistaken in me—you didn't know what I was! Now you know what I am!'—'I'll make you toe the mark, every soul of you, or I'll flog you all, fore and aft, from the boy, up!'—'You've got a driver over you! Yes, a *slave-driver—a negro-driver*! I'll see who'll tell me he isn't a negro slave!' With this and the like matter, equally calculated to quiet us, and to allay any apprehensions of future trouble, he entertained us for about ten minutes, when he went below. Soon after, John came aft, with his bare back covered with stripes and wales in every direction, and dreadfully swollen, and asked the steward to ask the captain to let him have some salve, or balsam, to put upon it. 'No,' said the captain, who heard him from below; 'tell him to put his shirt on; that's the best thing for him; and pull me ashore in the boat. Nobody is going to lay-up on board this vessel.' He then called to Mr. Russell to take those two men and two others in the boat, and pull him ashore. I went for one. The two men could hardly bend their backs, and the captain called to them to 'give way,' 'give way!' but finding they did their best, he let them alone. The agent was in the stern sheets, but during the whole pull—a league or more—not a word was spoken. We landed; the captain, agent, and officer went up to the house, and left us with the boat. I, and the man with me, staid near the boat, while John and Sam walked slowly away, and sat down on rocks. They talked some time together, but at length separated, each sitting alone. I had some fears of John. He was a foreigner, and violently tempered, and under suffering; and he had his knife with him, and the captain was to come down alone to the boat. But nothing happened; and we went quietly on board. The captain was probably armed, and if either of them had lifted a hand against him they would have had nothing before them but flight, and starvation in the woods of California, or capture by the soldiers and Indian bloodhounds, whom the offer of twenty dollars would have set upon them.

After the day's work was done, we went down into the forecastle, and ate our plain supper; but not a word was spoken. It was Saturday night; but there was no song—no 'sweethearts and wives.' A gloom was over everything. The two men lay in their berths, groaning with pain, and we all turned in, but for myself, not to sleep. A sound coming now and then from the berths of the two men showed that they were awake, as awake they must have been, for they could hardly lie in one posture a moment; the dim, swinging lamp of the forecastle shed its light over the dark hole in which we lived; and many and various reflections and purposes coursed through my mind. I thought of our situation, living under a tyranny; of the character of the country we were in; of the length of the voyage, and of the uncertainty attending our return to America; and then, if we should return, of the prospect of obtaining justice and satisfaction for these poor men; and vowed that if God should ever give me the means, I would do something to redress the grievances and relieve the sufferings of that poor class of beings, of whom I then was one.

1839 1840

HERMAN MELVILLE

1819–1891

FROM TYPEE

TYPEE MORTARKEE [1]

I

TYPEE or Happar? A frightful death at the hands of the fiercest of cannibals, or a kindly reception from a gentler race of savages? Which? But it was too late now to discuss a question which would so soon be answered.

The part of the valley in which we found ourselves appeared to be altogether uninhabited. An almost impenetrable thicket extended from side to side, without presenting a single plant affording the nourishment we had confidently calculated upon; and with this object, we followed the course of the stream, casting quick glances as we proceeded into the thick jungles on either hand.

My companion—to whose solicitations I had yielded in descending into the valley—now that the step was taken, began to manifest a degree of caution I had little expected from him. He proposed that, in the event of our finding an adequate supply of fruit, we should remain in this unfrequented portion of the country—where we should run little chance of being surprised by its occupants, whoever they might be—until sufficiently recruited to resume our journey; when, laying in a store of food equal to our wants, we might easily regain the bay of Nukuheva, after the lapse of a sufficient interval to ensure the departure of our vessel.

I objected strongly to this proposition, plausible as it was, as the difficulties of the route would be almost insurmountable, unacquainted as we were with the general bearings of the country, and I reminded my companion of the hardships which we had already encountered in our uncertain wanderings; in a word, I said that since we had deemed it advisable to enter the valley, we ought manfully to face the consequences, whatever they might be; the more especially as I was convinced there was no alternative left us but to fall in with the natives at once, and boldly risk the reception they might give us; and that as to myself, I felt the necessity of rest and shelter, and that until I had obtained them, I should be wholly unable to encounter such sufferings as we had lately passed through. To the justice of these observations Toby somewhat reluctantly assented.

We were surprised that, after moving as far as we had along the valley, we should still meet with the same impervious thickets; and thinking that although the borders of the stream might be lined for some distance with them, yet beyond there might be more open ground, I requested Toby to keep a bright look-out upon one side, while I did the same on the other, in order to discover some opening in the bushes, and especially to watch for the slightest appearance of a path or anything else that might indicate the vicinity of the islanders.

What furtive and anxious glances we cast into those dim-looking shades! With what apprehensions we proceeded, ignorant at what moment we might be greeted by the javelin of some ambushed savage! At last my companion paused, and directed my attention to a narrow opening in the foliage. We struck into it, and it soon brought us by an indistinctly traced path to a comparatively clear space, at the farther end of which we descried a number of the trees, the native name of which is 'annuee,' and which bear a most delicious fruit.

What a race! I hobbling over the ground like some decrepit wretch, and Toby leaping forward like a greyhound. He quickly cleared one of the trees on which there were two or three of the fruit, but to our chagrin they proved to be much decayed; the rinds partly opened by the birds, and their hearts half devoured. However, we quickly dispatched them, and no ambrosia could have been more delicious.

We looked about us uncertain whither to direct our steps, since the path we had so far followed appeared to be lost in the open space around us. At last we resolved

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is Chapters 10–11 of *Typee* (N.Y., 1846).

to enter a grove near at hand, and had advanced a few rods, when, just upon its skirts, I picked up a slender bread-fruit shoot perfectly green, and with the tender bark freshly stript from it. It was still slippery with moisture, and appeared as if it had been but that moment thrown aside. I said nothing, but merely held it up to Toby, who started at this undeniable evidence of the vicinity of the savages.

The plot was now thickening.—A short distance farther lay a little faggot of the same shoots bound together with a strip of bark. Could it have been thrown down by some solitary native, who, alarmed at seeing us, had hurried forward to carry the tidings of our approach to his countrymen?—Typee or Happar?—But it was too late to recede, so we moved on slowly, my companion in advance casting eager glances under the trees on either side, until all at once I saw him recoil as if stung by an adder. Sinking on his knee, he waved me off with one hand, while with the other he held aside some intervening leaves, and gazed intently at some object.

Disregarding his injunction, I quickly approached him and caught a glimpse of two figures partly hidden by the dense foliage; they were standing close together, and were perfectly motionless. They must have previously perceived us, and withdrawn into the depths of the wood to elude our observation.

My mind was at once made up. Dropping my staff, and tearing open the package of things we had brought from the ship, I unrolled the cotton cloth, and holding it in one hand, plucked with the other a twig from the bushes beside me, and telling Toby to follow my example, I broke through the covert and advanced, waving the branch in token of peace toward the shrinking forms before me.

They were a boy and a girl, slender and graceful, and completely naked, with the exception of a slight girdle of bark, from which depended at opposite points two of the russet leaves of the bread-fruit tree. An arm of the boy, half screened from sight by her wild tresses, was thrown about the neck of the girl, while with the other he held one of her hands in his; and thus they stood together, their heads inclined forward, catching the faint noise we made in our progress, and with one foot in advance, as if half inclined to fly from our presence.

As we drew near, their alarm evidently increased. Apprehensive that they might fly from us altogether, I stopped short and motioned them to advance and receive the gift I extended toward them, but they would not; I then uttered a few words of their language with which I was acquainted, scarcely expecting that they would understand me, but to show that we had not dropped from the clouds upon them. This appeared to give them a little confidence, so I approached nearer, presenting the cloth with one hand, and holding the bough with the other, while they slowly retreated. At last they suffered us to approach so near to them that we were enabled to throw the cotton cloth across their shoulders, giving them to understand that it was theirs, and by a variety of gestures endeavouring to make them understand that we entertained the highest possible regard for them.

The frightened pair now stood still, whilst we endeavoured to make them comprehend the nature of our wants. In doing this Toby went through with a complete series of pantomimic illustrations—opening his mouth from ear to ear, and thrusting his fingers down his throat, gnashing his teeth and rolling his eyes about, till I verily believe the poor creatures took us for a couple of white cannibals who were about to make a meal of them. When, however, they understood us, they showed no inclination to relieve our wants. At this juncture it began to rain violently, and we motioned them to lead us to some place of shelter. With this request they appeared willing to comply, but nothing could evince more strongly the apprehension with which they regarded us, than the way in which, whilst walking before us, they kept their eyes constantly turned back to watch every movement we made, and even our very looks.

'Typee or Happar, Toby?' asked I, as we walked after them.

'Of course, Happar,' he replied, with a show of confidence which was intended to disguise his doubts.

'We shall soon know,' I exclaimed; and at the same moment I stepped forward toward our guides, and pronouncing the

two names interrogatively, and pointing to the lowest part of the valley, endeavoured to come to the point at once. They repeated the words after me again and again, but without giving any peculiar emphasis to either, so that I was completely at a loss to understand them; for a couple of wilier young things than we afterward found them to have been on this particular occasion never probably fell in any traveller's way.

More and more curious to ascertain our fate, I now threw together in the form of a question the words 'Happar' and 'Mortarkee,' the latter being equivalent to the word 'good.' The two natives interchanged glances of peculiar meaning with one another at this, and manifested no little surprise; but on the repetition of the question, after some consultation together, to the great joy of Toby, they answered in the affirmative. Toby was now in ecstasies, especially as the young savages continued to reiterate their answer with great energy, as though desirous of impressing us with the idea that being among the Happars, we ought to consider ourselves perfectly secure.

Although I had some lingering doubts, I feigned great delight with Toby at this announcement, while my companion broke out into a pantomimic abhorrence of Typee, and immeasurable love for the particular valley in which we were; our guides all the while gazing uneasily at one another, as if at a loss to account for our conduct.

They hurried on, and we followed them; until suddenly they set up a strange halloo, which was answered from beyond the grove through which we were passing, and the next moment we entered upon some open ground, at the extremity of which we descried a long, low hut, and in front of it were several young girls. As soon as they perceived us they fled with wild screams into the adjoining thickets, like so many startled fawns. A few moments after the whole valley resounded with savage outcries, and the natives came running toward us from every direction.

Had an army of invaders made an irruption into their territory, they could not have evinced greater excitement. We were soon completely encircled by a dense throng, and in their eager desire to behold us, they almost arrested our progress; an equal number surrounding our youthful guides, who, with amazing volubility, appeared to be detailing the circumstances which had attended their meeting with us. Every item of intelligence appeared to redouble the astonishment of the islanders, and they gazed at us with inquiring looks.

At last we reached a large and handsome building of bamboos, and were by signs told to enter it, the natives opening a lane for us through which to pass; on entering, without ceremony we threw our exhausted frames upon the mats that covered the floor. In a moment the slight tenement was completely full of people, whilst those who were unable to obtain admittance gazed at us through its open cane-work.

It was now evening, and by the dim light we could just discern the savage countenances around us, gleaming with wild curiosity and wonder; the naked forms and tattooed limbs of brawny warriors, with here and there the slighter figures of young girls, all engaged in a perfect storm of conversation, of which we were of course the one only theme; whilst our recent guides were fully occupied in answering the innumerable questions which everyone put to them. Nothing can exceed the fierce gesticulation of these people when animated in conversation, and on this occasion they gave loose to all their natural vivacity, shouting and dancing about in a manner that well-nigh intimidated us.

Close to where we lay, squatting upon their haunches, were some eight or ten noble-looking chiefs—for such they subsequently proved to be—who, more reserved than the rest, regarded us with a fixed and stern attention, which not a little discomposed our equanimity. One of them in particular, who appeared to be the highest in rank, placed himself directly facing me, looking at me with a rigidity of aspect under which I absolutely quailed. He never once opened his lips, but maintained his severe expression of countenance, without turning his face aside for a single moment. Never before had I been subjected to so strange and steady a glance; it revealed nothing of the mind of the savage, but it appeared to be reading my own.

After undergoing this scrutiny till I grew

absolutely nervous, with a view of diverting it if possible, and conciliating the good opinion of the warrior, I took some tobacco from the bosom of my frock, and offered it to him. He quietly rejected the proffered gift, and, without speaking, motioned me to return it to its place.

In my previous intercourse with the natives of Nukuheva and Tior, I had found that the present of a small piece of tobacco would have rendered any of them devoted to my service. Was this act of the chief a token of his enmity? Typee or Happar? I asked within myself. I started, for at the same moment this identical question was asked by the strange being before me. I turned to Toby; the flickering light of a native taper showed me his countenance pale with trepidation at this fatal question. I paused for a second, and I know not by what impulse it was that I answered, 'Typee.' The piece of dusky statuary nodded in approval, and then murmured, 'Mortarkee?' 'Mortarkee,' said I, without further hesitation—'Typee mortarkee.'

What a transition! The dark figures around us leaped to their feet, clapped their hands in transport, and shouted again and again the talismanic syllables, the utterance of which appeared to have settled everything.

When this commotion had a little subsided, the principal chief squatted once more before me, and throwing himself into a sudden rage, poured forth a string of philippics, which I was at no loss to understand, from the frequent recurrence of the word Happar, as being directed against the natives of the adjoining valley. In all these denunciations my companion and I acquiesced, while we extolled the character of the warlike Typees. To be sure our panegyrics were somewhat laconic, consisting in the repetition of that name, united with the potent adjective 'mortarkee.' But this was sufficient, and served to conciliate the good-will of the natives, with whom our congeniality of sentiment on this point did more toward inspiring a friendly feeling than anything else that could have happened.

At last the wrath of the chief evaporated, and in a few moments he was as placid as ever. Laying his hand upon his breast, he now gave me to understand that his name was 'Mehevi,' and that, in return, he wished me to communicate my appellation. I hesitated for an instant, thinking that it might be difficult for him to pronounce my real name, and then, with the most praiseworthy intentions, intimated that I was known as 'Tom.' But I could not have made a worse selection; the chief could not master it: 'Tommo,' 'Tomma,' 'Tommee,' everything but plain 'Tom.' As he persisted in garnishing the word with an additional syllable, I compromised the matter with him at the word 'Tommo'; and by that name I went during the entire period of my stay in the valley. The same proceeding was gone through with Toby, whose mellifluous appellation was more easily caught.

An exchange of names is equivalent to a ratification of good-will and amity among these simple people; and as we were aware of this fact, we were delighted that it had taken place on the present occasion.

Reclining upon our mats, we now held a kind of levee, giving audience to successive troops of the natives, who introduced themselves to us by pronouncing their respective names, and retired in high good-humour on receiving ours in return. During the ceremony the greatest merriment prevailed, nearly every announcement on the part of the islanders being followed by a fresh sally of gaiety, which induced me to believe that some of them at least were innocently diverting the company at our expense, by bestowing upon themselves a string of absurd titles, of the humour of which we were, of course, entirely ignorant.

All this occupied about an hour, when the throng having a little diminished, I turned to Mehevi, and gave him to understand that we were in need of food and sleep. Immediately the attentive chief addressed a few words to one of the crowd, who disappeared, and returned in a few moments with a calabash of 'poee-poee,' and two or three young cocoa-nuts stripped of their husks, and with their shells partly broken. We both of us forthwith placed one of these natural goblets to our lips, and drained it in a moment of the refreshing draught it contained. The poee-poee was then placed before us, and even famished

as I was, I paused to consider in what manner to convey it to my mouth.

This staple article of food among the Marquese islanders is manufactured from the produce of the bread-fruit tree. It somewhat resembles in its plastic nature our bookbinders' paste, is of a yellow colour, and somewhat tart to the taste.

Such was the dish, the merits of which I was now eager to discuss. I eyed it wistfully for a moment, and then, unable any longer to stand on ceremony, plunged my hand into the yielding mass, and to the boisterous mirth of the natives drew it forth laden with the poee-poee, which adhered in lengthening strings to every finger. So stubborn was its consistency, that in conveying my heavily-freighted hand to my mouth, the connecting links almost raised the calabash from the mats on which it had been placed. This display of awkwardness—in which, by the by, Toby kept me company—convulsed the bystanders with uncontrollable laughter.

As soon as their merriment had somewhat subsided, Mehevi, motioning us to be attentive, dipped the forefinger of his right hand in the dish, and giving it a rapid and scientific twirl, drew it out coated smoothly with the preparation. With a second peculiar flourish he prevented the poee-poee from dropping to the ground as he raised it to his mouth, into which the finger was inserted, and drawn forth perfectly free from any adhesive matter. This performance was evidently intended for our instruction; so I again essayed the feat on the principles inculcated, but with very ill success.

A starving man, however, little heeds conventional proprieties, especially on a South Sea island, and accordingly Toby and I partook of the dish after our own clumsy fashion, beplastering our faces all over with the glutinous compound, and daubing our hands nearly to the wrist. This kind of food is by no means disagreeable to the palate of a European, though at first the mode of eating it may be. For my own part, after the lapse of a few days I became accustomed to its singular flavour, and grew remarkably fond of it.

So much for the first course; several other dishes followed it, some of which were positively delicious. We concluded our banquet by tossing off the contents of two more young cocoa-nuts, after which we regaled ourselves with the soothing fumes of tobacco, inhaled from a quaintly carved pipe which passed round the circle.

During the repast, the natives eyed us with intense curiosity, observing our minutest motions, and appearing to discover abundant matter for comment in the most trifling occurrence. Their surprise mounted the highest, when we began to remove our uncomfortable garments, which were saturated with rain. They scanned the whiteness of our limbs, and seemed utterly unable to account for the contrast they presented to the swarthy hue of our faces, embrowned from a six months' exposure to the scorching sun of the Line. They felt our skin, much in the same way that a silk mercer would handle a remarkably fine piece of satin; and some of them went so far in their investigation as to apply the olfactory organ.

Their singular behaviour almost led me to imagine that they never before had beheld a white man; but a few moments' reflection convinced me that this could not have been the case; and a more satisfactory reason for their conduct has since suggested itself to my mind.

Deterred by the frightful stories related of its inhabitants, ships never enter this bay, while their hostile relations with the tribes in the adjoining valleys prevent the Typees from visiting that section of the island where vessels occasionally lie. At long intervals, however, some intrepid captain will touch on the skirts of the bay, with two or three armed boats' crews, and accompanied by an interpreter. The natives who live near the sea descry the strangers long before they reach their waters, and aware of the purpose for which they come, proclaim loudly the news of their approach. By a species of vocal telegraph the intelligence reaches the inmost recesses of the vale in an inconceivably short space of time, drawing nearly its whole population down to the beach laden with every variety of fruit. The interpreter, who is invariably a 'tabooed kannaka,' leaps ashore with the goods intended for barter, while the boats, with their oars shipped, and every man on his thwart, lie just outside the surf, heading off from the shore, in readiness at the first

untoward event to escape to the open sea. As soon as the traffic is concluded, one of the boats pulls in under cover of the muskets of the others, the fruit is quickly thrown into her, and the transient visitors precipitately retire from what they justly consider so dangerous a vicinity.

The intercourse occurring with Europeans being so restricted, no wonder that the inhabitants of the valley manifested so much curiosity with regard to us, appearing as we did among them under such singular circumstances. I have no doubt that we were the first white men who ever penetrated thus far back into their territories, or at least the first who had ever descended from the head of the vale. What had brought us thither must have appeared a complete mystery to them, and from our ignorance of the language it was impossible for us to enlighten them. In answer to inquiries which the eloquence of their gestures enabled us to comprehend, all that we could reply was, that we had come from Nukuheva, a place, be it remembered, with which they were at open war. This intelligence appeared to affect them with the most lively emotions. 'Nukuheva mortarkee?' they asked. Of course we replied most energetically in the negative.

They then plied us with a thousand questions, of which we could understand nothing more than that they had reference to the recent movements of the French, against whom they seemed to cherish the most fierce hatred. So eager were they to obtain information on this point, that they still continued to propound their queries long after we had shown that we were utterly unable to answer them. Occasionally we caught some indistinct idea of their meaning, when we would endeavour by every method in our power to communicate the desired intelligence. At such times their gratification was boundless, and they would redouble their efforts to make us comprehend them more perfectly. But all in vain; and in the end they looked at us despairingly, as if we were the receptacles of invaluable information, but how to come at it they knew not.

After a while the group around us gradually dispersed, and we were left about midnight (as we conjectured) with those who appeared to be permanent residents of the house. These individuals now provided us with fresh mats to lie upon, covered us with several folds of tappa, and then extinguishing the tapers that had been burning, threw themselves down beside us, and after a little desultory conversation were soon sound asleep.

2

VARIOUS and conflicting were the thoughts which oppressed me during the silent hours that followed the events related in the preceding chapter. Toby, wearied with the fatigues of the day, slumbered heavily by my side; but the pain under which I was suffering effectually prevented my sleeping, and I remained distressingly alive to all the fearful circumstances of our present situation. Was it possible that, after all our vicissitudes, we were really in the terrible valley of Typee, and at the mercy of its inmates, a fierce and unrelenting tribe of savages?

Typee or Happar? I shuddered when I reflected that there was no longer any room for doubt; and that, beyond all hope of escape, we were now placed in those very circumstances from the bare thought of which I had recoiled with such abhorrence but a few days before. What might not be our fearful destiny? To be sure, as yet, we had been treated with no violence; nay, had been even kindly and hospitably entertained. But what dependence could be placed upon the fickle passions which sway the bosom of a savage? His inconstancy and treachery are proverbial. Might it not be that, beneath these fair appearances, the islanders covered some perfidious design, and that their friendly reception of us might only precede some horrible catastrophe? How strongly did these forebodings spring up in my mind, as I lay restlessly upon a couch of mats, surrounded by the dimly-revealed forms of those whom I so greatly dreaded.

From the excitement of these fearful thoughts, I sank, toward morning, into an uneasy slumber; and on awaking, with a start, in the midst of an appalling dream, looked up into the eager countenances of a number of the natives, who were bending over me.

It was broad day; and the house was nearly filled with young females, fancifully

decorated with flowers, who gazed upon me as I rose with faces in which childish delight and curiosity were vividly portrayed. After waking Toby, they seated themselves round us on the mats, and gave full play to that prying inquisitiveness which, time out of mind, has been attributed to the adorable sex.

As these unsophisticated young creatures were attended by no jealous duennas, their proceedings were altogether informal, and void of artificial restraint. Long and minute was the investigation with which they honoured us, and so uproarious their mirth, that I felt infinitely sheepish; and Toby was immeasurably outraged at their familiarity.

These lively young ladies were at the same time wonderfully polite and humane; fanning aside the insects that occasionally lighted on our brows; presenting us with food; and compassionately regarding me in the midst of my afflictions. But in spite of all their blandishments, my feelings of propriety were exceedingly shocked, for I could not but consider them as having overstepped the due limits of female decorum.

Having diverted themselves to their hearts' content, our young visitants now withdrew, and gave place to successive troops of the other sex, who continued flocking toward the house until near noon; by which time I have no doubt that the greater part of the inhabitants of the valley had bathed themselves in the light of our benignant countenances.

At last, when their numbers began to diminish, a superb-looking warrior stooped the towering plumes of his head-dress beneath the low portal, and entered the house. I saw at once that he was some distinguished personage, the natives regarding him with the utmost deference, and making room for him as he approached. His aspect was imposing. The splendid long drooping tail-feathers of the tropical bird, thickly interspersed with the gaudy plumage of the cock, were disposed in an immense upright semicircle upon his head, their lower extremities being fixed in a crescent of guinea-beads which spanned the forehead. Around his neck were several enormous necklaces of boars' tusks, polished like ivory, and disposed in such a manner as that the longest and largest were upon his capacious chest. Thrust forward through the large apertures in his ears were two small and finely-shaped sperm-whale teeth, presenting their cavities in front, stuffed with freshly-plucked leaves, and curiously wrought at the other end into strange little images and devices. These barbaric trinkets, garnished in this manner at their open extremities, and tapering and curving round to a point behind the ear, resembled not a little a pair of cornucopias.

The loins of the warrior were girt about with heavy folds of a dark-coloured tappa, hanging before and behind in clusters of braided tassels, while anklets and bracelets of curling human hair completed his unique costume. In his right hand he grasped a beautifully carved paddle-spear, nearly fifteen feet in length, made of the bright koa-wood, one end sharply pointed, and the other flattened like an oar-blade. Hanging obliquely from his girdle by a loop of sinnate, was a richly decorated pipe; the slender reed forming its stem was coloured with a red pigment, and round it, as well as the idol-bowl, fluttered little streamers of the thinnest tappa.

But that which was most remarkable in the appearance of this splendid islander was the elaborate tattooing displayed on every noble limb. All imaginable lines and curves and figures were delineated over his whole body, and in their grotesque variety and infinite profusion, I could only compare them to the crowded groupings of quaint patterns we sometimes see in costly pieces of lacework. The most simple and remarkable of all these ornaments was that which decorated the countenance of the chief. Two broad stripes of tattooing, diverging from the centre of his shaven crown, obliquely crossed both eyes—staining the lids—to a little below either ear, where they united with another stripe, which swept in a straight line along the lips, and formed the base of the triangle. The warrior, from the excellence of his physical proportions, might certainly have been regarded as one of nature's noblemen, and the lines drawn upon his face may possibly have denoted his exalted rank.

This warlike personage, upon entering the house, seated himself at some distance from the spot where Toby and myself reposed, while the rest of the savages looked alternately from us to him, as if in expecta-

tion of something they were disappointed in not perceiving. Regarding the chief attentively, I thought his lineaments appeared familiar to me. As soon as his full face was turned upon me, and I again beheld its extraordinary embellishment, and met the strange gaze to which I had been subjected the preceding night, I immediately, in spite of the alteration in his appearance, recognised the noble Mehevi. On addressing him, he advanced at once in the most cordial manner, and, greeting me warmly, seemed to enjoy not a little the effect his barbaric costume had produced upon me.

I forthwith determined to secure, if possible, the good-will of this individual, as I easily perceived he was a man of great authority in his tribe, and one who might exert a powerful influence upon our subsequent fate. In the endeavour I was not repulsed; for nothing could surpass the friendliness he manifested toward both my companion and myself. He extended his sturdy limbs by our side, and endeavoured to make us comprehend the full extent of the kindly feelings by which he was actuated. The almost insuperable difficulty in communicating to one another our ideas, affected the chief with no little mortification. He evinced a great desire to be enlightened with regard to the customs and peculiarities of the far-off country we had left behind us, and to which, under the name of Maneeka, he frequently alluded.

But that which more than any other subject engaged his attention, was the late proceedings of the 'France,' as he called the French, in the neighbouring bay of Nukuheva. This seemed a never-ending theme with him, and one concerning which he was never weary of interrogating us. All the information we succeeded in imparting to him on this subject was little more than that we had seen six men-of-war lying in the hostile bay at the time we had left it. When he received this intelligence, Mehevi, by the aid of his fingers, went through a long numerical calculation, as if estimating the number of Frenchmen the squadron might contain.

It was just after employing his faculties in this way that he happened to notice the swelling in my limb. He immediately examined it with the utmost attention, and after doing so, dispatched a boy, who happened to be standing by, with some message.

After the lapse of a few moments the stripling re-entered the house with an aged islander, who might have been taken for old Hippocrates himself. His head was as bald as the polished surface of a cocoa-nut shell, which article it precisely resembled in smoothness and colour, while a long silvery beard swept almost to his girdle of bark. Encircling his temples was a bandeau of the twisted leaves of the Omoo tree, pressed closely over the brows to shield his feeble vision from the glare of the sun. His tottering steps were supported by a long slim staff, resembling the wand with which a theatrical magician appears on the stage, and in one hand he carried a freshly-plaited fan of the green leaflets of the cocoa-nut tree. A flowing robe of tappa, knotted over the shoulder, hung loosely round his stooping form, and heightened the venerableness of his aspect.

Mehevi, saluting this old gentleman, motioned him to a seat between us, and then uncovering my limb, desired him to examine it. The leech gazed intently from me to Toby, and then proceeded to business. After diligently observing the ailing member, he commenced manipulating it; and on the supposition probably that the complaint had deprived the leg of all sensation, began to pinch and hammer it in such a manner that I absolutely roared with the pain. Thinking that I was as capable of making an application of thumps and pinches to the part as anyone else, I endeavoured to resist this species of medical treatment. But it was not so easy a matter to get out of the clutches of the old wizard; he fastened on the unfortunate limb as if it were something for which he had been long seeking, and muttering some kind of incantation continued his discipline, pounding it after a fashion that set me wellnigh crazy; while Mehevi, upon the same principle which prompts an affectionate mother to hold a struggling child in a dentist's chair, restrained me in his powerful grasp, and actually encouraged the wretch in this infliction of torture.

Almost frantic with rage and pain, I yelled like a bedlamite; while Toby, throwing himself into all the attitudes of a

posture-master, vainly endeavoured to expostulate with the natives by signs and gestures. To have looked at my companion, as, sympathising with my sufferings, he strove to put an end to them, one would have thought that he was the deaf and dumb alphabet incarnated. Whether my tormentor yielded to Toby's entreaties, or paused from sheer exhaustion, I do not know; but all at once he ceased his operations, and at the same time the chief relinquishing his hold upon me, I fell back, faint and breathless with the agony I had endured.

My unfortunate limb was now left much in the same condition as a rump-steak after undergoing the castigating process which precedes cooking. My physician, having recovered from the fatigues of his exertions, as if anxious to make amends for the pain to which he had subjected me, now took some herbs out of a little wallet that was suspended from his waist, and moistening them in water, applied them to the inflamed part, stooping over it at the same time, and either whispering a spell, or having a little confidential chat with some imaginary demon located in the calf of my leg. My limb was now swathed in leafy bandages, and grateful to Providence for the cessation of hostilities, I was suffered to rest.

Mehevi shortly after rose to depart; but before he went he spoke authoritatively to one of the natives, whom he addressed as Kory-Kory; and from the little I could understand of what took place, pointed him out to me as a man whose peculiar business thenceforth would be to attend upon my person. I am not certain that I comprehended as much as this at the time, but the subsequent conduct of my trusty body-servant fully assured me that such must have been the case.

I could not but be amused at the manner in which the chief addressed me upon this occasion, talking to me for at least fifteen or twenty minutes as calmly as if I could understand every word that he said. I remarked this peculiarity very often afterward in many other of the islanders.

Mehevi having now departed, and the family physician having likewise made his exit, we were left about sunset with the ten or twelve natives, who by this time I had ascertained composed the household of which Toby and I were members. As the dwelling to which we had been first introduced was the place of my permanent abode while I remained in the valley, and as I was necessarily placed upon the most intimate footing with its occupants, I may as well here enter into a little description of it and its inhabitants. This description will apply also to nearly all the other dwelling-places in the vale, and will furnish some idea of the generality of the natives.

Near one side of the valley, and about midway up the ascent of a rather abrupt rise of ground waving with the richest verdure, a number of large stones were laid in successive courses, to the height of nearly eight feet, and disposed in such a manner that their level surface corresponded in shape with the habitation which was perched upon it. A narrow space, however, was reserved in front of the dwelling, upon the summit of this pile of stones (called by the natives a 'pi-pi'), which, being enclosed by a little picket of canes, gave it somewhat the appearance of a verandah. The frame of the house was constructed of large bamboos planted uprightly, and secured together at intervals by transverse stalks of the light wood of the habiscus, lashed with thongs of bark. The rear of the tenement—built up with successive ranges of cocoa-nut boughs bound one upon another, with their leaflets cunningly woven together—inclined a little from the vertical, and extended from the extreme edge of the 'pi-pi' to about twenty feet from its surface; whence the shelving roof—thatched with the long tapering leaves of the palmetto—sloped steeply off to within about five feet of the floor; leaving the eaves drooping with tassel-like appendages over the front of the habitation. This was constructed of light and elegant canes, in a kind of open screen-work, tastefully adorned with bindings of variegated sinnate, which served to hold together its various parts. The sides of the house were similarly built; thus presenting three-quarters for the circulation of the air, while the whole was impervious to the rain.

In length this picturesque building was perhaps twelve yards, while in breadth it could not have exceeded as many feet. So much for the exterior; which, with its wire-

like reed-twisted sides, not a little reminded me of an immense aviary.

Stooping a little, you passed through a narrow aperture in its front; and facing you, on entering, lay two long, perfectly straight, and well-polished trunks of the cocoa-nut tree, extending the full length of the dwelling; one of them placed closely against the rear, and the other lying parallel with it some two yards distant, the interval between them being spread with a multitude of gaily-worked mats, nearly all of a different pattern. This space formed the common couch and lounging-place of the natives, answering the purpose of a divan in Oriental countries. Here would they slumber through the hours of the night, and recline luxuriously during the greater part of the day. The remainder of the floor presented only the cool shining surfaces of the large stones of which the 'pi-pi' was composed.

From the ridge-pole of the house hung suspended a number of large packages enveloped in coarse tappa; some of which contained festival dresses, and various other matters of the wardrobe, held in high estimation. These were easily accessible by means of a line, which, passing over the ridge-pole, had one end attached to a bundle, while with the other, which led to the side of the dwelling and was there secured, the package could be lowered or elevated at pleasure.

Against the farther wall of the house were arranged in tasteful figures a variety of spears and javelins, and other implements of savage warfare. Outside of the habitation, and built upon the piazza-like area in its front, was a little shed used as a sort of larder or pantry, and in which were stored various articles of domestic use and convenience. A few yards from the 'pi-pi' was a large shed built of cocoa-nut boughs, where the process of preparing the poee-poee was carried on, and all culinary operations attended to.

Thus much for the house, and its appurtenances; and it will be readily acknowledged that a more commodious and appropriate dwelling for the climate and the people could not possibly be devised. It was cool, free to admit the air, scrupulously clean, and elevated above the dampness and impurities of the ground.

But now to sketch the inmates; and here I claim for my tried servitor and faithful valet Kory-Kory the precedence of a first description. As his character will be gradually unfolded in the course of my narrative, I shall for the present content myself with delineating his personal appearance. Kory-Kory, though the most devoted and best-natured serving-man in the world, was, alas! a hideous object to look upon. He was some twenty-five years of age, and about six feet in height, robust and well made, and of the most extraordinary aspect. His head was carefully shaven, with the exception of two circular spots, about the size of a dollar, near the top of the cranium, where the hair, permitted to grow of an amazing length, was twisted up in two prominent knots, that gave him the appearance of being decorated with a pair of horns. His beard, plucked out by the root from every other part of his face, was suffered to droop in hairy pendants, two of which garnished his upper lip, and an equal number hung from the extremity of his chin.

Kory-Kory, with the view of improving the handiwork of nature, and perhaps prompted by a desire to add to the engaging expression of his countenance, had seen fit to embellish his face with three broad longitudinal stripes of tattooing, which, like those country roads that go straight forward in defiance of all obstacles, crossed his nasal organ, descended into the hollow of his eyes, and even skirted the borders of his mouth. Each completely spanned his physiognomy; one extending in a line with his eyes, another crossing the face in the vicinity of the nose, and the third sweeping along his lips from ear to ear. His countenance thus triply hooped, as it were, with tattooing, always reminded me of those unhappy wretches whom I have sometimes observed gazing out sentimentally from behind the grated bars of a prison window; whilst the entire body of my savage valet, covered all over with representations of birds and fishes, and a variety of most unaccountable-looking creatures, suggested to me the idea of a pictorial museum of natural history, or an illustrated copy of Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*.

But it seems really heartless in me to write thus of the poor islander, when I owe

perhaps to his unremitting attentions the very existence I now enjoy. Kory-Kory, I mean thee no harm in what I say in regard to thy outward adornings; but they were a little curious to my unaccustomed sight, and therefore I dilate upon them. But to underrate or forget thy faithful services is something I could never be guilty of, even in the giddiest moment of my life.

The father of my attached follower was a native of gigantic frame, and had once possessed prodigious physical powers; but the lofty form was now yielding to the inroads of time, though the hand of disease seemed never to have been laid upon the aged warrior. Marheyo—for such was his name—appeared to have retired from all active participation in the affairs of the valley, seldom or never accompanying the natives in their various expeditions; and employing the greater part of his time in throwing up a little shed just outside the house, upon which he was engaged to my certain knowledge for four months, without appearing to make any sensible advance. I suppose the old gentleman was in his dotage, for he manifested in various ways the characteristics which mark this particular stage of life.

I remember in particular his having a choice pair of ear-ornaments, fabricated from the teeth of some sea-monster. These he would alternately wear and take off at least fifty times in the course of the day, going and coming from his little hut on each occasion with all the tranquillity imaginable. Sometimes slipping them through the slits in his ears, he would seize his spear—which in length and slightness resembled a fishing pole—and go stalking beneath the shadows of the neighbouring groves, as if about to give a hostile meeting to some cannibal knight. But he would soon return again, and hiding his weapon under the projecting eaves of the house, and rolling his clumsy trinkets carefully in a piece of tappa, would resume his more pacific operations as quietly as if he had never interrupted them.

But despite his eccentricities, Marheyo was a most paternal and warm-hearted old fellow, and in this particular not a little resembled his son Kory-Kory. The mother of the latter was the mistress of the family, and a notable housewife, and a most industrious old lady she was. If she did not understand the art of making jellies, jams, custards, tea-cakes, and such like trashy affairs, she was profoundly skilled in the mysteries of preparing 'amar,' 'poee-poee,' and 'kokoo,' with other substantial matters. She was a genuine busybody; bustling about the house like a country landlady at an unexpected arrival; forever giving the young girls tasks to perform, which the little hussies as often neglected; poking into every corner, and rummaging over bundles of old tappa, or making a prodigious clatter among the calabashes. Sometimes she might have been seen squatting upon her haunches in front of a huge wooden basin, and kneading poee-poee with terrific vehemence, dashing the stone pestle about as if she would shiver the vessel into fragments: on other occasions, galloping about the valley in search of a particular kind of leaf, used in some of her recondite operations, and returning home, toiling and sweating, with a bundle of it, under which most women would have sunk.

To tell the truth, Kory-Kory's mother was the only industrious person in all the valley of Typee; and she could not have employed herself more actively had she been left an exceedingly muscular and destitute widow, with an inordinate supply of young children, in the bleakest part of the civilised world. There was not the slightest necessity for the greater portion of the labour performed by the old lady: but she seemed to work from some irresistible impulse; her limbs continually swaying to and fro, as if there were some indefatigable engine concealed within her body which kept her in perpetual motion.

Never suppose that she was a termagant or a shrew for all this; she had the kindliest heart in the world, and acted toward me in particular in a truly maternal manner, occasionally putting some little morsel of choice food into my hand, some outlandish kind of savage sweetmeat or pastry, like a doting mother petting a sickly urchin with tarts and sugar-plums. Warm indeed are my remembrances of the dear, good, affectionate old Tinor!

Besides the individuals I have mentioned, there belonged to the household three young men, dissipated, good-for-

nothing, roystering blades of savages, who were either employed in prosecuting love affairs with the maidens of the tribe, or grew boozy on 'arva' and tobacco in the company of congenial spirits, the scapegraces of the valley.

Among the permanent inmates of the house were likewise several lovely damsels, who instead of thrumming pianos and reading novels, like more enlightened young ladies, substituted for these employments the manufacture of a fine species of tappa; but for the greater portion of the time were skipping from house to house, gadding and gossiping with their acquaintances.

From the rest of these, however, I must except the beauteous nymph Fayaway, who was my peculiar favourite. Her free pliant figure was the very perfection of female grace and beauty. Her complexion was a rich and mantling olive, and when watching the glow upon her cheeks I could almost swear that beneath the transparent medium there lurked the blushes of a faint vermilion. The face of this girl was a rounded oval, and each feature as perfectly formed as the heart or imagination of a man could desire. Her full lips, when parted with a smile, disclosed teeth of a dazzling whiteness; and when her rosy mouth opened with a burst of merriment, they looked like the milk-white seeds of the 'arta,' a fruit of the valley, which, when cleft in twain, shows them reposing in rows on either side, imbedded in the rich and juicy pulp. Her hair of the deepest brown, parted irregularly in the middle, flowed in natural ringlets over her shoulders, and whenever she chanced to stoop, fell over and hid from view her lovely bosom. Gazing into the depths of her strange blue eyes, when she was in a contemplative mood, they seemed most placid yet unfathomable; but when illuminated by some lively emotion, they beamed upon the beholder like stars. The hands of Fayaway were as soft and delicate as those of any countess; for an entire exemption from rude labour marks the girlhood and even prime of a Typee woman's life. Her feet, though wholly exposed, were as diminutive and fairly shaped as those which peep from beneath the skirts of a Lima lady's dress. The skin of this young creature, from continual ablutions and the use of mollifying ointments, was inconceivably smooth and soft.

I may succeed, perhaps, in particularising some of the individual features of Fayaway's beauty, but that general loveliness of appearance which they all contributed to produce I will not attempt to describe. The easy unstudied graces of a child of nature like this, breathing from infancy an atmosphere of perpetual summer, and nurtured by the simple fruits of the earth; enjoying a perfect freedom from care and anxiety, and removed effectually from all injurious tendencies, strike the eye in a manner which cannot be portrayed. This picture is no fancy sketch; it is drawn from the most vivid recollections of the person delineated.

Were I asked if the beauteous form of Fayaway was altogether free from the hideous blemish of tattooing, I should be constrained to answer that it was not. But the practitioners of the barbarous art, so remorseless in their inflictions upon the brawny limbs of the warriors of the tribe, seem to be conscious that it needs not the resources of their profession to augment the charms of the maidens of the vale.

The females are very little embellished in this way, and Fayaway, with all the other young girls of her age, were even less so than those of their sex more advanced in years. The reason of this peculiarity will be alluded to hereafter. All the tattooing that the nymph in question exhibited upon her person may be easily described. Three minute dots, no bigger than pinheads, decorated either lip, and at a little distance were not at all discernible. Just upon the fall of the shoulder were drawn two parallel lines half an inch apart, and perhaps three inches in length, the interval being filled with delicately executed figures. These narrow bands of tattooing, thus placed, always reminded me of those stripes of gold lace worn by officers in undress, and which were in lieu of epaulettes to denote their rank.

Thus much was Fayaway tattooed. The audacious hand which had gone so far in its desecrating work stopping short, apparently wanting the heart to proceed.

But I have omitted to describe the dress worn by this nymph of the valley.

Fayaway—I must avow the fact—for the

most part clung to the primitive and summer garb of Eden. But how becoming the costume! It showed her fine figure to the best possible advantage; and nothing could have been better adapted to her peculiar style of beauty. On ordinary occasions she was habited precisely as I have described the two youthful savages whom we had met on first entering the valley. At other times, when rambling among the groves, or visiting at the houses of her acquaintances, she wore a tunic of white tappa, reaching from her waist to a little below the knees; and when exposed for any length of time to the sun, she invariably protected herself from its rays by a floating mantle of the same material, loosely gathered about the person. Her gala dress will be described hereafter.

As the beauties of our own land delight in bedecking themselves with fanciful articles of jewellery, suspending them from their ears, hanging them about their necks, and clasping them around their wrists; so Fayaway and her companions were in the habit of ornamenting themselves with similar appendages.

Flora was their jeweller. Sometimes they wore necklaces of small carnation flowers, strung like rubies upon a fibre of tappa, or displayed in their ears a single white bud, the stem thrust backward through the aperture, and showing in front the delicate petals folded together in a beautiful sphere, and looking like a drop of the purest pearl. Chaplets, too, resembling in their arrangement the strawberry coronal worn by an English peeress, and composed of intertwined leaves and blossoms, often crowned their temples; and bracelets and anklets of the same tasteful pattern were frequently to be seen. Indeed, the maidens of the island were passionately fond of flowers, and never wearied of decorating their persons with them; a lovely trait in their character, and one that ere long will be more fully alluded to.

Though in my eyes, at least, Fayaway was indisputably the loveliest female I saw in Typee, yet the description I have given of her will in some measure apply to nearly all the youthful portion of her sex in the valley. Judge ye then, reader, what beautiful creatures they must have been.

1845 1846

FROM WHITE-JACKET

CADWALLADER CUTICLE, M.D.[1]

I

A Man-of-War's Man Shot At

THERE was a seaman belonging to the foretop—a messmate, though not a topmate of mine, and no favourite of the captain's—who, for certain venial transgressions, had been prohibited from going ashore on liberty when the ship's company went. Enraged at the deprivation—for he had not touched earth in upward of a year—he, some nights after, lowered himself overboard, with the view of gaining a canoe, attached by a rope to a Dutch galliot some cables'-length distant. In this canoe he proposed paddling himself ashore. Not being a very expert swimmer, the commotion he made in the water attracted the ear of the sentry on that side of the ship, who, turning about in his walk, perceived the faint white spot where the fugitive was swimming in the frigate's shadow. He hailed it; but no reply.

'Give the word, or I fire!'

Not a word was heard.

The next instant there was a red flash, and, before it had completely ceased illuminating the night, the white spot was changed into crimson. Some of the officers, returning from a party at the Beach of the Flamingoes, happened to be drawing near the ship in one of her cutters. They saw the flash, and the bounding body it revealed. In a moment the topman was dragged into the boat, a handkerchief was used for a tourniquet, and the wounded fugitive was soon on board the frigate, when, the surgeon being called, the necessary attentions were rendered.

Now, it appeared, that at the moment the sentry fired, the topman—in order to elude discovery, by manifesting the completest quietude—was floating on the water, straight and horizontal, as if reposing on a bed. As he was not far from the ship at the time, and the sentry was considerably elevated above him—pacing his platform, on a level with the upper part of the hammock-nettings—the ball struck with great force, with a downward obliquity, entering the

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *White-Jacket*, ibid.,VI,307–33.

right thigh just above the knee, and, penetrating some inches, glanced upward along the bone, burying itself somewhere, so that it could not be felt by outward manipulation. There was no dusky discoloration to mark its internal track, as in the case when a partly spent ball—obliquely hitting—after entering the skin, courses on, just beneath the surface, without penetrating further. Nor was there any mark on the opposite part of the thigh to denote its place, as when a ball forces itself straight through a limb, and lodges, perhaps, close to the skin on the other side. Nothing was visible but a small, ragged puncture, bluish about the edges, as if the rough point of a tenpenny nail had been forced into the flesh, and withdrawn. It seemed almost impossible, that through so small an aperture, a musket bullet could have penetrated.

The extreme misery and general prostration of the man, caused by the great effusion of blood—though, strange to say, at first he said he felt no pain from the wound itself—induced the surgeon, very reluctantly, to forgo an immediate search for the ball, to extract it, as that would have involved the dilating of the wound by the knife; an operation which, at that juncture, would have been almost certainly attended with fatal results. A day or two, therefore, was permitted to pass, while simple dressings were applied.

The surgeons of the other American ships of war in harbour occasionally visited the *Neversink*, to examine the patient, and incidentally to listen to the expositions of our own surgeon, their senior in rank. But Cadwallader Cuticle, who, as yet, has been but incidentally alluded to, now deserves a chapter by himself.

2

The Surgeon of the Fleet

CADWALLADER CUTICLE, M.D., and Honorary Member of the most distinguished Colleges of Surgeons both in Europe and America, was our Surgeon of the Fleet. Nor was he at all blind to the dignity of his position; to which, indeed, he was rendered peculiarly competent, if the reputation he enjoyed was deserved. He had the name of being the foremost surgeon in the Navy, a gentleman of remarkable science and a veteran practitioner.

He was a small, withered man, nearly, perhaps quite, sixty years of age. His chest was shallow, his shoulders bent, his pantaloons hung round skeleton legs, and his face was singularly attenuated. In truth, the corporeal vitality of this man seemed, in a good degree, to have died out of him. He walked abroad, a curious patchwork of life and death, with a wig, one glass eye, and a set of false teeth, while his voice was husky and thick; but his mind seemed undebilitated as in youth; it shone out of his remaining eye with basilisk brilliancy.

Like most old physicians and surgeons who have seen much service, and have been promoted to high professional place for their scientific attainments, this Cuticle was an enthusiast in his calling. In private, he had once been heard to say, confidentially, that he would rather cut off a man's arm than dismember the wing of the most delicate pheasant. In particular, the department of morbid anatomy was his peculiar love; and in his state-room below he had a most unsightly collection of Parisian casts, in plaster and wax, representing all imaginable malformations of the human members, both organic and induced by disease. Chief among these was a cast, often to be met with in the Anatomical Museums of Europe, and no doubt an unexaggerated copy of a genuine original; it was the head of an elderly woman, with an aspect singularly gentle and meek, but at the same time wonderfully expressive of a gnawing sorrow, never to be relieved. You would almost have thought it the face of some abbess, for some unspeakable crime voluntarily sequestered from human society, and leading a life of agonised penitence without hope, so marvellously sad and tearfully pitiable was this head. But when you first beheld it, no such emotions ever crossed your mind. All your eyes and all your horrified soul were fast fascinated and frozen by the sight of a hideous, crumpled horn, like that of a ram, downward growing out from the forehead, and partly shadowing the face; but as you gazed, the freezing fascination of its horribleness gradually waned, and then your whole heart burst with sorrow, as you contemplated those aged features, ashy pale and wan. The horn

seemed the mark of a curse for some mysterious sin, conceived and committed before the spirit had entered the flesh. Yet that sin seemed something imposed, and not voluntarily sought; some sin growing out of the heartless necessities of the predestination of things; some sin under which the sinner sank in sinless woe.

But no pang of pain, not the slightest touch of concern, ever crossed the bosom of Cuticle when he looked on this cast. It was immovably fixed to a bracket, against the partition of his state-room, so that it was the first object that greeted his eyes when he opened them from his nightly sleep. Nor was it to hide the face, that upon retiring he always hung his Navy cap upon the upward curling extremity of the horn, for that obscured it but little.

The surgeon's cot-boy, the lad who made up his swinging bed and took care of his room, often told us of the horror he sometimes felt when he would find himself alone in his master's retreat. At times he was seized with the idea that Cuticle was a preternatural being; and once entering his room in the middle watch of the night, he started at finding it enveloped in a thick, bluish vapour, and stifling with the odours of brimstone. Upon hearing a low groan from the smoke, with a wild cry he darted from the place, and, rousing the occupants of the neighbouring state-rooms, it was found that the vapour proceeded from smouldering bunches of Lucifer matches, which had become ignited through the carelessness of the surgeon. Cuticle, almost dead, was dragged from the suffocating atmosphere, and it was several days ere he completely recovered from its effects. This accident took place immediately over the powder magazine; but as Cuticle, during his sickness, paid dearly enough for transgressing the laws prohibiting combustibles in the gun-room, the captain contented himself with privately remonstrating with him.

Well knowing the enthusiasm of the surgeon for all specimens of morbid anatomy, some of the ward-room officers used to play upon his credulity, though, in every case, Cuticle was not long in discovering their deceptions. Once, when they had some sago pudding for dinner, and Cuticle chanced to be ashore, they made up a neat parcel of this bluish-white, firm, jelly-like preparation, and placing it in a tin box, carefully sealed with wax, they deposited it on the gun-room table, with a note, purporting to come from an eminent physician in Rio, connected with the Grand National Museum on the Praca d'Acclamacao, begging leave to present to the scientific Senhor Cuticle—with the donor's compliments—an uncommonly fine specimen of a cancer.

Descending to the ward-room, Cuticle spied the note, and no sooner read it, than, clutching the case, he opened it, and exclaimed, 'Beautiful! splendid! I have never seen a finer specimen of this most interesting disease.'

'What have you there, Surgeon Cuticle?' said a lieutenant, advancing.

'Why, sir, look at it; did you ever see anything more exquisite?'

'Very exquisite, indeed; let me have a bit of it, will you, Cuticle?'

'Let you have a bit of it!' shrieked the surgeon, starting back. 'Let you have one of my limbs! I wouldn't mar so large a specimen for a hundred dollars; but what can you want of it? You are not making collections!'

'I'm fond of the article,' said the lieutenant; 'it's a fine cold relish to bacon or ham. You know, I was in New Zealand last cruise, Cuticle, and got into sad dissipation there among the cannibals; come, let's have a bit, if it's only a mouthful.'

'Why, you infernal Feejee!' shouted Cuticle, eyeing the other with a confounded expression; 'you don't really mean to eat a piece of this cancer?'

'Hand it to me, and see whether I will not,' was the reply.

'In God's name, take it!' cried the surgeon, putting the case into his hands, and then standing with his own uplifted.

'Steward!' cried the lieutenant, 'the castor —quick! I always use plenty of pepper with this dish, surgeon; it's oystery. Ah! this is really delicious,' he added, smacking his lips over a mouthful. 'Try it now, surgeon, and you'll never keep such a fine dish as this, lying uneaten on your hands, as a mere scientific curiosity.'

Cuticle's whole countenance changed; and, slowly walking up to the table, he put his nose close to the tin case, then touched its contents with his finger and tasted it. Enough. Buttoning up his coat, in all the

tremblings of an old man's rage, he burst from the ward-room, and, calling for a boat, was not seen again for twenty-four hours.

But though, like all other mortals, Cuticle was subject at times to these fits of passion —at least under outrageous provocation— nothing could exceed his coolness when actually employed in his imminent vocation. Surrounded by moans and shrieks, by features distorted with anguish inflicted by himself, he yet maintained a countenance almost supernaturally calm; and unless the intense interest of the operation flushed his wan face with a momentary tinge of professional enthusiasm, he toiled away, untouched by the keenest misery coming under a fleet-surgeon's eye. Indeed, long habituation to the dissecting-room and the amputation-table had made him seemingly impervious to the ordinary emotions of humanity. Yet you could not say that Cuticle was essentially a cruel-hearted man. His apparent heartlessness must have been of a purely scientific origin. It is not to be imagined even that Cuticle would have harmed a fly, unless he could procure a microscope powerful enough to assist him in experimenting on the minute vitals of the creature.

But notwithstanding his marvellous indifference to the sufferings of his patients, and spite even of his enthusiasm in his vocation—not cooled by frosting old age itself—Cuticle, on some occasions, would affect a certain disrelish of his profession, and declaim against the necessity that forced a man of his humanity to perform a surgical operation. Especially was it apt to be thus with him, when the case was one of more than ordinary interest. In discussing it, previous to setting about it, he would veil his eagerness under an aspect of great circumspection, curiously marred, however, by continual sallies of unsuppressible impatience. But the knife once in his hand, the compassionless surgeon himself, undisguised, stood before you. Such was Cadwallader Cuticle, our Surgeon of the Fleet.

3

A Consultation of Man-of-War Surgeons

IT seems customary for the Surgeon of the Fleet, when any important operation in his department is on the anvil, and there is nothing to absorb professional attention from it, to invite his brother surgeons, if at hand at the time, to a ceremonious consultation upon it. And this, in courtesy, his brother surgeons expect.

In pursuance of this custom, then, the surgeons of the neighbouring American ships of war were requested to visit the *Neversink* in a body, to advise concerning the case of the topman, whose situation had now become critical. They assembled on the half-deck, and were soon joined by their respected senior, Cuticle. In a body they bowed as he approached, and accosted him with deferential regard.

'Gentlemen,' said Cuticle, unostentatiously seating himself on a camp-stool, handed him by his cot-boy, 'we have here an extremely interesting case. You have all seen the patient, I believe. At first I had hopes that I should have been able to cut down to the ball, and remove it; but the state of the patient forbade. Since then, the inflammation and sloughing of the part has been attended with a copious suppuration, great loss of substance, extreme debility and emaciation. From this, I am convinced that the ball has shattered and deadened the bone, and now lies impacted in the medullary canal. In fact, there can be no doubt that the wound is incurable, and that amputation is the only resource. But, gentlemen, I find myself placed in a very delicate predicament. I assure you I feel no professional anxiety to perform the operation. I desire your advice, and if you will now again visit the patient with me, we can then return here, and decide what is best to be done. Once more let me say, that I feel no personal anxiety whatever to use the knife.'

The assembled surgeons listened to this address with the most serious attention, and, in accordance with their superior's desire, now descended to the sick-bay, where the patient was languishing. The examination concluded, they returned to the half-deck, and the consultation was renewed.

'Gentlemen,' began Cuticle, again seating himself, 'you have now just inspected the limb; you have seen that there is no resource but amputation; and now, gentlemen, what do you say? Surgeon Ban-

dage, of the *Mohawk*, will you express your opinion?'

'The wound is a very serious one,' said Bandage—a corpulent man, with a high German forehead—shaking his head solemnly.

'Can anything save him but amputation?' demanded Cuticle.

'His constitutional debility is extreme,' observed Bandage, 'but I have seen more dangerous cases.'

'Surgeon Wedge, of the *Malay*,' said Cuticle, in a pet, 'be pleased to give *your* opinion; and let it be definitive, I entreat': this was said with a severe glance toward Bandage.

'If I thought,' began Wedge, a very spare, tall man, elevating himself still higher on his toes, 'that the ball had shattered and divided the whole *femur*, including the *Greater* and *Lesser Trochanter*, the *Linear aspera*, the *Digital fossa*, and the *Intertrochanteric*, I should certainly be in favour of amputation; but that, sir, permit me to observe, is not my opinion.'

'Surgeon Sawyer, of the *Buccaneer*,' said Cuticle, drawing in his thin lower lip with vexation, and turning to a round-faced, florid, frank, sensible-looking man, whose uniform coat very handsomely fitted him, and was adorned with an unusual quantity of gold lace; 'Surgeon Sawyer, of the *Buccaneer*, let us now hear *your* opinion, if you please. Is not amputation the only resource, sir?'

'Excuse me,' said Sawyer, 'I am decidedly opposed to it; for if hitherto the patient has not been strong enough to undergo the extraction of the ball, I do not see how he can be expected to endure a far more severe operation. As there is no immediate danger of mortification, and you say the ball cannot be reached without making large incisions, I should support him, I think, for the present, with tonics, and gentle antiphlogistics, locally applied. On no account would I proceed to amputation until further symptoms are exhibited.'

'Surgeon Patella, of the *Algerine*,' said Cuticle, in an ill-suppressed passion, abruptly turning round on the person addressed, 'will *you* have the kindness to say whether *you* do not think that amputation is the only resource?'

Now Patella was the youngest of the company, a modest man, filled with a profound reverence for the science of Cuticle, and desirous of gaining his good opinion, yet not wishing to commit himself altogether by a decided reply, though, like Surgeon Sawyer, in his own mind he might have been clearly against the operation.

'What you have remarked, Mr. Surgeon of the Fleet,' said Patella, respectfully hemming, 'concerning the dangerous condition of the limb, seems obvious enough; amputation would certainly be a cure to the wound; but then, as, notwithstanding his present debility, the patient seems to have a strong constitution, he might rally as it is, and by your scientific treatment, Mr. Surgeon of the Fleet'—bowing—'be entirely made whole, without risking an amputation. Still, it is a very critical case, and amputation may be indispensable; and, if it *is* to be performed, there ought to be no delay whatever. That is my view of the case, Mr. Surgeon of the Fleet.'

'Surgeon Patella, then, gentlemen,' said Cuticle, turning round triumphantly, 'is clearly of opinion that amputation should be immediately performed. For my own part—individually, I mean, and without respect to the patient—I am sorry to have it so decided. But this settles the question, gentlemen—in my own mind, however, it was settled before. At ten o'clock to-morrow morning the operation will be performed. I shall be happy to see you all on the occasion, and also your juniors' (alluding to the absent *Assistant Surgeons*). 'Good morning, gentlemen; at ten o'clock, remember.'

And Cuticle retreated to the ward-room.

4

The Operation

NEXT morning, at the appointed hour, the surgeons arrived in a body. They were accompanied by their juniors, young men ranging in age from nineteen years to thirty. Like the senior surgeons, these young gentlemen were arrayed in their blue navy uniforms, displaying a profusion of bright buttons, and several broad bars of gold lace about the wristbands. As in honour of the occasion, they had put on their best coats; they looked exceedingly brilliant.

The whole party immediately descended to the half-deck, where preparations had

been made for the operation. A large garrison-ensign was stretched across the ship by the mainmast, so as completely to screen the space behind. This space included the whole extent aft to the bulkhead of the commodore's cabin, at the door of which the marine orderly paced, in plain sight, cutlass in hand.

Upon two gun-carriages, dragged amidships, the death-board (used for burials at sea) was horizontally placed, covered with an old royal-stun'-sail. Upon this occasion, to do duty as an amputation-table, it was widened by an additional plank. Two match-tubs, near by, placed one upon another, at either end supported another plank, distinct from the table, whereon was exhibited an array of saws and knives of various and peculiar shapes and sizes; also, a sort of steel, something like the dinner-table implement, together with long needles, crooked at the end for taking up the arteries, and large darning needles, thread, and bees-wax, for sewing up a wound.

At the end nearest the larger table was a tin basin of water, surrounded by small sponges, placed at mathematical intervals. From the long horizontal pole of a great-gun rammer—fixed in its usual place overhead—hung a number of towels, with 'U.S.' marked in the corners.

All these arrangements had been made by the 'surgeon's steward,' a person whose important functions in a man-of-war will, in a future chapter, be entered upon at large. Upon the present occasion, he was bustling about, adjusting and readjusting the knives, needles, and carver, like an over-conscientious butler fidgeting over a dinner-table just before the convivialists enter.

But by far the most striking object to be seen behind the ensign was a human skeleton, whose every joint articulated with wires. By a rivet at the apex of the skull, it hung dangling from a hammock hook fixed in a beam above. Why this object was here will presently be seen; but why it was placed immediately at the foot of the amputation-table only Surgeon Cuticle can tell.

While the final preparations were being made, Cuticle stood conversing with the assembled surgeons and assistant surgeons, his invited guests.

'Gentlemen,' said he, taking up one of the glittering knives, and artistically drawing the steel across it; 'Gentlemen, though these scenes are very unpleasant, and in some moods, I may say, repulsive to me—yet how much better for our patient to have the contusions and lacerations of his present wound—with all its dangerous symptoms—converted into a clean incision, free from these objections, and occasioning so much less subsequent anxiety to himself and the surgeon! Yes,' he added, tenderly feeling the edge of his knife, 'amputation is our only resource. Is it not so, Surgeon Patella?' turning toward that gentleman, as if relying upon some sort of an assent, however clogged with conditions.

'Certainly,' said Patella, 'amputation is your only resource, Mr. Surgeon of the Fleet; that is, I mean, if you are fully persuaded of its necessity.'

The other surgeons said nothing, maintaining a somewhat reserved air, as if conscious that they had no positive authority in the case, whatever might be their own private opinions; but they seemed willing to behold, and, if called upon, to assist at the operation, since it could not now be averted.

The young men, their assistants, looked very eager, and cast frequent glances of awe upon so distinguished a practitioner as the venerable Cuticle.

'They say he can drop a leg in one minute and ten seconds from the moment the knife touches it,' whispered one of them to another.

'We shall see,' was the reply; and the speaker clapped his hand to his fob, to see if his watch would be forthcoming when wanted.

'Are you all ready here?' demanded Cuticle, now advancing to his steward; 'have not those fellows got through yet?' pointing to three men of the carpenter's gang, who were placing bits of wood under the gun-carriages supporting the central table.

'They are just through, sir,' respectfully answered the steward, touching his hand to his forehead, as if there were a cap-front there.

'Bring up the patient, then,' said Cuticle.

'Young gentlemen,' he added, turning to the row of assistant surgeons, 'seeing you

here reminds me of the classes of students once under my instruction at the Philadelphia College of Physicians and Surgeons. Ah, those were happy days!' he sighed, applying the extreme corner of his handkerchief to his glass eye. 'Excuse an old man's emotions, young gentlemen; but when I think of the numerous rare cases that then came under my treatment, I cannot but give way to my feelings. The town, the city, the metropolis, young gentlemen, is the place for you students; at least in these dull times of peace, when the Army and Navy furnish no inducements for a youth ambitious of rising in our honourable profession. Take an old man's advice, and if the war now threatening between the States and Mexico should break out, exchange your Navy commissions for commissions in the Army. From having no military marine herself, Mexico has always been backward in furnishing subjects for the amputation-tables of foreign navies. The cause of science has languished in her hands. The Army, young gentlemen, is your best school; depend upon it. You will hardly believe it, Surgeon Bandage,' turning to that gentleman, 'but this is my first important case of surgery in a nearly three years' cruise. I have been almost wholly confined in this ship to doctor's practice—prescribing for fevers and fluxes. True, the other day a man fell from the mizen-top-sail-yard; but that was merely an aggravated case of dislocations, and bones splintered and broken. No one, sir, could have made an amputation of it, without severely contusing his conscience. And mine—I may say it, gentlemen, without ostentation—is peculiarly susceptible.'

And so saying, the knife and carver touchingly dropped to his sides, and he stood for a moment fixed in a tender revery. But a commotion being heard beyond the curtain, he started, and, briskly crossing and recrossing the knife and carver, exclaimed, 'Ah, here comes our patient; surgeons, this side of the table, if you please; young gentlemen, a little further off, I beg. Steward, take off my coat—so; my neckerchief now; I must be perfectly unencumbered, Surgeon Patella, or I can do nothing whatever.'

These articles being removed, he snatched off his wig, placing it on the gun-deck capstan; then took out his set of false teeth, and placed it by the side of the wig; and, lastly, putting his forefinger to the inner angle of his blind eye, spirted out the glass optic with professional dexterity, and deposited that, also, next to the wig and false teeth.

Thus divested of nearly all inorganic appurtenances, what was left of the surgeon slightly shook itself, to see whether anything more could be spared to advantage.

'Carpenter's mates,' he now cried, 'will you never get through with that job?'

'Almost through, sir—just through,' they replied, staring round in search of the strange, unearthly voice that addressed them; for the absence of his teeth had not at all improved the conversational tones of the Surgeon of the Fleet.

With natural curiosity these men had purposely been lingering, to see all they could; but now, having no further excuse, they snatched up their hammers and chisels, and—like the stage-builders decamping from a public meeting at the eleventh hour, after just completing the rostrum in time for the first speaker—the carpenter's gang withdrew.

The broad ensign now lifted, revealing a glimpse of the crowd of man-of-war's men outside, and the patient, borne in the arms of two of his messmates, entered the place. He was much emaciated, weak as an infant, and every limb visibly trembled, or rather jarred, like the head of a man with the palsy. As if an organic and involuntary apprehension of death had seized the wounded leg, its nervous motions were so violent that one of the messmates was obliged to keep his hand upon it.

The topman was immediately stretched upon the table, the attendants steadying his limbs, when, slowly opening his eyes, he glanced about at the glittering knives and saws, the towels and sponges, the armed sentry at the commodore's cabin-door, the row of eager-eyed students, the meagre death's-head of a Cuticle, now with his shirt-sleeves rolled up upon his withered arms and knife in hand, and, finally, his eye settled in horror upon the skeleton, slowly vibrating and jingling before him, with the slow, slight roll of the frigate in the water.

'I would advise perfect repose of your every limb, my man,' said Cuticle, address-

ing him; 'the precision of an operation is often impaired by the inconsiderate restlessness of the patient. But if you consider, my good fellow,' he added, in a patronising and almost sympathetic tone, and slightly pressing his hand on the limb, 'if you consider how much better it is to live with three limbs than to die with four, and especially if you but knew to what torments both sailors and soldiers were subjected before the time of Celsus, owing to the lamentable ignorance of surgery then prevailing, you would certainly thank God from the bottom of your heart that *your* operation has been postponed to the period of this enlightened age, blessed with a Bell, a Brodie, and a Lally. My man, before Celsus's time, such was the general ignorance of our noble science, that, in order to prevent the excessive effusion of blood, it was deemed indispensable to operate with a red-hot knife'—making a professional movement toward the thigh—'and pour scalding oil upon the parts'—elevating his elbow, as if with a teapot in his hand—'still further to sear them, after amputation had been performed.'

'He is fainting!' said one of his messmates; 'quick! some water!' The steward immediately hurried to the topman with the basin.

Cuticle took the topman by the wrist, and feeling it awhile, observed, 'Don't be alarmed, men,' addressing the two messmates; 'he'll recover presently; this fainting very generally takes place.' And he stood for a moment, tranquilly eyeing the patient.

Now the Surgeon of the Fleet and the topman presented a spectacle which, to a reflecting mind, was better than a churchyard sermon on the mortality of man.

Here was a sailor, who, four days previous, had stood erect—a pillar of life—with an arm like a royal-mast, and a thigh like a windlass. But the slightest conceivable finger-touch of a bit of crooked trigger had eventuated in stretching him out, more helpless than an hour-old babe, with a blasted thigh, utterly drained of its brawn. And who was it that now stood over him like a superior being, and, as if clothed himself with the attributes of immortality, indifferently discoursed of carving up his broken flesh, and thus piecing out his abbreviated days? Who was it, that, in capacity of surgeon, seemed enacting the part of a Regenerator of life? The withered, shrunken, one-eyed, toothless, hairless Cuticle; with a trunk half dead—a *memento mori* to behold!

And while, in those soul-sinking and panic-striking premonitions of speedy death which almost invariably accompany a severe gun-shot wound, even with the most intrepid spirits; while thus drooping and dying, this once robust topman's eye was now waning in his head like a Lapland moon being eclipsed in clouds—Cuticle, who for years had still lived in his withered tabernacle of a body—Cuticle, no doubt sharing in the common self-delusion of old age—Cuticle must have felt his hold of life as secure as the grim hug of a grizzly bear. Verily, life is more awful than death; and let no man, though his live heart beat in him like a cannon—let him not hug his life to himself; for, in the predestinated necessities of things, that bounding life of his is not a whit more secure than the life of a man on his death-bed. To-day we inhale the air with expanding lungs, and life runs through us like a thousand Niles; but to-morrow we may collapse in death, and all our veins be dry as the brook Kedron in a drought.

'And now, young gentlemen,' said Cuticle, turning to the assistant surgeons, 'while the patient is coming to, permit me to describe to you the highly interesting operation I am about to perform.'

'Mr. Surgeon of the Fleet,' said Surgeon Bandage, 'if you are about to lecture, permit me to present you with your teeth; they will make your discourse more readily understood.' And so saying, Bandage, with a bow, placed the two semicircles of ivory into Cuticle's hands.

'Thank you, Surgeon Bandage,' said Cuticle, and slipped the ivory into its place.

'In the first place, now, young gentlemen, let me direct your attention to the excellent preparation before you. I have had it unpacked from its case, and set up here from my state-room, where it occupies the spare berth; and all this for your express benefit, young gentlemen. This skeleton I procured in person from the Hunterian Department of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. It is a masterpiece

of art. But we have no time to examine it now. Delicacy forbids that I should amplify at a juncture like this'—casting an almost benignant glance toward the patient, now beginning to open his eyes; 'but let me point out to you upon this thigh-bone'—disengaging it from the skeleton, with a gentle twist—'the precise place where I propose to perform the operation. *Here*, young gentlemen, *here* is the place. You perceive it is very near the point of articulation with the trunk.'

'Yes,' interposed Surgeon Wedge, rising on his toes, 'yes, young gentlemen, the point of articulation with the *acetabulum* of the *os innominatum*.'

'Where's your *Bell on Bones*, Dick?' whispered one of the assistants to the student next him. 'Wedge has been spending the whole morning over it, getting out the hard names.'

'Surgeon Wedge,' said Cuticle, looking round severely, 'we will dispense with your commentaries, if you please, at present. Now, young gentlemen, you cannot but perceive, that the point of operation being so near the trunk and the vitals, it becomes an unusually beautiful one, demanding a steady hand and a true eye; and, after all, the patient may die under my hands.'

'Quick, steward! water, water; he's fainting again!' cried the two messmates.

'Don't be alarmed for your comrade, men,' said Cuticle, turning round. 'I tell you it is not an uncommon thing for the patient to betray some emotion upon these occasions—most usually manifested by swooning; it is quite natural it should be so. But we must not delay the operation. Steward, that knife—no, the next one—there, that's it. He is coming to, I think'—feeling the topman's wrist. 'Are you all ready, sir?'

This last observation was addressed to one of the *Neversink*'s assistant surgeons, a tall, lank, cadaverous young man, arrayed in a sort of shroud of white canvas, pinned about his throat, and completely enveloping his person. He was seated on a match-tub—the skeleton swinging near his head—at the foot of the table, in readiness to grasp the limb, as when a plank is being severed by a carpenter and his apprentice.

'The sponges, steward,' said Cuticle, for the last time taking out his teeth, and drawing up his shirt-sleeve still further. Then, taking the patient by the wrist, 'Stand by, now, you messmates; keep hold of his arms; pin him down. Steward, put your hand on the artery; I shall commence as soon as his pulse begins to—*now, now*! Letting fall the wrist, feeling the thigh carefully, and bowing over it an instant, he drew the fatal knife unerringly across the flesh. As it first touched the part, the row of surgeons simultaneously dropped their eyes to the watches in their hands, while the patient lay, with eyes horribly distended, in a kind of waking trance. Not a breath was heard; but as the quivering flesh parted in a long, lingering gash, a spring of blood welled up between the living walls of the wound, and two thick streams, in opposite directions, coursed down the thigh. The sponges were instantly dipped in the purple pool; every face present was pinched to a point with suspense; the limb writhed; the man shrieked; his messmates pinioned him; while round and round the leg went the unpitying cut.

'The saw!' said Cuticle.

Instantly it was in his hand.

Full of the operation, he was about to apply it, when, looking up, and turning to the assistant surgeons, he said, 'Would any of you young gentlemen like to apply the saw? A splendid subject!'

Several volunteered; when, selecting one, Cuticle surrendered the instrument to him, saying, 'Don't be hurried, now; be steady.'

While the rest of the assistants looked upon their comrade with glances of envy, he went rather timidly to work; and Cuticle, who was earnestly regarding him, suddenly snatched the saw from his hand. 'Away, butcher! you disgrace the profession. Look at *me*!'

For a few moments the thrilling rasping sound was heard; and then the topman seemed parted in twain at the hip, as the leg slowly slid into the arms of the pale, gaunt man in the shroud, who at once made away with it, and tucked it out of sight under one of the guns.

'Surgeon Sawyer,' now said Cuticle, courteously turning to the surgeon of the *Buccaneer*, 'would you like to take up the arteries? They are quite at your service, sir.'

'Do, Sawyer; be prevailed upon,' said Surgeon Bandage.

Sawyer complied; and while, with some modesty, he was conducting the operation, Cuticle, turning to the row of assistants, said, 'Young gentlemen, we will now proceed with our illustration. Hand me that bone, steward.' And taking the thigh-bone in his still bloody hands, and holding it conspicuously before his auditors, the Surgeon of the Fleet began:—

'Young gentlemen, you will perceive that precisely at this spot—*here*—to which I previously directed your attention—at the corresponding spot precisely—the operation has been performed. About here, young gentlemen, *here*'—lifting his hand some inches from the bone—'about *here* the great artery was. But you noticed that I did not use the tourniquet; I never do. The forefinger of my steward is far better than a tourniquet, being so much more manageable, and leaving the smaller veins uncompressed. But I have been told, young gentlemen, that a certain Seignior Seigniorони, a surgeon of Seville, has recently invented an admirable substitute for the clumsy, old-fashioned tourniquet. As I understand it, it is something like a pair of *callipers*, working with a small Archimedes screw—a very clever invention, according to all accounts. For the padded points at the end of the arches'—arching his forefinger and thumb—'can be so worked as to approximate in such a way, as to—but you don't attend to me, young gentlemen,' he added, all at once starting.

Being more interested in the active proceedings of Surgeon Sawyer, who was now threading a needle to sew up the overlapping of the stump, the young gentlemen had not scrupled to turn away their attention altogether from the lecturer.

A few moments more, and the topman, in a swoon, was removed below into the sick-bay. As the curtain settled again after the patient had disappeared, Cuticle, still holding the thigh-bone of the skeleton in his ensanguined hands, proceeded with his remarks upon it; and having concluded them, added, 'Now, young gentlemen, not the least interesting consequence of this operation will be the finding of the ball, which, in case of non-amputation, might have long eluded the most careful search. That ball, young gentlemen, must have taken a most circuitous route. Nor, in cases where the direction is oblique, is this at all unusual. Indeed, the learned Henner gives us a most remarkable—I had almost said an incredible—case of a soldier's neck, where the bullet entering at the part called Adam's Apple—'

'Yes,' said Surgeon Wedge, elevating himself, 'the *pomum Adami*.'

'Entering the point called *Adam's Apple*,' continued Cuticle, severely emphasising the last two words, 'ran completely round the neck, and, emerging at the same hole it had entered, shot the next man in the ranks. It was afterward extracted, says Henner, from the second man, and pieces of the other's skin were found adhering to it. But examples of foreign substances being received into the body with a ball, young gentlemen, are frequently observed. Being attached to a United States ship at the time, I happened to be near the spot of the battle of Ayacucho, in Peru. The day after the action, I saw in the barracks of the wounded a trooper, who having been severely injured in the brain, went crazy, and, with his own holster-pistol, committed suicide in the hospital. The ball drove inward a portion of his woollen nightcap—'

'In the form of a *cul-de-sac*, doubtless,' said the undaunted Wedge.

'For once, Surgeon Wedge, you use the only term that can be employed; and let me avail myself of this opportunity to say to you, young gentlemen, that a man of true science'—expanding his shallow chest a little—'uses but few hard words, and those only when none other will answer his purpose; whereas the smatterer in science'—slightly glancing toward Wedge—'thinks that by mouthing hard words he proves that he understands hard things. Let this sink deep in your minds, young gentlemen; and, Surgeon Wedge'—with a stiff bow—'permit me to submit the reflection to yourself. Well, young gentlemen, the bullet was afterward extracted by pulling upon the external parts of the *cul-de-sac*—a simple, but exceedingly beautiful operation. There is a fine example, somewhat similar, related in Guthrie; but, of course, you must have met with it, in so well known a work as his *Treatise on Gun-shot Wounds*. When, upward of twenty years ago, I was with Lord Cochrane, then admiral of the fleets of this very country'—pointing shoreward, out of

a port-hole—'a sailor of the vessel to which I was attached, during the blockade of Bahia, had his leg—' But by this time the fidgets had completely taken possession of his auditors, especially of the senior surgeons; and turning upon them abruptly he added, 'But I will not detain you longer, gentlemen'—turning round upon all the surgeons—'your dinners must be waiting you on board your respective ships. But, Surgeon Sawyer, perhaps you may desire to wash your hands before you go. There is the basin, sir; you will find a clean towel on the rammer. For myself, I seldom use them'—taking out his handkerchief. 'I must leave you now, gentlemen,'—bowing. 'To-morrow, at ten, the limb will be upon the table, and I shall be happy to see you all upon the occasion. Who's there?' turning to the curtain, which then rustled.

'Please, sir,' said the steward, entering, 'the patient is dead.'

'The body, also, gentlemen, at ten precisely,' said Cuticle, once more turning round upon his guests. 'I predicted that the operation might prove fatal; he was very much run down. Good morning;' and Cuticle departed.

'He does not, surely, mean to touch the body?' exclaimed Surgeon Sawyer, with much excitement.

'Oh, no!' said Patella, 'that's only his way; he means, doubtless, that it may be inspected previous to being taken ashore for burial.'

The assemblage of gold-laced surgeons now ascended to the quarter-deck; the second cutter was called away by the bugler, and, one by one, they were dropped aboard of their respective ships.

The following evening the messmates of the topman rowed his remains ashore, and buried them in the ever-vernal Protestant cemetery, hard by the Beach of the Flamingoes, in plain sight from the bay.

1849 1850

FROM MARDI

THE PHILOSOPHERS REGALE THEMSELVES WITH THEIR PIPES [1]

'Ho! mortals! mortals!' cried Media. 'Go we to bury our dead? Awake, sons of men! Cheer up, heirs of immortality! Ho, Vee-Vee! bring forth our pipes: we'll smoke off this cloud.'

Nothing so beguiling as the fumes of tobacco, whether inhaled through hookah, narghil, chibouque, Dutch porcelain, pure Principe, or Regalia. And a great oversight had it been in King Media, to have omitted pipes among the appliances of this voyage that we went. Tobacco in rouleaus we had none; cigar nor cigaret; which little the company esteemed. Pipes were preferred; and pipes we often smoked; testify, oh! Vee-Vee, to that. But not of the vile clay, of which mankind and Etruscan vases were made, were these jolly fine pipes of ours. But all in good time.

Now, the leaf called tobacco is of divers species and sorts. Not to dwell upon vile Shag, Pig-tail, Plug, Nail-rod, Negro-head, Cavendish, and misnamed Lady's-twist, there are the following varieties:—Gold-leaf, Oronoco, Cimaroza, Smyrna, Bird's-eye, James-river, Sweet-scented, Honey-dew, Kentucky, Cnaster, Scarfalati, and famed Shiraz, or Persian. Of all of which, perhaps the last is the best.

But smoked by itself, to a fastidious wight, even Shiraz is not gentle enough. It needs mitigation. And the cunning craft of so mitigating even the mildest tobacco was well understood in the dominions of Media. There, in plantations ever covered with a brooding, blue haze, they raised its fine leaf in the utmost luxuriance; almost as broad as the broad fans of the broad-bladed banana. The stalks of the leaf withdrawn, the remainder they cut up, and mixed with soft willow-bark, and the aromatic leaves of the Betel.

'Ho! Vee-Vee, bring forth the pipes,' cried Media. And forth they came, followed by a quaint, carved cocoanut, agate-lidded, containing ammunition sufficient for many stout charges and primings.

Soon we were all smoking so hard that the canopied howdah, under which we reclined, sent up purple wreaths like a Michigan wigwam. There we sat in a ring, all smoking in council—every pipe a halcyon pipe of peace.

And among those calumets, my lord Media's showed like the turbaned Grand Turk among his Bashaws. It was an extraordinary pipe, be sure; of right royal

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *Mardi*, ibid.,IV,58–66.

dimensions. Its mouthpiece an eagle's beak; its long stem, a bright, red-barked cherry-tree branch, partly covered with a close network of purple-dyed porcupine quills; and toward the upper end, streaming with pennons, like a Versailles flagstaff of a coronation day. These pennons were managed by halyards; and after lighting his prince's pipe, it was little Vee-Vee's part to run them up toward the mast-head, or mouthpiece, in token that his lord was fairly under weigh.

But Babbalanja's was of a different sort, an immense, black, serpentine stem of ebony, coiling this way and that, in endless convolutions, like an anaconda round a traveler in Brazil. Smoking this hydra, Babbalanja looked as if playing upon the trombone.

Next, gentle Yoomy's. Its stem, a slender golden reed, like musical Pan's; its bowl very merry with tassels.

Lastly, old Mohi the chronicler's. Its Death's-head bowl forming its latter end, continually reminding him of his own. Its shank was an ostrich's leg, some feathers still waving nigh the mouthpiece.

'Here, Vee-Vee! fill me up again,' cried Media, through the blue vapours sweeping round his great gonfalon, like plumed Marshal Ney, waving his baton in the smoke of Waterloo; or thrice gallant Anglesea, crossing his wooden leg mid the reek and rack of the Apsley House banquet.

Vee-Vee obeyed; and quickly, like a howitzer, the pipe-bowl was reloaded to the muzzle, and King Media smoked on.

'Ah! this is pleasant indeed,' he cried. 'Look, it's a calm on the waters, and a calm in our hearts, as we inhale these sedative odours.'

'So calm,' said Babbalanja; 'the very gods must be smoking now.'

'And thus,' said Media, 'we demi-gods hereafter shall cross-legged sit, and smoke out our eternities. Ah, what a glorious puff! Mortals, methinks these pipe-bowls of ours must be petrifactions of roses, so scented they seem. But, old Mohi, you have smoked this many a long year; doubtless, you know something about their material—the Froth-of-the-Sea they call it, I think—ere my handicraft subjects obtain it, to work into bowls. Tell us the tale.'

'Delighted to do so, my lord,' replied Mohi, slowly disentangling his mouthpiece from the braids of his beard. 'I have devoted much time and attention to the study of pipe-bowls, and groped among many learned authorities, to reconcile the clashing opinions concerning the origin of the so-called Farnoo, or Froth-of-the-Sea.'

'Well, then, my old centenarian, give us the result of your investigations. But smoke away: a word and a puff: go on.'

'May it please you, then, my right worshipful lord, this Farnoo is an unctuous, argillaceous substance; in its natural state, soft, malleable, and easily worked as the cornelian-red clay from the famous pipe-quarries of the wild tribes to the north. But though mostly found buried in terra-firma, especially in the isles toward the East, this Farnoo, my lord, is sometimes thrown up by the ocean; in seasons of high sea, being plentifully found on the reefs. But, my lord, like amber, the precise nature and origin of this Farnoo are points widely mooted.'

'Stop there!' cried Media; 'our mouthpieces are of amber; so, not a word more of the Froth-of-the-Sea, until something be said to clear up the mystery of amber. What is amber, old man?'

'A still more obscure thing to trace than the other, my worshipful lord. Ancient Plinnee maintained that originally it must be a juice, exuding from balsam firs and pines; Borhavo, that, like camphor, it is the crystallised oil of aromatic ferns; Berzilli, that it is the concreted scum of the lake Cephioris; and Vondendo, against scores of antagonists, stoutly held it a sort of bituminous gold, trickling from antediluvian smugglers' caves, nigh the sea.'

'Why, old Braid-Beard,' cried Media, placing his pipe in rest, 'you are almost as erudite as our philosopher here.'

'Much more so, my lord,' said Babbalanja; 'for Mohi has somehow picked up all my worthless forgettings, which are more than my valuable rememberings.'

'What say you, wise one?' cried Mohi, shaking his braids, like an enraged elephant with many trunks.

Said Yoomy: 'My lord, I have heard that amber is nothing less than the congealed tears of broken-hearted mermaids.'

'Absurd, minstrel,' cried Mohi. 'Hark

ye; I know what it is. All other authorities to the contrary, amber is nothing more than gold-fishes' brains, made waxy, then firm, by the action of the sea.'

'Nonsense!' cried Yoomy.

'My lord,' said Braid-Beard, waving his pipe, 'this thing is just as I say. Imbedded in amber, do we not find little fishes' fins, porpoise-teeth, sea-gulls' beaks and claws; nay, butterflies' wings, and sometimes a topaz? And how could that be, unless the substance was first soft? Amber is gold-fishes' brains, I say.'

'For one,' said Babbalanja, 'I'll not believe that, till you prove to me, Braid-Beard, that ideas themselves are found imbedded therein.'

'Another of your crazy conceits, philosopher,' replied Mohi, disdainfully; 'yet, sometimes plenty of strange black-letter characters have been discovered in amber.' And throwing back his hoary old head, he jetted forth his vapours like a whale.

'Indeed?' cried Babbalanja. 'Then, my lord Media, it may be earnestly inquired, whether the gentle laws of the tribes before the Flood, were not sought to be embalmed and perpetuated between transparent and sweet-scented tablets of amber.'

'That, now, is not so unlikely,' said Mohi; 'for old King Rondo the Round once set about getting him a coffin-lid of amber; much desiring a famous mass of it owned by the ancestors of Donjalolo of Juam. But no navies could buy it. So Rondo had himself urned in a crystal.'

'And that immortalised Rondo, no doubt,' said Babbalanja. 'Ha! ha! pity he fared not like the fat porpoise frozen and tombed in an iceberg; its icy shroud drifting south, soon melted away, and down, out of sight, sank the dead.'

'Well, so much for amber,' cried Media. 'Now, Mohi, go on about Farnoo.'

'Know, then, my lord, that Farnoo is more like ambergris than amber.'

'Is it? then, pray, tell us something on that head. You know all about ambergris, too, I suppose.'

'Every thing about all things, my lord. Ambergris is found both on land and at sea. But especially, are lumps of it picked up on the spicy coasts of Jovanna; indeed, all over the atolls and reefs in the eastern quarter of Mardi.'

'But *what* is this ambergris, Braid-Beard?' said Babbalanja.

'Aquovi, the chymist, pronounced it the fragments of mushrooms growing at the bottom of the sea; Voluto held that, like naphtha, it springs from fountains down there. But it is neither.'

'I have heard,' said Yoomy, 'that it is the honey-comb of bees, fallen from flowery cliffs into the brine.'

'Nothing of the kind,' said Mohi. 'Do I not know all about it, minstrel? Ambergris is the petrified gallstones of crocodiles.'

'What!' cried Babbalanja, 'comes sweet-scented ambergris from those musky and chain-plated river cavalry? No wonder, then, their flesh is so fragrant; their upper jaws as the visors of vinaigrettes.'

'Nay, you are all wrong,' cried King Media.

Then, laughing to himself: 'It's pleasant to sit by, a demi-god, and hear the surmisings of mortals, upon things they know nothing about; theology, or amber, or ambergris, it's all the same. But then, did I always out with everything I know, there would be no conversing with these comical creatures.

'Listen, old Mohi; ambergris is a morbid secretion of the spermaceti whale; for like you mortals, the whale is at times a sort of hypochondriac and dyspeptic. You must know, subjects, that in antediluvian times, the spermaceti whale was much hunted by sportsmen, that being accounted better pastime, than pursuing the behemoths on shore. Besides, it was a lucrative diversion. Now, sometimes upon striking the monster, it would start off in a dastardly fright, leaving certain fragments in its wake. These fragments the hunters picked up, giving over the chase for a while. For in those days, as now, a quarter-quintal of ambergris was more valuable than a whole ton of spermaceti.'

'Nor, my lord,' said Babbalanja, 'would it have been wise to kill the fish that dropped such treasures: no more than to murder the noddy that laid the golden eggs.'

'Beshrew me! a noddy it must have been,' gurgled Mohi through his pipe-stem, 'to lay golden eggs for others to hatch.'

'Come, no more of that now,' cried

Media. 'Mohi, how long think you may one of these pipe-bowls last?'

'My lord, like one's cranium, it will endure till broken. I have smoked this one of mine more than half a century.'

'But unlike our craniums, stocked full of concretions,' said Babbalanja, 'our pipe-bowls never need clearing out.'

'True,' said Mohi, 'they absorb the oil of the smoke, instead of allowing it offensively to incrust.'

'Aye, the older the better,' said Media, 'and the more delicious the flavour imparted to the fumes inhaled.'

'Farnoos forever! my lord,' cried Yoomy. 'By much smoking, the bowl waxes russet and mellow, like the berry-brown cheek of a sunburnt brunette.'

'And as like smoked hams,' cried Braid-Beard, 'we veteran old smokers grow browner and browner; hugely do we admire to see our jolly noses and pipe-bowls mellowing together.'

'Well said, old man,' cried Babbalanja; 'for, like a good wife, a pipe is a friend and companion for life. And whoso weds with a pipe is no longer a bachelor. After many vexations, he may go home to that faithful counsellor, and ever find it full of kind consolations and suggestions. But not thus with cigars or cigarets: the acquaintances of a moment, chatted with in by-places, whenever they come handy; their existence so fugitive, uncertain, unsatisfactory. Once ignited, nothing like longevity pertains to them. They never grow old. Why, my lord, the stump of a cigaret is an abomination; and two of them crossed are more of a *memento mori* than a brace of thigh-bones at right angles.'

'So they are, so they are,' cried King Media. 'Then, mortals, puff we away at our pipes. Puff, puff, I say. Ah! how we puff! But thus we demi-gods ever puff at our ease.'

'Puff, puff, how we puff,' cried Babbalanja. 'But life itself is a puff and a wheeze. Our lungs are two pipes which we constantly smoke.'

'Puff, puff! how we puff,' cried old Mohi. 'All thought is a puff.'

'Aye,' said Babbalanja, 'not more smoke in that skull-bowl of yours than in the skull on your shoulders: both ends alike.'

'Puff! puff! how we puff,' cried Yoomy. 'But in every puff, there hangs a wreath. In every puff off flies a care.'

'Aye, there they go,' cried Mohi, 'there goes another—and there, and there;—this is the way to get rid of them, my worshipful lord; puff them aside.'

'Yoomy,' said Media, 'give us that pipe song of thine. Sing it, my sweet and pleasant poet. We'll keep time with the flageolets of ours.'

So with pipes and puffs for a chorus, thus Yoomy sang:—

Care is all stuff:—
Puff! Puff!
To puff is enough:—
Puff! Puff!
More musky than snuff,
And warm is a puff:—
Puff! Puff!
Here we sit mid our puffs,
Like old lords in their ruffs,
Snug as bears in their muffs:—
Puff! Puff!
Then puff, puff, puff,
For care is all stuff,
Puffed off in a puff.—
Puff! Puff!

'Aye, puff away,' cried Babbalanja, 'puff, puff, so we are born, and so die. Puff, puff, my volcanoes: the great sun itself will yet go out in a snuff, and all Mardi smoke out its last wick.'

'Puffs enough,' said King Media, 'Vee-Vee! haul down my flag. There, lie down before me, oh Gonfalon! and, subjects, hear,—when I die, lay this spear on my right, and this pipe on my left, its colours at half-mast; so shall I be ambidexter, and sleep between eloquent symbols.'

1847–48 1849

FROM PIERRE

THE HISTORY OF AN AUTHOR [1]

I

Pierre Immaturely Attempts a Mature Work

WE are now to behold Pierre permanently lodged in three lofty adjoining chambers of

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *Pierre*, ibid., IX, 393–97, 411–26. In *Pierre*, Melville symbolically writes of the difficulties attendant on the pursuit of truth and the maintenance

the Apostles'. And passing on a little further in time, and overlooking the hundred and one domestic details, of how their internal arrangements were finally put into steady working order; how poor Delly, now giving over the sharper pangs of her grief, found in the lighter occupations of a handmaid and familiar companion to Isabel, the only practical relief from the memories of her miserable past; how Isabel herself in the otherwise occupied hours of Pierre, passed some of her time in mastering the chirographical incoherencies of his manuscripts, with a view to eventually copying them out in a legible hand for the printer; or went below-stairs to the rooms of the Millthorpes, and in the modest and amiable society of the three young ladies and their excellent mother, found some little solace for the absence of Pierre; or, when his day's work was done, sat by him in the twilight, and played her mystic guitar till Pierre felt chapter after chapter born of its wondrous suggestiveness; but alas! eternally incapable of being translated into words; for where the deepest words end, there music begins with its supersensuous and all-confounding intimations.

Disowning now all previous exertions of his mind, and burning in scorn even those fine fruits of a care-free fancy, which, written at Saddle Meadows in the sweet legendary time of Lucy and her love, he had jealously kept from the publishers, as too true and good to be published; renouncing all his foregone self, Pierre was now engaged in a comprehensive compacted work, to whose speedy completion two tremendous motives unitedly impelled;—the burning desire to deliver what he thought to be new, or at least miserably neglected Truth to the world; and the prospective menace of being absolutely penniless, unless by the sale of his book, he could realize money.

of integrity among the complexities and ambiguities of society. In the selection here used, he discusses the fallacies of contemporary searches for philosophical truth, and appears to analyse both the weaknesses of his earlier novels and his development as a writer. The work, immaturely attempted, is probably *Mardi*, a critique of the thought of others, rather than a plumbing of his own soul.

Pierre had broken outside the conventionalised circle about his family's home at Saddle meadows and Lucy his fiancée, and had come to New York to live with Isabel his half-sister and his father's child. Isabel was the hostage of a similar venture that had failed.

Swayed to universality of thought by the widely explosive mental tendencies of the profound events which had lately befallen him, and the unprecedented situation in which he now found himself; and perceiving, by presentiment, that most grand productions of the best human intellects ever are built round a circle, as atolls (*i.e.* the primitive coral islets which, raising themselves in the depths of profoundest seas, rise funnel-like to the surface, and present there a hoop of white rock, which though on the outside everywhere lashed by the ocean, yet excludes all tempests from the quiet lagoon within), digestively including the whole range of all that can be known or dreamed; Pierre was resolved to give the world a book, which the world should hail with surprise and delight. A varied scope of reading, little suspected by his friends, and randomly acquired by a random but lynx-eyed mind, in the course of the multifarious, incidental, bibliographic encounterings of almost any civilised young inquirer after Truth; this poured one considerable contributory stream into that bottomless spring of original thought which the occasion and time had caused to burst out in himself. Now he congratulated himself upon all his cursory acquisitions of this sort; ignorant that in reality to a mind bent on producing some thoughtful thing of absolute Truth, all mere reading is apt to prove but an obstacle hard to overcome; and not an accelerator helpingly pushing him along.

While Pierre was thinking that he was entirely transplanted into a new and wonderful element of Beauty and Power, he was, in fact, but in one of the stages of the transition. That ultimate element once fairly gained, then books no more are needed for buoys to our souls; our own strong limbs support us, and we float over all bottomlessnesses with a jeering impunity. He did not see,—or if he did, he could not yet name the true cause for it,—that already, in the incipiency of his work, the heavy unmalleable element of mere book-knowledge would not congenially weld with the wide fluidness and ethereal airiness of spontaneous creative thought. He would climb Parnassus with a pile of folios on his back. He did not see, that it was nothing at all to him, what other men had written; that though Plato was indeed

a transcendently great man in himself, yet Plato must not be transcendently great to him (Pierre), so long as he (Pierre himself) would also do something transcendently great. He did not see that there is no such thing as a standard for the creative spirit; that no one great book must ever be separately regarded, and permitted to domineer with its own uniqueness upon the creative mind; but that all existing great works must be federated in the fancy; and so regarded as a miscellaneous and Pantheistic whole; and then,—without at all dictating to his own mind, or unduly biasing it any way,—thus combined, they would prove simply an exhilarative and provocative to him. He did not see, that even when thus combined, all was but one small mite, compared to the latent infiniteness and inexhaustibility in himself; that all the great books in the world are but the mutilated shadowings-forth of invisible and eternally unembodied images in the soul; so that they are but the mirrors, distortedly reflecting to us our own things; and never mind what the mirror may be, if we would see the object, we must look at the object itself, and not at its reflection.

But, as to the resolute traveller in Switzerland, the Alps do never in one wide and comprehensive sweep, instantaneously reveal their full awfulness of amplitude—their overawing extent of peak crowded on peak, and spur sloping on spur, and chain jammed behind chain, and all their wonderful battalionings of might; so hath heaven wisely ordained, that on first entering into the Switzerland of his soul, man shall not at once perceive its tremendous immensity; lest illy prepared for such an encounter, his spirit should sink and perish in the lowermost snows. Only by judicious degrees, appointed of God, does man come at last to gain his Mont Blanc and take an overtopping view of these Alps; and even then, the tithe is not shown; and far over the invisible Atlantic, the Rocky Mountains and the Andes are yet unbeheld. Appalling is the soul of a man! Better might one be pushed off into the material spaces beyond the uttermost orbit of our sun, than once feel himself fairly afloat in himself!

But not now to consider these ulterior things, Pierre, though strangely and very newly alive to many before unregarded wonders in the general world; still, had he not as yet procured for himself that enchanter's wand of the soul, which but touching the humblest experiences in one's life, straightway it starts up all eyes, in every one of which are endless significancies. Not yet had he dropped his angle into the well of his childhood, to find what fish might be there; for who dreams to find fish in a well? the running stream of the outer world, there doubtless swim the golden perch and the pickerel! Ten million things were as yet uncovered to Pierre. The old mummy lies buried in cloth on cloth; it takes time to unwrap this Egyptian king. Yet now, forsooth, because Pierre began to see through the first superficiality of the world, he fondly weens he has come to the unlayered substance. But, far as any geologist has yet gone down into the world, it is found to consist of nothing but surface stratified on surface. To its axis, the world being nothing but superinduced superficies. By vast pains we mine into the pyramid; by horrible gropings we come to the central room; with joy we espy the sarcophagus; but we lift the lid—and no body is there!—appallingly vacant as vast is the soul of a man! . . .

2

The Flower-Curtain Lifted from before a Tropical Author, with Some Remarks on the Transcendental Flesh-Brush Philosophy

SOME days passed after the fatal tidings from the Meadows, and at length, somewhat mastering his emotions, Pierre again sits down in his chamber; for grieve how he will, yet work he must. And now day succeeds day, and week follows week, and Pierre still sits in his chamber. The long rows of cooled brick-kilns around him scarce know of the change; but from the fair fields of his great-great-great-grandfather's manor, Summer hath flown like a swallow-guest; the perfidious wight, Autumn, hath peeped in at the groves of the maple, and under pretence of clothing them in rich russet and gold, hath stripped them at last of the slightest rag, and then run away laughing; prophetic icicles depend from the arbours round about the old manorial mansion—now locked up and

abandoned; and the little, round, marble table in the viny summer-house where, of July mornings, he had sat chatting and drinking negus with his gay mother, is now spread with a shivering napkin of frost; sleety varnish hath encrusted that once gay mother's grave, preparing it for its final cerements of wrapping snow upon snow; wild howl the winds in the woods: it is Winter. Sweet Summer is done; and Autumn is done; but the book, like the bitter Winter, is yet to be finished.

That season's wheat is long garnered, Pierre; that season's ripe apples and grapes are in; no crop, no plant, no fruit is out; the whole harvest is done. Oh, woe to that belated winter-overtaken plant, which the summer could not bring to maturity! The drifting winter snows shall whelm it. Think, Pierre, doth not thy plant belong to some other and tropical clime? Though transplanted to northern Maine, the orange-tree of the Floridas will put forth leaves in that parsimonious summer, and show some few tokens of fruitage; yet November will find no golden globes thereon; and the passionate old lumberman, December, shall peel the whole tree, wrench it off at the ground, and toss it for a faggot to some lime-kiln. Ah, Pierre, Pierre, make haste! make haste! force thy fruitage, lest the winter force thee.

Watch yon little toddler, how long it is learning to stand by itself! First it shrieks and implores, and will not try to stand at all, unless both father and mother uphold it; then a little more bold, it must, at least, feel one parental hand, else again the cry and the tremble; long time is it ere by degrees this child comes to stand without any support. But, by and by, grown up to man's estate, it shall leave the very mother that bore it, and the father that begot it, and cross the seas, perhaps, or settle in far Oregon lands. There now, do you see the soul. In its germ on all sides it is closely folded by the world, as the husk folds the tenderest fruit; then it is born from the world-husk, but still now outwardly clings to it;—still clamours for the support of its mother the world, and its father the Deity. But it shall yet learn to stand independent, though not without many a bitter wail, and many a miserable fall.

That hour of the life of a man when first the help of humanity fails him, and he learns that in his obscurity and indigence humanity holds him a dog and no man: that hour is a hard one, but not the hardest. There is still another hour which follows, when he learns that in his infinite comparative minuteness and abjectness, the gods do likewise despise him, and own him not of their clan. Divinity and humanity then are equally willing that he should starve in the street for all that either will do for him. Now cruel father and mother have both let go his hand, and the little soul-toddler, now you shall hear his shriek and his wail, and often his fall.

When at Saddle Meadows, Pierre had wavered and trembled in those first wretched hours ensuing upon the receipt of Isabel's letter; then humanity had let go the hand of Pierre, and therefore his cry; but when at last inured to this, Pierre was seated at his book, willing that humanity should desert him, so long as he thought he felt a far higher support; then, ere long, he began to feel the utter loss of that other support, too; aye, even the paternal gods themselves did now desert Pierre; the toddler was toddling entirely alone, and not without shrieks.

If man must wrestle, perhaps it is well that it should be on the nakedest possible plain.

The three chambers of Pierre at the Apostles' were connecting ones. The first —having a little retreat where Delly slept —was used for the more exacting domestic purposes: here also their meals were taken; the second was the chamber of Isabel; the third was the closet of Pierre. In the first—the dining-room, as they called it—there was a stove which boiled the water for their coffee and tea, and where Delly concocted their light repasts. This was their only fire; for, warned again and again to economise to the uttermost, Pierre did not dare to purchase any additional warmth. But by prudent management, a very little warmth may go a great way. In the present case, it went some forty feet or more. A horizontal pipe, after elbowing away from above the stove in the dining-room, pierced the partition wall, and passing straight through Isabel's chamber, entered the closet of Pierre at one corner, and then abruptly disappeared into the wall, where all

further caloric—if any—went up through the chimney into the air, to help warm the December sun. Now, the great distance of Pierre's calorical stream from its fountain, sadly impaired it, and weakened it. It hardly had the flavour of heat. It would have had but very inconsiderable influence in raising the depressed spirits of the most mercurial thermometer; certainly it was not very elevating to the spirits of Pierre. Besides, this calorical stream, small as it was, did not flow through the room, but only entered it, to elbow right out of it, as some coquettish maidens enter the heart; moreover, it was in the furthest corner from the only place where, with a judicious view to the light, Pierre's desk-barrels and board could advantageously stand. Often, Isabel insisted upon his having a separate stove to himself; but Pierre would not listen to such a thing. Then Isabel would offer her own room to him; saying it was of no indispensable use to her by day; she could easily spend her time in the dining-room; but Pierre would not listen to such a thing; he would not deprive her of the comfort of a continually accessible privacy; besides, he was now used to his own room, and must sit by that particular window there, and no other. Then Isabel would insist upon keeping her connecting door open while Pierre was employed at his desk, that so the heat of her room might bodily go into his; but Pierre would not listen to such a thing; because he must be religiously locked up while at work; outer love and hate must alike be excluded then. In vain Isabel said she would make not the slightest noise, and muffle the point of the very needle she used. All in vain. Pierre was inflexible here.

Yes, he was resolved to battle it out in his own solitary closet; though a strange, transcendental conceit of one of the more erratic and non-conforming Apostles,—who was also at this time engaged upon a profound work above-stairs, and who denied himself his full sufficiency of food, in order to ensure an abundant fire;—the strange conceit of this Apostle, I say,—accidentally communicated to Pierre,—that, through all the kingdoms of Nature, caloric was the great universal producer and vivifyer, and could not be prudently excluded from the spot where great books were in the act of creation; and therefore, he (the Apostle) for one, was resolved to plant his head in a hot-bed of stove-warmed air, and so force his brain to germinate and blossom, and bud, and put forth the eventual, crowning, victorious flower;—though indeed this conceit rather staggered Pierre—for in truth, there was no small smack of plausible analogy in it—yet one thought of his purse would wholly expel the unwelcome intrusion, and reinforce his own previous resolve.

However lofty and magnificent the movements of the stars; whatever celestial melodies they may thereby beget; yet the astronomers assure us that they are the most rigidly methodical of all the things that exist. No old housewife goes her daily domestic round with one-millionth part the precision of the great planet Jupiter in his stated and unalterable revolutions. He has found his orbit, and stays in it; he has timed himself, and adheres to his periods. So, in some degree with Pierre, now revolving in the troubled orbit of his book.

Pierre rose moderately early; and the better to inure himself to the permanent chill of his room, and to defy and beard to its face, the cruellest cold of the outer air; he would—behind the curtain—throw down the upper sash of his window; and on a square of old painted canvas, formerly wrapping some bale of goods in the neighbourhood, treat his limbs, of those early December mornings, to a copious ablution, in water thickened with incipient ice. Nor, in this stoic performance, was he at all without company,—not present, but adjoiningly sympathetic; for scarce an Apostle in all those scores and scores of chambers, but undeviatingly took his daily December bath. Pierre had only to peep out of his pane and glance round the multi-windowed, enclosing walls of the quadrangle, to catch plentiful half-glimpses, all round him, of many a lean, philosophical nudity, refreshing his meagre bones with crash-towel and cold water. 'Quick be the play,' was their motto: 'Lively our elbows, and nimble all our tenuities.' Oh, the dismal echoings of the raspings of flesh-brushes, perverted to the filing and polishing of the merest ribs! Oh, the shuddersome splashings of pails of ice-water over feverish heads, not unfamiliar with aches! Oh, the rheumatical cracklings of rusted joints, in

that defied air of December! for every thick-frosted sash was down, and every lean nudity courted the zephyr!

Among all the innate, hyena-like repellants to the reception of any set form of a spiritually minded and pure archetypical faith, there is nothing so potent in its sceptical tendencies, as that inevitable perverse ridiculousness, which so often bestreaks some of the essentially finest and noblest aspirations of those men, who disgusted with the common conventional quackeries, strive, in their clogged terrestrial humanities, after some imperfectly discerned, but heavenly ideals: ideals, not only imperfectly discerned in themselves, but the path to them so little traceable, that no two minds will entirely agree upon it.

Hardly a new-light Apostle, but who, in superaddition to his revolutionary scheme for the minds and philosophies of men, entertains some insane, heterodoxical notions about the economy of his body. His soul, introduced by the gentlemanly gods into the supernal society, practically rejects that most sensible maxim of men of the world, who chancing to gain the friendship of any great character, never make that the ground of boring him with the supplemental acquaintance of their next friend, who perhaps is some miserable ninny. Love me, love my dog, is only an adage for the old country women who affectionately kiss their cows. The gods love the soul of a man; often, they will frankly accost it; but they abominate his body; and will forever cut it dead, both here and hereafter. So, if thou wouldst go to the gods, leave thy dog of a body behind thee. And most impotently thou strivest with thy purifying cold baths, and thy diligent scrubbings with flesh-brushes, to prepare it as a meet offering for their altar. Nor shall all thy Pythagorean and Shelleyan dietings on apple-parings, dried prunes, and crumbs of oatmeal cracker, ever fit thy body for heaven. Feed all things with food convenient for them,—that is, if the food be procurable. The food of thy soul is light and space; feed it then on light and space. But the food of thy body is champagne and oysters; feed it then on champagne and oysters; and so shall it merit a joyful resurrection, if there is any to be. Say, wouldst thou rise with a lantern jaw and a spavined knee? Rise with brawn on thee, and a most royal corporation before thee; so shalt thou in that day claim respectful attention. Know this: that while many a consumptive dietarian has but produced the merest literary flatulencies to the world; convivial authors have alike given utterance to the sublimest wisdom, and created the least gross and most ethereal forms. And for men of demonstrative muscle and action, consider that right royal epitaph which Cyrus the Great caused to be engraved on his tomb—'I could drink a great deal of wine, and it did me a great deal of good.' Ah, foolish! to think that by starving thy body, thou shalt fatten thy soul! Is yonder ox fatted because yonder lean fox starves in the winter wood? And prate not of despising thy body, while still thou flourisheth thy flesh-brush! The finest houses are most cared for within; the outer walls are freely left to the dust and the soot. Put venison in thee, and so wit shall come out of thee. It is one thing in the mill, but another in the sack.

Now it was the continual, quadrangular example of those forlorn fellows, the Apostles, who, in this period of his half-developments and transitions, had deluded Pierre into the Flesh-Brush Philosophy, and had almost tempted him into the Apple-Parings Dialectics. For all the long wards, corridors, and multitudinous chambers of the Apostles' were scattered with the stems of apples, the stones of prunes, and the shells of peanuts. They went about huskily muttering the Kantian Categories through teeth and lips dry and dusty as any miller's, with the crumbs of Graham crackers. A tumbler of cold water was the utmost welcome to their reception rooms; at the grand supposed Sanhedrim presided over by one of the deputies of Plotinus Plinlimmon, a huge jug of Adam's Ale, and a bushel-basket of Graham crackers were the only convivials. Continually bits of cheese were dropping from their pockets, and old shiny apple parchments were ignorantly exhibited every time they drew out a manuscript to read you. Some were curious in the vintages of waters; and in three glass decanters set before you, Fairmount, Croton, and Cochituate; they hold that Croton was the most potent, Fairmount a gentle tonic, and Cochituate the mildest and least inebriating of all. Take some more of the Croton, my dear sir! Be

brisk with the Fairmount! Why stops that Cochituate? So on their philosophical tables went round their Port, their Sherry, and their Claret.

Some, further advanced, rejected mere water in the bath, as altogether too coarse an element; and so, took to the Vapour-baths, and steamed their lean ribs every morning. The smoke which issued from their heads, and overspread their pages, was prefigured in the mists that issued from under their door-sills and out of their windows. Some could not sit down of a morning until after first applying the Vapour-bath outside, and then thoroughly rinsing out their interiors with five cups of cold Croton. They were as faithfully replenished fire-buckets; and could they, standing in one cordon, have consecutively pumped themselves into each other, then the great fire of 1835 had been far less wide-spread and disastrous.

Ah! ye poor lean ones! ye wretched Soakites and Vapourites! have not your niggardly fortunes enough rinsed ye out, and wizened ye, but ye must still be dragging the hose-pipe, and throwing still more cold Croton on yourselves and the world? Ah! attach the screw of your hose-pipe to some fine old butt of Madeira! pump us some sparkling wine into the world! see, see, already, from all eternity, two-thirds of it have lain helplessly soaking!

With cheek rather pale, then, and lips rather blue, Pierre sits down to his plank.

But is Pierre packed in the mail for St. Petersburg this morning? Over his boots are his moccasins; over his ordinary coat is his surtout; and over that, a cloak of Isabel's. Now he is squared to his plank; and at his hint, the affectionate Isabel gently pushes his chair closer to it, for he is so muffled, he can hardly move of himself. Now Delly comes in with bricks hot from the stove; and now Isabel and she with devoted solicitude pack away these comforting stones in the folds of an old blue cloak, a military garment of the grandfather of Pierre, and tenderly arrange it both over and under his feet; but putting the warm flagging beneath. Then Delly brings still another hot brick to put under his ink-stand, to prevent the ink from thickening. Then Isabel drags the camp-bedstead nearer to him, on which are the two or three books he may possibly have occasion to refer to that day, with a biscuit or two, and some water, and a clean towel, and a basin. Then she leans against the plank by the elbow of Pierre, a crook-ended stick. Is Pierre a shepherd, or a bishop, or a cripple? No, but he has in effect, reduced himself to the miserable condition of the last. With the crook-ended cane, Pierre—unable to rise without sadly impairing his manifold intrenchments, and admitting the cold air into their innermost nooks,—Pierre, if in his solitude, he should chance to need anything beyond the reach of his arm, then the crook-ended cane drags it to his immediate vicinity.

Pierre glances slowly all round him; everything seems to be right; he looks up with a grateful, melancholy satisfaction at Isabel; a tear gathers in her eye; but she conceals it from him by coming very close to him, stooping over, and kissing his brow. 'Tis her lips that leave the warm moisture there; not her tears, she says.

'I suppose I must go now, Pierre. Now don't, don't be so long to-day. I will call thee at half-past four. Thou shalt not strain thine eyes in the twilight.'

'We will *see* about that,' says Pierre, with an unobserved attempt at a very sad pun. 'Come, thou must go. Leave me.'

And there he is left.

Pierre is young; heaven gave him the divinest, freshest form of a man; put light into his eye, and fire into his blood, and brawn into his arm, and a joyous, jubilant, overflowing, upbubbling, universal life in him everywhere. Now look around in that most miserable room, and at that most miserable of all the pursuits of a man, and say if here be the place, and this be the trade, that God intended him for. A rickety chair, two hollow barrels, a plank, paper, pens, and infernally black ink, four leprously dingy white walls, no carpet, a cup of water, and a dry biscuit or two. Oh, I hear the leap of the Texan Camanche, as at this moment he goes crashing like a wild deer through the green underbrush; I hear his glorious whoop of savage and untamable health; and then I look in at Pierre. If physical, practical unreason make the savage, which is he? Civilisation, Philosophy, Ideal Virtue! behold your victim!

Some hours pass. Let us peep over the shoulder of Pierre, and see what it is he is writing there, in that most melancholy closet. Here, topping the reeking pile by his side, is the last sheet from his hand, the frenzied ink not yet entirely dry. It is much to our purpose; for in this sheet, he seems to have directly plagiarised from his own experiences, to fill out the mood of his apparent author-hero, Vivia, who thus soliloquises: 'A deep-down, unutterable mournfulness is in me. Now I drop all humorous or indifferent disguises, and all philosophical pretensions. I own myself a brother of the clod, a child of the Primeval Gloom. Hopelessness and despair are over me, as pall on pall. Away, ye chattering apes of a sophomorean Spinoza and Plato, who once didst all but delude me that the night was day, and pain only a tickle. Explain this darkness, exorcise this devil, ye cannot. Tell me not, thou inconceivable coxcomb of a Goethe, that the universe cannot spare thee and thy immortality, so long as—like a hired waiter—thou makest thyself "generally useful." Already the universe gets on without thee, and could still spare a million more of the same identical kidney. Corporations have no souls, and thy Pantheism, what was that? Thou wert but the pretentious, heartless part of a man. Lo! I hold thee in this hand, and thou art crushed in it like an egg from which the meat hath been sucked.'

Here is a slip from the floor.

'Whence flow the panegyrical melodies that precede the march of these heroes? From what but from a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal!'

And here is a second.

'Cast thy eye in there on Vivia; tell me why those four limbs should be clapped in a dismal jail—day out, day in—week out, week in—month out, month in—and himself the voluntary jailor! Is this the end of philosophy? This the larger, and spiritual life? This your boasted empyrean? Is it for this that a man should grow wise, and leave off his most excellent and calumniated folly?'

And here is a third.

'Cast thy eye in there on Vivia; he, who in the pursuit of the highest health of virtue and truth, shows but a pallid cheek! Weigh his heart in thy hand, oh, thou gold-laced, virtuoso Goethe! and tell me whether it does not exceed thy standard weight!'

And here is a fourth.

'Oh God, that man should spoil and rust on the stalk, and be wilted and threshed ere the harvest hath come! And oh God, that men that call themselves men should still insist on a laugh! I hate the world, and could trample all lungs of mankind as grapes, and heel them out of their breath, to think of the woe and the cant,—to think of the Truth and the Lie! Oh! blessed be the twenty-first day of December, and cursed be the twenty-first day of June!'

From these random slips, it would seem that Pierre is quite conscious of much that is so anomalously hard and bitter in his lot, of much that is so black and terrific in his soul. Yet that knowing his fatal condition does not one whit enable him to change or better his condition. Conclusive proof that he has no power over his condition. For in tremendous extremities human souls are like drowning men; well enough they know they are in peril; well enough they know the causes of that peril; nevertheless, the sea is the sea, and these drowning men do drown.

From eight o'clock in the morning till half-past four in the evening, Pierre sits there in his room;—eight hours and a half!

From throbbing neck-bands, and swinging belly-bands of gay-hearted horses, the sleigh-bells chimingly jingle;—but Pierre sits there in his room; Thanksgiving comes, with its glad thanks, and crisp turkeys;—but Pierre sits there in his room; soft through the snows, on tinted Indian moccasin, Merry Christmas comes stealing;—but Pierre sits there in his room; it is New Year's, and like a great flagon, the vast city over-brims at all curb-stones, wharves, and piers, with bubbling jubilations;—but Pierre sits there in his room:—Nor jingling sleigh-bells at throbbing neck-band, or swinging belly-band; nor glad thanks, and crisp turkeys of Thanksgiving; nor tinted Indian moccasin of Merry Christmas softly stealing through the snows; nor New Year's curb-stones, wharves, and piers, over-brimming with bubbling jubilations:—Nor jingling sleigh-bells, nor glad Thanksgiving, nor Merry Christmas, nor jubilating New Year's:—Nor Bell, Thank, Christ, Year;—none of these are for Pierre. In the midst of

the merriments of the mutations of Time, Pierre hath ringed himself in with the grief of Eternity. Pierre is a peak inflexible in the heart of Time, as the isle-peak, Piko, stands unassaultable in the midst of waves.

He will not be called to; he will not be stirred. Sometimes the intent ear of Isabel in the next room, overhears the alternate silence, and then the long lonely scratch of his pen. It is as if she heard the busy claw of some midnight mole in the ground. Sometimes she hears a low cough, and sometimes the scrape of his crook-handled cane.

Here surely is a wonderful stillness of eight hours and a half, repeated day after day. In the heart of such silence, surely something is at work. Is it creation, or destruction? Builds Pierre the noble world of a new book? or does the Pale Haggardness unbuild the lungs and the life in him?—Unutterable, that a man should be thus!

When in the meridian flush of the day, we recall the black apex of night; then night seems impossible; this sun can never go down. Oh that the memory of the uttermost gloom as an already tasted thing to the dregs, should be no security against its return. One may be passably well one day, but the next, he may sup at black broth with Pluto.

Is there then all this work to one book, which shall be read in a very few hours; and, far more frequently, utterly skipped in one second; and which, in the end, whatever it be, must undoubtedly go to the worms?

Not so; that which now absorbs the time and the life of Pierre, is not the book, but the primitive elementalising of the strange stuff, which in the act of attempting that book, has upheaved and upgushed in his soul. Two books are being writ; of which the world shall only see one, and that the bungled one. The larger book, and the infinitely better, is for Pierre's own private shelf. That it is, whose unfathomable cravings drink his blood; the other only demands his ink. But circumstances have so decreed, that the one cannot be composed on the paper, but only as the other is writ down in his soul. And the one of the soul is elephantinely sluggish, and will not budge at a breath. Thus Pierre is fastened on by two leeches;—how then can the life of Pierre last? Lo! he is fitting himself for the highest life, by thinning his blood and collapsing his heart. He is learning how to live, by rehearsing the part of death.

Who shall tell all the thoughts and feelings of Pierre in that desolate and shivering room, when at last the idea obtruded, that the wiser and the profounder he should grow, the more and the more he lessened the chances for bread; that could he now hurl his deep book out of the window, and fall to on some shallow nothing of a novel, composable in a month at the longest, then could he reasonably hope for both appreciation and cash. But the devouring profundities, now opened up in him, consume all his vigour; would he, he could not now be entertainingly and profitably shallow in some pellucid and merry romance. Now he sees, that with every accession of the personal divine to him, some great land-slide of the general surrounding divineness slips from him, and falls crashing away. Said I not that the gods, as well as mankind, had unhanded themselves from this Pierre? So now in him you behold the baby toddler I spoke of; forced now to stand and toddle alone.

Now and then he turns to the camp-bed, and wetting his towel in the basin, presses it against his brow. Now he leans back in his chair, as if to give up; but again bends over and plods.

Twilight draws on, the summons of Isabel is heard from the door; the poor, frozen, blue-lipped, soul-shivering traveller for St. Petersburg is unpacked; and for a moment stands toddling on the floor. Then his hat, and his cane, and out he sallies for fresh air. A most comfortless staggering of a stroll! People gaze at him passing, as at some imprudent sick man, wilfully burst from his bed. If an acquaintance is met, and would say a pleasant newsmonger's word in his ear, that acquaintance turns from him, affronted at his hard aspect of icy discourtesy. 'Bad-hearted,' mutters the man, and goes on.

He comes back to his chambers, and sits down at the neat table of Delly; and Isabel soothingly eyes him, and presses him to eat and be strong. But his is the famishing which loathes all food. He cannot eat but by force. He has assassinated the natural day; how then can he eat with an appetite?

If he lays him down, he cannot sleep; he has waked the infinite wakefulness in him; then how can he slumber? Still his book, like a vast lumbering planet, revolves in his aching head. He cannot command the thing out of its orbit; fain would he behead himself, to gain one night's repose. At last the heavy hours move on; and sheer exhaustion overtakes him, and he lies still—not asleep as children and day-labourers sleep—but he lies still from his throbbings, and for that interval holdingly sheathes the beak of the vulture in his hand, and lets it not enter his heart.

Morning comes; again the dropped sash, the icy water, the flesh-brush, the breakfast, the hot bricks, the ink, the pen, the from-eight-o'clock-to-half-past-four, and the whole general inclusive hell of the same departed day.

Ah! shivering thus day after day in his wrappers and cloaks, is this the warm lad that once sung to the world of the Tropical Summer?

1851 1852

FROM MOBY DICK [1]

THE SYMPHONY

IT was a clear steel-blue day. The firmaments of air and sea were hardly separable in that all-pervading azure; only, the pensive air was transparently pure and soft, with a woman's look, and the robust and man-like sea heaved with long, strong, lingering swells, as Samson's chest in his sleep.

Hither and thither, on high, glided the snow-white wings of small, unspeckled birds; these were the gentle thoughts of the feminine air; but to and fro in the deeps, far down in the bottomless blue, rushed mighty leviathans, sword-fish, and sharks; and these were the strong, troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine sea.

But though thus contrasting within, the contrast was only in shades and shadows without; those two seemed one; it was only the sex, as it were, that distinguished them.

Aloft, like a royal czar and king, the sun seemed giving this gentle air to this bold and rolling sea; even as bride to groom. And at the girdling line of the horizon, a soft and tremulous motion—most seen here at the Equator—denoted the fond, throbbing trust, the living alarms, with which the poor bride gave her bosom away.

Tied up and twisted; gnarled and knotted with wrinkles; haggardly firm and unyielding; his eyes glowing like coals, that still glow in the ashes of ruin; untottering Ahab stood forth in the clearness of the morn; lifting his splintered helmet of a brow to the fair girl's forehead of heaven.

Oh, immortal infancy and innocency of the azure! Invisible winged creatures that frolic all round us! Sweet childhood of air and sky! how oblivious were ye of old Ahab's close-coiled woe! But so have I seen little Miriam and Martha, laughing-eyed elves, heedlessly gambol around their old sire; sporting with the circle of singed locks which grew on the marge of that burnt-out crater of his brain.

Slowly crossing the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side, and watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to his gaze, the more and the more that he strove to pierce the profundity. But the lovely aromas in that enchanted air did at last seem to dispel, for a moment, the cankerous thing in his soul. That glad, happy air, that winsome sky, did at last stroke and caress him; the stepmother world, so long cruel—forbidding—now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over

1 The selections are from *Moby Dick*, ibid.,VIII,326–67. A key to the symbolism of Ahab's quest may be found in the sermon by Father Mapple, which the narrator heard before setting sail: 'But oh! shipmates! on the starboard hand of every woe, there is a sure delight; and higher the top of that delight, than the bottom of the woe is deep. . . . Delight is to him—a far, far upward, and inward delight—who against the proud gods and commodores of this earth, ever stands forth his own inexorable self. Delight is to him whose strong arms yet support him, when the ship of this base treacherous world has gone down beneath him. Delight is to him, who gives no quarter in the truth, and kills, burns, and destroys all sin though he pluck it out from under the robes of Senators and Judges. Delight, —top-gallant delight is to him who acknowledges no law or lord, but the Lord his God, and is only a patriot to heaven. Delight is to him, whom all the waves of the billows of the seas of the boisterous mob can never shake from this sure Keel of the Ages. And eternal delight and deliciousness will be his, who coming to lay him down, can say with his final breath—O Father!—chiefly known to me by Thy rod—mortal or immortal, here I die. I have striven to be Thine, more than to be this world's, or mine own. Yet this is nothing: I leave eternity to Thee; for what is man that he should live out the lifetime of his God?' Ibid.,VII,59.

one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to bless. From beneath his slouched hat Ahab dropped a tear into the sea; nor did all the Pacific contain such wealth as that one wee drop.

Starbuck saw the old man; saw him, how he heavily leaned over the side; and he seemed to hear in his own true heart the measureless sobbing that stole out of the centre of the serenity around. Careful not to touch him, or be noticed by him, he yet drew near to him, and stood there.

Ahab turned.

'Starbuck!'

'Sir.'

'Oh, Starbuck! it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild-looking sky. On such a day—very much such a sweetness as this—I struck my first whale—a boy-harpooneer of eighteen! Forty—forty—forty years ago!—ago! Forty years of continual whaling! forty years of privation, and peril, and storm-time! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors of the deep! Aye and yes, Starbuck, out of those forty years I have not spent three ashore. When I think of this life I have led; the desolation of solitude it has been; the masoned, walled-town of a captain's exclusiveness, which admits but small entrance to any sympathy from the green country without—oh, weariness! heaviness! Guinea-coast slavery of solitary command!—when I think of all this; only half suspected, not so keenly known to me before—and how for forty years I have fed upon dry salted fare—fit emblem of the dry nourishment of my soul!—when the poorest landsman has had fresh fruit to his daily hand, and broken the world's fresh bread to my mouldy crusts—away, whole oceans away, from that young girl-wife I wedded past fifty, and sailed for Cape Horn the next day, leaving but one dent in my marriage pillow—wife? wife?—rather a widow with her husband alive! Aye, I widowed that poor girl when I married her, Starbuck; and then, the madness, the frenzy, the boiling blood and the smoking brow, with which, for a thousand lowerings old Ahab has furiously, foamingly chased his prey—more a demon than a man!—aye, aye! what a forty years' fool—fool—old fool, has old Ahab been! Why this strife of the chase? why weary and palsy the arm at the oar, and the iron, and the lance? how the richer or better is Ahab now? Behold. Oh, Starbuck! is it not hard, that with this weary load I bear, one poor leg should have been snatched from under me? Here, brush this old hair aside; it blinds me, that I seem to weep. Locks so grey did never grow but from out some ashes! But do I look very old, so very, very old, Starbuck? I feel deadly faint, bowed, and humped, as though I were Adam, staggering beneath the piled centuries since Paradise. God! God! God!—crack my heart!—stave my brain!—mockery! mockery! bitter, biting mockery of grey hairs, have I lived enough joy to wear ye; and seem and feel thus intolerably old? Close! stand close to me, Starbuck; let me look into a human eye; it is better than to gaze into the sea or sky; better than to gaze upon God. By the green land; by the bright hearthstone! this is the magic glass, man; I see my wife and my child in thine eye. No, no; stay on board, on board!—lower not when I do; when branded Ahab gives chase to Moby Dick. That hazard shall not be thine. No, no! not with the far-away home I see in that eye!'

'Oh, my Captain! my Captain! noble soul! grand old heart, after all! why should any one give chase to that hated fish! Away with me! let us fly these deadly waters! let us home! Wife and child, too, are Starbuck's—wife and child of his brotherly, sisterly, playfellow youth; even as thine, sir, are the wife and child of thy loving, longing, paternal old age! Away! let us away!—this instant let me alter the course! How cheerily, how hilariously, oh my Captain, would we bowl on our way to see old Nantucket again! I think, sir, they have some such mild blue days, even as this, in Nantucket.'

'They have, they have. I have seen them—some summer days in the morning. About this time—yes, it is his noon nap now—the boy vivaciously wakes; sits up in bed; and his mother tells him of me, of cannibal old me; how I am abroad upon the deep, but will yet come back to dance him again.'

''Tis my Mary, my Mary herself! She promised that my boy, every morning, should be carried to the hill to catch the

first glimpse of his father's sail! Yes, yes! no more! it is done! we head for Nantucket! Come, my Captain, study out the course, and let us away! See, see! the boy's face from the window! the boy's hand on the hill!'

But Ahab's glance was averted; like a blighted fruit tree he shook, and cast his last, cindered apple to the soil.

'What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I. By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike. And all the time, lo! that smiling sky, and this unsounded sea! Look! see yon albicore! who put it into him to chase and fang that flying-fish? Where do murderers go, man? Who's to doom, when the judge himself is dragged to the bar? But it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild-looking sky; and the air smells now, as if it blew from a far-away meadow; they have been making hay somewhere under the slopes of the Andes, Starbuck, and the mowers are sleeping among the new-mown hay. Sleeping? Aye, toil we how we may, we all sleep at last on the field. Sleep? Aye, and rust amid greenness; as last year's scythes flung down, and left in the half-cut swaths—Starbuck!'

But blanched to a corpse's hue with despair, the mate had stolen away.

Ahab crossed the deck to gaze over on the other side; but started at two reflected, fixed eyes in the water there. Fedallah was motionlessly leaning over the same rail.

The Chase—First Day

That night, in the mid-watch, when the old man—as his wont at intervals—stepped forth from the scuttle in which he leaned, and went to his pivot-hole, he suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, snuffing up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle. He declared that a whale must be near. Soon that peculiar odour, sometimes to a great distance given forth by the living sperm whale, was palpable to all the watch; nor was any mariner surprised when, after inspecting the compass, and then the dog-vane, and then ascertaining the precise bearing of the odour as nearly as possible, Ahab rapidly ordered the ship's course to be slightly altered, and the sail to be shortened.

The acute policy dictating these movements was sufficiently vindicated at daybreak by the sight of a long sleek on the sea directly and lengthwise ahead, smooth as oil, and resembling in the pleated watery wrinkles bordering it, the polished metallic-like marks of some swift tide-rip, at the mouth of a deep, rapid stream.

'Man the mast-heads! Call all hands!'

Thundering with the butts of three clubbed handspikes on the forecastle deck, Daggoo roused the sleepers with such judgment claps that they seemed to exhale from the scuttle, so instantaneously did they appear with their clothes in their hands.

'What d'ye see?' cried Ahab, flattening his face to the sky.

'Nothing, nothing, sir!' was the sound hailing down in reply.

'T'-gallant-sails!—stun'-sails! alow and aloft, and on both sides!'

All sail being set, he now cast loose the life-line, reserved for swaying him to the main royal-mast-head; and in a few moments they were hoisting him thither, when, while but two-thirds of the way aloft, and while peering ahead through the horizontal vacancy between the main-top-sail and top-gallant-sail, he raised a gull-like cry in the air, 'There she blows!—there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill!—It is Moby Dick!'

Fired by the cry which seemed simultaneously taken up by the three lookouts, the men on deck rushed to the rigging to behold the famous whale they had so long been pursuing. Ahab had now gained his final perch, some feet above the other lookouts, Tashtego standing just beneath him

on the cap of the top-gallant-mast, so that the Indian's head was almost on a level with Ahab's heel. From this height the whale was now seen some mile or so ahead, at every roll of the sea revealing his high sparkling hump, and regularly jetting his silent spout into the air. To the credulous mariners it seemed the same silent spout they had so long ago beheld in the moonlit Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

'And did none of ye see it before?' cried Ahab, hailing the perched men all around him.

'I saw him almost that same instant, sir, that Captain Ahab did, and I cried out,' said Tashtego.

'Not the same instant; not the same—no, the doubloon is mine. Fate reserved the doubloon for me. *I* only; none of ye could have raised the White Whale first. There she blows! there she blows!—there she blows! There again!—there again!' he cried, in long-drawn, lingering, methodic tones, attuned to the gradual prolongings of the whale's visible jets. 'He's going to sound! In stun'-sails! Down top-gallant-sails! Stand by three boats. Mr. Starbuck, remember, stay on board, and keep the ship. Helm there! Luff, luff a point! So; steady, man, steady! There go flukes! No, no; only black water! All ready the boats there? Stand by, stand by! Lower me, Mr. Starbuck; lower, lower,—quick, quicker!' and he slid through the air to the deck.

'He is heading straight to leeward, sir,' cried Stubb; 'right away from us; cannot have seen the ship yet.'

'Be dumb, man! Stand by the braces! Hard down the helm!—brace up! Shiver her!—shiver her!—So; well that! Boats, boats!'

Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped; all the boat-sails set—all the paddles plying; with rippling swiftness, shooting to leeward; and Ahab heading the onset. A pale, death-glimmer lit up Fedallah's sunken eyes; a hideous motion gnawed his mouth.

Like noiseless nautilus shells, their light prows sped through the sea; but only slowly they neared the foe. As they neared him, the ocean grew still more smooth; seemed drawing a carpet over its waves; seemed a noon meadow, so serenely it spread. At length the breathless hunter came so nigh his seemingly unsuspecting prey, that his entire dazzling hump was distinctly visible, sliding along the sea as if an isolated thing, and continually set in a revolving ring of finest, fleecy, greenish foam. He saw the vast, involved wrinkles of the slightly projecting head beyond. Before it, far out on the soft Turkish-rugged waters, went the glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead, a musical rippling playfully accompanying the shade; and behind, the blue waters interchangeably flowed over into the moving valley of his steady wake; and on either hand bright bubbles arose and danced by his side. But these were broken again by the light toes of hundreds of gay fowl softly feathering the sea, alternate with their fitful flight; and like to some flagstaff rising from the painted hull of an argosy, the tall but shattered pole of a recent lance projected from the White Whale's back; and at intervals one of the cloud of soft-toed fowls hovering, and to and fro skimming like a canopy over the fish, silently perched and rocked on this pole, the long tail feathers streaming like pennons.

A gentle joyousness—a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness—invested the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam.

On each soft side—coincident with the parted swell, that but once leaving him, then flowed so wide away—on each bright side, the whale shed off enticings. No wonder there had been some among the hunters who, namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity, had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way thou may'st have bejuggled and destroyed before.

And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture, Moby Dick moved on, still

withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw. But soon the fore part of him slowly rose from the water; for an instant his whole marbleised body formed a high arch, like Virginia's Natural Bridge, and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the grand god revealed himself, sounded, and went out of sight. Hoveringly halting, and dipping on the wing, the white sea-fowls longingly lingered over the agitated pool that he left.

With oars apeak, and paddles down, the sheets of their sails adrift, the three boats now stilly floated, awaiting Moby Dick's reappearance.

'An hour,' said Ahab, standing rooted in his boat's stern; and he gazed beyond the whale's place, toward the dim blue spaces and wide wooing vacancies to leeward. It was only an instant; for again his eyes seemed whirling round in his head as he swept the watery circle. The breeze now freshened; the sea began to swell.

'The birds!—the birds!' cried Tashtego.

In long Indian file, as when herons take wing, the white birds were now all flying toward Ahab's boat; and when within a few yards began fluttering over the water there, wheeling round and round, with joyous, expectant cries. Their vision was keener than man's; Ahab could discover no sign in the sea. But suddenly as he peered down and down into its depths, he profoundly saw a white living spot no bigger than a white weasel, with wonderful celerity uprising, and magnifying as it rose, till it turned, and then there were plainly revealed two long crooked rows of white, glistening teeth, floating up from the undiscoverable bottom. It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast, shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea. The glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble tomb; and giving one sidelong sweep with his steering-oar, Ahab whirled the craft aside from this tremendous apparition. Then, calling upon Fedallah to change places with him, went forward to the bows, and seizing Perth's harpoon, commanded his crew to grasp their oars and stand by to stern.

Now, by reason of this timely spinning round the boat upon its axis, its bow, by anticipation, was made to face the whale's head while yet under water. But as if perceiving this stratagem, Moby Dick, with that malicious intelligence ascribed to him, sidelingly transplanted himself, as it were, in an instant, shooting his plaited head lengthwise beneath the boat.

Through and through; through every plank and each rib, it thrilled for an instant, the whale obliquely lying on his back, in the manner of a biting shark, slowly and feelingly taking its bows full within his mouth, so that the long, narrow, scrolled lower jaw curled high up into the open air, and one of the teeth caught in a rowlock. The bluish pearl-white of the inside of the jaw was within six inches of Ahab's head, and reached higher than that. In this attitude the White Whale now shook the slight cedar as a mildly cruel cat her mouse. With unastonished eyes Fedallah gazed, and crossed his arms; but the tiger-yellow crew were tumbling over each other's heads to gain the uttermost stern.

And now, while both elastic gunwales were springing in and out, as the whale dallied with the doomed craft in this devilish way; and from his body being submerged beneath the boat, he could not be darted at from the bows, for the bows were almost inside of him, as it were; and while the other boats involuntarily paused, as before a quick crisis impossible to withstand, then it was that monomaniac Ahab, furious with this tantalising vicinity of his foe, which placed him all alive and helpless in the very jaws he hated; frenzied with all this, he seized the long bone with his naked hands, and wildly strove to wrench it from its grip. As now he thus vainly strove, the jaw slipped from him; the frail gunwales bent in, collapsed, and snapped, as both jaws, like an enormous shears, sliding further aft, bit the craft completely in twain, and locked themselves fast again in the sea, midway between the two floating wrecks. These floated aside, the broken ends drooping, the crew at the stern-wreck clinging to the gunwales, and striving to hold fast to the oars to lash them across.

At that preluding moment, ere the boat was yet snapped, Ahab, the first to perceive the whale's intent, by the crafty upraising of his head, a movement that loosed his hold for the time; at that moment his hand had

made one final effort to push the boat out of the bite. But only slipping further into the whale's mouth, and tilting over sideways as it slipped, the boat had shaken off his hold on the jaw; spilled him out of it, as he leaned to the push; and so he fell flat-faced upon the sea.

Ripplingly withdrawing from his prey, Moby Dick now lay at a little distance, vertically thrusting his oblong white head up and down in the billows; and at the same time slowly revolving his whole spindled body; so that when his vast wrinkled forehead rose—some twenty or more feet out of the water—the now rising swells, with all their confluent waves, dazzlingly broke against it; vindictively tossing their shivered spray still higher into the air. So, in a gale, the but half-baffled Channel billows only recoil from the base of the Eddystone, triumphantly to overleap its summit with their scud.

But soon resuming his horizontal attitude, Moby Dick swam swiftly round and round the wrecked crew; sideways churning the water in his vengeful wake, as if lashing himself up to still another and more deadly assault. The sight of the splintered boat seemed to madden him, as the blood of grapes and mulberries cast before Antiochus's elephants in the book of Maccabees. Meanwhile Ahab, half smothered in the foam of the whale's insolent tail, and too much of a cripple to swim,—though he could still keep afloat, even in the heart of such a whirlpool as that; helpless Ahab's head was seen, like a tossed bubble which the least chance shock might burst. From the boat's fragmentary stern, Fedallah incuriously and mildly eyed him; the clinging crew, at the other drifting end, could not succour him; more than enough was it for them to look to themselves. For so revolvingly appalling was the White Whale's aspect, and so planetarily swift the ever-contracting circles he made, that he seemed horizontally swooping upon them. And though the other boats, unharmed, still hovered hard by, still they dared not pull into the eddy to strike, lest that should be the signal for the instant destruction of the jeopardised castaways, Ahab and all; nor in that case could they themselves hope to escape. With straining eyes, then, they remained on the outer edge of the direful zone, whose centre had now become the old man's head.

Meantime, from the beginning all this had been descried from the ship's mastheads; and squaring her yards, she had borne down upon the scene; and was now so nigh, that Ahab in the water hailed her; —'Sail on the'—but that moment a breaking sea dashed on him from Moby Dick, and whelmed him for the time. But struggling out of it again, and chancing to rise on a towering crest, he shouted,—'Sail on the whale!—Drive him off!'

The *Pequod*'s prows were pointed; and breaking up the charmed circle, she effectually parted the White Whale from his victim. As he sullenly swam off, the boats flew to the rescue.

Dragged into Stubb's boat with bloodshot, blinded eyes, the white brine caking in his wrinkles; the long tension of Ahab's bodily strength did crack, and helplessly he yielded to his body's doom for a time, lying all crushed in the bottom of Stubb's boat, like one trodden under foot of herds of elephants. Far inland, nameless wails came from him, as desolate sounds from out ravines.

But this intensity of his physical prostration did but so much the more abbreviate it. In an instant's compass, great hearts sometimes condense to one deep pang, the sum-total of those shallow pains kindly diffused through feebler men's whole lives. And so, such hearts, though summary in each one suffering; still, if the gods decree it, in their lifetime aggregate a whole age of woe, wholly made up of instantaneous intensities; for even in their pointless centres, those noble natures contain the entire circumferences of inferior souls.

'The harpoon,' said Ahab, half-way rising, and draggingly leaning on one bended arm—'is it safe?'

'Aye, sir, for it was not darted; this is it,' said Stubb, showing it.

'Lay it before me;—any missing men?'

'One, two, three, four, five;—there were five oars, sir, and here are five men.'

'That's good.—Help me, man; I wish to stand. So, so, I see him! there! there! going to leeward still; what a leaping spout!—Hands off from me! The eternal sap runs up in Ahab's bones again! Set the sail; out oars; the helm!'

It is often the case that when a boat is stove, its crew, being picked up by another boat, help to work that second boat; and the chase is thus continued with what is called double-banked oars. It was thus now. But the added power of the boat did not equal the added power of the whale, for he seemed to have treble-banked his every fin; swimming with a velocity which plainly showed, that if now, under these circumstances, pushed on, the chase would prove an indefinitely prolonged, if not a hopeless one; nor could any crew endure for so long a period, such an unintermitted, intense straining at the oar; a thing barely tolerable only in some one brief vicissitude. The ship itself, then, as it sometimes happens, offered the most promising intermediate means of overtaking the chase. Accordingly, the boats now made for her, and were soon swayed up to their cranes—the two parts of the wrecked boat having been previously secured by her—and then hoisting everything to her side, and stacking her canvas high up, and sideways outstretching it with stun'-sails, like the double-jointed wings of an albatross, the *Pequod* bore down in the leeward wake of Moby Dick. At the well-known, methodic intervals, the whale's glittering spout was regularly announced from the manned mast-heads; and when he would be reported as just gone down, Ahab would take the time, and then pacing the deck, binnacle-watch in hand, so soon as the last second of the allotted hour expired, his voice was heard.—'Whose is the doubloon now? D'ye see him?' and if the reply was, 'No, sir!' straightway he commanded them to lift him to his perch. In this way the day wore on; Ahab, now aloft and motionless; anon, unrestingly pacing the planks.

As he was thus walking, uttering no sound, except to hail the men aloft, or to bid them hoist a sail still higher, or to spread one to a still greater breadth—thus to and fro pacing, beneath his slouched hat, at every turn he passed his own wrecked boat, which had been dropped upon the quarter-deck, and lay there reversed: broken bow to shattered stern. At last he paused before it; and as in an already over-clouded sky fresh troops of clouds will sometimes sail across, so over the old man's face there now stole some such added gloom as this.

Stubb saw him pause; and perhaps intending, not vainly, though, to evince his own unabated fortitude, and thus keep up a valiant place in his captain's mind, he advanced, and eyeing the wreck exclaimed—'The thistle the ass refused; it pricked his mouth too keenly, sir; ha! ha!'

'What soulless thing is this that laughs before a wreck? Man, man! did I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear thou wert a poltroon. Groan nor laugh should be heard before a wreck.'

'Aye, sir,' said Starbuck, drawing near, "tis a solemn sight; an omen, and an ill one.'

'Omen? omen?—the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honourably speak outright; not shake their heads, and give an old wives' darkling hint.—Begone! Ye two are the opposite poles of one thing; Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and ye two are all mankind; and Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbours! Cold, cold—I shiver!—How now? Aloft there! D'ye see him? Sing out for every spout, though he spout ten times a second!'

The day was nearly done; only the hem of his golden robe was rustling. Soon, it was almost dark, but the look-out men still remained unset.

'Can't see the spout now, sir;—too dark'—cried a voice from the air.

'How heading when last seen?'

'As before, sir,—straight to leeward.'

'Good! he will travel slower now 'tis night. Down royals and top-gallant stun'-sails, Mr. Starbuck. We must not run over him before morning; he's making a passage now, and may heave-to a while. Helm there! keep her full before the wind!—Aloft! come down!—Mr. Stubb, send a fresh hand to the foremast-head, and see it manned till morning.'—Then advancing toward the doubloon in the mainmast—'Men, this gold is mine, for I earned it; but I shall let it abide here till the White Whale is dead; and then, whosoever of ye first raises him, upon the day he shall be killed, this gold is that man's; and if on that day I shall again raise him, then ten times its sum shall be divided among all of ye! Away now!—the deck is thine, sir.'

And so saying, he placed himself halfway within the scuttle, and slouching his hat, stood there till dawn, except when at intervals rousing himself to see how the night wore on.

The Chase—Second Day

At daybreak, the three mast-heads were punctually manned afresh.

'D'ye see him?' cried Ahab, after allowing a little space for the light to spread.

'See nothing, sir.'

'Turn up all hands and make sail! he travels faster than I thought for;—the topgallant-sails!—aye, they should have been kept on her all night. But no matter—'tis but resting for the rush.'

Here be it said, that this pertinacious pursuit of one particular whale, continued through day into night, and through night into day, is a thing by no means unprecedented in the South Sea fishery. For such is the wonderful skill, prescience of experience, and invincible confidence acquired by some great natural geniuses among the Nantucket commanders; that from the simple observation of a whale when last descried, they will, under certain given circumstances, pretty accurately foretell both the direction in which he will continue to swim for a time, while out of sight, as well as his probable rate of progression during that period. And, in these cases, somewhat as a pilot, when about losing sight of a coast, whose general trending he well knows, and which he desires shortly to return to again, but at some further point; like as this pilot stands by his compass, and takes the precise bearing of the cape at present visible, in order the more certainly to hit aright the remote, unseen headland, eventually to be visited: so does the fisherman, at his compass, with the whale; for after being chased, and diligently marked, through several hours of daylight, then, when night obscures the fish, the creature's future wake through the darkness is almost as established to the sagacious mind of the hunter, as the pilot's coast is to him. So that to this hunter's wondrous skill, the proverbial evanescence of a thing writ in water, a wake, is to all desired purposes well-nigh as reliable as the steadfast land. And as the mighty iron leviathan of the modern railway is so familiarly known in its every pace, that, with watches in their hands, men time his rate as doctors that of a baby's pulse; and lightly say of it, the up train or the down train will reach such or such a spot, at such or such an hour; even so, almost, there are occasions when these Nantucketers time that other leviathan of the deep, according to the observed humour of his speed; and say to themselves, so many hours hence this whale will have gone two hundred miles, will have about reached this or that degree of latitude or longitude. But to render this acuteness at all successful in the end, the wind and the sea must be the whaleman's allies; for of what present avail to the becalmed or windbound mariner is the skill that assures him he is exactly ninety-three leagues and a quarter from his port? Inferable from these statements are many collateral subtle matters touching the chase of whales.

The ship tore on; leaving such a furrow in the sea as when a cannon-ball, missent, becomes a ploughshare and turns up the level field.

'By salt and hemp!' cried Stubb, 'but this swift motion of the deck creeps up one's legs and tingles at the heart. This ship and I are two brave fellows!—Ha! ha! Some one take me up, and launch me, spine-wise, on the sea,—for by live-oaks! my spine's a keel. Ha, ha! we go the gait that leaves no dust behind!'

'There she blows—she blows!—she blows!—right ahead!' was now the mast-head cry.

'Aye, aye!' cried Stubb, 'I knew it—ye can't escape—blow on and split your spout, O whale! the mad fiend himself is after ye! blow your trump—blister your lungs!—Ahab will dam off your blood, as a miller shuts his water-gate upon the stream!'

And Stubb did but speak out for well-nigh all that crew. The frenzies of the chase had by this time worked them bubblingly up, like old wine worked anew. Whatever pale fears and forebodings some of them might have felt before; these were not only now kept out of sight through the growing awe of Ahab, but they were broken up, and on all sides routed, as timid prairie hares that scatter before the bounding bison. The hand of Fate had snatched all their souls; and by the stirring perils of the previous

day; the rack of the past night's suspense; the fixed, unfearing, blind, reckless way in which their wild craft went plunging toward its flying mark; by all these things, their hearts were bowled along. The wind that made great bellies of their sails, and rushed the vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed the symbol of that unseen agency which so enslaved them to the race.

They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that held them all; though it was put together of all contrasting things—oak, and maple, and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp—yet all these ran into each other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way, both balanced and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of the crew, this man's valour, that man's fear; guilt and guiltiness, all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to.

The rigging lived. The mast-heads, like the tops of tall palms, were outspreadingly tufted with arms and legs. Clinging to a spar with one hand, some reached forth the other with impatient wavings; others, shading their eyes from the vivid sunlight, sat far out on the rocking yards; all the spars in full bearing of mortals, ready and ripe for their fate. Ah! how they still strove through that infinite blueness to seek out the thing that might destroy them!

'Why sing ye not out for him, if ye see him?' cried Ahab, when, after the lapse of some minutes since the first cry, no more had been heard. 'Sway me up, men; ye have been deceived; not Moby Dick casts one odd jet that way, and then disappears.'

It was even so; in their headlong eagerness, the men had mistaken some other thing for the whale-spout, as the event itself soon proved; for hardly had Ahab reached his perch; hardly was the rope belayed to its pin on deck, when he struck the key-note to an orchestra, that made the air vibrate as with the combined discharges of rifles. The triumphant halloo of thirty buckskin lungs was heard, as—much nearer to the ship than the place of the imaginary jet, less than a mile ahead—Moby Dick bodily burst into view! For not by any calm and indolent spoutings; not by the peaceable gush of that mystic fountain in his head, did the White Whale now reveal his vicinity; but by the far more wondrous phenomenon of breaching. Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths, the sperm whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of air, and piling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the distance of seven miles and more. In those moments, the torn, enraged waves he shakes off seem his mane; in some cases this breaching is his act of defiance.

'There she breaches! there she breaches!' was the cry, as in his immeasurable bravadoes the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to heaven. So suddenly seen in the blue plain of the sea, and relieved against the still bluer margin of the sky, the spray that he raised, for the moment, intolerably glittered and glared like a glacier; and stood there gradually fading and fading away from its first sparkling intensity, to the dim mistiness of an advancing shower in a vale.

'Aye, breach your last to the sun, Moby Dick!' cried Ahab, 'thy hour and thy harpoon are at hand!—Down! down all of ye, but one man at the fore. The boats!—stand by!'

Unmindful of the tedious rope-ladders of the shrouds, the men, like shooting stars, slid to the deck, by the isolated backstays and halyards; while Ahab, less dartingly, but still rapidly, was dropped from his perch.

'Lower away,' he cried, so soon as he had reached his boat—a spare one, rigged the afternoon previous. 'Mr. Starbuck, the ship is thine—keep away from the boats, but keep near them. Lower, all!'

As if to strike a quick terror into them, by this time being the first assailant himself, Moby Dick had turned, and was now coming for the three crews. Ahab's boat was central; and cheering his men, he told them he would take the whale head-and-head,—that is, pull straight up to his forehead,—a not uncommon thing; for when within a certain limit, such a course excludes the coming onset from the whale's sidelong vision. But ere that close limit was gained, and while yet all three boats were plain as the ship's three masts to his eye; the White Whale, churning himself into furious speed, almost in an instant as it were, rushing among the boats with open jaws, and a lashing tail, offered appalling battle on

every side; and heedless of the irons darted at him from every boat, seemed only intent on annihilating each separate plank of which those boats were made. But skilfully manœuvred, incessantly wheeling like trained charges in the field; the boats for a while eluded him; though, at times, but by a plank's breadth; while all the time, Ahab's unearthly slogan tore every other cry but his to shreds.

But at last in his untraceable evolutions, the White Whale so crossed and recrossed, and in a thousand ways entangled the slack of the three lines now fast to him, that they foreshortened, and, of themselves, warped the devoted boats toward the planted irons in him; though now for a moment the whale drew aside a little, as if to rally for a more tremendous charge. Seizing that opportunity, Ahab first paid out more line: and then was rapidly hauling and jerking in upon it again—hoping that way to disencumber it of some snarls—when lo!—a sight more savage than the embattled teeth of sharks!

Caught and twisted—corkscrewed in the mazes of the line—loose harpoons and lances, with all their bristling barbs and points, came flashing and dripping up to the chocks in the bows of Ahab's boat. Only one thing could be done. Seizing the boat-knife, he critically reached within—through—and then, without—the rays of steel; dragged in the line beyond, passed it, inboard, to the bowsman, and then, twice sundering the rope near the chocks—dropped the intercepted fagot of steel into the sea; and was all fast again. That instant, the White Whale made a sudden rush among the remaining tangles of the other lines; by so doing, irresistibly dragged the more involved boats of Stubb and Flask toward his flukes; dashed them together like two rolling husks on a surf-beaten beach, and then, diving down into the sea, disappeared in a boiling maelstrom, in which, for a space, the odorous cedar chips of the wrecks danced round and round, like the grated nutmeg in a swiftly stirred bowl of punch.

While the two crews were yet circling in the waters, reaching out after the revolving line-tubs, oars, and other floating furniture, while aslope little Flask bobbed up and down like an empty vial, twitching his legs upward to escape the dreaded jaws of sharks; and Stubb was lustily singing out for some one to ladle him up; and while the old man's line—now parting—admitted of his pulling into the creamy pool to rescue whom he could:—in that wild simultaneousness of a thousand concreted perils,—Ahab's yet unstricken boat seemed drawn up toward heaven by invisible wires,—as, arrow-like, shooting perpendicularly from the sea, the White Whale dashed his broad forehead against its bottom, and sent it, turning over and over, into the air; till it fell again—gunwale downward—and Ahab and his men struggled out from under it, like seals from a seaside cave.

The first uprising momentum of the whale—modifying its direction as he struck the surface—involuntarily launched him along it, to a little distance from the centre of the destruction he had made; and with his back to it, he now lay for a moment slowly feeling with his flukes from side to side; and whenever a stray oar, bit of plank, the least chip or crumb of the boats touched his skin, his tail swiftly drew back, and came sideways smiting the sea. But soon, as if satisfied that his work for that time was done, he pushed his plaited forehead through the ocean, and trailing after him the intertangled lines, continued his leeward way at a traveller's methodic pace.

As before, the attentive ship having descried the whole fight, again came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat, picked up the floating mariners, tubs, oars, and whatever else could be caught at, and safely landed them on her decks. Some sprained shoulders, wrists, and ankles; livid contusions; wrenched harpoons and lances; inextricable intricacies of rope; shattered oars and planks; all these were there; but no fatal or even serious ill seemed to have befallen any one. As with Fedallah the day before, so Ahab was now found grimly clinging to his boat's broken half, which afforded a comparatively easy float; nor did it so exhaust him as the previous day's mishap.

But when he was helped to the deck, all eyes were fastened upon him; as instead of standing by himself he still half-hung upon the shoulder of Starbuck, who had thus far been the foremost to assist him. His ivory

leg had been snapped off, leaving but one short sharp splinter.

'Aye, aye, Starbuck, 'tis sweet to lean sometimes, be the leaner who he will; and would old Ahab had leaned oftener than he has.'

'The ferrule has not stood, sir,' said the carpenter, now coming up; 'I put good work into that leg.'

'But no bones broken, sir, I hope,' said Stubb with true concern.

'Aye! and all splintered to pieces, Stubb! —d'ye see it.—But even with a broken bone, old Ahab is untouched; and I account no living bone of mine one jot more me, than this dead one that's lost. Nor white whale, nor man, nor fiend, can so much as graze old Ahab in his own proper and inaccessible being. Can any lead touch yonder floor, any mast scrape yonder roof?— Aloft there! which way?'

'Dead to leeward, sir.'

'Up helm, then; pile on the sail again, shipkeepers! down the rest of the spare boats and rig them—Mr. Starbuck, away, and muster the boat's crews.'

'Let me first help thee towards the bulwarks, sir.'

'Oh, oh, oh! how this splinter gores me now! Accursed fate! that the unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate!'

'Sir?'

'My body, man, not thee. Give me something for a cane—there, that shivered-lance will do. Muster the men. Surely I have not seen him yet. By heaven, it cannot be!—missing?—quick! call them all.'

The old man's hinted thought was true. Upon mustering the company, the Parsee was not there.

'The Parsee!' cried Stubb—'he must have been caught in—'

'The black vomit wrench thee!—run all of ye above, alow, cabin, forecastle—find him—not gone—not gone!'

But quickly they returned to him with the tidings that the Parsee was nowhere to be found.

'Aye, sir,' said Stubb—'caught among the tangles of your line—I thought I saw him dragging under.'

'*My* line? *my* line? Gone?—gone? What means that little word?—What death-knell rings in it, that old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry. The harpoon, too!—toss over the litter there,—d'ye see it?—the forged iron, men, the White Whale's—no, no, no,—blistered fool! this hand did dart it!—'tis in the fish!—Aloft there! Keep him nailed—Quick!—all hands to the rigging of the boats—collect the oars—harpooneers! the irons, the irons!—hoist the royals higher—a pull on all the sheets!—helm there! steady, steady for your life! I'll ten times girdle the unmeasured globe; yea and dive straight through it, but I'll slay him yet!'

'Great God! but for one single instant show thyself,' cried Starbuck; 'never never wilt thou capture him, old man—In Jesus' name no more of this, that's worse than devil's madness. Two days chased; twice stove to splinters; thy very leg once more snatched from under thee; thy evil shadow gone—all good angels mobbing thee with warnings:—what more wouldst thou have? —Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he swamps the last man? Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea? Shall we be towed by him to the infernal world? Oh, oh,—Impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!'

'Starbuck, of late I've felt strangely moved to thee; ever since that hour we both saw—thou know'st what, in one another's eyes. But in this matter of the whale, be the front of thy face to me as the palm of this hand—a lipless, unfeatured blank. Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders. Look thou, underling! that thou obeyest mine,—stand round me, men. Ye see an old man cut down to the stump; leaning on a shivered lance; propped up on a lonely foot. 'Tis Ahab—his body's part; but Ahab's soul's a centipede, that moves upon a hundred legs. I feel strained, half-stranded, as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale; and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll hear me crack; and till ye hear *that*, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet. Believe ye, men, in the things called omens? Then laugh aloud, and cry encore! For ere they drown, drowning things will twice rise to the surface; then rise again, to sink for evermore. So with Moby Dick—two days he's floated—

to-morrow will be the third. Aye, men, he'll rise once more—but only to spout his last! D'ye feel brave men, brave?'

'As fearless fire,' cried Stubb.

'And as mechanical,' muttered Ahab. Then as the men went forward, he muttered on:—'The things called omens! And yesterday I talked the same to Starbuck there, concerning my broken boat. Oh! how valiantly I seek to drive out of others' hearts what's clinched so fast in mine!—The Parsee—the Parsee!—gone, gone? and he was to go before:—but still was to be seen again ere I could perish—How's that?—There's a riddle now might baffle all the lawyers backed by the ghosts of the whole line of judges:—like a hawk's beak it pecks my brain. *I'll, I'll* solve it, though!' [1]

When dusk descended, the whale was still in sight to leeward.

So once more the sail was shortened, and everything passed nearly as on the previous night; only, the sound of hammers and the hum of the grindstone was heard till nearly daylight, as the men toiled by lanterns in the complete and careful rigging of the spare boats and sharpening their fresh weapons for the morrow. Meantime, of the broken keel of Ahab's wrecked craft the carpenter made him another leg; while still as on the night before, slouched Ahab stood fixed within his scuttle; his hid, heliotrope glance anticipatingly gone backward on its dial, set due eastward for the earliest sun.

The Chase—Third Day

The morning of the third day dawned fair and fresh, and once more the solitary night-man at the foremast-head was relieved by crowds of the daylight lookouts, who dotted every mast and almost every spar.

'D'ye see him?' cried Ahab; but the whale was not yet in sight.

'In his infallible wake, though; but follow that wake, that's all. Helm there; steady, as thou goest, and hast been going. What a lovely day again! were it a new-made world, and made for a summer-house to the angels, and this morning the first of its throwing open to them, a fairer day could not dawn upon that world. Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels; *that's* tingling enough for mortal man! to think's audacity. God only has that right and privilege. Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a calmness; and our poor hearts throb, and our poor brains beat too much for that. And yet, I've sometimes thought my brain was very calm—frozen calm, this old skull cracks so, like a glass in which the contents turn to ice, and shiver it. And still this hair is growing now; this moment growing, and heat must breed it; but no, it's like that sort of common grass that will grow anywhere, between the earthy clefts of Greenland ice or in Vesuvius lava. How the wild winds blow it; they whip it about me as the torn shreds of split sails lash the tossed ship they cling to. A vile wind that has no doubt blown ere this through prison corridors and cells, and wards of hospitals, and ventilated them, and now comes blowing hither as innocent as fleeces. Out upon it!—it's tainted. Were I the wind, I'd blow no more on such a wicked, miserable world. I'd crawl somewhere to a cave, and slink there. And yet, 'tis a noble and heroic thing, the wind! who ever conquered it? In every fight it has the last and bitterest blow. Run tilting at it, and you but run through it.

1 *Cf.* Started from his slumbers, Ahab, face to face, saw the Parsee; and hooped round by the gloom of the night they seemed the last men in a flooded world. 'I have dreamed it again,' said he.

'Of the hearses? Have I not said, old man, that neither hearse nor coffin can be thine?'

'And who are hearsed that die on the sea?'

'But I said, old man, that ere thou couldst die on this voyage, two hearses must verily be seen by thee on the sea; the first not made by mortal hands; and the visible wood of the last one must be grown in America.'

'Aye, aye! a strange sight that, Parsee;—a hearse and its plumes floating over the ocean with the waves for the pall-bearers. Ha! Such a sight we shall not soon see.'

'Believe it or not, thou canst not die till it be seen, old man.'

'And what was that saying about thyself?'

'Though it come to the last, I shall still go before thee thy pilot.'

'And when thou art so gone before—if that ever befall—then ere I can follow, thou must still appear to me, to pilot me still?—Was it not so? Well, then, did I believe all ye say, oh my pilot! I have seen here two pledges that I shall yet slay Moby Dick and survive it.'

'Take another pledge, old man,' said the Parsee, as his eyes lighted up like fire-flies in the gloom—'Hemp only can kill thee.'

'The gallows, ye mean.—I am immortal then, on land and on sea,' cried Ahab, with a laugh of derision;—'Immortal on land and on sea!'

Both were silent again, as one man. Ibid., VIII, 271–72.

Ha! a coward wind that strikes stark-naked men, but will not stand to receive a single blow. Even Ahab is a braver thing—a nobler thing than *that*. Would now the wind but had a body; but all the things that most exasperate and outrage mortal man, all these things are bodiless, but only bodiless as objects, not as agents. There's a most special, a most cunning, oh, a most malicious difference! And yet, I say again, and swear it now, that there's something all glorious and gracious in the wind. These warm Trade Winds, at least, that in the clear heavens blow straight on, in strong and steadfast, vigourous mildness; and veer not from their mark, however the baser currents of the sea may turn and tack, and mightiest Mississippis of the land shift and swerve about, uncertain where to go at last. And by the eternal Poles! these same Trades that so directly blow my good ship on; these Trades, or something like them—something so unchangeable, and full as strong, blow my keeled soul along! To it! Aloft there! What d'ye see?'

'Nothing, sir.'

'Nothing! and noon at hand! The doubloon goes a-begging! See the sun! Aye, aye, it must be so. I've over-sailed him. How, got the start? Aye, he's chasing *me* now; not I, *him*—that's bad; I might have known it, too. Fool! the lines—the harpoons he's towing. Aye, aye, I have run him by last night. About! about! Come down, all of ye, but the regular lookouts! Man the braces!'

Steering as she had done, the wind had been somewhat on the *Pequod*'s quarter, so that now being pointed in the reverse direction, the braced ship sailed hard upon the breeze as she recburned the cream in her own white wake.

'Against the wind he now steers for the open jaw,' murmured Starbuck to himself, as he coiled the new-hauled main-brace upon the rail. 'God keep us, but already my bones feel damp within me, and from the inside wet my flesh. I misdoubt me that I disobey my God in obeying him!'

'Stand by to sway me up!' cried Ahab, advancing to the hempen basket. 'We should meet him soon.'

'Aye, aye, sir,' and straightway Starbuck did Ahab's bidding, and once more Ahab swung on high.

A whole hour now passed; gold-beaten out to ages. Time itself now held long breaths with keen suspense. But at last, some three points off the weather-bow, Ahab descried the spout again, and instantly from the three mast-heads three shrieks went up as if the tongues of fire had voiced it.

'Forehead to forehead I meet thee, this third time, Moby Dick! On deck there!—brace sharper up; crowd her into the wind's eye. He's too far off to lower yet, Mr. Starbuck. The sails shake! Stand over that helmsman with a top-maul! So, so; he travels fast, and I must down. But let me have one more good round look aloft here at the sea; there's time for that. An old, old sight, and yet somehow so young; aye, and not changed a wink since I first saw it, a boy, from the sandhills of Nantucket! The same!—the same!—the same to Noah as to me. There's a soft shower to leeward. Such lovely leewardings! They must lead somewhere—to something else than common land, more palmy than the palms. Leeward! the White Whale goes that way; look to windward, then; the better if the bitterer quarter. But good-bye, good-bye, old mast-head! What's this?—green? aye, tiny mosses in these warped cracks. No such green weather-stains on Ahab's head! There's the difference now between man's old age and matter's. But aye, old mast, we both grow old together; sound in our hulls, though, are we not, my ship? Aye, minus a leg, that's all. By heaven! this dead wood has the better of my live flesh every way. I can't compare with it; and I've known some ships made of dead trees outlast the lives of men made of the most vital stuff of vital fathers. What's that he said? he should still go before me, my pilot; and yet to be seen again? But where? Will I have eyes at the bottom of the sea, supposing I descend those endless stairs? and all night I've been sailing from him, wherever he did sink to. Aye, aye, like many more thou told'st direful truth as touching thyself, O Parsee; but, Ahab, there thy shot fell short. Good-bye, mast-head—keep a good eye upon the whale, the while I'm gone. We'll talk to-morrow, nay, to-night, when the White Whale lies down there, tied by head and tail.'

He gave the word; and still gazing round him, was steadily lowered through the cloven blue air to the deck.

In due time the boats were lowered; but as standing in his shallop's stern, Ahab just hovered upon the point of the descent, he waved to the mate,—who held one of the tackle-ropes on deck—and bade him pause.

'Starbuck!'

'Sir?'

'For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage, Starbuck.'

'Aye, sir, thou wilt have it so.'

'Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterward are missing, Starbuck!'

'Truth, sir: saddest truth.'

'Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of the flood;—and I feel now like a billow that's all one crested comb, Starbuck. I am old;—shake hands with me, man.'

Their hands met; their eyes fastened; Starbuck's tears the glue.

'Oh, my Captain, my Captain!—noble heart—go not—go not!—see, it's a brave man that weeps; how great the agony of the persuasion then!'

'Lower away!'—cried Ahab, tossing the mate's arm from him. 'Stand by, the crew!'

In an instant the boat was pulling round close under the stern.

'The sharks! the sharks!' cried a voice from the low cabin-window there; 'O master, my master, come back!'

But Ahab heard nothing; for his own voice was high-lifted then; and the boat leaped on.

Yet the voice spake true; for scarce had he pushed from the ship, when numbers of sharks, seemingly rising from out the dark waters beneath the hull, maliciously snapped at the blades of the oars, every time they dipped in the water; and in this way accompanied the boat with their bites. It is a thing not uncommonly happening to the whale-boats in those swarming seas; the sharks at times apparently following them in the same prescient way that vultures hover over the banners of marching regiments in the east. But these were the first sharks that had been observed by the *Pequod* since the White Whale had been first descried; and whether it was that Ahab's crew were all such tiger-yellow barbarians, and therefore their flesh more musky to the senses of the sharks—a matter sometimes well known to affect them,—however it was, they seemed to follow that one boat without molesting the others.

'Heart of wrought steel!' murmured Starbuck, gazing over the side, and following with his eyes the receding boat—'canst thou yet ring boldly to that sight?—lowering thy keel among ravening sharks, and followed by them, open-mouthed, to the chase; and this the critical third day?—For when three days flow together in one continuous intense pursuit; be sure the first is the morning, the second the noon, and the third the evening and the end of that thing—be that end what it may. Oh! my God! what is this that shoots through me, and leaves me so deadly calm, yet expectant,—fixed at the top of a shudder! Future things swim before me, as in empty outlines and skeletons; all the past is somehow grown dim. Mary, girl! thou fadest in pale glories behind me; boy! I seem to see but thy eyes grown wondrous blue. Strangest problems of life seem clearing; but clouds sweep between—Is my journey's end coming? My legs feel faint; like his who has footed it all day. Feel thy heart,—beats it yet?—Stir thyself, Starbuck!—stave it off—move, move! speak aloud!—Mast-head there! See ye my boy's hand on the hill?—Crazed;—aloft there!—keep thy keenest eye upon the boats:—mark well the whale!—Ho! again!—drive off that hawk! see! he pecks—he tears the vane'—pointing to the red flag flying at the main-truck—'Ha! he soars away with it!—Where's the old man now? see'st thou that sight, oh Ahab!—shudder, shudder!'

The boats had not gone very far, when by a signal from the mast-heads—a downward-pointed arm, Ahab knew that the whale had sounded; but intending to be near him at the next rising, he held on his way a little sideways from the vessel; the becharmed crew maintaining the profoundest silence, as the head-beat waves hammered and hammered against the opposing bow.

'Drive, drive in your nails, oh ye waves! to their uttermost heads drive them in! ye but strike a thing without a lid; and no coffin and no hearse can be mine:—and hemp only can kill me! Ha! ha!'

Suddenly the waters around them slowly swelled in broad circles; then quickly upheaved, as if sideways sliding from a submerged berg of ice, swiftly rising to the

surface. A low rumbling sound was heard; a subterraneous hum; and then all held their breaths; as bedraggled with trailing ropes, and harpoons, and lances, a vast form shot lengthwise, but obliquely, from the sea. Shrouded in a thin drooping veil of mist, it hovered for a moment in the rainbowed air; and then fell swamping back into the deep. Crushed thirty feet upward, the waters flashed for an instant like heaps of fountains, then brokenly sank in a shower of flakes, leaving the circling surface creamed like new milk round the marble trunk of the whale.

'Give way!' cried Ahab to the oarsmen, and the boats darted forward to the attack; but maddened by yesterday's fresh irons that corroded in him, Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven. The wide tiers of welded tendons overspreading his broad white forehead, beneath the transparent skin, looked knitted together; as head on, he came churning his tail among the boats; and once more flailed them apart; spilling out the irons and lances from the two mates' boats, and dashing in one side of the upper part of their bows, but leaving Ahab's almost without a scar.

While Daggoo and Queequeg were stopping the strained planks; and as the whale swimming out from them, turned, and showed one entire flank as he shot by them again; at that moment a quick cry went up. Lashed round and round to the fish's back; pinioned in the turns upon turns in which, during the past night, the whale had reeled the involutions of the lines around him, the half-torn body of the Parsee was seen; his sable raiment frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned full upon old Ahab.

The harpoon dropped from his hand.

'Befooled, befooled!'—drawing in a long lean breath—'Aye, Parsee! I see thee again. —Aye, and thou goest before; and this, *this* then is the hearse that thou didst promise. But I hold thee to the last letter of thy word. Where is the second hearse? Away, mates, to the ship! those boats are useless now; repair them if ye can in time, and return to me; if not, Ahab is enough to die—Down, men! the first thing that but offers to jump from this boat I stand in, that thing I harpoon. Ye are not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me.—Where's the whale? gone down again?'

But he looked too nigh the boat; for as if bent upon escaping with the corpse he bore, and as if the particular place of the last encounter had been but a stage in his leeward voyage, Moby Dick was now again steadily swimming forward; and had almost passed the ship,—which thus far had been sailing in the contrary direction to him, though for the present her headway had been stopped. He seemed swimming with his utmost velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his own straight path in the sea.

'Oh! Ahab,' cried Starbuck, 'not too late is it, even now, the third day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!'

Setting sail to the rising wind, the lonely boat was swiftly impelled to leeward, by both oars and canvas. And at last when Ahab was sliding by the vessel, so near as plainly to distinguish Starbuck's face as he leaned over the rail, he hailed him to turn the vessel about, and follow him, not too swiftly, at a judicious interval. Glancing upward, he saw Tashtego, Queequeg, and Daggoo, eagerly mounting to the three mast-heads; while the oarsmen were rocking in the two staved boats which had just been hoisted to the side, and were busily at work in repairing them. One after the other, through the port-holes, as he sped, he also caught flying glimpses of Stubb and Flask, busying themselves on deck among bundles of new irons and lances. As he saw all this; as he heard the hammers in the broken boats; far other hammers seemed driving a nail into his heart. But he rallied. And now marking that the vane or flag was gone from the main mast-head, he shouted to Tashtego, who had just gained that perch, to descend again for another flag, and a hammer and nails, and so nail it to the mast.

Whether fagged by the three days' running chase, and the resistance to his swimming in the knotted hamper he bore; or whether it was some latent deceitfulness and malice in him: whichever was true, the White Whale's way now began to abate, as it seemed, from the boat so rapidly nearing him once more; though indeed the whale's last start had not been so long a one as before. And still as Ahab glided over the

waves the unpitying sharks accompanied him; and so pertinaciously stuck to the boat; and so continually bit at the plying oars, that the blades became jagged and crunched, and left small splinters in the sea, at almost every dip.

'Heed them not! those teeth but give new rowlocks to your oars. Pull on! 'tis the better rest, the shark's jaw than the yielding water.'

'But at every bite, sir, the thin blades grow smaller and smaller!'

'They will last long enough! pull on!—But who can tell'—he muttered—'whether these sharks swim to feast on the whale or on Ahab?—But pull on! Aye, all alive, now—we near him. The helm! take the helm! let me pass,'—and so saying, two of the oarsmen helped him forward to the bows of the still flying boat.

At length as the craft was cast to one side, and ran ranging along with the White Whale's flank, he seemed strangely oblivious of its advance—as the whale sometimes will—and Ahab was fairly within the smoky mountain mist, which, thrown off from the whale's spout, curled round his great, Monadnock hump. He was even thus close to him; when, with body arched back, and both arms lengthwise high-lifted to the poise, he darted his fierce iron, and his far fiercer curse, into the hated whale. As both steel and curse sank to the socket, as if sucked into a morass, Moby Dick sideways writhed; spasmodically rolled his nigh flank against the bow, and, without staving a hole in it, so suddenly canted the boat over, that had it not been for the elevated part of the gunwale to which he then clung, Ahab would once more have been tossed into the sea. As it was, three of the oarsmen—who foreknew not the precise instant of the dart, and were therefore unprepared for its effects—these were flung out; but so fell, that, in an instant two of them clutched the gunwale again, and rising to its level on a combing wave, hurled themselves bodily inboard again; the third man helplessly dropping astern, but still afloat and swimming.

Almost simultaneously, with a mighty volition of ungraduated, instantaneous swiftness, the White Whale darted through the weltering sea. But when Ahab cried out to the steersman to take new turns with the line, and hold it so; and commanded the crew to turn round on their seats, and tow the boat up to the mark; the moment the treacherous line felt that double strain and tug, it snapped in the empty air!

'What breaks in me? Some sinew cracks!—'tis whole again; oars! oars! Burst in upon him!'

Hearing the tremendous rush of the sea-crashing boat, the whale wheeled round to present his blank forehead at bay; but in that evolution, catching sight of the nearing black hull of the ship; seemingly seeing in it the source of all his persecutions; bethinking it—it may be—a larger and nobler foe; of a sudden, he bore down upon its advancing prow, smiting his jaws amid fiery showers of foam.

Ahab staggered; his hand smote his forehead. 'I grow blind; hands! stretch out before me that I may yet grope my way. Is't night?'

'The whale! The ship!' cried the cringing oarsmen.

'Oars! oars! Slope downward to thy depths, O sea, that ere it be for ever too late, Ahab may slide this last, last time upon his mark! I see: the ship! the ship! Dash on, my men! Will ye not save my ship?'

But as the oarsmen violently forced their boat through the sledge-hammering seas, the before whale-smitten bow-ends of two planks burst through, and in an instant almost the temporarily disabled boat lay nearly level with the waves; its half-wading, splashing crew trying hard to stop the gap and bale out the pouring water.

Meantime, for that one beholding instant, Tashtego's mast-head hammer remained suspended in his hand; and the red flag, half-wrapping him as with a plaid, then streamed itself straight out from him, as his own forward-flowing heart; while Starbuck and Stubb, standing upon the bowsprit beneath, caught sight of the down-coming monster just as soon as he.

'The whale, the whale! Up helm, up helm! Oh, all ye sweet powers of air, now hug me close! Let not Starbuck die, if die he must, in a woman's fainting fit. Up helm, I say—ye fools, the jaw! the jaw! Is this the end of all my bursting prayers? all my life-long fidelities? Oh, Ahab, Ahab, lo, thy work. Steady! helmsman, steady. Nay, nay! Up helm again! He turns to meet us! Oh,

his unappeasable brow drives on toward one, whose duty tells him he cannot depart. My God, stand by me now! '

'Stand not by me, but stand under me, whoever you are that will now help Stubb; for Stubb, too, sticks here. I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Who ever helped Stubb, or kept Stubb awake, but Stubb's own unwinking eye? And now poor Stubb goes to bed upon a mattress that is all too soft; would it were stuffed with brushwood! I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Look ye, sun, moon, and stars! I call ye assassins of as good a fellow as ever spouted up his ghost. For all that, I would yet ring glasses with ye, would ye but hand the cup! Oh, oh! oh, oh! thou grinning whale, but there'll be plenty of gulping soon! Why fly ye not, O, Ahab? For me, off shoes and jacket to it; let Stubb die in his drawers! A most mouldy and over-salted death, though;—cherries! cherries! cherries! Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we die!'

'Cherries? I only wish that we were where they grow. Oh, Stubb, I hope my poor mother's drawn my part-pay ere this; if not, few coppers will come to her now, for the voyage is up.'

From the ship's bows, nearly all the seamen now hung inactive; hammers, bits of plank, lances, and harpoons, mechanically retained in their hands, just as they had darted from their various employments; all their enchanted eyes intent upon the whale, which from side to side strangely vibrating his predestinating head, sent a broad band of overspreading semicircular foam before him as he rushed. Retribution, swift vengeance, eternal malice were in his whole aspect, and spite of all that mortal man could do, the solid white buttress of his forehead smote the ship's starboard bow, till men and timbers reeled. Some fell flat upon their faces. Like dislodged trucks, the heads of the harpooneers aloft shook on their bull-like necks. Through the breach, they heard the waters pour, as mountain torrents down a flume.

'The ship! The hearse!—the second hearse!' cried Ahab from the boat; 'its wood could only be American!'

Diving beneath the settling ship, the whale ran quivering along its keel; but turning under water, swiftly shot to the surface again, far off the other bow, but within a few yards of Ahab's boat, where, for a time, he lay quiescent.

'I turn my body from the sun. What ho, Tashtego! let me hear thy hammer. Oh! ye three unsurrendered spires of mine; thou uncracked keel; and only god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed prow,—death-glorious ship! must ye then perish, and without me? Am I cut off from the last fond pride of meanest shipwrecked captains? Oh, lonely death on lonely life! Oh, now I feel my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief. Ho, ho! from all your furthest bounds, pour ye now in, ye bold billows of my whole foregone life, and top this one piled comber of my death! Toward thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! *Thus*, I give up the spear!'

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting velocity the line ran through the groove; ran foul. Ahab stopped to clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next instant, the heavy eye-splice in the rope's final end flew out of the stark-empty tub, knocked down an oarsman, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its depths.

For an instant, the tranced boat's crew stood still; then turned. 'The ship? Great God, where is the ship?' Soon they through dim, bewildering mediums saw her sidelong fading phantom, as in the gaseous Fata Morgana; only the uppermost masts out of water; while fixed by infatuation, or fidelity, or fate, to their once lofty perches, the pagan harpooneers still maintained their sinking lookouts on the sea. And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oar, and every lance-pole, and spinning, animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the *Pequod* out of sight.

But as the last whelmings intermixingly

poured themselves over the sunken head of the Indian at the main-mast, leaving a few inches of the erect spar yet visible, together with long streaming yards of the flag, which calmly undulated, with ironical coincidings, over the destroying billows they a!most touched:—at that instant, a red arm and a hammer hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of nailing the flag faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downward from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag, and incommoding Tashtego there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that ethereal thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death-gasp, kept his hammer frozen there; and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upward, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.

1850–51 1851

THE SONG

FAR off in the sea is Marlena,
A land of shades and streams,
A land of many delights.
Dark and bold, thy shores, Marlena;
But green, and timorous, thy soft knolls,
Crouching behind the woodlands.
All shady thy hills; all gleaming thy springs,
Like eyes in the earth looking at you.
How charming thy haunts, Marlena!—
Oh, the waters that flow through Onimoo:
Oh, the leaves that rustle through Ponoo:
Oh, the roses that blossom in Tarma.
Come, and see the valley of Vina:
How sweet, how sweet, the Isles from Hina:
'Tis aye afternoon of the full, full moon,
And ever the season of fruit,
And ever the hour of flowers,
And never the time of rains and gales,
All in and about Marlena.
Soft sigh the boughs in the stilly air,
Soft lap the beach the billows there;
And in the woods or by the streams,
You needs must nod in the Land of Dreams.

1849

HA, HA, GODS AND KINGS

HA, ha, gods and kings; fill high, one and all;
Drink, drink! shout and drink! mad respond to the call!
Fill fast, and fill full; 'gainst the goblet ne'er sin;
Quaff there, at high tide, to the uttermost rim:—
Flood-tide, and soul-tide to the brim!

Who with wine in him fears? who thinks of his cares?
Who sighs to be wise, when wine in him flares?
Water sinks down below, in currents full slow;
But wine mounts on high with its genial glow:—
Welling up, till the brain overflow!

As the spheres, with a roll, some fiery of soul,
Others golden, with music, revolve round the pole;
So let our cups, radiant with many-hued wines,
Round and round in groups circle, our Zodiac's Signs:—
Round reeling, and ringing their chimes!

Then drink, gods and kings; wine merriment brings;
It bounds through the veins; there, jubilant sings.
Let it ebb, then, and flow; wine never grows dim;
Drain down that bright tide at the foam beaded rim:—
Fill up, every cup, to the brim!

1849

QUACK! QUACK! QUACK!

QUACK! Quack! Quack!
With a toorooloo whack;
Hack away, merry men, hack away.

Who would not die brave,
His ear smote by a stave?
Thwack away, merry men, thwack away!
'Tis glory that calls,
To each hero that falls,
Hack away, merry men, hack away!
Quack! Quack! Quack!
Quack! Quack!
Quack!

1849

SHERIDAN AT CEDAR CREEK

(OCTOBER 1864)

SHOE the steed with silver
That bore him to the fray,
When he heard the guns at dawning—
Miles away;
When he heard them calling, calling—
Mount! nor stay:
Quick, or all is lost;
They've surprised and stormed the post,
They push your routed host—
Gallop! retrieve the day.

House the horse in ermine—
For the foam-flake blew
White through the red October;
He thundered into view;
They cheered him in the looming,
Horseman and horse they knew.
The turn of the tide began,
The rally of bugles ran,
He swung his hat in the van;
The electric hoof-spark flew.

Wreathe the steed and lead him—
For the charge he led
Touched and turned the cypress
Into amaranths for the head
Of Philip, king of riders,
Who raised them from the dead.
The camp (at dawning lost),
By eve, recovered—forced,
Rang with laughter of the host
At belated Early fled.

Shroud the horse in sable—
For the mounds they heap!
There is firing in the Valley,
And yet no strife they keep;
It is the parting volley,
It is the pathos deep.
There is glory for the brave
Who lead, and nobly save,
But no knowledge in the grave
Where the nameless followers sleep.

1866

IN THE PRISON PEN

(1864)

LISTLESS he eyes the palisades
And sentries in the glare;
'Tis barren as a pelican-beach—
But his world is ended there.

Nothing to do; and vacant hands
Bring on the idiot-pain;
He tries to think—to recollect,
But the blur is on his brain.

Around him swarm the plaining ghosts
Like those on Virgil's shore—
A wilderness of faces dim,
And pale ones gashed and hoar

A smiting sun. No shed, no tree;
He totters to his lair—
A den that sick hands dug in earth
Ere famine wasted there,

Or, dropping in his place, he swoons,
Walled in by throngs that press,
Till forth from the throngs they bear him dead—
Dead in his meagreness.

1866

FROM CLAREL [1]

THE GOLDEN AGE

'SEEDSMEN of old Saturn's land,
Love and peace went hand in hand,
And sowed the Era Golden!

'Golden time for man and mead:
Title none, nor title-deed,
Nor any slave, nor Soldan.

'Venus burned both large and bright,
Honey-moon from night to night,
Nor bride, nor groom waxed olden.

1 The selections, to which the titles of the first and third have been given by the editors, are, respectively, from ibid.,xv,98–99,42–44,70.

'Big the tears, but ruddy ones,
Crushed from grapes in vats and tuns
Of vineyards green and golden!

'Sweet to sour did never sue,
None repented ardour true—
Those years did so embolden.

'Glum Don Graveairs slunk in den:
Frankly roved the gods with men
In gracious talk and golden.

'Thrill it, cymbals of my rhyme,
Power was love, and love in prime,
Nor revel to toil beholden.

'Back, come back, good age, and reign,
Goodly age, and long remain—
Saturnian Age, the Golden!'

1876

Of Monasteries

The lake ink-black mid slopes of snow—
The dead-house for the frozen, barred—
And the stone hospice; chill they show
Monastic in thy pass, Bernard.
Apostle of the Alps storm-riven,
How lone didst build so near the heaven!
Anchored in seas of Nitria's sand,
The desert convent of the Copt—
No aerolite can more command
The sense of dead detachment, dropped
All solitary from the sky.
The herdsmen of Olympus lie
In summer when the eve is won
Viewing white Spermos lower down,
The mountain-convent; and winds bear
The chimes that bid the monks to prayer;
Nor man-of-war hawk sole in sky
O'er lonely ship sends lonelier cry.
The Grand Chartreuse with crystal peaks
Mid pines—the wintry Paradise
Of soul which but a Saviour seeks—
The mountains round all slabbed with ice;
May well recall the founder true,
St. Bruno, who to heaven has gone
And proved his motto—that whereto
Each locked Carthusian yet adheres:
Troubled I was, but spake I none;
I kept in mind the eternal years.
And Vallombrosa—in, shut in;
And Montserrat—enisled aloft;
With many more the verse might win,
Solitudes all, austere or soft.

But Saba! Of retreats where heart
Longing for more than downy rest,
Fit place would find from world apart,
Saba abides the loneliest:
Saba, that with an eagle's theft
Seizeth and dwelleth in the cleft.
Aloof the monks their aerie keep,
Down from their hanging cells they peep,
Like samphire-gatherers o'er the bay
Faint hearing there the hammering deep
Of surf that smites the ledges gray.

But up and down, from grot to shrine,
Along the gorge, hard by the brink
File the gowned monks in even line,
And never shrink!
With litany or dirge they wend
Where nature as in travail dwells;
And the worn grots and pensive dells
In wail for wail responses send—
Echoes in plaintive syllables.
With mystic silvery brede divine,
Saint Basil's banner of Our Lord
(In lieu of crucifix adored
By Greeks which images decline),
Stained with the five small wounds and red,
Down through the darkling gulf is led—
By night oft-times, while tapers glow
Small in the depths, as stars may show
Reflected far in well profound.

Full fifteen hundred years have wound
Since cenobite first harboured here;
The bones of men, deemed martyrs crowned,
To fossils turn in mountain near;
Nor less while now lone scribe may write,
Even now, in living dead of night,
In Saba's lamps the flames aspire—
The votaries tend the far-transmitted fire.

1876

What Is Beauty?

What is beauty? 'tis a dream
Dispensing still with gladness:
The dolphin haunteth not the shoal,
And deeps there be in sadness.

The rose-leaves, see, disbanded be—
Blowing, about me blowing;
But on the death-bed of the rose
My amaranths are growing.

1876

FROM BRIDEGROOM DICK

(1876)

WHERE'S Commander All-a-Tanto?
Where's Orlop Bob singing up from below?
Where's Rhyming Ned? has he spun his last canto?
Where's Jewsharp Jim? Where's Rigadoon Joe?
Ah, for the music over and done,
The band all dismissed save the droned trombone!
Where's Glen o' the gun-room, who loved Hot-Scotch—
Glen, prompt and cool in a perilous watch?
Where's flaxen-haired Phil? a grey lieutenant?
Or rubicund, flying a dignified pennant?
But where sleeps his brother?—the cruise it was o'er,
But ah, for death's grip that welcomed him ashore!
Where's Sid, the cadet, so frank in his brag,
Whose toast was audacious—'*Here's Sid, and Sid's flag!*'
Like holiday craft that have sunk unknown,
May a lark of a lad go lonely down?
Who takes the census under the sea?
Can others like old ensigns be,
Bunting I hoisted to flutter at the gaff—
Rags in end that once were flags
Gallant streaming from the staff?
Such scurvy doom could the chances deal
To Top-Gallant Harry and Jack Genteel?
Lo, Genteel Jack in hurricane weather,
Shagged like a bear, like a red lion roaring;
But O, so fine in his chapeau and feather,
In port to the ladies never once *jawing*;
All bland *politesse*, how urbane was he—
'*Oui, mademoiselle*'—'*Ma chère amie!* '

'Twas Jack got up the ball at Naples,
Gay in the old *Ohio* glorious;
His hair was curled by the berth-deck barber,
Never you'd deemed him a cub of rude Boreas;
In tight little pumps, with the grand dames in rout,
A-flinging his shapely foot all about;
His watch-chain with love's jewelled tokens abounding,
Curls ambrosial shaking out odours,
Waltzing along the batteries, astounding
The gunner glum and the grim-visaged loaders.

Wife, where be all these blades, I wonder,
Pennoned fine fellows, so strong, so gay?
Never their colours with a dip dived under;
Have they hauled them down in a lack-lustre day,
Or beached their boats in the Far, Far Away?
Hither and thither, blown wide asunder,
Where's this fleet, I wonder and wonder.
Slipt their cables, rattled their adieu
(Whereaway pointing? to what rendezvous?),
Out of sight, out of mind, like the crack *Constitution*,
And many a keel time never shall renew—
Bon Homme Dick o' the buff Revolution,
The *Black Cockade* and the staunch *True-Blue*.

Doff hats to Decatur! But where is his blazon?
Must merited fame endure time's wrong—
Glory's ripe grape wizen up to a raisin?
Yes! For Nature teems, and the years are strong,
And who can keep the tally o' the names that fleet along?

But his frigate, wife, his bride? Would blacksmiths brown
Into smithereens smite the solid old renown?

Riveting the bolts in the ironclad's shell,
Hark to the hammers with a *rat-tat-tat*;
'Handier a *Derby* than a laced cocked hat!
The *Monitor* was ugly, but she served us right well,
Better than the *Cumberland*, a beauty and the belle.'
Better than the Cumberland!—Heart alive in me!
That battlemented hull, Tantallon o' the sea,
Kicked in, as at Boston the taxed chests o' tea!
Aye, spurned by the *ram*, once a tall, shapely craft,
But lopped by the *Rebs* to an iron-beaked raft—
A blacksmith's unicorn in armour *cap-à-pie*.

Under the water-line a *ram*'s blow is dealt:
And foul fall the knuckles that strike below the belt.
Nor brave the inventions that serve to replace
The openness of valour while dismantling the grace.

Aloof from all this and the never-ending game,
Tantamount to teetering, plot and counter-plot;
Impenetrable armour—all-perforating shot;
Aloof, bless God, ride the warships of old,
A grand fleet moored in the roadstead of fame;
Not submarine sneaks with *them* are enrolled;
Their long shadows dwarf us, their flags are as flame.

Don't fidget so, wife; an old man's passion
Amounts to no more than this smoke that I puff;
There, there, now, buss me in good old fashion;
A died-down candle will flicker in the snuff.

1888

FROM THE HAGLETS

THERE, peaked and grey, three haglets fly,
And follow, follow fast in wake
Where slides the cabin-lustre shy,
And sharks from man a glamour take,
Seething along the line of light
In lane that endless rules the warship's flight.
The sea-fowl here, whose hearts none know,
They followed late the flagship quelled,
(As now the victor one) and long
Above her gurgling grave, shrill held
With screams their wheeling rites—then sped
Direct in silence where the victor led.
Now winds less fleet, but fairer, blow,
A ripple laps the coppered side,
While phosphor sparks make ocean gleam,
Like camps lit up in triumph wide;
With lights and tinkling cymbals meet
Acclaiming seas the advancing conqueror greet.

But who a flattering tide may trust,
Or favouring breeze, or aught in end?—
Careening under startling blasts
The sheeted towers of sails impend;
While, gathering bale, behind is bred
A livid storm-bow, like a rainbow dead.
At trumpet-call the topmen spring;
And, urged by after-call in stress,
Yet other tribes of tars ascend
The rigging's howling wilderness;
But ere yard-ends alert they win,
Hell rules in heaven with hurricane-fire and din.
The spars, athwart at spiry height,
Like quaking Lima's crosses rock;
Like bees the clustering sailors cling
Against the shrouds, or take the shock
Flat on the swept yard-arms aslant,
Dipped like the wheeling condor's pinions gaunt.
A lull! and tongues of languid flame
Lick every boom, and lambent show
Electric 'gainst each face aloft;
The herds of clouds with bellowings go:
The black ship rears—beset—harassed,
Then plunges far with luminous antlers vast.
In trim betimes they turn from land,
Some shivered sails and spars they stow:
One watch, dismissed, they troll the can,
While loud the billow thumps the bow—
Vies with the fist that smites the board,
Obstreperous at each reveller's jovial word.
Of royal oak by storms confirmed,
The tested hull her lineage shows:
Vainly the plungings whelm her prow—
She rallies, rears, she sturdier grows;
Each shot-hole plugged, each storm-sail home,
With batteries housed she rams the watery dome.

1888

MONODY

To have known him, to have loved him
After loneness long;
And then to be estranged in life,
And neither in the wrong;
And now for death to set his seal—
Ease me, a little ease, my song!

By wintry hills his hermit-mound
The sheeted snow-drifts drape,
And houseless there the snow-bird flits
Beneath the fir-trees' crape:

Glazed now with ice the cloistral vine
That hid the shyest grape.

1891

IN THE PAUPER'S TURNIP-FIELD

Crow, in pulpit lone and tall
Of yon charred hemlock, grimly dead,
Why on me in preachment call—
Me, by nearer preachment led
Here in homily of my hoe.
The hoe, the hoe,
My heavy hoe
That earthward bows me to foreshow
A mattock heavier than the hoe.

1924

ART

In placid hours well pleased we dream
Of many a brave unbodied scheme.
But form to lend, pulsed life create,
What unlike things must meet and mate:
A flame to melt—a wind to freeze;
Sad patience—joyous energies;
Humility—yet pride and scorn;
Instinct and study; love and hate;
Audacity—reverence. These must mate
And fuse with Jacob's mystic heart,
To wrestle with the angel—Art.

1891

POEMS OF THE CIVIL WAR

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS

1819–1892

DIRGE

For One Who Fell in Battle

Room for a Soldier! lay him in the clover;
He loved the fields, and they shall be his cover;
Make his mound with hers who called him once her lover:
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Bear him to no dismal tomb under city churches;
Take him to the fragrant fields, by the silver birches,
Where the whip-poor-will shall mourn, where the oriole perches:
Make his mound with sunshine on it,
Where the bee will dine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the rain will rain upon it.

Busy as the bee was he, and his rest should be the clover;
Gentle as the lamb was he, and the fern should be his cover;
Fern and rosemary shall grow my soldier's pillow over:
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Sunshine in his heart, the rain would come full often
Out of those tender eyes which evermore did soften:
He never *could* look cold till we saw him in his coffin.
Make his mound with sunshine on it,
Plant the lordly pine upon it,
Where the moon may stream upon it,
And memory shall dream upon it.

'Captain or Colonel,'—whatever invocation
Suit our hymn the best, no matter for thy station,—
On thy grave the rain shall fall from the eyes of a mighty nation!
Long as the sun doth shine upon it
Shall glow the goodly pine upon it,
Long as the stars do gleam upon it
Shall memory come to dream upon it.

1872

HENRY HOWARD BROWNELL

1820–1872

FROM THE RIVER-FIGHT

(MISSISSIPPI RIVER, APRIL 24, 1862)

WOULD you hear of the River-Fight?
It was two, of a soft spring night—
  God's stars looked down on all,
And all was clear and bright
But the low fog's chilling breath—
Up the River of Death
  Sailed the Great Admiral.

On our high poop-deck he stood,
  And round him ranged the men
Who have made their birthright good
  Of manhood, once and again—
Lords of helm and of sail,
Tried in tempest and gale,
  Bronzed in battle and wreck—
Bell and Bailey grandly led
Each his Line of the Blue and Red—
Wainwright stood by our starboard rail,
  Thornton fought the deck.

And I mind me of more than they,
  Of the youthful, steadfast ones,
  That have shown them worthy sons
Of the Seamen passed away—
(Tyson conned our helm that day,
  Watson stood by his guns.)

What thought our Admiral then,
Looking down on his men?
  Since the terrible day,
    (Day of renown and tears!)
  When at anchor the Essex lay,
  Holding her foes at bay,
When, a boy, by Porter's side he stood
Till deck and plank-shear were dyed with blood,
    'Tis a half a hundred years—
  Half a hundred years, to-day!

Who could fail, with him?
Who reckon of life or limb?
  Not a pulse but beat the higher!
There had you seen, by the star-light dim,
Five hundred faces strong and grim—
  The Flag is going under fire!
Right up by the fort, with her helm hard-a-port,
  The Hartford is going under fire!

The way to our work was plain,
Caldwell had broken the chain,
(Two hulks swung down amain,
  Soon as 'twas sundered)—
Under the night's dark blue,
Steering steady and true,
Ship after ship went through—
Till, as we hove in view,
  Jackson out-thundered.

Back echoed Philip!—ah, then,
Could you have seen our men,
  How they sprung, in the dim night haze,
To their work of toil and of clamor!
How the loaders, with sponge and rammer,
And their captains, with cord and hammer,
  Kept every muzzle ablaze!
How the guns, as with cheer and shout
Our tackle-men hurled them out,
  Brought up on the water-ways!

First, as we fired at their flash,
  'Twas lightning and black eclipse,
With a bellowing roll and crash—
But soon, upon either bow,
  What with forts, and fire-rafts, and ships—
(The whole fleet was hard at it now,
All pounding away!)—and Porter
Still thundering with shell and mortar—
  'Twas the mighty sound and form
  Of an Equatorial storm!

(Such you see in the Far South,
After long heat and drouth,
  As day draws nigh to even—
Arching from North to South,
    Blinding the tropic sun,
    The great black bow comes on,
  Till the thunder-veil is riven,
  When all is crash and levin,
  And the cannonade of heaven
    Rolls down the Amazon!)

But, as we worked along higher,
  Just where the river enlarges,
Down came a pyramid of fire—
  It was one of your long coal barges.
  (We had often had the like before)—
'Twas coming down on us to larboard,
  Well in with the eastern shore—

And our pilot, to let it pass round,
(You may guess we never stopped to sound,)
Giving us a rank sheer to starboard,
Ran the Flag hard and fast aground!

'Twas nigh abreast of the Upper Fort,
And straightway a rascal Ram
(She was shaped like the devil's dam)
Puffed away for us, with a snort,
And shoved it with spiteful strength,
Right alongside of us, to port—
It was all of our ship's length,
A huge crackling Cradle of the Pit,
Pitch-pine knots to the brim,
Belching flame red and grim—
What a roar came up from it!

Well, for a little it looked bad—
But these things are, somehow, shorter
In the acting than the telling—
There was no singing-out nor yelling,
Nor any fussing and fretting,
No stampede, in short—
But there we were, my lad,
All a-fire on our port quarter!
Hammocks a-blaze in the netting,
Flames spouting in at every port—
Our Fourth Cutter burning at the davit,
(No chance to lower away and save it.)

In a twinkling, the flames had risen
Halfway to main top and mizzen,
Darting up the shrouds like snakes!
Ah, how we clanked at the brakes,
And the deep steam-pumps throbbed under,
Sending a ceaseless flow—
Our top-men, a dauntless crowd,
Swarmed in rigging and shroud—
There, ('twas a wonder!)
The burning ratlines and strands
They quenched with their bare hard hands—
But the great guns below
Never silenced their thunder!

At last, by backing and sounding,
When we were clear of grounding,
And under head-way once more,
The whole rebel fleet came rounding
The point — if we had it hot before,
'Twas now, from shore to shore,
One long, loud thundering roar—
Such crashing, splintering, and pounding,
And smashing as you never heard before!

But that we fought foul wrong to wreck,
And to save the Land we loved so well,
You might have deemed our long gun deck
Two hundred feet of hell!

For all above was battle,
Broadside, and blaze, and rattle,
Smoke and thunder alone—
(But, down in the sick-bay,
Where our wounded and dying lay,
There was scarce a sob or a moan.)

And at last, when the dim day broke,
And the sullen sun awoke,
Drearily blinking
O'er the haze and the cannon-smoke,
That ever such morning dulls—
There were thirteen traitor hulls
On fire and sinking!
. . . .

1866

WILLIAM TUCKEY MEREDITH

1839– ?

FARRAGUT

(Mobile Bay, 5 August, 1864)

Farragut, Farragut,
Old Heart of Oak,
Daring Dave Farragut,
Thunderbolt stroke,
Watches the hoary mist
Lift from the bay,
Till his flag, glory-kissed,
Greets the young day.

Far, by gray Morgan's walls,
Looms the black fleet.
Hark, deck to rampart calls
With the drums' beat!
Buoy your chains overboard,
While the steam hums;
Men! to the battlement,
Farragut comes.

See, as the hurricane
Hurtles in wrath

Squadrons of clouds amain
  Back from its path!
Back to the parapet,
  To the guns' lips,
Thunderbolt Farragut
  Hurls the black ships.

Now through the battle's roar
  Clear the boy sings,
'By the mark fathoms four,'
  While his lead swings.
Steady the wheelmen five
  'Nor' by East keep her,'
'Steady,' but two alive:
  How the shells sweep her!

Lashed to the mast that sways
  Over red decks,
Over the flame that plays
  Round the torn wrecks,
Over the dying lips
  Framed for a cheer,
Farragut leads his ships,
  Guides the line clear.

On by heights cannon-browed,
  While the spars quiver;
Onward still flames the cloud
  Where the hulks shiver.
See, yon fort's star is set,
  Storm and fire past.
Cheer him, lads—Farragut,
  Lashed to the mast!

Oh! while Atlantic's breast
  Bears a white sail,
While the Gulf's towering crest
  Tops a green vale,
Men thy bold deeds shall tell,
  Old Heart of Oak,
Daring Dave Farragut,
  Thunderbolt stroke!

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ

1822–1872

SHERIDAN'S RIDE

Up from the South at break of day,
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
  The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
  Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door,
  The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,
  Telling the battle was on once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war,
Thundered along the horizon's bar;
And louder yet into Winchester rolled
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good broad highway leading down;
And there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night,
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,
As if he knew the terrible need;
He stretched away with his utmost speed;
Hills rose and fell; but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprung from those swift hoofs, thundering South,
The dust, like smoke from the cannon's mouth;
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.
The heart of the steed, and the heart of the master
Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,
Impatient to be where the battle-field calls;
Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,
With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet the road
Like an arrowy Alpine river flowed,
And the landscape sped away behind
Like an ocean flying before the wind,
And the steed, like a bark fed with furnace ire,
Swept on, with his wild eye full of fire.
But lo! he is nearing his heart's desire;

He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops,
What was done? what to do? a glance told him both,
Then striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line, 'mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.
With foam and with dust, the black charger was gray;
By the flash of his eye, and the red nostril's play,
He seemed to the whole great army to say,
'I have brought you Sheridan all the way
From Winchester, down to save the day!'

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky,
The American soldiers' Temple of Fame,
There with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,
'Here is the steed that saved the day,
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester, twenty miles away!'

1865

GEORGE HENRY BOKER

1823–1890

DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER

IN MEMORY OF GENERAL PHILIP KEARNY KILLED SEPTEMBER 1, 1862

CLOSE his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon, or set of sun,
Hand of man, or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
Sleep forever and forever.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

Fold him in his country's stars,
Roll the drum and fire the volley!
What to him are all our wars,
What but death bemocking folly?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

Leave him to God's watching eye;
Trust him to the hand that made him.
Mortal love weeps idly by:
God alone has power to aid him.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

1864

WILLIAM HENRY THOMPSON

1848–1918

THE HIGH TIDE AT GETTYSBURG[1]

A CLOUD possessed the hollow field,
The gathering battle's smoky shield.
  Athwart the gloom the lightning flashed,
  And through the cloud some horseman dashed,
And from the heights the thunder pealed.

Then at the brief command of Lee
Moved out that matchless infantry,
  With Pickett leading grandly down,
  To rush against the roaring crown
Of those dread heights of destiny.

Far heard above the angry guns
A cry across the tumult runs,—
  The voice that rang through Shiloh's woods
  And Chickamauga's solitudes,
The fierce South cheering on her sons!

Ah, how the withering tempest blew
Against the front of Pettigrew!
  A Khamsin wind that scorched and singed
  Like that infernal flame that fringed
The British squares at Waterloo!

A thousand fell where Kemper led;
A thousand died where Garnett bled:
  In blinding flame and strangling smoke
  The remnant through the batteries broke
And crossed the works with Armistead.

'Once more in Glory's van with me!'
Virginia cried to Tennessee;
  'We two together, come what may,
  Shall stand upon these works to-day!'
(The reddest day in history.)

Brave Tennessee! In reckless way
Virginia heard her comrade say:
  'Close round this rent and riddled rag!'
  What time she set her battle-flag
Amid the guns of Doubleday.

But who shall break the guards that wait
Before the awful face of Fate?
  The tattered standards of the South
  Were shriveled at the cannon's mouth,
And all her hopes were desolate.

In vain the Tennesseean set
His breast against the bayonet!
  In vain Virginia charged and raged,
  A tigress in her wrath uncaged,
Till all the hill was red and wet!

Above the bayonets, mixed and crossed,
Men saw a gray, gigantic ghost
  Receding through the battle-cloud,
  And heard across the tempest loud
The death-cry of a nation lost!

The brave went down! Without disgrace
They leaped to Ruin's red embrace.
  They only heard Fame's thunders wake,
  And saw the dazzling sun-burst break
In smiles on Glory's bloody face!

They fell, who lifted up a hand
And bade the sun in heaven to stand!
  They smote and fell, who set the bars
  Against the progress of the stars,
And stayed the march of Motherland!

They stood, who saw the future come
On through the fight's delirium!
  They smote and stood, who held the hope
  Of nations on that slippery slope
Amid the cheers of Christendom.

God lives! He forged the iron will
That clutched and held that trembling hill.
  God lives and reigns! He built and lent
  The heights for Freedom's battlement
Where floats her flag in triumph still!

Fold up the banners! Smelt the guns!
Love rules. Her gentler purpose runs.
  A mighty mother turns in tears
  The pages of her battle years,
Lamenting all her fallen sons!

[1] The poem was delivered by Thompson, a Confederate veteran, at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Battle of Gettysburg, on 4 July 1888.

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP
1851–1898

KEENAN'S CHARGE
(CHANCELLORSVILLE, MAY, 1863)

1

THE sun had set;
The leaves with dew were wet:
Down fell a bloody dusk
On the woods, that second of May,
Where Stonewall's corps, like a beast of prey,
Tore through, with angry tusk.

'They've trapped us, boys!'—
Rose from our flank a voice.
With a rush of steel and smoke
On came the rebels straight,
Eager as love and wild as hate;
And our line reeled and broke;

Broke and fled.
No one stayed—but the dead!
With curses, shrieks, and cries,
Horses and wagons and men
Tumbled back through the shuddering glen,
And above us the fading skies.

There's one hope, still—
Those batteries parked on the hill!
'Battery, wheel!' ('mid the roar)
'Pass pieces; fix prolonge to fire
Retiring. Trot!' In the panic dire
A bugle rings 'Trot!'—and no more.

The horses plunged,
The cannon lurched and lunged,
To join the hopeless rout.
But suddenly rode a form
Calmly in front of the human storm,
With a stern, commanding shout:

'Align those guns!'
(We knew it was Pleasonton's.)
The cannoneers bent to obey,
And worked with a will at his word:
And the black guns moved as if *they* had heard.
But ah, the dread delay!

'To wait is crime;
O God, for ten minutes' time!'
The General looked around.
There Keenan sat, like a stone,
With his three hundred horse alone,
Less shaken than the ground.

'Major, your men?'
'Are soldiers, General.' 'Then
Charge, Major! Do your best:
Hold the enemy back, at all cost,
Till my guns are placed;—else the army is lost.
You die to save the rest!'

2

By the shrouded gleam of the western skies,
Brave Keenan looked into Pleasonton's eyes
For an instant—clear, and cool, and still;
Then, with a smile, he said: 'I will.'

'Cavalry, charge!' Not a man of them shrank.
Their sharp, full cheer, from rank on rank,
Rose joyously, with a willing breath—
Rose like a greeting hail to death.
Then forward they sprang, and spurred and clashed;
Shouted the officers, crimson-sashed;
Rode well the men, each brave as his fellow,
In their faded coats of the blue and yellow;
And above in the air, with an instinct true,
Like a bird of war their pennon flew.

With clank of scabbards and thunder of steeds,
And blades that shine like sunlit reeds,
And strong brown faces bravely pale
For fear their proud attempt shall fail,
Three hundred Pennsylvanians close
On twice ten thousand gallant foes.

Line after line the troopers came
To the edge of the wood that was ring'd with flame;
Rode in and sabred and shot—and fell;
Nor came one back his wounds to tell.
And full in the midst rose Keenan, tall
In the gloom like a martyr awaiting his fall,
While the circle-stroke of his sabre, swung
'Round his head, like a halo there, luminous hung.

Line after line, aye, whole platoons,
Struck dead in their saddles—of brave dragoons
By the maddened horses were onward borne
And into the vortex flung, trampled and torn;
As Keenan fought with his men, side by side.

So they rode, till there were no more to ride.

But over them, lying there shattered and mute,
What deep echo rolls?—'Tis a death-salute
From the cannon in place; for, heroes, you braved
Your fate not in vain: the army was saved!

Over them now—year following year—
Over their graves the pine-cones fall,
And the whip-poor-will chants his spectre-call;
But they stir not again: they raise no cheer:
They have ceased. But their glory shall never cease,
Nor their light be quenched in the light of peace.
The rush of their charge is resounding still
That saved the army at Chancellorsville.

1892

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1809–1865

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NATIONAL CEMETERY, NOVEMBER 19, 1863

FOURSCORE and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate —we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow —this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us —that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

WALT WHITMAN

1819–1892

A BACKWARD GLANCE O'ER TRAVEL'D ROADS [1]

PERHAPS the best of songs heard, or of any and all true love, or life's fairest episodes, or sailors', soldiers' trying scenes on land or sea, is the *résumé* of them, or any of them, long afterwards, looking at the actualities away back past, with all their practical excitations gone. How the soul loves to float amid such reminiscences!

So here I sit gossiping in the early candle-light of old age—I and my book—casting backward glances over our travel'd road. After completing, as it were, the journey—(a varied jaunt of years, with

1 The essay served as preface to *November Boughs* (Philadelphia, 1888).

many halts and gaps of intervals—or some lengthen'd ship-voyage, wherein more than once the last hour had apparently arrived, and we seem'd certainly going down—yet reaching port in a sufficient way through all discomfitures at last)—After completing my poems, I am curious to review them in the light of their own (at the time unconscious, or mostly unconscious) intentions, with certain unfoldings of the thirty years they seek to embody. These lines, therefore, will probably blend the weft of first purposes and speculations, with the warp of that experience afterwards, always bringing strange developments.

Result of seven or eight stages and struggles extending through nearly thirty years, (as I nigh my three-score-and-ten I live largely on memory,) I look upon *Leaves of Grass*, now finish'd to the end of its opportunities and powers, as my definitive *carte visite* to the coming generations of the New World,[1] if I may assume to say so. That I have not gain'd the acceptance of my own time, but have fallen back on fond dreams of the future—anticipations—('still lives the song, though Regnar dies')—That from a worldly and business point of view *Leaves of Grass* has been worse than a failure—that public criticism on the book and myself as author of it yet shows mark'd anger and contempt more than anything else—('I find a solid line of enemies to you everywhere,'—letter from W.S.K., Boston, May 28, 1884)—And that solely for publishing it I have been the object of two or three pretty serious special official buffetings—is all probably no more than I ought to have expected. I had my choice when I commenc'd. I bid neither for soft eulogies, big money returns, nor the approbation of existing schools and conventions. As fulfill'd, or partially fulfill'd, the best comfort of the whole business (after a small band of the dearest friends and upholders ever vouchsafed to man or cause—doubtless all the more faithful and uncompromising—this little phalanx!—for being so few) is that, unstopp'd and unwarp'd by any influence outside the soul within me, I have had my say entirely my own way, and put it unerringly on record—the value thereof to be decided by time.

In calculating that decision, William O'Connor and Dr. Bucke are far more peremptory than I am. Behind all else that can be said, I consider *Leaves of Grass* and its theory experimental—as, in the deepest sense, I consider our American republic itself to be, with its theory. (I think I have at least enough philosophy not to be too absolutely certain of anything, or any results.) In the second place, the volume is a *sortie*—whether to prove triumphant, and conquer its field of aim and escape and construction, nothing less than a hundred years from now can fully answer. I consider the point that I have positively gain'd a hearing, to far more than make up for any and all other lacks and withholdings. Essentially, *that* was from the first, and has remain'd throughout, the main object. Now it seems to be achiev'd, I am certainly contented to waive any otherwise momentous drawbacks, as of little account. Candidly and dispassionately reviewing all my intentions, I feel that they were creditable—and I accept the result, whatever it may be.

After continued personal ambition and effort, as a young fellow, to enter with the rest into competition for the usual rewards, business, political, literary, &c.—to take part in the great *mêlée*, both for victory's prize itself and to do some good—After years of those aims and pursuits, I found myself remaining possess'd, at the age of thirty-one to thirty-three, with a special desire and conviction. Or rather, to be quite exact, a desire that had been flitting through my previous life, or hovering on the flanks, mostly indefinite hitherto, had steadily advanced to the front, defined itself, and finally dominated everything else. This was a feeling or ambition to articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual, and æsthetic Personality, in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate days, and of current America—and to exploit that Personality, identified with place and date, in a far more candid and comprehensive sense than any hitherto poem or book.

Perhaps this is in brief, or suggests, all I

1 'When Champollion, on his death-bed, handed to the printer the revised proof of his *Egyptian Grammar*, he said gayly, "Be careful of this—it is my *carte de visite* to posterity." ' Author's note, ibid., 5.

have sought to do. Given the Nineteenth Century, with the United States, and what they furnish as area and points of view, *Leaves of Grass* is, or seeks to be, simply a faithful and doubtless self-will'd record. In the midst of all, it gives one man's—the author's—identity, ardors, observations, faiths, and thoughts, color'd hardly at all with any decided coloring from other faiths or other identities. Plenty of songs had been sung—beautiful, matchless songs —adjusted to other lands than these—another spirit and stage of evolution; but I would sing, and leave out or put in, quite solely with reference to America and to-day. Modern science and democracy seem'd to be throwing out their challenge to poetry to put them in its statements in contradistinction to the songs and myths of the past. As I see it now (perhaps too late,) I have unwittingly taken up that challenge and made an attempt at such statements—which I certainly would not assume to do now, knowing more clearly what it means.

For grounds for *Leaves of Grass*, as a poem, I abandon'd the conventional themes, which do not appear in it: none of the stock ornamentation, or choice plots of love or war, or high, exceptional personages of Old-World song; nothing, as I may say, for beauty's sake—no legend, or myth, or romance, nor euphemism, nor rhyme. But the broadest average of humanity and its identities in the now ripening Nineteenth Century, and especially in each of their countless examples and practical occupations in the United States to-day.

One main contrast of the ideas behind every page of my verses, compared with establish'd poems, is their different relative attitude towards God, towards the objective universe, and still more (by reflection, confession, assumption, &c.) the quite changed attitude of the ego, the one chanting or talking, towards himself and towards his fellow-humanity. It is certainly time for America, above all, to begin this readjustment in the scope and basic point of view of verse; for everything else has changed. As I write, I see in an article on Wordsworth, in one of the current English magazines, the lines, 'A few weeks ago an eminent French critic said that, owing to the special tendency to science and to its all-devouring force, poetry would cease to be read in fifty years.' But I anticipate the very contrary. Only a firmer, vastly broader, new area begins to exist—nay, is already form'd—to which the poetic genius must emigrate. Whatever may have been the case in years gone by, the true use for the imaginative faculty of modern times is to give ultimate vivification to facts, to science, and to common lives, endowing them with the glows and glories and final illustriousness which belong to every real thing, and to real things only. Without that ultimate vivification—which the poet or other artist alone can give—reality would seem incomplete, and science, democracy, and life itself, finally in vain.

Few appreciate the moral revolutions of our age, which have been profounder far than the material or inventive or war-produced ones. The Nineteenth Century, now well towards its close (and ripening into fruit the seeds of the two preceding centuries[1])—the uprisings of national masses and shiftings of boundary-lines—the historical and other prominent facts of the United States—the war of attempted Secession—the stormy rush and haste of nebulous forces—never can future years witness more excitement and din of action —never completer change of army front along the whole line, the whole civilized world. For all these new and evolutionary facts, meanings, purposes, new poetic messages, new forms and expressions, are inevitable.

My Book and I—what a period we have presumed to span! those thirty years from 1850 to '80—and America in them! Proud, proud indeed may we be, if we have cull'd enough of that period in its own spirit to worthily waft a few live breaths of it to the future!

Let me not dare, here or anywhere, for my own purposes, or any purposes, to attempt the definition of Poetry, nor answer the question what it is. Like Religion, Love, Nature, while those terms are indis-

1 'The ferment and germination even of the United States to-day, dating back to, and in my opinion mainly founded on, the Elizabethan age in English history, the age of Francis Bacon and Shakspere. Indeed, when we pursue it, what growth or advent is there that does not date back, back, until lost—perhaps its most tantalizing clues lost—in the receded horizons of the past?' Author's note, ibid.,8.

pensable, and we all give a sufficiently accurate meaning to them, in my opinion no definition that has ever been made sufficiently encloses the name Poetry; nor can any rule or convention ever so absolutely obtain but some great exception may arise and disregard and overturn it.

Also it must be carefully remember'd that first-class literature does not shine by any luminosity of its own; nor do its poems. They grow of circumstances, and are evolutionary. The actual living light is always curiously from elsewhere—follows unaccountable sources, and is lunar and relative at the best. There are, I know, certain controling themes that seem endlessly appropriated to the poets—as war, in the past—in the Bible, religious rapture and adoration—always love, beauty, some fine plot, or pensive or other emotion. But, strange as it may sound at first, I will say there is something striking far deeper and towering far higher than those themes for the best elements of modern song.

Just as all the old imaginative works rest, after their kind, on long trains of presuppositions, often entirely unmention'd by themselves, yet supplying the most important bases of them, and without which they could have had no reason for being, so *Leaves of Grass*, before a line was written, presupposed something different from any other, and, as it stands, is the result of such presupposition. I should say, indeed, it were useless to attempt reading the book without first carefully tallying that preparatory background and quality in the mind. Think of the United States to-day—the facts of these thirty-eight or forty empires solder'd in one—sixty or seventy millions of equals, with their lives, their passions, their future —these incalculable, modern, American, seething multitudes around us, of which we are inseparable parts! Think, in comparison, of the petty environage and limited area of the poets of past or present Europe, no matter how great their genius. Think of the absence and ignorance, in all cases hitherto, of the multitudinousness, vitality, and the unprecedented stimulants of to-day and here. It almost seems as if a poetry with cosmic and dynamic features of magnitude and limitlessness suitable to the human soul, were never possible before. It is certain that a poetry of absolute faith and equality for the use of the democratic masses never was.

In estimating first-class song, a sufficient Nationality, or, on the other hand, what may be call'd the negative and lack of it, (as in Goethe's case, it sometimes seems to me,) is often, if not always, the first element. One needs only a little penetration to see, at more or less removes, the material facts of their country and radius, with the coloring of the moods of humanity at the time, and its gloomy or hopeful prospects, behind all poets and each poet, and forming their birth-marks. I know very well that my *Leaves* could not possibly have emerged or been fashion'd or completed, from any other era than the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, nor any other land than democratic America, and from the absolute triumph of the National Union arms.

And whether my friends claim it for me or not, I know well enough, too, that in respect to pictorial talent, dramatic situations, and especially in verbal melody and all the conventional technique of poetry, not only the divine works that to-day stand ahead in the world's reading, but dozens more, transcend (some of them immeasurably transcend) all I have done, or could do. But it seem'd to me, as the objects in Nature, the themes of æstheticism, and all special exploitations of the mind and soul, involve not only their own inherent quality, but the quality, just as inherent and important, of *their point of view*,[1] the time had come to reflect all themes and things, old and new, in the lights thrown on them by the advent of America and democracy—to chant those themes through the utterance of one, not only the grateful and reverent legatee of the past, but the born child of the New World—to illustrate all through the genesis and ensemble of to-day; and that such illustration and ensemble are the chief demands of America's prospective imaginative literature. Not to carry out, in the approved style, some choice plot of fortune or misfortune, or fancy, or fine thoughts, or incidents, or courtesies—all of which has been done overwhelmingly and well, probably never to be excell'd—but that while in such æsthetic presenta-

1 'According to Immanuel Kant, the last essential reality, giving shape and significance to all the rest.' Author's note, ibid., 10.

tion of objects, passions, plots, thoughts, &c., our lands and days do not want, and probably will never have, anything better than they already possess from the bequests of the past, it still remains to be said that there is even towards all those a subjective and contemporary point of view appropriate to ourselves alone, and to our new genius and environments, different from anything hitherto; and that such conception of current or gone-by life and art is for us the only means of their assimilation consistent with the Western world.

Indeed, and anyhow, to put it specifically, has not the time arrived when, (if it must be plainly said, for democratic America's sake, if for no other) there must imperatively come a readjustment of the whole theory and nature of Poetry? The question is important, and I may turn the argument over and repeat it: Does not the best thought of our day and Republic conceive of a birth and spirit of song superior to anything past or present? To the effectual and moral consolidation of our lands (already, as materially establish'd, the greatest factors in known history, and far, far greater through what they prelude and necessitate, and are to be in future)—to conform with and build on the concrete realities and theories of the universe furnish'd by science, and henceforth the only irrefragable basis for anything, verse included—to root both influences in the emotional and imaginative action of the modern time, and dominate all that precedes or opposes them—is not either a radical advance and step forward, or a new verteber of the best song indispensable?

The New World receives with joy the poems of the antique, with European feudalism's rich fund of epics, plays, ballads—seeks not in the least to deaden or displace those voices from our ear and area—holds them indeed as indispensable studies, influences, records, comparisons. But though the dawn-dazzle of the sun of literature is in those poems for us of to-day—though perhaps the best parts of current character in nations, social groups, or any man's or woman's individuality, Old World or New, are from them—and though if I were ask'd to name the most precious bequest to current American civilization from all the hitherto ages, I am not sure but I would name those old and less old songs ferried hither from east and west—some serious words and debits remain; some acrid considerations demand a hearing. Of the great poems receiv'd from abroad and from the ages, and to-day enveloping and penetrating America, is there one that is consistent with these United States, or essentially applicable to them as they are and are to be? Is there one whose underlying basis is not a denial and insult to democracy? What a comment it forms, anyhow, on this era of literary fulfilment, with the splendid day-rise of science and resuscitation of history, that our chief religious and poetical works are not our own, nor adapted to our light, but have been furnish'd by far-back ages out of their arriere and darkness, or, at most, twilight dimness! What is there in those works that so imperiously and scornfully dominates all our advanced civilization, and culture?

Even Shakspere, who so suffuses current letters and art (which indeed have in most degrees grown out of him,) belongs essentially to the buried past. Only he holds the proud distinction for certain important phases of that past, of being the loftiest of the singers life has yet given voice to. All, however, relate to and rest upon conditions, standards, politics, sociologies, ranges of belief, that have been quite eliminated from the Eastern hemisphere, and never existed at all in the Western. As authoritative types of song they belong in America just about as much as the persons and institutes they depict. True, it may be said, the emotional, moral, and æsthetic natures of humanity have not radically changed—that in these the old poems apply to our times and all times, irrespective of date; and that they are of incalculable value as pictures of the past. I willingly make those admissions, and to their fullest extent; then advance the points herewith as of serious, even paramount importance.

I have indeed put on record elsewhere my reverence and eulogy for those never-to-be-excell'd poetic bequests, and their indescribable preciousness as heirlooms for America. Another and separate point must now be candidly stated. If I had not stood before those poems with uncover'd head, fully aware of their colossal grandeur and beauty of form and spirit, I could not have

written *Leaves of Grass*. My verdict and conclusions as illustrated in its pages are arrived at through the temper and inculcation of the old works as much as through anything else—perhaps more than through anything else. As America fully and fairly construed is the legitimate result and evolutionary outcome of the past, so I would dare to claim for my verse. Without stopping to qualify the averment, the Old World has had the poems of myths, fictions, feudalism, conquest, caste, dynastic wars, and splendid exceptional characters and affairs, which have been great; but the New World needs the poems of realities and science and of the democratic average and basic equality, which shall be greater. In the centre of all, and object of all, stands the Human Being, towards whose heroic and spiritual evolution poems and everything directly or indirectly tend, Old World or New.

Continuing the subject, my friends have more than once suggested—or may be the garrulity of advancing age is possessing me—some further embryonic facts of *Leaves of Grass*, and especially how I enter'd upon them. Dr. Bucke has, in his volume, already fully and fairly described the preparation of my poetic field, with the particular and general plowing, planting, seeding, and occupation of the ground, till everything was fertilized, rooted, and ready to start its own way for good or bad. Not till after all this, did I attempt any serious acquaintance with poetic literature. Along in my sixteenth year I had become possessor of a stout, well-cramm'd one thousand page octavo volume (I have it yet,) containing Walter Scott's poetry entire—an inexhaustible mine and treasury of poetic forage (especially the endless forests and jungles of notes)—has been so to me for fifty years, and remains so to this day.[1]

Later, at intervals, summers and falls, I used to go off, sometimes for a week at a stretch, down in the country, or to Long Island's seashores—there, in the presence of outdoor influences, I went over thoroughly the Old and New Testaments, and absorb'd (probably to better advantage for me than in any library or indoor room—it makes such difference *where* you read,) Shakspere, Ossian, the best translated versions I could get of Homer, Eschylus, Sophocles, the old German *Nibelungen*, the ancient Hindoo poems, and one or two other masterpieces, Dante's among them. As it happen'd, I read the latter mostly in an old wood. The *Iliad* (Buckley's prose version) I read first thoroughly on the peninsula of Orient, northeast end of Long Island, in a shelter'd hollow of rocks and sand, with the sea on each side. (I have wonder'd since why I was not overwhelm'd by those mighty masters. Likely because I read them, as described, in the full presence of Nature, under the sun, with the far-spreading landscape and vistas, or the sea rolling in.)

Toward the last I had among much else look'd over Edgar Poe's poems—of which I was not an admirer, tho' I always saw that beyond their limited range of melody (like perpetual chimes of music bells, ringing from lower *b* flat up to *g*) they were melodious expressions, and perhaps never excell'd ones, of certain pronounc'd phases of human morbidity. (The Poetic area is very spacious—has room for all—has so many mansions!) But I was repaid in Poe's prose by the idea that (at any rate for our occasions, our day) there can be no such thing as a long poem. The same thought had been haunting my mind before, but Poe's argument, though short, work'd the sum out and proved it to me.

Another point had an early settlement, clearing the ground greatly. I saw, from the time my enterprise and questionings positively shaped themselves (how best can I express my own distinctive era and surroundings, America, Democracy?) that the trunk and centre whence the answer was to radiate, and to which all should

1 'Sir Walter Scott's *Complete Poems*; especially including "Border Minstrelsy"; then "Sir Tristrem"; "Lay of the Last Minstrel"; "Ballads from the German"; "Marmion"; "Lady of the Lake"; "Vision of Don Roderick"; "Lord of the Isles"; "Rokeby"; "Bridal of Triermain"; "Field of Waterloo"; "Harold the Dauntless"; all the Dramas; various Introductions, endless interesting Notes, and Essays on Poetry, Romance, &c.

'Lockhart's 1833 (or '34) edition with Scott's latest and copious revisions and annotations. (All the poems were thoroughly read by me, but the ballads of the "Border Minstrelsy" over and over again.)' Author's note, ibid., 12.

return from straying however far a distance, must be an identical body and soul, a personality—which personality, after many considerations and ponderings I deliberately settled should be myself—indeed could not be any other. I also felt strongly (whether I have shown it or not) that to the true and full estimate of the Present both the Past and the Future are main considerations.

These, however, and much more might have gone on and come to naught (almost positively would have come to naught,) if a sudden, vast, terrible, direct and indirect stimulus for new and national declamatory expression had not been given to me. It is certain, I say, that, although I had made a start before, only from the occurrence of the Secession War, and what it show'd me as by flashes of lightning, with the emotional depths it sounded and arous'd (of course, I don't mean in my own heart only, I saw it just as plainly in others, in millions) —that only from the strong flare and provocation of that war's sights and scenes the final reasons-for-being of an autochthonic and passionate song definitely came forth.

I went down to the war fields in Virginia (end of 1862), lived thenceforward in camp —saw great battles and the days and nights afterward—partook of all the fluctuations, gloom, despair, hopes again arous'd, courage evoked—death readily risk'd—*the cause*, too—along and filling those agonistic and lurid following years, 1863–'64–'65—the real parturition years (more than 1776–'83) of this henceforth homogeneous Union. Without those three or four years and the experiences they gave, *Leaves of Grass* would not now be existing.

But I set out with the intention also of indicating or hinting some point-characteristics which I since see (though I did not then, at least not definitely) were bases and object-urgings toward those *Leaves* from the first. The word I myself put primarily for the description of them as they stand at last, is the word Suggestiveness. I round and finish little, if anything; and could not, consistently with my scheme. The reader will always have his or her part to do, just as much as I have had mine. I seek less to state or display any theme or thought, and more to bring you, reader, into the atmosphere of the theme or thought—there to pursue your own flight. Another impetus-word is Comradeship as for all lands, and in a more commanding and acknowledg'd sense than hitherto. Other word signs would be Good Cheer, Content, and Hope.

The chief trait of any given poet is always the spirit he brings to the observation of Humanity and Nature—the mood out of which he contemplates his subjects. What kind of temper and what amount of faith report these things? Up to how recent a date is the song carried? What the equipment, and special raciness of the singer—what his tinge of coloring? The last value of artistic expressers, past and present—Greek æsthetes, Shakspere—or in our own day Tennyson, Victor Hugo, Carlyle, Emerson—is certainly involv'd in such questions. I say the profoundest service that poems or any other writings can do for their reader is not merely to satisfy the intellect, or supply something polish'd and interesting, nor even to depict great passions, or persons or events, but to fill him with vigorous and clean manliness, religiousness, and give him *good heart* as a radical possession and habit. The educated world seems to have been growing more and more ennuyed for ages, leaving to our time the inheritance of it all. Fortunately there is the original inexhaustible fund of buoyancy, normally resident in the race, forever eligible to be appeal'd to and relied on.

As for native American individuality, though certain to come, and on a large scale, the distinctive and ideal type of Western character (as consistent with the operative political and even money-making features of United States' humanity in the Nineteenth Century as chosen knights, gentlemen and warriors were the ideals of the centuries of European feudalism) it has not yet appear'd. I have allow'd the stress of my poems from beginning to end to bear upon American individuality and assist it—not only because that is a great lesson in Nature, amid all her generalizing laws, but as counterpoise to the leveling tendencies of Democracy—and for other reasons. Defiant of ostensible literary and other conventions, I avowedly chant 'the great pride of man in himself,' and permit it to be

more or less a *motif* of nearly all my verse. I think this pride indispensable to an American. I think it not inconsistent with obedience, humility, deference, and self-questioning.

Democracy has been so retarded and jeopardized by powerful personalities, that its first instincts are fain to clip, conform, bring in stragglers, and reduce everything to a dead level. While the ambitious thought of my song is to help the forming of a great aggregate Nation, it is, perhaps, altogether through the forming of myriads of fully develop'd and enclosing individuals. Welcome as are equality's and fraternity's doctrines and popular education, a certain liability accompanies them all, as we see. That primal and interior something in man, in his soul's abysms, coloring all, and, by exceptional fruitions, giving the last majesty to him—something continually touch'd upon and attain'd by the old poems and ballads of feudalism, and often the principal foundation of them—modern science and democracy appear to be endangering, perhaps eliminating. But that forms an appearance only; the reality is quite different. The new influences, upon the whole, are surely preparing the way for grander individualities than ever. To-day and here personal force is behind everything, just the same. The times and depictions from the *Iliad* to Shakspere inclusive can happily never again be realized—but the elements of courageous and lofty manhood are unchanged.

Without yielding an inch the workingman and working-woman were to be in my pages from first to last. The ranges of heroism and loftiness with which Greek and feudal poets endow'd their god-like or lordly born characters—indeed prouder and better based and with fuller ranges than those—I was to endow the democratic averages of America. I was to show that we, here and to-day, are eligible to the grandest and the best—more eligible now than any times of old were. I will also want my utterances (I said to myself before beginning) to be in spirit the poems of the morning. (They have been founded and mainly written in the sunny forenoon and early midday of my life.) I will want them to be the poems of women entirely as much as men. I have wish'd to put the complete Union of the States in my songs without any preference or partiality whatever. Henceforth, if they live and are read, it must be just as much South as North—just as much along the Pacific as Atlantic—in the valley of the Mississippi, in Canada, up in Maine, down in Texas, and on the shores of Puget Sound.

From another point of view *Leaves of Grass* is avowedly the song of Sex and Amativeness, and even Animality—though meanings that do not usually go along with those words are behind all, and will duly emerge; and all are sought to be lifted into a different light and atmosphere. Of this feature, intentionally palpable in a few lines, I shall only say the espousing principle of those lines so gives breath of life to my whole scheme that the bulk of the pieces might as well have been left unwritten were those lines omitted. Difficult as it will be, it has become, in my opinion, imperative to achieve a shifted attitude from superior men and women towards the thought and fact of sexuality, as an element in character, personality, the emotions, and a theme in literature. I am not going to argue the question by itself; it does not stand by itself. The vitality of it is altogether in its relations, bearings, significance—like the clef of a symphony. At last analogy the lines I allude to, and the spirit in which they are spoken, permeate all *Leaves of Grass*, and the work must stand or fall with them, as the human body and soul must remain as an entirety.

Universal as are certain facts and symptoms of communities or individuals all times, there is nothing so rare in modern conventions and poetry as their normal recognizance. Literature is always calling in the doctor for consultation and confession, and always giving evasions and swathing suppressions in place of that 'heroic nudity' [1] on which only a genuine diagnosis of serious cases can be built. And in respect to editions of *Leaves of Grass* in time to come (if there should be such) I take occasion now to confirm those lines with the settled convictions and deliberate renewals

1 '*Nineteenth Century*, July, 1883.' Author's note, ibid., 16. Whitman evidently refers to an article by W.C. Perry, 'The Sirens in Ancient Literature and Art,' in which various representations of the mythological Sirens are discussed.

of thirty years, and to hereby prohibit, as far as word of mine can do so, any elision of them.

Then still a purpose enclosing all, and over and beneath all. Ever since what might be call'd thought, or the budding of thought, fairly began in my youthful mind, I had had a desire to attempt some worthy record of that entire faith and acceptance ('to justify the ways of God to man' is Milton's well-known and ambitious phrase) which is the foundation of moral America. I felt it all as positively then in my young days as I do now in my old ones; to formulate a poem whose every thought or fact should directly or indirectly be or connive at an implicit belief in the wisdom, health, mystery, beauty of every process, every concrete object, every human or other existence, not only consider'd from the point of view of all, but of each.

While I cannot understand it or argue it out, I fully believe in a clue and purpose in Nature, entire and several; and that invisible spiritual results, just as real and definite as the visible, eventuate all concrete life and all materialism, through Time. My book ought to emanate buoyancy and gladness legitimately enough, for it was grown out of those elements, and has been the comfort of my life since it was originally commenced.

One main genesis-motive of the *Leaves* was my conviction (just as strong to-day as ever) that the crowning growth of the United States is to be spiritual and heroic. To help start and favor that growth—or even to call attention to it, or the need of it—is the beginning, middle and final purpose of the poems. (In fact, when really cipher'd out and summ'd to the last, plowing up in earnest the interminable average fallows of humanity—not 'good government' merely, in the common sense—is the justification and main purpose of these United States.)

Isolated advantages in any rank or grace or fortune—the direct or indirect threads of all the poetry of the past—are in my opinion distasteful to the republican genius, and offer no foundation for its fitting verse. Establish'd poems, I know, have the very great advantage of chanting the already perform'd, so full of glories, reminiscences dear to the minds of men. But my volume is a candidate for the future. 'All original art,' says Taine, anyhow, 'is self-regulated, and no original art can be regulated from without; it carries its own counterpoise, and does not receive it from elsewhere—lives on its own blood'—a solace to my frequent bruises and sulky vanity.

As the present is perhaps mainly an attempt at personal statement or illustration, I will allow myself as further help to extract the following anecdote from a book, *Annals of Old Painters*, conn'd by me in youth. Rubens, the Flemish painter, in one of his wanderings through the galleries of old convents, came across a singular work. After looking at it thoughtfully for a good while, and listening to the criticisms of his suite of students, he said to the latter, in answer to their questions (as to what school the work implied or belong'd,) 'I do not believe the artist, unknown and perhaps no longer living, who has given the world this legacy, ever belong'd to any school, or ever painted anything but this one picture, which is a personal affair—a piece out of a man's life.'

Leaves of Grass indeed (I cannot too often reiterate) has mainly been the outcropping of my own emotional and other personal nature—an attempt, from first to last, to put *a Person*, a human being (myself, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, in America,) freely, fully and truly on record. I could not find any similar personal record in current literature that satisfied me. But it is not on *Leaves of Grass* distinctively as *literature*, or a specimen thereof, that I feel to dwell, or advance claims. No one will get at my verses who insists upon viewing them as a literary performance, or attempt at such performance, or as aiming mainly toward art or æstheticism.

I say no land or people or circumstances ever existed so needing a race of singers and poems differing from all others, and rigidly their own, as the land and people and circumstances of our United States need such singers and poems to-day, and for the future. Still further, as long as the States continue to absorb and be dominated by the poetry of the Old World, and remain unsupplied with autochthonous song, to express, vitalize and give color to and define their material and political success,

and minister to them distinctively, so long will they stop short of first-class Nationality and remain defective.

In the free evening of my day I give to you, reader, the foregoing garrulous talk, thoughts, reminiscences,

As idly drifting down the ebb,
Such ripples, half-caught voices, echo from the shore.

Concluding with two items for the imaginative genius of the West, when it worthily rises—First, what Herder taught to the young Goethe, that really great poetry is always (like the Homeric or Biblical canticles) the result of a national spirit, and not the privilege of a polish'd and select few; Second, that the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung.

1888

FROM SPECIMEN DAYS

DIARY-JOTTINGS [1]

A Happy Hour's Command.

Down in the Woods, July 2d, 1882.—If I do it at all I must delay no longer. Incongruous and full of skips and jumps as is that huddle of diary-jottings, war-memoranda of 1862–'65, Nature-notes of 1877–'81, with Western and Canadian observations afterwards, all bundled up and tied by a big string, the resolution and indeed mandate comes to me this day, this hour,—(and what a day! what an hour just passing! the luxury of riant grass and blowing breeze, with all the shows of sun and sky and perfect temperature, never before so filling me, body and soul),—to go home, untie the bundle, reel out diary-scraps and memoranda, just as they are, large or small, one after another, into print-pages,[2] and let the melange's lackings and wants of connection take care of themselves. It will illustrate one phase of humanity anyhow; how few of life's days and hours (and they not by relative value or proportion, but by chance) are ever noted. Probably another point, too, how we give long preparations for some object, planning and delving and fashioning, and then, when the actual hour for doing arrives, find ourselves still quite unprepared, and tumble the thing together, letting hurry and crudeness tell the story better than fine work. At any rate I obey my happy hour's command, which seems curiously imperative. May-be, if I don't do anything else, I shall send out the most wayward, spontaneous, fragmentary book ever printed.

A Night Battle, Over a Week Since.

May 12.—There was part of the late battle at Chancellorsville, (second Fredericksburgh,) a little over a week ago, Saturday, Saturday night and Sunday, under Gen. Joe Hooker, I would like to give just a glimpse of—(a moment's look in a terrible storm at sea—of which a few suggestions are enough, and full details impossible.) The fighting had been very hot during the day, and after an intermission the latter part, was resumed at night, and kept up with furious energy till 3 o'clock in the morning. That afternoon (Saturday) an attack sudden and strong by Stonewall Jackson had gain'd a great advantage to the southern army, and broken our lines, enter-

1 These impressionistic jottings are selections from the first section of Whitman's *Specimen Days and Collect* (Philadelphia, 1882–83). The title has been given by the editors.

2 '. . . Following, I give some gloomy experiences. The war of attempted secession has, of course, been the distinguishing event of my time. I commenced at the close of 1862, and continued steadily through '63, '64 and '65, to visit the sick and wounded of the army, both on the field and in the hospitals in and around Washington city. From the first I kept little note-books for impromptu jottings in pencil to refresh my memory of names and circumstances, and what was especially wanted, &c. In these, I brief'd cases, persons, sights, occurrences in camp, by the bed-side, and not seldom by the corpses of the dead. Some were scratch'd down from narratives I heard and itemized while watching, or waiting, or tending somebody amid those scenes. . . . I leave them just as I threw them by after the war, blotch'd here and there with more than one blood-stain, hurriedly written, sometimes at the clinique, not seldom amid the excitement of uncertainty, or defeat, or of action, or getting ready for it, or a march. . . . Very different are most of the memoranda that follow. Some time after the war ended I had a paralytic stroke, which prostrated me for several years. In 1876 I began to get over the worst of it. From this date, portions of several seasons, especially summers, I spent at a secluded haunt down in Camden county, New Jersey—Timber creek, quite a little river (it enters from the great Delaware, twelve miles away)—with primitive solitudes, winding stream, recluse and woody banks, sweet-feeding springs, and all the charms that birds, grass, wild-flowers, rabbits and squirrels, old oaks, walnut trees, &c., can bring.' Author's note, *Specimen Days and Collect*, *Complete Prose Works* (Boston, 1898), 1–2.

ing us like a wedge, and leaving things in that position at dark. But Hooker at 11 at night made a desperate push, drove the secesh forces back, restored his original lines, and resumed his plans. This night scrimmage was very exciting, and afforded countless strange and fearful pictures. The fighting had been general both at Chancellorsville and northeast at Fredericksburgh. (We hear of some poor fighting, episodes, skedaddling on our part. I think not of it. I think of the fierce bravery, the general rule.) One corps, the 6th, Sedgewick's, fights four dashing and bloody battles in thirty-six hours, retreating in great jeopardy, losing largely but maintaining itself, fighting with the sternest desperation under all circumstances, getting over the Rappahannock only by the skin of its teeth, yet getting over. It lost many, many brave men, yet it took vengeance, ample vengeance.

But it was the tug of Saturday evening, and through the night and Sunday morning, I wanted to make a special note of. It was largely in the woods, and quite a general engagement. The night was very pleasant, at times the moon shining out full and clear, all Nature so calm in itself, the early summer grass so rich, and foliage of the trees—yet there the battle raging, and many good fellows lying helpless, with new accessions to them, and every minute amid the rattle of muskets and crash of cannon, (for there was an artillery contest too,) the red life-blood oozing out from heads or trunks or limbs upon that green and dew-cool grass. Patches of the woods take fire, and several of the wounded, unable to move, are consumed—quite large spaces are swept over, burning the dead also—some of the men have their hair and beards singed—some, burns on their faces and hands—others holes burnt in their clothing. The flashes of fire from the cannon, the quick flaring flames and smoke, and the immense roar—the musketry so general, the light nearly bright enough for each side to see the other—the crashing, tramping of men—the yelling—close quarters—we hear the secesh yells—our men cheer loudly back, especially if Hooker is in sight—hand to hand conflicts, each side stands up to it, brave, determin'd as demons, they often charge upon us—a thousand deeds are done worth to write newer greater poems on—and still the woods on fire—still many are not only scorch'd—too many, unable to move, are burn'd to death.

Then the camps of the wounded—O heavens, what scene is this?—is this indeed *humanity*—these butchers' shambles? There are several of them. There they lie, in the largest, in an open space in the woods, from 200 to 300 poor fellows—the groans and screams—the odor of blood, mixed with the fresh scent of the night, the grass, the trees—that slaughter-house! O well is it their mothers, their sisters cannot see them—cannot conceive, and never conceiv'd, these things. One man is shot by a shell, both in the arm and leg—both are amputated—there lie the rejected members. Some have their legs blown off—some bullets through the breast—some indescribably horrid wounds in the face or head, all mutilated, sickening, torn, gouged out—some in the abdomen—some mere boys—many rebels, badly hurt—they take their regular turns with the rest, just the same as any—the surgeons use them just the same. Such is the camp of the wounded—such a fragment, a reflection afar off of the bloody scene—while all over the clear, large moon comes out at times softly, quietly shining. Amid the woods, that scene of flitting souls—amid the crack and crash and yelling sounds—the impalpable perfume of the woods—and yet the pungent, stifling smoke—the radiance of the moon, looking from heaven at intervals so placid—the sky so heavenly—the clear-obscure up there, those buoyant upper oceans—a few large placid stars beyond, coming silently and languidly out, and then disappearing—the melancholy, draperied night above, around. And there, upon the roads, the fields, and in those woods, that contest, never one more desperate in any age or land—both parties now in force—masses—no fancy battle, no semi-play, but fierce and savage demons fighting there—courage and scorn of death the rule, exceptions almost none.

What history, I say, can ever give—for who can know—the mad, determin'd tussle of the armies, in all their separate large and little squads—as this—each steep'd from crown to toe in desperate, mortal purports? Who know the conflict, hand-to-hand—the

many conflicts in the dark, those shadowy-tangled, flashing moonbeam'd woods—the writhing groups and squads—the cries, the din, the cracking guns and pistols—the distant cannon—the cheers and calls and threats and awful music of the oaths—the indescribable mix—the officers' orders, persuasions, encouragements—the devils fully rous'd in human hearts—the strong shout, *Charge, men, charge*—the flash of the naked sword, and rolling flame and smoke? And still the broken, clear and clouded heaven—and still again the moonlight pouring silvery soft its radiant patches over all. Who paint the scene, the sudden partial panic of the afternoon, at dusk? Who paint the irrepressible advance of the second division of the Third corps, under Hooker himself, suddenly order'd up—those rapid-filing phantoms through the woods? Who show what moves there in the shadows, fluid and firm—to save, (and it did save,) the army's name, perhaps the nation? as there the veterans hold the field. (Brave Berry falls not yet—but death has mark'd him—soon he falls.)

Unnamed Remains the Bravest Soldier.

Of scenes like these, I say, who writes—whoe'er can write the story? Of many a score—aye, thousands, north and south, of unwrit heroes, unknown heroisms, incredible, impromptu, first-class desperations—who tells? No history ever—no poem sings, no music sounds, those bravest men of all—those deeds. No formal general's report, nor book in the library, nor column in the paper, embalms the bravest, north or south, east or west. Unnamed, unknown, remain, and still remain, the bravest soldiers. Our manliest—our boys—our hardy darlings; no picture gives them. Likely, the typic one of them (standing, no doubt, for hundreds, thousands,) crawls aside to some bush-clump, or ferny tuft, on receiving his death-shot—there sheltering a little while, soaking roots, grass and soil, with red blood—the battle advances, retreats, flits from the scene, sweeps by—and there, haply with pain and suffering (yet less, far less, than is supposed,) the last lethargy winds like a serpent round him—the eyes glaze in death—none recks—perhaps the burial-squads, in truce, a week afterwards, search not the secluded spot—and there, at last, the Bravest Soldier crumbles in mother earth, unburied and unknown.

Some Specimen Cases.

June 18th.—In one of the hospitals I find Thomas Haley, company M, 4th New York cavalry—a regular Irish boy, a fine specimen of youthful physical manliness—shot through the lungs—inevitably dying—came over to this country from Ireland to enlist—has not a single friend or acquaintance here—is sleeping soundly at this moment, (but it is the sleep of death)—has a bullet-hole straight through the lung. I saw Tom when first brought here, three days since, and didn't suppose he could live twelve hours—(yet he looks well enough in the face to a casual observer). He lies there with his frame exposed above the waist, all naked, for coolness, a fine built man, the tan not yet bleach'd from his cheeks and neck. It is useless to talk to him, as with his sad hurt, and the stimulants they give him, and the utter strangeness of every object, face, furniture, &c., the poor fellow, even when awake, is like some frighten'd, shy animal. Much of the time he sleeps, or half sleeps. (Sometimes I thought he knew more than he show'd.) I often come and sit by him in perfect silence; he will breathe for ten minutes as softly and evenly as a young babe asleep. Poor youth, so handsome, athletic, with profuse beautiful shining hair. One time as I sat looking at him while he lay asleep, he suddenly, without the least start, awaken'd, open'd his eyes, gave me a long steady look, turning his face very slightly to gaze easier—one long, clear, silent look—a slight sigh—then turn'd back and went into his doze again. Little he knew, poor death-stricken boy, the heart of the stranger that hover'd near.

W.H.E., Co. F., 2nd N.J.—His disease is pneumonia. He lay sick at the wretched hospital below Aquia creek, for seven or eight days before brought here. He was detail'd from his regiment to go there and help as nurse, but was soon taken down himself. Is an elderly, sallow-faced, rather gaunt, gray-hair'd man, a widower, with children. He express'd a great desire for good, strong green tea. An excellent lady, Mrs.W., of Washington, soon sent him a package; also a small sum of money. The

doctor said give him the tea at pleasure; it lay on the table by his side, and he used it every day. He slept a great deal; could not talk much, as he grew deaf. Occupied bed 15, ward I, Armory. (The same lady above, Mrs.W., sent the men a large package of tobacco.)

J.G. lies in bed 52, ward I; is of company B, 7th Pennsylvania. I gave him a small sum of money, some tobacco, and envelopes. To a man adjoining also gave twenty-five cents; he flush'd in the face when I offer'd it—refused at first, but as I found he had not a cent, and was very fond of having the daily papers to read, I prest it on him. He was evidently very grateful, but said little.

J.T.L., of company F., 9th New Hampshire, lies in bed 37, ward I. Is very fond of tobacco. I furnish him some; also with a little money. Has gangrene of the feet; a pretty bad case; will surely have to lose three toes. Is a regular specimen of an old-fashion'd, rude, hearty, New England countryman, impressing me with his likeness to that celebrated singed cat, who was better than she look'd.

Bed 3, ward E, Armory, has a great hankering for pickles, something pungent. After consulting the doctor, I gave him a small bottle of horse-radish; also some apples; also a book. Some of the nurses are excellent. The woman-nurse in this ward I like very much. (Mrs. Wright—a year afterwards I found her in Mansion house hospital, Alexandria—she is a perfect nurse.)

In one bed a young man, Marcus Small, company K, 7th Maine—sick with dysentery and typhoid fever—pretty critical case—I talk with him often—he thinks he will die—looks like it indeed. I write a letter for him home to East Livermore, Maine—I let him talk to me a little, but not much, advise him to keep very quiet—do most of the talking myself—stay quite a while with him, as he holds on to my hand —talk to him in a cheering, but slow, low and measured manner—talk about his furlough, and going home as soon as he is able to travel.

Thomas Lindly, 1st Pennsylvania cavalry, shot very badly through the foot—poor young man, he suffers horribly, has to be constantly dosed with morphine, his face ashy and glazed, bright young eyes—I give him a large handsome apple, lay it in sight, tell him to have it roasted in the morning, as he generally feels easier then, and can eat a little breakfast. I write two letters for him.

Opposite, an old Quaker lady sits by the side of her son, Amer Moore, 2d U.S. artillery—shot in the head two weeks since, very low, quite rational—from hips down paralyzed—he will surely die. I speak a very few words to him every day and evening—he answers pleasantly—wants nothing—(he told me soon after he came about his home affairs, his mother had been an invalid, and he fear'd to let her know his condition.) He died soon after she came.

Death of President Lincoln.

April 16, '65.—I find in my notes of the time, this passage on the death of Abraham Lincoln: He leaves for America's history and biography, so far, not only its most dramatic reminiscence—he leaves, in my opinion, the greatest, best, most characteristic, artistic, moral personality. Not but that he had faults, and show'd them in the Presidency; but honesty, goodness, shrewdness, conscience, and (a new virtue, unknown to other lands, and hardly yet really known here, but the foundation and tie of all, as the future will grandly develop,) UNIONISM, in its truest and amplest sense, form'd the hard-pan of his character. These he seal'd with his life. The tragic splendor of his death, purging, illuminating all, throws round his form, his head, an aureole that will remain and will grow brighter through time, while history lives, and love of country lasts. By many has this Union been help'd; but if one name, one man, must be pick'd out, he, most of all, is the conservator of it, to the future. He was assassinated—but the Union is not assassinated—*ça ira!* One falls and another falls. The soldier drops, sinks like a wave—but the ranks of the ocean eternally press on. Death does its work, obliterates a hundred, a thousand—President, general, captain, private,—but the Nation is immortal.

Three Years Summ'd Up.

During those three years in hospital, camp or field, I made over six hundred

visits or tours, and went, as I estimate, counting all, among from eighty thousand to a hundred thousand of the wounded and sick, as sustainer of spirit and body in some degree, in time of need. These visits varied from an hour or two, to all day or night; for with dear or critical cases I generally watch'd all night. Sometimes I took up my quarters in the hospital, and slept or watch'd there several nights in succession. Those three years I consider the greatest privilege and satisfaction, (with all their feverish excitements and physical deprivations and lamentable sights), and, of course, the most profound lesson of my life. I can say that in my ministerings I comprehended all, whoever came in my way, northern or southern, and slighted none. It arous'd and brought out and decided undream'd-of depths of emotion. It has given me my most fervent views of the true ensemble and extent of the States. While I was with wounded and sick in thousands of cases from the New England States, and from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and from Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and all the Western States, I was with more or less from all the States, North and South, without exception. I was with many from the border States, especially from Maryland and Virginia, and found, during those lurid years 1862–63, far more Union southerners, especially Tennesseans, than is supposed. I was with many rebel officers and men among our wounded and gave them always what I had, and tried to cheer them the same as any. I was among the army teamsters considerably, and, indeed, always found myself drawn to them. Among the black soldiers, wounded or sick, and in the contraband camps, I also took my way whenever in their neighborhood, and did what I could for them.

The Million Dead, Too, Summ'd Up.

The dead in this war—there they lie, strewing the fields and woods and valleys and battlefields of the south—Virginia, the Peninsula—Malvern hill and Fair Oaks—the banks of the Chickahominy—the terraces of Fredericksburgh—Antietam bridge—the grisly ravines of Manassas—the bloody promenade of the Wilderness—the varieties of the *strayed* dead, (the estimate of the War department is 25,000 national soldiers kill'd in battle and never buried at all, 5,000 drown'd—15,000 inhumed by strangers, or on the march in haste, in hitherto unfound localities—2,000 graves cover'd by sand and mud by Mississippi freshets, 3,000 carried away by caving-in of banks, &c.,)—Gettysburgh, the West, Southwest—Vicksburgh—Chattanooga—the trenches of Petersburgh—the numberless battles, camps, hospitals everywhere—the crop reap'd by the mighty reapers, typhoid, dysentery, inflammations—and blackest and loathesomest of all, the dead and living burial-pits, the prison-pens of Andersonville, Salisbury, Belle-Isle, &c., (not Dante's pictured hell and all its woes, its degradations, filthy torments, excell'd those prisons)—the dead, the dead, the dead—*our* dead—or South or North, ours all, (all, all, all, finally dear to me)—or East or West—Atlantic coast or Mississippi valley—somewhere they crawl'd to die, alone, in bushes, low gullies, or on the sides of hills—(there, in secluded spots, their skeletons, bleach'd bones, tufts of hair, buttons, fragments of clothing, are occasionally found yet)—our young men once so handsome and so joyous, taken from us—the son from the mother, the husband from the wife, the dear friend from the dear friend—the clusters of camp graves, in Georgia, the Carolinas, and in Tennessee—the single graves left in the woods or by the roadside, (hundreds, thousands, obliterated)—the corpses floated down the rivers, and caught and lodged, (dozens, scores, floated down the upper Potomac, after the cavalry engagements, the pursuit of Lee, following Gettysburgh)—some lie at the bottom of the sea—the general million, and the special cemeteries in almost all the States—the infinite dead—(the land entire saturated, perfumed with their impalpable ashes' exhalation in Nature's chemistry distill'd, and shall be so forever, in every future grain of wheat and ear of corn, and every flower that grows, and every breath we draw)—not only Northern dead leavening Southern soil—thousands, aye tens of thousands, of Southerners, crumble to-day in Northern earth.

And everywhere among these countless graves—everywhere in the many soldier

Cemeteries of the Nation, (there are now, I believe, over seventy of them)—as at the time in the vast trenches, the depositories of slain, Northern and Southern, after the great battles—not only where the scathing trail passed those years, but radiating since in all the peaceful quarters of the land—we see, and ages yet may see, on monuments and gravestones, singly or in masses, to thousands or tens of thousands, the significant word UNKNOWN.

(In some of the cemeteries nearly *all* the dead are unknown. At Salisbury, N.C., for instance, the known are only 85, while the unknown are 12,027, and 11,700 of these are buried in trenches. A national monument has been put up here, by order of Congress, to mark the spot—but what visible, material monument can ever fittingly commemorate that spot?)

The Real War Will Never Get in the Books.

And so good-bye to the war. I know not how it may have been, or may be, to others —to me the main interest I found, (and still, on recollection, find,) in the rank and file of the armies, both sides, and in those specimens amid the hospitals, and even the dead on the field. To me the points illustrating the latent personal character and eligibilities of these States, in the two or three millions of American young and middle-aged men, North and South, embodied in those armies—and especially the one-third or one-fourth of their number, stricken by wounds or disease at some time in the course of the contest—were of more significance even than the political interests involved. (As so much of a race depends on how it faces death, and how it stands personal anguish and sickness. As, in the glints of emotions under emergencies, and the indirect traits and asides in Plutarch, we get far profounder clues to the antique world than all its more formal history.)

Future years will never know the seething hell and the black infernal background of countless minor scenes and interiors, (not the official surface-courteousness of the Generals, not the few great battles) of the Secession war; and it is best they should not—the real war will never get in the books. In the mushy influences of current times, too, the fervid atmosphere and typical events of those years are in danger of being totally forgotten. I have at night watch'd by the side of a sick man in the hospital, one who could not live many hours. I have seen his eyes flash and burn as he raised himself and recurr'd to the cruelties on his surrender'd brother, and mutilations of the corpse afterward. (See in the preceding pages, the incident at Upperville—the seventeen kill'd as in the description, were left there on the ground. After they dropt dead, no one touch'd them—all were made sure of, however. The carcasses were left for the citizens to bury or not, as they chose.)

Such was the war. It was not a quadrille in a ball-room. Its interior history will not only never be written—its practicality, minutiæ of deeds and passions, will never be even suggested. The actual soldier of 1862–'65, North and South, with all his ways, his incredible dauntlessness, habits, practices, tastes, language, his fierce friendship, his appetite, rankness, his superb strength and animality, lawless gait, and a hundred unnamed lights and shades of camp, I say, will never be written—perhaps must not and should not be.

The preceding notes may furnish a few stray glimpses into that life, and into those lurid interiors, never to be fully convey'd to the future. The hospital part of the drama from '61 to '65, deserves indeed to be recorded. Of that many-threaded drama, with its sudden and strange surprises, its confounding of prophecies, its moments of despair, the dread of foreign interference, the interminable campaigns, the bloody battles, the mighty and cumbrous and green armies, the drafts and bounties—the immense money expenditure, like a heavy-pouring constant rain—with, over the whole land, the last three years of the struggle, an unending, universal mourning-wail of women, parents, orphans—the marrow of the tragedy concentrated in those Army Hospitals—(it seem'd sometimes as if the whole interest of the land, North and South, was one vast central hospital, and all the rest of the affair but flanges)—those forming the untold and unwritten history of the war—infinitely greater (like life's) than the few scraps and distortions that are ever told or written. Think how much, and of importance, will be—how much, civic and military, has already been—buried in the grave, in eternal darkness.

An Interregnum Paragraph.

Several years now elapse before I resume my diary. I continued at Washington working in the Attorney-General's department through '66 and '67, and some time afterward. In February '73 I was stricken down by paralysis, gave up my desk, and migrated to Camden, New Jersey, where I lived during '74 and '75, quite unwell—but after that began to grow better; commenc'd going for weeks at a time, even for months, down in the country, to a charmingly recluse and rural spot along Timber creek, twelve or thirteen miles from where it enters the Delaware river. Domicil'd at the farm-house of my friends, the Staffords, near by, I lived half the time along this creek and its adjacent fields and lanes. And it is to my life here that I, perhaps, owe partial recovery (a sort of second wind, or semi-renewal of the lease of life) from the prostration of 1874–'75. If the notes of that outdoor life could only prove as glowing to you, reader dear, as the experience itself was to me. Doubtless in the course of the following, the fact of invalidism will crop out, (I call myself *a half-Paralytic* these days, and reverently bless the Lord it is no worse,) between some of the lines—but I get my share of fun and healthy hours, and shall try to indicate them. (The trick is, I find, to tone your wants and tastes low down enough, and make much of negatives, and of mere daylight and the skies.)

New Themes Entered Upon.

1876, '77.—I find the woods in mid-May and early June my best places for composition.[1] Seated on logs or stumps there, or resting on rails, nearly all the following memoranda have been jotted down. Wherever I go, indeed, winter or summer, city or country, alone at home or traveling, I must take notes—(the ruling passion strong in age and disablement, and even the approach of—but I must not say it yet.) Then underneath the following excerpta—crossing the *t*'s and dotting the *i*'s of certain moderate movements of late years—I am fain to fancy the foundations of quite a lesson learn'd. After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, love, and so on—have found that none of these finally satisfy, or permanently wear—what remains? Nature remains; to bring out from their torpid recesses, the affinities of a man or woman with the open air, the trees, fields, the changes of seasons—the sun by day and the stars of heaven by night. We will begin from these convictions. Literature flies so high and is so hotly spiced, that our notes may seem hardly more than breaths of common air, or draughts of water to drink. But that is part of our lesson.

Dear, soothing, healthy, restoration-hours—after three confining years of paralysis—after the long strain of the war, and its wounds and death.

Summer Sights and Indolences.

June 10th.—As I write, 5½ P.M., here by the creek, nothing can exceed the quiet splendor and freshness around me. We had a heavy shower, with brief thunder and lightning, in the middle of the day; and since, overhead, one of those not uncommon yet indescribable skies (in quality, not details or forms) of limpid blue, with rolling silver-fringed clouds, and a pure-dazzling sun. For underlay, trees in fulness of tender foliage—liquid, reedy, long-drawn notes of birds—based by the fretful mewing of a querulous cat-bird, and the pleasant chippering-shriek of two kingfishers. I have been watching the latter the last half hour, on their regular evening frolic over and in the stream; evidently a spree of the liveliest kind. They pursue each other, whirling and wheeling around, with many a jocund downward dip, splashing the spray in jets of diamonds—and then off they swoop, with slanting wings and graceful flight, sometimes so near me I can plainly see their dark-gray feather-bodies and milk-white necks.

1 'Without apology for the abrupt change of field and atmosphere, . . . —temporary episodes, thank heaven! —I restore my book to the bracing and buoyant equilibrium of concrete outdoor Nature, the only permanent reliance for sanity of book or human life.

'Who knows, (I have it in my fancy, my ambition,) but the pages now ensuing may carry ray of sun, or smell of grass or corn, or call of bird, or gleam of stars by night, or snow-flakes falling fresh and mystic, to denizen of heated city house, or tired workman or workwoman?—or may-be in sick-room or prison—to serve as cooling breeze, or Nature's aroma, to some fever'd mouth or latent pulse.' Author's note, ibid., 75–76.

A July Afternoon by the Pond.

The fervent heat, but so much more endurable in this pure air—the white and pink pond-blossoms, with great heart-shaped leaves; the glassy waters of the creek, the banks, with dense bushery, and the picturesque beeches and shade and turf; the tremulous, reedy call of some bird from recesses, breaking the warm, indolent, half-voluptuous silence; an occasional wasp, hornet, honey-bee or bumble (they hover near my hands or face, yet annoy me not, nor I them, as they appear to examine, find nothing, and away they go)—the vast space of the sky overhead so clear, and the buzzard up there sailing his slow whirl in majestic spirals and discs; just over the surface of the pond, two large slate-color'd dragon-flies, with wings of lace, circling and darting and occasionally balancing themselves quite still, their wings quivering all the time, (are they not showing off for my amusement?)—the pond itself, with the sword-shaped calamus; the water snakes—occasionally a flitting blackbird, with red dabs on his shoulders, as he darts slantingly by—the sounds that bring out the solitude, warmth, light and shade—the quawk of some pond duck—(the crickets and grasshoppers are mute in the noon heat, but I hear the song of the first cicadas;)—then at some distance the rattle and whirr of a reaping machine as the horses draw it on a rapid walk through a rye field on the opposite side of the creek—(what was the yellow or light-brown bird, large as a young hen, with short neck and long-stretch'd legs I just saw, in flapping and awkward flight over there through the trees?)—the prevailing delicate, yet palpable, spicy, grassy, clovery perfume to my nostrils; and over all, encircling all, to my sight and soul, the free space of the sky, transparent and blue—and hovering there in the west, a mass of white-gray fleecy clouds the sailors call 'shoals of mackerel'—the sky, with silver swirls like locks of toss'd hair, spreading, expanding—a vast voiceless, formless simulacrum—yet maybe the most real reality and formulator of everything—who knows?

Autumn Side-Bits.

Sept. 20.—Under an old black oak, glossy and green, exhaling aroma—amid a grove the Albic druids might have chosen—envelop'd in the warmth and light of the noonday sun, and swarms of flitting insects—with the harsh cawing of many crows a hundred rods away—here I sit in solitude, absorbing, enjoying all. The corn, stack'd in its cone-shaped stacks, russet-color'd and sere—a large field spotted thick with scarlet-gold pumpkins—an adjoining one of cabbages, showing well in their green and pearl, mottled by much light and shade—melon patches, with their bulging ovals, and great silver-streak'd, ruffled, broad-edged leaves—and many an autumn sight and sound beside—the distant scream of a flock of guinea-hens—and pour'd over all the September breeze, with pensive cadence through the tree tops.

Another Day.—The ground in all directions strew'd with *débris* from a storm. Timber creek, as I slowly pace its banks, has ebb'd low, and shows reaction from the turbulent swell of the late equinoctial. As I look around, I take account of stock—weeds and shrubs, knolls, paths, occasional stumps, some with smooth'd tops, (several I use as seats of rest, from place to place, and from one I am now jotting these lines,)—frequent wild-flowers, little white, star-shaped things, or the cardinal red of the lobelia, or the cherry-ball seeds of the perennial rose, or the many-threaded vines winding up and around trunks of trees.

Oct. 1, 2 *and* 3.—Down every day in the solitude of the creek. A serene autumn sun and westerly breeze to-day (3d) as I sit here, the water surface prettily moving in wind-ripples before me. On a stout old beech at the edge, decayed and slanting, almost fallen to the stream, yet with life and leaves in its mossy limbs, a gray squirrel, exploring, runs up and down, flirts his tail, leaps to the ground, sits on his haunches upright as he sees me, (a Darwinian hint?) and then races up the tree again.

Oct. 4.—Cloudy and coolish; signs of incipient winter. Yet pleasant here, the leaves thick-falling, the ground brown with them already; rich coloring, yellows of all hues, pale and dark-green, shades from lightest to richest red—all set in and toned down by the prevailing brown of the earth and gray of the sky. So, winter is coming; and I yet in my sickness. I sit here amid all these fair sights and vital influences, and

abandon myself to that thought, with its wandering trains of speculation.

The Sky—Days and Nights—Happiness.

Oct. 20.—A clear, crispy day—dry and breezy air, full of oxygen. Out of the sane, silent, beauteous miracles that envelope and fuse me—trees, water, grass, sunlight, and early frost—the one I am looking at most to-day is the sky. It has that delicate, transparent blue, peculiar to autumn, and the only clouds are little or larger white ones, giving their still and spiritual motion to the great concave. All through the earlier day (say from 7 to 11) it keeps a pure, yet vivid blue. But as noon approaches the color gets lighter, quite gray for two or three hours—then still paler for a spell, till sun-down—which last I watch dazzling through the interstices of a knoll of big trees—darts of fire and a gorgeous show of light-yellow, liver-color and red, with a vast silver glaze askant on the water—the transparent shadows, shafts, sparkle, and vivid colors beyond all the paintings ever made.

I don't know what or how, but it seems to me mostly owing to these skies, (every now and then I think, while I have of course seen them every day of my life, I never really saw the skies before,) I have had this autumn some wondrously contented hours—may I not say perfectly happy ones? As I've read, Byron just before his death told a friend that he had known but three happy hours during his whole existence. Then there is the old German legend of the king's bell, to the same point. While I was out there by the wood, that beautiful sunset through the trees, I thought of Byron's and the bell story, and the notion started in me that I was having a happy hour. (Though perhaps my best moments I never jot down; when they come I cannot afford to break the charm by inditing memoranda. I just abandon myself to the mood, and let it float on, carrying me in its placid extasy.)

What is happiness, anyhow? Is this one of its hours, or the like of it?—so impalpable—a mere breath, an evanescent tinge? I am not sure—so let me give myself the benefit of the doubt. Hast Thou, pellucid, in Thy azure depths, medicine for case like mine? (Ah, the physical shatter and troubled spirit of me the last three years.) And dost Thou subtly mystically now drip it through the air invisibly upon me?

Night of Oct. 28.—The heavens unusually transparent—the stars out by myriads—the great path of the Milky Way, with its branch, only seen of very clear nights—Jupiter, setting in the west, looks like a huge hap-hazard splash, and has a little star for companion.

Clothed in his white garments,
Into the round and clear arena slowly
entered the brahmin,
Holding a little child by the hand,
Like the moon with the planet Jupiter in a
cloudless night-sky.

Old Hindu Poem.

Early in November.—At its farther end the lane already described opens into a broad grassy upland field of over twenty acres, slightly sloping to the south. Here I am accustom'd to walk for sky views and effects, either morning or sundown. To-day from this field my soul is calm'd and expanded beyond description, the whole forenoon by the clear blue arching over all, cloudless, nothing particular, only sky and daylight. Their soothing accompaniments, autumn leaves, the cool dry air, the faint aroma—crows cawing in the distance—two great buzzards wheeling gracefully and slowly far up there—the occasional murmur of the wind, sometimes quite gently, then threatening through the trees—a gang of farm-laborers loading corn-stalks in a field in sight, and the patient horses waiting.

Colors—A Contrast.

Such a play of colors and lights, different seasons, different hours of the day—the lines of the far horizon where the faint-tinged edge of the landscape loses itself in the sky. As I slowly hobble up the lane toward day-close, an incomparable sunset shooting in molten sapphire and gold, shaft after shaft, through the ranks of the long-leaved corn, between me and the west.

Another day.—The rich dark green of the tulip-trees and the oaks, the gray of the swamp-willows, the dull hues of the sycamores and black-walnuts, the emerald of

the cedars (after rain,) and the light yellow of the beeches.

Sea-Shore Fancies.

Even as a boy, I had the fancy, the wish, to write a piece, perhaps a poem, about the sea-shore—that suggesting, dividing line, contact, junction, the solid marrying the liquid—that curious, lurking something, (as doubtless every objective form finally becomes to the subjective spirit,) which means far more than its mere first sight, grand as that is—blending the real and ideal, and each made portion of the other. Hours, days, in my Long Island youth and early manhood, I haunted the shores of Rockaway or Coney island, or away east to the Hamptons or Montauk. Once, at the latter place, (by the old lighthouse, nothing but sea-tossings in sight in every direction as far as the eye could reach,) I remember well, I felt that I must one day write a book expressing this liquid, mystic theme. Afterward, I recollect, how it came to me that instead of any special lyrical or epical or literary attempt, the sea-shore should be an invisible *influence*, a pervading gauge and tally for me, in my composition. (Let me give a hint here to young writers. I am not sure but I have unwittingly follow'd out the same rule with other powers besides sea and shores—avoiding them, in the way of any dead set at poetizing them, as too big for formal handling—quite satisfied if I could indirectly show that we have met and fused, even if only once, but enough—that we have really absorb'd each other and understand each other.)

There is a dream, a picture, that for years at intervals, (sometimes quite long ones, but surely again, in time,) has come noiselessly up before me, and I really believe, fiction as it is, has enter'd largely into my practical life—certainly into my writings, and shaped and color'd them. It is nothing more or less than a stretch of interminable white-brown sand, hard and smooth and broad, with the ocean perpetually, grandly, rolling in upon it, with slow-measured sweep, with rustle and hiss and foam, and many a thump as of low bass drums. This scene, this picture, I say, has risen before me at times for years. Sometimes I wake at night and can hear and see it plainly.

An Hour on Kenosha Summit.

Jottings from the Rocky Mountains, mostly pencill'd during a day's trip over the South Park R.R., returning from Leadville, and especially the hour we were detain'd, (much to my satisfaction,) at Kenosha summit. As afternoon advances, novelties, far-reaching splendors, accumulate under the bright sun in this pure air. But I had better commence with the day.

The confronting of Platte cañon just at dawn, after a ten miles' ride in early darkness on the rail from Denver—the seasonable stoppage at the entrance of the cañon, and good breakfast of eggs, trout, and nice griddle-cakes—then as we travel on, and get well in the gorge, all the wonders, beauty, savage power of the scene—the wild stream of water, from sources of snows, brawling continually in sight one side—the dazzling sun, and the morning lights on the rocks—such turns and grades in the track, squirming around corners, or up and down hills—far glimpses of a hundred peaks, titanic necklaces, stretching north and south—the huge rightly-named Dome-rock—and as we dash along, others similar, simple, monolithic, elephantine.

An Egotistical 'Find.'

'I have found the law of my own poems,' was the unspoken but more-and-more decided feeling that came to me as I pass'd, hour after hour, amid all this grim yet joyous elemental abandon—this plenitude of material, entire absence of art, untrammel'd play of primitive Nature—the chasm, the gorge, the crystal mountain stream, repeated scores, hundreds of miles—the broad handling and absolute uncrampedness—the fantastic forms, bathed in transparent browns, faint reds and grays, towering sometimes a thousand, sometimes two or three thousand feet high—at their tops now and then huge masses pois'd, and mixing with the clouds, with only their outlines, hazed in misty lilac, visible. ('In Nature's grandest shows,' says an old Dutch writer, an ecclesiastic, 'amid the ocean's depth, if so might be, or countless worlds rolling above at night, a man thinks of them, weighs all, not for themselves or the abstract, but with reference to his own personality, and how they may affect him or color his destinies.')

New Senses: New Joys.

We follow the stream of amber and bronze brawling along its bed, with its frequent cascades and snow-white foam. Through the cañon we fly—mountains not only each side, but seemingly, till we get near, right in front of us—every rood a new view flashing, and each flash defying description—on the almost perpendicular sides, clinging pines, cedars, spruces, crimson sumach bushes, spots of wild grass—but dominating all, those towering rocks, rocks, rocks, bathed in delicate vari-colors, with the clear sky of autumn overhead. New senses, new joys, seem develop'd. Talk as you like, a typical Rocky Mountain cañon, or a limitless sea-like stretch of the great Kansas or Colorado plains, under favoring circumstances, tallies, perhaps expresses, certainly awakes, those grandest and subtlest element-emotions in the human soul, that all the marble temples and sculptures from Phidias to Thorwaldsen—all paintings, poems, reminiscences, or even music, probably never can.

After Trying a Certain Book.

I tried to read a beautifully printed and scholarly volume on 'the Theory of Poetry,' received by mail this morning from England—but gave it up at last for a bad job. Here are some capricious pencillings that follow'd, as I find them in my notes:

In youth and maturity Poems are charged with sunshine and varied pomp of day; but as the soul more and more takes precedence, (the sensuous still included,) the Dusk becomes the poet's atmosphere. I too have sought, and ever seek, the brilliant sun, and make my songs according. But as I grow old, the half-lights of evening are far more to me.

The play of Imagination, with the sensuous objects of Nature for symbols and Faith—with Love and Pride as the unseen impetus and moving-power of all, make up the curious chess-game of a poem.

Common teachers or critics are always asking 'What does it mean?' Symphony of fine musician, or sunset, or sea-waves rolling up the beach—what do they mean? Undoubtedly in the most subtle-elusive sense they mean something—as love does, and religion does, and the best poem;—but who shall fathom and define those meanings? (I do not intend this as a warrant for wildness and frantic escapades—but to justify the soul's frequent joy in what cannot be defined to the intellectual part, or to calculation.)

At its best, poetic lore is like what may be heard of conversation in the dusk, from speakers far or hid, of which we get only a few broken murmurs. What is not gather'd is far more—perhaps the main thing.

Grandest poetic passages are only to be taken at free removes, as we sometimes look for stars at night, not by gazing directly toward them, but off one side.

(*To a poetic student and friend.*)—I only seek to put you in rapport. Your own brain, heart, evolution, must not only understand the matter, but largely supply it.

Final Confessions—Literary Tests.

So draw near their end these garrulous notes. There have doubtless occurr'd some repetitions, technical errors in the consecutiveness of dates, in the minutiæ of botanical, astronomical, &c., exactness, and perhaps elsewhere;—for in gathering up, writing, peremptorily dispatching copy, this hot weather, (last of July and through August, '82,) and delaying not the printers, I have had to hurry along, no time to spare. But in the deepest veracity of all—in reflections of objects, scenes, Nature's outpourings, to my senses and receptivity, as they seem'd to me—in the work of giving those who care for it, some authentic glints, specimen-days of my life—and in the *bona fide* spirit and relations, from author to reader, on all the subjects design'd, and as far as they go, I feel to make unmitigated claims.

The synopsis of my early life, Long Island, New York city, and so forth, and the diary-jottings in the Secession war, tell their own story. My plan in starting what constitutes most of the middle of the book, was originally for hints and data of a Nature-poem that should carry one's experiences a few hours, commencing at noon-flush, and so through the after-part of the day—I suppose led to such idea by my own life-afternoon now arrived. But I soon found I could move at more ease, by giving the narrative at first hand. (Then there is a humiliating lesson one learns, in serene hours, of a fine day or night. Nature seems

to look on all fixed-up poetry and art as something almost impertinent.)

Thus I went on, years following, various seasons and areas, spinning forth my thought beneath the night and stars, (or as I was confined to my room by half-sickness,) or at midday looking out upon the sea, or far north steaming over the Saguenay's black breast, jotting all down in the loosest sort of chronological order, and here printing from my impromptu notes, hardly even the seasons group'd together, or anything corrected—so afraid of dropping what smack of outdoors or sun or starlight might cling to the lines, I dared not try to meddle with or smooth them. Every now and then, (not often, but for a foil,) I carried a book in my pocket—or perhaps tore out from some broken or cheap edition a bunch of loose leaves; most always had something of the sort ready, but only took it out when the mood demanded. In that way, utterly out of reach of literary conventions, I re-read many authors.

I cannot divest my appetite of literature, yet I find myself eventually trying it all by Nature—*first premises* many call it, but really the crowning results of all, laws, tallies and proofs. (Has it never occur'd to any one how the last deciding tests applicable to a book are entirely outside of technical and grammatical ones, and that any truly first-class production has little or nothing to do with the rules and calibres of ordinary critics? or the bloodless chalk of Allibone's Dictionary? I have fancied the ocean and the daylight, the mountain and the forest, putting their spirit in a judgment on our books. I have fancied some disembodied human soul giving its verdict.)

Nature and Democracy—Morality.

Democracy most of all affiliates with the open air, is sunny and hardy and sane only with Nature—just as much as Art is. Something is required to temper both—to check them, restrain them from excess, morbidity. I have wanted, before departure, to bear special testimony to a very old lesson and requisite. American Democracy, in its myriad personalities, in factories, workshops, stores, offices—through the dense streets and houses of cities, and all their manifold sophisticated life—must either be fibred, vitalized, by regular contact with out-door light and air and growths, farm-scenes, animals, fields, trees, birds, sun-warmth and free skies, or it will certainly dwindle and pale. We cannot have grand races of mechanics, work people, and commonalty, (the only specific purpose of America,) on any less terms. I conceive of no flourishing and heroic elements of Democracy in the United States, or of Democracy maintaining itself at all, without the Nature-element forming a main part—to be its health-element and beauty-element—to really underlie the whole politics, sanity, religion and art of the New World.

Finally, the morality: 'Virtue,' said Marcus Aurelius, 'what is it, only a living and enthusiastic sympathy with Nature?' Perhaps indeed the efforts of the true poets, founders, religions, literatures, all ages, have been, and ever will be, our time and times to come, essentially the same—to bring people back from their persistent strayings and sickly abstractions, to the costless average, divine, original concrete.

1882–1883

ONE'S-SELF I SING

ONE'S-SELF I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

1867

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I HEAR America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deck-hand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

1860

SONG OF MYSELF

1

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same,
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

2

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes, the shelves are crowded with perfumes,
I breathe the fragrance myself and know it and like it,
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it.

The atmosphere is not a perfume, it has no taste of the distillation, it is odorless,
It is for my mouth forever, I am in love with it,
I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked,
I am mad for it to be in contact with me.

The smoke of my own breath,
Echoes, ripples, buzz'd whispers, love-root, silk-thread, crotch and vine,
My respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart, the passing of blood and air through my lungs,
The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and dark-color'd sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn,
The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the wind,

A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching around of arms,
The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag,
The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hill-sides,
The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun.

Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much? have you reckon'd the earth much?
Have you practis'd so long to learn to read?
Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of suns left,)
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feed on the spectres in books,
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.

3

I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end,
But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there is now,
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

Urge and urge and urge,
Always the procreant urge of the world.
Out of the dimness opposite equals advance, always substance and increase, always sex,
Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of life.

To elaborate is no avail, learn'd and unlearn'd feel that it is so.

Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights, well entretied, braced in the beams,
Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,
I and this mystery here we stand.

Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul.

Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen,
Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.

Showing the best and dividing it from the worst age vexes age,
Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things, while they discuss I am silent, and go bathe and admire myself.

Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean,
Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the rest.

I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing;
As the hugging and loving bed-fellow sleeps at my side through the night, and withdraws at the peep of the day with stealthy tread,
Leaving me baskets cover'd with white towels swelling the house with their plenty,
Shall I postpone my acceptation and realization and scream at my eyes,
That they turn from gazing after and down the road,

And forthwith cipher and show me to a cent,
Exactly the value of one and exactly the value of two, and which is ahead?

4

Trippers and askers surround me,
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the ward and city I live in, or the nation,
The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies, authors old and new,
My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman I love,
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or ill-doing or loss or lack of money, or depressions or exaltations,
Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of doubtful news, the fitful events;
These come to me days and nights and go from me again,
But they are not the Me myself.

Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am,
Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, unitary,
Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an impalpable certain rest,
Looking with side-curved head curious what will come next,
Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.

Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog with linguists and contenders,
I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait.

5

I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you,
And you must not be abased to the other.

Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat,
Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not even the best,
Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice.

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon me,
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart,
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth,
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my sisters and lovers,
And that a kelson of the creation is love,
And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,
And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,
And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones, elder, mullein and poke-weed.

6

A child said *What is the grass*? fetching it to me with full hands,
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,

Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among white,
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps,
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.
O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women,
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

7

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it.

I pass death with the dying and birth with the new-wash'd babe, and am not contain'd between my hat and boots,
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike and every one good,
The earth good and the stars good, and their adjuncts all good.

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself,
(They do not know how immortal, but I know.)

Every kind for itself and its own, for me mine male and female,
For me those that have been boys and that love women,
For me the man that is proud and feels how it stings to be slighted,
For me the sweet-heart and the old maid, for me mothers and the mothers of mothers,

For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears,
For me children and the begetters of children.

Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale nor discarded,
I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether or no,
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be shaken away.

8

The little one sleeps in its cradle,
I lift the gauze and look a long time, and silently brush away flies with my hand.

The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside up the bushy hill,
I peeringly view them from the top.

The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the bedroom,
I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair, I note where the pistol has fallen.

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of the promenaders,
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb, the clank of the shod horses on the granite floor,
The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of snow-balls,
The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd mobs,
The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside borne to the hospital,
The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows and fall,
The excited crowd, the policeman with his star quickly working his passage to the centre of the crowd,
The impassive stones that receive and return so many echoes,
What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sunstruck or in fits,
What exclamations of women taken suddenly who hurry home and give birth to babes,
What living and buried speech is always vibrating here, what howls restrain'd by decorum,
Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made, acceptances, rejections with convex lips,
I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I come and I depart.

9

The big doors of the country barn stand open and ready,
The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the slow-drawn wagon,
The clear light plays on the brown gray and green intertinged,
The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging mow.

I am there, I help, I came stretch'd atop of the load,
I felt its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the other,
I jump from the cross-beams and seize the clover and timothy,
And roll head over heels and tangle my hair full of wisps.

10

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee,
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night,
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd game,
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves with my dog and gun by my side.

The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle and scud,
My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck.

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me,
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time;
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle.

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far west, the bride was a red girl,
Her father and his friends sat near cross-legged and dumbly smoking, they had moccasins to their feet and large thick blankets hanging from their shoulders,
On a bank lounged the trapper, he was drest mostly in skins, his luxuriant beard and curls protected his neck, he held his bride by the hand,
She had long eyelashes, her head was bare, her coarse straight locks descended upon her voluptuous limbs and reach'd to her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside,
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy and weak,
And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assured him,
And brought water and fill'd a tub for his sweated body and bruis'd feet,
And gave him a room that enter'd from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes,
And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness,
And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles;
He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and pass'd north,
I had him sit next me at table, my fire-lock lean'd in the corner.

11

Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore,
Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly;
Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all so lonesome.

She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank,
She hides handsome and richly drest aft the blinds of the window.

Which of the young men does she like the best?
Ah the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.

Where are you off to, lady? for I see you,
You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room.

Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty-ninth bather,
The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved them.

The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it ran from their long hair,
Little streams pass'd all over their bodies.

An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies,
It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.

The young men float on their backs, their white bellies bulge to the sun, they do not ask who seizes fast to them,
They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and bending arch,
They do not think whom they souse with spray.

12

The butcher-boy puts off his killing-clothes, or sharpens his knife at the stall in the market,
I loiter enjoying his repartee and his shuffle and break-down.

Blacksmiths with grimed and hairy chests environ the anvil,
Each has his main-sledge, they are all out, there is a great heat in the fire.

From the cinder-strew'd threshold I follow their movements,
The lithe sheer of their waists plays even with their massive arms,
Overhand the hammers swing, overhand so slow, overhand so sure,
They do not hasten, each man hits in his place.

13

The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses, the block swags underneath on its tied-over chain,
The negro that drives the long dray of the stone-yard, steady and tall he stands pois'd on one leg on the string-piece,
His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast and loosens over his hip-band,
His glance is calm and commanding, he tosses the slouch of his hat away from his forehead,
The sun falls on his crispy hair and mustache, falls on the black of his polish'd and perfect limbs.

I behold the picturesque giant and love him, and I do not stop there,
I go with the team also.

In me the caresser of life wherever moving, backward as well as forward sluing,
To niches aside and junior bending, not a person or object missing,
Absorbing all to myself and for this song.

Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the leafy shade, what is that you express in your eyes?
It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.

My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck on my distant and day-long ramble,
They rise together, they slowly circle around.

I believe in those wing'd purposes,
And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within me,
And consider green and violet and the tufted crown intentional,
And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else,
And the jay in the woods never studied the gamut, yet trills pretty well to me,
And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.

14

The wild gander leads his flock through the cool night,
Ya-honk he says, and sounds it down to me like an invitation,
The pert may suppose it meaningless, but I listening close,
Find its purpose and place up there toward the wintry sky.

The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the cat on the house-sill, the chickadee, the prairie-dog,
The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats,
The brood of the turkey-hen and she with her half-spread wings,
I see in them and myself the same old law.

The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections,
They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

I am enamour'd of growing out-doors,
Of men that live among cattle or taste of the ocean or woods,

Of the builders and steerers of ships and the wielders of axes and mauls, and the drivers of horses,
I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest, is Me,
Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns,
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me,
Not asking the sky to come down to my good will,
Scattering it freely forever.

15

The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,
The carpenter dresses his plank, the tongue of his foreplane whistles its wild ascending lisp,
The married and unmarried children ride home to their Thanksgiving dinner,
The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with a strong arm,
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat, lance and harpoon are ready,
The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches,
The deacons are ordain'd with cross'd hands at the altar,
The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of the big wheel,
The farmer stops by the bars as he walks on a First-day loafe and looks at the oats and rye,
The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum a confirm'd case,
(He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's bed-room;)
The jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case,
He turns his quid of tobacco while his eyes blurr with the manuscript;
The malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's table,
What is removed drops horribly in a pail;
The quadroon girl is sold at the auction-stand, the drunkard nods by the bar-room stove,
The machinist rolls up his sleeves, the policeman travels his beat, the gate-keeper marks who pass,
The young fellow drives the express-wagon, (I love him, though I do not know him;)
The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race,
The western turkey-shooting draws old and young, some lean on their rifles, some sit on logs,
Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes his position, levels his piece;
The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee,
As the woolly-pates hoe in the sugar-field, the overseer views them from his saddle,
The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentlemen run for their partners, the dancers bow to each other,
The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd garret and harks to the musical rain,
The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron,
The squaw wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth is offering moccasins and bead-bags for sale,
The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with half-shut eyes bent sideways,
As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat the plank is thrown for the shore-going passengers,
The young sister holds out the skein while the elder sister winds it off in a ball, and stops now and then for the knots,
The one-year wife is recovering and happy having a week ago borne her first child,
The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her sewing-machine or in the factory or mill,
The paving-man leans on his two-handed rammer, the reporter's lead flies swiftly over the note-book, the sign-painter is lettering with blue and gold,
The canal boy trots on the tow-path, the book-keeper counts at his desk, the shoemaker waxes his thread,
The conductor beats time for the band and all the performers follow him,
The child is baptized, the convert is making his first professions,
The regatta is spread on the bay, the race is begun, (how the white sails sparkle!)
The drover watching his drove sings out to them that would stray,

The pedler sweats with his pack on his back, (the purchaser higgling about the odd cent;)
The bride unrumples her white dress, the minute-hand of the clock moves slowly,
The opium-eater reclines with rigid head and just-open'd lips,
The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck,
The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other,
(Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you;)
The President holding a cabinet council is surrounded by the great Secretaries,
On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms,
The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated layers of halibut in the hold,
The Missourian crosses the plains toting his wares and his cattle,
As the fare-collector goes through the train he gives notice by the jingling of loose change,
The floor-men are laying the floor, the tinners are tinning the roof, the masons are calling for mortar,
In single file each shouldering his hod pass onward the laborers;
Seasons pursuing each other the indescribable crowd is gather'd, it is the fourth of Seventh-month, (what salutes of cannon and small arms!)
Seasons pursuing each other the plougher ploughs, the mower mows, and the winter-grain falls in the ground;
Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by the hole in the frozen surface,
The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter strikes deep with his axe,
Flatboatmen make fast towards dusk near the cotton-wood or pecan-trees,
Coon-seekers go through the regions of the Red river or through those drain'd by the Tennessee, or through those of the Arkansas,
Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chattahooche or Altamahaw,
Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and great grandsons around them,
In walls of adobie, in canvas tents, rest hunters and trappers after their day's sport,
The city sleeps and the country sleeps,
The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time,
The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband sleeps by his wife;
And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,
And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

16

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd with the stuff that is fine,
One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same and the largest the same,
A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable down by the Oconee I live,
A Yankee bound my own way ready for trade, my joints the limberest joints on earth and the sternest joints on earth,
A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn in my deer-skin leggings, a Louisianian or Georgian,
A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye;
At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in the bush, or with fishermen off Newfoundland,
At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest and tacking,
At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or the Texan ranch,
Comrade of Californians, comrade of free North-Westerners, (loving their big proportions,)
Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake hands and welcome to drink and meat,
A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfullest,
A novice beginning yet experient of myriads of seasons,
Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,

A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

I resist any thing better than my own diversity,
Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

(The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place,
The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see are in their place,
The palpable is in its place and the impalpable is in its place.)

17

These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands, they are not original with me,
If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing, or next to nothing,
If they are not the riddle and the untying of the riddle they are nothing,
If they are not just as close as they are distant they are nothing.

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is,
This the common air that bathes the globe.

18

With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for conquer'd and slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

I beat and pound for the dead,
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome heroes!
And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes known!

19

This is the meal equally set, this the meat for natural hunger,
It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous, I make appointments with all,
I will not have a single person slighted or left away,
The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited,
The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited, the venerealee is invited;
There shall be no difference between them and the rest.

This is the press of a bashful hand, this the float and odor of hair,
This the touch of my lips to yours, this the murmur of yearning,
This the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face,
This the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.

Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?
Well I have, for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side of a rock has.

Do you take it I would astonish?
Does the daylight astonish? does the early redstart twittering through the woods?
Do I astonish more than they?

This hour I tell things in confidence,
I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.

20

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;
How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is a man anyhow? what am I? what are you?

All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own,
Else it were time lost listening to me.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over,
That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth.

Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for invalids, conformity goes to the fourth-removed,
I wear my hat as I please indoors or out.

Why should I pray? why should I venerate and be ceremonious?

Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair, counsel'd with doctors and calculated close,
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn less,
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
I see that the elementary laws never apologize,
(I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all.)

I exist as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,
And whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time.

21

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,

The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night—press close magnetic nourishing night!
Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!
Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset—earth of the mountains misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love—therefore I to you give love!
O unspeakable passionate love.

22

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean,
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers,
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me,
We must have a turn together, I undress, hurry me out of sight of the land,
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse,
Dash me with amorous wet, I can repay you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells,
Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths,
Sea of the brine of life and of unshovell'd yet always-ready graves,
Howler and scooper of storms, capricious and dainty sea,
I am integral with you, I too am of one phase and of all phases.

Partaker of influx and efflux, I, extoller of hate and conciliation,
Extoller of amies and those that sleep in each others' arms,

I am he attesting sympathy,
(Shall I make my list of things in the house and skip the house that supports them?)

I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?

Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent,
My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait,
I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging pregnancy?
Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd over and rectified?

I find one side a balance and the antipodal side a balance,
Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine,
Thoughts and deeds of the present our rouse and early start.

This minute that comes to me over the past decillions,
There is no better than it and now.

What behaved well in the past or behaves well to-day is not such a wonder,
The wonder is always and always how there can be a mean man or an infidel.

23

Endless unfolding of words of ages!
And mine a word of the modern, the word En-Masse.

A word of the faith that never balks,
Here or henceforward it is all the same to me, I accept Time absolutely.

It alone is without flaw, it alone rounds and completes all,
That mystic baffling wonder alone completes all.

I accept Reality and dare not question it,
Materialism first and last imbuing.

Hurrah for positive science! long live exact demonstration!
Fetch stonecrop mixt with cedar and branches of lilac,
This is the lexicographer, this the chemist, this made a grammar of the old cartouches,
These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas,
This is the geologist, this works with the scalpel, and this is a mathematician.

Gentlemen, to you the first honors always!
Your facts are useful, and yet they are not my dwelling,
I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling.

Less the reminders of properties told my words,
And more the reminders they of life untold, and of freedom and extrication,
And make short account of neuters and geldings, and favor men and women fully equipt.
And beat the gong of revolt, and stop with fugitives and them that plot and conspire.

24

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding,
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them,
No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus surging and surging, through me the current and index.

I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices,
Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves,
Voices of the diseas'd and despairing and of thieves and dwarfs,
Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,
And of the threads that connect the stars, and of wombs and of the father-stuff,
And of the rights of them the others are down upon,
Of the deform'd, trivial, flat, foolish, despised,
Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

Through me forbidden voices,
Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veil'd and I remove the veil,
Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

I do not press my fingers across my mouth,
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart,
Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from,
The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.

If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread of my own body, or any part of it,
Translucent mould of me it shall be you!
Shaded ledges and rests it shall be you!
Firm masculine colter it shall be you!
Whatever goes to the tilth of me it shall be you!
You my rich blood! your milky stream pale strippings of my life!
Breast that presses against other breasts it shall be you!
My brain it shall be your occult convolutions!
Root of wash'd sweet-flag! timorous pond-snipe! nest of guarded duplicate eggs! it shall be you!
Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be you!
Trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat, it shall be you!
Sun so generous it shall be you!
Vapors lighting and shading my face it shall be you!
You sweaty brooks and dews it shall be you!
Winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me it shall be you!
Broad muscular fields, branches of live oak, loving lounger in my winding paths, it shall be you!
Hands I have taken, face I have kiss'd, mortal I have ever touch'd, it shall be you.

I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious,
Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy,
I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the cause of my faintest wish,
Nor the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause of the friendship I take again.

That I walk up my stoop, I pause to consider if it really be,
A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.

To behold the day-break!
The little light fades the immense and diaphanous shadows,
The air tastes good to my palate.

Hefts of the moving world at innocent gambols silently rising, freshly exuding,
Scooting obliquely high and low.

Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous prongs,
Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven.

The earth by the sky staid with, the daily close of their junction,
The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over my head,
The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be master!

25

Dazzling and tremendous how quick the sun-rise would kill me,
If I could not now and always send sun-rise out of me.

We also ascend dazzling and tremendous as the sun,
We found our own O my soul in the calm and cool of the daybreak.

My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach,
With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds and volumes of worlds.

Speech is the twin of my vision, it is unequal to measure itself,
It provokes me forever, it says sarcastically,
Walt you contain enough, why don't you let it out then?

Come now I will not be tantalized, you conceive too much of articulation,
Do you not know O speech how the buds beneath you are folded?
Waiting in gloom, protected by frost,
The dirt receding before my prophetical screams,
I underlying causes to balance them at last,
My knowledge my live parts, it keeping tally with the meaning of all things,
Happiness, (which whoever hears me let him or her set out in search of this day.)

My final merit I refuse you, I refuse putting from me what I really am,
Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me,
I crowd your sleekest and best by simply looking toward you.

Writing and talk do not prove me,
I carry the plenum of proof and every thing else in my face,
With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the skeptic.

26

Now I will do nothing but listen,
To accrue what I hear into this song, to let sounds contribute toward it.

I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of flames, clack of sticks cooking my meals.
I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice,
I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or following,

Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the day and night,
Talkative young ones to those that like them, the loud laugh of work-people at their meals,
The angry base of disjointed friendship, the faint tones of the sick,
The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips pronouncing a death-sentence,
The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the wharves, the refrain of the anchor-lifters,
The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the whirr of swift-streaking engines and hose-carts with premonitory tinkles and color'd lights,
The steam-whistle, the solid roll of the train of approaching cars,
The slow march play'd at the head of the association marching two and two,
(They go to guard some corpse, the flag-tops are draped with black muslin.)

I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's complaint,)
I hear the key'd cornet, it glides quickly in through my ears,
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,
Ah this indeed is music—this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me,
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies,
It wrenches such ardors from me I did not know I possess'd them,
It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick'd by the indolent waves,
I am cut by bitter and angry hail, I lose my breath,
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled in fakes of death,
At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
And that we call Being.

27

To be in any form, what is that?
(Round and round we go, all of us, and ever come back thither,)
If nothing lay more develop'd the quahaug in its callous shell were enough.

Mine is no callous shell,
I have instant conductors all over me whether I pass or stop,
They seize every object and lead it harmlessly through me.

I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am happy,
To touch my person to some one else's is about as much as I can stand.

28

Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity,
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,
Treacherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help them,
My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what is hardly different from myself,
On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,
Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip,
Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial,
Depriving me of my best as for a purpose,
Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist,
Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight and pasture-fields,
Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away,
They bribed to swap off with touch and go and graze at the edges of me,
No consideration, no regard for my draining strength or my anger,

Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a while,
Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry me.

The sentries desert every other part of me,
They have left me helpless to a red marauder,
They all come to the headland to witness and assist against me.

I am given up by traitors,
I talk wildly, I have lost my wits, I and nobody else am the greatest traitor,
I went myself first to the headland, my own hands carried me there.

You villain touch! what are you doing? my breath is tight in its throat,
Unclench your floodgates, you are too much for me.

29

Blind loving wrestling touch, sheath'd hooded sharp-tooth'd touch!
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?

Parting track'd by arriving, perpetual payment of perpetual loan,
Rich showering rain, and recompense richer afterward.

Sprouts take and accumulate, stand by the curb prolific and vital,
Landscapes projected masculine, full-sized and golden.

30

All truths wait in all things,
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon,
The insignificant is as big to me as any,
(What is less or more than a touch?)

Logic and sermons never convince,
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

(Only what proves itself to every man and woman is so,
Only what nobody denies is so.)

A minute and a drop of me settle my brain,
I believe the soggy clods shall become lovers and lamps,
And a compend of compends is the meat of a man or woman,
And a summit and flower there is the feeling they have for each other,
And they are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson until it becomes omnific,
And until one and all shall delight us, and we them.

31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

I find I incorporate gneiss, coal, long-threaded moss, fruits, grains, esculent roots,
And am stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over,

And have distanced what is behind me for good reasons,
But call any thing back again when I desire it.

In vain the speeding or shyness,
In vain the plutonic rocks send their old heat against my approach,
In vain the mastodon retreats beneath its own powder'd bones,
In vain objects stand leagues off and assume manifold shapes,
In vain the ocean settling in hollows and the great monsters lying low,
In vain the buzzard houses herself with the sky,
In vain the snake slides through the creepers and logs,
In vain the elk takes to the inner passes of the woods,
In vain the razor-bill'd auk sails far north to Labrador,
I follow quickly, I ascend to the nest in the fissure of the cliff.

32

I think I could turn and live with animals, they're so placid and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

So they show their relations to me and I accept them,
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in their possession.

I wonder where they get those tokens,
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?

Myself moving forward then and now and forever,
Gathering and showing more always and with velocity,
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among them,
Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remembrancers,
Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him on brotherly terms.

A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive to my caresses,
Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears,
Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness, ears finely cut, flexibly moving.

His nostrils dilate as my heels embrace him,
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure as we race around and return.

I but use you a minute, then I resign you, stallion,
Why do I need your paces when I myself out-gallop them?
Even as I stand or sit passing faster than you.

33

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at,
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,
And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps,
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts, camping with lumbermen,
Along the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry gulch and rivulet bed,
Weeding my onion-patch or hoeing rows of carrots and parsnips, crossing savannas, trailing in forests,
Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase,
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, hauling my boat down the shallow river,
Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead, where the buck turns furiously at the hunter,
Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock, where the otter is feeding on fish,
Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the bayou,
Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey, where the beaver pats the mud with his paddle-shaped tail;
Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-flower'd cotton plant, over the rice in its low moist field,
Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its scallop'd scum and slender shoots from the gutters,
Over the western persimmon, over the long-leav'd corn, over the delicate blue-flower flax,
Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and buzzer there with the rest,
Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades in the breeze;
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by low scragged limbs,
Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves of the brush,
Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the wheat-lot,
Where the bat flies in the Seventh-month eve, where the great gold-bug drops through the dark,
Where the brook puts out of the roots of the old tree and flows to the meadow,
Where cattle stand and shake away flies with the tremulous shuddering of their hides,
Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen, where andirons straddle the hearth-slab, where cobwebs fall in festoons from the rafters;
Where trip-hammers crash, where the press is whirling its cylinders,
Where the human heart beats with terrible throes under its ribs,
Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating aloft, (floating in it myself and looking composedly down,)
Where the life-car is drawn on the slip-noose, where the heat hatches pale-green eggs in the dented sand,
Where the she-whale swims with her calf and never forsakes it,
Where the steam-ship trails hind-ways its long pennant of smoke,
Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black chip out of the water,
Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on unknown currents,
Where shells grow to her slimy deck, where the dead are corrupting below;
Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the head of the regiments,
Approaching Manhattan up by the long-stretching island,
Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance,
Upon a door-step, upon the horse-block of hard wood outside,
Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs or a good game of base-ball,
At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances, drinking, laughter,
At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking the juice through a straw,
At apple-peelings wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find,
At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees, huskings, house-raisings;
Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles, cackles, screams, weeps,
Where the hay-rick stands in the barn-yard, where the dry-stalks are scatter'd, where the brood-cow waits in the hovel,

Where the bull advances to do his masculine work, where the stud to the mare, where the cock is treading the hen,
Where the heifers browse, where geese nip their food with short jerks,
Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless and lonesome prairie,
Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square miles far and near,
Where the humming-bird shimmers, where the neck of the long-lived swan is curving and winding,
Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where she laughs her near-human laugh,
Where bee-hives range on a gray bench in the garden half hid by the high weeds,
Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a ring on the ground with their heads out,
Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a cemetery,
Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and icicled trees,
Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to the edge of the marsh at night and feeds upon small crabs,
Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the warm noon,
Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the walnut-tree over the well,
Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-wired leaves,
Through the salt-lick or orange glade, or under conical firs,
Through the gymnasium, through the curtain'd saloon, through the office or public hall;
Pleas'd with the native and pleas'd with the foreign, pleas'd with the new and old,
Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as the handsome,
Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet and talks melodiously,
Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the whitewash'd church,
Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Methodist preacher, impress'd seriously at the camp-meeting;
Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway the whole forenoon, flatting the flesh of my nose on the thick plate glass,
Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up to the clouds, or down a lane or along the beach,
My right and left arms round the sides of two friends, and I in the middle;
Coming home with the silent and dark-cheek'd bush-boy, (behind me he rides at the drape of the day,)
Far from the settlements studying the print of animals' feet, or the moccasin print,
By the cot in the hospital reaching lemonade to a feverish patient,
Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still, examining with a candle;
Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure,
Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager and fickle as any,
Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to knife him,
Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone from me a long while,
Walking the old hills of Judæa with the beautiful gentle God by my side,
Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars,
Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad ring, and the diameter of eighty thousand miles,
Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-balls like the rest,
Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly,
Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning,
Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing,
I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at the product,
And look at quintillions ripen'd and look at quintillions green.

I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul,
My course runs below the soundings of plummets.

I help myself to material and immaterial,
No guard can shut me off, no law prevent me.

I anchor my ship for a little while only,
My messengers continually cruise away or bring their returns to me.

I go hunting polar furs and the seal, leaping chasms with a pike-pointed staff, clinging to topples of brittle and blue.

I ascend to the foretruck,
I take my place late at night in the crow's-nest,
We sail the arctic sea, it is plenty light enough,
Through the clear atmosphere I stretch around on the wonderful beauty,
The enormous masses of ice pass me and I pass them, the scenery is plain in all directions,
The white-topt mountains show in the distance, I fling out my fancies toward them,
We are approaching some great battle-field in which we are soon to be engaged,
We pass the colossal outposts of the encampment, we pass with still feet and caution,
Or we are entering by the suburbs some vast and ruin'd city,
The blocks and fallen architecture more than all the living cities of the globe.

I am a free companion, I bivouac by invading watchfires,
I turn the bridegroom out of bed and stay with the bride myself,
I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail of the stairs,
They fetch my man's body up dripping and drown'd.

I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times,
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steamship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm,
How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of days and faithful of nights,
And chalk'd in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not desert you;*
How he follow'd with them and tack'd with them three days and would not give it up,
How he saved the drifting company at last,
How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated from the side of their prepared graves,
How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipp'd unshaved men;
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,
I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

The disdain and calmness of martyrs,
The mother of old, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her children gazing on,
The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing, cover'd with sweat,
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the murderous buckshot and the bullets,
All these I feel or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen,
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin,
I fall on the weeds and stones,
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.

Agonies are one of my changes of garments.
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person,
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken,
Tumbling walls buried me in their debris,
Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my comrades,
I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels,
They have clear'd the beams away, they tenderly lift me forth.
I lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading hush is for my sake,
Painless after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy,
White and beautiful are the faces around me, the heads are bared of their fire-caps,
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the torches.

Distant and dead resuscitate,
They show as the dial or move as the hands of me, I am the clock myself.

I am an old artillerist, I tell of my fort's bombardment,
I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers,
Again the attacking cannon, mortars,
Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

I take part, I see and hear the whole,
The cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots,
The ambulanza slowly passing trailing its red drip,
Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable repairs,
The fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped explosion,
The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general, he furiously waves with his hand,
He gasps through the clot *Mind not me—mind—the entrenchments.*

34

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth,
(I tell not the fall of Alamo,
Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,
The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo,)
'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve young men.

Retreating they had form'd in a hollow square with their baggage for breastworks,
Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemy's, nine times their number, was the price they took in advance,
Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone,
They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd writing and seal, gave up their arms and march'd back prisoners of war.

They were the glory of the race of rangers,
Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,
Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate,
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,
Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second First-day morning they were brought out in squads and massacred, it was beautiful early summer,
The work commenced about five o'clock and was over by eight.

None obey'd the command to kneel,
Some made a mad and helpless rush, some stood stark and straight,
A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the living and dead lay together,
The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt, the new-comers saw them there,
Some half-kill'd attempted to crawl away,
These were despatch'd with bayonets or batter'd with the blunts of muskets.
A youth not seventeen years old seiz'd his assassin till two more came to release him,
The three were all torn and cover'd with the boy's blood.

At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies;
That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and twelve young men.

35

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?
Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you, (said he,)
His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never was, and never will be;
Along the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd,
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water,
On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all around and blowing up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five feet of water reported,
The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-hold to give them a chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels,
They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,
The other asks if we demand quarter?
If our colors are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,
We have not struck, he composedly cries, *we have just begun our part of the fighting*.

Only three guns are in use,
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's main-mast,
Two well serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top.
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease,
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are sinking.

Serene stands the little captain,
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

36

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,
Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness,
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to the one we have conquer'd,
The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through a countenance white as a sheet,
Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin,
The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully curl'd whiskers,
The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and below,
The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty,
Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of flesh upon the masts and spars,
Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of waves,
Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent,
A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining,
Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore, death-messages given in charge to survivors,
The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull, tapering groan,
These so, these irretrievable.

37

You laggards there on guard! look to your arms!
In at the conquer'd doors they crowd! I am possess'd!
Embody all presences outlaw'd or suffering,
See myself in prison shaped like another man,
And feel the dull unintermitted pain,

For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their carbines and keep watch,
It is I let out in the morning and barr'd at night.

Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am handcuff'd to him and walk by his side,
(I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one with sweat on my twitching lips.)

Not a youngster is taken for larceny but I go up too, and am tried and sentenced.

Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp but I also lie at the last gasp,
My face is ash-color'd, my sinews gnarl, away from me people retreat.

Askers embody themselves in me and I am embodied in them,
I project my hat, sit shame-faced, and beg.

38

Enough! enough! enough!
Somehow I have been stunn'd. Stand back!

Give me a little time beyond my cuff'd head, slumbers, dreams, gaping,
I discover myself on the verge of a usual mistake.

That I could forget the mockers and insults!
That I could forget the trickling tears and the blows of the bludgeons and hammers!
That I could look with a separate look on my own crucifixion and bloody crowning!

I remember now,
I resume the overstaid fraction,
The grave of rock multiplies what has been confided to it, or to any graves,
Corpses rise, gashes heal, fastenings roll from me.

I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one of an average unending procession, 97c
Inland and sea-coast we go, and pass all boundary lines,
Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole earth,
The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of thousands of years.

Eleves, I salute you! come forward!
Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.

39

The friendly and flowing savage, who is he?
Is he waiting for civilization, or past it and mastering it?

Is he some Southwesterner rais'd out-doors? is he Kanadian?
Is he from the Mississippi country? Iowa, Oregon, California?
The mountains? prairie-life, bush-life? or sailor from the sea? 98c

Wherever he goes men and women accept and desire him,
They desire he should like them, touch them, speak to them, stay with them.

Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as grass, uncomb'd head, laughter, and naivetè,
Slow-stepping feet, common features, common modes and emanations,
They descend in new forms from the tips of his fingers,
They are wafted with the odor of his body or breath, they fly out of the glance of his eyes.

40

Flaunt of the sunshine I need not your bask—lie over!
You light surfaces only, I force surfaces and depths also.

Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands,
Say, old top-knot, what do you want? 99o

Man or woman, I might tell how I like you, but cannot,
And might tell what it is in me and what it is in you, but cannot,
And might tell that pining I have, that pulse of my nights and days.

Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity,
When I give I give myself.

You there, impotent, loose in the knees,
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you,
Spread your palms and lift the flaps of your pockets,
I am not to be denied, I compel, I have stores plenty and to spare,
And any thing I have I bestow. 100c

I do not ask who you are, that is not important to me,
You can do nothing and be nothing but what I will infold you.

To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean,
On his right cheek I put the family kiss,
And in my soul I swear I never will deny him.

On women fit for conception I start bigger and nimbler babes,
(This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant republics.)

To any one dying, thither I speed and twist the knob of the door,
Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed,
Let the physician and the priest go home.

I seize the descending man and raise him with resistless will,
O despairer, here is my neck,
By God, you shall not go down! hang your whole weight upon me.

I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up,
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.

Sleep—I and they keep guard all night,
Not doubt, not disease shall dare to lay finger upon you,
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to myself,
And when you rise in the morning you will find what I tell you is so.

41

I am he bringing help for the sick as they pant on their backs,
And for strong upright men I bring yet more needed help.

I heard what was said of the universe,
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years;
It is middling well as far as it goes—but is that all?

Magnifying and applying come I,
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson,
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the crucifix engraved,
With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every idol and image,
Taking them all for what they are worth and not a cent more,
Admitting they were alive and did the work of their days,
(They bore mites as for unfledg'd birds who have now to rise and fly and sing for themselves,)
Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in myself, bestowing them freely on each man and woman I see,
Discovering as much or more in a framer framing a house,
Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up sleeves driving the mallet and chisel,
Not objecting to special revelations, considering a curl of smoke or a hair on the back of my hand just as curious as any revelation,
Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes no less to me than the gods of the antique wars,
Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,

Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths, their white foreheads whole and unhurt
out of the flames;
By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding for every person born,
Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty angels with shirts bagg'd out at
their waists,
The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins past and to come,
Selling all he possesses, traveling on foot to fee lawyers for his brother and sit by him while he
is tried for forgery;
What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square rod about me, and not filling the square
rod then,
The bull and the bug never worshipp'd half enough,
Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd,
The supernatural of no account, myself waiting my time to be one of the supremes,
The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much good as the best, and be as prodigious;
By my life-lumps! becoming already a creator,
Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of the shadows.

42

A call in the midst of the crowd,
My own voice, orotund sweeping and final.

Come my children,
Come my boys and girls, my women, household and intimates,
Now the performer launches his nerve, he has pass'd his prelude on the reeds within.

Easily written loose-finger'd chords—I feel the thrum of your climax and close.

My head slues round on my neck,
Music rolls, but not from the organ,
Folks are around me, but they are no household of mine.

Ever the hard unsunk ground,
Ever the eaters and drinkers, ever the upward and downward sun, ever the air and the
ceaseless tides,
Ever myself and my neighbors, refreshing, wicked, real,
Ever the old inexplicable query, ever that thorn'd thumb, that breath of itches and thirsts,
Ever the vexer's *hoot! hoot!* till we find where the sly one hides and bring him forth,
Ever love, ever the sobbing liquid of life,
Ever the bandage under the chin, ever the trestles of death.

Here and there with dimes on the eyes walking,
To feed the greed of the belly the brains liberally spooning,
Tickets buying, taking, selling, but in to the feast never once going,
Many sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff for payment receiving,
A few idly owning, and they the wheat continually claiming.

This is the city and I am one of the citizens,
Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets, newspapers, schools,
The mayor and councils, banks, tariffs, steamships, factories, stocks, stores, real estate and
personal estate.

The little plentiful manikins skipping around in collars and tail'd coats,
I am aware who they are, (they are positively not worms or fleas,)
I acknowledge the duplicates of myself, the weakest and shallowest is deathless with me,

What I do and say the same waits for them,
Every thought that flounders in me the same flounders in them.

I know perfectly well my own egotism,
Know my omnivorous lines and must not write any less,
And would fetch you whoever you are flush with myself.

Not words of routine this song of mine,
But abruptly to question, to leap beyond yet nearer bring;
This printed and bound book—but the printer and the printing-office boy?
The well-taken photographs—but your wife or friend close and solid in your arms?
The black ship mail'd with iron, her mighty guns in her turrets—but the pluck of the captain and engineers? 109c
In the houses the dishes and fare and furniture—but the host and hostess, and the look out of their eyes?
The sky up there—yet here or next door, or across the way?
The saints and sages in history—but you yourself?
Sermons, creeds, theology—but the fathomless human brain,
And what is reason? and what is love? and what is life?

43

I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over,
My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,
Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between ancient and modern,
Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand years,
Waiting responses from oracles, honoring the gods, saluting the sun, 110c
Making a fetich of the first rock or stump, powowing with sticks in the circle of obis,
Helping the llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the idols,
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and austere in the woods a gymnosophist,
Drinking mead from the skull-cup, to Shastas and Vedas admirant, minding the Koran,
Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the stone and knife, beating the serpent-skin drum,
Accepting the Gospels, accepting him that was crucified, knowing assuredly that he is divine,
To the mass kneeling or the puritan's prayer rising, or sitting patiently in a pew,
Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting dead-like till my spirit arouses me,
Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of pavement and land,
Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits. 111c

One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like a man leaving charges before a journey.

Down-hearted doubters dull and excluded,
Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, dishearten'd, atheistical,
I know every one of you, I know the sea of torment, doubt, despair and unbelief.

How the flukes splash!
How they contort rapid as lightning, with spasms and spouts of blood!

Be at peace bloody flukes of doubters and sullen mopers,
I take my place among you as much as among any,
The past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same,
And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all precisely the same. 1120

I do not know what is untried and afterward,
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.

Each who passes is consider'd, each who stops is consider'd, not a single one can it fail.

It cannot fail the young man who died and was buried,
Nor the young woman who died and was put by his side,
Nor the little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew back and was never seen again,
Nor the old man who has lived without purpose, and feels it with bitterness worse than gall,
Nor him in the poor house tubercled by rum and the bad disorder,
Nor the numberless slaughter'd and wreck'd, nor the brutish koboo call'd the ordure of humanity,
Nor the sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to slip in,
Nor any thing in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the earth,
Nor any thing in the myriads of spheres, nor the myriads of myriads that inhabit them,
Nor the present, nor the least wisp that is known.

44

It is time to explain myself—let us stand up.

What is known I strip away,
I launch all men and women forward with me into the Unknown.

The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate?

We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers,
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

I do not call one greater and one smaller,
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my brother, my sister?
I am sorry for you, they are not murderous or jealous upon me,
All has been gentle with me, I keep no account with lamentation,
(What have I to do with lamentation?)

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser of things to be.

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps,
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there,
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the lethargic mist,
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid carbon.

Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen,
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me,
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it with care.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and delight me,
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

45

O span of youth! ever-push'd elasticity.
O manhood, balanced, florid and full.

My lovers suffocate me,
Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin,
Jostling me through streets and public halls, coming naked to me at night,
Crying by day *Ahoy!* from the rocks of the river, swinging and chirping over my head,
Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled underbrush,
Lighting on every moment of my life,
Bussing my body with soft balsamic busses,
Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts and giving them to be mine.

Old age superbly rising! O welcome, ineffable grace of dying days!

Every condition promulges not only itself, it promulges what grows after and out of itself,
And the dark hush promulges as much as any.

I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled systems,
And all I see multiplied as high as I can cipher edge but the rim of the farther systems.

Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always expanding,
Outward and outward and forever outward.

My sun has his sun and round him obediently wheels,
He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,
And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest inside them.

There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage,
If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces, were this moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would not avail in the long run,
We should surely bring up again where we now stand,
And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.

A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic leagues, do not hazard the span or make it impatient,
They are but parts, any thing is but a part.

See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that,
Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,
The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there.

46

I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured and never will be measured.

I tramp a perpetual journey, (come listen all!)
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods,
No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair,
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy,
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, exchange,
But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a knoll,
My left hand hooking you round the waist,
My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents and the public road.

Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you,
You must travel it for yourself.

It is not far, it is within reach,
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born and did not know,
Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land.

Shoulder your duds dear son, and I will mine, and let us hasten forth,
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go.

If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff of your hand on my hip,
And in due time you shall repay the same service to me,
For after we start we never lie by again.

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the crowded heaven,
And I said to my spirit *When we become the enfolders of those orbs, and the pleasure and knowledge of every thing in them, shall we be fill'd and satisfied then?*
And my spirit said *No, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond.*

You are also asking me questions and I hear you,
I answer that I cannot answer, you must find out for yourself.

Sit a while dear son,
Here are biscuits to eat and here is milk to drink,
But as soon as you sleep and renew yourself in sweet clothes, I kiss you with a good-by kiss and open the gate for your egress hence.

Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams,
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every moment of your life.

Long have you timidly waded holding a plank by the shore,
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,
To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to me, shout, and laughingly dash with your hair.

47

I am the teacher of athletes,
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of my own,
He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man not through derived power, but in his own right,
Wicked rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear,

Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak,
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him worse than sharp steel cuts,
First-rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song or play on the banjo,
Preferring scars and the beard and faces pitted with small-pox over all latherers,
And those well-tann'd to those that keep out of the sun.

I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?
I follow you whoever you are from the present hour,
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar or to fill up the time while I wait for a boat,
(It is you talking just as much as myself, I act as the tongue of you,
Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be loosen'd.)

I swear I will never again mention love or death inside a house,
And I swear I will never translate myself at all, only to him or her who privately stays with me in the open air.

If you would understand me go to the heights or water-shore,
The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a drop or motion of waves a key,
The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words.

No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,
But roughs and little children better than they.

The young mechanic is closest to me, he knows me well,
The woodman that takes his axe and jug with him shall take me with him all day,
The farm-boy ploughing in the field feels good at the sound of my voice,
In vessels that sail my words sail, I go with fishermen and seamen and love them.

The soldier camp'd or upon the march is mine,
On the night ere the pending battle many seek me, and I do not fail them,
On that solemn night (it may be their last) those that know me seek me.

My face rubs to the hunter's face when he lies down alone in his blanket,
The driver thinking of me does not mind the jolt of his wagon,
The young mother and old mother comprehend me,
The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment and forget where they are,
They and all would resume what I have told them.

48

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud,
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth,
And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the learning of all times,
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero,
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe,
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes.

And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.)

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

49

And as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortality, it is idle to try to alarm me.

To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes,
I see the elder-hand pressing receiving supporting,
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.

And as to you Corpse I think you are good manure, but that does not offend me,
I smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing,
I reach to the leafy lips, I reach to the polish'd breasts of melons.

And as to you Life I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths,
(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.)

I hear you whispering there O stars of heaven,
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual transfers and promotions,
If you do not say any thing how can I say any thing?

Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn forest,
Of the moon that descends the steeps of the soughing twilight,
Toss, sparkles of day and dusk—toss on the black stems that decay in the muck,
Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry limbs.

I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night,
I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noonday sunbeams reflected,
And debouch to the steady and central from the offspring great or small.

50

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is in me.

Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes,
I sleep—I sleep long.

I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid,
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.

Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on,
To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes me.

Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for my brothers and sisters.

Do you see O my brothers and sisters?
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal life—it is Happiness.

51

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! what have you to confide to me?
Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening,
(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.)

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I wait on the door-slab.

Who has done his day's work? who will soonest be through with his supper?
Who wishes to walk with me?

Will you speak before I am gone? will you prove already too late?

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

1855

ONE HOUR TO MADNESS AND JOY

ONE hour to madness and joy! O furious! O confine me not!
(What is this that frees me so in storms?
What do my shouts amid lightnings and raging winds mean?)

O to drink the mystic deliria deeper than any other man!
O savage and tender achings! (I bequeath them to you, my children,
I tell them to you, for reasons, O bridegroom and bride.)

O to be yielded to you whoever you are, and you to be yielded to me in defiance of the world!
O to return to Paradise! O bashful and feminine!
O to draw you to me, to plant on you for the first time the lips of a determin'd man.

O the puzzle, the thrice-tied knot, the deep and dark pool, all untied and illumin'd!
O to speed where there is space enough and air enough at last!
To be absolv'd from previous ties and conventions, I from mine and you from yours!
To find a new unthought-of nonchalance with the best of Nature!
To have the gag remov'd from one's mouth!
To have the feeling to-day or any day I am sufficient as I am.

O something unprov'd! something in a trance!
To escape utterly from others' anchors and holds!
To drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dangerous!
To court destruction with taunts, with invitations!
To ascend, to leap to the heavens of the love indicated to me!
To rise thither with my inebriate soul!
To be lost if it must be so!
To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fulness and freedom!
With one brief hour of madness and joy.

1860

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I SAW in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover near,
I know very well I could not.

1860

I HEAR IT WAS CHARGED AGAINST ME

I HEAR it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions,
But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
(What indeed have I in common with them? or what with the destruction of them?)
Only I will establish in the Mannahatta and in every city of these States inland and seaboard,
And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large that dents the water,
Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument,
The institution of the dear love of comrades.

1860

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY

1

FLOOD-TIDE below me! I see you face to face!
Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose,
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day,
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage over the river,
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them,
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore,
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high,
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

3

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence,
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest in strong shadow,
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my head in the sunlit water,
Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,
Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,

Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor,
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender serpentine pennants,
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-houses,
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests and glistening,
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the granite storehouses by the docks,
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flank'd on each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter,
On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burning high and glaringly into the night,
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow light over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

4

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you,
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river,
The men and women I saw were all near to me,
Others the same—others who look back on me because I look'd forward to them,
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night.)

5

What is it then between us?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not,
I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine,
I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the waters around it,
I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me.
In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me,
In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me,
I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution,
I too had receiv'd identity by my body,
That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should be of my body.

6

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre?
Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,
Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,
The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting,
Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these wanting,
Was one with the rest, the days and haps of the rest,

Was call'd by my nighest name by clear loud voices of young men as they saw me approaching or passing,
Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent leaning of their flesh against me as I sat,
Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly, yet never told them a word,
Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping,
Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as great as we like,
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

7

Closer yet I approach you,
What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you—I laid in my stores in advance,
I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
Who knows but I am enjoying this?
Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than mast-hemm'd Manhattan?
River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide?
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and the belated lighter?
What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I love call me promptly and loudly by my nighest name as I approach?

What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my face?
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?

We understand then do we not?
What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?
What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accomplish is accomplish'd, is it not?

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the men and women generations after me!
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my nighest name!
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!
Play the old role, the role that is great or small according as one makes it!
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking upon you;
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting current;
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all downcast eyes have time to take it from you!
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's head, in the sunlit water!
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd schooners, sloops, lighters!

Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at sunset!
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are,
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our divinest aromas,
Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers,
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers,
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward,
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us,
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within us,
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also,
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

1856

FROM SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE

I

WEAPON shapely, naked, wan,
Head from the mother's bowels drawn,
Wooded flesh and metal bone, limb only one and lip only one,
Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown, helve produced from a little seed sown,
Resting the grass amid and upon,
To be lean'd and to lean on.
. . . .

1856

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

COME my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with the foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the high plateaus,
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we come,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental blood intervein'd,
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the Northern,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O resistless restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for all!
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress, (bend your heads all,)
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive, weapon'd mistress,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly fill'd,
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked,
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions pressing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!
Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets,
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,
All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo wait behind,
We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!
O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!
(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done your work,)
Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted doors?
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?
Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged nodding on our way?
Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and clear I hear it wind,
Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

1865

FRANCE

The 18th Year of These States

A GREAT year and place,
A harsh discordant natal scream out-sounding, to touch the mother's heart closer than any yet.

I walk'd the shores of my Eastern sea,
Heard over the waves the little voice,
Saw the divine infant where she woke mournfully wailing, amid the roar of cannon, curses, shouts, crash of falling buildings,
Was not so sick from the blood in the gutters running, nor from the single corpses, nor those in heaps, nor those borne away in the tumbrils,
Was not so desperate at the battues of death—was not so shock'd at the repeated fusillades of the guns.

Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long-accrued retribution?
Could I wish humanity different?
Could I wish the people made of wood and stone?
Or that there be no justice in destiny or time?

O Liberty! O mate for me!
Here too the blaze, the grape-shot and the axe, in reserve, to fetch them out in case of need,
Here too, though long repress, can never be destroy'd,
Here too could rise at last murdering and ecstatic,
Here too demanding full arrears of vengeance.

Hence I sign this salute over the sea,
And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism,
But remember the little voice that I heard wailing, and wait with perfect trust, no matter how long,
And from to-day sad and cogent I maintain the bequeath'd cause, as for all lands,
And I send these words to Paris with my love,
And I guess some chansonniers there will understand them,
For I guess there is latent music yet in France, floods of it,
O I hear already the bustle of instruments, they will soon be drowning all that would interrupt them,
O I think the east wind brings a triumphal and free march,
It reaches hither, it swells me to joyful madness,
I will run transpose it in words, to justify it,
I will yet sing a song for you ma femme.

1860

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,

A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden,
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,

Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.

But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur,

And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.

Hither my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.

O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

The aria sinking,
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching,
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,

Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside,)
The sea whisper'd me.

1860

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee,)
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)
Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale, (thou art all wings,)
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,

Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou my soul,
What joys! what joys were thine!

1881

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT

On the beach at night,
Stands a child with her father,
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses spreading,
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades.

From the beach the child holding the hand of her father,
Those burial clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all,
Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child,
Weep not, my darling,
With these kisses let me remove your tears,
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only in apparition,
Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the Pleiades shall emerge,
They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall shine out again,
The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they endure,
The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive moons shall again shine.

Then dearest child mournest thou only for Jupiter?
Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

Something there is,
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection,)
Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
(Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing away,)
Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter,
Longer than sun or any revolving satellite,
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

1856

EUROPE

The 72d and 73d Years of These States

Suddenly out of its stale and drowsy lair, the lair of slaves,
Like lightning it le'pt forth half startled at itself,
Its feet upon the ashes and the rags, its hand tight to the throats of kings.

O hope and faith!
O aching close of exiled patriots' lives!
O many a sicken'd heart!
Turn back unto this day and make yourselves afresh.

And you, paid to defile the People—you liars, mark!
Not for numberless agonies, murders, lusts,
For court thieving in its manifold mean forms, worming from his simplicity the poor man's wages,
For many a promise sworn by royal lips and broken and laugh'd at in the breaking,
Then in their power not for all these did the blows strike revenge, or the heads of the nobles fall;
The People scorn'd the ferocity of kings.

But the sweetness of mercy brew'd bitter destruction, and the frighten'd monarchs come back,
Each comes in state with his train, hangman, priest, tax-gatherer,
Soldier, lawyer, lord, jailer, and sycophant.

Yet behind all lowering stealing, lo, a shape,
Vague as the night, draped interminably, head, front and form, in scarlet folds,
Whose face and eyes none may see,
Out of its robes only this, the red robes lifted by the arm,
One finger crook'd pointed high over the top, like the head of a snake appears.

Meanwhile corpses lie in new-made graves, bloody corpses of young men,
The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of princes are flying, the creatures of power laugh aloud,
And all these things bear fruits, and they are good.

Those corpses of young men,
Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets, those hearts pierc'd by the gray lead,
Cold and motionless as they seem live elsewhere with unslaughter'd vitality.

They live in other young men O kings!
They live in brothers again ready to defy you,
They were purified by death, they were taught and exalted.

Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom but grows seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed,
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains and the snows nourish.

Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants let loose,
But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering, counseling, cautioning.

Liberty, let others despair of you—I never despair of you.

Is the house shut? is the master away?
Nevertheless, be ready, be not weary of watching,
He will soon return, his messengers come anon.

1855

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

WHEN I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

1865

CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD

A LINE in long array where they wind betwixt green islands,
They take a serpentine course, their arms flash in the sun—hark to the musical clank,
Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing horses loitering stop to drink,
Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each person a picture, the negligent rest on the saddles,
Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are just entering the ford—while,
Scarlet and blue and snowy white,
The guidon flags flutter gayly in the wind.

1865

COME UP FROM THE FIELDS FATHER

COME up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, *gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,*
At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

Grieve not so, dear mother, (the just-grown daughter speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd,)
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.

Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor may-be needs to be better, that brave and simple soul,)
While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,
O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

1865

A MARCH IN THE RANKS HARD-PREST, AND THE ROAD UNKNOWN

A MARCH in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown,
A route through a heavy wood with muffled steps in the darkness,
Our army foil'd with loss severe, and the sullen remnant retreating,
Till after midnight glimmer upon us the lights of a dim-lighted building,
We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by the dim-lighted building,
'Tis a large old church at the crossing roads, now an impromptu hospital,
Entering but for a minute I see a sight beyond all the pictures and poems ever made,
Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving candles and lamps,
And by one great pitchy torch stationary with wild red flame and clouds of smoke,
By these, crowds, groups of forms vaguely I see on the floor, some in the pews laid down,
At my feet more distinctly a soldier, a mere lad, in danger of bleeding to death, (he is shot in the abdomen,)
I stanch the blood temporarily, (the youngster's face is white as a lily,)
Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene fain to absorb it all,
Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in obscurity, some of them dead,
Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell of ether, the odor of blood,
The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms, the yard outside also fill'd,
Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers, some in the death-spasm sweating,
An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders or calls,
The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the glint of the torches,
These I resume as I chant, I see again the forms, I smell the odor,
Then hear outside the orders given, *Fall in, my men, fall in;*
But first I bend to the dying lad, his eyes open, a half-smile gives he me,
Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to the darkness,
Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in the ranks,
The unknown road still marching.

1865

A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAYBREAK GRAY AND DIM

A SIGHT in camp in the daybreak gray and dim,
As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless,
As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital tent,
Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there untended lying,
Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woolen blanket,
Gray and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.

Curious I halt and silent stand,
Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest the first just lift the blanket;
Who are you elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-gray'd hair, and flesh all sunken about the eyes?
Who are you my dear comrade?

Then to the second I step—and who are you my child and darling?
Who are you sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming?

Then to the third—a face nor child nor old, very calm, as of beautiful yellow-white ivory;
Young man I think I know you—I think this face is the face of the Christ himself,
Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

1865

THE WOUND-DRESSER

1

AN old man bending I come among new faces,
Years looking backward resuming in answer to children,
Come tell us old man, as from young men and maidens that love me,
(Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the alarum, and urge relentless war,
But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd and I resign'd myself,
To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch the dead;)
Years hence of these scenes, of these furious passions, these chances,
Of unsurpass'd heroes, (was one side so brave? the other was equally brave;)
Now be witness again, paint the mightiest armies of earth,
Of those armies so rapid so wondrous what saw you to tell us?
What stays with you latest and deepest? of curious panics,
Of hard-fought engagements or sieges tremendous what deepest remains?

2

O maidens and young men I love and that love me,
What you ask of my days those the strangest and sudden your talking recalls,
Soldier alert I arrive after a long march cover'd with sweat and dust,
In the nick of time I come, plunge in the fight, loudly shout in the rush of successful charge,
Enter the captur'd works—yet lo, like a swift-running river they fade,
Pass and are gone they fade—I dwell not on soldiers' perils or soldiers' joys,
(Both I remember well—many of the hardships, few the joys, yet I was content.)

But in silence, in dreams' projections,
While the world of gain and appearance and mirth goes on,
So soon what is over forgotten, and waves wash the imprints off the sand,
With hinged knees returning I enter the doors, (while for you up there,
Whoever you are, follow without noise and be of strong heart.)

Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,
Straight and swift to my wounded I go,
Where they lie on the ground after the battle brought in,
Where their priceless blood reddens the grass the ground,
Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under the roof'd hospital,
To the long rows of cots up and down each side I return,
To each and all one after another I draw near, not one do I miss,
An attendant follows holding a tray, he carries a refuse pail,
Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied, and fill'd again.

I onward go, I stop,
With hinged knees and steady hand to dress wounds,
I am firm with each, the pangs are sharp yet unavoidable,
One turns to me his appealing eyes—poor boy! I never knew you,
Yet I think I could not refuse this moment to die for you, if that would save you.

3

On, on I go, (open doors of time! open hospital doors!)
The crush'd head I dress, (poor crazed hand tear not the bandage away,)
The neck of the cavalry-man with the bullet through and through I examine,
Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the eye, yet life struggles hard,
(Come sweet death! be persuaded O beautiful death!
In mercy come quickly.)

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter and blood,
Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck and side falling head,
His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the bloody stump,
And has not yet look'd on it.

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep,
But a day or two more, for see the frame all wasted and sinking,
And the yellow-blue countenance see.

I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound,
Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening, so offensive,
While the attendant stands behind aside me holding the tray and pail.

I am faithful, I do not give out,
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdomen,
These and more I dress with impassive hand, (yet deep in my breast a fire, a burning flame.)

4

Thus in silence in dreams' projections,
Returning, resuming, I thread my way through the hospitals,
The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand,
I sit by the restless all the dark night, some are so young,
Some suffer so much, I recall the experience sweet and sad,
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have cross'd and rested,
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips.)

1865

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

1

GIVE me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows,
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape,
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching content,
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars,
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can walk undisturb'd,
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman of whom I should never tire,
Give me a perfect child, give me away aside from the noise of the world a rural domestic life,

Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears only,
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your primal sanities!

These demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless excitement, and rack'd by the war-strife,)
These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,
Day upon day and year upon year O city, walking your streets,
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time refusing to give me up,
Yet giving to make me glutted, enrich'd of soul, you give me forever faces;
(O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,
I see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

2

Keep your splendid silent sun,
Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods,
Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-fields and orchards,
Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-month bees hum;
Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms incessant and endless along the trottoirs!
Give me interminable eyes—give me women—give me comrades and lovers by the thousand!
Let me see new ones every day—let me hold new ones by the hand every day!
Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan!
Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give me the sound of the trumpets and drums!
(The soldiers in companies or regiments—some starting away, flush'd and reckless,
Some, their time up, returning with thinn'd ranks, young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing nothing;)
Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships!
O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied!
The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!
The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the torchlight procession!
The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled military wagons following;
People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants,
Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as now,
The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets, (even the sight of the wounded,)
Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!
Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

1865

ETHIOPIA SALUTING THE COLORS

WHO are you dusky woman, so ancient hardly human,
With your woolly-white and turban'd head, and bare bony feet?
Why rising by the roadside here, do you the colors greet?

('Tis while our army lines Carolina's sands and pines,
Forth from thy hovel door thou Ethiopia com'st to me,
As under doughty Sherman I march toward the sea.)

Me master years a hundred since from my parents sunder'd,
A little child, they caught me as the savage beast is caught,
Then hither me across the sea the cruel slaver brought.

No further does she say, but lingering all the day,
Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her darkling eye,
And courtesies to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

What is it fateful woman, so blear, hardly human?
Why wag your head with turban bound, yellow, red and green?
Are the things so strange and marvelous you see or have seen?

1871

RECONCILIATION

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

1866

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D [1]

1

WHEN lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

2

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,

[1] 'In the future of these States must arise poets immenser far, and make great poems of death. The poems of life are great, but there must be poems of the purports of life, not only in itself, but beyond itself. . . . America needs, and the world needs, a class of bards who will, now and ever, so link and tally the rational physical being of man, with the ensembles of time and space, and with this vast and multiform show, Nature, surrounding him, ever tantalizing him, equally a part, and yet not a part of him, as to essentially harmonize, satisfy, and put at rest. Faith, very old, now scared away by science, must be restored, brought back by the same power that caused her departure—restored with new sway, deeper, wider, higher than ever. Surely, this universal ennui, this coward fear, this shuddering at death, these low degrading views, are not always to rule the spirit pervading future society, as it has the past, and does the present. What the Roman Lucretius sought most nobly, yet all too blindly, negatively to do for his age and its successors, must be done positively by some great coming literatus, especially poet, who, while remaining fully poet, will absorb whatever science indicates, with spiritualism, and out of them, and out of his genius, will compose the great poem of death. Then will man indeed confront Nature, and confront time and space, both with science and *con amore*, and take his right place, prepared for life, master of fortune and misfortune.' Whitman, 'Democratic Vistas' (1871), *Complete Prose Works*(Boston, 1898), 245–46.

With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

4

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.
Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

8

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,

As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side, (while the other stars all look'd on,)
As we wander'd together the solemn night, (for something I know not what kept me from sleep,)
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

11

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

12

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,

The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets how their throbbings throbb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

15

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,

And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

1866

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
The arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

1866

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH [1]

THERE was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and the song of the phœbe-bird,
And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of him,
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow corn, and the esculent roots of the garden,
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit afterward, and wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road,
And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern whence he had lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that had conceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the sense of what is real, the thought if after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious whether and how,
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are not flashes and specks what are they?
The streets themselves and the façades of houses, and goods in the windows,
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves, the huge crossing at the ferries,

1 'People have often asked him the meaning of the poem "There Was a Child Went Forth," and he has always made the same answer: "What is the meaning? I wonder what? I wonder what?" Once he said to Bronsall: "Harry, maybe it has no meaning." ' Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (N.Y., 1915), II, 228.

The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset, the river between,
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of white or brown two miles off,
The schooner near by sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat slack-tow'd astern,
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint away solitary by itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in,
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and shore mud,
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day.

1855

THE CITY DEAD-HOUSE

By the city dead-house by the gate,
As idly sauntering wending my way from the clangor,
I curious pause, for lo, an outcast form, a poor dead prostitute brought,
Her corpse they deposit unclaim'd, it lies on the damp brick pavement,
The divine woman, her body, I see the body, I look on it alone,
That house once full of passion and beauty, all else I notice not,
Nor stillness so cold, nor running water from faucet, nor odors morbific impress me,
But the house alone—that wondrous house—that delicate fair house—that ruin!
That immortal house more than all the rows of dwellings ever built!
Or white-domed capitol with majestic figure surmounted, or all the old high-spired cathedrals,
That little house alone more than them all—poor, desperate house!
Fair, fearful wreck—tenement of a soul—itself a soul,
Unclaim'd, avoided house—take one breath from my tremulous lips,
Take one tear dropt aside as I go for thought of you,
Dead house of love—house of madness and sin, crumbled, crush'd.
House of life, erewhile talking and laughing—but ah, poor house, dead even then,
Months, years, an echoing, garnish'd house—but dead, dead, dead.

1867

TO A COMMON PROSTITUTE

Be composed—be at ease with me—I am Walt Whitman, liberal and lusty as Nature,
Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you,
Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you and the leaves to rustle for you, do my words refuse to glisten and rustle for you.

My girl I appoint with you an appointment, and I charge you that you make preparation to be worthy to meet me,
And I charge you that you be patient and perfect till I come.

Till then I salute you with a significant look that you do not forget me.

1860

WHO LEARNS MY LESSON COMPLETE?

Who learns my lesson complete?
Boss, journeyman, apprentice, churchman and atheist,
The stupid and the wise thinker, parents and offspring, merchant, clerk, porter and customer,
Editor, author, artist, and schoolboy—draw nigh and commence;
It is no lesson—it lets down the bars to a good lesson,
And that to another, and every one to another still.
The great laws take and effuse without argument,
I am of the same style, for I am their friend,
I love them quits and quits, I do not halt and make salaams.

I lie abstracted and hear beautiful tales of things and the reasons of things,
They are so beautiful I nudge myself to listen.

I cannot say to any person what I hear—I cannot say it to myself—it is very wonderful.

It is no small matter, this round and delicious globe moving so exactly in its orbit for ever and ever, without one jolt or the untruth of a single second,
I do not think it was made in six days, nor in ten thousand years, nor ten billions of years,
Nor plann'd and built one thing after another as an architect plans and builds a house.

I do not think seventy years is the time of a man or woman,
Nor that seventy millions of years is the time of a man or woman,
Nor that years will ever stop the existence of me, or any one else.

Is it wonderful that I should be immortal? as every one is immortal;
I know it is wonderful, but my eyesight is equally wonderful, and how I was conceived in my mother's womb is equally wonderful,
And pass'd from a babe in the creeping trance of a couple of summers and winters to articulate and walk—all this is equally wonderful.

And that my soul embraces you this hour, and we affect each other without ever seeing each other, and never perhaps to see each other, is every bit as wonderful.

And that I can think such thoughts as these is just as wonderful,
And that I can remind you, and you think them and know them to be true, is just as wonderful.

And that the moon spins round the earth and on with the earth, is equally wonderful,
And that they balance themselves with the sun and stars is equally wonderful.

1855

ITALIAN MUSIC IN DAKOTA

('THE SEVENTEENTH—THE FINEST REGIMENTAL BAND I EVER HEARD.')

THROUGH the soft evening air enwinding all,
Rocks, woods, fort, cannon, pacing sentries, endless wilds,
In dulcet streams, in flutes' and cornets' notes,
Electric, pensive, turbulent, artificial,
(Yet strangely fitting even here, meanings unknown before,
Subtler than ever, more harmony, as if born here, related here,
Not to the city's fresco'd rooms, not to the audience of the opera house,
Sounds, echoes, wandering strains, as really here at home,
Somnambula's innocent love, trios with *Norma's* anguish,
And thy ecstatic chorus *Poliuto*;)
Ray'd in the limpid yellow slanting sundown,
Music, Italian music in Dakota.

While Nature, sovereign of this gnarl'd realm,
Lurking in hidden barbaric grim recesses,
Acknowledging rapport however far remov'd,
(As some old root or soil of earth its last-born flower or fruit,)
Listens well pleas'd.

1881

PASSAGE TO INDIA [1]

1

SINGING my days,
Singing the great achievements of the present,
Singing the strong light works of engineers,
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven outvied,)
In the Old World the east the Suez canal,
The New by its mighty railroad spann'd,
The seas inlaid with eloquent gentle wires;
Yet first to sound, and ever sound, the cry with thee O soul,
The Past! the Past! the Past!

The Past—the dark unfathom'd retrospect!
The teeming gulf—the sleepers and the shadows!
The past—the infinite greatness of the past!
For what is the present after all but a growth out of the past?
(As a projectile form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line, still keeps on,
So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)

2

Passage O soul to India!
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic, the primitive fables.

Not you alone proud truths of the world,
Nor you alone ye facts of modern science,
But myths and fables of eld, Asia's, Africa's fables,
The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd dreams,
The deep diving bibles and legends,
The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions;
O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd over by the rising sun!
O you fables spurning the known, eluding the hold of the known, mounting to heaven!
You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses, burnish'd with gold!
Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from mortal dreams!
You too I welcome and fully the same as the rest!
You too with joy I sing.

Passage to India!
Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
The lands to be welded together.

A worship new I sing,
You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours,

1 In reference to this poem, Whitman said: 'There's more of me, the essential me, in that than in any of the poems. There is no philosophy, consistent or inconsistent, in that poem—there Brinton would be right—but the burden of it is evolution—the one thing escaping the other—the unfolding of cosmic purposes.' Ibid., I,156–57.

You engineers, you architects, machinists, yours,
You, not for trade or transportation only,
But in God's name, and for thy sake O soul.

3

Passage to India!
Lo soul for thee of tableaus twain.
I see in one the Suez canal initiated, open'd,
I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Eugenie's leading the van,
I mark from on deck the strange landscape, the pure sky, the level sand in the distance,
I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen gather'd,
The gigantic dredging machines.

In one again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul, the same,)
I see over my own continent the Pacific railroad surmounting every barrier,
I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte carrying freight and passengers,
I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the shrill steam-whistle,
I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest scenery in the world,
I cross the Laramie plains, I note the rocks in grotesque shapes, the buttes,
I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions, the barren, colorless, sage-deserts,
I see in glimpses afar or towering immediately above me the great mountains, I see the Wind river and the Wahsatch mountains,
I see the Monument mountain and the Eagle's Nest, I pass the Promontory, I ascend the Nevadas,
I scan the noble Elk mountain and wind around its base,
I see the Humboldt range, I thread the valley and cross the river,
I see the clear waters of lake Tahoe, I see forests of majestic pines,
Or crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I behold enchanting mirages of waters and meadows,
Marking through these and after all, in duplicate slender lines,
Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land travel,
Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,
The road between Europe and Asia.

(Ah Genoese thy dream! thy dream!
Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,
The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream.)

4

Passage to India!
Struggles of many a captain, tales of many a sailor dead,
Over my mood stealing and spreading they come,
Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd sky.

Along all history, down the slopes,
As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now again to the surface rising,
A ceaseless thought, a varied train—lo, soul, to thee, thy sight, they rise,
The plans, the voyages again, the expeditions;
Again Vasco de Gama sails forth,
Again the knowledge gain'd, the mariner's compass,
Lands found and nations born, thou born America,
For purpose vast, man's long probation fill'd,
Thou rondure of the world at last accomplish'd.

5

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,
Unspeakable high processions of sun and moon and countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, mountains, trees,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending radiating,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, curious, with restless explorations,
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts,
With that sad incessant refrain, *Wherefore unsatisfied soul?* and *Whither O mocking life?*

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive earth?
Who bind it to us? what is this separate Nature so unnatural?
What is this earth to our affections? (unloving earth, without a throb to answer ours,
Cold earth, the place of graves.)

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already cross'd,)
After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors, after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

Then not your deeds only O voyagers, O scientists and inventors, shall be justified,
All these hearts as of fretted children shall be sooth'd,
All affection shall be fully responded to, the secret shall be told,
All these separations and gaps shall be taken up and hook'd and link'd together,
The whole earth, this cold, impassive, voiceless earth, shall be completely justified,
Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accomplish'd and compacted by the true son of God, the poet,
(He shall indeed pass the straits and conquer the mountains,
He shall double the cape of Good Hope to some purpose,)
Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more,
The true son of God shall absolutely fuse them.

6

Year at whose wide-flung door I sing!
Year of the purpose accomplish'd!
Year of the marriage of continents, climates and oceans!
(No mere doge of Venice now wedding the Adriatic,)
I see O year in you the vast terraqueous globe given and giving all,
Europe to Asia, Africa join'd, and they to the New World,
The lands, geographies, dancing before you, holding a festival garland,
As brides and bridegrooms hand in hand.

Passage to India!
Cooling airs from Caucasus, far, soothing cradle of man,
The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again.

Lo soul, the retrospect brought forward,
The old, most populous, wealthiest of earth's lands,
The streams of the Indus and the Ganges and their many affluents,
(I my shores of America walking to-day behold, resuming all,)
The tale of Alexander on his warlike marches suddenly dying,
On one side China and on the other side Persia and Arabia,
To the south the great seas and the bay of Bengal,
The flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions, castes,
Old occult Brahma interminably far back, the tender and junior Buddha,
Central and southern empires and all their belongings, possessors,
The wars of Tamerlane, the reign of Aurungzebe,
The traders, rulers, explorers, Moslems, Venetians, Byzantium, the Arabs, Portuguese,
The first travelers famous yet, Marco Polo, Batouta the Moor,
Doubts to be solv'd, the map incognita, blanks to be fill'd,
The foot of man unstay'd, the hands never at rest,
Thyself O soul that will not brook a challenge.

The mediæval navigators rise before me,
The world of 1492, with its awaken'd enterprise,
Something swelling in humanity now like the sap of the earth in spring,
The sunset splendor of chivalry declining.

And who art thou sad shade?
Gigantic, visionary, thyself a visionary,
With majestic limbs and pious beaming eyes,
Spreading around with every look of thine a golden world,
Enhuing it with gorgeous hues.

As the chief histrion,
Down to the footlights walks in some great scena,
Dominating the rest I see the Admiral himself,
(History's type of courage, action, faith,)
Behold him sail from Palos leading his little fleet,
His voyage behold, his return, his great fame,
His misfortunes, calumniators, behold him a prisoner, chain'd,
Behold his dejection, poverty, death.

(Curious in time I stand, noting the efforts of heroes,
Is the deferment long? bitter the slander, poverty, death?
Lies the seed unreck'd for centuries in the ground? lo, to God's due occasion,
Uprising in the night, it sprouts, blooms,
And fills the earth with use and beauty.)

7

Passage indeed O soul to primal thought,
Not lands and seas alone, thy own clear freshness,
The young maturity of brood and bloom,
To realms of budding bibles.

O soul, repressless, I with thee and thou with me,
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin,
Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,
To reason's early paradise,
Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,
Again with fair creation.

8

O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship O soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O soul,)
Caroling free, singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

With laugh and many a kiss,
(Let others deprecate, let others weep for sin, remorse, humiliation,)
O soul thou pleasest me, I thee.

Ah more than any priest O soul we too believe in God,
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

O soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me O God in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them,
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving,
Thou moral, spiritual fountain—affection's source—thou reservoir,
(O pensive soul of me—O thirst unsatisfied—waitest not there?
Waitest not haply for us somewhere there the Comrade perfect?)
Thou pulse—thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space,
How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how speak, if, out of myself,
I could not launch, to those, superior universes?

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O soul, thou actual Me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;
What love than thine and ours could wider amplify?
What aspirations, wishes, outvie thine and ours O soul?
What dreams of the ideal? what plans of purity, perfection, strength,
What cheerful willingness for others' sake to give up all?
For others' sake to suffer all?

Reckoning ahead O soul, when thou, the time achiev'd,
The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes, the voyage done,
Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attain'd,

As fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother found,
The Younger melts in fondness in his arms.

9

Passage to more than India!
Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?
O soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages like those?
Disportest thou on waters such as those?
Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas?
Then have thy bent unleash'd.

Passage to you, your shores, ye aged fierce enigmas!
Passage to you, to mastership of you, ye strangling problems!
You, strew'd with the wrecks of skeletons, that, living, never reach'd you.

Passage to more than India!
O secret of the earth and sky!
Of you O waters of the sea! O winding creeks and rivers!
Of you O woods and fields! of you strong mountains of my land!
Of you O prairies! of you gray rocks!
O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!
O day and night, passage to you!

O sun and moon and all you stars! Sirius and Jupiter!
Passage to you!

Passage, immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!
Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!
Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?
Have we not grovel'd here long enough, eating and drinking like mere brutes?
Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books long enough?

Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only,
Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!
O farther farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

1871

CHANTING THE SQUARE DEIFIC [1]

I

CHANTING the square deific, out of the One advancing, out of the sides,
Out of the old and new, out of the square entirely divine,
Solid, four-sided, (all the sides needed,) from this side Jehovah am I,
Old Brahm I, and I Saturnius am;
Not Time affects me—I am Time, old, modern as any,

1 'Brinton said: " 'Chanting the Square Deific' is an immortal poem: I sometimes think it is the most subtle and profound thing you have written." W. said as to that: "Many of my friends have agreed with you, Doctor, about that. It would be hard to give the idea mathematical expression: the idea of spiritual equity—of spiritual substance: the four-square

Unpersuadable, relentless, executing righteous judgments,
As the Earth, the Father, the brown old Kronos, with laws,
Aged beyond computation, yet ever new, ever with those mighty laws rolling,
Relentless I forgive no man—whoever sins dies—I will have that man's life;
Therefore let none expect mercy—have the seasons, gravitation, the appointed days, mercy? no more have I,
But as the seasons and gravitation, and as all the appointed days that forgive not,
I dispense from this side judgments inexorable without the least remorse.

2

Consolator most mild, the promis'd one advancing,
With gentle hand extended, the mightier God am I,
Foretold by prophets and poets in their most rapt prophecies and poems,
From this side, lo! the Lord Christ gazes—lo! Hermes I—lo! mine is Hercules' face,
All sorrow, labor, suffering, I, tallying it, absorb in myself,
Many times have I been rejected, taunted, put in prison, and crucified, and many times shall be again,
All the world have I given up for my dear brothers' and sisters' sake, for the soul's sake,
Wending my way through the homes of men, rich or poor, with the kiss of affection,
For I am affection, I am the cheer-bringing God, with hope and all-enclosing charity,
With indulgent words as to children, with fresh and sane words, mine only,
Young and strong I pass knowing well I am destin'd myself to an early death;
But my charity has no death—my wisdom dies not, neither early nor late,
And my sweet love bequeath'd here and elsewhere never dies.

3

Aloof, dissatisfied, plotting revolt,
Comrade of criminals, brother of slaves,
Crafty, despised, a drudge, ignorant,
With sudra face and worn brow, black, but in the depths of my heart, proud as any,
Lifted now and always against whoever scorning assumes to rule me,
Morose, full of guile, full of reminiscences, brooding, with many wiles,
(Though it was thought I was baffled and dispel'd, and my wiles done, but that will never be,)
Defiant, I, Satan, still live, still utter words, in new lands duly appearing, (and old ones also,)
Permanent here from my side, warlike, equal with any, real as any,
Nor time nor change shall ever change me or my words.

4

Santa Spirita, breather, life,
Beyond the light, lighter than light,
Beyond the flames of hell, joyous, leaping easily above hell,
Beyond Paradise, perfumed solely with mine own perfume,
Including all life on earth, touching, including God, including Saviour and Satan,
Ethereal, pervading all, (for without me what were all? what were God?)
Essence of forms, life of the real identities, permanent, positive, (namely the unseen,)
Life of the great round world, the sun and stars, and of man, I, the general soul,
Here the square finishing, the solid, I the most solid,
Breathe my breath also through these songs.

1866

entity—the north, south, east, west of the constituted universe (even the soul universe)—the four sides as sustaining the universe (the supernatural something): this is not the poem but the idea back of the poem or below the poem. I am lame enough trying to explain it in other words—the idea seems to fit its own words better than mine. You see, at the time the poem wrote itself: now I am trying to write it." ' Ibid.,I,156.

A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

A NOISELESS patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

1871

THE LAST INVOCATION

AT the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a whisper,
Set ope the doors O soul.

Tenderly—be not impatient,
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,
Strong is your hold O love.)

1871

TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER

THEE for my recitative,
Thee in the driving storm even as now, the snow, the winter-day declining,
Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual throbbing and thy beat convulsive,
Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and silvery steel,
Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and connecting rods, gyrating, shuttling at thy sides,
Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now tapering in the distance,
Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in front,
Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged with delicate purple,
The dense and murky clouds out-belching from thy smoke-stack,
Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves, the tremulous twinkle of thy wheels,
Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following,
Through gale or calm, now swift, now slack, yet steadily careering;
Type of the modern—emblem of motion and power—pulse of the continent,
For once come serve the Muse and merge in verse, even as here I see thee,
With storm and buffeting gusts of wind and falling snow,
By day thy warning ringing bell to sound its notes,
By night thy silent signal lamps to swing.

Fierce-throated beauty!
Roll through my chant with all thy lawless music, thy swinging lamps at night,
Thy madly-whistled laughter, echoing, rumbling like an earthquake, rousing all,
Law of thyself complete, thine own track firmly holding,

(No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine,)
Thy trills of shrieks by rocks and hills return'd,
Launch'd o'er the prairies wide, across the lakes,
To the free skies unpent and glad and strong.

1876

YEARS OF THE MODERN

YEARS of the modern! years of the unperform'd!
Your horizon rises, I see it parting away for more august dramas,
I see not America only, not only Liberty's nation but other nations preparing,
I see tremendous entrances and exits, new combinations, the solidarity of races,
I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the world's stage,
(Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts? are the acts suitable to them closed?)
I see Freedom, completely arm'd and victorious and very haughty, with Law on one side and Peace on the other,
A stupendous trio all issuing forth against the idea of caste;
What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach?
I see men marching and countermarching by swift millions,
I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies broken,
I see the landmarks of European kings removed,
I see this day the People beginning their landmarks, (all others give way;)
Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day,
Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God,
Lo, how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest!
His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere, he colonizes the Pacific, the archipelagoes,
With the steamship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper, the wholesale engines of war,
With these and the world-spreading factories he interlinks all geography, all lands;
What whispers are these O lands, running ahead of you, passing under the seas?
Are all nations communing? is there going to be but one heart to the globe?
Is humanity forming en-masse? for lo, tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim,
The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general divine war,
No one knows what will happen next, such portents fill the days and nights;
Years prophetical! the space ahead as I walk, as I vainly try to pierce it, is full of phantoms,
Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes around me,
This incredible rush and heat, this strange ecstatic fever of dreams O years!
Your dreams O years, how they penetrate through me! (I know now whether I sleep or wake;)
The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring in shadow behind me,
The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance, advance upon me.

1865

MANNAHATTA

I WAS asking for something specific and perfect for my city,
Whereupon lo! upsprang the aboriginal name.

Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid, sane, unruly, musical, self-sufficient,
I see that the word of my city is that word from of old,
Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays, superb,
Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and steamships, an island sixteen miles long, solid-founded,
Numberless crowded streets, high growths of iron, slender, strong, light, splendidly uprising toward clear skies,
Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sundown,
The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger adjoining islands, the heights, the villas,

The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the lighters, the ferry-boats, the black sea-steamers well-model'd,
The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business, the houses of business of the ship-merchants and money-brokers, the river-streets,
Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a week,
The carts hauling goods, the manly race of drivers of horses, the brown-faced sailors,
The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing clouds aloft,
The winter snows, the sleigh-bells, the broken ice in the river, passing along up or down with the flood-tide or ebb-tide,
The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd, beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes,
Trottoirs throng'd, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the shops and shows,
A million people—manners free and superb—open voices—hospitality—the most courageous and friendly young men,
City of hurried and sparkling waters! city of spires and masts!
City nested in bays! my city!

1860

WITH HUSKY-HAUGHTY LIPS, O SEA!

WITH husky-haughty lips, O sea!
Where day and night I wend thy surf-beat shore,
Imaging to my sense thy varied strange suggestions,
(I see and plainly list thy talk and conference here,)
Thy troops of white-maned racers racing to the goal,
Thy ample, smiling face, dash'd with the sparkling dimples of the sun,
Thy brooding scowl and murk—thy unloos'd hurricanes,
Thy unsubduedness, caprices, wilfulness;
Great as thou art above the rest, thy many tears—a lack from all eternity in thy content,
(Naught but the greatest struggles, wrongs, defeats, could make thee greatest—no less could make thee,)
Thy lonely state—something thou ever seek'st and seek'st, yet never gain'st,
Surely some right withheld—some voice, in huge monotonous rage, of freedom-lover pent,
Some vast heart, like a planet's, chain'd and chafing in those breakers,
By lengthen'd swell, and spasm, and panting breath,
And rhythmic rasping of thy sands and waves,
And serpent hiss, and savage peals of laughter,
And undertones of distant lion roar,
(Sounding, appealing to the sky's deaf ear—but now, rapport for once,
A phantom in the night thy confidant for once,)
The first and last confession of the globe,
Outsurging, muttering from thy soul's abysms,
The tale of cosmic elemental passion,
Thou tellest to a kindred soul.

1889

AFTER THE SUPPER AND TALK

AFTER the supper and talk—after the day is done,
As a friend from friends his final withdrawal prolonging,
Good-bye and Good-bye with emotional lips repeating,
(So hard for his hand to release those hands—no more will they meet,
No more for communion of sorrow and joy, of old and young,
A far-stretching journey awaits him, to return no more,)
Shunning, postponing severance—seeking to ward off the last word ever so little,

E'en at the exit-door turning—charges superfluous calling back—e'en as he descends the steps,
Something to eke out a minute additional—shadows of nightfall deepening,
Farewells, messages lessening—dimmer the forthgoer's visage and form,
Soon to be lost for aye in the darkness—loth, O so loth to depart!
Garrulous to the very last.

1889

SO LONG!

To conclude, I announce what comes after me.

I remember I said before my leaves sprang at all,
I would raise my voice jocund and strong with reference to consummations.

When America does what was promis'd,
When through these States walk a hundred millions of superb persons,
When the rest part away for superb persons and contribute to them,
When breeds of the most perfect mothers denote America,
Then to me and mine our due fruition.

I have press'd through in my own right,
I have sung the body and the soul, war and peace have I sung, and the songs of life and death,
And the songs of birth, and shown that there are many births.

I have offer'd my style to every one, I have journey'd with confident step;
While my pleasure is yet at the full I whisper *So long!*
And take the young woman's hand and the young man's hand for the last time.

I announce natural persons to arise,
I announce justice triumphant,
I announce uncompromising liberty and equality,
I announce the justification of candor and the justification of pride.

I announce that the identity of these States is a single identity only,
I announce the Union more and more compact, indissoluble,
I announce splendors and majesties to make all the previous politics of the earth insignificant.

I announce adhesiveness, I say it shall be limitless, unloosen'd,
I say you shall yet find the friend you were looking for.

I announce a man or woman coming, perhaps you are the one, (*So long!*)
I announce the great individual, fluid as Nature, chaste, affectionate, compassionate, fully arm'd.

I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement, spiritual, bold,
I announce an end that shall lightly and joyfully meet its translation.

I announce myriads of youths, beautiful, gigantic, sweet-blooded,
I announce a race of splendid and savage old men.

O thicker and faster—(*So long!*)
O crowding too close upon me,
I foresee too much, it means more than I thought,
It appears to me I am dying.

Hasten throat and sound your last,
Salute me—salute the days once more. Peal the old cry once more.

Screaming electric, the atmosphere using,
At random glancing, each as I notice absorbing,
Swiftly on, but a little while alighting,
Curious envelop'd messages delivering,
Sparkles hot, seed ethereal down in the dirt dropping,
Myself unknowing, my commission obeying, to question it never daring,
To ages and ages yet the growth of the seed leaving,
To troops out of the war arising, they the task I have set promulging,
To women certain whispers of myself bequeathing, their affection me more clearly explaining,
To young men my problems offering—no dallier I—I the muscle of their brains trying,
So I pass, a little time vocal, visible, contrary,
Afterward a melodious echo, passionately bent for, (death making me really undying,)
The best of me then when no longer visible, for toward that I have been incessantly preparing.

What is there more, that I lag and pause and crouch extended with unshut mouth?
Is there a single final farewell?

My songs cease, I abandon them,
From behind the screen where I hid I advance personally solely to you.

Camerado, this is no book,
Who touches this touches a man,
(Is it night? are we here together alone?)
It is I you hold and who holds you,
I spring from the pages into your arms—decease calls me forth.

O how your fingers drowse me,
Your breath falls around me like dew, your pulse lulls the tympans of my ears,
I feel immerged from head to foot,
Delicious, enough.

Enough O deed impromptu and secret,
Enough O gliding present—enough O summ'd-up past.

Dear friend whoever you are take this kiss,
I give it especially to you, do not forget me,
I feel like one who has done work for the day to retire awhile,
I receive now again of my many translations, from my avataras ascending, while others doubtless await me,
An unknown sphere more real than I dream'd, more direct, darts awakening rays about me,
So long!
Remember my words, I may again return,
I love you, I depart from materials,
I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.

1860

AS AT THY PORTALS ALSO DEATH

As at thy portals also death,
Entering thy sovereign, dim, illimitable grounds,
To memories of my mother, to the divine blending, maternity,
To her, buried and gone, yet buried not, gone not from me,

(I see again the calm benignant face fresh and beautiful still,
I sit by the form in the coffin,
I kiss and kiss convulsively again the sweet old lips, the cheeks, the closed eyes in the coffin;)
To her, the ideal woman, practical, spiritual, of all of earth, life, love, to me the best,
I grave a monumental line, before I go, amid these songs,
And set a tombstone here.

1881

GOOD-BYE MY FANCY!

Good-bye my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love!
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last—let me look back a moment;
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended into one;
Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)
If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens,
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs, (who knows?)
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—so now finally,
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.

1891

EMILY DICKINSON

1830–1886

THIRTY-TWO POEMS

1

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

1890

2

My life closed twice before its close;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

1896

3

They say that 'time assuages,'—
Time never did assuage;
An actual suffering strengthens,
As sinews do, with age.

Time is a test of trouble,
But not a remedy.
If such it prove, it prove too
There was no malady.

1896

4

JUST lost when I was saved!
Just felt the world go by!
Just girt me for the onset with eternity,
When breath blew back,
And on the other side
I heard recede the disappointed tide!

Therefore, as one returned, I feel,
Odd secrets of the line to tell!
Some sailor, skirting foreign shores,
Some pale reporter from the awful doors
Before the seal!

Next time, to stay!
Next time, the things to see
By ear unheard,
Unscrutinized by eye.

Next time, to tarry,
While the ages steal,—
Slow tramp the centuries,
And the cycles wheel.

1891

5

I TASTE a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

1890

6

I STARTED early, took my dog,
And visited the sea;
The mermaids in the basement
Came out to look at me,

And frigates in the upper floor
Extended hempen hands,
Presuming me to be a mouse
Aground, upon the sands.

But no man moved me till the tide
Went past my simple shoe,
And past my apron and my belt,
And past my bodice too,

And made as he would eat me up
As wholly as a dew
Upon a dandelion's sleeve—
And then I started too.

And he—he followed close behind;
I felt his silver heel
Upon my ankle,—then my shoes
Would overflow with pearl.

Until we met the solid town,
No man he seemed to know;
And bowing with a mighty look
At me, the sea withdrew.

1891

7

IF you were coming in the fall,
I'd brush the summer by
With half a smile and half a spurn,
As housewives do a fly.

If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls,
And put them each in separate drawers,
Until their time befalls.

If only centuries delayed,
I'd count them on my hand,
Subtracting till my fingers dropped
Into Van Diemen's land.

If certain, when this life was out,
That yours and mine should be,
I'd toss it yonder like a rind,
And taste eternity.

But now, all ignorant of the length
Of time's uncertain wing,
It goads me, like the goblin bee,
That will not state its sting.

1890

8

BECAUSE I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

1890

9

OUR share of night to bear,
Our share of morning,
Our blank in bliss to fill,
Our blank in scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,
Some lose their way.
Here a mist, and there a mist,
Afterwards—day!

1890

10

ALTER? When the hills do.
Falter? When the sun
Question if his glory
Be the perfect one.

Surfeit? When the daffodil
Doth of the dew
Even as herself, O friend!
I will of you!

1890

11

I CANNOT live with you,
It would be life,
And life is over there
Behind the shelf

The sexton keeps the key to,
Putting up
Our life, his porcelain,
Like a cup

Discarded of the housewife,
Quaint or broken;
A newer Sèvres pleases,
Old ones crack.

I could not die with you,
For one must wait
To shut the other's gaze down,—
You could not.

And I, could I stand by
And see you freeze,
Without my right of frost,
Death's privilege?

Nor could I rise with you,
Because your face
Would put out Jesus',
That new grace

Glow plain and foreign
On my homesick eye,
Except that you, than he
Shone closer by.

They'd judge us—how?
For you served Heaven, you know,
Or sought to;
I could not,

Because you saturated sight,
And I had no more eyes
For sordid excellence
As Paradise.

And were you lost, I would be,
Though my name
Rang loudest
On the heavenly fame.

And were you saved,
And I condemned to be
Where you were not,
That self were hell to me.

So we must keep apart,
You there, I here,
With just the door ajar
That oceans are,
And prayer,
And that pale sustenance,
Despair!

1890

12

I'LL tell you how the sun rose,—
A ribbon at a time.
The steeples swam in amethyst,
The news like squirrels ran.

The hills untied their bonnets,
The bobolinks begun.
Then I said softly to myself,
'That must have been the sun!'

. . . . . .

But how he set, I know not.
There seemed a purple stile
Which little yellow boys and girls
Were climbing all the while

Till when they reached the other side,
A dominie in gray
Put gently up the evening bars,
And led the flock away.

1890

13

I NEVER saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

1890

14

I'M nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

1891

15

SURGEONS must be very careful
When they take the knife!
Underneath their fine incisions
Stirs the culprit,—Life!

1891

16

I FOUND the phrase to every thought
I ever had, but one;
And that defies me,—as a hand
Did try to chalk the sun

To races nurtured in the dark;—
How would your own begin?
Can blaze be done in cochineal,
Or noon in mazarin?

1891

17

THE last night that she lived,
It was a common night,
Except the dying; this to us
Made nature different.

We noticed smallest things,—
Things overlooked before,
By this great light upon our minds
Italicized, as 'twere.

That others could exist
While she must finish quite,
A jealousy for her arose
So nearly infinite.

We waited while she passed;
It was a narrow time,
Too jostled were our souls to speak,
At length the notice came.

She mentioned, and forgot;
Then lightly as a reed
Bent to the water, shivered scarce,
Consented, and was dead.

And we, we placed the hair,
And drew the head erect;
And then an awful leisure was,
Our faith to regulate.

1890

18

I FELT a funeral in my brain,
And mourners, to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated,
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead, again.
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And Being but an ear,
And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

1896

19

I LIKE to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

1891

20

HE ate and drank the precious words,
His spirit grew robust;
He knew no more that he was poor,
Nor that his frame was dust.
He danced along the dingy days,
And this bequest of wings
Was but a book. What liberty
A loosened spirit brings!

1890

21

To fight aloud is very brave,
But gallanter, I know,
Who charge within the bosom,
The cavalry of woe.

Who win, and nations do not see,
Who fall, and none observe,
Whose dying eyes no country
Regards with patriot love.

We trust, in plumed procession,
For such the angels go,
Rank after rank, with even feet
And uniforms of snow.

1890

22

MUCH madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye;
Much sense the starkest madness.
'Tis the majority
In this, as all, prevails.
Assent, and you are sane;
Demur,—you're straightway dangerous,
And handled with a chain.

1890

23

A DEATH-BLOW is a life-blow to some
Who, till they died, did not alive become;
Who, had they lived, had died, but when
They died, vitality begun.

1891

24

IT dropped so low in my regard
I heard it hit the ground,
And go to pieces on the stones
At bottom of my mind;

Yet blamed the fate that fractured, less
Than I reviled myself
For entertaining plated wares
Upon my silver shelf.

1896

25

HE preached upon 'breadth' till it argued him narrow,—
The broad are too broad to define;
And of 'truth' until it proclaimed him a liar,—
The truth never flaunted a sign.

Simplicity fled from his counterfeit
presence
As gold the pyrites would shun.
What confusion would cover the innocent
Jesus
To meet so enabled a man!

1891

26

THAT such have died enables us
The tranquiller to die;
That such have lived, certificate
For immortality.

1896

27

To hear an oriole sing
May be a common thing,
Or only a divine.

It is not of the bird
Who sings the same, unheard,
As unto crowd.

The fashion of the ear
Attireth that it hear
In dun or fair.

So whether it be rune,
Or whether it be none,
Is of within;

The 'tune is in the tree,'
The sceptic showeth me;
'No, sir! In thee!'

1891

28

THE sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

1890

29

A ROUTE of evanescence
With a revolving wheel;
A resonance of emerald,
A rush of cochineal;
And every blossom on the bush
Adjusts its tumbled head,—
The mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy morning's ride.

1891

30

THE thought beneath so slight a film
Is more distinctly seen,—
As laces just reveal the surge,
Or mists the Apennine.

1891

31

NOT with a club the heart is broken,
Nor with a stone;
A whip, so small you could not see it,
I've known

To lash the magic creature
Till it fell,
Yet that whip's name too noble
Then to tell.

Magnanimous of bird
By boy descried,
To sing unto the stone
Of which it died.

1896

32

PAIN has an element of blank;
It cannot recollect
When it began, or if there were
A day when it was not.

It has no future but itself,
Its infinite realms contain
Its past, enlightened to perceive
New periods of pain.

1890

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

1836–1907

FREDERICKSBURG

THE increasing moonlight drifts across my bed,
And on the churchyard by the road, I know
It falls as white and noiselessly as snow. . . .
'Twas such a night two weary summers fled;
The stars, as now, were waning overhead.
Listen! Again the shrill-lipped bugles blow
Where the swift currents of the river flow
Past Fredericksburg;—far off the heavens are red
With sudden conflagration; on yon height,
Linstock in hand, the gunners hold their breath;
A signal-rocket pierces the dense night,
Flings its spent stars upon the town beneath;
Hark!—the artillery massing on the right,
Hark!—the black squadrons wheeling down to Death!

1865

IDENTITY

SOMEWHERE—in desolate wind-swept space—
In Twilight-land—in No-man's-land—
Two hurrying Shapes met face to face,
And bade each other stand.

'And who are you?' cried one a-gape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light.
'I know not,' said the second Shape,
'I only died last night!'

1877

HEREDITY

A SOLDIER of the Cromwell stamp,
With sword and psalm-book by his side,
At home alike in church and camp:
Austere he lived, and smileless died.

But she, a creature soft and fine—
From Spain, some say, some say from France;
Within her veins leapt blood like wine—
She led her Roundhead lord a dance!

In Grantham church they lie asleep;
Just where, the verger may not know.
Strange that two hundred years should keep
The old ancestral fires aglow!

In me these two have met again;
To each my nature owes a part:
To one, the cool and reasoning brain,
To one, the quick, unreasoning heart.

1885

MEMORY

MY mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour—
'Twas noon by yonder village tower,
And on the last blue noon in May—
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, pausing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

1891

BAYARD TAYLOR

1825–1878

ARIEL IN THE CLOVEN PINE

Now the frosty stars are gone:
I have watched them, one by one,
Fading on the shores of Dawn.
Round and full the glorious sun
Walks with level step the spray,
Through his vestibule of Day,
While the wolves that late did howl
Slink to dens and coverts foul,
Guarded by the demon owl,
Who, last night, with mocking croon,
Wheeled athwart the chilly moon,

And with eyes that blankly glared
On my direful torment stared.

The lark is flickering in the light;
Still the nightingale doth sing;—
All the isle, alive with Spring,
Lies, a jewel of delight,
On the blue sea's heaving breast:
Not a breath from out the West,
But some balmy smell doth bring
From the sprouting myrtle buds,
Or from meadowy vales that lie
Like a green inverted sky,
Which the yellow cowslip stars,
And the bloomy almond woods,
Cloud-like, cross with roseate bars.
All is life that I can spy,
To the farthest sea and sky,
And my own the only pain
Within this ring of Tyrrhene main.

In the gnarled and cloven Pine
Where that hell-born hag did chain me,
All this orb of cloudless shine,
All this youth in Nature's veins
Tingling with the season's wine,
With a sharper torment pain me.
Pansies in soft April rains
Fill their stalks with honeyed sap
Drawn from Earth's prolific lap;
But the sluggish blood she brings
To the tough Pine's hundred rings,
Closer locks their cruel hold,
Closer draws the scaly bark
Round the crevice, damp and cold,
Where my useless wings I fold,—
Sealing me in iron dark.
By this coarse and alien state
Is my dainty essence wronged;
Finer senses that belonged
To my freedom, chafe at Fate,
Till the happier elves I hate,
Who in moonlight dances turn
Underneath the palmy fern,
Or in light and twinkling bands
Follow on with linkèd hands
To the Ocean's yellow sands.

Primrose-eyes each morning ope
In their cool, deep beds of grass;
Violets make the airs that pass
Telltales of their fragrant slope.
I can see them where they spring
Never brushed by fairy wing.
All those corners I can spy
In the island's solitude,
Where the dew is never dry,
Nor the miser bees intrude.
Cups of rarest hue are there,
Full of perfumed wine undrained,—
Mushroom banquets, ne'er profaned,
Canopied by maiden-hair.
Pearls I see upon the sands,
Never touched by other hands,
And the rainbow bubbles shine
On the ridged and frothy brine,
Tenantless of voyager
Till they burst in vacant air.
O, the songs that sung might be,
And the mazy dances woven,
Had that witch ne'er crossed the sea
And the Pine been never cloven!

Many years my direst pain
Has made the wave-rocked isle complain.
Winds, that from the Cyclades
Came, to blow in wanton riot
Round its shore's enchanted quiet,
Bore my wailings on the seas;
Sorrowing birds in Autumn went
Through the world with my lament.
Still the bitter fate is mine,
All delight unshared to see,
Smarting in the cloven Pine,
While I wait the tardy axe
Which, perchance, shall set me free
From the damned Witch Sycorax.

1848

BEDOUIN SONG

From the Desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

Look from thy window and see
My passion and my pain;
I lie on the sands below,
And I faint in thy disdain.

Let the night-winds touch thy brow
With the heat of my burning sigh,
And melt thee to hear the vow
Of a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

My steps are nightly driven,
By the fever in my breast,
To hear from thy lattice breathed
The word that shall give me rest.
Open the door of thy heart,
And open thy chamber door,
And my kisses shall teach thy lips
The love that shall fade no more.
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment
Book unfold!

1853 1854

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN
1833–1908

HOW OLD BROWN TOOK HARPER'S FERRY

JOHN BROWN in Kansas settled, like a
steadfast Yankee farmer,
Brave and godly, with four sons, all
stalwart men of might.
There he spoke aloud for freedom, and the
Border-strife grew warmer,
Till the Rangers fired his dwelling, in his
absence, in the night;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Came homeward in the morning—to find
his house burned down.

Then he grasped his trusty rifle and boldly
fought for freedom;
Smote from border unto border the
fierce, invading band;
And he and his brave boys vowed—so
might Heaven help and speed 'em!—
They would save those grand old prairies
from the curse that blights the land;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Said, 'Boys, the Lord will aid us!' and he
shoved his ramrod down.

And the Lord *did* aid these men, and they
labored day and even,
Saving Kansas from its peril; and their
very lives seemed charmed,
Till the ruffians killed one son, in the
blessed light of Heaven,—
In cold blood the fellows slew him, as he
journeyed all unarmed;
Then Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Shed not a tear, but shut his teeth, and
frowned a terrible frown!

Then they seized another brave boy,—not
amid the heat of battle,
But in peace, behind his ploughshare,—
and they loaded him with chains,
And with pikes, before their horses, even as
they goad their cattle,
Drove him cruelly, for their sport, and at
last blew out his brains;
Then Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Raised his right hand up to Heaven, calling
Heaven's vengeance down.

And he swore a fearful oath, by the name of
the Almighty,
He would hunt this ravening evil that
had scathed and torn him so;
He would seize it by the vitals; he would
crush it day and night; he
Would so pursue its footsteps, so return it
blow for blow,
That Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Should be a name to swear by, in backwoods
or in town!

Then his beard became more grizzled, and
his wild blue eye grew wilder,
And more sharply curved his hawk's-nose,
snuffing battle from afar;
And he and the two boys left, though the
Kansas strife waxed milder,

Grew more sullen, till was over the
bloody Border War,
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Had gone crazy, as they reckoned by his
fearful glare and frown.

So he left the plains of Kansas and their
bitter woes behind him,
Slipt off into Virginia, where the states-
men all are born,
Hired a farm by Harper's Ferry, and no one
knew where to find him,
Or whether he'd turned parson, or was
jacketed and shorn;
For Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Mad as he was, knew texts enough to wear a
parson's gown.

He bought no ploughs and harrows, spades
and shovels, and such trifles;
But quietly to his rancho there came, by
every train,
Boxes full of pikes and pistols, and his well-
beloved Sharp's rifles;
And eighteen other madmen joined their
leader there again.
Says Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
'Boys, we've got an army large enough to
march and take the town!

'Take the town, and seize the muskets, free
the negroes, and then arm them;
Carry the County and the State, ay, and
all the potent South.
On their own heads be the slaughter, if
their victims rise to harm them—
These Virginians! who believed not, nor
would heed the warning mouth.'
Says Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
'The world shall see a Republic, or my
name is not John Brown.'

'Twas the sixteenth of October, on the
evening of a Sunday:
'This good work,' declared the captain,
'shall be on a holy night!'
It was on a Sunday evening, and before the
noon of Monday,
With two sons, and Captain Stephens,
fifteen privates—black and white,
Captain Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Marched across the bridged Potomac, and
knocked the sentry down;

Took the guarded armory-building, and the
muskets and the cannon;
Captured all the county majors and the
colonels, one by one;
Scared to death each gallant scion of
Virginia they ran on,
And before the noon of Monday, I say,
the deed was done.
Mad Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
With his eighteen other crazy men, went in
and took the town.

Very little noise and bluster, little smell of
powder made he;
It was all done in the midnight, like the
Emperor's *coup d'état*.
'Cut the wires! Stop the rail-cars! Hold the
streets and bridges!' said he,
Then declared the new Republic, with
himself for guiding star,—
This Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown;
And the bold two thousand citizens ran off
and left the town.

Then was riding and railroading and
expressing here and thither;
And the Martinsburg Sharpshooters and
the Charlestown Volunteers,
And the Shepherdstown and Winchester
Militia hastened whither
Old Brown was said to muster his ten
thousand grenadiers.
General Brown!
Osawatomie Brown! !
Behind whose rampant banner all the
North was pouring down.

But at last, 'tis said, some prisoners escaped
from Old Brown's durance,
And the effervescent valor of the Chivalry
broke out,
When they learned that nineteen madmen
had the marvellous assurance—
Only nineteen—thus to seize the place
and drive them straight about;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Found an army come to take him,
encamped around the town.

But to storm with all the forces I have mentioned, was too risky;
So they hurried off to Richmond for the Government Marines,
Tore them from their weeping matrons, fired their souls with Bourbon whiskey,
Till they battered down Brown's castle with their ladders and machines;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Received three bayonet stabs, and a cut on his brave old crown.

Tallyho! the old Virginia gentry gather to the baying!
In they rushed and killed the game, shooting lustily away;
And whene'er they slew a rebel, those who came too late for slaying,
Not to lose a share of glory, fired their bullets in his clay;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Saw his sons fall dead beside him, and between them laid him down.

How the conquerors wore their laurels; how they hastened on the trial;
How Old Brown was placed, half-dying, on the Charlestown court-house floor;
How he spoke his grand oration, in the scorn of all denial;
What the brave old madman told them,—these are known the country o'er.
'Hang Old Brown,
Oswatomie Brown,'
Said the judge, 'and all such rebels!' with his most judicial frown.

But, Virginians, don't do it! for I tell you that the flagon,
Filled with blood of Old Brown's offspring, was first poured by Southern hands;
And each drop from Old Brown's life-veins, like the red gore of the dragon,
May spring up a vengeful Fury, hissing through your slave-worn lands!
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
May trouble you more than ever, when you've nailed his coffin down!

1859 1860

KEARNY AT SEVEN PINES

So that soldierly legend is still on its journey,—
That story of Kearny who knew not to yield!
'Twas the day when with Jameson, fierce Berry, and Birney,
Against twenty thousand he rallied the field.
Where the red volleys poured, where the clamor rose highest,
Where the dead lay in clumps through the dwarf oak and pine,
Where the aim from the thicket was surest and nighest,—
No charge like Phil Kearny's along the whole line.

When the battle went ill, and the bravest were solemn,
Near the dark Seven Pines, where we still held our ground,
He rode down the length of the withering column,
And his heart at our war-cry leapt up with a bound;
He snuffed, like his charger, the wind of the powder,—
His sword waved us on and we answered the sign:
Loud our cheer as we rushed, but his laugh rang the louder,
'There's the devil's own fun, boys, along the whole line!'

How he strode his brown steed! How we saw his blade brighten
In the one hand still left,—and the reins in his teeth!
He laughed like a boy when the holidays heighten,
But a soldier's glance shot from his visor beneath.
Up came the reserves to the mellay infernal,
Asking where to go in,—through the clearing or pine?
'O, anywhere! Forward! 'Tis all the same, Colonel:
You'll find lovely fighting along the whole line!'

O, evil the black shroud of night at Chantilly,

That hid him from sight of his brave men and tried!
Foul, foul sped the bullet that clipped the white lily,
The flower of our knighthood, the whole army's pride!
Yet we dream that he still,—in that shadowy region
Where the dead form their ranks at the wan drummer's sign,—
Rides on, as of old, down the length of his legion,
And the word still is Forward! along the whole line.

1877

BRET HARTE

1836–1902

THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT[1]

As Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, stepped into the main street of Poker Flat on the morning of the 23d of November, 1850, he was conscious of a change in its moral atmosphere since the preceding night. Two or three men, conversing earnestly together, ceased as he approached, and exchanged significant glances. There was a Sabbath lull in the air, which, in a settlement unused to Sabbath influences, looked ominous.

Mr. Oakhurst's calm, handsome face betrayed small concern in these indications. Whether he was conscious of any predisposing cause was another question. 'I reckon they're after somebody,' he reflected; 'likely it's me.' He returned to his pocket the handkerchief with which he had been whipping away the red dust of Poker Flat from his neat boots, and quietly discharged his mind of any further conjecture.

In point of fact, Poker Flat was 'after somebody.' It had lately suffered the loss of several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it. A secret committee had determined to rid the town of all improper persons. This was done permanently in regard of two men who were then hanging from the boughs of a sycamore in the gulch, and temporarily in the banishment of certain other objectionable characters. I regret to say that some of these were ladies. It is but due to the sex, however, to state that their impropriety was professional, and it was only in such easily established standards of evil that Poker Flat ventured to sit in judgment.

Mr. Oakhurst was right in supposing that he was included in this category. A few of the committee had urged hanging him as a possible example and a sure method of reimbursing themselves from his pockets of the sums he had won from them. 'It's agin justice,' said Jim Wheeler, 'to let this yer young man from Roaring Camp—an entire stranger—carry away our money.' But a crude sentiment of equity residing in the breasts of those who had been fortunate

1 Of himself, Harte wrote: 'But he deems it worthy of consideration that during this period, i.e., from 1862 to 1866, he produced . . . his first efforts toward indicating a peculiarly characteristic Western American literature. He would like to offer these facts as evidence of his very early, half-boyish, but very enthusiastic, belief in such a possibility—a belief which never deserted him, and which, a few years later, from the better-known pages of the *Overland Monthly*, he was able to demonstrate to a larger and more cosmopolitan audience in the story of "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and the poem of the "Heathen Chinee." But it was one of the anomalies of the very condition of life that he worked amidst, and endeavoured to portray, that these first efforts were rewarded by very little success; and . . . even "The Luck of Roaring Camp" depended for its recognition in California upon its success elsewhere. Hence the critical reader will observe that the bulk of these earlier efforts . . . were marked by very little flavour of the soil, but were addressed to an audience half foreign in their sympathies, and still imbued with Eastern or New England habits and literary traditions. "Home" was still potent with these voluntary exiles in their moments of relaxation. Eastern magazines and current Eastern literature formed their literary recreation, and the sale of the better class of periodicals was singularly great. Nor was the taste confined to American literature. The illustrated and satirical English journals were as frequently seen in California as in Massachusetts; and the author records that he has experienced more difficulty in procuring a copy of *Punch* in an English provincial town than was his fortune at "Red Dog" or "One-Horse Gulch." ' Harte, Introduction, *Works*(Boston, 1882), I,2–3.

enough to win from Mr. Oakhurst overruled this narrower local prejudice.

Mr. Oakhurst received his sentence with philosophic calmness, none the less coolly that he was aware of the hesitation of his judges. He was too much of a gambler not to accept fate. With him life was at best an uncertain game, and he recognized the usual percentage in favor of the dealer.

A body of armed men accompanied the deported wickedness of Poker Flat to the outskirts of the settlement. Besides Mr. Oakhurst, who was known to be a coolly desperate man, and for whose intimidation the armed escort was intended, the expatriated party consisted of a young woman familiarly known as 'The Duchess;' another who had won the title of 'Mother Shipton;' and 'Uncle Billy,' a suspected sluice-robber and confirmed drunkard. The cavalcade provoked no comments from the spectators, nor was any word uttered by the escort. Only when the gulch which marked the uttermost limit of Poker Flat was reached, the leader spoke briefly and to the point. The exiles were forbidden to return at the peril of their lives.

As the escort disappeared, their pent-up feelings found vent in a few hysterical tears from the Duchess, some bad language from Mother Shipton, and a Parthian volley of expletives from Uncle Billy. The philosophic Oakhurst alone remained silent. He listened calmly to Mother Shipton's desire to cut somebody's heart out, to the repeated statements of the Duchess that she would die in the road, and to the alarming oaths that seemed to be bumped out of Uncle Billy as he rode forward. With the easy good humor characteristic of his class, he insisted upon exchanging his own riding-horse, 'Five-Spot,' for the sorry mule which the Duchess rode. But even this act did not draw the party into any closer sympathy. The young woman readjusted her somewhat draggled plumes with a feeble, faded coquetry; Mother Shipton eyed the possessor of 'Five-Spot' with malevolence, and Uncle Billy included the whole party in one sweeping anathema.

The road to Sandy Bar—a camp that, not having as yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some invitation to the emigrants—lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe travel. In that advanced season the party soon passed out of the moist, temperate regions of the foothills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no farther, and the party halted.

The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheatre, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently toward the crest of another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was, undoubtedly, the most suitable spot for a camp, had camping been advisable. But Mr. Oakhurst knew that scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished, and the party were not equipped or provisioned for delay. This fact he pointed out to his companions curtly, with a philosophic commentary on the folly of 'throwing up their hand before the game was played out.' But they were furnished with liquor, which in this emergency stood them in place of food, fuel, rest, and prescience. In spite of his remonstrances, it was not long before they were more or less under its influence. Uncle Billy passed rapidly from a bellicose state into one of stupor, the Duchess became maudlin, and Mother Shipton snored. Mr. Oakhurst alone remained erect, leaning against a rock, calmly surveying them.

Mr. Oakhurst did not drink. It interfered with a profession which required coolness, impassiveness, and presence of mind, and, in his own language, he 'couldn't afford it.' As he gazed at his recumbent fellow exiles, the loneliness begotten of his pariah trade, his habits of life, his very vices, for the first time seriously oppressed him. He bestirred himself in dusting his black clothes, washing his hands and face, and other acts characteristic of his studiously neat habits, and for a moment forgot his annoyance. The thought of deserting his weaker and more pitiable companions never perhaps occurred to him. Yet he could not help feeling the want of that excitement which, singularly enough, was most conducive to that calm equanimity for which he was notorious. He looked at the gloomy walls that rose a thousand feet sheer above the circling pines around him, at the sky ominously clouded, at the valley below, already deepening into

shadow; and, doing so, suddenly he heard his own name called.

A horseman slowly ascended the trail. In the fresh, open face of the newcomer Mr. Oakhurst recognized Tom Simson, otherwise known as 'The Innocent,' of Sandy Bar. He had met him some months before over a 'little game,' and had, with perfect equanimity, won the entire fortune—amounting to some forty dollars—of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door and thus addressed him: 'Tommy, you're a good little man, but you can't gamble worth a cent. Don't try it over again.' He then handed him his money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson.

There was a remembrance of this in his boyish and enthusiastic greeting of Mr. Oakhurst. He had started, he said, to go to Poker Flat to seek his fortune. 'Alone?' No, not exactly alone; in fact (a giggle), he had run away with Piney Woods. Didn't Mr. Oakhurst remember Piney? She that used to wait on the table at the Temperance House? They had been engaged a long time, but old Jake Woods had objected, and so they had run away, and were going to Poker Flat to be married, and here they were. And they were tired out, and how lucky it was they had found a place to camp, and company. All this the Innocent delivered rapidly, while Piney, a stout, comely damsel of fifteen, emerged from behind the pine-tree, where she had been blushing unseen, and rode to the side of her lover.

Mr. Oakhurst seldom troubled himself with sentiment, still less with propriety; but he had a vague idea that the situation was not fortunate. He retained, however, his presence of mind sufficiently to kick Uncle Billy, who was about to say something, and Uncle Billy was sober enough to recognize in Mr. Oakhurst's kick a superior power that would not bear trifling. He then endeavored to dissuade Tom Simson from delaying further, but in vain. He even pointed out the fact that there was no provision, nor means of making a camp. But, unluckily, the Innocent met this objection by assuring the party that he was provided with an extra mule loaded with provisions, and by the discovery of a rude attempt at a log house near the trail. 'Piney can stay with Mrs. Oakhurst,' said the Innocent, pointing to the Duchess, 'and I can shift for myself.'

Nothing but Mr. Oakhurst's admonishing foot saved Uncle Billy from bursting into a roar of laughter. As it was, he felt compelled to retire up the cañon until he could recover his gravity. There he confided the joke to the tall pine-trees, with many slaps of his leg, contortions of his face, and the usual profanity. But when he returned to the party, he found them seated by a fire —for the air had grown strangely chill and the sky overcast—in apparently amicable conversation. Piney was actually talking in an impulsive girlish fashion to the Duchess, who was listening with an interest and animation she had not shown for many days. The Innocent was holding forth, apparently with equal effect, to Mr. Oakhurst and Mother Shipton, who was actually relaxing into amiability. 'Is this yer a d—d picnic?' said Uncle Billy, with inward scorn, as he surveyed the sylvan group, the glancing firelight, and the tethered animals in the foreground. Suddenly an idea mingled with the alcoholic fumes that disturbed his brain. It was apparently of a jocular nature, for he felt impelled to slap his leg again and cram his fist into his mouth.

As the shadows crept slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine-trees and moaned through their long and gloomy aisles. The ruined cabin, patched and covered with pine boughs, was set apart for the ladies. As the lovers parted, they unaffectedly exchanged a kiss, so honest and sincere that it might have been heard above the swaying pines. The frail Duchess and the malevolent Mother Shipton were probably too stunned to remark upon this last evidence of simplicity, and so turned without a word to the hut. The fire was replenished, the men lay down before the door, and in a few minutes were asleep.

Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke benumbed and cold. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing strongly, brought to his cheek that which caused the blood to leave it,—snow!

He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no

time to lose. But turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying, he found him gone. A suspicion leaped to his brain, and a curse to his lips. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered—they were no longer there. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers. The Innocent slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humored, freckled face; the virgin Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as sweetly as though attended by celestial guardians; and Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his mustaches and waited for the dawn. It came slowly in a whirling mist of snowflakes that dazzled and confused the eye. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed. He looked over the valley, and summed up the present and future in two words, 'Snowed in!'

A careful inventory of the provisions, which, fortunately for the party, had been stored within the hut, and so escaped the felonious fingers of Uncle Billy, disclosed the fact that with care and prudence they might last ten days longer. 'That is,' said Mr. Oakhurst *sotto voce* to the Innocent, 'if you're willing to board us. If you ain't—and perhaps you'd better not—you can wait till Uncle Billy gets back with provisions.' For some occult reason, Mr. Oakhurst could not bring himself to disclose Uncle Billy's rascality, and so offered the hypothesis that he had wandered from the camp and had accidentally stampeded the animals. He dropped a warning to the Duchess and Mother Shipton, who of course knew the facts of their associate's defection. 'They'll find out the truth about us *all* when they find out anything,' he added significantly, 'and there's no good frightening them now.'

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. 'We'll have a good camp for a week, and then the snow'll melt, and we'll all go back together.' The cheerful gayety of the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm infected the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine boughs, extemporized a thatch for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed Piney in the rearrangement of the interior with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. 'I reckon now you're used to fine things at Poker Flat,' said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheeks through their professional tint, and Mother Shipton requested Piney not to 'chatter.' But when Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whiskey, which he had prudently cachéd. 'And yet it don't somehow sound like whiskey,' said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blinding storm, and the group around it, that he settled to the conviction that it was 'square fun.'

Whether Mr. Oakhurst had cachéd his cards with the whiskey as something debarred the free access of the community, I cannot say. It was certain that, in Mother Shipton's words, he 'didn't say "cards" once' during that evening. Haply the time was beguiled by an accordion, produced somewhat ostentatiously by Tom Simson from his pack. Notwithstanding some difficulties attending the manipulation of this instrument, Piney Woods managed to pluck several reluctant melodies from its keys, to an accompaniment by the Innocent on a pair of bone castanets. But the crowning festivity of the evening was reached in a rude camp-meeting hymn, which the lovers, joining hands, sang with great earnestness and vociferation. I fear that a certain defiant tone and Covenanter's swing to its chorus, rather than any devotional quality, caused it speedily to infect the others, who at last joined in the refrain:

'I'm proud to live in the service of the
Lord,
And I'm bound to die in His army.'

The pines rocked, the storm eddied and whirled above the miserable group, and the flames of their altar leaped heavenward, as if in token of the vow.

At midnight the storm abated, the rolling clouds parted, and the stars glittered keenly above the sleeping camp. Mr. Oakhurst,

whose professional habits had enabled him to live on the smallest possible amount of sleep, in dividing the watch with Tom Simson somehow managed to take upon himself the greater part of that duty. He excused himself to the Innocent by saying that he had 'often been a week without sleep.' 'Doing what?' asked Tom. 'Poker!' replied Oakhurst sententiously. 'When a man gets a streak of luck,—nigger-luck,—he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck,' continued the gambler reflectively, 'is a mighty queer thing. All you know about it for certain is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you. We've had a streak of bad luck since we left Poker Flat,—you come along, and slap you get into it, too. If you can hold your cards right along you're all right. For,' added the gambler, with cheerful irrelevance—

'"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
And I'm bound to die in His army."'

The third day came, and the sun, looking through the white-curtained valley, saw the outcasts divide their slowly decreasing store of provisions for the morning meal. It was one of the peculiarities of that mountain climate that its rays diffused a kindly warmth over the wintry landscape, as if in regretful commiseration of the past. But it revealed drift on drift of snow piled high around the hut,—a hopeless, uncharted, trackless sea of white lying below the rocky shores to which the castaways still clung. Through the marvelously clear air the smoke of the pastoral village of Poker Flat rose miles away. Mother Shipton saw it, and from a remote pinnacle of her rocky fastness hurled in that direction a final malediction. It was her last vituperative attempt, and perhaps for that reason was invested with a certain degree of sublimity. It did her good, she privately informed the Duchess. 'Just you go out there and cuss, and see.' She then set herself to the task of amusing 'the child,' as she and the Duchess were pleased to call Piney. Piney was no chicken, but it was a soothing and original theory of the pair thus to account for the fact that she didn't swear and wasn't improper.

When night crept up again through the gorges, the reedy notes of the accordion rose and fell in fitful spasms and long-drawn gasps by the flickering campfire. But music failed to fill entirely the aching void left by insufficient food, and a new diversion was proposed by Piney,—story-telling. Neither Mr. Oakhurst nor his female companions caring to relate their personal experiences, this plan would have failed too, but for the Innocent. Some months before he had chanced upon a stray copy of Mr. Pope's ingenious translation of the Iliad. He now proposed to narrate the principal incidents of that poem—having thoroughly mastered the argument and fairly forgotten the words—in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And so for the rest of that night the Homeric demigods again walked the earth. Trojan bully and wily Greek wrestled in the winds, and the great pines in the cañon seemed to bow to the wrath of the son of Peleus. Mr. Oakhurst listened with quiet satisfaction. Most especially was he interested in the fate of 'Ash-heels,' as the Innocent persisted in denominating the 'swift-footed Achilles.'

So, with small food and much of Homer and the accordion, a week passed over the heads of the outcasts. The sun again forsook them, and again from leaden skies the snowflakes were sifted over the land. Day by day closer around them drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over drifted walls of dazzling white, that towered twenty feet above their heads. It became more and more difficult to replenish their fires, even from the fallen trees beside them, now half hidden in the drifts. And yet no one complained. The lovers turned from the dreary prospect and looked into each other's eyes, and were happy. Mr. Oakhurst settled himself coolly to the losing game before him. The Duchess, more cheerful than she had been, assumed the care of Piney. Only Mother Shipton—once the strongest of the party—seemed to sicken and fade. At midnight on the tenth day she called Oakhurst to her side. 'I'm going,' she said, in a voice of querulous weakness, 'but don't say anything about it. Don't waken the kids. Take the bundle from under my head, and open it.' Mr. Oakhurst did so. It contained Mother Shipton's rations for the last week,

untouched. 'Give 'em to the child,' she said, pointing to the sleeping Piney. 'You've starved yourself,' said the gambler. 'That's what they call it,' said the woman querulously, as she lay down again, and, turning her face to the wall, passed quietly away.

The accordion and the bones were put aside that day, and Homer was forgotten. When the body of Mother Shipton had been committed to the snow, Mr. Oakhurst took the Innocent aside, and showed him a pair of snowshoes, which he had fashioned from the old pack-saddle. 'There's one chance in a hundred to save her yet,' he said, pointing to Piney; 'but it's there,' he added, pointing toward Poker Flat. 'If you can reach there in two days she's safe.' 'And you?' asked Tom Simson. 'I'll stay here,' was the curt reply.

The lovers parted with a long embrace. 'You are not going, too?' said the Duchess, as she saw Mr. Oakhurst apparently waiting to accompany him. 'As far as the cañon,' he replied. He turned suddenly and kissed the Duchess, leaving her pallid face aflame, and her trembling limbs rigid with amazement.

Night came, but not Mr. Oakhurst. It brought the storm again and the whirling snow. Then the Duchess, feeding the fire, found that some one had quietly piled beside the hut enough fuel to last a few days longer. The tears rose to her eyes, but she hid them from Piney.

The women slept but little. In the morning, looking into each other's faces, they read their fate. Neither spoke, but Piney, accepting the position of the stronger, drew near and placed her arm around the Duchess's waist. They kept this attitude for the rest of the day. That night the storm reached its greatest fury, and, rending asunder the protecting vines, invaded the very hut.

Toward morning they found themselves unable to feed the fire, which gradually died away. As the embers slowly blackened, the Duchess crept closer to Piney, and broke the silence of many hours: 'Piney, can you pray?' 'No, dear,' said Piney simply. The Duchess, without knowing exactly why, felt relieved, and, putting her head upon Piney's shoulder, spoke no more. And so reclining, the younger and purer pillowing the head of her soiled sister upon her virgin breast, they fell asleep.

The wind lulled as if it feared to waken them. Feathery drifts of snow, shaken from the long pine boughs, flew like white-winged birds, and settled about them as they slept. The moon through the rifted clouds looked down upon what had been the camp. But all human stain, all trace of earthly travail, was hidden beneath the spotless mantle mercifully flung from above.

They slept all that day and the next, nor did they waken when voices and footsteps broke the silence of the camp. And when pitying fingers brushed the snow from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told from the equal peace that dwelt upon them which was she that had sinned. Even the law of Poker Flat recognized this, and turned away, leaving them still locked in each other's arms.

But at the head of the gulch, on one of the largest pine-trees, they found the deuce of clubs pinned to the bark with a bowie-knife. It bore the following, written in pencil in a firm hand:

†
BENEATH THIS TREE
LIES THE BODY
OF
JOHN OAKHURST,
WHO STRUCK A STREAK OF BAD LUCK
ON THE 23D OF NOVEMBER, 1850,
AND
HANDED IN HIS CHECKS
ON THE 7TH DECEMBER, 1850.
┼

And pulseless and cold, with a Derringer by his side and a bullet in his heart, though still calm as in life, beneath the snow lay he who was at once the strongest and yet the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat.

1868 1870

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(TABLE MOUNTAIN, 1870)

WHICH I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, 'Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,'—
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
In the game 'he did not understand.'

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
Which the same I am free to maintain.

1870 1871

DICKENS IN CAMP [1]

(1812–1870)

ABOVE the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras, far beyond, uplifting
Their minarets of snow.

The roaring camp-fire, with rude humor, painted
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and fainted
In the fierce race for wealth;

Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure
To hear the tale anew.

And then, while round them shadows gathered faster,
And as the firelight fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of 'Little Nell.'

Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy,—for the reader
Was youngest of them all,—
But, as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall;

The fir-trees, gathering closer in the shadows,
Listened in every spray,

1 'When news of the death of Dickens reached Bret Harte he was camping in the Foot-Hills, far from San Francisco, but he sent a telegram to hold back for a day the printing of the *Overland*, then ready for the press, and his poem was written that night and forwarded the next morning.' Merwin, *The Life of Bret Harte* (Boston, 1911), 312n.

While the whole camp with 'Nell' on
English meadows
Wandered and lost their way.

And so in mountain solitudes—o'ertaken
As by some spell divine—
Their cares dropped from them like the
needles shaken
From out the gusty pine.

Lost is that camp and wasted all its
fire;
And he who wrought that spell?
Ah! towering pine and stately Kentish
spire,
Ye have one tale to tell!

Lost is that camp, but let its fragrant
story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop-vine's incense all the pensive
glory
That fills the Kentish hills.

And on that grave where English oak and
holly
And laurel wreaths entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly,
This spray of Western pine!

1870 1871

'JIM'

Say there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
Might know Jim Wild?
Well,—no offense:
Thar ain't no sense
In gittin' riled!

Jim was my chum
Up on the Bar:
That's why I come
Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew,—
Blest if you are!

Money? Not much:
That ain't my kind;
I ain't no such.
Rum? I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim,—
Did you know him?
Jes' 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes;—
Well, that is strange:
Why, it's two year
Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.

Well, here's to us:
Eh?
The h— you say!
Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star',
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass in yer shop
But you must r'ar?
It wouldn't take
D—d much to break
You and your bar.

Dead!
Poor—little—Jim!
Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben,—
No-account men:
Then to take *him*!

Well, thar—Good-by—
No more, sir—I—
Eh?
What's that you say?
Why, dern it!—sho!—
No? Yes! By Joe!
Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb,
You ornery,
Derned old
Long-legged Jim.

1871

WHAT THE BULLET SANG

O joy of creation
To be!
O rapture to fly
And be free!
Be the battle lost or won,
Though its smoke shall hide the sun,
I shall find my love,—the one
Born for me!

I shall know him where he stands,
All alone,
With the power in his hands
Not o'erthrown;
I shall know him by his face,
By his godlike front and grace;
I shall hold him for a space,
All my own!

It is he—O my love!
So bold!
It is I—all thy love
Foretold!
It is I. O love! what bliss!
Dost thou answer to my kiss?
O sweetheart! what is this
Lieth there so cold?

1882

JOHN HAY

1838–1905

JIM BLUDSO, OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE

WALL, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Because he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He weren't no saint,—them engineers
Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had,—
To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,—
A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.

And so she come tearin' along that night—
The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned, and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
'I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore.'

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He weren't no saint,—but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a going to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

1871

JOAQUIN MILLER

1839–1913

KIT CARSON'S RIDE[1]

ROOM! *room to turn round in, to breathe and be free,*
To grow to be giant, to sail as at sea
With the speed of the wind on a steed with his mane
To the wind, without pathway or route or a rein.
Room! room to be free where the white border'd sea
Blows a kiss to a brother as boundless as he;
Where the buffalo come like a cloud on the plain,
Pouring on like the tide of a storm-driven main,
And the lodge of the hunter to friend or to foe
Offers rest; and unquestion'd you come or you go.
My plains of America! Seas of wild lands!
From a land in the seas in a raiment of foam,
That has reached to a stranger the welcome of home,
I turn to you, lean to you, lift you my hands.

Run? Run? See this flank, sir, and I do love him so!
But he's blind, badger blind. Whoa, Pache boy, whoa,
No, you wouldn't believe it to look at his eyes,
But he's blind, badger blind, and it happen'd this wise:

'We lay in the grass and the sunburnt clover
That spread on the ground like a great brown cover
Northward and southward, and west and away
To the Brazos, where our lodges lay,
One broad and unbroken level of brown.

We were waiting the curtains of night to come down
To cover us trio and conceal our flight
With my brown bride, won from an Indian town
That lay in the rear the full ride of a night.

'We lounged in the grass—her eyes were in mine,
And her hands on my knee, and her hair was as wine
In its wealth and its flood, pouring on and all over
Her bosom wine red, and press'd never by one.
Her touch was as warm as the tinge of the clover
Burnt brown as it reach'd to the kiss of the sun.
Her words they were low as the lute-throated dove,
And as laden with love as the heart when it beats
In its hot, eager answer to earliest love,
Or the bee hurried home by its burthen of sweets.

'We lay low in the grass on the broad plain levels,
Old Revels and I, and my stolen brown bride;
"Forty full miles if a foot to ride!
Forty full miles if a foot, and the devils
Of red Comanches are hot on the track
When once they strike it. Let the sun go down
Soon, very soon," muttered bearded old Revels
As he peer'd at the sun, lying low on his back,
Holding fast to his lasso. Then he jerk'd at his steed
And he sprang to his feet, and glanced swiftly around,
And then dropp'd, as if shot, with an ear to the ground;
Then again to his feet, and to me, to my bride,
While his eyes were like flame, his face like a shroud,
His form like a king, and his beard like a cloud,

1 "The bugle-call to battle, the shouts of men and the neighing of horses, the roar of cannon, the waving banners—here is something sinfully poetic. The spotted cattle on the hills, the winding rivers through the valleys, the surging white seas against the granite shores—all life, all action that is beautiful and grand is poetry, waiting for expression. The world is one great poem, because it is very grand, very good, and very beautiful.' Miller, 'What Is Poetry,' *Memorie and Rime*(N.Y., 1884),39.

And his voice loud and shrill, as both trumpet and reed,—
"Pull, pull in your lassoes, and bridle to steed,
And speed you if ever for life you would speed.
Aye, ride for your lives, for your lives you must ride!
For the plain is aflame, the prairie on fire,
And the feet of wild horses hard flying before
I heard like a sea breaking high on the shore,
While the buffalo come like a surge of the sea,
Driven far by the flame, driving fast on us three
As a hurricane comes, crushing palms in his ire."

'We drew in the lassoes, seized saddle and rein,
Threw them on, cinched them on, cinched them over again,
And again drew the girth; and spring we to horse,
With head to the Brazos, with a sound in the air
Like the surge of a sea, with a flash in the eye,
From that red wall of flame reaching up to the sky;
A red wall of flame and a black rolling sea
Rushing fast upon us, as the wind sweeping free
And afar from the desert blown hollow and hoarse.

'Not a word, not a wail from a lip was let fall,
We broke not a whisper, we breathed not a prayer,
There was work to be done, there was death in the air,
And the chance was as one to a thousand for all.

'Twenty miles! . . . thirty miles! . . . a dim distant speck . . .
Then a long reaching line, and the Brazos in sight!
And I rose in my seat with a shout of delight.
I stood in my stirrup, and look'd to my right—
But Revels was gone; I glanced by my shoulder
And saw his horse stagger; I saw his head drooping
Hard down on his breast, and his naked breast stooping
Low down to the mane, as so swifter and bolder
Ran reaching out for us the red-footed fire
He rode neck to neck with a buffalo bull,
That made the earth shake where he came in his course,
The monarch of millions, with shaggy mane full
Of smoke and of dust, and it shook with desire
Of battle, with rage and with bellowings hoarse.
His keen, crooked horns, through the storm of his mane,
Like black lances lifted and lifted again;
And I looked but this once, for the fire licked through,
And Revels was gone, as we rode two and two.

'I look'd to my left then—and nose, neck, and shoulder
Sank slowly, sank surely, till back to my thighs,
And up through the black blowing veil of her hair
Did beam full in mine her two marvelous eyes,
With a longing and love yet a look of despair
And of pity for me, as she felt the smoke fold her,
And flames leaping far for her glorious hair.
Her sinking horse falter'd, plunged, fell and was gone
As I reach'd through the flame and I bore her still on.
On! into the Brazos, she, Pache and I—
Poor, burnt, blinded Pache. I love him. . .
That's why.'

1871 1871

CROSSING THE PLAINS

WHAT great yoked brutes with briskets low,
With wrinkled necks like buffalo,
With round, brown, liquid, pleading eyes,
That turn'd so slow and sad to you,

That shone like love's eyes soft with tears,
That seem'd to plead, and make replies,
The while they bow'd their necks and drew
The creaking load; and look'd at you.
Their sable briskets swept the ground,
Their cloven feet kept solemn sound.

Two sullen bullocks led the line,
Their great eyes shining bright like wine;
Two sullen captive kings were they,
That had in time held herds at bay,
And even now they crushed the sod
With stolid sense of majesty,
And stately stepp'd and stately trod,
As if 'twere something still to be
Kings even in captivity.

1878

COLUMBUS [1]

(AUGUST 3—OCTOBER 12, 1492)

BEHIND him lay the gray Azores,
  Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
  Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: 'Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone,
Brave Adm'r'l, speak; what shall I say?'
  'Why, say: "Sail on! sail on! and on!" '

'My men grow mutinous day by day;
  My men grow ghastly, wan and weak.'
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
  Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
'What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,
  If we sight naught but seas at dawn?'
'Why, you shall say at break of day:
  "Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!" '

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
  Until at last the blanched mate said:
'Why, now not even God would know
  Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
  For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Adm'r'l, speak and say—'
  He said: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
  'This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
  With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
  What shall we do when hope is gone?'
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
  'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'

Then, pale and worn, he paced his deck,
  And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
  A light! A light! At last a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
  It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
  Its grandest lesson: 'On! sail on!'

1892 1896

[1] '"Columbus" was written at "The Hights" in Oakland the first week in October, 1892. He had suffered loss through, and disillusionment in one he had trusted that year. Reading a translated copy of the logbook left by Columbus, he marked—"the men mutinied, but I sailed on." Another annotation: "Storm and darkness; stars changed, but we sailed on." ' Daughter's note.

FROM A SONG OF CREATION

CANTO I

1

HIS triple star led on and on,
Led up blue, bastioned Chilkoot Pass
To clouds, through clouds, above white clouds
That droop with snows like beaded strouds—
Above a world of gleaming glass,
Where loomed such cities of the skies
As only prophets look upon,
As only loving poets see,
With prophet ken of mystery.

2

What lone, white silence, left or right,
What whiteness, something more than white!
Such steel blue whiteness, van or rear—
Such silence as you could but hear
Above the sparkled, frosted rime,
As if the steely stars kept time
And sang their mystic, mighty rune—
. . . And oh, the icy, eerie moon!

3

What temples, towers, tombs of white,
White tombs, white tombstones, left and right,

That pushed the passing night aside
To ward where fallen stars had died—
To ward white tombs where dead stars lay—
White tombs more white, more bright than they;
White tombs high heaped white tombs upon—
White Ossa piled on Pelion!

4

Pale, steel stars flashed, rose, fell again,
Then paused, leaned low, as pitying,
And leaning so they ceased to sing,
The while the moon, with mother care,
Slow rocked her silver rocking-chair.

5

Night here, mid-year, is as a span;
Thor comes, a gold-clad king of war,
Comes only as the great Thor can.
Thor storms the battlements and Thor,
Far leaping, clinging crowned upon,
Throws battle hammer forth and back
Until the walls blaze in his track
With sparks and it is sudden dawn—
Dawn, sudden, sparkling, as a gem—
A jeweled, frost-set diadem
Of diamond, ruby, radium.

6

Two tallest, ice-tipt peaks take flame,
Take yellow flame, take crimson, pink,
Then, ere you yet have time to think,
Take hues that never yet had name.
Then turret, minaret, and tower,
As if to mark some mystic hour,
Or ancient, lost Masonic sign,
Take on a darkness like to night,
Deep night below the yellow light
That erstwhile seemed some snow-white tomb.
Then all is set in ghostly gloom,
As some dim-lighted, storied shrine—
As if the stars forget to stay
At court when comes the kingly day.

7

And now the high-built shafts of brass,
Gate posts that guard the tomb-set pass,
Put off their crowns, rich robes, and all
Their sudden, splendid light let fall;
And tomb and minaret and tower
Again gleam as that midnight hour.
While day, as scorning still to wait,
Drives fiercely through the ice-built gate
That guards the Arctic's outer hem
Of white, high-built Jerusalem.

8

To see, to guess the great white throne,
Behold Alaska's ice-built steeps
Where everlasting silence keeps
And white death lives and lords alone:
Go see God's river born full grown—
The gold of this stream it is good:
Here grows the Ark's white gopher wood—
A wide, white land, unnamed, unknown,
A land of mystery and moan.

9

Tall, trim, slim gopher trees incline,
A leaning, laden, helpless copse,
And moan and creak and intertwine
Their laden, twisted, tossing tops,
And moan all night and moan all day
With winds that walk these steeps alway.

10

The melancholy moose looks down,
A tattered Capuchin in brown,
A gaunt, ungainly, mateless monk,
An elephant without his trunk,
While far, against the gleaming blue,
High up a rock-topt ridge of snow,
Where scarce a dream would care to go,
Climb countless blue-clad caribou,
In endless line till lost to view.

11

The rent ice surges, grinds, and groans,
Then gorges, backs, and climbs the shore,
Then breaks with sudden rage and roar
And plunging, leaping, foams and moans
Swift down the surging, seething stream—
Mad hurdles of some monstrous dream.

12

To see God's river born full grown,
To see him burst the womb of earth
And leap, a giant at his birth,
Through shoreless whiteness, with wild shout—
A shout so sharp, so cold, so dread
You see, feel, hear, his sheeted dead—
'Tis as to know, no longer doubt,
'Tis as to know the eld Unknown,
Aye, bow before the great white throne.

1903

SAMUEL CLEMENS
(*Mark Twain*)
1835–1910

THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY[1]

IN compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, *Leonidas W.* Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that *Leonidas W.* Smiley is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; that he only conjectured that, if I asked old Wheeler about him, it would remind him of his infamous *Jim* Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me nearly to death with some infernal reminiscence of him as long and tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was the design, it certainly succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar-room stove of the old, dilapidated tavern in the ancient mining camp of Angel's, and I noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up and gave me good-day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named *Leonidas W.* Smiley—*Rev. Leonidas W.* Smiley—a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of Angel's Camp. I added that, if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat me down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned the initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in *finesse*. To me, the spectacle of a man drifting serenely along through such a queer yarn without ever smiling, was exquisitely absurd. As I said before, I asked him to tell me what he knew of Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, and he replied as follows. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once:

There was a feller here once by the name of *Jim* Smiley, in the winter of '49—or may be it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume wasn't finished when he first came to the camp; but any way, he was the curiosest man about always betting on any thing that turned up you ever see, if he could get any body to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't, he'd change sides. Any way that suited the other man would suit him—any way just so's he got a bet, *he* was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solitary thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take any side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush, or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting, he would be there reg'lar, to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be

[1] In a notebook kept at Angel's Camp, California, Clemens jotted down the following incident: 'Coleman with his jumping frog—bet a stranger $50.—Stranger had no frog and C. got him one:—In the meantime stranger filled C.'s frog full of shot and he couldn't jump. The stranger's frog won.' Across this note he wrote: 'Wrote this story for Artemus [Ward]—his idiot publisher, Carleton, gave it to Clapp's *Saturday Press*.' Paine, ed., *Mark Twain's Notebook*(N.Y., 1935),7.

the best exhorter about there, and so he was, too, and a good man. If he even seen a straddle-bug start to go anywheres, he would bet you how long it would take him to get wherever he was going to, and if you took him up, he would follow that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley, and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to *him*—he would bet on *any* thing—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he come in, and Smiley asked how she was, and he said she was considerable better—thank the Lord for his inf'nit mercy—and coming on so smart that, with the blessing of Prov'dence, she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says, 'Well, I'll risk two-and-a-half that she won't, any way.'

Thish-yer Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because, of course, she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag-end of the race she'd get excited and desperate-like, and come cavorting and straddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side amongst the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust, and raising m-o-r-e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and always fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cypher it down.

And he had a little small bull pup, that to look at him you'd think he wa'n't worth a cent, but to set around and look ornery, and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him, he was a different dog; his underjaw'd begin to stick out like the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover, and shine savage like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him, and bullyrag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what *he* was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to it—not chaw, you understand, but only jest grip and hang on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off by a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he saw in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discouraged-like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was *his* fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him, and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't had no opportunity to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances, if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

Well, this-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats, and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'klated to edercate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet he *did* learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summerset, or may be a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in

the matter of catching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as far as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog—and sing out, 'Flies, Dan'l, flies!' and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor again as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywheres, all said he laid over any frog that ever *they* see.

Well, Smiley kept the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come across him with his box, and says:

'What might it be that you've got in the box?'

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent like, 'It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, may be, but it ain't—it's only just a frog.'

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, 'H'm—so 'tis. Well, what's *he* good for?'

'Well,' Smiley says, easy and careless, 'He's good enough for *one* thing, I should judge—he can outjump ary frog in Calaveras county.'

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, 'Well, I don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.'

'May be you don't,' Smiley says. 'May be you understand frogs, and may be you don't understand 'em; may be you've had experience, and may be you an't only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I've got *my* opinion, and I'll risk forty dollars he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county.'

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, 'Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I an't got no frog, but if I had a frog, I'd bet you.'

And then Smiley says, 'That's all right—that's all right—if you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog.' And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

'Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his fore-paws just even with Dan'l, and I'll give the word.' Then he says, 'One—two—three—jump!' and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it wa'n't no use—couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as an anvil, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out of the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulders—this way—at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, 'Well, *I* don' see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.'

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, 'I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for—I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look might baggy, somehow.' And he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and lifted him up and says, 'Why, blame my cats, if he don't weigh five

pound!' and turned him upside down, and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he sees how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And—

(Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.) And turning to me as he moved away, he said: 'Just set where you are, stranger, and rest easy—I an't going to be gone a second.'

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond *Jim* Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. *Leonidas W.* Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he buttonholed me and recommenced:

'Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only jest a short stump like a bannanner, and—'

'Oh! hang Smiley and his afflicted cow!' I muttered, good-naturedly, and bidding the old gentleman good-day, I departed.

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1865 1867

FROM LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

HUCK FINN ON THE RAFT [1]

BY *way of illustrating keelboat talk and manners, and that now departed and hardly remembered raft life, I will throw in, in this place, a chapter from a book which I have been working at, by fits and starts, during the past five or six years, and may possibly finish in the course of five or six more. The book is a story which details some passages in the life of an ignorant village boy, Huck Finn, son of the town drunkard of my time out West, there. He has run away from his persecuting father, and from a persecuting good widow who wishes to make a nice, truth-telling, respectable boy of him; and with him a slave of the widow's has also escaped. They have found a fragment of a lumber-raft (it is high water and dead summer-time), and are floating down the river by night, and hiding in the willows by day—bound for Cairo, whence the Negro will seek freedom in the heart of the free states. But, in a fog, they pass Cairo without knowing it. By and by they begin to suspect the truth, and Huck Finn is persuaded to end the dismal suspense by swimming down to a huge raft which they have seen in the distance ahead of them, creeping aboard under cover of the darkness, and gathering the needed information by eavesdropping:*

But you know a young person can't wait very well when he is impatient to find a thing out. We talked it over, and by and by Jim said it was such a black night, now, that it wouldn't be no risk to swim down to the big raft and crawl aboard and listen—they would talk about Cairo, because they would be calculating to go ashore there for a spree, maybe; or anyway they would send boats ashore to buy whisky or fresh meat or something. Jim had a wonderful level head, for a nigger: he could most always start a good plan when you wanted one.

I stood up and shook my rags off and jumped into the river, and struck out for the raft's light. By and by, when I got down nearly to her, I eased up and went slow and cautious. But everything was all right—nobody at the sweeps. So I swum down along the raft till I was most abreast the camp-fire in the middle, then I crawled aboard and inched along and got in among some bundles of shingles on the weather side of the fire. There was thirteen men there—they was the watch on deck of course. And a mighty rough-looking lot, too. They had a jug, and tin cups, and they kept the jug moving. One man was singing—roaring, you may say; and it wasn't a nice song—for a parlor, anyway. He roared through his nose, and strung out the last word of every line very long. When he was done they all fetched a kind of Injun war-whoop, and then another was sung. It begun:

'There was a woman in our towdn,
In our towdn did dwed'l [dwell],
She loved her husband dear-i-lee,
But another man twyste as wed'l.

'Singing too, riloo, riloo, riloo,
Ri-too, riloo, rilay - - - e,
She loved her husband dear-i-lee,
But another man twyste as wed'l.'

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *Life on the Mississippi* (N.Y., 1931), 19–31.

And so on—fourteen verses. It was kind of poor, and when he was going to start on the next verse one of them said it was the tune the old cow died on; and another one said: 'Oh, give us a rest!' And another one told him to take a walk. They made fun of him till he got mad and jumped up and begun to cuss the crowd, and said he could lam any thief in the lot.

They was all about to make a break for him, but the biggest man there jumped up and says:

'Set whar you are, gentlemen. Leave him to me; he's my meat.'

Then he jumped up in the air three times, and cracked his heels together every time. He flung off a buckskin coat that was all hung with fringes, and says, 'You lay thar tell the chawin-up's done;' and flung his hat down, which was all over ribbons, and says, 'You lay thar tell his sufferin's is over.'

Then he jumped up in the air and cracked his heels together again, and shouted out:

'Whoo-oop! I'm the old original iron-jawed, brass-mounted, copper-bellied corpse-maker from the wilds of Arkansaw! Look at me! I'm the man they call Sudden Death and General Desolation! Sired by a hurricane, dam'd by an earthquake, half-brother to the cholera, nearly related to the smallpox on the mother's side! Look at me! I take nineteen alligators and a bar'l of whisky for breakfast when I'm in robust health, and a bushel of rattlesnakes and a dead body when I'm ailing. I split the everlasting rocks with my glance, and I squench the thunder when I speak! Whoo-oop! Stand back and give me room according to my strength! Blood's my natural drink, and the wails of the dying is music to my ear! Cast your eye on me, gentlemen! and lay low and hold your breath, for I'm 'bout to turn myself loose!'

All the time he was getting this off, he was shaking his head and looking fierce, and kind of swelling around in a little circle, tucking up his wristbands, and now and then straightening up and beating his breast with his fist, saying, 'Look at me, gentlemen!' When he got through, he jumped up and cracked his heels together three times, and let off a roaring 'Whoo-oop! I'm the bloodiest son of a wildcat that lives!'

Then the man that had started the row tilted his old slouch hat down over his right eye; then he bent stooping forward, with his back sagged and his south end sticking out far, and his fists a-shoving out and drawing in in front of him, and so went around in a little circle about three times, swelling himself up and breathing hard. Then he straightened, and jumped up and cracked his heels together three times before he lit again (that made them cheer), and he began to shout like this:

'Whoo-oop! bow your neck and spread, for the kingdom of sorrow's a-coming! Hold me down to the earth, for I feel my powers a-working! whoo-oop! I'm a child of sin, *don't* let me get a start! Smoked glass, here, for all! Don't attempt to look at me with the naked eye, gentlemen! When I'm playful I use the meridians of longitude and parallels of latitude for a seine, and drag the Atlantic Ocean for whales! I scratch my head with the lightning and purr myself to sleep with the thunder! When I'm cold, I bile the Gulf of Mexico and bathe in it; when I'm hot I fan myself with an equinoctial storm; when I'm thirsty I reach up and suck a cloud dry like a sponge; when I range the earth hungry, famine follows in my tracks! Whoo-oop! Bow your neck and spread! I put my hand on the sun's face and make it night in the earth; I bite a piece out of the moon and hurry the seasons; I shake myself and crumble the mountains! Contemplate me through leather—*don't* use the naked eye! I'm the man with a petrified heart and biler-iron bowels! The massacre of isolated communities is the pastime of my idle moments, the destruction of nationalities the serious business of my life! The boundless vastness of the great American desert is my inclosed property, and I bury my dead on my own premises!' He jumped up and cracked his heels together three times before he lit (they cheered him again), and as he come down he shouted out: 'Whoo-oop! bow your neck and spread, for the Pet Child of Calamity's a-coming!'

Then the other one went to swelling around and blowing again—the first one—the one they called Bob; next, the Child of Calamity chipped in again, bigger than ever; then they both got at it at the same time, swelling round and round each other and punching their fists most into each other's faces, and whooping and jawing like Injuns;

then Bob called the Child names, and the Child called him names back again; next, Bob called him a heap rougher names, and the Child come back at him with the very worst kind of language; next, Bob knocked the Child's hat off, and the Child picked it up and kicked Bob's ribbony hat about six foot; Bob went and got it and said never mind, this warn't going to be the last of this thing, because he was a man that never forgot and never forgive, and so the Child better look out, for there was a time a-coming, just as sure as he was a living man, that he would have to answer to him with the best blood in his body. The Child said no man was willinger than he for that time to come, and he would give Bob fair warning, *now*, never to cross his path again, for he could never rest till he had waded in his blood, for such was his nature, though he was sparing him now on account of his family, if he had one.

Both of them was edging away in different directions, growling and shaking their heads and going on about what they was going to do; but a little black-whiskered chap skipped up and says:

'Come back here, you couple of chicken-livered cowards, and I'll thrash the two of ye!'

And he done it, too. He snatched them, he jerked them this way and that, he booted them around, he knocked them sprawling faster than they could get up. Why, it warn't two minutes till they begged like dogs—and how the other lot did yell and laugh and clap their hands all the way through, and shout, 'Sail in, Corpse-Maker!' 'Hi! at him again, Child of Calamity!' 'Bully for you, little Davy!' Well, it was a perfect pow-wow for a while. Bob and the Child had red noses and black eyes when they got through. Little Davy made them own up that they was sneaks and cowards and not fit to eat with a dog or drink with a nigger; then Bob and the Child shook hands with each other, very solemn, and said they had always respected each other and was willing to let bygones be bygones. So then they washed their faces in the river; and just then there was a loud order to stand by for a crossing, and some of them went forward to man the sweeps there, and the rest went aft to handle the after sweeps.

I lay still and waited for fifteen minutes, and had a smoke out of a pipe that one of them left in reach; then the crossing was finished, and they stumped back and had a drink around and went to talking and singing again. Next they got out an old fiddle, and one played, and another patted juba, and the rest turned themselves loose on a regular old-fashioned keelboat breakdown. They couldn't keep that up very long without getting winded, so by and by they settled around the jug again.

They sung 'Jolly, Jolly Raftsman's the Life for Me,' with a rousing chorus, and then they got to talking about differences betwixt hogs, and their different kind of habits; and next about women and their different ways; and next about the best ways to put out houses that was afire; and next about what ought to be done with the Injuns; and next about what a king had to do, and how much he got; and next about how to make cats fight; and next about what to do when a man has fits; and next about differences betwixt clear-water rivers and muddy-water ones. The man they called Ed said the muddy Mississippi water was wholesomer to drink than the clear water of the Ohio; he said if you let a pint of this yaller Mississippi water settle, you would have about a half to three-quarters of an inch of mud in the bottom, according to the stage of the river, and then it warn't no better than Ohio water—what you wanted to do was to keep it stirred up—and when the river was low, keep mud on hand to put in and thicken the water up the way it ought to be.

The Child of Calamity said that was so; he said there was nutritiousness in the mud, and a man that drunk Mississippi water could grow corn in his stomach if he wanted to. He says:

'You look at the graveyards; that tells the tale. Trees won't grow worth shucks in a Cincinnati graveyard, but in a Sent Louis graveyard they grow upwards of eight hundred foot high. It's all on account of the water the people drunk before they laid up. A Cincinnati corpse don't richen a soil any.'

And they talked about how Ohio water didn't like to mix with Mississippi water. Ed said if you take the Mississippi on a rise when the Ohio is low, you'll find a wide band of clear water all the way down the

east side of the Mississippi for a hundred mile or more, and the minute you get out a quarter of a mile from shore and pass the line, it is all thick and yaller the rest of the way across. Then they talked about how to keep tobacco from getting mouldy, and from that they went into ghosts and told about a lot that other folks had seen; but Ed says:

'Why don't you tell something that you've seen yourselves? Now let me have a say. Five years ago I was on a raft as big as this, and right along here it was a bright moonshiny night, and I was on watch and boss of the stabboard oar forrard, and one of my pards was a man named Dick Allbright, and he come along to where I was sitting, forrard—gaping and stretching, he was—and stooped down on the edge of the raft and washed his face in the river, and come and set down by me and got out his pipe, and had just got it filled, when he looks up and says:

' "Why looky-here," he says, "ain't that Buck Miller's place, over yander in the bend?"

' "Yes," says I, "it is—why?" He laid his pipe down and leant his head on his hand, and says:

' "I thought we'd be furder down." I says:

' "I thought it, too, when I went off watch"—we was standing six hours on and six off—"but the boys told me," I says, "that the raft didn't seem to hardly move, for the last hour," says I, "though she's a-slipping along all right now," says I. He give a kind of a groan, and says:

' "I've seed a raft act so before, along here," he says, " 'pears to me the current has most quit above the head of this bend durin' the last two years," he says.

'Well, he raised up two or three times, and looked away off and around on the water. That started me at it, too. A body is always doing what he sees somebody else doing, though there mayn't be no sense in it. Pretty soon I see a black something floating on the water away off to stabboard and quartering behind us. I see he was looking at it, too. I says:

' "What's that?" He says, sort of pettish:

' " 'Tain't nothing but an old empty bar'l."

' "An empty bar'l!" says I, "why," says I, "a spy-glass is a fool to *your* eyes. How can you tell it's an empty bar'l?" He says:

' "I don't know; I reckon it ain't a bar'l, but I thought it might be," says he.

' "Yes," I says, "so it might be, and it might be anything else, too; a body can't tell nothing about it, such a distance as that," I says.

'We hadn't nothing else to do, so we kept on watching it. By and by I says:

' "Why looky-here, Dick Allbright, that thing's a-gaining on us, I believe."

'He never said nothing. The thing gained and gained, and I judged it must be a dog that was about tired out. Well, we swung down into the crossing, and the thing floated across the bright streak of the moonshine, and by George, it *was* a bar'l. Says I:

' "Dick Allbright, what made you think that thing was a bar'l, when it was half a mile off?" says I. Says he:

' "I don't know." Says I:

' "You tell me, Dick Allbright." Says he:

' "Well, I knowed it was a bar'l; I've seen it before; lots has seen it; they says it's a ha'nted bar'l."

'I called the rest of the watch, and they come and stood there, and I told them what Dick said. It floated right along abreast, now, and didn't gain any more. It was about twenty foot off. Some was for having it aboard, but the rest didn't want to. Dick Allbright said rafts that had fooled with it had got bad luck by it. The captain of the watch said he didn't believe in it. He said he reckoned the bar'l gained on us because it was in a little better current than what we was. He said it would leave by and by.

'So then we went to talking about other things, and we had a song, and then a breakdown; and after that the captain of the watch called for another song; but it was clouding up now, and the bar'l stuck right thar in the same place, and the song didn't seem to have much warm-up to it, somehow, and so they didn't finish it, and there warn't any cheers, but it sort of dropped flat, and nobody said anything for a minute. Then everybody tried to talk at once, and one chap got off a joke, but it warn't no use, they didn't laugh, and even the chap that made the joke didn't laugh at it, which ain't usual. We all just settled down glum, and watched the bar'l, and was oneasy and oncomfortable. Well, sir, it shut down black

and still, and then the wind began to moan around, and next the lightning began to play and the thunder to grumble. And pretty soon there was a regular storm, and in the middle of it a man that was running aft stumbled and fell and sprained his ankle so that he had to lay up. This made the boys shake their heads. And every time the lightning come, there was that bar'l, with the blue lights winking around it. We was always on the lookout for it. But by and by, toward dawn, she was gone. When the day come we couldn't see her anywhere, and we warn't sorry, either.

'But next night about half past nine, when there was songs and high jinks going on, here she comes again, and took her old roost on the stabboard side. There warn't no more high jinks. Everybody got solemn; nobody talked; you couldn't get anybody to do anything but set around moody and look at the bar'l. It begun to cloud up again. When the watch changed, the off watch stayed up, 'stead of turning in. The storm ripped and roared around all night, and in the middle of it another man tripped and sprained his ankle, and had to knock off. The bar'l left toward day, and nobody see it go.

'Everybody was sober and down in the mouth all day. I don't mean the kind of sober that comes of leaving liquor alone—not that. They was quiet, but they all drunk more than usual—not together, but each man sidled off and took it private, by himself.

'After dark the off watch didn't turn in; nobody sung, nobody talked; the boys didn't scatter around, neither; they sort of huddled together, forrard; and for two hours they set there, perfectly still, looking steady in the one direction, and heaving a sigh once in a while. And then, here comes the bar'l again. She took up her old place. She stayed there all night; nobody turned in. The storm come on again, after midnight. It got awful dark; the rain poured down; hail, too; the thunder boomed and roared and bellowed; the wind blowed a hurricane; and the lightning spread over everything in big sheets of glare, and showed the whole raft as plain as day; and the river lashed up white as milk as far as you could see for miles, and there was that bar'l jiggering along, same as ever. The captain ordered the watch to man the after sweeps for a crossing, and nobody would go—no more sprained ankles for them, they said. They wouldn't even *walk* aft. Well, then, just then the sky split wide open, with a crash, and the lightning killed two men of the after watch, and crippled two more. Crippled them how, say you? Why, *sprained their ankles!*

'The bar'l left in the dark betwixt lightnings, toward dawn. Well, not a body eat a bite at breakfast that morning. After that the men loafed around, in twos and threes, and talked low together. But none of them herded with Dick Allbright. They all give him the cold shake. If he come around where any of the men was, they split up and sidled away. They wouldn't man the sweeps with him. The captain had all the skiffs hauled up on the raft, alongside of his wigwam, and wouldn't let the dead men be took ashore to be planted; he didn't believe a man that got ashore would come back; and he was right.

'After night come, you could see pretty plain that there was going to be trouble if that bar'l come again; there was such a muttering going on. A good many wanted to kill Dick Allbright, because he'd seen the bar'l on other trips, and that had an ugly look. Some wanted to put him ashore. Some said: "Let's all go ashore in a pile, if the bar'l comes again."

'This kind of whispers was still going on, the men being bunched together forrard watching for the bar'l, when lo and behold you! here she comes again. Down she comes, slow and steady, and settles into her old tracks. You could 'a' heard a pin drop. Then up comes the captain, and says:

' "Boys, don't be a pack of children and fools; I don't want this bar'l to be dogging us all the way to Orleans, and *you* don't: Well, then, how's the best way to stop it? Burn it up—that's the way. I'm going to fetch it aboard," he says. And before anybody could say a word, in he went.

'He swum to it, and as he come pushing it to the raft, the men spread to one side. But the old man got it aboard and busted in the head, and there was a baby in it! Yes, sir; a stark-naked baby. It was Dick Allbright's baby; he owned up and said so.

' "Yes," he says, a-leaning over it, "yes, it is my own lamented darling, my poor lost

Charles William Allbright deceased," says he—for he could curl his tongue around the bulliest words in the language when he was a mind to, and lay them before you without a jint started anywheres. Yes, he said, he used to live up at the head of this bend, and one night he choked his child, which was crying, not intending to kill it—which was prob'ly a lie—and then he was scared, and buried it in a bar'l, before his wife got home, and off he went, and struck the northern trail and went to rafting; and this was the third year that the bar'l had chased him. He said the bad luck always begun light, and lasted till four men was killed, and then the bar'l didn't come any more after that. He said if the men would stand it one more night—and was a-going on like that—but the men had got enough. They started to get out a boat to take him ashore and lynch him, but he grabbed the little child all of a sudden and jumped overboard with it, hugged up to his breast and shedding tears, and we never see him again in this life, poor old suffering soul, nor Charles William neither.'

'*Who* was shedding tears?' says Bob; 'was it Allbright or the baby?'

'Why, Allbright, of course; didn't I tell you the baby was dead? Been dead three years—how could it cry?'

'Well, never mind how it could cry—how could it *keep* all that time?' says Davy. 'You answer me that.'

'I don't know how it done it,' says Ed. 'It done it, though—that's all I know about it.'

'Say—what did they do with the bar'l?' says the Child of Calamity.

'Why, they hove it overboard, and it sunk like a chunk of lead.'

'Edward, did the child look like it was choked?' says one.

'Did it have its hair parted?' says another.

'What was the brand on that bar'l, Eddy?' says a fellow they called Bill.

'Have you got the papers for them statistics, Edmund?' says Jimmy.

'Say, Edwin, was you one of the men that was killed by the lightning?' says Davy.

'Him? Oh, no! he was both of 'em,' says Bob. Then they all haw-hawed.

'Say, Edward, don't you reckon you'd better take a pill? You look bad—don't you feel pale?' says the Child of Calamity.

'Oh, come, now, Eddy,' says Jimmy, 'show up; you must 'a' kept part of that bar'l to prove the thing by. Show us the bung-hole—*do*—and we'll all believe you.'

'Say, boys,' says Bill, 'less divide it up. Thar's thirteen of us. I can swaller a thirteenth of the yarn, if you can worry down the rest.'

Ed got up mad and said they could all go to some place which he ripped out pretty savage, and then walked off aft, cussing to himself, and they yelling and jeering at him, and roaring and laughing so you could hear them a mile.

'Boys, we'll split a watermelon on that,' says the Child of Calamity; and he came rummaging around in the dark amongst the shingle bundles where I was, and put his hand on me. I was warm and soft and naked; so he says 'Ouch!' and jumped back.

'Fetch a lantern or a chunk of fire here, boys—there's a snake here as big as a cow!'

So they run there with a lantern, and crowded up and looked in on me.

'Come out of that, you beggar!' says one.

'Who are you?' says another.

'What are you after here? Speak up prompt, or overboard you go.'

'Snake him out, boys. Snatch him out by the heels.'

I began to beg, and crept out amongst them trembling. They looked me over, wondering, and the Child of Calamity says:

'A cussed thief! Lend a hand and less heave him overboard!'

'No,' says Big Bob, 'less get out the paint-pot and paint him a sky-blue all over from head to heel, and *then* heave him over.'

'Good! that's it. Go for the paint, Jimmy.'

When the paint come, and Bob took the brush and was just going to begin, the others laughing and rubbing their hands, I begun to cry, and that sort of worked on Davy, and he says:

' 'Vast there. He's nothing but a cub. I'll paint the man that teches him!'

So I looked around on them, and some of them grumbled and growled, and Bob put down the paint, and the others didn't take it up.

'Come here to the fire, and less see what you're up to here,' says Davy. 'Now set

down there and give an account of yourself. How long have you been aboard here?'

'Not over a quarter of a minute, sir,' says I.

'How did you get dry so quick?'

'I don't know, sir. I'm always that way, mostly.'

'Oh, you are, are you? What's your name?'

I warn't going to tell my name. I didn't know what to say, so I just says:

'Charles William Allbright, sir.'

Then they roared—the whole crowd; and I was mighty glad I said that, because, maybe, laughing would get them in a better humor.

When they got done laughing, Davy says:

'It won't hardly do, Charles William. You couldn't have growed this much in five year, and you was a baby when you come out of the bar'l, you know, and dead at that. Come, now, tell a straight story, and nobody'll hurt you, if you ain't up to anything wrong. What *is* your name?'

'Aleck Hopkins, sir. Aleck James Hopkins.'

'Well, Aleck, where did you come from, here?'

'From a trading scow. She lays up the bend yonder. I was born on her. Pap has traded up and down here all his life; and he told me to swim off here, because when you went by he said he would like to get some of you to speak to a Mr. Jonas Turner, in Cairo, and tell him—'

'Oh, come!'

'Yes, sir, it's as true as the world. Pap he says—'

'Oh, your grandmother!'

They all laughed, and I tried again to talk, but they broke in on me and stopped me.

'Now, looky-here,' says Davy; 'you're scared, and so you talk wild. Honest, now, do you live in a scow, or is it a lie?'

'Yes, sir, in a trading scow. She lays up at the head of the bend. But I warn't born in her. It's our first trip.'

'Now you're talking! What did you come aboard here for? To steal?'

'No, sir, I didn't. It was only to get a ride on the raft. All boys does that.'

'Well, I know that. But what did you hide for?'

'Sometimes they drive the boys off.'

'So they do. They might steal. Looky-here; if we let you off this time, will you keep out of these kind of scrapes hereafter?'

' 'Deed I will, boss. You try me.'

'All right, then. You ain't but little ways from shore. Overboard with you, and don't you make a fool of yourself another time this way. Blast it, boy, some raftsmen would rawhide you till you were black and blue!'

I didn't wait to kiss good-by, but went overboard and broke for shore. When Jim come along by and by, the big raft was away out of sight around the point. I swum out and got aboard, and was mighty glad to see home again.

The boy did not get the information he was after, but his adventure has furnished the glimpse of the departed raftsman and keelboatman which I desire to offer in this place.

1883

THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED HADLEYBURG

I

It was many years ago. Hadleyburg was the most honest and upright town in all the region around about. It had kept that reputation unsmirched during three generations, and was prouder of it than of any other of its possessions. It was so proud of it, and so anxious to insure its perpetuation, that it began to teach the principles of honest dealing to its babies in the cradle, and made the like teachings the staple of their culture thenceforward through all the years devoted to their education. Also, throughout the formative years temptations were kept out of the way of the young people, so that their honesty could have every chance to harden and solidify, and become a part of their very bone. The neighboring towns were jealous of this honorable supremacy, and affected to sneer at Hadleyburg's pride in it and call it vanity; but all the same they were obliged to acknowledge that Hadleyburg was in reality an incorruptible town; and if pressed they would also acknowledge that the mere fact that a young man hailed from Hadleyburg was all the recommendation he needed when he went forth from his natal town to seek for responsible employment.

But at last, in the drift of time, Hadley

burg had the ill luck to offend a passing stranger—possibly without knowing it, certainly without caring, for Hadleyburg was sufficient unto itself, and cared not a rap for strangers or their opinions. Still, it would have been well to make an exception in this one's case, for he was a bitter man and revengeful. All through his wanderings during a whole year he kept his injury in mind, and gave all his leisure moments to trying to invent a compensating satisfaction for it. He contrived many plans, and all of them were good, but none of them was quite sweeping enough; the poorest of them would hurt a great many individuals, but what he wanted was a plan which would comprehend the entire town, and not let so much as one person escape unhurt. At last he had a fortunate idea, and when it fell into his brain it lit up his whole head with an evil joy. He began to form a plan at once, saying to himself, 'That is the thing to do—I will corrupt the town.'

Six months later he went to Hadleyburg, and arrived in a buggy at the house of the old cashier of the bank about ten at night. He got a sack out of the buggy, shouldered it, and staggered with it through the cottage yard, and knocked at the door. A woman's voice said 'Come in,' and he entered, and set his sack behind the stove in the parlor, saying politely to the old lady who sat reading the *Missionary Herald* by the lamp:

'Pray keep your seat, madam, I will not disturb you. There—now it is pretty well concealed; one would hardly know it was there. Can I see your husband a moment, madam?'

No, he was gone to Brixton, and might not return before morning.

'Very well, madam, it is no matter. I merely wanted to leave that sack in his care, to be delivered to the rightful owner when he shall be found. I am a stranger; he does not know me; I am merely passing through the town to-night to discharge a matter which has been long in my mind. My errand is now completed, and I go pleased and a little proud, and you will never see me again. There is a paper attached to the sack which will explain everything. Good night, madam.'

The old lady was afraid of the mysterious big stranger, and was glad to see him go. But her curiosity was roused, and she went straight to the sack and brought away the paper. It began as follows:

TO BE PUBLISHED; or, the right man sought out by private inquiry—either will answer. This sack contains gold coin weighing a hundred and sixty pounds four ounces—

'Mercy on us, and the door not locked!'

Mrs. Richards flew to it all in a tremble and locked it, then pulled down the window-shades and stood frightened, worried, and wondering if there was anything else she could do toward making herself and the money more safe. She listened awhile for burglars, then surrendered to curiosity and went back to the lamp and finished reading the paper:

I am a foreigner, and am presently going back to my own country, to remain there permanently. I am grateful to America for what I have received at her hands during my long stay under her flag; and to one of her citizens —a citizen of Hadleyburg—I am especially grateful for a great kindness done me a year or two ago. Two great kindnesses, in fact. I will explain. I was a gambler. I say I WAS. *I was a ruined gambler. I arrived in this village at night, hungry and without a penny. I asked for help—in the dark; I was ashamed to beg in the light. I begged of the right man. He gave me twenty dollars—that is to say, he gave me life, as I considered it. He also gave me fortune; for out of that money I have made myself rich at the gaming-table. And finally, a remark which he made to me has remained with me to this day, and has at last conquered me; and in conquering has saved the remnant of my morals; I shall gamble no more. Now I have no idea who that man was, but I want him found, and I want him to have this money, to give away, throw away, or keep, as he pleases. It is merely my way of testifying my gratitude to him. If I could stay, I would find him myself; but no matter, he will be found. This is an honest town, an incorruptible town, and I know I can trust it without fear. This man can be identified by the remark which he made to me; I feel persuaded that he will remember it.*

And now my plan is this: If you prefer to conduct the inquiry privately, do so. Tell the contents of this present writing to any one who is likely to be the right man. If he shall an-

swer, 'I ant the man; the remark I made was so-and-so,' apply the test—to wit: open the sack, and in it you will find a sealed envelope containing that remark. If the remark mentioned by the candidate tallies with it, give him the money, and ask no further questions, for he is certainly the right man.

But if you shall prefer a public inquiry, then publish this present writing in the local paper—with these instructions added, to wit: Thirty days from now, let the candidate appear at the town-hall at eight in the evening (Friday), and hand his remark, in a sealed envelope, to the Rev. Mr. Burgess (if he will be kind enough to act); and let Mr. Burgess there and then destroy the seals of the sack, open it, and see if the remark is correct; if correct, let the money be delivered, with my sincere gratitude, to my benefactor thus identified.

Mrs. Richards sat down, gently quivering with excitement, and was soon lost in thinkings—after this pattern: 'What a strange thing it is! . . . And what a fortune for that kind man who set his bread afloat upon the waters! . . . If it had only been my husband that did it!—for we are so poor, so old and poor! . . .' Then, with a sigh—'But it was not my Edward; no, it was not he that gave a stranger twenty dollars. It is a pity, too; I see it now. . . .' Then, with a shudder—'But it is *gambler's* money! the wages of sin: we couldn't take it; we couldn't touch it. I don't like to be near it; it seems a defilement.' She moved to a farther chair. . . . 'I wish Edward would come and take it to the bank; a burglar might come at any moment; it is dreadful to be here all alone with it.'

At eleven Mr. Richards arrived, and while his wife was saying, 'I am *so* glad you've come!' he was saying, 'I'm so tired —tired clear out; it is dreadful to be poor, and have to make these dismal journeys at my time of life. Always at the grind, grind, grind, on a salary—another man's slave, and he sitting at home in his slippers, rich and comfortable.'

'I am so sorry for you, Edward, you know that; but be comforted: we have our livelihood; we have our good name—'

'Yes, Mary, and that is everything. Don't mind my talk—it's just a moment's irritation and doesn't mean anything. Kiss me—there, it's all gone now, and I am not complaining any more. What have you been getting? What's in the sack?'

Then his wife told him the great secret. It dazed him for a moment; then he said:

'It weighs a hundred and sixty pounds? Why, Mary, it's for-ty thou-sand dollars—think of it—a whole fortune! Not ten men in this village are worth that much. Give me the paper.'

He skimmed through it and said:

'Isn't it an adventure! Why, it's a romance; it's like the impossible things one reads about in books, and never sees in life.' He was well stirred up now; cheerful, even gleeful. He tapped his old wife on the cheek, and said, humorously, 'Why, we're rich, Mary, rich; all we've got to do is to bury the money and burn the papers. If the gambler ever comes to inquire, we'll merely look coldly upon him and say: "What is this nonsense you are talking? We have never heard of you and your sack of gold before;" and then he would look foolish, and—'

'And in the mean time, while you are running on with your jokes, the money is still here, and it is fast getting along toward burglar-time.'

'True. Very well, what shall we do—make the inquiry private? No, not that: it would spoil the romance. The public method is better. Think what a noise it will make! And it will make all the other towns jealous; for no stranger would trust such a thing to any town but Hadleyburg, and they know it. It's a great card for us. I must get to the printing-office now, or I shall be too late.'

'But stop—stop—don't leave me here alone with it, Edward!'

But he was gone. For only a little while, however. Not far from his own house he met the editor-proprietor of the paper, and gave him the document, and said, 'Here is a good thing for you, Cox—put it in.'

'It may be too late, Mr. Richards, but I'll see.'

At home again he and his wife sat down to talk the charming mystery over; they were in no condition for sleep. The first question was, Who could the citizen have been who gave the stranger the twenty dollars? It seemed a simple one; both answered it in the same breath:

'Barclay Goodson.'

'Yes,' said Richards, 'he could have done it, and it would have been like him, but there's not another in the town.'

'Everybody will grant that, Edward—grant it privately, anyway. For six months, now, the village has been its own proper self once more—honest, narrow, self-righteous, and stingy.'

'It is what he always called it, to the day of his death—said it right out publicly, too.'

'Yes, and he was hated for it.'

'Oh, of course; but he didn't care. I reckon he was the best-hated man among us, except the Reverend Burgess.'

'Well, Burgess deserves it—he will never get another congregation here. Mean as the town is, it knows how to estimate *him*. Edward, doesn't it seem odd that the stranger should appoint Burgess to deliver the money?'

'Well, yes—it does. That is—that is—'

'Why so much that-*is*-ing? Would *you* select him?'

'Mary, maybe the stranger knows him better than this village does.'

'Much *that* would help Burgess!'

The husband seemed perplexed for an answer; the wife kept a steady eye upon him, and waited. Finally Richards said, with the hesitancy of one who is making a statement which is likely to encounter doubt:

'Mary, Burgess is not a bad man.'

His wife was certainly surprised.

'Nonsense!' she exclaimed.

'He is not a bad man. I know. The whole of his unpopularity had its foundation in that one thing—the thing that made so much noise.'

'That "one thing," indeed! As if that "one thing" wasn't enough, all by itself.'

'Plenty. Plenty. Only he wasn't guilty of it.'

'How you talk! Not guilty of it! Everybody knows he *was* guilty.'

'Mary, I give you my word—he was innocent.'

'I can't believe it, and I don't. How do you know?'

'It is a confession. I am ashamed, but I will make it. I was the only man who knew he was innocent. I could have saved him, and—and—well, you know how the town was wrought up—I hadn't the pluck to do it. It would have turned everybody against me. I felt mean, ever so mean; but I didn't dare; I hadn't the manliness to face that.'

Mary looked troubled, and for a while was silent. Then she said, stammeringly:

'I—I don't think it would have done for you to—to—One mustn't—er—public opinion—one has to be so careful—so—' It was a difficult road, and she got mired; but after a little she got started again. 'It was a great pity, but—Why, we couldn't afford it, Edward—we couldn't indeed. Oh, I wouldn't have had you do it for anything!'

'It would have lost us the good will of so many people, Mary; and then—and then—'

'What troubles me now is, what *he* thinks of us, Edward.'

'He? *He* doesn't suspect that I could have saved him.'

'Oh,' exclaimed the wife, in a tone of relief, 'I am glad of that! As long as he doesn't know that you could have saved him, he—he—well, that makes it a great deal better. Why, I might have known he didn't know, because he is always trying to be friendly with us, as little encouragement as we give him. More than once people have twitted me with it. There's the Wilsons, and the Wilcoxes, and the Harknesses, they take a mean pleasure in saying, "*Your friend* Burgess," because they know it pesters me. I wish he wouldn't persist in liking us so; I can't think why he keeps it up.'

'I can explain it. It's another confession. When the thing was new and hot, and the town made a plan to ride him on a rail, my conscience hurt me so that I couldn't stand it, and I went privately and gave him notice, and he got out of the town and staid out till it was safe to come back.'

'Edward! If the town had found it out—'

'*Don't!* It scares me yet, to think of it. I repented of it the minute it was done; and I was even afraid to tell you, lest your face might betray it to somebody. I didn't sleep any that night, for worrying. But after a few days I saw that no one was going to suspect me, and after that I got to feeling glad I did it. And I feel glad yet, Mary—glad through and through.'

'So do I, now, for it would have been a dreadful way to treat him. Yes, I'm glad; for really you did owe him that, you know.

But, Edward, suppose it should come out yet, some day!'

'It won't.'

'Why?'

'Because everybody thinks it was Goodson.'

'Of course they would!'

'Certainly. And of course *he* didn't care. They persuaded poor old Sawlsberry to go and charge it on him, and he went blustering over there and did it. Goodson looked him over, like as if he was hunting for a place on him that he could despise the most, then he says, "So you are the Committee of Inquiry, are you?" Sawlsberry said that was about what he was. "Hm. Do they require particulars, or do you reckon a kind of a *general* answer will do?" "If they require particulars, I will come back, Mr. Goodson; I will take the general answer first." "Very well, then, tell them to go to hell—I reckon that's general enough. And I'll give you some advice, Sawlsberry; when you come back for the particulars, fetch a basket to carry the relics of yourself home in." '

'Just like Goodson; it's got all the marks. He had only one vanity: he thought he could give advice better than any other person.'

'It settled the business, and saved us, Mary. The subject was dropped.'

'Bless you, I'm not doubting *that*.'

Then they took up the gold-sack mystery again, with strong interest. Soon the conversation began to suffer breaks—interruptions caused by absorbed thinkings. The breaks grew more and more frequent. At last Richards lost himself wholly in thought. He sat long, gazing vacantly at the floor, and by and by he began to punctuate his thoughts with little nervous movements of his hands that seemed to indicate vexation. Meantime his wife too had relapsed into a thoughtful silence, and her movements were beginning to show a troubled discomfort. Finally Richards got up and strode aimlessly about the room, plowing his hands through his hair, much as a somnambulist might do who was having a bad dream. Then he seemed to arrive at a definite purpose; and without a word he put on his hat and passed quickly out of the house. His wife sat brooding, with a drawn face, and did not seem to be aware that she was alone. Now and then she murmured, 'Lead us not into t— . . . but—but—we are so poor, so poor! . . . Lead us not into . . . Ah, who would be hurt by it?—and no one would ever know. . . . Lead us . . .' The voice died out in mumblings. After a little she glanced up and muttered in a half-frightened, half-glad way:

'He is gone! But, oh dear, he may be too late—too late. . . . Maybe not—maybe there is still time.' She rose and stood thinking, nervously clasping and unclasping her hands. A slight shudder shook her frame, and she said, out of a dry throat, 'God forgive me—it's awful to think such things—but . . . Lord, how we are made—how strangely we are made!'

She turned the light low, and slipped stealthily over and kneeled down by the sack and felt of its ridgy sides with her hands, and fondled them lovingly; and there was a gloating light in her poor old eyes. She fell into fits of absence; and came half out of them at times to mutter, 'If we had only waited!—oh, if we had only waited a little, and not been in such a hurry!'

Meantime Cox had gone home from his office and told his wife all about the strange thing that had happened, and they had talked it over eagerly, and guessed that the late Goodson was the only man in the town who could have helped a suffering stranger with so noble a sum as twenty dollars. Then there was a pause, and the two became thoughtful and silent. And by and by nervous and fidgety. At last the wife said, as if to herself:

'Nobody knows this secret but the Richardses . . . and us . . . nobody.'

The husband came out of his thinkings with a slight start, and gazed wistfully at his wife, whose face was become very pale; then he hesitatingly rose, and glanced furtively at his hat, then at his wife—a sort of mute inquiry. Mrs. Cox swallowed once or twice, with her hand at her throat, then in place of speech she nodded her head. In a moment she was alone, and mumbling to herself.

And now Richards and Cox were hurrying through the deserted streets, from opposite directions. They met, panting, at the foot of the printing-office stairs; by the night light there they read each other's face. Cox whispered:

'Nobody knows about this but us?'

The whispered answer was,

'Not a soul—on honor, not a soul!'

'If it isn't too late to—'

The men were starting up-stairs; at this moment they were overtaken by a boy, and Cox asked:

'Is that you, Johnny?'

'Yes, sir.'

'You needn't ship the early mail—nor *any* mail; wait till I tell you.'

'It's already gone, sir.'

'*Gone?*' It had the sound of an unspeakable disappointment in it.

'Yes, sir. Time-table for Brixton and all the towns beyond changed to-day, sir—had to get the papers in twenty minutes earlier than common. I had to rush; if I had been two minutes later—'

The men turned and walked slowly away, not waiting to hear the rest. Neither of them spoke during ten minutes; then Cox said, in a vexed tone:

'What possessed you to be in such a hurry, *I* can't make out.'

The answer was humble enough:

'I see it now, but somehow I never thought, you know, until it was too late. But the next time—'

'Next time be hanged! It won't come in a thousand years.'

Then the friends separated without a good night, and dragged themselves home with the gait of mortally stricken men. At their homes their wives sprang up with an eager 'Well?'—then saw the answer with their eyes and sank down sorrowing, without waiting for it to come in words. In both houses a discussion followed of a heated sort—a new thing; there had been discussions before, but not heated ones, not ungentle ones. The discussions to-night were a sort of seeming plagiarisms of each other. Mrs. Richards said,

'If you had only waited, Edward—if you had only stopped to think; but no, you must run straight to the printing-office and spread it all over the world.'

'It *said* publish it.'

'That is nothing; it also said do it privately, if you liked. There, now—is that true, or not?'

'Why, yes—yes, it is true; but when I thought what a stir it would make, and what a compliment it was to Hadleyburg that a stranger should trust it so—'

'Oh, certainly, I know all that; but if you had only stopped to think, you would have seen that you *couldn't* find the right man, because he is in his grave, and hasn't left chick nor child nor relation behind him; and as long as the money went to somebody that awfully needed it, and nobody would be hurt by it, and—and—'

She broke down, crying. Her husband tried to think of some comforting thing to say, and presently came out with this:

'But after all, Mary, it must be for the best—it *must* be; we know that. And we must remember that it was so ordered—'

'Ordered! Oh, everything's *ordered*, when a person has to find some way out when he has been stupid. Just the same, it was *ordered* that the money should come to us in this special way, and it was you that must take it on yourself to go meddling with the designs of Providence—and who gave you the right? It was wicked, that is what it was—just blasphemous presumption, and no more becoming to a meek and humble professor of—'

'But, Mary, you know how we have been trained all our lives long, like the whole village, till it is absolutely second nature to us to stop not a single moment to think when there's an honest thing to be done—'

'Oh, I know it, I know it—it's been one everlasting training and training and training in honesty—honesty shielded, from the very cradle, against every possible temptation, and so it's *artificial* honesty, and weak as water when temptation comes, as we have seen this night. God knows I never had shade nor shadow of a doubt of my petrified and indestructible honesty until now—and now, under the very first big and real temptation, I—Edward, it is my belief that this town's honesty is as rotten as mine is; as rotten as yours is. It is a mean town, a hard, stingy town, and hasn't a virtue in the world but this honesty it is so celebrated for and so conceited about; and so help me, I do believe that if ever the day comes that its honesty falls under great temptation, its grand reputation will go to ruin like a house of cards. There, now I've made confession, and I feel better; I am a humbug, and I've been one all my life, without knowing it. Let no man call me honest again—I will not have it.'

'I—well, Mary, I feel a good deal as you

do; I certainly do. It seems strange, too, so strange. I never could have believed it—never.'

A long silence followed; both were sunk in thought. At last the wife looked up and said:

'I know what you are thinking, Edward.'

Richards had the embarrassed look of a person who is caught.

'I am ashamed to confess it, Mary, but—'

'It's no matter, Edward, I was thinking the same question myself.'

'I hope so. State it.'

'You were thinking, if a body could only guess out *what the remark was* that Goodson made to the stranger.'

'It's perfectly true. I feel guilty and ashamed. And you?'

'I'm past it. Let us make a pallet here; we've got to stand watch till the bank vault opens in the morning and admits the sack. . . . Oh dear, oh dear—if we hadn't made the mistake!'

The pallet was made, and Mary said:

'The open sesame—what could it have been? I do wonder what that remark could have been? But come; we will get to bed now.'

'And sleep?'

'No: think.'

'Yes, think.'

By this time the Coxes too had completed their spat and their reconciliation, and were turning in—to think, to think, and toss, and fret, and worry over what the remark could possibly have been which Goodson made to the stranded derelict; that golden remark; that remark worth forty thousand dollars, cash.

The reason that the village telegraph-office was open later than usual that night was this: The foreman of Cox's paper was the local representative of the Associated Press. One might say its honorary representative, for it wasn't four times a year that he could furnish thirty words that would be accepted. But this time it was different. His despatch stating what he had caught got an instant answer:

Send the whole thing—all the details—twelve hundred words.

A colossal order! The foreman filled the bill; and he was the proudest man in the State. By breakfast-time the next morning the name of Hadleyburg the Incorruptible was on every lip in America, from Montreal to the Gulf, from the glaciers of Alaska to the orange-groves of Florida; and millions and millions of people were discussing the stranger and his money-sack, and wondering if the right man would be found, and hoping some more news about the matter would come soon—right away.

II

Hadleyburg village woke up world-celebrated—astonished—happy—vain. Vain beyond imagination. Its nineteen principal citizens and their wives went about shaking hands with each other, and beaming, and smiling, and congratulating, and saying *this* thing adds a new word to the dictionary—*Hadleyburg*, synonym for *incorruptible*—destined to live in dictionaries forever! And the minor and unimportant citizens and their wives went around acting in much the same way. Everybody ran to the bank to see the gold-sack; and before noon grieved and envious crowds began to flock in from Brixton and all neighboring towns; and that afternoon and next day reporters began to arrive from everywhere to verify the sack and its history and write the whole thing up anew, and make dashing free-hand pictures of the sack, and of Richards's house, and the bank, and the Presbyterian church, and the Baptist church, and the public square, and the town-hall where the test would be applied and the money delivered; and damnable portraits of the Richardses, and Pinkerton the banker, and Cox, and the foreman, and Reverend Burgess, and the postmaster—and even of Jack Halliday, who was the loafing, good-natured, no-account, irreverent fisherman, hunter, boys' friend, stray-dogs' friend, typical 'Sam Lawson' of the town. The little mean, smirking, oily Pinkerton showed the sack to all comers, and rubbed his sleek palms together pleasantly, and enlarged upon the town's fine old reputation for honesty and upon this wonderful indorsement of it, and hoped and believed that the example would now spread far and wide over the American world, and be epoch-making in the matter of moral regeneration. And so on, and so on.

By the end of a week things had quieted

down again; the wild intoxication of pride and joy had sobered to a soft, sweet, silent delight—a sort of deep, nameless, unutterable content. All faces bore a look of peaceful, holy happiness.

Then a change came. It was a gradual change: so gradual that its beginnings were hardly noticed; maybe were not noticed at all, except by Jack Halliday, who always noticed everything; and always made fun of it, too, no matter what it was. He began to throw out chaffing remarks about people not looking quite so happy as they did a day or two ago; and next he claimed that the new aspect was deepening to positive sadness; next, that it was taking on a sick look; and finally he said that everybody was become so moody, thoughtful, and absent-minded that he could rob the meanest man in town of a cent out of the bottom of his breeches pocket and not disturb his revery.

At this stage—or at about this stage—a saying like this was dropped at bedtime—with a sigh, usually—by the head of each of the nineteen principal households: 'Ah, what *could* have been the remark that Goodson made?'

And straightway—with a shudder—came this, from the man's wife:

'Oh, *don't*! What horrible thing are you mulling in your mind? Put it away from you, for God's sake!'

But that question was wrung from those men again the next night—and got the same retort. But weaker.

And the third night the men uttered the question yet again—with anguish, and absently. This time—and the following night—the wives fidgeted feebly, and tried to say something. But didn't.

And the night after that they found their tongues and responded—longingly:

'Oh, if we *could* only guess!'

Halliday's comments grew daily more and more sparklingly disagreeable and disparaging. He went diligently about, laughing at the town, individually and in mass. But his laugh was the only one left in the village: it fell upon a hollow and mournful vacancy and emptiness. Not even a smile was findable anywhere. Halliday carried a cigar-box around on a tripod, playing that it was a camera, and halted all passers and aimed the thing and said, 'Ready!—now look pleasant, please,' but not even this capital joke could surprise the dreary faces into any softening.

So three weeks passed—one week was left. It was Saturday evening—after supper. Instead of the aforetime Saturday-evening flutter and bustle and shopping and larking, the streets were empty and desolate. Richards and his old wife sat apart in their little parlor—miserable and thinking. This was become their evening habit now: the lifelong habit which had preceded it, of reading, knitting, and contented chat, or receiving or paying neighborly calls, was dead and gone and forgotten, ages ago—two or three weeks ago; nobody talked now, nobody read, nobody visited—the whole village sat at home, sighing, worrying, silent. Trying to guess out that remark.

The postman left a letter. Richards glanced listlessly at the superscription and the postmark—unfamiliar, both—and tossed the letter on the table and resumed his might-have-beens and his hopeless dull miseries where he had left them off. Two or three hours later his wife got wearily up and was going away to bed without a good night—custom now—but she stopped near the letter and eyed it awhile with a dead interest, then broke it open, and began to skim it over. Richards, sitting there with his chair tilted back against the wall and his chin between his knees, heard something fall. It was his wife. He sprang to her side, but she cried out:

'Leave me alone, I am too happy. Read the letter—read it!'

He did. He devoured it, his brain reeling. The letter was from a distant state, and it said:

I am a stranger to you, but no matter: I have something to tell. I have just arrived home from Mexico, and learned about that episode. Of course you do not know who made that remark, but I know, and I am the only person living who does know. It was GOODSON. *I knew him well, many years ago. I passed through your village that very night, and was his guest till the midnight train came along. I overheard him make that remark to the stranger in the dark—it was in Hale Alley. He and I talked of it the rest of the way home, and while smoking in his house. He mentioned many of your villagers in the course of his talk—most of them in a very un-*

complimentary way, but two or three favorably; among these latter yourself. I say 'favorably'—nothing stronger. I remember his saying he did not actually LIKE *any person in the town—not one; but that you—I* THINK *he said you—am almost sure—had done him a very great service once, possibly without knowing the full value of it, and he wished he had a fortune, he would leave it to you when he died, and a curse apiece for the rest of the citizens. Now, then, if it was you that did him that service, you are his legitimate heir, and entitled to the sack of gold. I know that I can trust to your honor and honesty, for in a citizen of Hadleyburg these virtues are an unfailing inheritance, and so I am going to reveal to you the remark, well satisfied that if you are not the right man you will seek and find the right one and see that poor Goodson's debt of gratitude for the service referred to is paid. This is the remark:* 'YOU ARE FAR FROM BEING A BAD MAN: GO, AND REFORM.'

HOWARD L. STEPHENSON

'Oh, Edward, the money is ours, and I am so grateful, *oh*, so grateful—kiss me, dear, it's forever since we kissed—and we needed it so—the money—and now you are free of Pinkerton and his bank, and nobody's slave any more; it seems to me I could fly for joy.'

It was a happy half-hour that the couple spent there on the settee caressing each other; it was the old days come again—days that had begun with their courtship and lasted without a break till the stranger brought the deadly money. By and by the wife said:

'Oh, Edward, how lucky it was you did him that grand service, poor Goodson! I never liked him, but I love him now. And it was fine and beautiful of you never to mention it or brag about it.' Then, with a touch of reproach, 'But you ought to have told *me*, Edward, you ought to have told your wife, you know.'

'Well, I—er—well, Mary, you see—'

'Now stop hemming and hawing, and tell me about it, Edward. I always loved you, and now I'm proud of you. Everybody believes there was only one good generous soul in this village, and now it turns out that you—Edward, why don't you tell me?'

'Well—er—er—Why, Mary, I can't!'

'You *can't*? *Why* can't you?'

'You see, he—well, he—he made me promise I wouldn't.'

The wife looked him over, and said, very slowly:

'Made—you—promise? Edward, what do you tell me that for?'

'Mary, do you think I would lie?'

She was troubled and silent for a moment, then she laid her hand within his and said:

'No . . . no. We have wandered far enough from our bearings—God spare us that! In all your life you have never uttered a lie. But now—now that the foundations of things seem to be crumbling from under us, we—we—' She lost her voice for a moment, then said, brokenly, 'Lead us not into temptation. . . . I think you made the promise, Edward. Let it rest so. Let us keep away from that ground. Now—that is all gone by; let us be happy again; it is no time for clouds.'

Edward found it something of an effort to comply, for his mind kept wandering—trying to remember what the service was that he had done Goodson.

The couple lay awake the most of the night, Mary happy and busy, Edward busy but not so happy. Mary was planning what she would do with the money. Edward was trying to recall that service. At first his conscience was sore on account of the lie he had told Mary—if it was a lie. After much reflection—suppose it *was* a lie? What then? Was it such a great matter? Aren't we always *acting* lies? Then why not *tell* them? Look at Mary—look what she had done. While he was hurrying off on his honest errand, what was she doing? Lamenting because the papers hadn't been destroyed and the money kept! Is theft better than lying?

That point lost its sting—the lie dropped into the background and left comfort behind it. The next point came to the front: *Had* he rendered that service? Well, here was Goodson's own evidence as reported in Stephenson's letter; there could be no better evidence than that—it was even *proof* that he had rendered it. Of course. So that point was settled. . . . No, not quite. He recalled with a wince that this unknown Mr. Stephenson was just a trifle unsure as to whether the performer of it was Richards or some other—and, oh dear, he had put

Richards on his honor! He must himself decide whither that money must go—and Mr. Stephenson was not doubting that if he was the wrong man he would go honorably and find the right one. Oh, it was odious to put a man in such a situation—ah, why couldn't Stephenson have left out that doubt! What did he want to intrude that for?

Further reflection. How did it happen that *Richards's* name remained in Stephenson's mind as indicating the right man, and not some other man's name? That looked good. Yes, that looked very good. In fact, it went on looking better and better, straight along—until by and by it grew into positive *proof*. And then Richards put the matter at once out of his mind, for he had a private instinct that a proof once established is better left so.

He was feeling reasonably comfortable now, but there was still one other detail that kept pushing itself on his notice: of course he had done that service—that was settled; but what *was* that service? He must recall it—he would not go to sleep till he had recalled it; it would make his peace of mind perfect. And so he thought and thought. He thought of a dozen things—possible services, even probable services—but none of them seemed adequate, none of them seemed large enough, none of them seemed worth the money—worth the fortune Goodson had wished he could leave in his will. And besides, he couldn't remember having done them, anyway. Now, then—now, then—what *kind* of a service would it be that would make a man so inordinately grateful? Ah—the saving of his soul! That must be it. Yes, he could remember, now, how he once set himself the task of converting Goodson, and labored at it as much as—he was going to say three months; but upon closer examination it shrunk to a month, then to a week, then to a day, then to nothing. Yes, he remembered now, and with unwelcome vividness, that Goodson had told him to go to thunder and mind his own business—*he* wasn't hankering to follow Hadleyburg to heaven!

So that solution was a failure—he hadn't saved Goodson's soul. Richards was discouraged. Then after a little came another idea: had he saved Goodson's property? No, that wouldn't do—he hadn't any. His life? That is it! Of course. Why, he might have thought of it before. This time he was on the right track, sure. His imagination-mill was hard at work in a minute, now.

Thereafter during a stretch of two exhausting hours he was busy saving Goodson's life. He saved it in all kinds of difficult and perilous ways. In every case he got it saved satisfactorily up to a certain point; then, just as he was beginning to get well persuaded that it had really happened, a troublesome detail would turn up which made the whole thing impossible. As in the matter of drowning, for instance. In that case he had swum out and tugged Goodson ashore in an unconscious state with a great crowd looking on and applauding, but when he had got it all thought out and was just beginning to remember all about it, a whole swarm of disqualifying details arrived on the ground: the town would have known of the circumstance, Mary would have known of it, it would glare like a limelight in his own memory instead of being an inconspicuous service which he had possibly rendered 'without knowing its full value.' And at this point he remembered that he couldn't swim, anyway.

Ah—*there* was a point which he had been overlooking from the start: it had to be a service which he had rendered 'possibly without knowing the full value of it.' Why, really, that ought to be an easy hunt—much easier than those others. And sure enough, by and by he found it. Goodson, years and years ago, came near marrying a very sweet and pretty girl, named Nancy Hewitt, but in some way or other the match had been broken off; the girl died, Goodson remained a bachelor, and by and by became a soured one and a frank despiser of the human species. Soon after the girl's death the village found out, or thought it had found out, that she carried a spoonful of Negro blood in her veins. Richards worked at these details a good while, and in the end he thought he remembered things concerning them which must have gotten mislaid in his memory through long neglect. He seemed to dimly remember that it was *he* that found out about the Negro blood; that it was he that told the village; that the village told Goodson where they got it; that he thus saved Goodson from marrying the tainted

girl; that he had done him this great service 'without knowing the full value of it,' in fact without knowing that he *was* doing it; but that Goodson knew the value of it, and what a narrow escape he had had, and so went to his grave grateful to his benefactor and wishing he had a fortune to leave him. It was all clear and simple now, and the more he went over it the more luminous and certain it grew; and at last, when he nestled to sleep satisfied and happy, he remembered the whole thing just as if it had been yesterday. In fact, he dimly remembered Goodson's *telling* him his gratitude once. Meantime Mary had spent six thousand dollars on a new house for herself and a pair of slippers for her pastor, and then had fallen peacefully to rest.

That same Saturday evening the postman had delivered a letter to each of the other principal citizens—nineteen letters in all. No two of the envelopes were alike, and no two of the superscriptions were in the same hand, but the letters inside were just like each other in every detail but one. They were exact copies of the letter received by Richards—handwriting and all—and were all signed by Stephenson, but in place of Richards's name each receiver's own name appeared.

All night long eighteen principal citizens did what their caste-brother Richards was doing at the same time—they put in their energies trying to remember what notable service it was that they had unconsciously done Barclay Goodson. In no case was it a holiday job; still they succeeded.

And while they were at this work, which was difficult, their wives put in the night spending the money, which was easy. During that one night the nineteen wives spent an average of seven thousand dollars each out of the forty thousand in the sack—a hundred and thirty-three thousand altogether.

Next day there was a surprise for Jack Halliday. He noticed that the faces of the nineteen chief citizens and their wives bore that expression of peaceful and holy happiness again. He could not understand it, neither was he able to invent any remarks about it that could damage it or disturb it. And so it was his turn to be dissatisfied with life. His private guesses at the reasons for the happiness failed in all instances, upon examination. When he met Mrs. Wilcox and noticed the placid ecstasy in her face, he said to himself, 'Her cat has had kittens'—and went and asked the cook: it was not so; the cook had detected the happiness, but did not know the cause. When Halliday found the duplicate ecstasy in the face of 'Shadbelly' Billson (village nickname), he was sure some neighbor of Billson's had broken his leg, but inquiry showed that this had not happened. The subdued ecstasy in Gregory Yates's face could mean but one thing—he was a mother-in-law short: it was another mistake. 'And Pinkerton—Pinkerton—he has collected ten cents that he thought he was going to lose.' And so on, and so on. In some cases the guesses had to remain in doubt, in the others they proved distinct errors. In the end Halliday said to himself, 'Anyway it foots up that there's nineteen Hadleyburg families temporarily in heaven: I don't know how it happened; I only know Providence is off duty to-day.'

An architect and builder from the next state had lately ventured to set up a small business in this unpromising village, and his sign had now been hanging out a week. Not a customer yet; he was a discouraged man, and sorry he had come. But his weather changed suddenly now. First one and then another chief citizen's wife said to him privately:

'Come to my house Monday week—but say nothing about it for the present. We think of building.'

He got eleven invitations that day. That night he wrote his daughter and broke off her match with her student. He said she could marry a mile higher than that.

Pinkerton the banker and two or three other well-to-do men planned country-seats —but waited. That kind don't count their chickens until they are hatched.

The Wilsons devised a grand new thing —a fancy-dress ball. They made no actual promises, but told all their acquaintanceship in confidence that they were thinking the matter over and thought they should give it—'and if we do, you will be invited, of course.' People were surprised, and said, one to another, 'Why, they are crazy, those poor Wilsons, they can't afford it.' Several among the nineteen said privately to their husbands, 'It is a good idea: we will keep

still till their cheap thing is over, then *we* will give one that will make it sick.'

The days drifted along, and the bill of future squanderings rose higher and higher, wilder and wilder, more and more foolish and reckless. It began to look as if every member of the nineteen would not only spend his whole forty thousand dollars before receiving-day, but be actually in debt by the time he got the money. In some cases light-headed people did not stop with planning to spend, they really spent—on credit. They bought land, mortgages, farms, speculative stocks, fine clothes, horses, and various other things, paid down the bonus, and made themselves liable for the rest—at ten days. Presently the sober second thought came, and Halliday noticed that a ghastly anxiety was beginning to show up in a good many faces. Again he was puzzled, and didn't know what to make of it. 'The Wilcox kittens aren't dead, for they weren't born; nobody's broken a leg; there's no shrinkage in mother-in-laws; *nothing* has happened—it is an unsolvable mystery.'

There was another puzzled man, too—the Rev. Mr. Burgess. For days, wherever he went, people seemed to follow him or to be watching out for him; and if he ever found himself in a retired spot, a member of the nineteen would be sure to appear, thrust an envelope privately into his hand, whisper 'To be opened at the town-hall Friday evening,' then vanish away like a guilty thing. He was expecting that there might be one claimant for the sack—doubtful, however, Goodson being dead—but it never occurred to him that all this crowd might be claimants. When the great Friday came at last, he found that he had nineteen envelopes.

III

The town hall had never looked finer. The platform at the end of it was backed by a showy draping of flags; at intervals along the walls were festoons of flags; the gallery fronts were clothed in flags; the supporting columns were swathed in flags; all this was to impress the stranger, for he would be there in considerable force, and in a large degree he would be connected with the press. The house was full. The 412 fixed seats were occupied; also the 68 extra chairs which had been packed into the aisles; the steps of the platform were occupied; some distinguished strangers were given seats on the platform; at the horseshoe of tables which fenced the front and sides of the platform sat a strong force of special correspondents who had come from everywhere. It was the best-dressed house the town had ever produced. There were some tolerably expensive toilets there, and in several cases the ladies who wore them had the look of being unfamiliar with that kind of clothes. At least the town thought they had that look, but the notion could have arisen from the town's knowledge of the fact that these ladies had never inhabited such clothes before.

The gold-sack stood on a little table at the front of the platform where all the house could see it. The bulk of the house gazed at it with a burning interest, a mouth-watering interest, a wistful and pathetic interest; a minority of nineteen couples gazed at it tenderly, lovingly, proprietarily, and the male half of this minority kept saying over to themselves the moving little impromptu speeches of thankfulness for the audience's applause and congratulations which they were presently going to get up and deliver. Every now and then one of these got a piece of paper out of his vest pocket and privately glanced at it to refresh his memory.

Of course there was a buzz of conversation going on—there always is; but at last when the Rev. Mr. Burgess rose and laid his hand on the sack he could hear his microbes gnaw, the place was so still. He related the curious history of the sack, then went on to speak in warm terms of Hadleyburg's old and well-earned reputation for spotless honesty, and of the town's just pride in this reputation. He said that this reputation was a treasure of priceless value; that under Providence its value had now become inestimably enhanced, for the recent episode had spread this fame far and wide, and thus had focused the eyes of the American world upon this village, and made its name for all time, as he hoped and believed, a synonym for commercial incorruptibility. [*Applause.*] 'And who is to be the guardian of this noble treasure—the community as a whole? No! The responsibility is individual, not communal. From this day forth each and every one of you is

in his own person its special guardian, and individually responsible that no harm shall come to it. Do you—does each of you—accept this great trust? [*Tumultuous assent.*] Then all is well. Transmit it to your children and to your children's children. To-day your purity is beyond reproach—see to it that it shall remain so. To-day there is not a person in your community who could be beguiled to touch a penny not his own—see to it that you abide in this grace. ['*We will! we will!*'] This is not the place to make comparisons between ourselves and other communities—some of them ungracious toward us; they have their ways, we have ours; let us be content. [*Applause.*] I am done. Under my hand, my friends, rests a stranger's eloquent recognition of what we are; through him the world will always henceforth know what we are. We do not know who he is, but in your name I utter your gratitude, and ask you to raise your voices in indorsement.'

The house rose in a body and made the walls quake with the thunders of its thankfulness for the space of a long minute. Then it sat down, and Mr. Burgess took an envelope out of his pocket. The house held its breath while he slit the envelope open and took from it a slip of paper. He read its contents—slowly and impressively—the audience listening with tranced attention to this magic document, each of whose words stood for an ingot of gold:

' "*The remark which I made to the distressed stranger was this: 'You are very far from being a bad man: go, and reform.'* " '

Then he continued:

'We shall know in a moment now whether the remark here quoted corresponds with the one concealed in the sack; and if that shall prove to be so—and it undoubtedly will—this sack of gold belongs to a fellow-citizen who will henceforth stand before the nation as the symbol of the special virtue which has made our town famous throughout the land—Mr. Billson!'

The house had gotten itself all ready to burst into the proper tornado of applause; but instead of doing it, it seemed stricken with a paralysis; there was a deep hush for a moment or two, then a wave of whispered murmurs swept the place—of about this tenor: '*Billson*! oh, come, this is *too* thin! Twenty dollars to a stranger—or *anybody*—*Billson*! tell it to the marines!' And now at this point the house caught its breath all of a sudden in a new access of astonishment, for it discovered that whereas in one part of the hall Deacon Billson was standing up with his head meekly bowed, in another part of it Lawyer Wilson was doing the same. There was a wondering silence now for a while.

Everybody was puzzled, and nineteen couples were surprised and indignant.

Billson and Wilson turned and stared at each other. Billson asked, bitingly:

'Why do *you* rise, Mr. Wilson?'

'Because I have a right to. Perhaps you will be good enough to explain to the house why *you* rise?'

'With great pleasure. Because I wrote that paper.'

'It is an impudent falsity! I wrote it myself.'

It was Burgess's turn to be paralyzed. He stood looking vacantly at first one of the men and then the other, and did not seem to know what to do. The house was stupefied. Lawyer Wilson spoke up, now, and said,

'I ask the Chair to read the name signed to that paper.'

That brought the Chair to itself, and it read out the name:

' "John Wharton *Billson*." '

'There!' shouted Billson, 'what have you got to say for yourself, now? And what kind of apology are you going to make to me and to this insulted house for the imposture which you have attempted to play here?'

'No apologies are due, sir; and as for the rest of it, I publicly charge you with pilfering my note from Mr. Burgess and substituting a copy of it signed with your own name. There is no other way by which you could have gotten hold of the test-remark; I alone, of living men, possessed the secret of its wording.'

There was likely to be a scandalous state of things if this went on; everybody noticed with distress that the short-hand scribes were scribbling like mad; many people were crying 'Chair, Chair! Order! order!' Burgess rapped with his gavel, and said:

'Let us not forget the proprieties due. There has evidently been a mistake somewhere, but surely that is all. If Mr. Wilson

gave me an envelope—and I remember now that he did—I still have it.'

He took one out of his pocket, opened it, glanced at it, looked surprised and worried, and stood silent a few moments. Then he waved his hand in a wandering and mechanical way, and made an effort or two to say something, then gave it up, despondently. Several voices cried out:

'Read it! read it! What is it?'

So he began in a dazed and sleep-walker fashion:

' "*The remark which I made to the unhappy stranger was this: 'You are far from being a bad man.* [The house gazed at him, marveling.] *Go, and reform.'* " [*Murmurs*: 'Amazing! what can this mean?'] This one,' said the Chair, 'is signed Thurlow G. Wilson.'

'There!' cried Wilson. 'I reckon that settles it! I knew perfectly well my note was purloined.'

'Purloined!' retorted Billson. 'I'll let you know that neither you nor any man of your kidney must venture to—'

The Chair. 'Order, gentlemen, order! Take your seats, both of you, please.'

They obeyed, shaking their heads and grumbling angrily. The house was profoundly puzzled; it did not know what to do with this curious emergency. Presently Thompson got up. Thompson was the hatter. He would have liked to be a Nineteener; but such was not for him: his stock of hats was not considerable enough for the position. He said:

'Mr. Chairman, if I may be permitted to make a suggestion, can both of these gentlemen be right? I put it to you, sir, can both have happened to say the very same words to the stranger? It seems to me—'

The tanner got up and interrupted him. The tanner was a disgruntled man; he believed himself entitled to be a Nineteener, but he couldn't get recognition. It made him a little unpleasant in his ways and speech. Said he:

'Sho, *that's* not the point! *That* could happen—twice in a hundred years—but not the other thing. *Neither* of them gave the twenty dollars!'

[*A ripple of applause.*]

Billson. '*I* did!'

Wilson. '*I* did!'

Then each accused the other of pilfering.

The Chair. 'Order! Sit down, if you please—both of you. Neither of the notes has been out of my possession at any moment.'

A Voice. 'Good—that settles *that*!'

The Tanner. 'Mr. Chairman, one thing is now plain: one of these men has been eavesdropping under the other one's bed, and filching family secrets. If it is not unparliamentary to suggest it, I will remark that both are equal to it. [*The Chair.* 'Order! order!'] I withdraw the remark, sir, and will confine myself to suggesting that *if* one of them has overheard the other reveal the test-remark to his wife, we shall catch him now.'

A Voice. 'How?'

The Tanner. 'Easily. The two have not quoted the remark in exactly the same words. You would have noticed that, if there hadn't been a considerable stretch of time and an exciting quarrel inserted between the two readings.'

A Voice. 'Name the difference.'

The Tanner. 'The word *very* is in Billson's note, and not in the other.'

Many Voices. 'That's so—he's right!'

The Tanner. 'And so, if the Chair will examine the test-remark in the sack, we shall know which of these two frauds—[*The Chair.* 'Order!']—which of these two adventurers—[*The Chair.* 'Order! order!']—which of these two gentlemen—[*laughter and applause*]—is entitled to wear the belt as being the first dishonest blatherskite ever bred in this town—which he has dishonored, and which will be a sultry place for him from now out!' [*Vigorous applause.*]

Many Voices. 'Open it!—open the sack!'

Mr. Burgess made a slit in the sack, slid his hand in and brought out an envelope. In it were a couple of folded notes. He said:

'One of these is marked, "Not to be examined until all written communications which have been addressed to the Chair—if any—shall have been read." The other is marked "*The Test.*" Allow me. It is worded—to wit:

' "I do not require that the first half of the remark which was made to me by my benefactor shall be quoted with exactness, for it was not striking, and could be forgotten; but its closing fifteen words are quite striking, and I think easily rememberable; unless *these* shall be accurately reproduced,

let the applicant be regarded as an impostor. My benefactor began by saying he seldom gave advice to any one, but that it always bore the hall-mark of high value when he did give it. Then he said this—and it has never faded from my memory: '*You are far from being a bad man*—' " '

Fifty Voices. 'That settles it—the money's Wilson's! Wilson! Wilson! Speech! Speech!'

People jumped up and crowded around Wilson, wringing his hand and congratulating fervently—meantime the Chair was hammering with the gavel and shouting:

'Order, gentlemen! Order! Order! Let me finish reading, please.' When quiet was restored, the reading was resumed—as follows:

' " '*Go, and reform—or, mark my words—some day, for your sins, you will die and go to hell or Hadleyburg*—TRY AND MAKE IT THE FORMER.' " '

A ghastly silence followed. First an angry cloud began to settle darkly upon the faces of the citizenship; after a pause the cloud began to rise, and a tickled expression tried to take its place; tried so hard that it was only kept under with great and painful difficulty; the reporters, the Brixtonites, and other strangers bent their heads down and shielded their faces with their hands, and managed to hold in by main strength and heroic courtesy. At this most inopportune time burst upon the stillness the roar of a solitary voice—Jack Halliday's:

'*That's* got the hall-mark on it!'

Then the house let go, strangers and all. Even Mr. Burgess's gravity broke down presently, then the audience considered itself officially absolved from all restraint, and it made the most of its privilege. It was a good long laugh, and a tempestuously whole-hearted one, but it ceased at last—long enough for Mr. Burgess to try to resume, and for the people to get their eyes partially wiped; then it broke out again; and afterward yet again; then at last Burgess was able to get out these serious words:

'It is useless to try to disguise the fact—we find ourselves in the presence of a matter of grave import. It involves the honor of your town, it strikes at the town's good name. The difference of a single word between the test-remarks offered by Mr. Wilson and Mr. Billson was itself a serious thing, since it indicated that one or the other of these gentlemen had committed a theft—'

The two men were sitting limp, nerveless, crushed; but at these words both were electrified into movement, and started to get up—

'Sit down!' said the Chair, sharply, and they obeyed. 'That, as I have said, was a serious thing. And it was—but for only one of them. But the matter has become graver; for the honor of *both* is now in formidable peril. Shall I go even further, and say in inextricable peril? *Both* left out the crucial fifteen words.' He paused. During several moments he allowed the pervading stillness to gather and deepen its impressive effects, then added: 'There would seem to be but one way whereby this could happen. I ask these gentlemen—Was there *collusion*?—*agreement*?'

A low murmur sifted through the house; its import was, 'He's got them both.'

Billson was not used to emergencies; he sat in a helpless collapse. But Wilson was a lawyer. He struggled to his feet, pale and worried, and said:

'I ask the indulgence of the house while I explain this most painful matter. I am sorry to say what I am about to say, since it must inflict irreparable injury upon Mr. Billson, whom I have always esteemed and respected until now, and in whose invulnerability to temptation I entirely believed—as did you all. But for the preservation of my own honor I must speak—and with frankness. I confess with shame—and I now beseech your pardon for it—that I said to the ruined stranger all of the words contained in the test-remark, including the disparaging fifteen. [*Sensation.*] When the late publication was made I recalled them, and I resolved to claim the sack of coin, for by every right I was entitled to it. Now I will ask you to consider this point, and weigh it well: that stranger's gratitude to me that night knew no bounds; he said himself that he could find no words for it that were adequate, and that if he should ever be able he would repay me a thousand-fold. Now, then, I ask you this: Could I expect—could I believe—could I even remotely imagine—that, feeling as he did, he would do so ungrateful a thing as to add those quite unnecessary fifteen words to his test?—set a

trap for me?—expose me as a slanderer of my own town before my own people assembled in a public hall? It was preposterous; it was impossible. His test would contain only the kindly opening clause of my remark. Of that I had no shadow of doubt. You would have thought as I did. You would not have expected a base betrayal from one whom you had befriended and against whom you had committed no offense. And so, with perfect confidence, perfect trust, I wrote on a piece of paper the opening words—ending with "Go, and reform,"—and signed it. When I was about to put it in an envelope I was called into my back office, and without thinking I left the paper lying open on my desk.' He stopped, turned his head slowly toward Billson, waited a moment, then added: 'I ask you to note this: when I returned, a little later, Mr. Billson was retiring by my street door.' [*Sensation.*]

In a moment Billson was on his feet and shouting:

'It's a lie! It's an infamous lie!'

The Chair. 'Be seated, sir! Mr. Wilson has the floor.'

Billson's friends pulled him into his seat and quieted him, and Wilson went on:

'Those are the simple facts. My note was now lying in a different place on the table from where I had left it. I noticed that, but attached no importance to it, thinking a draught had blown it there. That Mr. Billson would read a private paper was a thing which could not occur to me; he was an honorable man, and he would be above that. If you will allow me to say it, I think his extra word "*very*" stands explained; it is attributable to a defect of memory. I was the only man in the world who could furnish here any detail of the test-remark—by *honorable* means. I have finished.'

There is nothing in the world like a persuasive speech to fuddle the mental apparatus and upset the convictions and debauch the emotions of an audience not practised in the tricks and delusions of oratory. Wilson sat down victorious. The house submerged him in tides of approving applause; friends swarmed to him and shook him by the hand and congratulated him, and Billson was shouted down and not allowed to say a word. The Chair hammered and hammered with its gavel, and kept shouting:

'But let us proceed, gentlemen, let us proceed!'

At last there was a measurable degree of quiet, and the hatter said:

'But what is there to proceed with, sir, but to deliver the money?'

Voices. 'That's it! That's it! Come forward, Wilson!'

The Hatter. 'I move three cheers for Mr. Wilson, Symbol of the special virtue which—'

The cheers burst forth before he could finish; and in the midst of them—and in the midst of the clamor of the gavel also—some enthusiasts mounted Wilson on a big friend's shoulder and were going to fetch him in triumph to the platform. The Chair's voice now rose above the noise—

'Order! To your places! You forget that there is still a document to be read.' When quiet had been restored he took up the document, and was going to read it, but laid it down again, saying, 'I forgot; this is not to be read until all written communications received by me have first been read.' He took an envelope out of his pocket, removed its inclosure, glanced at it—seemed astonished—held it out and gazed at it—stared at it.

Twenty or thirty voices cried out:

'What is it? Read it! read it!'

And he did—slowly, and wondering:

' "The remark which I made to the stranger—[*Voices.* 'Hello! how's this?']—was this: 'You are far from being a bad man. [*Voices.* 'Great Scott!'] Go, and reform.' " [*Voice.* 'Oh, saw my leg off!'] Signed by Mr. Pinkerton, the banker.'

The pandemonium of delight which turned itself loose now was of a sort to make the judicious weep. Those whose withers were unwrung laughed till the tears ran down; the reporters, in throes of laughter, set down disordered pot-hooks which would never in the world be decipherable; and a sleeping dog jumped up, scared out of its wits, and barked itself crazy at the turmoil. All manner of cries were scattered through the din: 'We're getting rich—*two* Symbols of Incorruptibility!—without counting Billson!' '*Three*!—count Shadbelly in—we can't have too many!' 'All right—Billson's elected!' 'Alas, poor Wilson—victim of *two* thieves!'

A Powerful Voice. 'Silence! The Chair's fished up something more out of its pocket.'

Voices. 'Hurrah! Is it something fresh? Read it! read! read!'

The Chair [reading]. ' "The remark which I made," etc.: " 'You are far from being a bad man. Go,' " etc. Signed, "Gregory Yates." '

Tornado of Voices. 'Four Symbols!' ' 'Rah for Yates!' 'Fish again!'

The house was in a roaring humor now, and ready to get all the fun out of the occasion that might be in it. Several Nineteeners, looking pale and distressed, got up and began to work their way toward the aisles, but a score of shouts went up:

'The doors, the doors—close the doors; no Incorruptible shall leave this place! Sit down, everybody!'

The mandate was obeyed.

'Fish again! Read! read!'

The Chair fished again, and once more the familiar words began to fall from its lips —' "You are far from being a bad man." '

'Name! name! What's his name?'

' "L. Ingoldsby Sargent." '

'Five elected! Pile up the Symbols! Go on, go on!'

' "You are far from being a bad—" '

'Name! name!'

' "Nicholas Whitworth." '

'Hooray! hooray! it's a symbolical day!'

Somebody wailed in, and began to sing this rhyme (leaving out 'it's') to the lovely 'Mikado' tune of 'When a man's afraid, a beautiful maid—'; the audience joined in, with joy; then, just in time, somebody contributed another line—

'And don't you this forget—'

The house roared it out. A third line was at once furnished—

'Corruptibles far from Hadleyburg are—'

The house roared that one too. As the last note died, Jack Halliday's voice rose high and clear, freighted with a final line—

'But the Symbols are here, you bet!'

That was sung, with booming enthusiasm. Then the happy house started in at the beginning and sang the four lines through twice, with immense swing and dash, and finished up with a crashing three-times-three and a tiger for 'Hadleyburg the Incorruptible and all Symbols of it which we shall find worthy to receive the hall-mark to-night.'

Then the shoutings at the Chair began again, all over the place:

'Go on! go on! Read! read some more! Read all you've got!'

'That's it—go on! We are winning eternal celebrity!'

A dozen men got up now and began to protest. They said that this farce was the work of some abandoned joker, and was an insult to the whole community. Without a doubt these signatures were all forgeries—

'Sit down! sit down! Shut up! You are confessing. We'll find *your* names in the lot.'

'Mr. Chairman, how many of those envelopes have you got?'

The Chair counted.

'Together with those that have been already examined, there are nineteen.'

A storm of derisive applause broke out.

'Perhaps they all contain the secret. I move that you open them all and read every signature that is attached to a note of that sort—and read also the first eight words of the note.'

'Second the motion!'

It was put and carried—uproariously. Then poor old Richards got up, and his wife rose and stood at his side. Her head was bent down, so that none might see that she was crying. Her husband gave her his arm, and so supporting her, he began to speak in a quavering voice:

'My friends, you have known us two—Mary and me—all our lives, and I think you have liked us and respected us—'

The Chair interrupted him:

'Allow me. It is quite true—that which you are saying, Mr. Richards: this town *does* know you two; it *does* like you; it *does* respect you; more—it honors you and *loves* you—'

Halliday's voice rang out:

'That's the hall-marked truth, too! If the Chair is right, let the house speak up and say it. Rise! Now, then—hip! hip! hip!—all together!'

The house rose in mass, faced toward the old couple eagerly, filled the air with a snow-storm of waving handkerchiefs, and delivered the cheers with all its affectionate heart.

The Chair then continued:

'What I was going to say is this: We know your good heart, Mr. Richards, but this is not a time for the exercise of charity toward offenders. [*Shouts of 'Right! right!'*] I see your generous purpose in your face, but I cannot allow you to plead for these men—'

'But I was going to—'

'Please take your seat, Mr. Richards. We must examine the rest of these notes—simple fairness to the men who have already been exposed requires this. As soon as that has been done—I give you my word for this —you shall be heard.'

Many Voices. 'Right!—the Chair is right —no interruption can be permitted at this stage! Go on!—the names! the names!—according to the terms of the motion!'

The old couple sat reluctantly down, and the husband whispered to the wife, 'It is pitifully hard to have to wait; the shame will be greater than ever when they find we were only going to plead for *ourselves*.'

Straightway the jollity broke loose again with the reading of the names.

' "You are far from being a bad man—" Signature, "Robert J. Titmarsh."

' "You are far from being a bad man—" Signature, "Eliphalet Weeks."

' "You are far from being a bad man—" Signature, "Oscar B. Wilder." '

At this point the house lit upon the idea of taking the eight words out of the Chairman's hands. He was not unthankful for that. Thenceforward he held up each note in its turn, and waited. The house droned out the eight words in a massed and measured and musical deep volume of sound (with a daringly close resemblance to a well-known church chant)—' "You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-a-d man." ' Then the Chair said, 'Signature, "Archibald Wilcox." ' And so on, and so on, name after name, and everybody had an increasingly and gloriously good time except the wretched Nineteen. Now and then, when a particularly shining name was called, the house made the Chair wait while it chanted the whole of the test-remark from the beginning to the closing words, 'And go to hell or Hadleyburg—try and make it the for-or-m-e-r!' and in these special cases they added a grand and agonized and imposing 'A-a-a-a-*men*!'

The list dwindled, dwindled, dwindled, poor old Richards keeping tally of the count, wincing when a name resembling his own was pronounced, and waiting in miserable suspense for the time to come when it would be his humiliating privilege to rise with Mary and finish his plea, which he was intending to word thus: '. . . for until now we have never done any wrong thing, but have gone our humble way unreproached. We are very poor, we are old, and have no chick nor child to help us; we were sorely tempted, and we fell. It was my purpose when I got up before to make confession and beg that my name might not be read out in this public place, for it seemed to us that we could not bear it; but I was prevented. It was just; it was our place to suffer with the rest. It has been hard for us. It is the first time we have ever heard our name fall from any one's lips—sullied. Be merciful—for the sake of the better days; make our shame as light to bear as in your charity you can.' At this point in his revery Mary nudged him, perceiving that his mind was absent. The house was chanting, 'You are f-a-r,' etc.

'Be ready,' Mary whispered. 'Your name comes now; he has read eighteen.'

The chant ended.

'Next! next! next!' came volleying from all over the house.

Burgess put his hand into his pocket. The old couple, trembling, began to rise. Burgess fumbled a moment, then said,

'I find I have read them all.'

Faint with joy and surprise, the couple sank into their seats, and Mary whispered:

'Oh, bless God, we are saved!—he has lost ours—I wouldn't give this for a hundred of those sacks!'

The house burst out with its 'Mikado' travesty, and sang it three times with ever-increasing enthusiasm, rising to its feet when it reached for the third time the closing line—

'But the Symbols are here, you bet!'

and finishing up with cheers and a tiger for 'Hadleyburg purity and our eighteen immortal representatives of it.'

Then Wingate, the saddler, got up and proposed cheers 'for the cleanest man in town, the one solitary important citizen in

it who didn't try to steal that money—Edward Richards.'

They were given with great and moving heartiness; then somebody proposed that Richards be elected sole guardian and Symbol of the now Sacred Hadleyburg Tradition, with power and right to stand up and look the whole sarcastic world in the face.

Passed, by acclamation; then they sang the 'Mikado' again, and ended it with:

'And there's *one* Symbol left, you bet!'

There was a pause; then—

A Voice. 'Now, then, who's to get the sack?'

The Tanner (with bitter sarcasm). 'That's easy. The money has to be divided among the eighteen Incorruptibles. They gave the suffering stranger twenty dollars apiece—and that remark—each in his turn—it took twenty-two minutes for the procession to move past. Staked the stranger—total contribution, $360. All they want is just the loan back—and interest—forty thousand dollars altogether.'

Many Voices [derisively]. 'That's it! Divvy! divvy! Be kind to the poor—don't keep them waiting!'

The Chair. 'Order! I now offer the stranger's remaining document. It says "If no claimant shall appear [*grand chorus of groans*] I desire that you open the sack and count out the money to the principal citizens of your town, they to take it in trust [*cries of 'Oh! Oh! Oh!'*], and use it in such ways as to them shall seem best for the propagation and preservation of your community's noble reputation for incorruptible honesty [*more cries*]—a reputation to which their names and their efforts will add a new and far-reaching luster." [*Enthusiastic outburst of sarcastic applause.*] That seems to be all. No—here is a postscript:

' "P. S.—CITIZENS OF HADLEYBURG: There *is* no test-remark—nobody made one. [*Great sensation.*] There wasn't any pauper stranger, nor any twenty-dollar contribution, nor any accompanying benediction and compliment—these are all inventions. [*General buzz and hum of astonishment and delight.*] Allow me to tell my story—it will take but a word or two. I passed through your town at a certain time, and received a deep offense which I had not earned. Any other man would have been content to kill one or two of you and call it square, but to me that would have been a trivial revenge, and inadequate; for the dead do not *suffer*. Besides, I could not kill you all—and, anyway, made as I am, even that would not have satisfied me. I wanted to damage every man in the place, and every woman—and not in their bodies or in their estate, but in their vanity—the place where feeble and foolish people are most vulnerable. So I disguised myself and came back and studied you. You were easy game. You had an old and lofty reputation for honesty, and naturally you were proud of it—it was your treasure of treasures, the very apple of your eye. As soon as I found out that you carefully and vigilantly kept yourselves and your children *out of temptation*, I knew how to proceed. Why, you simple creatures, the weakest of all weak things is a virtue which has not been tested in the fire. I laid a plan, and gathered a list of names. My project was to corrupt Hadleyburg the Incorruptible. My idea was to make liars and thieves of nearly half a hundred smirchless men and women who had never in their lives uttered a lie or stolen a penny. I was afraid of Goodson. He was neither born nor reared in Hadleyburg. I was afraid that if I started to operate my scheme by getting my letter laid before you, you would say to yourselves, 'Goodson is the only man among us who would give away twenty dollars to a poor devil'—and then you might not bite at my bait. But Heaven took Goodson; then I knew I was safe, and I set my trap and baited it. It may be that I shall not catch all the men to whom I mailed the pretended test secret, but I shall catch the most of them, if I know Hadleyburg nature. [*Voices.* 'Right—he got every last one of them.'] I believe they will even steal ostensible *gamble*-money, rather than miss, poor, tempted, and mistrained fellows. I am hoping to eternally and everlastingly squelch your vanity and give Hadleyburg a new renown—one that will *stick*—and spread far. If I have succeeded, open the sack and summon the Committee on Propagation and Preservation of the Hadleyburg Reputation." '

A Cyclone of Voices. 'Open it! Open it! The Eighteen to the front! Committee on Propagation of the Tradition! Forward—the Incorruptibles!'

The Chair ripped the sack wide, and gathered up a handful of bright, broad, yellow coins, shook them together, then examined them—

'Friends, they are only gilded disks of lead!'

There was a crashing outbreak of delight over this news, and when the noise had subsided, the tanner called out:

'By right of apparent seniority in this business, Mr. Wilson is Chairman of the Committee on Propagation of the Tradition. I suggest that he step forward on behalf of his pals, and receive in trust the money.'

A Hundred Voices. 'Wilson! Wilson! Wilson! Speech! Speech!'

Wilson [in a voice trembling with anger]. 'You will allow me to say, and without apologies for my language, *damn* the money!'

A Voice. 'Oh, and him a Baptist!'

A Voice. 'Seventeen Symbols left! Step up, gentlemen, and assume your trust!'

There was a pause—no response.

The Saddler. 'Mr. Chairman, we've got *one* clean man left, anyway, out of the late aristocracy; and he needs money, and deserves it. I move that you appoint Jack Halliday to get up there and auction off that sack of gilt twenty-dollar pieces, and give the result to the right man—the man whom Hadleyburg delights to honor—Edward Richards.'

This was received with great enthusiasm, the dog taking a hand again; the saddler started the bids at a dollar, the Brixton folk and Barnum's representative fought hard for it, the people cheered every jump that the bids made, the excitement climbed moment by moment higher and higher, the bidders got on their mettle and grew steadily more and more daring, more and more determined, the jumps went from a dollar up to five, then to ten, then to twenty, then fifty, then to a hundred, then—

At the beginning of the auction Richards whispered in distress to his wife: 'O Mary, can we allow it? It—it—you see, it is an honor-reward, a testimonial to purity of character, and—and—can we allow it? Hadn't I better get up and—O Mary, what ought we to do?—what do you think we—[*Halliday's voice. 'Fifteen I'm bid!—fifteen for the sack!—twenty!—ah, thanks!—thirty—thanks again! Thirty, thirty, thirty!—do I hear forty?—forty it is! Keep the ball rolling, gentlemen, keep it rolling!—fifty! thanks, noble Roman! going at fifty, fifty, fifty!—seventy!—ninety!—splendid!—a hundred!—pile it up, pile it up!—hundred and twenty—forty!—just in time!—hundred and fifty!—*TWO *hundred!—superb! Do I hear two h—thanks!—two hundred and fifty!—*']

'It is another temptation, Edward—I'm all in a tremble—but, oh, we've escaped *one* temptation, and that ought to warn us to—[*'Six did I hear?—thanks!—six-fifty, six-f—*SEVEN *hundred!'*] And yet, Edward, when you think—nobody susp— [*'Eight hundred dollars!—hurrah!—make it nine!—Mr. Parsons, did I hear you say—thanks—nine!—this noble sack of virgin lead going at only nine hundred dollars, gilding and all—come! do I hear—a thousand!—gratefully yours!—did some one say eleven?—a sack which is going to be the most celebrated in the whole Uni—*'] O Edward' (beginning to sob), 'we are *so* poor! —but—but—do as you think best—do as you think best.'

Edward fell—that is, he sat still; sat with a conscience which was not satisfied, but which was overpowered by circumstances.

Meantime a stranger, who looked like an amateur detective gotten up as an impossible English earl, had been watching the evening's proceedings with manifest interest, and with a contented expression in his face; and he had been privately commenting to himself. He was now soliloquizing somewhat like this: 'None of the Eighteen are bidding; that is not satisfactory; I must change that—the dramatic unities require it; they must buy the sack they tried to steal; they must pay a heavy price, too—some of them are rich. And another thing, when I make a mistake in Hadleyburg nature the man that puts that error upon me is entitled to a high honorarium, and some one must pay it. This poor old Richards has brought my judgment to shame; he is an honest man:—I don't understand it, but I acknowledge it. Yes, he saw my deuces *and* with a straight flush, and by rights the pot is his. And it shall be a jack-pot, too, if I can manage it. He disappointed me, but let that pass.'

He was watching the bidding. At a thousand, the market broke; the prices tumbled swiftly. He waited—and still watched. One competitor dropped out; then another, and

another. He put in a bid or two, now. When the bids had sunk to ten dollars, he added a five; some one raised him a three; he waited a moment, then flung in a fifty-dollar jump, and the sack was his—at $1,282. The house broke out in cheers—then stopped; for he was on his feet, and had lifted his hand. He began to speak.

'I desire to say a word, and ask a favor. I am a speculator in rarities, and I have dealings with persons interested in numismatics all over the world. I can make a profit on this purchase, just as it stands; but there is a way, if I can get your approval, whereby I can make every one of these leaden twenty-dollar pieces worth its face in gold, and perhaps more. Grant me that approval, and I will give part of my gains to your Mr. Richards, whose invulnerable probity you have so justly and so cordially recognized to-night; his share shall be ten thousand dollars, and I will hand him the money to-morrow. [*Great applause from the house.* But the 'invulnerable probity' made the Richardses blush prettily; however, it went for modesty, and did no harm.] If you will pass my proposition by a good majority—I would like a two-thirds vote—I will regard that as the town's consent, and that is all I ask. Rarities are always helped by any device which will rouse curiosity and compel remark. Now if I may have your permission to stamp upon the faces of each of these ostensible coins the names of the eighteen gentlemen who—'

Nine-tenths of the audience were on their feet in a moment—dog and all—and the proposition was carried with a whirlwind of approving applause and laughter.

They sat down, and all the Symbols except 'Dr.' Clay Harkness got up, violently protesting against the proposed outrage, and threatening to—

'I beg you not to threaten me,' said the stranger, calmly. 'I know my legal rights, and am not accustomed to being frightened at bluster.' [*Applause.*] He sat down. 'Dr.' Harkness saw an opportunity here. He was one of the two very rich men of the place, and Pinkerton was the other. Harkness was proprietor of a mint; that is to say, a popular patent medicine. He was running for the legislature on one ticket, and Pinkerton on the other. It was a close race and a hot one, and getting hotter every day. Both had strong appetites for money; each had bought a great tract of land, with a purpose; there was going to be a new railway, and each wanted to be in the legislature and help locate the route to his own advantage; a single vote might make the decision, and with it two or three fortunes. The stake was large, and Harkness was a daring speculator. He was sitting close to the stranger. He leaned over while one or another of the other Symbols was entertaining the house with protests and appeals, and asked, in a whisper.

'What is your price for the sack?'

'Forty thousand dollars.'

'I'll give you twenty.'

'No.'

'Twenty-five.'

'No.'

'Say thirty.'

'The price is forty thousand dollars; not a penny less.'

'All right, I'll give it. I will come to the hotel at ten in the morning. I don't want it known: will see you privately.'

'Very good.' Then the stranger got up and said to the house:

'I find it late. The speeches of these gentlemen are not without merit, not without interest, not without grace; yet if I may be excused I will take my leave. I thank you for the great favor which you have shown me in granting my petition. I ask the Chair to keep the sack for me until to-morrow, and to hand these three five-hundred-dollar notes to Mr. Richards.' They were passed up to the Chair. 'At nine I will call for the sack, and at eleven will deliver the rest of the ten thousand to Mr. Richards in person, at his home. Good night.'

Then he slipped out, and left the audience making a vast noise, which was composed of a mixture of cheers, the 'Mikado' song, dog-disapproval, and the chant, 'You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-d man—a-a-a-a-men!'

IV

AT home the Richardses had to endure congratulations and compliments until midnight. Then they were left to themselves. They looked a little sad, and they sat silent and thinking. Finally Mary sighed and said,

'Do you think we are to blame, Edward —*much* to blame?' and her eyes wandered to the accusing triplet of big bank-notes

lying on the table, where the congratulators had been gloating over them and reverently fingering them. Edward did not answer at once; then he brought out a sigh and said, hesitatingly:

'We—we couldn't help it, Mary. It—well, it was ordered. *All* things are.'

Mary glanced up and looked at him steadily, but he didn't return the look. Presently she said:

'I thought congratulations and praises always tasted good. But—it seems to me, now—Edward?'

'Well?'

'Are you going to stay in the bank?'

'N-no.'

'Resign?'

'In the morning—by note.'

'It does seem best.'

Richards bowed his head in his hands and muttered:

'Before, I was not afraid to let oceans of people's money pour through my hands, but—Mary, I am so tired, so tired—'

'We will go to bed.'

At nine in the morning the stranger called for the sack and took it to the hotel in a cab. At ten Harkness had a talk with him privately. The stranger asked for and got five checks on a metropolitan bank—drawn to 'Bearer'—four for $1,500 each, and one for $34,000. He put one of the former in his pocketbook, and the remainder, representing $38,500, he put in an envelope, and with these he added a note, which he wrote after Harkness was gone. At eleven he called at the Richards house and knocked. Mrs. Richards peeped through the shutters, then went and received the envelope, and the stranger disappeared without a word. She came back flushed and a little unsteady on her legs, and gasped out:

'I am sure I recognized him! Last night it seemed to me that maybe I had seen him somewhere before.'

'He is the man that brought the sack here?'

'I am almost sure of it.'

'Then he is the ostensible Stephenson, too, and sold every important citizen in this town with his bogus secret. Now if he has sent checks instead of money, we are sold, too, after we thought we had escaped. I was beginning to feel fairly comfortable once more, after my night's rest, but the look of that envelope makes me sick. It isn't fat enough; $8,500 in even the largest bank-notes makes more bulk than that.'

'Edward, why do you object to checks?'

'Checks signed by Stephenson! I am resigned to take the $8,500 if it could come in bank-notes—for it does seem that it was so ordered, Mary—but I have never had much courage, and I have not the pluck to try to market a check signed with that disastrous name. It would be a trap. That man tried to catch me; we escaped somehow or other; and now he is trying a new way. If it is checks—'

'Oh, Edward, it is *too* bad!' and she held up the checks and began to cry.

'Put them in the fire! quick! we mustn't be tempted. It is a trick to make the world laugh at *us*, along with the rest, and—Give them to *me*, since you can't do it!' He snatched them and tried to hold his grip till he could get to the stove; but he was human, he was a cashier, and he stopped a moment to make sure of the signature. Then he came near to fainting.

'Fan me, Mary, fan me! They are the same as gold!'

'Oh, how lovely, Edward! Why?'

'Signed by Harkness. What can the mystery of that be, Mary?'

'Edward, do you think—'

'Look here—look at this! Fifteen—fifteen—fifteen—thirty-four. Thirty-eight thousand five hundred! Mary, the sack isn't worth twelve dollars, and Harkness—apparently—has paid about par for it.'

'And does it all come to us, do you think—instead of the ten thousand?'

'Why, it looks like it. And the checks are made to "Bearer," too.'

'Is that good, Edward? What is it for?'

'A hint to collect them at some distant bank, I reckon. Perhaps Harkness doesn't want the matter known. What is that—a note?'

'Yes. It was with the checks.'

It was in the 'Stephenson' handwriting, but there was no signature. It said:

'I am a disappointed man. Your honesty is beyond the reach of temptation. I had a different idea about it, but I wronged you in that, and I beg pardon, and do it sincerely. I honor you—and that is sincere too. This town is not worthy to kiss the hem of your garment. Dear

sir, I made a square bet with myself that there were nineteen debauchable men in your self-righteous community. I have lost. Take the whole pot, you are entitled to it.'

Richards drew a deep sigh, and said:

'It seems written with fire—it burns so. Mary—I am miserable again.'

'I, too. Ah, dear, I wish—'

'To think, Mary—he *believes* in me.'

'Oh, don't, Edward—I can't bear it.'

'If those beautiful words were deserved, Mary—and God knows I believed I deserved them once—I think I could give the forty thousand dollars for them. And I would put that paper away, as representing more than gold and jewels, and keep it always. But now—We could not live in the shadow of its accusing presence, Mary.'

He put it in the fire.

A messenger arrived and delivered an envelope.

Richards took from it a note and read it; it was from Burgess.

'You saved me, in a difficult time. I saved you last night. It was at cost of a lie, but I made the sacrifice freely, and out of a grateful heart. None in this village knows so well as I know how brave and good and noble you are. At bottom you cannot respect me, knowing as you do of that matter of which I am accused, and by the general voice condemned; but I beg that you will at least believe that I am a grateful man; it will help me to bear my burden.

[*Signed*]

BURGESS'

'Saved, once more. And on such terms!' He put the note in the fire. 'I—I wish I were dead, Mary, I wish I were out of it all.'

'Oh, these are bitter, bitter days, Edward. The stabs, through their very generosity, are so deep—and they come so fast!'

Three days before the election each of two thousand voters suddenly found himself in possession of a prized memento—one of the renowned bogus double-eagles. Around one of its faces was stamped these words: 'THE REMARK I MADE TO THE POOR STRANGER WAS—' Around the other face was stamped these: 'GO, AND REFORM. [SIGNED] PINKERTON.' Thus the entire remaining refuse of the renowned joke was emptied upon a single head, and with calamitous effect. It revived the recent vast laugh and concentrated it upon Pinkerton; and Harkness's election was a walkover.

Within twenty-four hours after the Richardses had received their checks their consciences were quieting down, discouraged; the old couple were learning to reconcile themselves to the sin which they had committed. But they were to learn, now, that a sin takes on new and real terrors when there seems a chance that it is going to be found out. This gives it a fresh and most substantial and important aspect. At church the morning sermon was of the usual pattern; it was the same old things said in the same old way; they had heard them a thousand times and found them innocuous, next to meaningless, and easy to sleep under; but now it was different: the sermon seemed to bristle with accusations; it seemed aimed straight and specially at people who were concealing deadly sins. After church they got away from the mob of congratulators as soon as they could, and hurried homeward, chilled to the bone at they did not know what—vague, shadowy, indefinite fears. And by chance they caught a glimpse of Mr. Burgess as he turned a corner. He paid no attention to their nod of recognition! He hadn't seen it; but they did not know that. What could his conduct mean? It might mean—it might mean—oh, a dozen dreadful things. Was it possible that he knew that Richards could have cleared him of guilt in that bygone time, and had been silently waiting for a chance to even up accounts? At home, in their distress they got to imagining that their servant might have been in the next room listening when Richards revealed the secret to his wife that he knew of Burgess's innocence; next, Richards began to imagine that he had heard the swish of a gown in there at that time; next, he was sure he *had* heard it. They would call Sarah in, on a pretext, and watch her face: if she had been betraying them to Mr. Burgess, it would show in her manner. They asked her some questions—questions which were so random and incoherent and seemingly purposeless that the girl felt sure that the old people's minds had been affected by their sudden good fortune; the sharp and watchful gaze which they bent upon her fright-

ened her, and that completed the business. She blushed, she became nervous and confused, and to the old people these were plain signs of guilt—guilt of some fearful sort or other—without doubt she was a spy and a traitor. When they were alone again they began to piece many unrelated things together and get horrible results out of the combination. When things had got about to the worst, Richards was delivered of a sudden gasp, and his wife asked:

'Oh, what is it?—what is it?'

'The note—Burgess's note! Its language was sarcastic, I see it now.' He quoted: '"At bottom you cannot respect me, *knowing*, as you do, of *that matter* of which I am accused"—oh, it is perfectly plain, now, God help me! He knows that I know! You see the ingenuity of the phrasing. It was a trap —and like a fool, I walked into it. And Mary—?'

'Oh, it is dreadful—I know what you are going to say—he didn't return your transcript of the pretended test-remark.'

'No—kept it to destroy us with. Mary, he has exposed us to some already. I know it—I know it well. I saw it in a dozen faces after church. Ah, he wouldn't answer our nod of recognition—*he* knew what he had been doing!'

In the night the doctor was called. The news went around in the morning that the old couple were rather seriously ill—prostrated by the exhausting excitement growing out of their great windfall, the congratulations, and the late hours, the doctor said. The town was sincerely distressed; for these old people were about all it had left to be proud of, now.

Two days later the news was worse. The old couple were delirious, and were doing strange things. By witness of the nurses, Richards had exhibited checks—for $8,500? No—for an amazing sum—$38,500! What could be the explanation of this gigantic piece of luck?

The following day the nurses had more news—and wonderful. They had concluded to hide the checks, lest harm come to them; but when they searched they were gone from under the patient's pillow—vanished away. The patient said:

'Let the pillow alone; what do you want?'

'We thought it best that the checks—'

'You will never see them again—they are destroyed. They came from Satan. I saw the hell-brand on them, and I knew they were sent to betray me to sin.' Then he fell to gabbling strange and dreadful things which were not clearly understandable, and which the doctor admonished them to keep to themselves.

Richards was right; the checks were never seen again.

A nurse must have talked in her sleep, for within two days the forbidden gabblings were the property of the town; and they were of a surprising sort. They seemed to indicate that Richards had been a claimant for the sack himself, and that Burgess had concealed that fact and then maliciously betrayed it.

Burgess was taxed with this and stoutly denied it. And he said it was not fair to attach weight to the chatter of a sick old man who was out of his mind. Still, suspicion was in the air, and there was much talk.

After a day or two it was reported that Mrs. Richards's delirious deliveries were getting to be duplicates of her husband's. Suspicion flamed up into conviction, now, and the town's pride in the purity of its one undiscredited important citizen began to dim down and flicker toward extinction.

Six days passed, then came more news. The old couple were dying. Richards's mind cleared in his latest hour, and he sent for Burgess. Burgess said:

'Let the room be cleared. I think he wishes to say something in privacy.'

'No!' said Richards: 'I want witnesses. I want you all to hear my confession, so that I may die a man, and not a dog. I was clean —artificially—like the rest; and like the rest I fell when temptation came. I signed a lie, and claimed the miserable sack. Mr. Burgess remembered that I had done him a service, and in gratitude (and ignorance) he suppressed my claim and saved me. You know the thing that was charged against Burgess years ago. My testimony, and mine alone, could have cleared him, and I was a coward, and left him to suffer disgrace—'

'No—no—Mr. Richards, you—'

'My servant betrayed my secret to him—'

'No one has betrayed anything to me—'

—'and then he did a natural and justifiable thing, he repented of the saving kindness which he had done me, and he *exposed* me—as I deserved—'

'Never!—I make oath—'

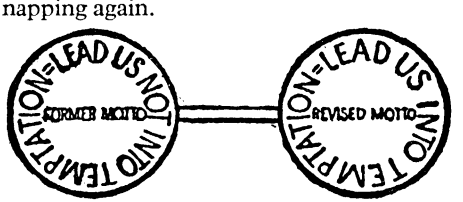
'Out of my heart I forgive him.'

Burgess's impassioned protestations fell upon deaf ears; the dying man passed away without knowing that once more he had done poor Burgess a wrong. The old wife died that night.

The last of the sacred Nineteen had fallen a prey to the fiendish sack; the town was stripped of the last rag of its ancient glory. Its mourning was not showy, but it was deep.

By act of the Legislature—upon prayer and petition—Hadleyburg was allowed to change its name to (never mind what—I will not give it away), and leave one word out of the motto that for many generations had graced the town's official seal.

It is an honest town once more, and the man will have to rise early that catches it napping again.



1898 1900

LITTLE BESSIE WOULD ASSIST PROVIDENCE [1]

[It is dull, and I need wholesome excitements and distractions; so I will go lightly excursioning along the primrose path of theology.]

Little Bessie was nearly three years old. She was a good child, and not shallow, not frivolous, but meditative and thoughtful, and much given to thinking out the reasons of things and trying to make them harmonize with results. One day she said:

'Mama, why is there so much pain and sorrow and suffering? What is it all for?'

It was an easy question, and mama had no difficulty in answering it:

'It is for our good, my child. In His wisdom and mercy the Lord sends us these afflictions to discipline us and make us better.'

'Is it *He* that sends them?'

'Yes.'

'Does He send *all* of them, mama?'

'Yes, dear, all of them. None of them comes by accident; He alone sends them, and always out of love for us, and to make us better.'

'Isn't it strange?'

'Strange? Why, no, I have never thought of it in that way. I have not heard any one call it strange before. It has always seemed natural and right to me, and wise and most kindly and merciful.'

'Who first thought of it like that, mama? Was it you?'

'Oh no, child, I was taught it.'

'Who taught you so, mama?'

'Why, really, I don't know—I can't remember. My mother, I suppose; or the preacher. But it's a thing that everybody knows.'

'Well, anyway, it does seem strange. Did He give Billy Norris the typhus?'

'Yes.'

'What for?'

'Why, to discipline him and make him good.'

'But he died, mama, and so it *couldn't* make him good.'

'Well, then, I suppose it was for some other reason. We know it was a *good* reason, whatever it was.'

'What do you think it was, mama?'

'Oh, you ask so many questions! I think it was to discipline his parents.'

'Well, then, it wasn't fair, mama. Why should *his* life be taken away for their sake, when he wasn't doing anything?'

'Oh, *I* don't know! I only know it was for a good and wise and merciful reason.'

'What reason, mama?'

'I think—I think—well, it was a judgment; it was to punish them for some sin they had committed.'

'But *he* was the one that was punished, mama. Was that right?'

'Certainly, certainly. He does nothing that isn't right and wise and merciful. You can't understand these things now, dear, but when you are grown up you will understand them, and then you will see that they are just and wise.'

1 Clemens 'often busied himself working out more extensively some of the ideas that came to him—moral ideas, he called them. One fancy which he followed in several forms (some of them not within the privilege of print) was that of an inquisitive little girl, Bessie, who pursues her mother with difficult questionings. He read these aloud as he finished them . . .' Paine, *Mark Twain*(N.Y., 1912),III,1515. The above selection was first published, ibid.,III,1671–73.

After a pause:

'Did He make the roof fall in on the stranger that was trying to save the crippled old woman from the fire, mama?'

'Yes, my child. *Wait*! Don't ask me why, because I don't know. I only know it was to discipline some one, or be a judgment upon somebody, or to show His power.'

'That drunken man that stuck a pitch-fork into Mrs. Welch's baby when—'

'Never mind about it, you needn't go into particulars; it was to discipline the child—*that* much is certain, anyway.'

'Mama, Mr. Burgess said in his sermon that billions of little creatures are sent into us to give us cholera, and typhoid, and lockjaw, and more than a thousand other sicknesses and—mama, does He send them?'

'Oh, certainly, child, certainly. Of course.'

'What for?'

'Oh, to *dis*cipline us! Haven't I told you so, over and over again?'

'It's awful cruel, mama! And silly! and if I—'

'Hush, oh *hush*! Do you want to bring the lightning?'

'You know the lightning *did* come last week, mama, and struck the new church, and burnt it down. Was it to discipline the church?'

(Wearily.) 'Oh, I suppose so.'

'But it killed a hog that wasn't doing anything. Was it to discipline the hog, mama?'

'Dear child, don't you want to run out and play a while? If you would like to—'

'Mama, only think! Mr. Hollister says there isn't a bird, or fish, or reptile, or any other animal that hasn't got an enemy that Providence has sent to bite it and chase it and pester it and kill it and suck its blood and discipline it and make it good and religious. Is that true, mother—because if it is true why did Mr. Hollister laugh at it?'

'That Hollister is a scandalous person, and I don't want you to listen to anything he says.'

'Why, mama, he is very interesting, and *I* think he tries to be good. He says the wasps catch spiders and cram them down into their nests in the ground—*alive*, mama!—and there they live and suffer days and days and days, and the hungry little wasps chewing their legs and gnawing into their bellies all the time, to make them good and religious and praise God for His infinite mercies. *I* think Mr. Hollister is just lovely, and ever so kind; for when I asked him if *he* would treat a spider like that he said he hoped to be damned if he would; and then he—*Dear* mama, have you fainted! I will run and bring help! Now *this* comes of staying in town this hot weather.'

1909 1912

HENRY TIMROD

1828–1867

THE COTTON BOLL

While I recline
At ease beneath
This immemorial pine,
Small sphere!
(By dusky fingers brought this morning here
And shown with boastful smiles),
I turn thy cloven sheath,
Through which the soft white fibres peer,
That, with their gossamer bands,
Unite, like love, the sea-divided lands,
And slowly, thread by thread,
Draw forth the folded strands,
Than which the trembling line,
By whose frail help yon startled spider fled
Down the tall spear-grass from his swinging bed,
Is scarce more fine;
And as the tangled skein
Unravels in my hands,
Betwixt me and the noonday light,
A veil seems lifted, and for miles and miles
The landscape broadens on my sight,
As, in the little boll, there lurked a spell
Like that which, in the ocean shell,
With mystic sound,
Breaks down the narrow walls that hem us round,

And turns some city lane
Into the restless main,
With all his capes and isles!

Yonder bird,
Which floats, as if at rest,
In those blue tracts above the thunder, where
No vapors cloud the stainless air,
And never sound is heard,
Unless at such rare time
When, from the City of the Blest,
Rings down some golden chime,
Sees not from his high place
So vast a cirque of summer space
As widens round me in one mighty field,
Which, rimmed by seas and sands,
Doth hail its earliest daylight in the beams
Of gray Atlantic dawns;
And, broad as realms made up of many lands,
Is lost afar
Behind the crimson hills and purple lawns
Of sunset, among plains which roll their streams
Against the Evening Star!
And lo!
To the remotest point of sight,
Although I gaze upon no waste of snow,
The endless field is white;
And the whole landscape glows,
For many a shining league away,
With such accumulated light
As Polar lands would flash beneath a tropic day!
Nor lack there (for the vision grows,
And the small charm within my hands—
More potent even than the fabled one,
Which oped whatever golden mystery
Lay hid in fairy wood or magic vale,
The curious ointment of the Arabian tale—
Beyond all mortal sense
Doth stretch my sight's horizon, and I see,
Beneath its simple influence,
As if, with Uriel's crown,
I stood in some great temple of the Sun,
And looked, as Uriel, down!)
Nor lack there pastures rich and fields all green
With all the common gifts of God,
For temperate airs and torrid sheen
Weave Edens of the sod;
Through lands which look one sea of billowy gold
Broad rivers wind their devious ways;
A hundred isles in their embraces fold
A hundred luminous bays;
And through yon purple haze
Vast mountains lift their plumed peaks cloud-crowned;
And, save where up their sides the plowman creeps,
An unhewn forest girds them grandly round,
In whose dark shades a future navy sleeps!
Ye Stars, which, though unseen, yet with me gaze
Upon this loveliest fragment of the earth!
Thou Sun, that kindlest all thy gentlest rays
Above it, as to light a favorite hearth!
Ye Clouds, that in your temples in the West
See nothing brighter than its humblest flowers!
And you, ye Winds, that on the ocean's breast
Are kissed to coolness ere ye reach its bowers!
Bear witness with me in my song of praise,
And tell the world that, since the world began,
No fairer land hath fired a poet's lays,
Or given a home to man!

But these are charms already widely blown!
His be the meed whose pencil's trace
Hath touched our very swamps with grace,
And round whose tuneful way
All Southern laurels bloom;
The Poet of 'The Woodlands,' unto whom
Alike are known
The flute's low breathing and the trumpets' tone,
And the soft west wind's sighs;
But who shall utter all the debt,
O Land wherein all powers are met
That bind a people's heart,
The world doth owe thee at this day,
And which it never can repay,
Yet scarcely deigns to own!
Where sleeps the poet who shall fitly sing
The source wherefrom doth spring
That mighty commerce which, confined
To the mean channels of no selfish mart,
Goes out to every shore
Of this broad earth, and throngs the sea with ships
That bear no thunders; hushes hungry lips
In alien lands;
Joins with a delicate web remotest strands;
And gladdening rich and poor,

Doth gild Parisian domes,
Or feed the cottage-smoke of English homes,
And only bounds its blessings by mankind!
In offices like these, thy mission lies,
My Country! and it shall not end
As long as rain shall fall and heaven bend
In blue above thee; though thy foes be hard
And cruel as their weapons, it shall guard
Thy hearth-stones as a bulwark; make thee great
In white and bloodless state;
And haply, as the years increase—
Still working through its humbler reach
With that large wisdom which the ages teach—
Revive the half-dead dream of universal peace!
As men who labor in that mine
Of Cornwall, hollowed out beneath the bed
Of ocean, when a storm rolls overhead,
Hear the dull booming of the world of brine
Above them, and a mighty muffled roar
Of winds and waters, yet toil calmly on,
And split the rock, and pile the massive ore,
Or carve a niche, or shape the arched roof;
So I, as calmly, weave my woof
Of song, chanting the days to come,
Unsilenced, though the quiet summer air
Stirs with the bruit of battles, and each dawn
Wakes from its starry silence to the hum
Of many gathering armies. Still,
In that we sometimes hear,
Upon the Northern winds, the voice of woe
Not wholly drowned in triumph, though I know
The end must crown us, and a few brief years
Dry all our tears,
I may not sing too gladly. To Thy will
Resigned, O Lord! we cannot all forget
That there is much even Victory must regret.
And, therefore, not too long
From the great burthen of our country's wrong
Delay our just release!
And, if it may be, save
These sacred fields of peace
From stain of patriot or of hostile blood!
Oh, help us, Lord! to roll the crimson flood
Back on its course, and, while our banners wing
Northward, strike with us! till the Goth shall cling
To his own blasted altar-stones, and crave
Mercy; and we shall grant it, and dictate
The lenient future of his fate
There, where some rotting ships and crumbling quays
Shall one day mark the Port which ruled the Western seas.

c.1862 1873

CHARLESTON

CALM as that second summer which precedes
The first fall of the snow,
In the broad sunlight of heroic deeds,
The city bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts stern and proud,
Her bolted thunders sleep—
Dark Sumter, like a battlemented cloud,
Looms o'er the solemn deep.

No Calpe frowns from lofty cliff or scar
To guard the holy strand;
But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs of war
Above the level sand.

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie couched,
Unseen, beside the flood—
Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched,
That wait and watch for blood.

Meanwhile, through streets still echoing with trade,
Walk grave and thoughtful men,
Whose hands may one day wield the patriot's blade
As lightly as the pen.

And maidens, with such eyes as would grow dim
Over a bleeding hound,
Seem each one to have caught the strength of him
Whose sword she sadly bound.

Thus girt without and garrisoned at home,
Day patient following day,
Old Charleston looks from roof and spire and dome,
Across her tranquil bay.

Ships, through a hundred foes, from Saxon lands
And spicy Indian ports,
Bring Saxon steel and iron to her hands,
And Summer to her courts.

But still, along yon dim Atlantic line,
The only hostile smoke
Creeps like a harmless mist above the brine,
From some frail floating oak.

Shall the Spring dawn, and she, still clad in smiles,
And with an unscathed brow,
Rest in the strong arms of her palm-crowned isles,
As fair and free as now?

We know not; in the temple of the Fates
God has inscribed her doom;
And, all untroubled in her faith, she waits
The triumph of the tomb.

c.1861 1873

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

1830–1886

ASPECTS OF THE PINES

TALL, sombre, grim, against the morning sky
They rise, scarce touched by melancholy airs,
Which stir the fadeless foliage dreamfully,
As if from realms of mystical despairs.

Tall, sombre, grim, they stand with dusky gleams
Brightening to gold within the wood-land's core,
Beneath the gracious noontide's tranquil beams—
But the weird winds of morning sigh no more.

A stillness, strange, divine, ineffable,
Broods round and o'er them in the wind's surcease,
And on each tinted copse and shimmering dell
Rests the mute rapture of deep-hearted peace.

Last, sunset comes—the solemn joy and might
Borne from the West when cloudless day declines—
Low, flutelike breezes sweep the waves of light,
And lifting dark green tresses of the pines,

Till every lock is luminous—gently float,
Fraught with hale odors up the heavens afar
To faint when twilight on her virginal throat
Wears for a gem the tremulous vesper star.

1875

THE MOCKING-BIRD

(AT NIGHT)

A GOLDEN pallor of voluptuous light
Filled the warm southern night:
The moon, clear orbed, above the sylvan scene
Moved like a stately queen,
So rife with conscious beauty all the while,
What could she do but smile
At her own perfect loveliness below,
Glassed in the tranquil flow
Of crystal fountains and unruffled streams?
Half lost in waking dreams,
As down the loneliest forest dell I strayed,
Lo! from a neighboring glade,
Flashed through the drifts of moonshine, swiftly came
A fairy shape of flame.
It rose in dazzling spirals overhead,
Whence to wild sweetness wed,
Poured marvellous melodies, silvery trill on trill;
The very leaves grew still
On the charmed trees to hearken; while for me,
Heart-trilled to ecstasy,
I followed—followed the bright shape that flew,
Still circling up the blue,
Till as a fountain that has reached its height,

Falls back in sprays of light
Slowly dissolved, so that enrapturing lay,
Divinely melts away
Through tremulous spaces to a music-mist,
Soon by the fitful breeze
How gently kissed
Into remote and tender silences.

1882

SIDNEY LANIER

1842–1881

FROM TIGER LILIES

THE STORY OF CAIN AND GORM SMALLIN [1]

'Russet yeas and honest kersey noes.'
LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST

CAIN SMALLIN was the most indefatigable of scouts. He was always moving; the whole country side knew him. His good-natured face and communicated habits procured for him a cordial welcome at every house in that quiet country, where as yet only the distant roar of the war had been heard, where all was still and sunny and lonesome, where the house-hold talk was that of old men and women, of girls and children, whose sons and brothers were all away in the midst of that dimly-heard roaring. In this serene land a soldier's face that had been in front of cannon and bullets was a thing to be looked at twice, and a soldier's talk was the rare treasure of a fireside. The gunboats in the river, upon which these neighbors looked whenever they walked the river bank, had ceased to be objects of alarm, or even of curiosity. They lay there quietly and lazily, day after day, making no hostile sign; and had lain so since Norfolk fell. And as for the evening-gun at Fortress Monroe—that had boomed every sunset for many a year before the war.

On his way to the Point which terminates between Burwell's Bay and Smithfield Creek, and which afforded store of succulent grass and clover for the horses, Cain Smallin passed the house of a neighbor who had particularly distinguished himself in kindness to our little party of scouts. The old gentleman was seated in the open doorway, in midst of a pile of newspapers.

'Good mornin'! Mr. Smallin. Couldn't stand it any longer, you see, so I sent Dick away up to Ivor yesterday to try and get some papers. Here's another stinger in the *Examiner*. Sit down here; I want you to read it.'

'Thank'ee, sir, don't care if I do rest a leetle; tolluble warm walkin' this mornin',' replied the mountaineer, and fell to reading —a slow operation for him whose eye was far more accustomed to sighting a rifle than deciphering letters.

'Massy me!' said he, after some silence, 'our men's desertin' mighty fast, up yan, f'om the army. Here's nigh to a whole column full of "Thirty Dollars Rewards" for each deserter. Let's see if I know any of 'em.'

Cain's lip moved busily, in what might well have been called a spell of silence. Suddenly he dropped the paper and looked piteously upward.

'May be I spelt it wrong, le'm me look again,' muttered he, and snatched the paper up to gaze again upon their dreadful Thirty Dollar column.

It was there.

THIRTY-DOLLARS REWARD.
'Deserted from the — Regiment, — Volunteers, GORM SMALLIN, *who enlisted,' &c., &c.*

Cain Smallin dropped his newspaper and strode hastily out of the door, unheeding the surprise of his host.

He walked rapidly, and aimlessly. The cruel torture would not permit him to rest; his grief drove him about; it lashed him with sharp thongs. Across fields and marshes, through creeks and woods, with bent head, with hands idly hanging, with unsteady step, he circled. A tear emerged from his eye. It stopped in a furrow, and glistened. Occasionally he muttered to himself,—

'We was poor. We aint never had much

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is Chapter 6 from Book II of *Tiger Lilies*(N.Y., 1876).

to live on but our name, which it was good as gold. An' now it aint no better'n rusty copper; hit'll be green an' pisenous. An' who's done it? Gorm Smallin! Nobody but Gorm Smallin! My own brother, Gorm Smallin! Gorm,—Gorm.' He repeated this name a hundred times, as if his mind wandered and he wished to fix it.

The hours passed on and still the mountaineer walked. His simple mountain-life had known few griefs. This was worse than any sorrow. It was disgrace. He knew no sophistries to retire into, in the ostrich-fashion wherewith men avoid dishonor. He had lost all. Not only he, but all whom he loved, would suffer.

'What will the Sterlin's say? Old John Sterlin'; him that stuck by us when corn was so scurce in the Cove? an' Philip! him that I've hunted with an' fished with an' camped with, by ourselves, in yan mountains? And Miss Felix! Miss Felix!'

The man dwelt on this name. His mind became a blank, except two luminous spots which were rather feelings than thoughts. These were, a sensation of disgrace and a sensation of loveliness: the one embodied in the name Gorm, the other in the name Felix. He recoiled from one; he felt as if religion demanded that he should also recoil from the other. He suffered more than if he had committed the crime himself. For he was innocence, and that is highly tender and sensitive, being unscared.

At length the gathering twilight attracted his attention. He looked around, to discover his locality. Leaping a fence he found himself in the main road, and a short walk brought him to a low house that stood in a field on the right. He opened the gate, and knocked at the door. 'Here's whar he said he'd stay,' he muttered. Gorm himself came to the door.

'Put on your hat, Gorm!'

The stern tone of his voice excited his brother's surprise.

'What fur, Cain?'

'I want you to walk with me, a little piece. Hurry!'

Gorm took down his hat and came out.

'Whar to, brother Cain?

'Follow me,' replied Cain, with a motion of displeasure at the wheedling tone of his brother.

Leaving the road, he struck into a path leading to the Point from which he had wandered. As he walked his pace increased, until it required the most strenuous exertions on the part of his companion to keep up with his long and rapid strides.

'Whar the devil air you gwine to, Cain? Don't walk so fast, anyhow; I'm a'most out o' breath a'ready!'

The mountaineer made no reply, but slackened his pace. He only muttered to himself: 'Hits eight mile across; ye'll need your strength to git thar, may be.'

The path wound now amongst gloomy pines, for some distance, until suddenly they emerged upon the open beach. They were upon the extreme end of the lonely Point. The night was dark; but the sand-beach glimmered ghastly white through the darkness. Save the mournful hooting of an owl from his obscure cell in the woods, the place was silent. Hundreds of huge tree-stumps, with their roots upturned in the air, lay in all fantastic positions upon the white sand, as the tide had deposited them. These straggling clumps had been polished white by salt air and waves. They seemed like an agitated convention of skeletons, discussing the propriety of flesh. A small boat rested on the beach, with one end secured by a 'painter' to a stake driven in the sand.

'Little did I think, when I found it in the marsh this mornin' an' brought it thar, thinkin' to git it round to camp to-night, what use I was gwine put it to,' said Cain Smallin to himself.

As he led the way to the boat, suddenly he stopped and turned face to face with his recreant brother. His eyes glared into Gorm's. His right hand was raised, and a pistol-barrel protruded from the long fingers.

'Gorm Smallin,' he said, with grating voice, 'have ye ever know'd me to say I'd do anything an' then not to do it?'

'I—I—no, I haven't, Cain,' stuttered the deserter, cowering with terror and surprise.

'Remember them words. Now answer my questions, and don't say nothin' outside o' them. Gorm Smallin, whar was you born?'

'What makes you ax me sich foolish questions, Cain? I was born in Tennessy, an' you know it!'

'Answer my questions, Gorm Smallin! Who raised you, f'om a little un?'

'Mother an' father, o' course.'

'Who's your mother and father? what's ther name?'

'Cain, air you crazy? ther name's Smallin.'

'Gorm Smallin, did you ever know any o' the Smallins to cheat a man in a trade?'

'No, Cain; we've always been honest.'

'Did ye ever know a Smallin to swar to a lie afore the Jestis?'

'No.'

'Did ye ever know one to steal another man's horse, or his rifle, or anything?'

'No.'

'Did ye ever know one to sneak out f'om a rightful fight?'

'No.'

'Did ye ever know one to'—the words came like lightning with a zigzag jerk—'to desert f'om his rigiment?'

The flash struck Gorm Smallin. He visibly sank into himself like a jointed cane. He trembled, and gazed apprehensively at the pistol in his brother's right hand which still towered threateningly aloft. He made no reply.

'Ye don't like to say yes this time!' continued Cain. 'Gorm Smallin, altho' I say it which I'm your brother,—ye lied every time ye said no, afore. *You* has cheated in a dirty trade; *you* has swore to a lie afore God that's better than the Jestis; *you* has stole what's better'n any rifle or horse; *you* has sneaked out f'om the rightfullest fight ye ever was in; *you* has deserted f'om your rigiment, an' that when yer own brother an' every friend ye had in the world was fightin' along with ye.

'Gorm Smallin, you has cheated me, an' ole father an' mother an' all, out of our name which it was all we had; you has swore to a lie, for you swore to me 'at the colonel sent you down here to go a-scoutin' amongst the Yankees; you has stole our honest name, which it is more than ye can ever make to give to your wife's baby; you has sneaked out f'om a fight that we was fightin' to keep what was our'n an' to pertect them that has been kind to us an' them that raised us; you has deserted f'om your rigiment which it has fought now gwine on four years an' fought manful, too, an' never run a inch.

'Gorm Smallin, you has got your name in the paper 'ith thirty dollars reward over it, in big letters; big letters, so 'at father's ole eyes can read it 'ithout callin' sister Ginny to make it out for him. Thar it is, for every man, woman, *and* child in the whole Confederacy to read it, an' by this time they *has* read it, may be, an' every man in the rigiment has cussed you for a sneak an' a scoundrel, an' wonderin' whether Cain Smallin will do like his brother!

'Gorm Smallin, you has brung me to that, that I haint no sperrit to fight hearty an' cheerful. Ef ye had been killed in a fa'r battle, I mought ha' been able to fight hard enough for both of us, for every time I cried a-thinkin' of you, I'd ha' been twice as strong an' twice as clear-sighted as I was buffore. But—sich things as these'—the mountaineer wiped off a tear with his coat-sleeve—'burns me an' weakens me an' hurts my eyes that bad that I kin scarcely look a man straight forrard in the face. Hit don't make much diff'ence to me now, whether we whips the Yanks or they whips us. What good'll it do ef we conquer 'em? Everybody'll be a-shoutin' an' a-hurrahin' an' they'll leave *us* out o' the frolic, for we is kin to a deserter! An' the women'll be a-smilin' on them that has lived to git home, one minute, an' the next they'll be a-weepin' for them that's left dead in Virginy an' Pennsylvany an' Tennessy,—but *you* won't git home, an' *you* won't be left dead nowher; they cain't neither smile at you nor cry for you; what'll they do ef anybody speaks yer name? Gorm Smallin, they'll lift their heads high an' we'll hang our'n low. They'll scorn ye an' we'll blush for ye.

'Hadn't ye better be dead? Hadn't I better kill ye right here an' bury ye whar ye cain't do no more harm to the fambly name?

'But I cain't shoot ye, hardly. The same uns raised us an' fed us. I cain't do it; an' I'm sorry I cain't!

'You air 'most on yer knees, anyhow; git down on 'em all the way. Listen to me. God A'mighty's a-lookin' at you out o' the stars yan, an' he's a-listenin' at you out o' the sand here, an' he won't git tired by mornin' but he'll keep a-listenin' an' a-lookin' at ye tomorrow all day. Now mind ye. I'm gwine to put ye in this boat here, an' you can paddle across to yan side the river, easy. Ef ye'll keep yer eye on yan bright star that's jest a-risin' over Bullitt Pint, ye'll strike t'other shore about the right place. Ef ye

paddle out o' the way, the guard on yan gunboat'll be apt to fire into ye; keep yer eye on the star. Ye'll git to the beach on t'other side, an' lay down under a tree an' sleep till mornin'—ef ye *can* sleep. In the mornin' ye'll walk down the road, an' the Yankee pickets'll see yer gray coat an' take ye to Head-quarters. The officer at Head-quarters'll examine ye, an' when you tell him you air a deserter he'll make ye take the oath, an' ef he know'd how many oaths ye've already broke I think he would'n' take the trouble! Howsumdever, I'm gwine to do the same foolishness, for it's all I kin do. Now when ye take the oath the officer'll likely make ye sign yer name to it, or write yer name somewhar. Gorm Smallin, when ye write that name ye *shall* not write your own name; ye must write some other name. Swar to it, now, while ye air kneelin' bufore God A'mighty! Raise up yer hands, both of 'em; swar to it, that ye'll write some other name in the Yankee deserter-book, or I'll shoot ye, thar, right down!'

Cain had placed the muzzle of his pistol against his brother's forehead.

The oath was taken.

'Don't git up yet; kneel thar. Hit would'n' be right to put any other man's name in the deserter-book in place o' yourn, for ye mought be robbin' some other decent fambly of ther good name. Le'ss see. We must git some name that nobody ever was named afore. Take a stick thar an' write it in the sand, so you won't forgit it. The fust name don't make no diff'ence. Write Sam'l.'

It was written in great scrawling letters.

'Now write J, an' call out as you write, so you won't forgit it. For I'm gwine to captur' that deserter-book on' see ef your name's in it. Write J, an' call out.'

'J.'

'O.'

'O.'

'X.'

'X.'

'O.'

'O.'

'B.'

'B.'

'B, agin.'

'B, agin.'

'le,-bul!'

'le,-bul!'

'Sam'l Joxo—Joxy—I cain't call it, but you can write it—hit'll do. Git it by heart.'

Cain paused a moment.

'Now git up. Git in the boat. Gorm Smallin, don't never come back home, don't never come whar I may be! I cain't shake hands with ye; but I'll shove ye off.'

Cain loosened the head of the boat from the sand, turned her round, and gave a mighty push, running with her till he was waist deep in the water. He came out dripping, folded his arms, and stood still, watching the dusky form in the receding boat.

Gorm Smallin was a half-mile from shore. Suddenly he heard his brother's voice, across the water.

'Gorm!'

'Hello!'

'Joxo—Joxobabbul!' cried Cain Smallin at the top of his voice bending down to read the inscription on the sand.

1867

FROM THE SCIENCE OF ENGLISH VERSE

VERSE A PHENOMENON OF SOUND [1]

PERHAPS no one will find difficulty in accepting the assertion that when formal poetry, or verse,—two terms which will be always used here as convertible,—is repeated aloud, it impresses itself upon the ear as verse only by means of certain relations existing among its component words considered purely as sounds, without reference to their associated ideas. If the least doubt upon this point should be entertained, it may be dispelled by observing that all ideas may be abolished out of a poem without disturbing its effect upon the ear as verse. This may be practically demonstrated by the simple experiment of substituting for the words of a formal poem any other words which preserve the accentuation, alliteration, and rhyme, but which convey no ideas to the mind,—words of some foreign language not understood by the experimenter being the most effective for this purpose. Upon repeating aloud the poem thus treated it will be found that the verse-structure has not been impaired. If, therefore, the ear accepts as perfect verse a series

1 The selection is from *The Science of English Verse* (N.Y., 1909), 21–24, 39–40, 46–48, 57–58.

of words from which ideas are wholly absent,—that is to say, a series of sounds,—it is clear that what we call 'verse' is a set of specially related sounds, at least in the case of a formal poem repeated aloud.

But a much more sweeping proposition is true. If we advance from the case of formal poetry repeated aloud to that of formal poetry silently perused by the eye of a reader, a slight examination will show the proposition good that here, as before, verse is still a set of specially related sounds. For, in this instance, the characters of print or writing in which the words are embodied are simply signs of sounds; and although originally received by the eye, they are handed over to the ear, are interpreted by the auditory sense, and take their final lodgement, not at all as conceptions of sight, but as conceptions of hearing. The function of the eye is now purely ministerial: it merely purveys for the ear. An analogous process is indicated in the Arabian saw which affirms that 'that is the best description which makes the ear and eye.' In general, the reader will do well to recall that each sense has not only what is ordinarily called its physical province, but also its corresponding imaginative province; the eye has its imagination, the ear its imagination; and when the term 'imagination of the ear' is hereinafter used it must be understood to suggest those perceptions of sound which come to exist in the mind, not by virtue of actual vibratory impact upon the tympanum immediately preceding the perception, but by virtue of indirect causes (such as the characters of print and of writing) which in any way amount to practical equivalents of such impact. Now these signs convey, along with their corresponding sounds, the same relations between those sounds which are suggested to the ear when the sounds themselves fall upon the tympanum. It is therefore strictly true that, although the great majority of formal poems in modern times are perceived by the mind through the original agency of the eye, the relations indicated by the term 'verse' are still relations between sounds.

Nor—to call the briefest attention to the only other case in which this fundamental proposition could seem at all doubtful—is this connection of verse with sound less essential when the formal poem is merely conceived in the thought of its author without ever reaching either visible or audible embodiment. For the formal poem is necessarily conceived in words, and in the imagination of the sounds (words) is necessarily involved the imagination of the relations between the sounds, that is, of verse.

In short, when we hear verse, we *hear* a set of relations between sounds; when we silently read verse, we *see* that which brings to us a set of relations between sounds; when we imagine verse, we *imagine* a set of relations between sounds.

Approached in this way, the proposition given below will probably not seem difficult of acceptance; indeed it is possible many will be surprised that the ideas leading to it have been dwelt upon so long. In point of fact, however, it is the very failure to recognize verse as in all respects a phenomenon of sound and to appreciate the necessary consequences thereof which has caused the non-existence of a science of formal poetry. Occasion will presently arise to show how this has happened, with some detail; meantime, we are now prepared to formulate a proposition which will serve as the basis of a science of verse.

The term 'verse' denotes a set of specially related sounds. . . .

Since an art of sound must depend primarily upon exact co-ordinations by the ear, and since these exact co-ordinations are, as just shown, possible only in respect of duration, pitch, and tone-color, it is evident that these three sound-relations constitute three distinct principles to one or the other of which all the primary phenomena of this art must be referred. They thus afford us three fundamental principles of classification for the effects of sound in art. The effects ordinarily known as 'rhythm' depend primarily upon duration; those known as 'tune' depend upon pitch; those known as 'colors' in music, and as 'rhymes' and 'alliterations' in verse,—besides many allied effects of verse which have never been named,—depend upon tone-color. Stated in other terms:—

I

When the ear exactly co-ordinates a series of sounds and silences with primary reference to their duration, the result is a conception of . . . . . RHYTHM.

II

When the ear exactly co-ordinates a series of sounds with primary reference to their pitch, the result is a conception of . . . TUNE.

III

When the ear exactly co-ordinates a series of sounds with primary reference to their tone-color, the result is a conception of (in music, flute-tone as distinct from violin-tone, and the like; in verse, rhyme as opposed to rhyme, vowel varied with vowel, phonetic syzygy, and the like), in general . . . . . TONE-COLOR.

. . .We have now reached a point where we can profitably inquire as to the precise differentiation between the two species of the art of sound—music and verse. We have found that the art of sound, in general, embraces phenomena of rhythm, of tune, and of tone-color. Many will be disposed to think that the second class of these phenomena just named—tune—is not found in verse, and that the absence of it should be one of the first differences to be noted as between music and verse. Tune is, however, quite as essential a constituent of verse as of music; and the disposition to believe otherwise is due only to the complete unconsciousness with which we come to use these tunes after the myriad repetitions of them which occur in all our daily intercourse by words. We will presently find, from numerous proofs and illustrations which are submitted in Part II., on the Tunes of Verse, that our modern speech is made up quite as much of tunes as of words, and that our ability to convey our thoughts depends upon the existence of a great number of curious melodies of speech which have somehow acquired form and significance. These 'tunes' are not mere vague variations of pitch in successive words,—which would deserve the name of tune only in the most general sense of that term,—but they are perfectly definite and organized melodies of the speaking-voice, composed of exact variations of pitch so well marked as to be instantly recognized by every ear. If they were *not* thus recognized a large portion of the ideas which we now convey with ease would be wholly inexpressible. Reserving, then, all details upon this matter until their appropriate place under the head of the Tunes of Verse, in Part II. above cited, it will be sufficient here if the reader is asked to realize them in a practical way by first attempting to utter any significant sentences of prose or verse in an absolutely unchanging voice from beginning to end. This will be found quite difficult, and when successfully executed produces an impression of strangeness which all the more clearly illustrates how habitually and how unconsciously the tunes of speech are used. If, having uttered the sentences in a rigidly unvarying tone, the reader will then utter them in the tunes which we feel—by some inward perceptions too subtle for treatment here—to be appropriate to them, it will be easily seen that definite successions of tones are being used,—so definite that they are kept in mind for their appropriate occasions just as words are, and so regular in their organizations as to be in all respects worthy the name of 'tunes,' instead of the vague terms 'intonation,' or 'inflection,' which have so long concealed the real function of these wonderful melodies of the speaking-voice.

The art of verse, then, as well as the art of music,—the two species of the genus art of sound,—includes all the three great classes of phenomena summed up under the terms rhythm, tune, and tone-color. We will presently find many problems solved by the full recognition of this fact that there is absolutely no difference between the sound-relations used in music and those used in verse.

If this be true,—if the sound-relations of music and verse are the same,—we are necessarily forced to look for the difference between the two arts in the nature of the *sounds* themselves with which they deal. Here, indeed, the difference lies. Expressed, as far as possible, in popular terms, it is as follows:—

When those exact co-ordinations which the ear perceives as rhythm, tune, and tone-color, are suggested to the ear by a series of 'musical sounds,' the result is . . . MUSIC.

When those exact co-ordinations which the ear perceives as rhythm, tune, and tone-color, are suggested to the ear by a series of 'spoken words,' the result is . . . . . VERSE.

. . .The foregoing proposition aims only to state the distinctions between music and verse: it will not be found complete for other purposes. For example, it would not serve to discriminate verse and prose. Prose has its rhythms, its tunes, and its tone-colors, like verse; and, while the extreme forms of prose and verse are sufficiently unlike each other, there are such near grades of intermediate forms that they may be said to run into each other, and any line claiming to be distinctive must necessarily be more or less arbitrary. The art of sound must always be regarded the genus, and music and verse its two species. Prose, scientifically considered, is a wild variety of verse.

The science of verse, then, observes and classifies all the phenomena of rhythm, of tune, and of tone-color, so far as they can be exhibited to the ear directly by spoken words,—or to the ear, through the eye, by written or printed signs of spoken words,—or to the mind by the conception of spoken words; and,

The science of *English* verse observes and classifies these phenomena so far as they can be indicated through the medium of spoken English words. . . .

1880

THE SYMPHONY [1]

'O TRADE! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
The Time needs heart—'tis tired of head:
We're all for love,' the violins said.

'Of what avail the rigorous tale
Of bill for coin and box for bale?
Grant thee, O Trade! thine uttermost hope:
Level red gold with blue sky-slope,
And base it deep as devils grope:
When all's done, what hast thou won
Of the only sweet that's under the sun?
Ay, canst thou buy a single sigh
Of true love's least, least ecstasy?'
Then, with a bridegroom's heart-beats trembling,
All the mightier strings assembling
Ranged them on the violins' side
As when the bridegroom leads the bride,
And, heart in voice, together cried:
'Yea, what avail the endless tale
Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?
Look up the land, look down the land
The poor, the poor, the poor, they stand
Wedged by the pressing of Trade's hand
Against an inward-opening door
That pressure tightens ever more:
They sigh a monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside leagues of liberty,
Where Art, sweet lark, translates the sky
Into a heavenly melody.
"Each day, all day" (these poor folks say),
"In the same old year-long, drear-long way,
We weave in the mills and heave in the kilns,
We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thieve much gold from the Devil's bank tills,
To relieve, O God, what manner of ills?—
The beasts, they hunger, and eat, and die;
And so do we, and the world's a sty;
Hush, fellow-swine: why nuzzle and cry?
Swinehood hath no remedy
Say many men, and hasten by,
Clamping the nose and blinking the eye
But who said once, in the lordly tone,
Man shall not live by bread alone
But all that cometh from the Throne?
Hath God said so?
But Trade saith *No*:
And the kilns and the curt-tongued mills say *Go*:
There's plenty that can, if you can't: we know.
Move out, if you think you're underpaid.
The poor are prolific; we're not afraid;
Trade is trade." '
Thereat this passionate protesting
Meekly changed, and softened till

1 Lanier wrote, 12 Feb. 1876, to a friend: 'I met with a line in one of Shakspeare's sonnets some time ago which seems to me so completely a nutshell judgment on my side as regards the possibilities of interpreting—within limits—one sense by another through the forms of art that I cannot help sending it to you. It is: "To hear with eyes belongs to Love's fine wit." In my "Symphony" Love's fine wit—the love of one's fellow-men—attempts (not to hear with eyes, but precisely the reverse) to see with ears.' Starke, *Sidney Lanier* (Chapel Hill,N.C., 1933),205–06.

To Simms, 17 April 1872, Lanier wrote: 'Trade, Trade,Trade: pah, are we not all sick? A man cannot walk down a green alley of woods, in these days, without unawares getting his mouth and nose and eyes covered with some web or other that Trade has stretched across, to catch some gain or other. . . . You know what the commercial spirit is: you remember that Trade killed Chivalry and now sits in the throne. It was Trade that hatched the Jacquerie in the 14th Century: it was Trade that hatched John Brown, and broke the saintly heart of Robert Lee in the 19th.' Ibid.,201.

It sank to sad requesting
And suggesting sadder still:
'And oh, if men might some time see
How piteous-false the poor decree
That trade no more than trade must be!
Does business mean, *Die, you—live, I*?
Then "Trade is trade" but sings a lie:
'Tis only war grown miserly.
If business is battle, name it so:
War-crimes less will shame it so,
And widows less will blame it so.
Alas, for the poor to have some part
In yon sweet living lands of Art,
Makes problem not for head, but heart.
Vainly might Plato's brain revolve it:
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it.'

And then, as when from words that seem
but rude
We pass to silent pain that sits abrood
Back in our heart's great dark and solitude,
So sank the strings to gentle throbbing
Of long chords change-marked with
sobbing—
Motherly sobbing, not distinctlier heard
Than half wing-openings of the sleeping
bird,
Some dream of danger to her young hath
stirred.
Then stirring and demurring ceased, and
lo!
Every least ripple of the strings' song-flow
Died to a level with each level bow
And made a great chord tranquil-surfaced
so,
As a brook beneath his curving bank doth
go
To linger in the sacred dark and green
Where many boughs the still pool overlean
And many leaves make shadow with their
sheen.
But presently
A velvet flute-note fell down pleasantly
Upon the bosom of that harmony,
And sailed and sailed incessantly,
As if a petal from a wild-rose blown
Had fluttered down upon that pool of tone
And boatwise dropped o' the convex side
And floated down the glassy tide
And clarified and glorified
The solemn spaces where the shadows bide.
From the warm concave of that fluted note
Somewhat, half song, half odor, forth did
float,
As if a rose might somehow be a throat:

'When Nature from her far-off glen
Flutes her soft messages to men,
The flute can say them o'er again;
Yea, Nature, singing sweet and lone,
Breathes through life's strident polyphone
The flute-voice in the world of tone.
Sweet friends,
Man's love ascends
To finer and diviner ends
Than man's mere thought e'er
comprehends.
For I, e'en I,
As here I lie,
A petal on a harmony,
Demand of Science whence and why
Man's tender pain, man's inward cry,
When he doth gaze on earth and sky?
I am not overbold:
I hold
Full powers from Nature manifold.
I speak for each no-tongued tree
That, spring by spring, doth nobler be,
And dumbly and most wistfully
His mighty prayerful arms outspreads
Above men's oft-unheeding heads,
And his big blessing downward sheds.
I speak for all-shaped blooms and leaves,
Lichens on stones and moss on caves,
Grasses and grains in ranks and sheaves;
Broad-fronded ferns and keen-leaved canes,
And briery mazes bounding lanes,
And marsh-plants, thirsty-cupped for
rains,
And milky stems and sugary veins;
For every long-armed woman-vine
That round a piteous tree doth twine;
For passionate odors, and divine
Pistils, and petals crystalline;
All purities of shady springs,
All shynesses of film-winged things
That fly from tree-trunks and bark-rings;
All modesties of mountain-fawns
That leap to covert from wild lawns,
And tremble if the day but dawns;
All sparklings of small beady eyes
Of birds, and sidelong glances wise
Wherewith the jay hints tragedies;
All piquancies of prickly burs,
And smoothnesses of downs and furs
Of eiders and of minevers;
All limpid honeys that do lie
At stamen-bases, nor deny
The humming-birds' fine roguery,
Bee-thighs, nor any butterfly;
All gracious curves of slender wings,

Bark-mottlings, fibre-spiralings,
Fern-wavings and leaf-flickerings;
Each dial-marked leaf and flower-bell
Wherewith in every lonesome dell
Time to himself his hours doth tell;
All tree-sounds, rustlings of pine cones,
Wind-sighings, doves' melodious moans,
And night's unearthly under-tones;
All placid lakes and waveless deeps,
All cool reposing mountain-steeps,
Vale-calms and tranquil lotos-sleeps;—
Yea, all fair forms, and sounds, and lights,
And warmths, and mysteries, and mights,
Of Nature's utmost depths and heights,
—These doth my timid tongue present,
Their mouthpiece and leal instrument
And servant, all love-eloquent.
I heard, when *All for love* the violins
cried:
So, Nature calls through all her system
wide,
Give me thy love, O man, so long denied.
Much time is run, and man hath changed
his ways,
Since Nature, in the antique fable-days,
Was hid from man's true love by proxy
fays,
False fauns and rascal gods that stole her
praise.
The nymphs, cold creatures of man's colder
brain,
Chilled Nature's streams till man's warm
heart was fain
Never to lave its love in them again.
Later, a sweet Voice *Love thy neighbor* said;
Then first the bounds of neighborhood
outspread
Beyond all confines of old ethnic dread.
Vainly the Jew might wag his covenant
head:
All men are neighbors, so the sweet Voice
said.
So, when man's arms had circled all man's
race,
The liberal compass of his warm embrace
Stretched bigger yet in the dark bounds of
space;
With hands a-grope he felt smooth Nature's
grace,
Drew her to breast and kissed her sweet-
heart face:
Yea, man found neighbors in great hills and
trees
And streams and clouds and suns and birds
and bees,
And throbbed with neighbor-loves in
loving these.
But oh, the poor! the poor! the poor!
That stand by the inward-opening door
Trade's hand doth tighten ever more,
And sigh their monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside hills of liberty,
Where Nature spreads her wild blue sky
For Art to make into melody!
Thou Trade! thou king of the modern
days!
Change thy ways,
Change thy ways;
Let the sweaty laborers file
A little while,
A little while,
Where Art and Nature sing and smile.
Trade! is thy heart all dead, all dead?
And hast thou nothing but a head?
I'm all for heart,' the flute-voice said,
And into sudden silence fled,
Like as a blush that while 'tis red
Dies to a still, still white instead.

Thereto a thrilling calm succeeds,
Till presently the silence breeds
A little breeze among the reeds
That seems to blow by sea-marsh weeds:
Then from the gentle stir and fret
Sings out the melting clarionet,
Like as a lady sings while yet
Her eyes with salty tears are wet.
'O Trade! O Trade!' the Lady said,
'I too will wish thee utterly dead
If all thy heart is in thy head.
For O my God! and O my God!
What shameful ways have women trod
At beckoning of Trade's golden rod!
Alas when sighs are traders' lies,
And heart's-ease eyes and violet eyes
Are merchandise!
O purchased lips that kiss with pain!
O cheeks coin-spotted with smirch and
stain!
O trafficked hearts that break in twain!
—And yet what wonder at my sisters'
crime?
So hath Trade withered up Love's sinewy
prime,
Men love not women as in olden time.
Ah, not in these cold merchantable days
Deem men their life an opal gray, where
plays
The one red Sweet of gracious ladies'-
praise.

Now, comes a suitor with sharp prying
eye—
Says, *Here, you Lady, if you'll sell, I'll buy:*
Come, heart for heart—a trade? What!
weeping? why?
Shame on such wooers' dapper mercery!
I would my lover kneeling at my feet
In humble manliness should cry, *O sweet!*
I know not if thy heart my heart will greet:
I ask not if thy love my love can meet:
Whate'er thy worshipful soft tongue shall
say,
I'll kiss thine answer, be it yea or nay:
I do but know I love thee, and I pray
To be thy knight until my dying day.
Woe him that cunning trades in hearts
contrives!
Base love good women to base loving drives
If men loved larger, larger were our lives;
And wooed they nobler, won they nobler
wives.'

There thrust the bold straightforward horn
To battle for that lady lorn,
With heartsome voice of mellow scorn,
Like any knight in knighthood's morn.
'Now comfort thee,' said he,
'Fair Lady.
For God shall right thy grievous wrong,
And man shall sing thee a true-love song,
Voiced in act his whole life long,
Yea, all thy sweet life long,
Fair Lady.
Where's he that craftily hath said,
The day of chivalry is dead?
I'll prove that lie upon his head,
Or I will die instead,
Fair Lady.
Is Honor gone into his grave?
Hath Faith become a caitiff knave,
And Selfhood turned into a slave
To work in Mammon's cave,
Fair Lady?
Will Truth's long blade ne'er gleam again?
Hath Giant Trade in dungeons slain
All great contempts of mean-got gain
And hates of inward stain,
Fair Lady?
For aye shall name and fame be sold,
And place be hugged for the sake of gold,
And smirch-robed Justice feebly scold
At Crime all money-bold,
Fair Lady?
Shall self-wrapt husbands aye forget
Kiss-pardons for the daily fret
Wherewith sweet wifely eyes are wet—
Blind to lips kiss-wise set—
Fair Lady?
Shall lovers higgle, heart for heart,
Till wooing grows a trading mart
Where much for little, and all for part,
Make love a cheapening art,
Fair Lady?
Shall woman scorch for a single sin
That her betrayer may revel in,
And she be burnt, and he but grin
When that the flames begin,
Fair Lady?
Shall ne'er prevail the woman's plea,
We maids would far, far whiter be
If that our eyes might sometimes see
Men maids in purity,
Fair Lady?
Shall Trade aye salve his conscience-aches
With jibes at Chivalry's old mistakes—
The wars that o'erhot knighthood makes
For Christ's and ladies' sakes,
Fair Lady?
Now by each knight that e'er hath prayed
To fight like a man and love like a maid,
Since Pembroke's life, as Pembroke's
blade,
I' the scabbard, death, was laid,
Fair Lady,
I dare avouch my faith is bright
That God doth right and God hath might.
Nor time hath changed His hair to white,
Nor His dear love to spite,
Fair Lady.
I doubt no doubts: I strive, and shrive my
clay,
And fight my fight in the patient modern
way
For true love and for thee—ah me! and
pray
To be thy knight until my dying day,
Fair Lady.'
Made end that knightly horn, and spurred
away
Into the thick of the melodious fray.

And then the hautboy played and smiled,
And sang like any large-eyed child,
Cool-hearted and all undefiled.
'Huge Trade!' he said,
'Would thou wouldst lift me on thy head
And run where'er my finger led!
Once said a Man—and wise was He—
Never shalt thou the heavens see,
Save as a little child thou be.'

Then o'er sea-lashings of commingling tunes
The ancient wise bassoons,
Like weird
Gray-beard
Old harpers sitting on the high sea-dunes,
Chanted runes:
'Bright-waved gain, gray waved loss,
The sea of all doth lash and toss,
One wave forward and one across:
But now 'twas trough, now 'tis crest,
And worst doth foam and flash to best,
And curst to blest.

Life! Life! thou sea-fugue, writ from east to west,
Love, Love alone can pore
On thy dissolving score
Of harsh half-phrasings,
Blotted ere writ,
And double erasings
Of chords most fit.
Yea, Love, sole music master blest,
May read thy weltering palimpsest.
To follow Time's dying melodies through,
And never to lose the old in the new,
And ever to solve the discords true—
Love alone can do.
And ever Love hears the poor-folks' crying,
And ever Love hears the women's sighing,
And ever sweet knighthood's death-defying,
And ever wise childhood's deep implying,
But never a trader's glozing and lying.

'And yet shall Love himself be heard,
Though long deferred, though long deferred:
O'er the modern waste a dove hath whirred:
Music is Love in search of a word.'
1875 1877

EVENING SONG

Look off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands.
O night! divorce our sun and sky apart
Never our lips, our hands.
1876 1884

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone

In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

1877 1884

THE REVENGE OF HAMISH[1]

It was three slim does and a ten-tined buck in the bracken lay;
And all of a sudden the sinister smell of a man,
Awaft on a wind-shift, wavered and ran
Down the hill-side and sifted along through the bracken and passed that way.

Then Nan got a-tremble at nostril; she was the daintiest doe;
In the print of her velvet flank on the velvet fern
She reared, and rounded her ears in turn.
Then the buck leapt up, and his head as a king's to a crown did go

Full high in the breeze, and he stood as if Death had the form of a deer;
And the two slim does long lazily stretching arose,
For their day-dream slowlier came to a close,
Till they woke and were still, breath-bound with waiting and wonder and fear.

Then Alan the huntsman sprang over the hillock, the hounds shot by,
The does and the ten-tined buck made a marvellous bound,
The hounds swept after with never a sound,
But Alan loud winded his horn in sign that the quarry was nigh.

For at dawn of that day proud Maclean of Lochbuy to the hunt had waxed wild,
And he cursed at old Alan till Alan fared off with the hounds
For to drive him the deer to the lower glen-grounds:
'I will kill a red deer,' quoth Maclean, 'in the sight of the wife and the child.'

So gayly he paced with the wife and the child to his chosen stand;
But he hurried tall Hamish the henchman ahead: 'Go turn,'—
Cried Maclean—'if the deer seek to cross to the burn,
Do thou turn them to me: nor fail, lest thy back be red as thy hand.'

Now hard-fortuned Hamish, half blown of his breath with the height of the hill,
Was white in the face when the ten-tined buck and the does
Drew leaping to burn-ward; huskily rose
His shouts, and his nether lip twitched, and his legs were o'er-weak for his will.

So the deer darted lightly by Hamish and bounded away to the burn.
But Maclean never bating his watch tarried waiting below.
Still Hamish hung heavy with fear for to go
All the space of an hour; then he went, and his face was greenish and stern,

And his eye sat back in the socket, and shrunken the eyeballs shone,
As withdrawn from a vision of deeds it were shame to see.
'Now, now, grim henchman, what is't with thee?'
Brake Maclean, and his wrath rose red as a beacon the wind hath upblown.

1 '. . . While alliteration was used among the Anglo-Saxon poets to establish and fortify the main rhythm of the verse, its effect in modern verse is to vary the main rhythm by irregular and unlooked-for groups which break the monotony of the set rhythmic movement.

. . . All alliteration for the sake of alliteration is trifling, and . . . in modern English verse it is to be used with such delicate art that the ear will unconsciously feel its indefinite presence, varying the verse as brief irregular bird-calls, heard in the wood here and there, seem to add a delight to the mass of green.' Lanier, *The Science of English Verse*(N.Y., 1909),310-14.

'Three does and a ten-tined buck made out,'
spoke Hamish, full mild,
'And I ran for to turn, but my breath it
was blown, and they passed;
I was weak, for ye called ere I broke me
my fast.'
Cried Maclean: 'Now a ten-tined buck in
the sight of the wife and the child

I had killed if the gluttonous kern had not
wrought me a snail's own wrong!'
Then he sounded, and down came kins-
men and clansmen all:
'Ten blows, for ten tine, on his back let
fall,
And reckon no stroke if the blood follow
not at the bite of thong!'

So Hamish made bare, and took him his
strokes; at the last he smiled.
'Now I'll to the burn,' quoth Maclean,
'for it still may be,
If a slimmer-paunched henchman will
hurry with me,
I shall kill me the ten-tined buck for a gift
to the wife and the child!'

Then the clansmen departed, by this path
and that; and over the hill
Sped Maclean with an outward wrath for
an inward shame;
And that place of the lashing full quiet
became;
And the wife and the child stood sad; and
bloody-backed Hamish sat still.

But look! red Hamish has risen; quick about
and about turns he.
'There is none betwixt me and the crag-
top!' he screams under breath.
Then, livid as Lazarus lately from death,
He snatches the child from the mother, and
clambers the crag toward the sea.

Now the mother drops breath; she is dumb,
and her heart goes dead for a space,
Till the motherhood, mistress of death,
shrieks, shrieks through the glen,
And that place of the lashing is live with
men,
And Maclean, and the gillie that told him,
dash up in a desperate race.

Not a breath's time for asking; an eye-
glance reveals all the tale untold.
They follow mad Hamish afar up the
crag toward the sea,
And the lady cries: 'Clansmen, run for a
fee!—
Yon castle and lands to the two first hands
that shall hook him and hold

Fast Hamish back from the brink!'—and
ever she flies up the steep,
And the clansmen pant, and they sweat,
and they jostle and strain.
But, mother, 'tis vain; but, father, 'tis
vain;
Stern Hamish stands bold on the brink, and
dangles the child o'er the deep.

Now a faintness falls on the men that run,
and they all stand still.
And the wife prays Hamish as if he were
God, on her knees,
Crying: 'Hamish! O Hamish! but please,
but please
For to spare him!' and Hamish still dangles
the child, with a wavering will.

On a sudden he turns; with a sea-hawk
scream, and a gibe, and a song,
Cries: 'So; I will spare ye the child if, in
sight of ye all,
Ten blows on Maclean's bare back shall
fall,
And ye reckon no stroke if the blood follow
not at the bite of the thong!'

Then Maclean he set hardly his tooth to
his lip that his tooth was red,
Breathed short for a space, said: 'Nay,
but it never shall be!
Let me hurl off the damnable hound in
the sea!'
But the wife: 'Can Hamish go fish us the
child from the sea, if dead?

Say yea!—Let them lash *me*, Hamish?'—
'Nay!' —'Husband, the lashing will
heal;
But, oh, who will heal me the bonny
sweet bairn in his grave?
Could ye cure me my heart with the
death of a knave?
Quick! Love! I will bare thee—so—kneel!'
Then Maclean 'gan slowly to kneel

With never a word, till presently downward
he jerked to the earth.

Then the henchman—he that smote
Hamish—would tremble and lag;
'Strike, hard!' quoth Hamish, full stern,
from the crag;
Then he struck him, and 'One!' sang
Hamish, and danced with the child
in his mirth.

And no man spake beside Hamish; he
counted each stroke with a song.
When the last stroke fell, then he moved
him a pace down the height,
And he held forth the child in the heart-
aching sight
Of the mother, and looked all pitiful grave,
as repenting a wrong.

And there as the motherly arms stretched
out with the thanksgiving prayer—
And there as the mother crept up with a
fearful swift pace,
Till her finger nigh felt of the bairnie's
face—
In a flash fierce Hamish turned round and
lifted the child in the air,

And sprang with the child in his arms from
the horrible height in the sea,
Shrill screeching, 'Revenge!' in the wind-
rush; and pallid Maclean,
Age-feeble with anger and impotent pain,
Crawled up on the crag, and lay flat, and
locked hold of dead roots of a tree—

And gazed hungrily o'er, and the blood from
his back drip-dripped in the brine,
And a sea-hawk flung down a skeleton
fish as he flew,
And the mother stared white on the
waste of blue,
And the wind drove a cloud to seaward, and
the sun began to shine.

1878 1884

OPPOSITION

Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,
Complain no more; for these, O heart,
Direct the random of the will
As rhymes direct the rage of art.

The lute's fixt fret, that runs athwart
The strain and purpose of the string,
For governance and nice consort
Doth bar his wilful wavering.

The dark hath many dear avails;
The dark distils divinest dews;
The dark is rich with nightingales,
With dreams, and with the heavenly Muse.

Bleeding with thorns of petty strife,
I'll ease (as lovers do) my smart
With sonnets to my lady Life
Writ red in issues from the heart.

What grace may lie within the chill
Of favor frozen fast in scorn!
When Good's a-freeze, we call it Ill!
This rosy Time is glacier-born.

Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,
Complain thou not, O heart; for these
Bank-in the current of the will
To uses, arts, and charities.

1879–1880 1884

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER [1]

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him
last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came.

1880 1884

THE CRYSTAL

At midnight, death's and truth's unlocking
time,
When far within the spirit's hearing rolls

1 '"A Ballad of Trees and the Master" was conceived as an interlude of the latest "Hymn of the Marshes," "Sunrise," although written earlier. . . . In Mr. Lanier's final copy the "Ballad" is omitted. It was one of several interludes which he at first designed, but, for some reason, afterwards abandoned.' Mrs. Lanier's note, *Poems of Sidney Lanier* (N.Y., 1929), 255.

The great soft rumble of the course of things—
A bulk of silence in a mask of sound,—
When darkness clears our vision that by day
Is sun-blind, and the soul's a ravening owl
For truth and flitteth here and there about
Low-lying woody tracts of time and oft
Is minded for to sit upon a bough,
Dry-dead and sharp, of some long-stricken tree
And muse in that gaunt place,—'twas then my heart,
Deep in the meditative dark, cried out:

'Ye companies of governor-spirits grave,
Bards, and old bringers-down of flaming news
From steep-wall'd heavens, holy malcontents,
Sweet seers, and stellar visionaries, all
That brood about the skies of poesy,
Full bright ye shine, insuperable stars;
Yet, if a man look hard upon you, none
With total lustre blazeth, no, not one
But hath some heinous freckle of the flesh
Upon his shining cheek, not one but winks
His ray, opaqued with intermittent mist
Of defect; yea, you masters all must ask
Some sweet forgiveness, which we leap to give,
We lovers of you, heavenly-glad to meet
Your largesse so with love, and interplight
Your geniuses with our mortalities.

Thus unto thee, O sweetest Shakspere sole,
A hundred hurts a day I do forgive
('Tis little, but, enchantment! 'tis for thee):
Small curious quibble; Juliet's prurient pun
In the poor, pale face of Romeo's fancied death;
Cold rant of Richard; Henry's fustian roar
Which frights away that sleep he invocates;
Wronged Valentine's unnatural haste to yield:
Too-silly shifts of maids that mask as men
In faint disguises that could ne'er disguise —
Viola, Julia, Portia, Rosalind;
Fatigues most drear, and needless overtax
Of speech obscure that had as lief be plain;
Last I forgive (with more delight, because
'Tis more to do) the labored-lewd discourse
That e'en thy young invention's youngest heir
Besmirched the world with.

Father Homer, thee,
Thee also I forgive thy sandy wastes
Of prose and catalogue, thy drear harangues
That tease the patience of the centuries,
Thy sleazy scrap of story,—but a rogue's
Rape of a light-o'-love,—too soiled a patch
To broider with the gods.

Thee, Socrates,
Thou dear and very strong one, I forgive
Thy year-worn cloak, thine iron stringencies
That were but dandy upside-down, thy words
Of truth that, mildlier spoke had mainlier wrought.

So, Buddha, beautiful! I pardon thee
That all the All thou hadst for needy man
Was Nothing, and thy Best of being was
But not to be.

Worn Dante, I forgive
The implacable hates that in thy horrid hells
Or burn or freeze thy fellows, never loosed
By death, nor time, nor love.

And I forgive
Thee, Milton, those thy comic-dreadful wars
Where, armed with gross and inconclusive steel,
Immortals smite immortals mortalwise
And fill all heaven with folly.

Also thee,
Brave Æschylus, thee I forgive, for that
Thine eye, by bare bright justice basilisked,
Turned not, nor ever learned to look where Love
Stands shining.

So, unto thee, Lucretius mine
(For oh, what heart hath loved thee like to this
That's now complaining?), freely I forgive
Thy logic poor, thine error rich, thine earth
Whose graves eat souls and all.

Yea, all you hearts
Of beauty, and sweet righteous lovers large:
Aurelius fine, oft superfine; mild Saint
A Kempis, overmild; Epictetus,
Whiles low in thought, still with old slavery tinct;
Rapt Behmen, rapt too far; high Swedenborg,
O'ertoppling; Langley, that with but a touch
Of art hadst sung Piers Plowman to the top
Of English songs, whereof 'tis dearest, now,
And most adorable; Cædmon, in the morn,
A-calling angels with the cow-herd's call
That late brought up the cattle; Emerson,
Most wise, that yet, in finding Wisdom, lost
Thy Self, sometimes; tense Keats, with angels' nerves
Where men's were better; Tennyson, largest voice
Since Milton, yet some register of wit
Wanting;—all, all, I pardon, ere 'tis asked,
Your more or less, your little mole that marks
You brother and your kinship seals to man.

But Thee, but Thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
But Thee, O poets' Poet, Wisdom's Tongue,
But Thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest,—
What *if* or *yet*, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
What least defect or shadow of defect,
What rumor, tattled by an enemy,
Of inference loose, what lack of grace
Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's—
Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ?'

1880 1884

FROM HYMNS OF THE MARSHES

I. SUNRISE

IN my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain
Of the live-oak, the marsh, and the main.
The little green leaves would not let me alone in my sleep;
Up-breathed from the marshes, a message of range and of sweep,
Interwoven with waftures of wild sea-liberties, drifting,
Came through the lapped leaves sifting, sifting,
Came to the gates of sleep.
Then my thoughts, in the dark of the dungeon-keep
Of the Castle of Captives hid in the City of Sleep,
Upstarted, by twos and by threes assembling:
The gates of sleep fell a-trembling
Like as the lips of a lady that forth falter *yes*,
Shaken with happiness:
The gates of sleep stood wide.

I have waked, I have come, my beloved! I might not abide:
I have come ere the dawn, O beloved, my live-oaks, to hide
In your gospelling glooms,—to be
As a lover in heaven, the marsh my marsh and the sea my sea.

Tell me, sweet burly-bark'd, man-bodied Tree
That mine arms in the dark are embracing, dost know
From what fount are these tears at thy feet which flow?
They rise not from reason, but deeper inconsequent deeps.
Reason's not one that weeps.
What logic of greeting lies
Betwixt dear over-beautiful trees and the rain of the eyes?

O cunning green leaves, little masters! like as ye gloss
All the dull-tissued dark with your luminous darks that emboss
The vague blackness of night into pattern and plan,
So,
(But would I could know, but would I could know,)
With your question embroid'ring the dark of the question of man,—
So, with your silences purfling this silence of man

While his cry to the dead for some knowledge is under the ban,
Under the ban,—
So, ye have wrought me
Designs on the night of our knowledge,—yea, ye have taught me,
So,
That haply we know somewhat more than we know.

Ye lispers, whisperers, singers in storms,
Ye consciences murmuring faiths under forms,
Ye ministers meet for each passion that grieves,
Friendly, sisterly, sweetheart leaves,
Oh, rain me down from your darks that contain me
Wisdoms ye winnow from winds that pain me,—
Sift down tremors of sweet-within-sweet
That advise me of more than they bring,—repeat
Me the woods-smell that swiftly but now brought breath
From the heaven-side bank of the river of death,—
Teach me the terms of silence,—preach me
The passion of patience,—sift me,—impeach me,—
And there, oh there
As ye hang with your myriad palms upturned in the air,
Pray me a myriad prayer.

My gossip, the owl,—is it thou
That out of the leaves of the low-hanging bough,
As I pass to the beach, art stirred?
Dumb woods, have ye uttered a bird?

. . . . . .

Reverend Marsh, low-couched along the sea,
Old chemist, rapt in alchemy,
Distilling silence,—lo,
That which our father-age had died to know—
The menstruum that dissolves all matter —thou
Hast found it: for this silence, filling now
The globèd charity of receiving space,
This solves us all: man, matter, doubt, disgrace,
Death, love, sin, sanity,
Must in yon silence, clear solution lie.
Too clear! That crystal nothing who'll peruse?
The blackest night could bring us brighter news.
Yet precious qualities of silence haunt
Round these vast margins, ministrant.
Oh, if thy soul's at latter gasp for space,
With trying to breathe no bigger than thy race
Just to be fellow'd, when that thou hast found
No man with room, or grace enough of bound
To entertain that New thou tell'st, thou art,—
'Tis here, 'tis here, thou canst unhand thy heart
And breathe it free, and breathe it free,
By rangy marsh, in lone sea-liberty.

The tide's at full: the marsh with flooded streams
Glimmers, a limpid labyrinth of dreams.
Each winding creek in grave entrancement lies
A rhapsody of morning-stars. The skies
Shine scant with one forked galaxy,—
The marsh brags ten: looped on his breast they lie.

Oh, what if a sound should be made!
Oh, what if a bound should be laid
To this bow-and-string tension of beauty and silence a-spring,—
To the bend of beauty the bow, or the hold of silence the string!
I fear me. I fear me yon dome of diaphanous gleam
Will break as a bubble o'er-blown in a dream,—
Yon dome of too-tenuous tissues of space and of night,
Over-weighted with stars, over-freighted with light,
Over-sated with beauty and silence, will seem
But a bubble that broke in a dream,
If a bound of degree to this grace be laid,
Or a sound or a motion made.

But no: it is made: list! somewhere,—
mystery, where?
In the leaves? in the air?
In my heart? is a motion made:
'Tis a motion of dawn, like a flicker of
shade on shade.
In the leaves 'tis palpable: low multitudi-
nous stirring
Upwinds through the woods; the little ones,
softly conferring,
Have settled my lord's to be looked for; so;
they are still;
But the air and my heart and the earth are
a-thrill,—
And look where the wild duck sails round
the bend of the river,—
And look where a passionate shiver
Expectant is bending the blades
Of the marsh-grass in serial shimmers and
shades,—
And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast
fleeting,
Are beating

The dark overhead as my heart beats,—
and steady and free
Is the ebb-tide flowing from marsh to sea—
(Run home, little streams,
With your lapfulls of stars and
dreams),—
And a sailor unseen is hoisting a-peak,
For list, down the inshore curve of the
creek
How merrily flutters the sail,—
And lo, in the East! Will the East unveil?
The East is unveiled, the East hath
confessed
A flush: 'tis dead; 'tis alive: 'tis dead, ere
the West
Was aware of it: nay, 'tis abiding, 'tis
unwithdrawn:
Have a care, sweet Heaven! 'Tis Dawn.

Now a dream of a flame through that dream
of a flush is uprolled:
To the zenith ascending, a dome of un-
dazzling gold
Is builded, in shape as a bee-hive, from out
of the sea:
The hive is of gold undazzling, but oh, the
Bee,
The star-fed Bee, the build-fire Bee,
Of dazzling gold is the great Sun-Bee
That shall flash from the hive-hole over the
sea.
Yet now the dew-drop, now the morn-
ing gray,
Shall live their little lucid sober day
Ere with the sun their souls exhale
away.
Now in each pettiest personal sphere of dew
The summ'd moon shines complete as in
the blue
Big dew-drop of all heaven: with these lit
shrines
O'er-silvered to the farthest sea-confines,
The sacramental marsh one pious plain
Of worship lies. Peace to the ante-reign
Of Mary Morning, blissful mother mild,
Minded of nought but peace, and of a
child.

Not slower than Majesty moves, for a mean
and a measure
Of motion,—not faster than dateless
Olympian leisure
Might pace with unblown ample garments
from pleasure to pleasure,—
The wave-serrate sea-rim sinks unjarring,
unreeling,
Forever revealing, revealing, revealing,
Edgewise, bladewise, halfwise, wholewise,
—'tis done!
Good-morrow, lord Sun!
With several voice, with ascription one,
The woods and the marsh and the sea and
my soul
Unto thee, whence the glittering stream of
all morrows doth roll,
Cry good and past-good and most heavenly
morrow, lord Sun.

O Artisan born in the purple,—Workman
Heat,—
Parter of passionate atoms that travail to
meet,
And be mixed in the death-cold oneness,—
innermost Guest
At the marriage of elements,—fellow of
publicans,—blest
King in the blouse of flame, that loiterest
o'er
The idle skies yet laborest fast ever-
more,—
Thou, in the fine forge-thunder, thou, in
the beat
Of the heart of a man, thou Motive,—
Laborer Heat:
Yea, Artist, thou, of whose art yon sea's all
news,

With his inshore greens and manifold mid-sea blues,
Pearl-glint, shell-tint, ancientest perfectest hues
Ever shaming the maidens,—lily and rose
Confess thee, and each mild flame that glows
In the clarified virginal bosoms of stones that shine,
It is thine, it is thine:

Thou chemist of storms, whether driving the winds a-swirl
Or a-flicker the subtiler essences polar that whirl
In the magnet earth,—yea, thou with a storm for a heart,
Rent with debate, many-spotted with question, part
From part oft sundered, yet ever a globèd light,
Yet ever the artist, ever more large and bright
Than the eye of a man may avail of:—manifold One,
I must pass from the face, I must pass from the face of the Sun:
Old Want is awake and agog, every wrinkle a-frown;
The worker must pass to his work in the terrible town:
But I fear not, nay, and I fear not the thing to be done;
I am strong with the strength of my lord the Sun:
How dark, how dark soever the race that must needs be run,
I am lit with the Sun.

Oh, never the mast-high run of the seas
Of traffic shall hide thee,
Never the hell-colored smoke of the factories
Hide thee,
Never the reek of the time's fen-politics
Hide thee,
And ever my heart through the night shall with knowledge abide thee,
And ever by day shall my spirit, as one that hath tried thee,
Labor, at leisure, in art,—till yonder beside thee
My soul shall float, friend Sun,
The day being done.

1880 1884

IV. The Marshes of Glynn

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,—
Emerald twilights,—
Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day fire,—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;—

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,—
Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,

And my spirit is grown to a lordly great
compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the
sweep of the marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have
wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth
was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary
unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of
the plain,—

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am
drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as
a belt of the dawn,
For a mete and a mark
To the forest-dark:—
So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low,—
Thus—with your favor—soft, with a
reverent hand,
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of
the land!)
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I
stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of
sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous north-
ward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the
marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and
southward the beach-lines linger and
curl
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to
and follows the firm sweet limbs of
a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving
again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim
gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the
wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh
and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass,
waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked
with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the
terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly
free
From the weighing of fate and the sad dis-
cussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the
sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and
nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer
yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the
rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man
who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of in-
finite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out
of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the
watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the great-
ness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the
marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt
the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends
in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the great-
ness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the great-
ness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal
marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo,
out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-
tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate
channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost
creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million
veins,

That like as with rosy and silvery essences
flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the
marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that
westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents
cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy;
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the
waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that
creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth
below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the
marvelous marshes of Glynn.

1878 1884

GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE

1844–1925

BELLES DEMOISELLES PLANTATION

THE original grantee was Count——, assume the name to be De Charleu; the old Creoles never forgive a public mention. He was the French king's commissary. One day, called to France to explain the lucky accident of the commissariat having burned down with his account-books inside, he left his wife, a Choctaw Comptesse, behind.

Arrived at court, his excuses were accepted, and that tract granted him where afterwards stood Belles Demoiselles Plantation. A man cannot remember every thing! In a fit of forgetfulness he married a French gentlewoman, rich and beautiful, and 'brought her out.' However, 'All's well that ends well'; a famine had been in the colony, and the Choctaw Comptesse had starved, leaving nought but a half-caste orphan family lurking on the edge of the settlement, bearing our French gentlewoman's own new name, and being mentioned in Monsieur's will.

And the new Comptesse—she tarried but a twelve-month, left Monsieur a lovely son, and departed, led out of this vain world by the swamp-fever.

From this son sprang the proud Creole family of De Charleu. It rose straight up, up, up, generation after generation, tall, branchless, slender, palm-like; and finally, in the time of which I am to tell, flowered with all the rare beauty of a century-plant, in Artemise, Innocente, Felicité, the twins Marie and Martha, Leontine and little Septima; the seven beautiful daughters for whom their home had been fitly named Belles Demoiselles.

The Count's grant had once been a long Pointe, round which the Mississippi used to whirl, and seethe, and foam, that it was horrid to behold. Big whirlpools would open and wheel about in the savage eddies under the low bank, and close up again, and others open, and spin, and disappear. Great circles of muddy surface would boil up from hundreds of feet below, and gloss over, and seem to float away,—sink, come back again under water, and with only a soft hiss surge up again, and again drift off, and vanish. Every few minutes the loamy bank would tip down a great load of earth upon its besieger, and fall back a foot,—sometimes a yard,—and the writhing river would press after, until at last the Pointe was quite swallowed up, and the great river glided by in a majestic curve, and asked no more; the bank stood fast, the 'caving' became a forgotten misfortune, and the diminished grant was a long, sweeping, willowy bend, rustling with miles of sugar-cane.

Coming up the Mississippi in the sailing craft of those early days, about the time one first could descry the white spires of the old St. Louis Cathedral, you would be

pretty sure to spy, just over to your right under the levee, Belles Demoiselles Mansion, with its broad veranda and red painted cypress roof, peering over the embankment, like a bird in the nest, half hid by the avenue of willows which one of the departed De Charleus,—he that married a Marot,—had planted on the levee's crown.

The house stood unusually near the river, facing eastward, and standing four-square, with an immense veranda about its sides, and a flight of steps in front spreading broadly downward, as we open arms to a child. From the veranda nine miles of river were seen; and in their compass, near at hand, the shady garden full of rare and beautiful flowers; farther away broad fields of cane and rice, and the distant quarters of the slaves, and on the horizon everywhere a dark belt of cypress forest.

The master was old Colonel De Charleu,—Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charleu-Marot, and 'Colonel' by the grace of the first American governor. Monsieur,—he would not speak to any one who called him 'Colonel,'—was a hoary-headed patriarch. His step was firm, his form erect, his intellect strong and clear, his countenance classic, serene, dignified, commanding, his manners courtly, his voice musical,—fascinating. He had had his vices,—all his life; but had borne them, as his race do, with a serenity of conscience and a cleanness of mouth that left no outward blemish on the surface of the gentleman. He had gambled in Royal Street, drunk hard in Orleans Street, run his adversary through in the duelling-ground at Slaughter-house Point, and danced and quarrelled at the St. Philippe-street-theatre quadroon balls. Even now, with all his courtesy and bounty, and a hospitality which seemed to be entertaining angels, he was bitter-proud and penurious, and deep down in his hard-finished heart loved nothing but himself, his name, and his motherless children. But these!—their ravishing beauty was all but excuse enough for the unbounded idolatry of their father. Against these seven goddesses he never rebelled. Had they even required him to defraud old De Carlos—

I can hardly say.

Old De Carlos was his extremely distant relative on the Choctaw side. With this single exception, the narrow thread-like line of descent from the Indian wife, diminished to a mere strand by injudicious alliances, and deaths in the gutters of old New Orleans, was extinct. The name, by Spanish contact, had become De Carlos; but this one surviving bearer of it was known to all, and known only, as Injin Charlie.

One thing I never knew a Creole to do. He will not utterly go back on the ties of blood, no matter what sort of knots those ties may be. For one reason, he is never ashamed of his or his father's sins; and for another,—he will tell you—he is 'all heart!'

So the different heirs of the De Charleu estate had always strictly regarded the rights and interests of the De Carloses, especially their ownership of a block of dilapidated buildings in a part of the city, which had once been very poor property, but was beginning to be valuable. This block had much more than maintained the last De Carlos through a long and lazy lifetime, and, as his household consisted only of himself, and an aged and crippled negress, the inference was irresistible that he 'had money.' Old Charlie, though by *alias* an 'Injin,' was plainly a dark white man, about as old as Colonel De Charleu, sunk in the bliss of deep ignorance, shrewd, deaf, and, by repute at least, unmerciful.

The Colonel and he always conversed in English. This rare accomplishment, which the former had learned from his Scotch wife,—the latter from up-river traders,—they found an admirable medium of communication, answering, better than French could, a similar purpose to that of the stick which we fasten to the bit of one horse and breast-gear of another, whereby each keeps his distance. Once in a while, too, by way of jest, English found its way among the ladies of Belles Demoiselles, always signifying that their sire was about to have business with old Charlie.

Now a long-standing wish to buy out Charlie troubled the Colonel. He had no desire to oust him unfairly; he was proud of being always fair; yet he did long to engross the whole estate under one title. Out of his luxurious idleness he had conceived this desire, and thought little of so slight an obstacle as being already somewhat in debt to old Charlie for money borrowed, and for which Belles Demoiselles was, of course, good, ten times over. Lots, buildings, rents,

all, might as well be his, he thought, to give, keep, or destroy. 'Had he but the old man's heritage. Ah! he might bring that into existence which his *belles demoiselles* had been begging for, "since many years;" a home,—and such a home,—in the gay city. Here he should tear down this row of cottages, and make his garden wall; there that long ropewalk should give place to vine-covered arbors; the bakery yonder should make way for a costly conservatory; that wine warehouse should come down, and the mansion go up. It should be the finest in the state. Men should never pass it, but they should say—"the palace of the De Charleus; a family of grand descent, a people of elegance and bounty, a line as old as France, a fine old man, and seven daughters as beautiful as happy; whoever dare attempt to marry there must leave his own name behind him!"

'The house should be of stones fitly set, brought down in ships from the land of "les Yankees," and it should have an airy belvedere, with a gilded image tip-toeing and shining on its peak, and from it you should see, far across the gleaming folds of the river, the red roof of Belles Demoiselles, the country-seat. At the big stone gate there should be a porter's lodge, and it should be a privilege even to see the ground.'

Truly they were a family fine enough, and fancy-free enough to have fine wishes, yet happy enough where they were, to have had no wish but to live there always.

To those, who, by whatever fortune, wandered into the garden of Belles Demoiselles some summer afternoon as the sky was reddening towards evening, it was lovely to see the family gathered out upon the tiled pavement at the foot of the broad front steps, gayly chatting and jesting, with that ripple of laughter that comes so pleasingly from a bevy of girls. The father would be found seated in their midst, the centre of attention and compliment, witness, arbiter, umpire, critic, by his beautiful children's unanimous appointment, but the single vassal, too, of seven absolute sovereigns.

Now they would draw their chairs near together in eager discussion of some new step in the dance, or the adjustment of some rich adornment. Now they would start about him with excited comments to see the eldest fix a bunch of violets in his button-hole. Now the twins would move down a walk after some unusual flower, and be greeted on their return with the high pitched notes of delighted feminine surprise.

As evening came on they would draw more quietly about their paternal centre. Often their chairs were forsaken, and they grouped themselves on the lower steps, one above another, and surrendered themselves to the tender influences of the approaching night. At such an hour the passer on the river, already attracted by the dark figures of the broad-roofed mansion, and its woody garden standing against the glowing sunset, would hear the voices of the hidden group rise from the spot in the soft harmonies of an evening song; swelling clearer and clearer as the thrill of music warmed them into feeling, and presently joined by the deeper tones of the father's voice; then, as the daylight passed quite away, all would be still, and he would know that the beautiful home had gathered its nestlings under its wings.

And yet, for mere vagary, it pleased them not to be pleased.

'Arti!' called one sister to another in the broad hall, one morning,—mock amazement in her distended eyes,—'something is goin' to took place!'

'*Comm-e-n-t?*'—long-drawn perplexity.

'Papa is goin' to town!'

The news passed up stairs.

'Inno!'—one to another meeting in a doorway,—'something is goin' to took place!'

'*Qu'est-ce-que c'est!*'—vain attempt at gruffness.

'Papa is goin' to town!'

The unusual tidings were true. It was afternoon of the same day that the Colonel tossed his horse's bridle to his groom, and stepped up to old Charlie, who was sitting on his bench under a China-tree, his head, as was his fashion, bound in a Madras handkerchief. The 'old man' was plainly under the effect of spirits, and smiled a deferential salutation without trusting himself to his feet.

'Eh, well Charlie!'—the Colonel raised his voice to suit his kinsman's deafness,—'how is those times with my friend Charlie?'

'Eh?' said Charlie, distractedly.

'Is that goin' well with my friend Charlie?'

'In de house,—call her,'—making a pretence of rising.

'*Non, non!* I don't want,' the speaker paused to breathe—' 'ow is collection?'

'Oh!' said Charlie, 'every day he make me more poorer!'

'What do you hask for it?' asked the planter indifferently, designating the house by a wave of his whip.

'Ask for w'at?' said Injin Charlie.

'De *house*! What you ask for it?'

'I don't believe,' said Charlie.

'What you would *take* for it!' cried the planter.

'Wait for w'at?'

'What you would *take* for the whole block?'

'I don't want to sell him!'

'I'll give you *ten thousand dollah* for it.'

'Ten t'ousand dollah for dis house? Oh, no, dat is no price. He is blame good old house,—dat old house.' (Old Charlie and the Colonel never swore in presence of each other.) 'Forty years dat old house didn't had to be paint! I easy can get fifty t'ousand dollah for dat old house.'

'Fifty thousand picayunes; yes,' said the Colonel.

'She's a good house. Can make plenty money,' pursued the deaf man.

'That's what make you so rich, eh, Charlie?'

'*Non*, I don't make nothing. Too blame clever, me, dat's de troub'. She's a good house,—make money fast like a steamboat, —make a barrel full in a week! Me, I lose money all de days. Too blame clever.'

'Charlie!'

'Eh?'

'Tell me what you'll take.'

'Make? I don't make *nothing*. Too blame clever.'

'What will you *take*?'

'Oh! I got enough already,—half drunk now.'

'What will you take for the 'ouse?'

'You want to buy her?'

'I don't know,'—(shrug),—'may*be*,—if you sell it cheap.'

'She's a bully old house.'

There was a long silence. By and by old Charlie commenced—

'Old Injin Charlie is a low-down dog.'

'*C'est vrai, oui!*' retorted the Colonel in an undertone.

'He's got Injin blood in him.'

The Colonel nodded assent.

'But he's got some blame good blood, too, ain't it?'

The Colonel nodded impatiently.

'*Bien!* Old Charlie's Injin blood says, "sell de house, Charlie, you blame old fool!" *Mais*, old Charlie's good blood says, "Charlie! if you sell dat old house, Charlie, you low-down old dog, Charlie, what de Compte De Charleu make for you grace-granmuzzer, de dev' can eat you, Charlie, I don't care." '

'But you'll sell it anyhow, won't you, old man?'

'No!' And the *no* rumbled off in muttered oaths like thunder out on the Gulf. The incensed old Colonel wheeled and started off.

'Curl!' (Colonel) said Charlie, standing up unsteadily.

The planter turned with an inquiring frown.

'I'll trade with you!' said Charlie.

The Colonel was tempted. ' 'Ow'l you trade?' he asked.

'My house for yours!'

The old Colonel turned pale with anger. He walked very quickly back, and came close up to his kinsman.

'Charlie!' he said.

'Injin Charlie,'—with a tipsy nod.

But by this time self-control was returning. 'Sell Belles Demoiselles to you?' he said in a high key, and then laughed 'Ho, ho, ho!' and rode away.

A cloud, but not a dark one, overshadowed the spirits of Belles Demoiselles' plantation. The old master, whose beaming presence had always made him a shining Saturn, spinning and sparkling within the bright circle of his daughters, fell into musing fits, started out of frowning reveries, walked often by himself, and heard business from his overseer fretfully.

No wonder. The daughters knew his closeness in trade, and attributed to it his failure to negotiate for the Old Charlie buildings,—so to call them. They began to depreciate Belles Demoiselles. If a north wind blew, it was too cold to ride. If a shower had fallen, it was too muddy to drive. In the morning the garden was wet.

In the evening the grasshopper was a burden. *Ennui* was turned into capital; every headache was interpreted a premonition of ague; and when the native exuberance of a flock of ladies without a want or a care burst out in laughter in the father's face, they spread their French eyes, rolled up their little hands, and with rigid wrists and mock vehemence vowed and vowed again that they only laughed at their misery, and should pine to death unless they could move to the sweet city. 'Oh! the theatre! Oh! Orleans Street! Oh! the masquerade! the Place d'Armes! the ball!' and they would call upon Heaven with French irreverence, and fall into each other's arms, and whirl down the hall singing a waltz, end with a grand collision and fall, and, their eyes streaming merriment, lay the blame on the slippery floor, that would some day be the death of the whole seven.

Three times more the fond father, thus goaded, managed, by accident,—business accident,—to see old Charlie and increase his offer; but in vain. He finally went to him formally.

'Eh?' said the deaf and distant relative. 'For what you want him, eh? Why you don't stay where you halways be 'appy? Dis is a blame old rat-hole,—good for old Injin Charlie,—da's all. Why you don't stay where you be halways 'appy? Why you don't buy somewheres else?'

'That's none of your business,' snapped the planter. Truth was, his reasons were unsatisfactory even to himself.

A sullen silence followed. Then Charlie spoke:

'Well, now, look here; I sell you old Charlie's house.'

'*Bien!* and the whole block,' said the Colonel.

'Hold on,' said Charlie. 'I sell you de 'ouse and de block. Den I go and git drunk, and go to sleep; de dev' comes along and says, "Charlie! old Charlie, you blame low-down old dog, wake up! What you doin' here? Where's de 'ouse what Monsieur le Compte give your grace-gran-muzzer? Don't you see dat fine gentyman, De Charleu, done gone and tore him down and make him over new, you blame old fool, Charlie, you low-down old Injin dog!" '

'I'll give you forty thousand dollars,' said the Colonel.

'For de 'ouse?'

'For all.'

The deaf man shook his head.

'Forty-five!' said the Colonel.

'What a lie? For what you tell me "What a lie?" I don't tell you no lie.'

'*Non, non!* I give you *forty-five*!' shouted the Colonel.

Charlie shook his head again.

'Fifty!'

He shook it again.

The figures rose and rose to—

'Seventy-five!'

The answer was an invitation to go away and let the owner alone, as he was, in certain specified respects, the vilest of living creatures, and no company for a fine gentyman.

The 'fine gentyman' longed to blaspheme,—but before old Charlie!—in the name of pride, how could he? He mounted and started away.

'Tell you what I'll make wid you,' said Charlie.

The other, guessing aright, turned back without dismounting, smiling.

'How much Belles Demoiselles hoes me now?' asked the deaf one.

'One hundred and eighty thousand dollars,' said the Colonel, firmly.

'Yass,' said Charlie. 'I don't want Belles Demoiselles.'

The old Colonel's quiet laugh intimated it made no difference either way.

'But me,' continued Charlie, 'me,—I'm got le Compte De Charleu's blood in me, any'ow,—a litt' bit, any'ow, ain't it?'

The Colonel nodded that it was.

'*Bien!* If I go out of dis place and don't go to Belles Demoiselles, de peoples will say,—dey will say, "Old Charlie he been all doze time tell a blame *lie*! He ain't no kin to his old grace-gran-muzzer, not a blame bit! He don't got nary drop of De Charleu blood to save his blame low-down old Injin soul!" No, sare! What I want wid money, den? No, sare! My place for yours!'

He turned to go into the house, just too soon to see the Colonel make an ugly whisk at him with his riding-whip. Then the Colonel, too, moved off.

Two or three times over, as he ambled homeward, laughter broke through his annoyance, as he recalled old Charlie's family

pride and the presumption of his offer. Yet each time he could but think better of—not the offer to swap, but the preposterous ancestral loyalty. It was so much better than he could have expected from his 'low-down' relative, and not unlike his own whim withal—the proposition which went with it was forgiven.

This last defeat bore so harshly on the master of Belles Demoiselles, that the daughters, reading chagrin in his face, began to repent. They loved their father as daughters can, and when they saw their pretended dejection harassing him seriously they restrained their complaints, displayed more than ordinary tenderness, and heroically and ostentatiously concluded there was no place like Belles Demoiselles. But the new mood touched him more than the old, and only refined his discontent. Here was a man, rich without the care of riches, free from any real trouble, happiness as native to his house as perfume to his garden, deliberately, as it were with premeditated malice, taking joy by the shoulder and bidding her be gone to town, whither he might easily have followed, only that the very same ancestral nonsense that kept Injin Charlie from selling the old place for twice its value prevented him from choosing any other spot for a city home.

But by and by the charm of nature and the merry hearts around him prevailed; the fit of exalted sulks passed off, and after a while the year flared up at Christmas, flickered, and went out.

New Year came and passed; the beautiful garden of Belles Demoiselles put on its spring attire; the seven fair sisters moved from rose to rose; the cloud of discontent had warmed into invisible vapor in the rich sunlight of family affection, and on the common memory the only scar of last year's wound was old Charlie's sheer impertinence in crossing the caprice of the De Charleus. The cup of gladness seemed to fill with the filling of the river.

How high that river was! Its tremendous current rolled and tumbled and spun along, hustling the long funeral flotillas of drift,—and how near shore it came! Men were out day and night, watching the levee. On windy nights even the old Colonel took part, and grew light-hearted with occupation and excitement, as every minute the river threw a white arm over the levee's top, as though it would vault over. But all held fast, and, as the summer drifted in, the water sunk down into its banks and looked quite incapable of harm.

On a summer afternoon of uncommon mildness, old Colonel Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charleu-Marot, being in a mood for revery, slipped the custody of his feminine rulers and sought the crown of the levee, where it was his wont to promenade. Presently he sat upon a stone bench,—a favorite seat. Before him lay his broad-spread fields; near by, his lordly mansion; and being still,—perhaps by female contact,—somewhat sentimental, he fell to musing on his past. It was hardly worthy to be proud of. All its morning was reddened with mad frolic, and far toward the meridian it was marred with elegant rioting. Pride had kept him well-nigh useless, and despised the honors won by valor; gaming had dimmed prosperity; death had taken his heavenly wife; voluptuous ease had mortgaged his lands; and yet his house still stood, his sweet-smelling fields were still fruitful, his name was fame enough; and yonder and yonder, among the trees and flowers, like angels walking in Eden, were the seven goddesses of his only worship.

Just then a slight sound behind him brought him to his feet. He cast his eyes anxiously to the outer edge of the little strip of bank between the levee's base and the river. There was nothing visible. He paused, with his ear toward the water, his face full of frightened expectation. Ha! There came a single plashing sound, like some great beast slipping into the river, and little waves in a wide semi-circle came out from under the bank and spread over the water!

'My God!'

He plunged down the levee and bounded through the low weeds to the edge of the bank. It was sheer, and the water about four feet below. He did not stand quite on the edge, but fell upon his knees a couple of yards away, wringing his hands, moaning and weeping, and staring through his watery eyes at a fine, long crevice just discernible under the matted grass, and curving outward on either hand toward the river.

'My God!' he sobbed aloud; 'my God!' and even while he called, his God an-

swered: the tough Bermuda grass stretched and snapped, the crevice slowly became a gape, and softly, gradually, with no sound but the closing of the water at last, a ton or more of earth settled into the boiling eddy and disappeared.

At the same instant a pulse of the breeze brought from the garden behind, the joyous, thoughtless laughter of the fair mistresses of Belles Demoiselles.

The old Colonel sprang up and clambered over the levee. Then forcing himself to a more composed movement, he hastened into the house and ordered his horse.

'Tell my children to make merry while I am gone,' he left word. 'I shall be back to-night,' and the horse's hoofs clattered down a by-road leading to the city.

'Charlie,' said the planter, riding up to a window, from which the old man's nightcap was thrust out, 'what you say, Charlie, —my house for yours, eh, Charlie—what you say?'

'Ello!' said Charlie; 'from where you come from dis time of to-night?'

'I come from the Exchange in St. Louis Street.' (A small fraction of the truth.)

'What you want?' said matter-of-fact Charlie.

'I come to trade.'

The low-down relative drew the worsted off his ears. 'Oh! yass,' he said with an uncertain air.

'Well, old man Charlie, what you say: my house for yours,—like you said,—eh, Charlie?'

'I dunno,' said Charlie; 'it's nearly mine now. Why you don't stay dare youse'f?'

'*Because I don't want!*' said the Colonel savagely. 'Is dat reason enough for you? You better take me in de notion, old man, I tell you,—yes!'

Charlie never winced; but how his answer delighted the Colonel! Quoth Charlie:

'I don't care—I take him!—*mais*, possession give right off.'

'Not the whole plantation, Charlie; only'—

'I don't care,' said Charlie; 'we easy can fix dat. *Mais*, what for you don't want to keep him? I don't want him. You better keep him.'

'Don't you try to make no fool of me, old man,' cried the planter.

'Oh, no!' said the other. 'Oh, no! but you make a fool of yourself, ain't it?'

The dumbfounded Colonel stared; Charlie went on:

'Yass! Belles Demoiselles is more wort' dan tree block like dis one. I pass by dare since two weeks. Oh, pritty Belles Demoiselles! De cane was wave in de wind, de garden smell like a bouquet, de white-cap was jump up and down on de river; seven *belles demoiselles* was ridin' on horses. "Pritty, pritty, pritty!" says old Charlie. Ah! *Monsieur le père*, 'ow 'appy, 'appy, 'appy!

'Yass!' he continued—the Colonel still staring—'le Compte De Charleu have two familie. One was low-down Choctaw, one was high up *noblesse*. He gave the low-down Choctaw dis old rat-hole; he give Belles Demoiselles to you gran-fozzer; and now you don't be *satisfait*. What I'll do wid Belles Demoiselles? She'll break me in two years, yass. And what you'll do wid old Charlie's house, eh? You'll tear her down and make you'se'f a blame old fool. I rather wouldn't trade!'

The planter caught a big breathful of anger, but Charlie went straight on:

'I rather wouldn't, *mais* I will do it for you;—just the same, like Monsieur le Compte would say, "Charlie, you old fool, I want to shange houses wid you." '

So long as the Colonel suspected irony he was angry, but as Charlie seemed, after all, to be certainly in earnest, he began to feel conscience-stricken. He was by no means a tender man, but his lately-discovered misfortune had unhinged him, and this strange, undeserved, disinterested family fealty on the part of Charlie touched his heart. And should he still try to lead him into the pitfall he had dug? He hesitated;—no, he would show him the place by broad daylight, and if he chose to overlook the 'caving bank,' it would be his own fault;—a trade's a trade.

'Come,' said the planter, 'come at my house to-night; to-morrow we look at the place before breakfast, and finish the trade.'

'For what?' said Charlie.

'Oh, because I got to come in town in the morning.'

'I don't want,' said Charlie. 'How I'm goin' to come dere?'

'I git you a horse at the liberty stable.'

'Well—anyhow—I don't care—I'll go.' And they went.

When they had ridden a long time, and were on the road darkened by hedges of Cherokee rose, the Colonel called behind him to the 'low-down' scion:

'Keep the road, old man.'

'Eh?'

'Keep the road.'

'Oh, yes; all right; I keep my word; we don't goin' to play no tricks, eh?'

But the Colonel seemed not to hear. His ungenerous design was beginning to be hateful to him. Not only old Charlie's unprovoked goodness was prevailing; the eulogy on Belles Demoiselles had stirred the depths of an intense love for his beautiful home. True, if he held to it, the caving of the bank, at its present fearful speed, would let the house into the river within three months; but were it not better to lose it so, than sell his birthright? Again,—coming back to the first thought,—to betray his own blood! It was only Injin Charlie; but had not the De Charleu blood just spoken out in him? Unconsciously he groaned.

After a time they struck a path approaching the plantation in the rear, and a little after, passing from behind a clump of live-oaks, they came in sight of the villa. It looked so like a gem, shining through its dark grove, so like a great glow-worm in the dense foliage, so significant of luxury and gayety, that the poor master, from an overflowing heart, groaned again.

'What?' asked Charlie.

The Colonel only drew his rein, and, dismounting mechanically, contemplated the sight before him. The high, arched doors and windows were thrown wide to the summer air; from every opening the bright light of numerous candelabra darted out upon the sparkling foliage of magnolia and bay, and here and there in the spacious verandas a colored lantern swayed in the gentle breeze. A sound of revel fell on the ear, the music of harps; and across one window, brighter than the rest, flitted, once or twice, the shadows of dancers. But oh! the shadows flitting across the heart of the fair mansion's master!

'Old Charlie,' said he, gazing fondly at his house, 'You and me is both old, eh?'

'Yaas,' said the stolid Charlie.

'And we has both been bad enough in our time, eh, Charlie?'

Charlie, surprised at the tender tone, repeated 'Yaas.'

'And you and me is mighty close?'

'Blame close, yaas.'

'But you never know me to cheat, old man!'

'No,'—impassively.

'And do you think I would cheat you now?'

'I dunno,' said Charlie. 'I don't believe.'

'Well, old man, old man,'—his voice began to quiver,—'I sha'n't cheat you now. My God!—old man, I tell you—you better not make the trade!'

'Because for what?' asked Charlie in plain anger; but both looked quickly toward the house! The Colonel tossed his hands wildly in the air, rushed forward a step or two, and giving one fearful scream of agony and fright, fell forward on his face in the path. Old Charlie stood transfixed with horror. Belles Demoiselles, the realm of maiden beauty, the home of merriment, the house of dancing, all in the tremor and glow of pleasure, suddenly sunk, with one short, wild wail of terror—sunk, sunk, down, down, down, into the merciless, unfathomable flood of the Mississippi.

Twelve long months were midnight to the mind of the childless father; when they were only half gone, he took his bed; and every day, and every night, old Charlie, the 'low-down,' the 'fool,' watched him tenderly, tended him lovingly, for the sake of his name, his misfortunes, and his broken heart. No woman's step crossed the floor of the sick-chamber, whose western dormer-windows overpeered the dingy architecture of old Charlie's block; Charlie and a skilled physician, the one all interest, the other all gentleness, hope, and patience—these only entered by the door; but by the window came in a sweet-scented evergreen vine, transplanted from the caving bank of Belles Demoiselles. It caught the rays of sunset in its flowery net and let them softly in upon the sick man's bed; gathered the glancing beams of the moon at midnight, and often wakened the sleeper to look, with his mindless eyes, upon their pretty silver fragments strewn upon the floor.

By and by there seemed—there was—a

twinkling dawn of returning reason. Slowly, peacefully, with an increase unseen from day to day, the light of reason came into the eyes, and speech became coherent; but withal there came a failing of the wrecked body, and the doctor said that monsieur was both better and worse.

One evening, as Charlie sat by the vine-clad window with his fireless pipe in his hand, the old Colonel's eyes fell full upon his own, and rested there.

'Charl—,' he said with an effort, and his delighted nurse hastened to the bedside and bowed his best ear. There was an unsuccessful effort or two, and then he whispered, smiling with sweet sadness,—

'We didn't trade.'

The truth, in this case, was a secondary matter to Charlie; the main point was to give a pleasing answer. So he nodded his head decidedly, as who should say—'Oh yes, we did, it was a bona-fide swap!' but when he saw the smile vanish, he tried the other expedient and shook his head with still more vigor, to signify that they had not so much as approached a bargain; and the smile returned.

Charlie wanted to see the vine recognized. He stepped backward to the window with a broad smile, shook the foliage, nodded and looked smart.

'I know,' said the Colonel, with beaming eyes, '—many weeks.'

The next day—

'Charl—'

The best ear went down.

'Send for a priest.'

The priest came, and was alone with him a whole afternoon. When he left, the patient was very haggard and exhausted, but smiled and would not suffer the crucifix to be removed from his breast.

One more morning came. Just before dawn Charlie, lying on a pallet in the room, thought he was called, and came to the bedside.

'Old man,' whispered the failing invalid, 'is it caving yet?'

Charlie nodded.

'It won't pay you out.'

'Oh, dat makes not'ing,' said Charlie. Two big tears rolled down his brown face. 'Dat makes not'in'.'

The Colonel whispered once more:

'*Mes belles demoiselles!* in paradise;—in the garden—I shall be with them at sunrise;' and so it was.

1879

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

1848–1908

FROM UNCLE REMUS

UNCLE REMUS INITIATES THE LITTLE BOY[1]

ONE evening recently, the lady whom Uncle Remus calls 'Miss Sally' missed her little seven-year-old. Making search for him through the house and through the yard, she heard the sound of voices in the old man's cabin, and, looking through the window, saw the child sitting by Uncle Remus. His head rested against the old man's arm, and he was gazing with an expression of the most intense interest into the rough, weather-beaten face, that beamed so kindly upon him. This is what 'Miss Sally' heard:

'Bimeby, one day, arter Brer Fox bin doin' all dat he could fer ter ketch Brer Rabbit, en Brer Rabbit bin doin' all he could fer to keep 'im fum it, Brer Fox say to hisse'f dat he'd put up a game on Brer

1 The selections are Chapters 1, 2, and 4 from the revised version of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* (N.Y., 1925). In his introduction to the collection, Harris wrote: 'I am advised by my publishers that this book is to be included in their catalogue of humorous publications, and this friendly warning gives me an opportunity to say that however humorous it may be in effect, its intention is perfectly serious; and, even if it were otherwise, it seems to me that a volume written wholly in dialect must have its solemn, not to say melancholy, features. With respect to the Folk-Lore series, my purpose has been to preserve the legends themselves in their original simplicity, and to wed them permanently to the quaint dialect—if, indeed, it can be called a dialect—through the medium of which they have become a part of the domestic history of every Southern family; and I have endeavored to give to the whole a genuine flavor of the old plantation.

'Each legend has its variants, but in every instance I have retained that particular version which seemed to me to be the most characteristic, and have given it without embellishment and without exaggeration.' Ibid.,vii.

Rabbit, en' he ain't mo'n got de wuds out'n his mouf twel Brer Rabbit come a lopin' up de big road, lookin' des ez plump, en ez fat, en ez sassy ez a Moggin hoss in a barley-patch.

' "Hol' on dar, Brer Rabbit," sez Brer Fox, sezee.

' "I ain't got time, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, sorter mendin' his licks.

' "I wanter have some confab wid you, Brer Rabbit," sez Brer Fox, sezee.

' "All right, Brer Fox, but you better holler fum whar you stan'. I'm monstus full er fleas dis mawnin'," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

' "I seed Brer B'ar yistiddy," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "en he sorter rake me over de coals kaze you en me ain't make frens en live naberly, en I told 'im dat I'd see you."

'Den Brer Rabbit scratch one year wid his off hinefoot sorter jub'usly, en den he ups en sez, sezee:

' "All a settin', Brer Fox. Spose'n you drap roun' ter-morrer en take dinner wid me. We ain't got no great doin's at our house, but I speck de old 'oman en de chilluns kin sorter scramble roun' en git up sump'n fer ter stay yo' stummuck."

' "I'm 'gree'ble, Brer Rabbit," sez Brer Fox, sezee.

' "Den I'll 'pen' on you," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

'Nex' day, Mr. Rabbit an' Miss Rabbit got up soon, 'fo' day, en raided on a gyarden like Miss Sally's out dar, en got some cabbiges, en some roas'n years, en some sparrer-grass, en dey fixed up a smashin' dinner. Bimeby one er de little Rabbits, playin' out in de backyard, come runnin' in hollerin', "Oh, ma! oh, ma! I seed Mr. Fox a comin'!" En den Brer Rabbit he tuck de chilluns by der years en made um set down, en den him and Miss Rabbit sorter dally roun' waitin' for Brer Fox. En dey keep on waitin', but no Brer Fox ain't come. Atter 'while Brer Rabbit goes to de do', easy like, en peep out, en dar, stickin' fum behime de cornder, wuz de tip-een' er Brer Fox tail. Den Brer Rabbit shot de do' en sot down, en put his paws behime his years en begin fer ter sing:

' "De place wharbouts you spill de grease,
Right dar youer boun' ter slide,
An' whar you fine a bunch er ha'r,
You'll sholy fine de hide."

'Nex' day, Brer Fox sont word by Mr. Mink an' skuze hisse'f kaze he wuz too sick fer ter come, en he ax Brer Rabbit fer to come en take dinner wid him, en Brer Rabbit say he wuz 'gree'ble.

'Bimeby, w'en de shadders wuz at der shortes', Brer Rabbit he sorter brush up en santer down ter Brer Fox's house, en w'en he got dar, he hear somebody groanin', en he look in de do' en dar he see Brer Fox settin' up in a rockin' cheer all wrop up wid flannil, en he look mighty weak. Brer Rabbit look all 'roun', he did, but he ain't see no dinner. De dish-pan wuz settin' on de table, en close by wuz a kyarvin' knife.

' "Look like you gwineter have chicken fer dinner, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

' "Yes, Brer Rabbit, deyer nice, en fresh, en tender," sez Brer Fox, sezee.

'Den Brer Rabbit sorter pull his mustarsh, en say: "You ain't got no calamus root, is you, Brer Fox? I done got so now dat I can't eat no chicken 'ceppin she's seasoned up wid calamus root." En wid dat Brer Rabbit lipt out er de do' and dodge 'mong de bushes, en sot dar watchin' fer Brer Fox; en he ain't watch long, nudder, kaze Brer Fox flung off de flannil en crope out er de house en got whar he could cloze in on Brer Rabbit, en bimeby Brer Rabbit holler out: "Oh, Brer Fox! I'll des put yo' calamus root out yer on dis yer stump. Better come git it while hit's fresh," and wid dat Brer Rabbit gallop off home. En Brer Fox ain't never kotch 'im yit, en w'at's mo', honey, he ain't gwineter.'

The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story

'Didn't the fox *never* catch the rabbit, Uncle Remus?' asked the little boy the next evening.

'He come mighty nigh it, honey, sho's you born—Brer Fox did. One day atter Brer Rabbit fool 'im wid dat calamus root, Brer Fox went ter wuk en got 'im some tar, en mix it wid some turkentime, en fix up a contrapshun wat he call a Tar-Baby, en he tuck dish yer Tar-Baby en he sot 'er in de big road, en den he lay off in de bushes fer to see wat de news wuz gwineter be. En he didn't hatter wait long, nudder, kaze bimeby here come Brer Rabbit pacin' down

de road—lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity—dez ez sassy ez a jay-bird. Brer Fox, he lay low. Brer Rabbit come prancin' 'long twel he spy de Tar-Baby, en den he fotch up on his behime legs like he wuz 'stonished. De Tar-Baby, she sot dar, she did, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

' "Mawnin'!" sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. "Nice wedder dis mawnin'," sezee.

'Tar-Baby ain't sayin' nothin', en Brer Fox, he lay low.

' "How duz yo' sym'tums seem ter segashuate?" sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

'Brer Fox, he wink his eye slow, en lay low, en de Tar-Baby, she ain't saying nothin'.

' "How you come on, den? Is you deaf?" sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. "Kaze if you is, I kin holler louder," sezee.

'Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

' "Youer stuck up, dat's w'at you is," says Brer Rabbit, sezee, "en I'm gwineter kyore you, dat's w'at I'm a gwineter do," sezee.

'Brer Fox, he sorter chuckle in his stummuck, he did, but Tar-Baby ain't sayin' nothin'.

' "I'm gwineter larn you howter talk ter 'specttubble fokes ef hit's de las' ack," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. "Ef you don't take off dat hat en tell me howdy, I'm gwineter bus' you wide open," sezee.

'Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

'Brer Rabbit keep on axin' 'im, en de Tar-Baby she keep on sayin' nothin', twel present'y Brer Rabbit draw back wid his fis', he did, en blip he tuck 'er side er de head. Right dar's whar he broke his mer-lasses jug. His fis' stuck, en he can't pull loose. De tar hilt 'im. But Tar-Baby, she stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

' "Ef you don't lemme loose, I'll knock you agin," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, en wid dat he fotch 'er a wipe wid de udder han', en dat stuck. Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nothin', en Brer Fox, he lay low.

' "Tu'n me loose, fo' I kick de natal stuffin' outen you," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, but de Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nothin'. She des hilt on, en den Brer Rabbit lose de use er his feet in de same way. Brer Fox, he lay low. Den Brer Rabbit squall out dat ef de Tar-Baby don't tu'n 'im loose he butt 'er cranksided. En den he butted, en his head got stuck. Den Brer Fox, he sa'ntered fort', lookin' des ez innercent ez one er yo' mammy's mockin' birds.

' "Howdy, Brer Rabbit," sez Brer Fox, sezee. "You look sorter stuck up dis mawnin'," sezee, en den he rolled on de groun', en laughed en laughed twel he couldn't laugh no mo'. "I speck you'll take dinner wid me dis time, Brer Rabbit. I done laid in some calamus root, en I ain't gwineter take no skuse," sez Brer Fox, sezee.'

Here Uncle Remus paused, and drew a two-pound yam out of the ashes.

'Did the fox eat the rabbit?' asked the little boy to whom the story had been told.

'Dat's all de fur de tale goes,' replied the old man. 'He mout, en den agin he moutent. Some say Jedge B'ar come 'long en loosed 'im—some say he didn't. I hear Miss Sally callin'. You better run 'long.'

How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox

'Uncle Remus,' said the little boy one evening, when he had found the old man with little or nothing to do, 'did the fox kill and eat the rabbit when he caught him with the Tar-Baby?'

'Law, honey, ain't I tell you 'bout dat?' replied the old darkey, chuckling slyly. 'I 'clar ter grashus I ought er tole you dat, but old man Nod wuz ridin' on my eyeleds 'twel a leetle mo'n I'd a dis'member'd my own name, en den on to dat here come yo' mammy hollerin' atter you.

'W'at I tell you w'en I fus' begin? I tole you Brer Rabbit wuz a monstus soon creetur; leas'ways dat's w'at I laid out fer ter tell you. Well, den, honey, don't you go en make no udder calkalashuns, kaze in dem days Brer Rabbit en his fambly wuz at de head er de gang w'en enny racket wuz on han', en dar dey stayed. 'Fo' you begins fer ter wipe yo' eyes 'bout Brer Rabbit, you wait en see whar'bouts Brer Rabbit gwineter fetch up at. But dat's needer yer ner dar.

'W'en Brer Fox fine Brer Rabbit mixt up wid de Tar-Baby, he feel mighty good, en he roll on de groun' en laff. Bimeby he up'n say, sezee:

' "Well, I speck I got you dis time, Brer

Rabbit," sezee; "maybe I ain't, but I speck I is. You been runnin' roun' here sassin' atter me a mighty long time, but I speck you done come ter de een' er de row. You bin cuttin' up yo' capers en bouncin' 'roun' in dis neighberhood ontwel you come ter b'leeve yo'se'f de boss er de whole gang. En den youer allers some'rs whar you got no bizness," sez Brer Fox, sezee. "Who ax you fer ter come en strike up a 'quaintance wid dish yer Tar-Baby? En who stuck you up dar whar you iz? Nobody in de roun' worril. You des tuck en jam yo'se'f on dat Tar-Baby widout waitin' fer enny invite," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "en dar you is, en dar you'll stay twel I fixes up a bresh-pile and fires her up, kaze I'm gwineter bobbycue you dis day, sho," sez Brer Fox, sezee.

'Den Brer Rabbit talk mighty 'umble.

' "I don't keer w'at you do wid me, Brer Fox," sezee, "so you don't fling me in dat brier-patch. Roas' me, Brer Fox," sezee, "but don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.

' "Hit's so much trouble fer ter kindle a fier," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "dat I speck I'll hatter hang you," sezee.

' "Hang me des ez high as you please, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "but do fer de Lord's sake don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.

' "I ain't got no string," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "en now I speck I'll hatter drown you," sezee.

' "Drown me des ez deep ez you please, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "but do don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.

' "Dey ain't no water nigh," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "en now I speck I'll hatter skin you," sezee.

' "Skin me, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "snatch out my eyeballs, t'ar out my years by de roots, en cut off my legs," sezee, "but do please, Brer Fox, don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.

'Co'se Brer Fox wanter hurt Brer Rabbit bad ez he kin, so he cotch 'im by de behime legs en slung 'im right in de middle er de brier-patch. Dar wuz a considerbul flutter whar Brer Rabbit struck de bushes, en Brer Fox sorter hang 'roun' fer ter see w'at wuz gwineter happen. Bimeby he hear somebody call 'im, en way up de hill he see Brer Rabbit settin' cross-legged on a chinkapin log koamin' de pitch outen his har wid a chip. Den Brer Fox know dat he bin swop off mighty bad. Brer Rabbit wuz bleedzed fer ter fling back some er his sass, en he holler out:

' "Bred en bawn in a brier-patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a brier-patch!" en wid dat he skip out des ez lively ez a cricket in de embers.'

1881

LAFCADIO HEARN [1]

1850–1904

FROM CHITA

THE LEGEND OF L'ÎLE DERNIÈRE [1]

I

TRAVELLING south from New Orleans to the Islands, you pass through a strange land into a strange sea, by various winding waterways. You can journey to the Gulf by lugger if you please; but the trip may be made much more rapidly and agreeably on some one of those light, narrow steamers, built especially for bayou-travel, which usually receive passengers at a point not far from the foot of old Saint-Louis Street, hard by the sugar-landing, where there is ever a pushing and flocking of steam-craft —all striving for place to rest their white breasts against the levée, side by side,—like great weary swans. But the miniature steamboat on which you engage passage to the Gulf never lingers long in the Mississippi: she crosses the river, slips into some canal-mouth, labors along the artificial channel awhile, and then leaves it with a scream of joy, to puff her free way down many a league of heavily shadowed bayou. Perhaps thereafter she may bear you through the immense silence of drenched ricefields, where the yellow-green level is broken at long intervals by the black silhouette of some irrigating machine;—but, whichever of the five different routes be

1 The selection is the first section of *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* (N.Y., 1889),3–59.

pursued, you will find yourself more than once floating through sombre mazes of swamp-forest,—past assemblages of cypresses all hoary with the parasitic tillandsia, and grotesque as gatherings of fetich-gods. Ever from river or from lakelet the steamer glides again into canal or bayou,—from bayou or canal once more into lake or bay; and sometimes the swamp-forest visibly thins away from these shores into wastes of reedy morass where, even of breathless nights, the quaggy soil trembles to a sound like thunder of breakers on a coast: the storm-roar of billions of reptile voices chanting in cadence,—rhythmically surging in stupendous *crescendo* and *diminuendo*,—a monstrous and appalling chorus of frogs! . . . .

Panting, screaming, scraping her bottom over the sand-bars,—all day the little steamer strives to reach the grand blaze of blue open water below the marsh-lands; and perhaps she may be fortunate enough to enter the Gulf about the time of sunset. For the sake of passengers, she travels by day only; but there are other vessels which make the journey also by night—threading the bayou-labyrinths winter and summer: sometimes steering by the North Star,—sometimes feeling the way with poles in the white season of fogs,—sometimes, again, steering by that Star of Evening which in our sky glows like another moon, and drops over the silent lakes as she passes a quivering trail of silver fire.

Shadows lengthen; and at last the woods dwindle away behind you into thin bluish lines;—land and water alike take more luminous color;—bayous open into broad passes;—lakes link themselves with sea-bays;—and the ocean-wind bursts upon you,—keen, cool, and full of light. For the first time the vessel begins to swing,—rocking to the great living pulse of the tides. And gazing from the deck around you, with no forest walls to break the view, it will seem to you that the low land must have once been rent asunder by the sea, and strewn about the Gulf in fantastic tatters. . . .

Sometimes above a waste of wind-blown prairie-cane you see an oasis emerging,—a ridge or hillock heavily umbraged with the rounded foliage of evergreen oaks:—a *chénière*. And from the shining flood also kindred green knolls arise,—pretty islets, each with its beach-girdle of dazzling sand and shells, yellow-white,—and all radiant with semi-tropical foliage, myrtle and palmetto, orange and magnolia. Under their emerald shadows curious little villages of palmetto huts are drowsing, where dwell a swarthy population of Orientals,—Malay fishermen, who speak the Spanish-Creole of the Philippines as well as their own Tagal, and perpetuate in Louisiana the Catholic traditions of the Indies. There are girls in those unfamiliar villages worthy to inspire any statuary,—beautiful with the beauty of ruddy bronze,—gracile as the palmettoes that sway above them. . . . Further seaward you may also pass a Chinese settlement: some queer camp of wooden dwellings clustering around a vast platform that stands above the water upon a thousand piles;—over the miniature wharf you can scarcely fail to observe a white sign-board painted with crimson ideographs. The great platform is used for drying fish in the sun; and the fantastic characters of the sign, literally translated, mean: '*Heap—Shrimp—Plenty.*' . . . And finally all the land melts down into desolations of sea-marsh, whose stillness is seldom broken, except by the melancholy cry of long-legged birds, and in wild seasons by that sound which shakes all shores when the weird Musician of the Sea touches the bass keys of his mighty organ. . . .

II

Beyond the sea-marshes a curious archipelago lies. If you travel by steamer to the sea-islands to-day, you are tolerably certain to enter the Gulf by Grande Pass—skirting Grande Terre, the most familiar island of all, not so much because of its proximity as because of its great crumbling fort and its graceful pharos: the stationary White-Light of Barataria. Otherwise the place is bleakly uninteresting: a wilderness of wind-swept grasses and sinewy weeds waving away from a thin beach ever speckled with drift and decaying things,—worm-riddled timbers, dead porpoises. Eastward the russet level is broken by the columnar silhouette of the light-house, and again, beyond it, by some puny scrub timber, above which rises the angular ruddy mass of the old brick fort, whose ditches swarm with crabs, and whose sluiceways are half choked by obsolete cannon-shot, now thickly covered

with incrustation of oyster shells. . . . Around all the gray circling of a shark-haunted sea. . . .

Sometimes of autumn evenings there, when the hollow of heaven flames like the interior of a chalice, and waves and clouds are flying in one wild rout of broken gold, —you may see the tawny grasses all covered with something like husks,—wheat-colored husks,—large, flat, and disposed evenly along the lee-side of each swaying stalk, so as to present only their edges to the wind. But, if you approach, those pale husks all break open to display strange splendors of scarlet and seal-brown, with arabesque mottlings in white and black: they change into wondrous living blossoms, which detach themselves before your eyes and rise in air, and flutter away by thousands to settle down farther off, and turn into wheat-colored husks once more . . . a whirling flower-drift of sleepy butterflies!

Southwest, across the pass, gleams beautiful Grande Isle: primitively a wilderness of palmetto (*latanier*);—then drained, diked, and cultivated by Spanish sugar-planters; and now familiar chiefly as a bathing-resort. Since the war the ocean reclaimed its own;—the cane-fields have degenerated into sandy plains, over which tramways wind to the smooth beach;—the plantation-residences have been converted into rustic hotels, and the negro-quarters remodelled into villages of cozy cottages for the reception of guests. But with its imposing groves of oak, its golden wealth of orange-trees, its odorous lanes of oleander, its broad grazing-meadows yellow-starred with wild camomile, Grande Isle remains the prettiest island of the Gulf; and its loveliness is exceptional. For the bleakness of Grande Terre is reiterated by most of the other islands,—Caillou, Cassetête, Calumet, Wine Island, the twin Timbaliers, Gull Island, and the many islets haunted by the gray pelican,—all of which are little more than sand-bars covered with wiry grasses, prairie-cane, and scrub-timber. Last Island (*L'Île Dernière*),—well worthy a long visit in other years, in spite of its remoteness, is now a ghastly desolation twenty-five miles long. Lying nearly forty miles west of Grande Isle, it was nevertheless far more populated a generation ago: it was not only the most celebrated island of the group, but also the most fashionable watering-place of the aristocratic South;—to-day it is visited by fishermen only, at long intervals. Its admirable beach in many respects resembled that of Grande Isle to-day; the accommodations also were much similar, although finer: a charming village of cottages facing the Gulf near the western end. The hotel itself was a massive two-story construction of timber, containing many apartments, together with a large dining-room and dancing-hall. In the rear of the hotel was a bayou, where passengers landed—'Village Bayou' it is still called by seamen;—but the deep channel which now cuts the island in two a little eastwardly did not exist while the village remained. The sea tore it out in one night—the same night when trees, fields, dwellings, all vanished into the Gulf, leaving no vestige of former human habitation except a few of those strong brick props and foundations upon which the frame houses and cisterns had been raised. One living creature was found there after the cataclysm—a cow! But how that solitary cow survived the fury of a storm-flood that actually rent the island in twain has ever remained a mystery. . . .

III

On the Gulf side of these islands you may observe that the trees—when there are any trees—all bend away from the sea; and, even of bright, hot days when the wind sleeps, there is something grotesquely pathetic in their look of agonized terror. A group of oaks at Grande Isle I remember as especially suggestive: five stooping silhouettes in line against the horizon, like fleeing women with streaming garments and wind-blown hair,—bowing grievously and thrusting out arms desperately northward as to save themselves from falling. And they are being pursued indeed;—for the sea is devouring the land. Many and many a mile of ground has yielded to the tireless charging of Ocean's cavalry: far out you can see, through a good glass, the porpoises at play where of old the sugar-cane shook out its million bannerets; and shark-fins now seam deep water above a site where pigeons used to coo. Men build dikes; but the besieging tides bring up their battering-rams—whole

forests of drift—huge trunks of water-oak and weighty cypress. Forever the yellow Mississippi strives to build; forever the sea struggles to destroy;—and amid their eternal strife the islands and the promontories change shape, more slowly, but not less fantastically, than the clouds of heaven.

And worthy of study are those wan battle-grounds where the woods made their last brave stand against the irresistible invasion,—usually at some long point of seamarsh, widely fringed with billowing sand. Just where the waves curl beyond such a point you may discern a multitude of blackened, snaggy shapes protruding above the water,—some high enough to resemble ruined chimneys, others bearing a startling likeness to enormous skeleton-feet and skeleton-hands,—with crustaceous white growths clinging to them here and there like remnants of integument. These are bodies and limbs of drowned oaks,—so long drowned that the shell-scurf is inch-thick upon parts of them. Farther in upon the beach immense trunks lie overthrown. Some look like vast broken columns; some suggest colossal torsos imbedded, and seem to reach out mutilated stumps in despair from their deepening graves;—and beside these are others which have kept their feet with astounding obstinacy, although the barbarian tides have been charging them for twenty years, and gradually torn away the soil above and beneath their roots. The sand around,—soft beneath and thinly crusted upon the surface,—is everywhere pierced with holes made by a beautifully mottled and semi-diaphanous crab, with hairy legs, big staring eyes, and milk-white claws;—while in the green sedges beyond there is a perpetual rustling, as of some strong wind beating among reeds: a marvellous creeping of 'fiddlers,' which the inexperienced visitor might at first mistake for so many peculiar beetles, as they run about sideways, each with his huge single claw folded upon his body like a wing-case. Year by year that rustling strip of green land grows narrower; the sand spreads and sinks, shuddering and wrinkling like a living brown skin; and the last standing corpses of the oaks, ever clinging with naked, dead feet to the sliding beach, lean more and more out of the perpendicular. As the sands subside, the stumps appear to creep; their intertwisted masses of snakish roots seem to crawl, to writhe,—like the reaching arms of cephalopods. . . .

. . . Grande Terre is going: the sea mines her fort, and will before many years carry the ramparts by storm. Grande Isle is going,—slowly but surely: the Gulf has eaten three miles into her meadowed land. Last Island has gone! How it went I first heard from the lips of a veteran pilot, while we sat one evening together on the trunk of a drifted cypress which some high tide had pressed deeply into the Grande Isle beach. The day had been tropically warm; we had sought the shore for a breath of living air. Sunset came, and with it the ponderous heat lifted,—a sudden breeze blew,—lightnings flickered in the darkening horizon,—wind and water began to strive together,—and soon all the low coast boomed. Then my companion began his story; perhaps the coming of the storm inspired him to speak! And as I listened to him, listening also to the clamoring of the coast, there flashed back to me recollection of a singular Breton fancy: that the Voice of the Sea is never one voice, but a tumult of many voices—voices of drowned men,—the muttering of multitudinous dead,—the moaning of innumerable ghosts, all rising, to rage against the living, at the great Witch-call of storms. . . .

IV

The charm of a single summer day on these island shores is something impossible to express, never to be forgotten. Rarely, in the paler zones, do earth and heaven take such luminosity: those will best understand me who have seen the splendor of a West Indian sky. And yet there is a tenderness of tint, a caress of color, in these Gulf-days which is not of the Antilles,—a spirituality, as of eternal tropical spring. It must have been to even such a sky that Xenophanes lifted up his eyes of old when he vowed the Infinite Blue was God;—it was indeed under such a sky that De Soto named the vastest and grandest of Southern havens Espiritu Santo,—the Bay of the Holy Ghost. There is a something unutterable in this bright Gulf-air that compels awe,—something vital, something holy, something pantheistic: and reverentially the mind asks itself if what the eye beholds is not the Πνεύμα indeed, the Infinite Breath, the

Divine Ghost, the great Blue Soul of the Unknown. All, all is blue in the calm,—save the low land under your feet, which you almost forget, since it seems only as a tiny green flake afloat in the liquid eternity of day. Then slowly, caressingly, irresistibly, the witchery of the Infinite grows upon you: out of Time and Space you begin to dream with open eyes,—to drift into delicious oblivion of facts,—to forget the past, the present, the substantial,—to comprehend nothing but the existence of that infinite Blue Ghost as something into which you would wish to melt utterly away forever. . . .

And this day-magic of azure endures sometimes for months together. Cloudlessly the dawn reddens up through a violet east: there is no speck upon the blossoming of its Mystical Rose,—unless it be the silhouette of some passing gull, whirling his sickle-wings against the crimsoning. Ever, as the sun floats higher, the flood shifts its color. Sometimes smooth and gray, yet flickering with the morning gold, it is the vision of John,—the apocalyptic Sea of Glass mixed with fire;—again, with the growing breeze, it takes that incredible purple tint familiar mostly to painters of West Indian scenery;—once more, under the blaze of noon, it changes to a waste of broken emerald. With evening, the horizon assumes tints of inexpressible sweetness,—pearl-lights, opaline colors of milk and fire; and in the west are topaz-glowings and wondrous flushings as of nacre. Then, if the sea sleeps, it dreams of all these,—faintly, weirdly,—shadowing them even to the verge of heaven.

Beautiful, too, are those white phantasmagoria which, at the approach of equinoctial days, mark the coming of the winds. Over the rim of the sea a bright cloud gently pushes up its head. It rises; and others rise with it, to right and left—slowly at first; then more swiftly. All are brilliantly white and flocculent, like loose new cotton. Gradually they mount in enormous line high above the Gulf, rolling and wreathing into an arch that expands and advances,—bending from horizon to horizon. A clear, cold breath accompanies its coming. Reaching the zenith, it seems there to hang poised awhile,—a ghostly bridge arching the empyrean,—upreaching its measureless span from either underside of the world. Then the colossal phantom begins to turn, as on a pivot of air,—always preserving its curvilinear symmetry, but moving its unseen ends beyond and below the sky-circle. And at last it floats away unbroken beyond the blue sweep of the world, with a wind following after. Day after day, almost at the same hour, the white arc rises, wheels, and passes. . . .

. . . Never a glimpse of rock on these low shores;—only long sloping beaches and bars of smooth tawny sand. Sand and sea teem with vitality;—over all the dunes there is a constant susurration, a blattering and swarming of crustacea;—through all the sea there is a ceaseless play of silver lightning,—flashing of myriad fish. Sometimes the shallows are thickened with minute, transparent, crab-like organisms,—all colorless as gelatine. There are days also when countless medusæ drift in—beautiful veined creatures that throb like hearts, with perpetual systole and diastole of their diaphanous envelops: some, of translucent azure or rose, seem in the flood the shadows or ghosts of huge campanulate flowers;—others have the semblance of strange living vegetables,—great milky tubers, just beginning to sprout. But woe to the human skin grazed by those shadowy sproutings and spectral stamens!—the touch of glowing iron is not more painful. . . . Within an hour or two after their appearance all these tremulous jellies vanish mysteriously as they came.

Perhaps, if a bold swimmer, you may venture out alone a long way—once! Not twice!—even in company. As the water deepens beneath you, and you feel those ascending wave-currents of coldness arising which bespeak profundity, you will also begin to feel innumerable touches, as of groping fingers—touches of the bodies of fish, innumerable fish, fleeing towards shore. The farther you advance, the more thickly you will feel them come; and above you and around you, to right and left, others will leap and fall so swiftly as to daze the sight, like intercrossing fountain-jets of fluid silver. The gulls fly lower about you, circling with sinister squeaking cries;—perhaps for an instant your feet touch in the deep something heavy, swift, lithe, that rushes past with a swirling shock. Then the fear of the

Abyss, the vast and voiceless Nightmare of the Sea, will come upon you; the silent panic of all those opaline millions that flee glimmering by will enter into you also. . . .

From what do they flee thus perpetually? Is it from the giant sawfish or the ravening shark?—from the herds of the porpoises, or from the *grande-écaille*,—that splendid monster whom no net may hold,—all helmed and armored in argent plate-mail? —or from the hideous devil-fish of the Gulf,—gigantic, flat-bodied, black, with immense side-fins ever outspread like the pinions of a bat,—the terror of luggermen, the uprooter of anchors? From all these, perhaps, and from other monsters likewise —goblin shapes evolved by Nature as destroyers, as equilibrists, as counterchecks to that prodigious fecundity, which, unhindered, would thicken the deep into one measureless and waveless ferment of being. . . . But when there are many bathers these perils are forgotten,—numbers give courage,—one can abandon one's self, without fear of the invisible, to the long, quivering, electrical caresses of the sea. . . .

V

Thirty years ago, Last Island lay steeped in the enormous light of even such magical days. July was dying;—for weeks no fleck of cloud had broken the heaven's blue dream of eternity; winds held their breath; slow wavelets caressed the bland brown beach with a sound as of kisses and whispers. To one who found himself alone, beyond the limits of the village and beyond the hearing of its voices,—the vast silence, the vast light, seemed full of weirdness. And these hushes, these transparencies, do not always inspire a causeless apprehension: they are omens sometimes—omens of coming tempest. Nature,—incomprehensible Sphinx! —before her mightiest bursts of rage, ever puts forth her divinest witchery, makes more manifest her awful beauty. . . .

But in that forgotten summer the witchery lasted many long days,—days born in rose-light, buried in gold. It was the height of the season. The long myrtle-shadowed village was thronged with its summer population;—the big hotel could hardly accommodate all its guests;—the bathing-houses were too few for the crowds who flocked to the water morning and evening. There were diversions for all,—hunting and fishing parties, yachting excursions, rides, music, games, promenades. Carriage wheels whirled flickering along the beach, seaming its smoothness noiselessly, as if muffled. Love wrote its dreams upon the sand. . . .

. . . Then one great noon, when the blue abyss of day seemed to yawn over the world more deeply than ever before, a sudden change touched the quicksilver smoothness of the waters—the swaying shadow of a vast motion. First the whole sea-circle appeared to rise up bodily at the sky; the horizon-curve lifted to a straight line; the line darkened and approached,—a monstrous wrinkle, an immeasurable fold of green water, moving swift as a cloud-shadow pursued by sunlight. But it had looked formidable only by startling contrast with the previous placidity of the open: it was scarcely two feet high;—it curled slowly as it neared the beach, and combed itself out in sheets of woolly foam with a low, rich roll of whispered thunder. Swift in pursuit another followed—a third —a feebler fourth; then the sea only swayed a little, and stilled again. Minutes passed, and the immeasurable heaving recommenced—one, two, three, four . . . seven long swells this time;—and the Gulf smoothed itself once more. Irregularly the phenomenon continued to repeat itself, each time with heavier billowing and briefer intervals of quiet—until at last the whole sea grew restless and shifted color and flickered green;—the swells became shorter and changed form. Then from horizon to shore ran one uninterrupted heaving—one vast green swarming of snaky shapes, rolling in to hiss and flatten upon the sand. Yet no single cirrus-speck revealed itself through all the violet heights: there was no wind!—you might have fancied the sea had been upheaved from beneath. . . .

And indeed the fancy of a seismic origin for a windless surge would not appear in these latitudes to be utterly without foundation. On the fairest days a southeast breeze may bear you an odor singular enough to startle you from sleep,—a strong, sharp smell as of fish-oil; and gazing at the sea you might be still more startled at the sudden apparition of great oleaginous patches spreading over the water, sheeting over the swells. That is, if you had never heard of

the mysterious submarine oil-wells, the volcanic fountains, unexplored, that well up with the eternal pulsing of the Gulf-Stream. . . .

But the pleasure-seekers of Last Island knew there must have been a 'great blow' somewhere that day. Still the sea swelled; and a splendid surf made the evening bath delightful. Then, just at sundown, a beautiful cloud-bridge grew up and arched the sky with a single span of cottony pink vapor, that changed and deepened color with the dying of the iridescent day. And the cloud-bridge approached, stretched, strained, and swung round at last to make way for the coming of the gale,—even as the light bridges that traverse the dreamy Têche swing open when luggermen sound through their conch-shells the long, bellowing signal of approach.

Then the wind began to blow, with the passing of July. It blew from the northeast, clear, cool. It blew in enormous sighs, dying away at regular intervals, as if pausing to draw breath. All night it blew; and in each pause could be heard the answering moan of the rising surf,—as if the rhythm of the sea moulded itself after the rhythm of the air,—as if the waving of the water responded precisely to the waving of the wind,—a billow for every puff, a surge for every sigh.

The August morning broke in a bright sky;—the breeze still came cool and clear from the northeast. The waves were running now at a sharp angle to the shore: they began to carry fleeces, an innumerable flock of vague green shapes, wind-driven to be despoiled of their ghostly wool. Far as the eye could follow the line of the beach, all the slope was white with the great shearing of them. Clouds came, flew as in a panic against the face of the sun, and passed. All that day and through the night and into the morning again the breeze continued from the northeast, blowing like an equinoctial gale. . . .

Then day by day the vast breath freshened steadily, and the waters heightened. A week later sea-bathing had become perilous: colossal breakers were herding in, like moving leviathan-backs, twice the height of a man. Still the gale grew, and the billowing waxed mightier, and faster and faster overhead flew the tatters of torn cloud. The gray morning of the 9th wanly lighted a surf that appalled the best swimmers: the sea was one wild agony of foam, the gale was rending off the heads of the waves and veiling the horizon with a fog of salt spray. Shadowless and gray the day remained; there were mad bursts of lashing rain. Evening brought with it a sinister apparition, looming through a cloud-rent in the west—a scarlet sun in a green sky. His sanguine disk, enormously magnified, seemed barred like the body of a belted planet. A moment, and the crimson spectre vanished; and the moonless night came.

Then the Wind grew weird. It ceased being a breath; it became a Voice moaning across the world,—hooting,—uttering nightmare sounds,—*Whoo!—whoo!—whoo!* —and with each stupendous owl-cry the mooing of the waters seemed to deepen, more and more abysmally, through all the hours of darkness. From the northwest the breakers of the bay began to roll high over the sandy slope, into the salines;—the village bayou broadened to a bellowing flood. . . . So the tumult swelled and the turmoil heightened until morning,—a morning of gray gloom and whistling rain. Rain of bursting clouds and rain of wind-blown brine from the great spuming agony of the sea.

The steamer *Star* was due from St. Mary's that fearful morning. Could she come? No one really believed it,—no one. And nevertheless men struggled to the roaring beach to look for her, because hope is stronger than reason. . . .

Even to-day, in these Creole islands, the advent of the steamer is the great event of the week. There are no telegraph lines, no telephones: the mailpacket is the only trustworthy medium of communication with the outer world, bringing friends, news, letters. The magic of steam has placed New Orleans nearer to New York than to the Timbaliers, nearer to Washington than to Wine Island, nearer to Chicago than to Barataria Bay. And even during the deepest sleep of waves and winds there will come betimes to sojourners in this unfamiliar archipelago a feeling of lonesomeness that is a fear, a feeling of isolation from the world of men, —totally unlike that sense of solitude which haunts one in the silence of mountain-

heights, or amid the eternal tumult of lofty granitic coasts: a sense of helpless insecurity. The land seems but an undulation of the sea-bed: its highest ridges do not rise more than the height of a man above the salines on either side;—the salines themselves lie almost level with the level of the flood-tides;—the tides are variable, treacherous, mysterious. But when all around and above these ever-changing shores the twin vastnesses of heaven and sea begin to utter the tremendous revelation of themselves as infinite forces in contention, then indeed this sense of separation from humanity appals. . . . Perhaps it was such a feeling which forced men, on the tenth day of August, eighteen hundred and fifty-six, to hope against hope for the coming of the *Star*, and to strain their eyes towards far-off Terrebonne. 'It was a wind you could lie down on,' said my friend the pilot.

. . . 'Great God!' shrieked a voice above the shouting of the storm,—'*she is coming!*' . . . It was true. Down the Atchafalaya, and thence through strange mazes of bayou, lakelet, and pass, by a rear route familiar only to the best of pilots, the frail river-craft had toiled into Caillou Bay, running close to the main shore;—and now she was heading right for the island, with the wind aft, over the monstrous sea. On she came, swaying, rocking, plunging,—with a great whiteness wrapping her about like a cloud, and moving with her moving,—a tempest-whirl of spray;—ghost-white and like a ghost she came, for her smoke-stacks exhaled no visible smoke—the wind devoured it! The excitement on shore became wild;—men shouted themselves hoarse; women laughed and cried. Every telescope and opera-glass was directed upon the coming apparition; all wondered how the pilot kept his feet; all marvelled at the madness of the captain.

But Captain Abraham Smith was not mad. A veteran American sailor, he had learned to know the great Gulf as scholars know deep books by heart: he knew the birthplace of its tempests, the mystery of its tides, the omens of its hurricanes. While lying at Brashear City he felt the storm had not yet reached its highest, vaguely foresaw a mighty peril, and resolved to wait no longer for a lull. 'Boys,' he said, 'we've got to take her out in spite of Hell!' And they 'took her out.' Through all the peril, his men stayed by him and obeyed him. By mid-morning the wind had deepened to a roar,—lowering sometimes to a rumble, sometimes bursting upon the ears like a measureless and deafening crash. Then the captain knew the *Star* was running a race with Death. 'She'll win it,' he muttered;—'she'll stand it. . . . Perhaps they'll have need of me to-night.'

She won! With a sonorous steamchant of triumph the brave little vessel rode at last into the bayou, and anchored hard by her accustomed resting-place, in full view of the hotel, though not near enough to shore to lower her gang-plank. . . . But she had sung her swan-song. Gathering in from the northeast, the waters of the bay were already marbling over the salines and half across the island; and still the wind increased its paroxysmal power.

Cottages began to rock. Some slid away from the solid props upon which they rested. A chimney tumbled. Shutters were wrenched off; verandas demolished. Light roofs lifted, dropped again, and flapped into ruin. Trees bent their heads to the earth. And still the storm grew louder and blacker with every passing hour.

The *Star* rose with the rising of the waters, dragging her anchor. Two more anchors were put out, and still she dragged —dragged in with the flood,—twisting, shuddering, careening in her agony. Evening fell; the sand began to move with the wind, stinging faces like a continuous fire of fine shot; and frenzied blasts came to buffet the steamer forward, sideward. Then one of her hog-chains parted with a clang like the boom of a big bell. Then another! . . . Then the captain bade his men to cut away all her upper works, clean to the deck. Overboard into the seething went her stacks, her pilot-house, her cabins,—and whirled away. And the naked hull of the *Star*, still dragging her three anchors, labored on through the darkness, nearer and nearer to the immense silhouette of the hotel, whose hundred windows were now all aflame. The vast timber building seemed to defy the storm. The wind, roaring round its broad verandas,—hissing through every crevice with the sound and force of steam,—appeared to waste its rage. And in the half-lull between two terrible gusts there came

to the captain's ears a sound that seemed strange in that night of multitudinous terrors . . . a sound of music!

VI

. . . Almost every evening throughout the season there had been dancing in the great hall;—there was dancing that night also. The population of the hotel had been augmented by the advent of families from other parts of the island, who found their summer cottages insecure places of shelter: there were nearly four hundred guests assembled. Perhaps it was for this reason that the entertainment had been prepared upon a grander plan than usual, that it assumed the form of a fashionable ball. And all those pleasure-seekers,—representing the wealth and beauty of the Creole parishes,—whether from Ascension or Assumption, St. Mary's or St. Landry's, Iberville or Terrebonne, whether inhabitants of the multi-colored and many-balconied Creole quarter of the quaint metropolis, or dwellers in the dreamy paradises of the Têche, —mingled joyously, knowing each other, feeling in some sort akin—whether affiliated by blood, connaturalized by caste, or simply interassociated by traditional sympathies of class sentiment and class interest. Perhaps in the more than ordinary merriment of that evening something of nervous exaltation might have been discerned,—something like a feverish resolve to oppose apprehension with gayety, to combat uneasiness by diversion. But the hours passed in mirthfulness; the first general feeling of depression began to weigh less and less upon the guests; they had found reason to confide in the solidity of the massive building; there were no positive terrors, no outspoken fears; and the new conviction of all had found expression in the words of the host himself,—'*Il n'y a rien de mieux à faire que de s'amuser!*' Of what avail to lament the prospective devastation of cane-fields,—to discuss the possible ruin of crops? Better to seek solace in choregraphic harmonies, in the rhythm of gracious motion and of perfect melody, than hearken to the discords of the wild orchestra of storms;—wiser to admire the grace of Parisian toilets, the eddy of trailing robes with its fairy-foam of lace, the ivorine loveliness of glossy shoulders and jewelled throats, the glimmering of satin-slippered feet,—than to watch the raging of the flood without, or the flying of the wrack. . . .

So the music and the mirth went on: they made joy for themselves—those elegant guests;—they jested and sipped rich wines;—they pledged, and hoped, and loved, and promised, with never a thought of the morrow, on the night of the tenth of August, eighteen hundred and fifty-six. Observant parents were there, planning for the future bliss of their nearest and dearest;—mothers and fathers of handsome lads, lithe and elegant as young pines, and fresh from the polish of foreign university training;—mothers and fathers of splendid girls whose simplest attitudes were witcheries. Young cheeks flushed, young hearts fluttered with an emotion more puissant than the excitement of the dance;—young eyes betrayed the happy secret discreeter lips would have preserved. Slave-servants circled through the aristocratic press, bearing dainties and wines, praying permission to pass in terms at once humble and officious,—always in the excellent French which well-trained house-servants were taught to use on such occasions.

. . . Night wore on: still the shining floor palpitated to the feet of the dancers; still the piano-forte pealed, and still the violins sang,—and the sound of their singing shrilled through the darkness, in gasps of the gale, to the ears of Captain Smith, as he strove to keep his footing on the spray-drenched deck of the *Star*.

—'Christ!' he muttered,—'a dance! If that wind whips round south, there'll be another dance! . . . But I guess the *Star* will stay.' . . .

Half an hour might have passed; still the lights flamed calmly, and the violins trilled, and the perfumed whirl went on. . . . And suddenly the wind veered!

Again the *Star* reeled, and shuddered, and turned, and began to drag all her anchors. But she now dragged away from the great building and its lights,—away from the voluptuous thunder of the grand piano, —even at that moment outpouring the great joy of Weber's melody orchestrated by Berlioz: *l'Invitation à la Valse*,—with its marvellous musical swing!

—'Waltzing!' cried the captain. 'God help them!—God help us all now! . . .

The Wind waltzes to-night, with the Sea for his partner!' . . .

O the stupendous Valse-Tourbillon! O the mighty Dancer! One—two—three! From northeast to east, from east to southeast, from southeast to south: then from the south he came, whirling the Sea in his arms. . . .

. . . Some one shrieked in the midst of the revels;—some girl who found her pretty slippers wet. What could it be? Thin streams of water were spreading over the level planking,—curling about the feet of the dancers. . . . What could it be? All the land had begun to quake, even as, but a moment before, the polished floor was trembling to the pressure of circling steps;—all the building shook now; every beam uttered its groan. What could it be? . . .

There was a clamor, a panic, a rush to the windy night. Infinite darkness above and beyond; but the lantern-beams danced far out over an unbroken circle of heaving and swirling black water. Stealthily, swiftly, the measureless sea-flood was rising.

—'*Messieurs—mesdames, ce n'est rien.* Nothing serious, ladies, I assure you. . . . *Mais nous en avons vu bien souvent, les inondations comme celle-ci; ça passe vite!* The water will go down in a few hours, ladies;—it never rises higher than this; *il n'y a pas le moindre danger, je vous dis! Allons! il n'y a*—My God! what is that?' . . .

For a moment there was a ghastly hush of voices. And through that hush there burst upon the ears of all a fearful and unfamiliar sound, as of a colossal cannonade—rolling up from the south, with volleying lightnings. Vastly and swiftly, nearer and nearer it came,—a ponderous and unbroken thunder-roll, terrible as the long muttering of an earthquake.

The nearest mainland,—across mad Caillou Bay to the sea-marshes,—lay twelve miles north; west, by the Gulf, the nearest solid ground was twenty miles distant. There were boats, yes!—but the stoutest swimmer might never reach them now!

Then rose a frightful cry,—the hoarse, hideous, indescribable cry of hopeless fear,—the despairing animal-cry man utters when suddenly brought face to face with Nothingness, without preparation, without consolation, without possibility of respite. . . . *Sauve qui peut!* Some wrenched down the doors; some clung to the heavy banquet-tables, to the sofas, to the billiard-tables:—during one terrible instant,—against fruitless heroisms, against futile generosities,—raged all the frenzy of selfishness, all the brutalities of panic. And then—then came, thundering through the blackness, the giant swells, boom on boom! . . . One crash!—the huge frame building rocks like a cradle, seesaws, crackles. What are human shrieks now?—the tornado is shrieking! Another!—chandeliers splinter; lights are dashed out; a sweeping cataract hurls in: the immense hall rises,—oscillates,—twirls as upon a pivot,—crepitates,—crumbles into ruin. Crash again!—the swirling wreck dissolves into the wallowing of another monster billow; and a hundred cottages overturn, spin in sudden eddies, quiver, disjoint, and melt into the seething.

. . . So the hurricane passed,—tearing off the heads of the prodigious waves, to hurl them a hundred feet in air,—heaping up the ocean against the land,—upturning the woods. Bays and passes were swollen to abysses; rivers regorged; the sea-marshes were changed to raging wastes of water. Before New Orleans the flood of the mile-broad Mississippi rose six feet above highest water-mark. One hundred and ten miles away, Donaldsonville trembled at the towering tide of the Lafourche. Lakes strove to burst their boundaries. Far-off river steamers tugged wildly at their cables,—shivering like tethered creatures that hear by night the approaching howl of destroyers. Smoke-stacks were hurled overboard, pilot-houses torn away, cabins blown to fragments.

And over roaring Kaimbuck Pass,—over the agony of Caillou Bay,—the billowing tide rushed unresisted from the Gulf,—tearing and swallowing the land in its course,—ploughing out deep-sea channels where sleek herds had been grazing but a few hours before,—rending islands in twain,—and ever bearing with it, through the night, enormous vortex of wreck and vast wan drift of corpses. . . .

But the *Star* remained. And Captain Abraham Smith, with a long, good rope about his waist, dashed again and again into that awful surging to snatch victims from death,—clutching at passing hands, heads, garments, in the cataract-sweep of the seas, —saving, aiding, cheering, though blinded by spray and battered by drifting wreck, until his strength failed in the unequal struggle at last, and his men drew him aboard senseless, with some beautiful half-drowned girl safe in his arms. But well-nigh twoscore souls had been rescued by him; and the *Star* stayed on through it all.

Long years after, the weed-grown ribs of her graceful skeleton could still be seen, curving up from the sand-dunes of Last Island, in valiant witness of how well she stayed.

VII

Day breaks through the flying wrack, over the infinite heaving of the sea, over the low land made vast with desolation. It is a spectral dawn: a wan light, like the light of a dying sun.

The wind has waned and veered; the flood sinks slowly back to its abysses—abandoning its plunder,—scattering its piteous waifs over bar and dune, over shoal and marsh, among the silences of the mango-swamps, over the long low reaches of sand-grasses and drowned weeds, for more than a hundred miles. From the shell-reefs of Pointe-au-Fer to the shallows of Pelto Bay the dead lie mingled with the high-heaped drift;—from their cypress groves the vultures rise to dispute a share of the feast with the shrieking frigate-birds and squeaking gulls. And as the tremendous tide withdraws its plunging waters, all the pirates of air follow the great white-gleaming retreat: a storm of billowing wings and screaming throats.

And swift in the wake of gull and frigate-bird the Wreckers come, the Spoilers of the dead,—savage skimmers of the sea,—hurricane-riders wont to spread their canvas-pinions in the face of storms; Sicilian and Corsican outlaws, Manila-men from the marshes, deserters from many navies, Lascars, marooners, refugees of a hundred nationalities,—fishers and shrimpers by name, smugglers by opportunity,—wild channel-finders from obscure bayous and unfamiliar *chénières*, all skilled in the mysteries of these mysterious waters beyond the comprehension of the oldest licensed pilot. . . .

There is plunder for all—birds and men. There are drowned sheep in multitude, heaped carcasses of kine. There are casks of claret and kegs of brandy and legions of bottles bobbing in the surf. There are billiard-tables overturned upon the sand;—there are sofas, pianos, footstools and music-stools, luxurious chairs, lounges of bamboo. There are chests of cedar, and toilet-tables of rosewood, and trunks of fine stamped leather stored with precious apparel. There are *objets de luxe* innumerable. There are children's playthings: French dolls in marvellous toilets, and toy carts, and wooden horses, and wooden spades, and brave little wooden ships that rode out the gale in which the great *Nautilus* went down. There is money in notes and in coin—in purses, in pocket-books, and in pockets: plenty of it! There are silks, satins, laces, and fine linen to be stripped from the bodies of the drowned,—and necklaces, bracelets, watches, finger-rings and fine chains, brooches and trinkets. . . . '*Chi bidizza!—Oh! chi bedda mughieri! Eccu, la bidizza!*' [1] That ball-dress was made in Paris by—But you never heard of him, Sicilian Vicenzu. . . . '*Che bella sposina!*' [2] Her betrothal ring will not come off, Giuseppe; but the delicate bone snaps easily: your oyster-knife can sever the tendon. . . . '*Guardate! chi bedda picciota!*' [3] Over her heart you will find it, Valentino—the locket held by that fine Swiss chain of woven hair—'*Caya man-an!*' [4] And it is not your quadroon bonds-maid, sweet lady, who now disrobes you so roughly; those Malay hands are less deft than hers,—but she slumbers very far away from you, and may not be aroused from her sleep. '*No quita mo! dalaga!—na quita maganda!*' [5] . . . Juan, the fastenings of those diamond ear-drops are much too complicated for your peon fingers: tear them out!—'*Dispense, chulita!*' [6] . . .

1 'What a beauty!—Oh, what a beautiful woman! Look at the beauty!'
2 'What a lovely little bride!'
3 'Look! What a beautiful girl!'
4 'The wealth!'
5 'Have you seen it, lady? Have you seen the beauty?'
6 'Excuse me, my love!'

. . . Suddenly a long, mighty silver trilling fills the ears of all: there is a wild hurrying and scurrying; swiftly, one after another, the overburdened luggers spread wings and flutter away.

Thrice the great cry rings rippling through the gray air, and over the green sea, and over the far-flooded shell-reefs, where the huge white flashes are,—sheet-lightning of breakers,—and over the weird wash of corpses coming in.

It is the steam-call of the relief-boat, hastening to rescue the living, to gather in the dead.

The tremendous tragedy is over!

1889

SARAH ORNE JEWETT

1849–1909

FROM THE COUNTRY OF THE POINTED FIRS

GREEN ISLAND [1]

I

WE were standing where there was a fine view of the harbor and its long stretches of shore all covered by the great army of the pointed firs, darkly cloaked and standing as if they waited to embark. As we looked far seaward among the outer islands, the trees seemed to march seaward still, going steadily over the heights and down to the water's edge.

It had been growing gray and cloudy, like the first evening of autumn, and a shadow had fallen on the darkening shore. Suddenly, as we looked, a gleam of golden sunshine struck the outer islands, and one of them shone out clear in the light, and revealed itself in a compelling way to our eyes. Mrs. Todd was looking off across the bay with a face full of affection and interest. The sunburst upon that outermost island made it seem like a sudden revelation of the world beyond this which some believe to be so near.

'That's where mother lives,' said Mrs. Todd. 'Can't we see it plain? I was brought up out there on Green Island. I know every rock an' bush on it.'

'Your mother!' I exclaimed, with great interest.

'Yes, dear, cert'in; I've got her yet, old's I be. She's one of them spry, light-footed little women; always was, an' lighthearted, too,' answered Mrs. Todd, with satisfaction. 'She's seen all the trouble folks can see, without it's her last sickness; an' she's got a word of courage for everybody. Life ain't spoilt her a mite. She's eighty-six an' I'm sixty-seven, and I've seen the time I've felt a good sight the oldest. "Land sakes alive!" says she, last time I was out to see her. "How you do lurch about steppin' into a bo't!" I laughed so I liked to have gone right over into the water; an' we pushed off, an' left her laughin' there on the shore.'

The light had faded as we watched. Mrs. Todd had mounted a gray rock, and stood there grand and architectural, like a *caryatide*. Presently she stepped down, and we continued our way homeward.

'You an' me, we'll take a bo't an' go out some day and see mother,' she promised me. ' 'Twould please her very much, an' there's one or two sca'ce herbs grows better on the island than anywheres else. I ain't seen their like nowheres here on the main.'

'Now I'm goin' right down to get us each a mug o' my beer,' she announced as we entered the house, 'an' I believe I'll sneak in a little mite o' camomile. Goin' to the funeral an' all, I feel to have had a very wearin' afternoon.'

I heard her going down into the cool little cellar, and then there was considerable delay. When she returned, mug in hand, I noticed the taste of camomile, in spite of my protest; but its flavor was disguised by some other herb that I did not know, and she stood over me until I drank it all and said that I liked it.

'I don't give that to everybody,' said Mrs. Todd kindly; and I felt for a moment as if it were part of a spell and incantation, and as if my enchantress would now begin to look like the cobweb shapes of the arctic town. Nothing happened but a quiet eve-

1 The selection is from *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (Boston, 1896),44–85.

ning and some delightful plans that we made about going to Green Island, and on the morrow there was the clear sunshine and blue sky of another day.

II

One morning, very early, I heard Mrs. Todd in the garden outside my window. By the unusual loudness of her remarks to a passer-by, and the notes of a familiar hymn which she sang as she worked among the herbs, and which came as if directed purposely to the sleepy ears of my consciousness, I knew that she wished I would wake up and come and speak to her.

In a few minutes she responded to a morning voice from behind the blinds. 'I expect you're goin' up to your schoolhouse to pass all this pleasant day; yes, I expect you're goin' to be dreadful busy,' she said despairingly.

'Perhaps not,' said I. 'Why, what's going to be the matter with you, Mrs. Todd?' For I supposed that she was tempted by the fine weather to take one of her favorite expeditions along the shore pastures to gather herbs and simples, and would like to have me keep the house.

'No, I don't want to go nowhere by land,' she answered gayly,—'no, not by land; but I don't know's we shall have a better day all the rest of the summer to go out to Green Island an' see mother. I waked up early thinkin' of her. The wind's light northeast, —'twill take us right straight out; an' this time o' year it's liable to change round southwest an' fetch us home pretty, 'long late in the afternoon. Yes, it's goin' to be a good day.'

'Speak to the captain and the Bowden boy, if you see anybody going by toward the landing,' said I. 'We'll take the big boat.'

'Oh, my sakes! now you let me do things my way,' said Mrs. Todd scornfully. 'No, dear, we won't take no big bo't. I'll just git a handy dory, an' Johnny Bowden an' me, we'll man her ourselves. I don't want no abler bo't than a good dory, an' a nice light breeze ain't goin' to make no sea; an' Johnny's my cousin's son,—mother'll like to have him come; an' he'll be down to the herrin' weirs all the time we're there, anyway; we don't want to carry no men folks havin' to be considered every minute an' takin' up all our time. No, you let me do; we'll just slip out an' see mother by ourselves. I guess what breakfast you'll want's about ready now.'

I had become well acquainted with Mrs. Todd as landlady, herb-gatherer, and rustic philosopher; we had been discreet fellow-passengers once or twice when I had sailed up the coast to a larger town than Dunnet Landing to do some shopping; but I was yet to become acquainted with her as a mariner. An hour later we pushed off from the landing in the desired dory. The tide was just on the turn, beginning to fall, and several friends and acquaintances stood along the side of the dilapidated wharf and cheered us by their words and evident interest. Johnny Bowden and I were both rowing in haste to get out where we could catch the breeze and put up the small sail which lay clumsily furled along the gunwale. Mrs. Todd sat aft, a stern and unbending lawgiver.

'You better let her drift; we'll get there 'bout as quick; the tide'll take her right out from under these old buildin's; there's plenty wind outside.'

'Your bo't ain't trimmed proper, Mis' Todd!' exclaimed a voice from shore. 'You're lo'ded so the bo't'll drag; you can't git her before the wind, ma'am. You set 'midships, Mis' Todd, an' let the boy hold the sheet 'n' steer after he gits the sail up; you won't never git out to Green Island that way. She's lo'ded bad, your bo't is,—she's heavy behind's she is now!'

Mrs. Todd turned with some difficulty and regarded the anxious adviser, my right oar flew out of water, and we seemed about to capsize. 'That you, Asa? Good-mornin',' she said politely. 'I al'ays liked the starn seat best. When'd you git back from up country?'

This allusion to Asa's origin was not lost upon the rest of the company. We were some little distance from shore, but we could hear a chuckle of laughter, and Asa, a person who was too ready with his criticism and advice on every possible subject, turned and walked indignantly away.

When we caught the wind we were soon on our seaward course, and only stopped to underrun a trawl, for the floats of which Mrs. Todd looked earnestly, explaining that her mother might not be prepared for three extra to dinner; it was her brother's

trawl, and she meant to just run her eye along for the right sort of a little haddock. I leaned over the boat's side with great interest and excitement, while she skillfully handled the long line of hooks, and made scornful remarks upon worthless, bait-consuming creatures of the sea as she reviewed them and left them on the trawl or shook them off into the waves. At last we came to what she pronounced a proper haddock, and having taken him on board and ended his life resolutely, we went our way.

As we sailed along I listened to an increasingly delightful commentary upon the islands, some of them barren rocks, or at best giving sparse pasturage for sheep in the early summer. On one of these an eager little flock ran to the water's edge and bleated at us so affectingly that I would willingly have stopped; but Mrs. Todd steered away from the rocks, and scolded at the sheep's mean owner, an acquaintance of hers, who grudged the little salt and still less care which the patient creatures needed. The hot midsummer sun makes prisons of these small islands that are a paradise in early June, with their cool springs and short thick-growing grass. On a larger island, farther out to sea, my entertaining companion showed me with glee the small houses of two farmers who shared the island between them, and declared that for three generations the people had not spoken to each other even in times of sickness or death or birth. 'When the news come that the war was over, one of 'em knew it a week, and never stepped across his wall to tell the others,' she said. 'There, they enjoy it: they've got to have somethin' to interest 'em in such a place; 'tis a good deal more tryin' to be tied to folks you don't like than 'tis to be alone. Each of 'em tells the neighbors their wrongs; plenty likes to hear and tell again; them as fetch a bone'll carry one, an' so they keep the fight a-goin'. I must say I like variety myself; some folks washes Monday an' irons Tuesday the whole year round, even if the circus is goin' by!'

A long time before we landed at Green Island we could see the small white house, standing high like a beacon, where Mrs. Todd was born and where her mother lived, on a green slope above the water, with dark spruce woods still higher. There were crops in the fields, which we presently distinguished from one another. Mrs. Todd examined them while we were still far at sea. 'Mother's late potatoes looks backward; ain't had rain enough so far,' she pronounced her opinion. 'They look weedier than what they call Front Street down to Cowper Centre. I expect brother William is so occupied with his herrin' weirs an' servin' out bait to the schooners that he don't think once a day of the land.'

'What's the flag for, up above the spruces there behind the house?' I inquired, with eagerness.

'Oh, that's the sign for herrin',' she explained kindly, while Johnny Bowden regarded me with contemptuous surprise. 'When they get enough for schooners they raise that flag; an' when 'tis a poor catch in the weir pocket they just fly a little signal down by the shore, an' then the small bo'ts comes and get enough an' over for their trawls. There, look! there she is: mother sees us; she's wavin' somethin' out o' the fore door! She'll be to the landin'-place quick's we are.'

I looked, and could see a tiny flutter in the doorway, but a quicker signal had made its way from the heart on shore to the heart on the sea.

'How do you suppose she knows it's me?' said Mrs. Todd, with a tender smile on her broad face. 'There, you never get over bein' a child long's you have a mother to go to. Look at the chimney, now; she's gone right in an' brightened up the fire. Well, there, I'm glad mother's well; you'll enjoy seein' her very much.'

Mrs. Todd leaned back into her proper position, and the boat trimmed again. She took a firmer grasp of the sheet, and gave an impatient look up at the gaff and the leech of the little sail, and twitched the sheet as if she urged the wind like a horse. There came at once a fresh gust, and we seemed to have doubled our speed. Soon we were near enough to see a tiny figure with handkerchiefed head come down across the field and stand waiting for us at the cove above a curve of pebble beach.

Presently the dory grated on the pebbles, and Johnny Bowden, who had been kept in abeyance during the voyage, sprang out and used manful exertions to haul us up with the next wave, so that Mrs. Todd could make a dry landing.

'You done that very well,' she said, mounting to her feet, and coming ashore somewhat stiffly, but with great dignity, refusing our outstretched hands, and returning to possess herself of a bag which had lain at her feet.

'Well, mother, here I be!' she announced with indifference; but they stood and beamed in each other's faces.

'Lookin' pretty well for an old lady, ain't she?' said Mrs. Todd's mother, turning away from her daughter to speak to me. She was a delightful little person herself, with bright eyes and an affectionate air of expectation like a child on a holiday. You felt as if Mrs. Blackett were an old and dear friend before you let go her cordial hand. We all started together up the hill.

'Now don't you haste too fast, mother,' said Mrs. Todd warningly; ' 'tis a far reach o' risin' ground to the fore door, and you won't set an' get your breath when you're once there, but go trotting about. Now don't you go a mite faster than we proceed with this bag an' basket. Johnny, there, 'll fetch up the haddock. I just made one stop to underrun William's trawl till I come to jes' such a fish's I thought you'd want to make one o' your nice chowders of. I've brought an onion with me that was layin' about on the window-sill at home.'

'That's just what I was wantin',' said the hostess. 'I give a sigh when you spoke o' chowder, knowin' my onions was out. William forgot to replenish us last time he was to the Landin'. Don't you haste so yourself, Almiry, up this risin' ground. I hear you commencin' to wheeze a'ready.'

This mild revenge seemed to afford great pleasure to both giver and receiver. They laughed a little, and looked at each other affectionately, and then at me. Mrs. Todd considerately paused, and faced about to regard the wide sea view. I was glad to stop, being more out of breath than either of my companions, and I prolonged the halt by asking the names of the neighboring islands. There was a fine breeze blowing, which we felt more there on the high land than when we were running before it in the dory.

'Why, this ain't that kitten I saw when I was out last, the one that I said didn't appear likely?' exclaimed Mrs. Todd as we went our way.

'That's the one, Almiry,' said her mother. 'She always had a likely look to me, an' she's right after her business. I never see such a mouser for one of her age. If 't wan't for William, I never should have housed that other dronin' old thing so long; but he sets by her on account of her havin' a bob tail. I don't deem it advisable to maintain cats just on account of their havin' bob tails; they're like all other curiosities, good for them that wants to see 'em twice. This kitten catches mice for both, an' keeps me respectable as I ain't been for a year. She's a real understandin' little help, this kitten is. I picked her from among five Miss Augusta Pennell had over to Burnt Island,' said the old woman, trudging along with the kitten close at her skirts. 'Augusta, she says to me, "Why, Mis' Blackett, you've took the homeliest;" an' says I, "I've got the smartest; I'm satisfied." '

'I'd trust nobody sooner 'n you to pick out a kitten, mother,' said the daughter handsomely, and we went on in peace and harmony.

The house was just before us now, on a green level that looked as if a huge hand had scooped it out of the long green field we had been ascending. A little way above, the dark spruce woods began to climb the top of the hill and cover the seaward slopes of the island. There was just room for the small farm and the forest; we looked down at the fish-house and its rough sheds, and the weirs stretching far out into the water. As we looked upward, the tops of the firs came sharp against the blue sky. There was a great stretch of rough pasture-land round the shoulder of the island to the eastward, and here were all the thick-scattered gray rocks that kept their places, and the gray backs of many sheep that forever wandered and fed on the thin sweet pasturage that fringed the ledges and made soft hollows and strips of green turf like growing velvet. I could see the rich green of bayberry bushes here and there, where the rocks made room. The air was very sweet; one could not help wishing to be a citizen of such a complete and tiny continent and home of fisherfolk.

The house was broad and clean, with a roof that looked heavy on its low walls. It was one of the houses that seem firm-rooted in the ground, as if they were two-thirds below the surface, like icebergs. The front door stood hospitably open in expec-

tation of company, and an orderly vine grew at each side; but our path led to the kitchen door at the house-end, and there grew a mass of gay flowers and greenery, as if they had been swept together by some diligent garden broom into a tangled heap: there were portulacas all along under the lower step and straggling off into the grass, and clustering mallows that crept as near as they dared, like poor relations. I saw the bright eyes and brainless little heads of two half-grown chickens who were snuggled down among the mallows as if they had been chased away from the door more than once, and expected to be again.

'It seems kind o' formal comin' in this way,' said Mrs. Todd impulsively, as we passed the flowers and came to the front doorstep; but she was mindful of the proprieties, and walked before us into the best room on the left.

'Why, mother, if you haven't gone an' turned the carpet!' she exclaimed, with something in her voice that spoke of awe and admiration. 'When'd you get to it? I s'pose Mis' Addicks come over an' helped you, from White Island Landing?'

'No, she didn't,' answered the old woman, standing proudly erect, and making the most of a great moment. 'I done it all myself with William's help. He had a spare day, an' took right holt with me; an' 'twas all well beat on the grass, an' turned, an' put down again afore we went to bed. I ripped an' sewed over two o' them long breadths. I ain't had such a good night's sleep for two years.'

'There, what do you think o' havin' such a mother as that for eighty-six year old?' said Mrs. Todd, standing before us like a large figure of Victory.

As for the mother, she took on a sudden look of youth; you felt as if she promised a great future, and was beginning, not ending, her summers and their happy toils.

'My, my!' exclaimed Mrs. Todd. 'I couldn't ha' done it myself, I've got to own it.'

'I was much pleased to have it off my mind,' said Mrs. Blackett, humbly; 'the more so because along at the first of the next week I wasn't very well. I suppose it may have been the change of weather.'

Mrs. Todd could not resist a significant glance at me, but, with charming sympathy, she forbore to point the lesson or to connect this illness with its apparent cause. She loomed larger than ever in the little old-fashioned best room, with its few pieces of good furniture and pictures of national interest. The green paper curtains were stamped with conventional landscapes of a foreign order,—castles on inaccessible crags, and lovely lakes with steep wooded shores; under-foot the treasured carpet was covered thick with home-made rugs. There were empty glass lamps and crystallized bouquets of grass and some fine shells on the narrow mantelpiece.

'I was married in this room,' said Mrs. Todd unexpectedly; and I heard her give a sigh after she had spoken, as if she could not help the touch of regret that would forever come with all her thoughts of happiness.

'We stood right there between the windows,' she added, 'and the minister stood here. William wouldn't come in. He was always odd about seein' folks, just's he is now. I run to meet 'em from a child, an' William, he'd take an' run away.'

'I've been the gainer,' said the old mother cheerfully. 'William has been son an' daughter both since you was married off the island. He's been 'most too satisfied to stop at home 'long o' his old mother, but I always tell 'em I'm the gainer.'

We were all moving toward the kitchen as if by common instinct. The best room was too suggestive of serious occasions, and the shades were all pulled down to shut out the summer light and air. It was indeed a tribute to Society to find a room set apart for her behests out there on so apparently neighborless and remote an island. Afternoon visits and evening festivals must be few in such a bleak situation at certain seasons of the year, but Mrs. Blackett was of those who do not live to themselves, and who have long since passed the line that divides mere self-concern from a valued share in whatever Society can give and take. There were those of her neighbors who never had taken the trouble to furnish a best room, but Mrs. Blackett was one who knew the uses of a parlor.

'Yes, do come right out into the old kitchen; I shan't make any stranger of you,' she invited us pleasantly, after we had been properly received in the room appointed

to formality. 'I expect Almiry, here, 'll be driftin' out 'mongst the pasture-weeds quick's she can find a good excuse. 'Tis hot now. You'd better content yourselves till you get nice an' rested, an' 'long after dinner the sea-breeze'll spring up, an' then you can take your walks, an' go up an' see the prospect from the big ledge. Almiry'll want to show off everything there is. Then I'll get you a good cup o' tea before you start to go home. The days are plenty long now.'

While we were talking in the best room the selected fish had been mysteriously brought up from the shore, and lay all cleaned and ready in an earthen crock on the table.

'I think William might have just stopped an' said a word,' remarked Mrs. Todd, pouting with high affront as she caught sight of it. 'He's friendly enough when he comes ashore, an' was remarkable social the last time, for him.'

'He ain't disposed to be very social with the ladies,' explained William's mother, with a delightful glance at me, as if she counted upon my friendship and tolerance. 'He's very particular, and he's all in his old fishin'-clothes to-day. He'll want me to tell him everything you said and done, after you've gone. William has very deep affections. He'll want to see you, Almiry. Yes, I guess he'll be in by an' by.'

'I'll search for him by 'n' by, if he don't,' proclaimed Mrs. Todd, with an air of unalterable resolution. 'I know all of his burrows down 'long the shore. I'll catch him by hand 'fore he knows it. I've got some business with William, anyway. I brought forty-two cents with me that was due him for them last lobsters he brought in.'

'You can leave it with me,' suggested the little old mother, who was already stepping about among her pots and pans in the pantry, and preparing to make the chowder.

I became possessed of a sudden unwonted curiosity in regard to William, and felt that half the pleasure of my visit would be lost if I could not make his interesting acquaintance.

III

Mrs. Todd had taken the onion out of her basket and laid it down upon the kitchen table. 'There's Johnny Bowden come with us, you know,' she reminded her mother. 'He'll be hungry enough to eat his size.'

'I've got new doughnuts, dear,' said the little old lady. 'You don't often catch William 'n' me out o' provisions. I expect you might have chose a somewhat larger fish, but I'll try an' make it do. I shall have to have a few extra potatoes, but there's a field full out there, an' the hoe's leanin' against the well-house, in 'mongst the climbin'-beans.' She smiled, and gave her daughter a commanding nod.

'Land sakes alive! Le' 's blow the horn for William,' insisted Mrs. Todd, with some excitement. 'He needn't break his spirit so far's to come in. He'll know you need him for something particular, an' then we can call to him as he comes up the path. I won't put him to no pain.'

Mrs. Blackett's old face, for the first time, wore a look of trouble, and I found it necessary to counteract the teasing spirit of Almira. It was too pleasant to stay indoors altogether, even in such rewarding companionship; besides, I might meet William; and straying out presently, I found the hoe by the well-house and an old splint basket at the woodshed door, and also found my way down to the field where there was a great square patch of rough, weedy potato-tops and tall ragweed. One corner was already dug, and I chose a fat-looking hill where the tops were well withered. There is all the pleasure that one can have in gold-digging in finding one's hopes satisfied in the riches of a good hill of potatoes. I longed to go on; but it did not seem frugal to dig any longer after my basket was full, and at last I took my hoe by the middle and lifted the basket to go back up the hill. I was sure that Mrs. Blackett must be waiting impatiently to slice the potatoes into the chowder, layer after layer, with the fish.

'You let me take holt o' that basket, ma'am,' said a pleasant, anxious voice behind me.

I turned, startled in the silence of the wide field, and saw an elderly man, bent in the shoulders as fishermen often are, gray-headed and clean-shaven, and with a timid air. It was William. He looked just like his mother, and I had been imagining that he was large and stout like his sister, Almira Todd; and, strange to say, my fancy had led me to picture him not far from thirty and a

little loutish. It was necessary instead to pay William the respect due to age.

I accustomed myself to plain facts on the instant, and we said good-morning like old friends. The basket was really heavy, and I put the hoe through its handle and offered him one end; then we moved easily toward the house together, speaking of the fine weather and of mackerel which were reported to be striking in all about the bay. William had been out since three o'clock, and had taken an extra fare of fish. I could feel that Mrs. Todd's eyes were upon us as we approached the house, and although I fell behind in the narrow path, and let William take the basket alone and precede me at some little distance the rest of the way, I could plainly hear her greet him.

'Got round to comin' in, didn't you?' she inquired, with amusement. 'Well, now, that's clever. Didn't know's I should see you to-day, William, an' I wanted to settle an account.'

I felt somewhat disturbed and responsible, but when I joined them they were on the most simple and friendly terms. It became evident that, with William, it was the first step that cost, and that, having once joined in social interests, he was able to pursue them with more or less pleasure. He was about sixty, and not young-looking for his years, yet so undying is the spirit of youth, and bashfulness has such a power of survival, that I felt all the time as if one must try to make the occasion easy for some one who was young and new to the affairs of social life. He asked politely if I would like to go up to the great ledge while dinner was getting ready; so, not without a deep sense of pleasure, and a delighted look of surprise from the two hostesses, we started, William and I, as if both of us felt much younger than we looked. Such was the innocence and simplicity of the moment that when I heard Mrs. Todd laughing behind us in the kitchen I laughed too, but William did not even blush. I think he was a little deaf, and he stepped along before me most businesslike and intent upon his errand.

We went from the upper edge of the field above the house into a smooth, brown path among the dark spruces. The hot sun brought out the fragrance of the pitchy bark, and the shade was pleasant as we climbed the hill. William stopped once or twice to show me a great wasps-nest close by, or some fishhawks'-nest below in a bit of swamp. He picked a few sprigs of late-blooming linnæa as we came out upon an open bit of pasture at the top of the island, and gave them to me without speaking, but he knew as well as I that one could not say half he wished about linnæa. Through this piece of rough pasture ran a huge shape of stone like the great backbone of an enormous creature. At the end, near the woods, we could climb up on it and walk along to the highest point; there above the circle of pointed firs we could look down over all the island, and could see the ocean that circled this and a hundred other bits of island-ground, the mainland shore and all the far horizons. It gave a sudden sense of space, for nothing stopped the eye or hedged one in,—that sense of liberty in space and time which great prospects always give.

'There ain't no such view in the world, I expect,' said William proudly, and I hastened to speak my heartfelt tribute of praise; it was impossible not to feel as if an untraveled boy had spoken, and yet one loved to have him value his native heath.

IV

We were a little late to dinner, but Mrs. Blackett and Mrs. Todd were lenient, and we all took our places after William had paused to wash his hands, like a pious Brahmin, at the well, and put on a neat blue coat which he took from a peg behind the kitchen door. Then he resolutely asked a blessing in words that I could not hear, and we ate the chowder and were thankful. The kitten went round and round the table, quite erect, and, holding on by her fierce young claws, she stopped to mew with pathos at each elbow, or darted off to the open door when a song sparrow forgot himself and lit in the grass too near. William did not talk much, but his sister Todd occupied the time and told all the news there was to tell of Dunnet Landing and its coasts, while the old mother listened with delight. Her hospitality was something exquisite; she had the gift which so many women lack, of being able to make themselves and their houses belong entirely to a guest's pleasure,—that charming surrender for the moment of themselves and whatever belongs to them, so that they make a part of

one's own life that can never be forgotten. Tact is after all a kind of mind-reading, and my hostess held the golden gift. Sympathy is of the mind as well as the heart, and Mrs. Blackett's world and mine were one from the moment we met. Besides, she had that final, that highest gift of heaven, a perfect self-forgetfulness. Sometimes, as I watched her eager, sweet old face, I wondered why she had been set to shine on this lonely island of the northern coast. It must have been to keep the balance true, and make up to all her scattered and depending neighbors for other things which they may have lacked.

When we had finished clearing away the old blue plates, and the kitten had taken care of her share of the fresh haddock, just as we were putting back the kitchen chairs in their places, Mrs. Todd said briskly that she must go up into the pasture now to gather the desired herbs.

'You can stop here an' rest, or you can accompany me,' she announced. 'Mother ought to have her nap, and when we come back she an' William'll sing for you. She admires music,' said Mrs. Todd, turning to speak to her mother.

But Mrs. Blackett tried to say that she couldn't sing as she used, and perhaps William wouldn't feel like it. She looked tired, the good old soul, or I should have liked to sit in the peaceful little house while she slept; I had had much pleasant experience of pastures already in her daughter's company. But it seemed best to go with Mrs. Todd, and off we went.

Mrs. Todd carried the gingham bag which she had brought from home, and a small heavy burden in the bottom made it hang straight and slender from her hand. The way was steep, and she soon grew breathless, so that we sat down to rest awhile on a convenient large stone among the bayberry.

'There, I wanted you to see this,—'tis mother's picture,' said Mrs. Todd; ' 'twas taken once when she was up to Portland, soon after she was married. That's me,' she added, opening another worn case, and displaying the full face of the cheerful child she looked like still in spite of being past sixty. 'And here's William an' father together. I take after father, large and heavy, an' William is like mother's folks, short an' thin. He ought to have made something o' himself, bein' a man an' so like mother; but though he's been very steady to work, an' kept up the farm, an' done his fishin' too right along, he never had mother's snap an' power o' seein' things just as they be. He's got excellent judgment, too,' meditated William's sister, but she could not arrive at any satisfactory decision upon what she evidently thought his failure in life. 'I think it is well to see any one so happy an' makin' the most of life just as it falls to hand,' she said as she began to put the daguerreotypes away again; but I reached out my hand to see her mother's once more, a most flowerlike face of a lovely young woman in quaint dress. There was in the eyes a look of anticipation and joy, a far-off look that sought the horizon; one often sees it in seafaring families, inherited by girls and boys alike from men who spend their lives at sea, and are always watching for distant sails or the first loom of the land. At sea there is nothing to be seen close by, and this has its counterpart in a sailor's character, in the large and brave and patient traits that are developed, the hopeful pleasantness that one loves so in a seafarer.

When the family pictures were wrapped again in a big handkerchief, we set forward in a narrow footpath and made our way to a lonely place that faced northward, where there was more pasturage and fewer bushes, and we went down to the edge of short grass above some rocky cliffs where the deep sea broke with a great noise, though the wind was down and the water looked quiet a little way from shore. Among the grass grew such pennyroyal as the rest of the world could not provide. There was a fine fragrance in the air as we gathered it sprig by sprig and stepped along carefully, and Mrs. Todd pressed her aromatic nosegay between her hands and offered it to me again and again.

'There's nothin' like it,' she said; 'oh no, there's no such pennyr'yal as this in the State of Maine. It's the right pattern of the plant, and all the rest I ever see is but an imitation. Don't it do you good?' And I answered with enthusiasm.

'There, dear, I never showed nobody else but mother where to find this place; 'tis kind of sainted to me. Nathan, my husband, an' I used to love this place when we was

courtin', and'—she hesitated, and then spoke softly— 'when he was lost, 'twas just off shore tryin' to get in by the short channel out there between Squaw Islands, right in sight o' this headland where we'd set an' made our plans all summer long.'

I had never heard her speak of her husband before, but I felt that we were friends now since she had brought me to this place.

' 'Twas but a dream with us,' Mrs. Todd said. 'I knew it when he was gone. I knew it'—and she whispered as if she were at confession—'I knew it afore he started to go to sea. My heart was gone out o' my keepin' before I ever saw Nathan; but he loved me well, and he made me real happy, and he died before he ever knew what he'd had to know if we'd lived long together. 'Tis very strange about love. No, Nathan never found out, but my heart was troubled when I knew him first. There's more women likes to be loved than there is of those that loves. I spent some happy hours right here. I always liked Nathan, and he never knew. But this pennyr'yal always reminded me, as I'd sit and gather it and hear him talkin' —it always would remind me of—the other one.'

She looked away from me, and presently rose and went on by herself. There was something lonely and solitary about her great determined shape. She might have been Antigone alone on the Theban plain. It is not often given in a noisy world to come to the places of great grief and silence. An absolute, archaic grief possessed this country-woman; she seemed like a renewal of some historic soul, with her sorrows and the remoteness of a daily life busied with rustic simplicities and the scents of primeval herbs.

I was not incompetent at herb-gathering, and after a while, when I had sat long enough waking myself to new thoughts, and reading a page of remembrance with new pleasure, I gathered some bunches, as I was bound to do, and at last we met again higher up the shore, in the plain every-day world we had left behind when we went down to the pennyroyal plot. As we walked together along the high edge of the field we saw a hundred sails about the bay and farther seaward; it was mid-afternoon or after, and the day was coming to an end.

'Yes, they're all makin' towards the shore,—the small craft an' the lobster smacks an' all,' said my companion. 'We must spend a little time with mother now, just to have our tea, an' then put for home.'

'No matter if we lose the wind at sundown; I can row in with Johnny,' said I; and Mrs. Todd nodded reassuringly and kept to her steady plod, not quickening her gait even when we saw William come round the corner of the house as if to look for us, and wave his hand and disappear.

'Why, William's right on deck; I didn't know's we should see any more of him!' exclaimed Mrs. Todd. 'Now mother'll put the kettle right on; she's got a good fire goin'.' I too could see the blue smoke thicken, and then we both walked a little faster, while Mrs. Todd groped in her full bag of herbs to find the daguerreotypes and be ready to put them in their places.

V

William was sitting on the side door step, and the old mother was busy making her tea; she gave into my hand an old flowered-glass tea-caddy.

'William thought you'd like to see this, when he was settin' the table. My father brought it to my mother from the island of Tobago; an' here's a pair of beautiful mugs that came with it.' She opened the glass door of a little cupboard beside the chimney. 'These I call my best things, dear,' she said. 'You'd laugh to see how we enjoy 'em Sunday nights in winter: we have a real company tea 'stead o' livin' right along just the same, an' I make somethin' good for a s'prise an' put on some o' my preserves, an' we get a-talkin' together an' have real pleasant times.'

Mrs. Todd laughed indulgently, and looked to see what I thought of such childishness.

'I wish I could be here some Sunday evening,' said I.

'William an' me'll be talkin' about you an' thinkin' o' this nice day,' said Mrs. Blackett affectionately, and she glanced at William, and he looked up bravely and nodded. I began to discover that he and his sister could not speak their deeper feelings before each other.

'Now I want you an' mother to sing,' said Mrs. Todd abruptly, with an air of

command, and I gave William much sympathy in his evident distress.

'After I've had my cup o' tea, dear,' answered the old hostess cheerfully; and so we sat down and took our cups and made merry while they lasted. It was impossible not to wish to stay on forever at Green Island, and I could not help saying so.

'I'm very happy here, both winter an' summer,' said old Mrs. Blackett. 'William an' I never wish for any other home, do we, William? I'm glad you find it pleasant; I wish you'd come an' stay, dear, whenever you feel inclined. But here's Almiry; I always think Providence was kind to plot an' have her husband leave her a good house where she really belonged. She'd been very restless if she'd had to continue here on Green Island. You wanted more scope, didn't you, Almiry, an' to live in a large place where more things grew? Sometimes folks wonders that we don't live together; perhaps we shall some time,' and a shadow of sadness and apprehension flitted across her face. 'The time o' sickness an' failin' has got to come to all. But Almiry's got an herb that's good for everything.' She smiled as she spoke, and looked bright again.

'There's some herb that's good for everybody, except for them that thinks they're sick when they ain't,' announced Mrs. Todd, with a truly professional air of finality. 'Come, William, let's have Sweet Home, an' then mother'll sing Cupid an' the Bee for us.'

Then followed a most charming surprise. William mastered his timidity and began to sing. His voice was a little faint and frail, like the family daguerreotypes, but it was a tenor voice, and perfectly true and sweet. I have never heard Home, Sweet Home sung as touchingly and seriously as he sang it; he seemed to make it quite new; and when he paused for a moment at the end of the first line and began the next, the old mother joined him and they sang together, she missing only the higher notes, where he seemed to lend his voice to hers for the moment and carry on her very note and air. It was the silent man's real and only means of expression, and one could have listened forever, and have asked for more and more songs of old Scotch and English inheritance and the best that have lived from the ballad music of the war. Mrs. Todd kept time visibly, and sometimes audibly, with her ample foot. I saw the tears in her eyes sometimes, when I could see beyond the tears in mine. But at last the songs ended and the time came to say good-by; it was the end of a great pleasure.

Mrs. Blackett, the dear old lady, opened the door of her bedroom while Mrs. Todd was tying up the herb bag, and William had gone down to get the boat ready and to blow the horn for Johnny Bowden, who had joined a roving boat party who were off the shore lobstering.

I went to the door of the bedroom, and thought how pleasant it looked, with its pink-and-white patchwork quilt and the brown unpainted paneling of its woodwork.

'Come right in, dear,' she said. 'I want you to set down in my old quilted rockin'-chair there by the window; you'll say it's the prettiest view in the house. I set there a good deal to rest me and when I want to read.'

There was a worn red Bible on the light-stand, and Mrs. Blackett's heavy silver-bowed glasses; her thimble was on the narrow window-ledge, and folded carefully on the table was a thick striped-cotton shirt that she was making for her son. Those dear old fingers and their loving stitches, that heart which had made the most of everything that needed love! Here was the real home, the heart of the old house on Green Island! I sat in the rocking-chair, and felt that it was a place of peace, the little brown bedroom, and the quiet outlook upon field and sea and sky.

I looked up, and we understood each other without speaking. 'I shall like to think o' your settin' here to-day,' said Mrs. Blackett. 'I want you to come again. It has been so pleasant for William.'

The wind served us all the way home, and did not fall or let the sail slacken until we were close to the shore. We had a generous freight of lobsters in the boat, and new potatoes which William had put aboard, and what Mrs. Todd proudly called a full 'kag' of prime number one salted mackerel; and when we landed we had to make business arrangements to have these conveyed to her house in a wheelbarrow.

I never shall forget the day at Green Island. The town of Dunnet Landing seemed large and noisy and oppressive as we came

ashore. Such is the power of contrast; for the village was so still that I could hear the shy whippoorwills singing that night as I lay awake in my downstairs bedroom, and the scent of Mrs. Todd's herb garden under the window blew in again and again with every gentle rising of the sea-breeze.

1896

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

1837–1920

FROM CRITICISM AND FICTION

THE NOVEL [1]

I

IN General Grant's confession of novel-reading there is a sort of inference that he had wasted his time, or else the guilty conscience of the novelist in me imagines such an inference. But however this may be, there is certainly no question concerning the intention of a correspondent who once wrote to me after reading some rather bragging claims I had made for fiction as a mental and moral means. 'I have very grave doubts,' he said, 'as to the whole list of magnificent things that you seem to think novels have done for the race, and can witness in myself many evil things which they have done for me. Whatever in my mental make-up is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious, I can trace to the perusal of some work of fiction. Worse than that, they beget such high-strung and supersensitive ideas of life that plain industry and plodding perseverance are despised, and matter-of-fact poverty, or every-day, commonplace distress, meets with no sympathy, if indeed noticed at all, by one who has wept over the impossibly accumulated sufferings of some gaudy hero or heroine.'

I am not sure that I had the controversy with this correspondent that he seemed to suppose; but novels are now so fully accepted by every one pretending to cultivated taste—and they really form the whole intellectual life of such immense numbers of people, without question of their influence, good or bad, upon the mind—that it is refreshing to have them frankly denounced, and to be invited to revise one's ideas and feelings in regard to them. A little honesty, or a great deal of honesty, in this quest will do the novel, as we hope yet to have it, and as we have already begun to have it, no harm; and for my own part I will confess that I believe fiction in the past to have been largely injurious, as I believe the stage play to be still almost wholly injurious, through its falsehood, its folly, its wantonness, and its aimlessness. It may be safely assumed that most of the novel-reading which people fancy an intellectual pastime is the emptiest dissipation, hardly more related to thought or the wholesome exercise of the mental faculties than opium-eating; in either case the brain is drugged, and left weaker and crazier for the debauch. If this may be called the negative result of the fiction habit, the positive injury that most novels work is by no means so easily to be measured in the case of young men whose character they help so much to form or deform, and the women of all ages whom they keep so much in ignorance of the world they misrepresent. Grown men have little harm from them, but in the other cases, which are the vast majority, they hurt because they are not true—not because they are malevolent, but because they are idle lies about human nature and the social fabric, which it behooves us to know and to understand, that we may deal justly with ourselves and with one another. One need not go so far as our correspondent, and trace to the fiction habit 'whatever is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious,' in one's life; bad as the fiction habit is it is probably not responsible for the whole sum of evil in its victims, and I believe that if the reader will use care in choosing from this fungus-growth with which the fields of literature teem every day, he may nourish himself as with the true mushroom, at no risk from the poisonous species.

The tests are very plain and simple, and they are perfectly infallible. If a novel flat-

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is Chapters 18–19, and 24 of *Criticism and Fiction*(N.Y., 1891).

ters the passions, and exalts them above the principles, it is poisonous; it may not kill, but it will certainly injure; and this test will alone exclude an entire class of fiction, of which eminent examples will occur to all. Then the whole spawn of so-called unmoral romances, which imagine a world where the sins of sense are unvisited by the penalties following, swift or slow, but inexorably sure, in the real world, are deadly poison: these do kill. The novels that merely tickle our prejudices and lull our judgment, or that coddle our sensibilities or pamper our gross appetite for the marvellous are not so fatal, but they are innutritious, and clog the soul with unwholesome vapors of all kinds. No doubt they too help to weaken the moral fibre, and make their readers indifferent to 'plodding perseverance and plain industry,' and to 'matter-of-fact poverty and commonplace distress.'

Without taking them too seriously, it still must be owned that the 'gaudy hero and heroine' are to blame for a great deal of harm in the world. That heroine long taught by example, if not precept, that Love, or the passion or fancy she mistook for it, was the chief interest of a life, which is really concerned with a great many other things; that it was lasting in the way she knew it; that it was worthy of every sacrifice, and was altogether a finer thing than prudence, obedience, reason; that love alone was glorious and beautiful, and these were mean and ugly in comparison with it. More lately she has begun to idolize and illustrate Duty, and she is hardly less mischievous in this new role, opposing duty, as she did love, to prudence, obedience, and reason. The stock hero, whom, if we met him, we could not fail to see was a most deplorable person, has undoubtedly imposed himself upon the victims of the fiction habit as admirable. With him, too, love was and is the great affair, whether in its old romantic phase of chivalrous achievement or manifold suffering for love's sake, or its more recent development of the 'virile,' the bullying, and the brutal, or its still more recent agonies of self-sacrifice, as idle and useless as the moral experiences of the insane asylums. With his vain posturings and his ridiculous splendor he is really a painted barbarian, the prey of his passions and his delusions, full of obsolete ideals, and the motives and ethics of a savage, which the guilty author of his being does his best—or his worst—in spite of his own light and knowledge, to foist upon the reader as something generous and noble. I am not merely bringing this charge against that sort of fiction which is beneath literature and outside of it, 'the shoreless lakes of ditch-water,' whose miasms fill the air below the empyrean where the great ones sit; but I am accusing the work of some of the most famous, who have, in this instance or in that, sinned against the truth, which can alone exalt and purify men. I do not say that they have constantly done so, or even commonly done so; but that they have done so at all marks them as of the past, to be read with the due historical allowance for their epoch and their conditions. For I believe that, while inferior writers will and must continue to imitate them in their foibles and their errors, no one hereafter will be able to achieve greatness who is false to humanity, either in its facts or its duties. The light of civilization has already broken even upon the novel, and no conscientious man can now set about painting an image of life without perpetual question of the verity of his work, and without feeling bound to distinguish so clearly that no reader of his may be misled, between what is right and what is wrong, what is noble and what is base, what is health and what is perdition, in the actions and the characters he portrays.

The fiction that aims merely to entertain—the fiction that is to serious fiction as the opera-bouffe, the ballet, and the pantomime are to the true drama—need not feel the burden of this obligation so deeply; but even such fiction will not be gay or trivial to any reader's hurt, and criticism will hold it to account if it passes from painting to teaching folly.

More and more not only the criticism which prints its opinions, but the infinitely vaster and powerfuler criticism which thinks and feels them merely, will make this demand. I confess that I do not care to judge any work of the imagination without first of all applying this test to it. We must ask ourselves before we ask anything else, Is it true?—true to the motives, the impulses, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women? This truth, which necessarily includes the highest morality

and the highest artistry—this truth given, the book cannot be wicked and cannot be weak; and without it all graces of style and feats of invention and cunning of construction are so many superfluities of naughtiness. It is well for the truth to have all these, and shine in them, but for falsehood they are merely meretricious, the bedizenment of the wanton; they atone for nothing, they count for nothing. But in fact they come naturally of truth, and grace it without solicitation; they are added unto it. In the whole range of fiction we know of no true picture of life—that is, of human nature—which is not also a masterpiece of literature, full of divine and natural beauty. It may have no touch or tint of this special civilization or of that; it had better have this local color well ascertained; but the truth is deeper and finer than aspects, and if the book is true to what men and women know of one another's souls it will be true enough, and it will be great and beautiful. It is the conception of literature as something apart from life, superfinely aloof, which makes it really unimportant to the great mass of mankind, without a message or a meaning for them; and it is the notion that a novel may be false in its portrayal of causes and effects that makes literary art contemptible even to those whom it amuses, that forbids them to regard the novelist as a serious or right-minded person. If they do not in some moment of indignation cry out against all novels, as my correspondent does, they remain besotted in the fume of the delusions purveyed to them, with no higher feeling for the author than such maudlin affection as the habitué of an opium-joint perhaps knows for the attendant who fills his pipe with the drug.

Or, as in the case of another correspondent who writes that in his youth he 'read a great many novels, but always regarded it as an amusement, like horse-racing and card-playing,' for which he had no time when he entered upon the serious business of life, it renders them merely contemptuous. His view of the matter may be commended to the brotherhood and sisterhood of novelists as full of wholesome if bitter suggestion; and we urge them not to dismiss it with high literary scorn as that of some Bœotian dull to the beauty of art. Refuse it as we may, it is still the feeling of the vast majority of people for whom life is earnest, and who find only a distorted and misleading likeness of it in our books. We may fold ourselves in our scholars' gowns, and close the doors of our studies, and affect to despise this rude voice; but we cannot shut it out. It comes to us from wherever men are at work, from wherever they are truly living, and accuses us of unfaithfulness, of triviality, of mere stage-play; and none of us can escape conviction except he prove himself worthy of his time —a time in which the great masters have brought literature back to life, and filled its ebbing veins with the red tides of reality. We cannot all equal them; we need not copy them; but we can all go to the sources of their inspiration and their power; and to draw from these no one need go far—no one need really go out of himself.

Fifty years ago, Carlyle, in whom the truth was always alive, but in whom it was then unperverted by suffering, by celebrity, and by despair, wrote in his study of Diderot: 'Were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of novel-writers and such like must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things: either retire into the nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes, or else, what were far better, sweep their novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake themselves with such faculty as they have to understand and record what is true, of which surely there is, and will forever be, a whole infinitude unknown to us of infinite importance to us? Poetry, it will more and more come to be understood, is nothing but higher knowledge; and the only genuine Romance (for grown persons), Reality.'

If, after half a century, fiction still mainly works for 'children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes,' it is nevertheless one of the hopefulest signs of the world's progress that it has begun to work for 'grown persons,' and if not exactly in the way that Carlyle might have solely intended in urging its writers to compile memoirs instead of building the 'novel-fabric,' still it has, in the highest and widest sense, already made Reality its Romance. I cannot judge it, I do not even care for it, except as it has done this; and I car hardly

conceive of a literary self-respect in these days compatible with the old trade of make-believe, with the production of the kind of fiction which is too much honored by classification with card-playing and horse-racing. But let fiction cease to lie about life; let it portray men and women as they are, actuated by the motives and the passions in the measure we all know; let it leave off painting dolls and working them by springs and wires; let it show the different interests in their true proportions; let it forbear to preach pride and revenge, folly and insanity, egotism and prejudice, but frankly own these for what they are, in whatever figures and occasions they appear; let it not put on fine literary airs; let it speak the dialect, the language, that most Americans know—the language of unaffected people everywhere —and there can be no doubt of an unlimited future, not only of delightfulness but of usefulness, for it.

II

This is what I say in my severer moods, but at other times I know that, of course, no one is going to hold all fiction to such strict account. There is a great deal of it which may be very well left to amuse us, if it can, when we are sick or when we are silly, and I am not inclined to despise it in the performance of this office. Or, if people find pleasure in having their blood curdled for the sake of having it uncurdled again at the end of the book, I would not interfere with their amusement, though I do not desire it. There is a certain demand in primitive natures for the kind of fiction that does this, and the author of it is usually very proud of it. The kind of novels he likes, and likes to write, are intended to take his reader's mind, or what that reader would probably call his mind, off himself; they make one forget life and all its cares and duties; they are not in the least like the novels which make you think of these, and shame you into at least wishing to be a helpfuler and wholesomer creature than you are. No sordid details of verity here, if you please; no wretched being humbly and weakly struggling to do right and to be true, suffering for his follies and his sins, tasting joy only through the mortification of self, and in the help of others; nothing of all this, but a great, whirling splendor of peril and achievement, a wild scene of heroic adventure and of emotional ground and lofty tumbling, with a stage 'picture' at the fall of the curtain, and all the good characters in a row, their left hands pressed upon their hearts, and kissing their right hands to the audience, in the good old way that has always charmed and always will charm. Heaven bless it!

In a world which loves the spectacular drama and the practically bloodless sports of the modern amphitheatre the author of this sort of fiction has his place, and we must not seek to destroy him because he fancies it the first place. In fact, it is a condition of his doing well the kind of work he does that he should think it important, that he should believe in himself; and I would not take away this faith of his, even if I could. As I say, he has his place. The world often likes to forget itself, and he brings on his heroes, his goblins, his feats, his hair-breadth escapes, his imminent deadly breaches, and the poor, foolish, childish old world renews the excitements of its nonage. Perhaps this is a work of beneficence; and perhaps our brave conjurer in his cabalistic robe is a philanthropist in disguise.

Within the last four or five years there has been throughout the whole English-speaking world what Mr. Grant Allen happily calls the 'recrudescence' of taste in fiction. The effect is less noticeable in America than in England, where effete Philistinism, conscious of the dry-rot of its conventionality, is casting about for cure in anything that is wild and strange and unlike itself. But the recrudescence has been evident enough here, too; and a writer in one of our periodicals has put into convenient shape some common errors concerning popularity as a test of merit in a book. He seems to think, for instance, that the love of the marvellous and impossible in fiction, which is shown not only by 'the unthinking multitude clamoring about the book counters' for fiction of that sort, but by the 'literary elect' also, is proof of some principle in human nature which ought to be respected as well as tolerated. He seems to believe that the ebullition of this passion forms a sufficient answer to those who say that art should represent life, and that the art which misrepresents life is feeble art

and false art. But it appears to me that a little carefuler reasoning from a little closer inspection of the facts would not have brought him to these conclusions. In the first place, I doubt very much whether the 'literary elect' have been fascinated in great numbers by the fiction in question; but if I supposed them to have really fallen under that spell, I should still be able to account for their fondness and that of the 'unthinking multitude' upon the same grounds, without honoring either very much. It is the habit of hasty casuists to regard civilization as inclusive of all the members of a civilized community; but this is a palpable error. Many persons in every civilized community live in a state of more or less evident savagery with respect to their habits, their morals, and their propensities; and they are held in check only by the law. Many more yet are savage in their tastes, as they show by the decoration of their houses and persons, and by their choice of books and pictures; and these are left to the restraints of public opinion. In fact, no man can be said to be thoroughly civilized or always civilized; the most refined, the most enlightened person has his moods, his moments of barbarism, in which the best, or even the second best, shall not please him. At these times the lettered and the unlettered are alike primitive and their gratifications are of the same simple sort; the highly cultivated person may then like melodrama, impossible fiction, and the trapeze as sincerely and thoroughly as a boy of thirteen or a barbarian of any age.

I do not blame him for these moods; I find something instructive and interesting in them; but if they lastingly established themselves in him, I could not help deploring the state of that person. No one can really think that the 'literary elect,' who are said to have joined the 'unthinking multitude' in clamoring about the book counters for the romances of no-man's land, take the same kind of pleasure in them as they do in a novel of Tolstoï, Tourguéneff, George Eliot, Thackeray, Balzac, Manzoni, Hawthorne, Henry James, Thomas Hardy, Palacio Valdés, or even Walter Scott. They have joined the 'unthinking multitude,' perhaps because they are tired of thinking, and expect to find relaxation in feeling—feeling crudely, grossly, merely. For once in a way there is no great harm in this; perhaps no harm at all. It is perfectly natural; let them have their innocent debauch. But let us distinguish, for our own sake and guidance, between the different kinds of things that please the same kind of people; between the things that please them habitually and those that please them occasionally; between the pleasures that edify them and those that amuse them. Otherwise we shall be in danger of becoming permanently part of the 'unthinking multitude,' and of remaining puerile, primitive, savage. We shall be so in moods and at moments; but let us not fancy that those are high moods or fortunate moments. If they are harmless, that is the most that can be said for them. They are lapses from which we can perhaps go forward more vigorously; but even this is not certain.

My own philosophy of the matter, however, would not bring me to prohibition of such literary amusements as the writer quoted seems to find significant of a growing indifference to truth and sanity in fiction. Once more, I say, these amusements have their place, as the circus has, and the burlesque and negro minstrelsy, and the ballet, and prestidigitation. No one of these is to be despised in its place; but we had better understand that it is not the highest place, and that it is hardly an intellectual delight. The lapse of all the 'literary elect' in the world could not dignify unreality; and their present mood, if it exists, is of no more weight against that beauty in literature which comes from truth alone, and never can come from anything else, than the permanent state of the 'unthinking multitude.'

Yet even as regards the 'unthinking multitude,' I believe I am not able to take the attitude of the writer I have quoted. I am afraid that I respect them more than he would like to have me, though I cannot always respect their taste, any more than that of the 'literary elect.' I respect them for their good sense in most practical matters; for their laborious, honest lives; for their kindness, their good-will; for that aspiration towards something better than themselves which seems to stir, however dumbly, in every human breast not abandoned to literary pride or other forms of self-righteousness. I find every man inter-

esting, whether he thinks or unthinks, whether he is savage or civilized; for this reason I cannot thank the novelist who teaches us not to know but to unknow our kind. Yet I should by no means hold him to such strict account as Emerson, who felt the absence of the best motive, even in the greatest of the masters, when he said of Shakespeare that, after all, he was only master of the revels. The judgment is so severe, even with the praise which precedes it, that one winces under it; and if one is still young, with the world gay before him, and life full of joyous promise, one is apt to ask, defiantly, Well, what is better than being such a master of the revels as Shakespeare was? Let each judge for himself. To the heart again of serious youth uncontaminate and exigent of ideal good, it must always be a grief that the great masters seem so often to have been willing to amuse the leisure and vacancy of meaner men, and leave their mission to the soul but partially fulfilled. This, perhaps, was what Emerson had in mind; and if he had it in mind of Shakespeare, who gave us, with his histories and comedies and problems, such a searching homily as 'Macbeth,' one feels that he scarcely recognized the limitations of the dramatist's art. Few consciences, at times, seem so enlightened as that of this personally unknown person, so withdrawn into his work, and so lost to the intensest curiosity of after-time; at other times he seems merely Elizabethan in his coarseness, his courtliness, his imperfect sympathy.

III

One of the great newspapers the other day invited the prominent American authors to speak their minds upon a point in the theory and practice of fiction which had already vexed some of them. It was the question of how much or how little the American novel ought to deal with certain facts of life which are not usually talked of before young people, and especially young ladies. Of course the question was not decided, and I forget just how far the balance inclined in favor of a larger freedom in the matter. But it certainly inclined that way; one or two writers of the sex which is somehow supposed to have purity in its keeping (as if purity were a thing that did not practically concern the other sex, preoccupied with serious affairs) gave it a rather vigorous tilt to that side. In view of this fact it would not be the part of prudence to make an effort to dress the balance; and indeed I do not know that I was going to make any such effort. But there are some things to say, around and about the subject, which I should like to have some one else say, and which I may myself possibly be safe in suggesting.

One of the first of these is the fact, generally lost sight of by those who censure the Anglo-Saxon novel for its prudishness, that it is really not such a prude after all; and that if it is sometimes apparently anxious to avoid those experiences of life not spoken of before young people, this may be an appearance only. Sometimes a novel which has this shuffling air, this effect of truckling to propriety, might defend itself, if it could speak for itself, by saying that such experiences happened not to come within its scheme, and that, so far from maiming or mutilating itself in ignoring them, it was all the more faithfully representative of the tone of modern life in dealing with love that was chaste, and with passion so honest that it could be openly spoken of before the tenderest society bud at dinner. It might say that the guilty intrigue, the betrayal, the extreme flirtation even, was the exceptional thing in life, and unless the scheme of the story necessarily involved it, that it would be bad art to lug it in, and as bad taste as to introduce such topics in a mixed company. It could say very justly that the novel in our civilization now always addresses a mixed company, and that the vast majority of the company are ladies, and that very many, if not most, of these ladies are young girls. If the novel were written for men and for married women alone, as in continental Europe, it might be altogether different. But the simple fact is that it is not written for them alone among us, and it is a question of writing, under cover of our universal acceptance, things for young girls to read which you would be put out-of-doors for saying to them, or frankly giving notice of your intention, and so cutting yourself off from the pleasure—and it is a very high and sweet one—of appealing to these vivid, responsive intelligences, which are none the less brilliant and admirable because they are innocent.

One day a novelist who liked, after the

manner of other men, to repine at his hard fate, complained to his friend, a critic, that he was tired of the restriction he had put upon himself in this regard; for it is a mistake, as can be readily shown, to suppose that others impose it. 'See how free those French fellows are!' he rebelled. 'Shall we always be shut up to our tradition of decency?'

'Do you think it's much worse than being shut up to their tradition of indecency?' said his friend.

Then that novelist began to reflect, and he remembered how sick the invariable motive of the French novel made him. He perceived finally that, convention for convention, ours was not only more tolerable, but on the whole was truer to life, not only to its complexion, but also to its texture. No one will pretend that there is not vicious love beneath the surface of our society; if he did, the fetid explosions of the divorce trials would refute him; but if he pretended that it was in any just sense characteristic of our society, he could be still more easily refuted. Yet it exists, and it is unquestionably the material of tragedy, the stuff from which intense effects are wrought. The question, after owning this fact, is whether these intense effects are not rather cheap effects. I incline to think they are, and I will try to say why I think so, if I may do so without offence. The material itself, the mere mention of it, has an instant fascination; it arrests, it detains, till the last word is said, and while there is anything to be hinted. This is what makes a love intrigue of some sort all but essential to the popularity of any fiction. Without such an intrigue the intellectual equipment of the author must be of the highest, and then he will succeed only with the highest class of readers. But any author who will deal with a guilty love intrigue holds all readers in his hand, the highest with the lowest, as long as he hints the slightest hope of the smallest potential naughtiness. He need not at all be a great author; he may be a very shabby wretch, if he has but the courage or the trick of that sort of thing. The critics will call him 'virile' and 'passionate;' decent people will be ashamed to have been limed by him; but the low average will only ask another chance of flocking into his net. If he happens to be an able writer, his really fine and costly work will be unheeded, and the lure to the appetite will be chiefly remembered. There may be other qualities which make reputations for other men, but in his case they will count for nothing. He pays this penalty for his success in that kind; and every one pays some such penalty who deals with some such material. It attaches in like manner to the triumphs of the writers who now almost form a school among us, and who may be said to have established themselves in an easy popularity simply by the study of erotic shivers and fervors. They may find their account in the popularity, or they may not; there is no question of the popularity.

But I do not mean to imply that their case covers the whole ground. So far as it goes, though, it ought to stop the mouths of those who complain that fiction is enslaved to propriety among us. It appears that of a certain kind of impropriety it is free to give us all it will, and more. But this is not what serious men and women writing fiction mean when they rebel against the limitations of their art in our civilization. They have no desire to deal with nakedness, as painters and sculptors freely do in the worship of beauty; or with certain facts of life, as the stage does, in the service of sensation. But they ask why, when the conventions of the plastic and histrionic arts liberate their followers to the portrayal of almost any phase of the physical or of the emotional nature, an American novelist may not write a story on the lines of *Anna Karenina* or *Madame Bovary*. Sappho they put aside, and from Zola's work they avert their eyes. They do not condemn him or Daudet, necessarily, or accuse their motives; they leave them out of the question; they do not want to do that kind of thing. But they do sometimes wish to do another kind, to touch one of the most serious and sorrowful problems of life in the spirit of Tolstoï and Flaubert, and they ask why they may not. At one time, they remind us, the Anglo-Saxon novelist did deal with such problems—DeFoe in his spirit, Richardson in his, Goldsmith in his. At what moment did our fiction lose this privilege? In what fatal hour did the Young Girl arise and seal the lips of Fiction, with a touch of her finger, to some of the most vital interests of life?

Whether I wished to oppose them in their aspiration for greater freedom, or whether

I wished to encourage them, I should begin to answer them by saying that the Young Girl had never done anything of the kind. The manners of the novel have been improving with those of its readers; that is all. Gentlemen no longer swear or fall drunk under the table, or abduct young ladies and shut them up in lonely country-houses, or so habitually set about the ruin of their neighbors' wives, as they once did. Generally, people now call a spade an agricultural implement; they have not grown decent without having also grown a little squeamish, but they have grown comparatively decent; there is no doubt about that. They require of a novelist whom they respect unquestionable proof of his seriousness, if he proposes to deal with certain phases of life; they require a sort of scientific decorum. He can no longer expect to be received on the ground of entertainment only; he assumes a higher function, something like that of a physician or a priest, and they expect him to be bound by laws as sacred as those of such professions; they hold him solemnly pledged not to betray them or abuse their confidence. If he will accept the conditions, they give him their confidence, and he may then treat to his greater honor, and not at all to his disadvantage, of such experiences, such relations of men and women as George Eliot treats in *Adam Bede*, in *Daniel Deronda*, in *Romola*, in almost all her books; such as Hawthorne treats in *The Scarlet Letter*; such as Dickens treats in *David Copperfield*; such as Thackeray treats in *Pendennis*, and glances at in every one of his fictions; such as most of the masters of English fiction have at some time treated more or less openly. It is quite false or quite mistaken to suppose that our novels have left untouched these most important realities of life. They have only not made them their stock in trade; they have kept a true perspective in regard to them; they have relegated them in their pictures of life to the space and place they occupy in life itself, as we know it in England and America. They have kept a correct proportion, knowing perfectly well that unless the novel is to be a map, with everything scrupulously laid down in it, a faithful record of life in far the greater extent could be made to the exclusion of guilty love and all its circumstances and consequences.

I justify them in this view not only because I hate what is cheap and meretricious, and hold in peculiar loathing the cant of the critics who require 'passion' as something in itself admirable and desirable in a novel, but because I prize fidelity in the historian of feeling and character. Most of these critics who demand 'passion' would seem to have no conception of any passion but one. Yet there are several other passions: the passion of grief, the passion of avarice, the passion of pity, the passion of ambition, the passion of hate, the passion of envy, the passion of devotion, the passion of friendship; and all these have a greater part in the drama of life than the passion of love, and infinitely greater than the passion of guilty love. Wittingly or unwittingly, English fiction and American fiction have recognized this truth, not fully, not in the measure it merits, but in greater degree than most other fiction.

1891

FROM A MODERN INSTANCE

THE DEPARTURE FROM EQUITY [1]

THIS last drop of the local meanness filled Bartley's bitter cup. As he passed the house at the end of the street he seemed to drain it all. He knew that the old lawyer was there sitting by the office stove, drawing his hand across his chin, and Bartley hoped that he was still as miserable as he had looked when he last saw him; but he did not know that by the window in the house, which he would not even look at, Marcia sat self-prisoned in her room, with her eyes upon the road, famishing for the thousandth part of a chance to see him pass. She saw him now for the instant of his coming and going. With eyes trained to take in every point, she saw the preparation which seemed like final departure, and with a gasp of 'Bartley!' as if she were trying to call after him, she sank back into her chair and shut her eyes.

He drove on, plunging into the deep hollow beyond the house, and keeping for several miles the road they had taken on

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is Chapter 12 from *A Modern Instance* (Boston, 1882). Bartley Hubbard has hurriedly quitted Equity, where his first attempt at an ambitious career has failed. Marcia Gaylord, whose father had understood Hubbard's essential weakness and forbidden their marriage, follows after him.

that Sunday together; but he did not make the turn that brought them back to the village again. The pale sunset was slanting over the snow when he reached the Junction, for he had slackened his colt's pace after he had put ten miles behind him, not choosing to reach a prospective purchaser with his horse all blown and bathed with sweat. He wished to be able to say, 'Look at him! He's come fifteen miles since three o'clock, and he's as keen as when he started.'

This was true, when, having left his baggage at the Junction, he drove another mile into the country to see the farmer of the gentleman who had his summer-house here, and who had once bantered Bartley to sell him his colt. The farmer was away, and would not be at home till the up-train from Boston was in. Bartley looked at his watch, and saw that to wait would lose him the six o'clock down-train. There would be no other till eleven o'clock. But it was worth while: the gentleman had said, 'When you want the money for that colt, bring him over any time; my farmer will have it ready for you.' He waited for the up-train; but when the farmer arrived, he was full of all sorts of scruples and reluctances. He said he should not like to buy it till he had heard from Mr. Farnham; he ended by offering Bartley eighty dollars for the colt on his own account; he did not want the cutter.

'You write to Mr. Farnham,' said Bartley, 'that you tried that plan with me, and it wouldn't work; he's lost the colt.'

He made this brave show of indifference, but he was disheartened, and, having carried the farmer home from the Junction for the convenience of talking over the trade with him, he drove back again through the early night-fall in sullen desperation.

The weather had softened and was threatening rain or snow; the dark was closing in spiritlessly; the colt, shortening from a trot into a short, springy jolt, dropped into a walk at last as if he were tired, and gave Bartley time enough on his way back to the Junction for reflection upon the disaster into which his life had fallen. These passages of utter despair are commoner to the young than they are to those whom years have experienced in the impermanence of any fate, good, bad, or indifferent, unless, perhaps, the last may seem rather constant. Taken in reference to all that had been ten days ago, the present ruin was incredible, and had nothing reasonable in proof of its existence. Then he was prosperously placed, and in the way to better himself indefinitely. Now, he was here in the dark, with fifteen dollars in his pocket, and an unsalable horse on his hands; outcast, deserted, homeless, hopeless: and by whose fault? He owned even then that he had committed some follies; but in his sense of Marcia's all-giving love he had risen for once in his life to a conception of self-devotion, and in taking herself from him as she did, she had taken from him the highest incentive he had ever known, and had checked him in his first feeble impulse to do and be all in all for another. It was she who had ruined him.

As he jumped out of the cutter at the Junction the station-master stopped with a cluster of party-colored signal-lanterns in his hand and cast their light over the sorrel.

'Nice colt you got there.'

'Yes,' said Bartley, blanketing the horse, 'do you know anybody who wants to buy?'

'Whose is he?' asked the man.

'He's mine!' shouted Bartley. 'Do you think I stole him?'

'*I* don't know where you got him,' said the man, walking off, and making a soft play of red and green lights on the snow beyond the narrow platform.

Bartley went into the great ugly barn of a station, trembling, and sat down in one of the gouged and whittled arm-chairs near the stove. A pomp of timetables and luminous advertisements of Western railroads and their land-grants decorated the wooden walls of the gentlemen's waiting-room, which had been sanded to keep the gentlemen from writing and sketching upon them. This was the more judicious because the ladies' room, in the absence of tourist travel, was locked in winter, and they were obliged to share the gentlemen's. In summer, the Junction was a busy place, but after the snow fell, and until the snow thawed, it was a desolation relieved only by the arrival of the sparsely peopled through-trains from the north and east, and by such local travellers as wished to take trains not stopping at their own stations. These broke in upon the solitude of the joint station-master and baggage-man and switch-tender with just sufficient frequency to keep him in a state of uncharitable irritation and unrest.

To-night Bartley was the sole intruder, and he sat by the stove wrapped in a cloud of rebellious memories, when one side of a colloquy without made itself heard.

'What?'

Some question was repeated.

'No; it went down half an hour ago.'

An inaudible question followed.

'Next down-train at eleven.'

There was now a faintly audible lament or appeal.

'Guess you'll have to come earlier next time. Most folks does that wants to take it.'

Bartley now heard the despairing moan of a woman: he had already divined the sex of the futile questioner whom the station-master was bullying; but he had divined it without compassion, and if he had not himself been a sufferer from the man's insolence he might even have felt a ferocious satisfaction in it. In a word, he was at his lowest and worst when the door opened and the woman came in, with a movement at once bewildered and daring, which gave him the impression of a despair as complete and final as his own. He doggedly kept his place; she did not seem to care for him, but in the uncertain light of the lamp above them she drew near the stove, and, putting one hand to her pocket as if to find her handkerchief, she flung aside her veil with her other, and showed her tear-stained face.

He was on his feet somehow. 'Marcia!'

'Oh! Bartley—'

He had seized her by the arm to make sure that she was there in verity of flesh and blood, and not by some trick of his own senses, as a cold chill running over him had made him afraid. At the touch their passion ignored all that they had made each other suffer; her head was on his breast, his embrace was round her; it was a moment of delirious bliss that intervened between the sorrows that had been and the reasons that must come.

'What—what are you doing here, Marcia?' he asked at last.

They sank on the benching that ran round the wall; he held her hands fast in one of his, and kept his other arm about her as they sat side by side.

'I don't know—I—' She seemed to rouse herself by an effort from her rapture. 'I was going to see Nettie Spaulding. And I saw you driving past our house; and I thought you were coming here; and I couldn't bear—I couldn't bear to let you go away without telling you that I was wrong; and asking—asking you to forgive me. I thought you would do it,—I thought you would know that I had behaved that way because I—I—cared so much for you. I thought—I was afraid you had gone on the other train—' She trembled and sank back in his embrace, from which she had lifted herself a little.

'How did you get here?' asked Bartley, as if willing to give himself all the proofs he could of the every-day reality of her presence.

'Andy Morrison brought me. Father sent him from the hotel. I didn't care what you would say to me. I wanted to tell you that I was wrong, and not let you go away feeling that—that—you were all to blame. I thought when I had done that you might drive me away,—or laugh at me, or anything you pleased, if only you would let me take back—'

'Yes,' he answered dreamily. All that wicked hardness was breaking up within him; he felt it melting drop by drop in his heart. This poor love-tossed soul, this frantic, unguided, reckless girl, was an angel of mercy to him, and in her folly and error a messenger of heavenly peace and hope. 'I am a bad fellow, Marcia,' he faltered. 'You ought to know that. You did right to give me up. I made love to Hannah Morrison; I never promised to marry her, but I made her think that I was fond of her.'

'I don't care for that,' replied the girl. 'I told you when we were first engaged that I would never think of anything that had gone before that; and then when I would not listen to a word from you, that day, I broke my promise.'

'When I struck Henry Bird because he was jealous of me, I was as guilty as if I had killed him.'

'If you had killed him, I was bound to you by my word. Your striking him was part of the same thing,—part of what I had promised I never would care for.' A gush of tears came into his eyes, and she saw them. 'Oh, poor Bartley! Poor Bartley!'

She took his head between her hands and pressed it hard against her heart, and then wrapped her arms tight about him, and softly bemoaned him.

They drew a little apart when the man came in with his lantern, and set it down to mend the fire. But as a railroad employee he was far too familiar with the love that vaunts itself on all railroad trains to feel that he was an intruder. He scarcely looked at them, and went out when he had mended the fire, and left it purring.

'Where is Andy Morrison?' asked Bartley. 'Has he gone back?'

'No; he is at the hotel over there. I told him to wait till I found out when the train went north.'

'So you inquired when it went to Boston,' said Bartley, with a touch of his old raillery. 'Come,' he added, taking her hand under his arm. He led her out of the room, to where his cutter stood outside. She was astonished to find the colt there.

'I wonder I didn't see it. But if I had, I should have thought that you had sold it and gone away; Andy told me you were coming here to sell the colt. When the man told me the express was gone, I knew you were on it.'

They found the boy stolidly waiting for Marcia on the veranda of the hotel, stamping first upon one foot and then the other, and hugging himself in his great-coat as the coming snow-fall blew its first flakes in his face.

'Is that you, Andy?' asked Bartley.

'Yes, sir,' answered the boy, without surprise at finding him with Marcia.

'Well, here! Just take hold of the colt's head a minute.'

As the boy obeyed, Bartley threw the reins on the dashboard, and leaped out of the cutter, and went within. He returned after a brief absence, followed by the landlord.

'Well, it ain't more'n a mile'n a half, if it's that. You just keep straight along this street, and take your first turn to the left, and you're right at the house; it's the first house on the left-hand side.'

'Thanks,' returned Bartley. 'Andy, you tell the Squire that you left Marcia with me, and I said I would see about her getting back. You needn't hurry.'

'All right,' said the boy, and he disappeared round the corner of the house to get his horse from the barn.

'Well, I'll be all ready by the time you're here,' said the landlord, still holding the hall-door ajar. 'Luck *to* you!' he shouted, shutting it.

Marcia locked both her hands through Bartley's arm, and leaned her head on his shoulder. Neither spoke for some minutes; then he asked, 'Marcia, do you know where you are?'

'With you,' she answered, in a voice of utter peace.

'Do you know where we are going?' he asked, leaning over to kiss her cold, pure cheek.

'No,' she answered in as perfect content as before.

'We are going to get married.'

He felt her grow tense in her clasp upon his arm, and hold there rigidly for a moment, while the swift thoughts whirled through her mind. Then, as if the struggle had ended, she silently relaxed, and leaned more heavily against him.

'There's still time to go back, Marcia,' he said, 'if you wish. That turn to the right, yonder, will take us to Equity, and you can be at home in two hours.' She quivered. 'I'm a poor man,—I suppose you know that; I've only got fifteen dollars in the world, and the colt here. I know I can get on; I'm not afraid for myself; but if you would rather wait,—if you're not perfectly certain of yourself,—remember, it's going to be a struggle; we're going to have some hard times—'

'You forgive me?' she huskily asked, for all answer, without moving her head from where it lay.

'Yes, Marcia.'

'Then—hurry.'

The minister was an old man, and he seemed quite dazed at the suddenness of their demand for his services. But he gathered himself together, and contrived to make them man and wife, and to give them his marriage certificate.

'It seems as if there were something else,' he said, absently, as he handed the paper to Bartley.

'Perhaps it's this,' said Bartley, giving him a five-dollar note in return.

'Ah, perhaps,' he replied, in unabated perplexity. He bade them serve God, and let them out into the snowy night, through which they drove back to the hotel.

The landlord had kindled a fire on the hearth of the Franklin stove in his parlor,

and the blazing hickory snapped in electrical sympathy with the storm when they shut themselves into the bright room, and Bartley took Marcia fondly into his arms.

'Wife!'

'Husband!'

They sat down before the fire, hand in hand, and talked of the light things that swim to the top, and eddy round and round on the surface of our deepest moods. They made merry over the old minister's perturbation, which Bartley found endlessly amusing. Then he noticed that the dress Marcia had on was the one she had worn to the sociable in Lower Equity, and she said, yes, she had put it on because he once said he liked it. He asked her when, and she said, oh, she knew; but if he could not remember, she was not going to tell him. Then she wanted to know if he recognized her by the dress before she lifted her veil in the station.

'No,' he said, with a teasing laugh. 'I wasn't thinking of you.'

'Oh, Bartley!' she joyfully reproached him. 'You must have been!'

'Yes, I was! I was so mad at you, that I was glad to have that brute of a station-master bullying *some* woman!'

'Bartley!'

He sat holding her hand. 'Marcia,' he said, gravely, 'we must write to your father at once, and tell him. I want to begin life in the right way, and I think it's only fair to him.'

She was enraptured at his magnanimity. 'Bartley! That's *like* you! Poor father! I declare—Bartley, I'm afraid I had forgotten him! It's dreadful; but—*you* put everything else out of my head. I do believe I've died and come to life somewhere else!'

'Well, *I* haven't,' said Bartley, 'and I guess you'd better write to your father. *You'd* better write; at present, he and I are not on speaking terms. Here!' He took out his note-book, and gave her his stylographic pen after striking the fist that held it upon his other fist, in the fashion of the amateurs of that reluctant instrument, in order to bring down the ink.

'Oh, what's that?' she asked.

'It's a new kind of pen. I got it for a notice in the Free Press.'

'Is Henry Bird going to edit the paper?'

'I don't know, and I don't care,' answered Bartley. 'I'll go out and get an envelope, and ask the landlord what's the quickest way to get the letter to your father.'

He took up his hat, but she laid her hand on his arm. 'Oh, send for him!' she said.

'Are you afraid I sha'n't come back?' he demanded, with a laughing kiss. 'I want to see him about something else, too.'

'Well, don't be gone long.'

They parted with an embrace that would have fortified older married people for a year's separation. When Bartley came back, she handed him the leaf she had torn out of his book, and sat down beside him while he read it, with her arm over his shoulder.

'Dear father,' the letter ran, 'Bartley and I are married. We were married an hour ago, just across the New Hampshire line, by the Rev. Mr. Jessup. Bartley wants I should let you know the very first thing. I am going to Boston with Bartley to-night, and, as soon as we get settled there, I will write again. I want you should forgive us both; but if you won't forgive Bartley, you mustn't forgive me. You were mistaken about Bartley, and I was right. Bartley has told me everything, and I am perfectly satisfied. Love to mother.

'MARCIA.'

'P.S.—I *did* intend to visit Netty Spaulding. But I saw Bartley driving past on his way to the Junction, and I determined to see him if I could before he started for Boston, and tell him I was all wrong, no matter what he said or did afterwards. I ought to have told you I meant to see Bartley; but then you would not have let me come, and if I had not come, I should have died.'

'There's a good deal of Bartley in it,' said the young man with a laugh.

'You don't like it!'

'Yes, I do; it's all right. Did you use to take the prize for composition at boarding-school?'

'Why, I think it's a very good letter for when I'm in such an excited state.'

'It's beautiful!' cried Bartley, laughing more and more. The tears started to her eyes.

'Marcia,' said her husband fondly, 'what a child you are! If ever I do anything to betray your trust in me—'

There came a shuffling of feet outside the door, a clinking of glass and crockery, and a jarring sort of blow, as if some one were

trying to rap on the panel with the edge of a heavy-laden waiter. Bartley threw the door open and found the landlord there, red and smiling, with the waiter in his hand.

'I thought I'd bring your supper in here, you know,' he explained confidentially, 'so 's't you could have it a little more snug. And my wife she kind o' got wind o' what was going on,—women will, you know,' he said with a wink,—'and she's sent ye in some hot biscuit and a little jell, and some of her cake.' He set the waiter down on the table, and stood admiring its mystery of napkined dishes. 'She guessed you wouldn't object to some cold chicken, and she's put a little of that on. Sha'n't cost ye any more,' he hastened to assure them. 'Now this is your room till the train comes, and there ain't agoin' to anybody come in here. So you can make yourselves at home. And *I* hope you'll enjoy your supper as much as we did ourn the night *we* was married. There! I guess I'll let the lady fix the table; she looks as if she knowed how.'

He got himself out of the room again, and then Marcia, who had made him some embarrassed thanks, burst out in praise of his pleasantness.

'Well, he ought to be pleasant,' said Bartley, 'he's just beaten me on a horse-trade. I've sold him the colt.'

'Sold him the colt!' cried Marcia, tragically dropping the napkin she had lifted from the plate of cold chicken.

'Well, we couldn't very well have taken him to Boston with us. And we couldn't have got there without selling him. You know you haven't married a millionnaire, Marcia.'

'How much did you get for the colt?'

'Oh, I didn't do so badly. I got a hundred and fifty for him.'

'And you had fifteen besides.'

'That was before we were married. I gave the minister five for you,—I think you are worth it. I wanted to give fifteen.'

'Well, then, you have a hundred and sixty now. Isn't that a great deal?'

'An everlasting lot,' said Bartley, with an impatient laugh. 'Don't let the supper cool, Marcia!'

She silently set out the feast, but regarded it ruefully. 'You oughtn't to have ordered so much, Bartley,' she said. 'You couldn't afford it.'

'I can afford anything when I'm hungry. Besides, I only ordered the oysters and coffee; all the rest is conscience money—or sentiment—from the landlord. Come, come! cheer up, now! We sha'n't starve to-night, anyhow.'

'Well, I know father will help us.'

'We sha'n't count on him,' said Bartley. 'Now *drop* it!' He put his arm round her shoulders and pressed her against him, till she raised her face for his kiss.

'Well, I *will*!' she said, and the shadow lifted itself from their wedding feast, and they sat down and made merry as if they had all the money in the world to spend. They laughed and joked; they praised the things they liked, and made fun of the others.

'How strange! How perfectly impossible it all seems! Why, last night I was taking supper at Kinney's logging-camp, and hating you at every mouthful with all my might. Everything seemed against me, and I was feeling ugly, and flirting like mad with a fool from Montreal: she had come out there from Portland for a frolic with the owners' party. You made me do it, Marcia!' he cried jestingly. 'And remember that, if you want me to be good, you must be kind. The other thing seems to make me worse and worse.'

'I will,—I will, Bartley,' she said humbly. 'I will try to be kind and patient with you. I will indeed.'

He threw back his head, and laughed and laughed. 'Poor—poor old Kinney! He's the cook, you know, and he thought I'd been making fun of him to that woman, and he behaved so, after they were gone, that I started home in a rage; and he followed me out with his hands all covered with dough, and wanted to stop me, but he couldn't for fear of spoiling my clothes—' He lost himself in another paroxysm.

Marcia smiled a little. Then, 'What sort of a looking person was she?' she tremulously asked.

Bartley stopped abruptly. 'Not one ten-thousandth part as good-looking, nor one millionth part as bright, as Marcia Hubbard!' He caught her and smothered her against his breast.

'I don't care! I don't care!' she cried. 'I was to blame more than you, if you flirted with her, and it serves me right. Yes, I will

never say anything to you for anything that happened after I behaved so to you.'

'There wasn't anything else happened,' cried Bartley. 'And the Montreal woman snubbed me soundly before she was done with me.'

'Snubbed you!' exclaimed Marcia, with illogical indignation. This delighted Bartley so much that it was long before he left off laughing over her.

Then they sat down, and were silent till she said, 'And did you leave him in a temper?'

'Who? Kinney? In a perfect devil of a temper. I wouldn't even borrow some money he wanted to lend me.'

'Write to him, Bartley,' said his wife, seriously. 'I love you so I can't bear to have anybody bad friends with you.'

1882

FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN

1821–1873

SIX SONNETS [1]

I

As one turned round on some high mountain top
Views all things as they are, but out of place,
Reversing recognition, so I trace
Dimly those dreams of youth and love and stop
Blindly; for in such mood landmarks and ways
That we have trodden all our lives and know
We seem not to have known and cannot guess:
Like one who told his footsteps over to me
In the opposite world and where he wandered through
Whilst the hot wind blew from the sultry north—
Forests that give no shade and bottomless
Sands where the plummet sinks as in the sea,
Saw the sky struck by lightning from the earth,
Rain salt like blood, and flights of fiery snow.
1872 1931

2

LONG ISLAND! Yes! When first my vision swept
Thy far faint shores with inlet and lagoon
Or misty woodflats, where the senses swoon
As in that land where Christian sank and slept,
I thought of him; and then when in the rain
We reached the Inn; and when I heard them speak
Of Fire Place at hand and Devil's Neck
And Good Ground and Mount Sinai west away,
As in a dream I seemed to tread again
The Pilgrim's steps and trace the Heavenly Way.
But there sat Happy Jack, with dumb Rejoice,
Red Ike the hostler with his whistling voice,
And an old man I called Legality . . .
Craftily quaint the tale he told to me.
1872 1931

3

'YOUNG Silas Long, a carrier through these woods,
Drove home one night in not the best of moods,
Having just seen a drowned man flung ashore
With a strange feather cap. And once before,
When he was hauling seine in Southold Bay
About this time of year, a seaman's corse
Washed up, with such a cap and such a face,
And it had brought misfortune on the place.
Pondering he drove; when lo, across the way
He saw, too late, that there a body lay,

1 The sonnets have been selected from sequences written in 1872, and not printed before their appearance in Bynner, ed., *The Sonnets of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman*(N.Y., 1931). They are, respectively, sonnets 8,11, 12, and 13 from the third sequence; and sonnets 6 and 10 from the fourth.

Felt the wheels tilt but could not stop his horse
Or not at once, then—flinging with a slap
The old cloth cover down he called a cap—
Ran back, ten steps or more, and nothing found . . .'
1872 1931

4

'YES, the dead pines and deersfoot on the ground,—
So quick returned again in five or six.
His cap was gone and in its stead thrown down
The very loon-skin the twice-drowned had on,
With bits of seaweed sticking to the flix.
So Long rode home, of cap and sense bereft,
But still can show the dead man's that was left,
And the webs crawl, he says, when the sea rolls.'
Then he, having told his tale and said his say,
By way of emphasis or corollary
Spat a torpedo in the bed of coals.
'And what, what, what,' squealed Ike, 'became of Long's?'
But the old man here rose and reached the tongs,
Laid fire to his pipe and phewed away.
1872 1931

5

AND two I knew, an old man and a boy,
Alternate helpers: for their day was spent
In gathering forest bark; and when they went
Late home, the elder did his time employ
To teach the other and tell him what he knew
Of history, myth, or mathematics hard,
In hours of night and, when the night was dark,
Showed him Job's Coffin, and the Golden Yard,
Showed the nine moonstars in the moonless blue,
And the great Circle of the Bestiary;
So that the child grew up to love the sky
And, in the woods beyond the hemlock bark,
To heed the intricate moss that o'er it grew,
The shadowy flower all wet with all-day dew.
1872 1931

6

HAST thou seen reversed the prophet's miracle—
The worm that, touched, a twig-like semblance takes?
Or hast thou mused what giveth the craft that makes
The twirling spider at once invisible,
And the spermal odour to the barberry flower,
Or heard the singing sand by the cold coast foam,
Or late—in inland autumn groves afar—
Hast thou ever plucked the little chick-wintergreen star
And tasted the sour of its leaf? Then come
With me betimes, and I will show thee more
Than these, of nature's secrecies the least:
In the first morning, overcast and chill,
And in the day's young sunshine, seeking still
For earliest flowers and gathering to the east.
1872 1931

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

1841–1887

TRUTH AT LAST

DOES a man ever give up hope, I wonder,—
Face the grim fact, seeing it clear as day?
When Bennen saw the snow slip, heard its thunder
Low, louder, roaring round him, felt the speed
Grow swifter as the avalanche hurled downward,
Did he for just one heart-throb—did he indeed

Know with all certainty, as they swept onward,
There was the end, where the crag dropped away?
Or did he think, even till they plunged and fell,
Some miracle would stop them? Nay, they tell
That he turned round, face forward, calm and pale,
Stretching his arms out toward his native vale
As if in mute, unspeakable farewell,
And so went down.—'Tis something, if at last,
Though only for a flash, a man may see
Clear-eyed the future as he sees the past,
From doubt, or fear, or hope's illusion free.

1883

FIVE LIVES

FIVE mites of monads dwelt in a round drop
That twinkled on a leaf by a pool in the sun.
To the naked eye they lived invisible;
Specks, for a world of whom the empty shell
Of a mustard-seed had been a hollow sky.

One was a meditative monad, called a sage;
And, shrinking all his mind within, he thought:
'Tradition, handed down for hours and hours,
Tells that our globe, this quivering crystal world,
Is slowly dying. What if, seconds hence,
When I am very old, yon shimmering dome
Come drawing down and down, till all things end?'
Then with a weazen smirk he proudly felt
No other mote of God had ever gained
Such giant grasp of universal truth.

One was a transcendental monad; thin
And long and slim in the mind; and thus he mused:
'Oh, vast, unfathomable monad-souls!
Made in the image'—a hoarse frog croaks from the pool—
'Hark! 'twas some god, voicing his glorious thought
In thunder music! Yea, we hear their voice,
And we may guess their minds from ours, their work.
Some taste they have like ours, some tendency
To wriggle about, and munch a trace of scum.'
He floated up on a pin-point bubble of gas
That burst, pricked by the air, and he was gone.

One was a barren-minded monad, called
A positivist; and he knew positively:
'There is no world beyond this certain drop.
Prove me another! Let the dreamers dream
Of their faint dreams, and noises from without,
And higher and lower; life is life enough.'
Then swaggering half a hair's breadth, hungrily
He seized upon an atom of bug, and fed.

One was a tattered monad, called a poet;
And with shrill voice ecstatic thus he sang:
'Oh, the little female monad's lips!
Oh, the little female monad's eyes:
Ah, the little, little, female, female monad!'

The last was a strong-minded monadess,
Who dashed amid the infusoria,
Danced high and low, and wildly spun and dove
Till the dizzy others held their breath to see.

But while they led their wondrous little lives
Æonian moments had gone wheeling by,
The burning drop had shrunk with fearful speed;
A glistening film—'twas gone; the leaf was dry.
The little ghost of an inaudible squeak
Was lost to the frog that goggled from his stone;
Who, at the huge, slow tread of a thoughtful ox
Coming to drink, stirred sideways fatly, plunged,
Launched backward twice, and all the pool was still.

1883

THE FOOL'S PRAYER

THE royal feast was done; the King
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: 'Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!'

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: 'O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

'No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool;
The rod must heal the sin: but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

' 'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

'These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

'The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung?

'Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

'Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave; and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!'

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
'Be merciful to me, a fool!'

1883

OPPORTUNITY

THIS I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, 'Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
Blunt thing—!' he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

1887

JOHN BANISTER TABB

1845–1909

FATHER DAMIEN [1]

(DIED APRIL 10TH, 1889)

O GOD, the cleanest offering
Of tainted earth below,
Unblushing to thy feet we bring—
'A leper white as snow!'

1889 1894

EVOLUTION

OUT of the dusk a shadow,
Then a spark;
Out of the cloud a silence,
Then a lark;

Out of the heart a rapture,
Then a pain;
Out of the dead, cold ashes,
Life again.

1894

BLOSSOM

FOR this the fruit, for this the seed,
For this the parent tree;
The least to man, the most to God—
A fragrant mystery
Where love, with beauty glorified,
Forgets utility.

1892 1894

THE PEAK

As on some solitary height
Abides, in summer's fierce despite,
Snow-blossom that no sun can blight,
No frost can kill;
So, in my soul—all else below
To change succumbing—stands aglow
One wreath of immemorial snow,
Unscattered still.

1892 1894

1 Father Damien, a Roman Catholic priest, was a missionary among the lepers at Molokai, Hawaii. He himself at last contracted the disease, and died of it.

PREJUDICE

A LEAF may hide the largest star
From love's uplifted eye;
A mote of prejudice out-bar
A world of charity.

1892 1894

FAME

THEIR noonday never knows
What names immortal are;
'Tis night alone that shows
How star surpasseth star.

1894 1897

EXPECTANCY

AN eagle on the summit—Hope and Fear,
Alternate pinions, moving restlessly.
O Distance, doth the better part appear
Doubt or fulfilment of the thing to be?

1923

SUNDERED

THOU sleepest sound, and I
Anear thee lie,
Yet worlds apart:
Thou in the light of dreams;
I, where the midnight seems—
An ashen sea—
From this my world and that wherein thou art
To blot out all but me.

1908 1910

GOING BLIND

BACK to the primal gloom
Where life began,
As to my mother's womb
Must I a man
Return:
Not to be born again,
But to remain;
And in the School of Darkness learn
What mean
'The things unseen.'

1908 1910

RICHARD HOVEY

1864–1900

THE WANDER-LOVERS

DOWN the world with Marna!
That's the life for me!
Wandering with the wandering wind,
Vagabond and unconfined!
Roving with the roving rain
Its unboundaried domain!
Kith and kin of wander-kind,
Children of the sea!

Petrels of the sea-drift!
Swallows of the lea!
Arabs of the whole wide girth
Of the wind-encircled earth!
In all climes we pitch our tents,
Cronies of the elements,
With the secret lords of birth
Intimate and free.

All the seaboard knows us
From Fundy to the Keys;
Every bend and every creek
Of abundant Chesapeake;
Ardise hills and Newport coves
And the far-off orange groves,
Where Floridian oceans break,
Tropic tiger seas.

Down the world with Marna,
Tarrying there and here!
Just as much at home in Spain
As in Tangier or Touraine!
Shakespeare's Avon knows us well,
And the crags of Neufchâtel;
And the ancient Nile is fain
Of our coming near.

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the air!
Marna of the subtle grace,
And the vision in her face!
Moving in the measures trod
By the angels before God!
With her sky-blue eyes amaze
And her sea-blue hair!

Marna with the trees' life
In her veins a-stir!
Marna of the aspen heart
Where the sudden quivers start!
Quick-responsive, subtle, wild!
Artless as an artless child,
Spite of all her reach of art!
Oh, to roam with her!

Marna with the wind's will,
Daughter of the sea!
Marna of the quick disdain,
Starting at the dream of stain!
At a smile with love aglow,
At a frown a statued woe,
Standing pinnacled in pain
Till a kiss sets free!

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the fire!
Marna of the deathless hope,
Still alert to win new scope
Where the wings of life may spread
For a flight unhazarded!
Dreaming of the speech to cope
With the heart's desire!

Marna of the far quest
After the divine!
Striving ever for some goal
Past the blunder-god's control!
Dreaming of potential years
When no day shall dawn in fears!
That's the Marna of my soul,
Wander-bride of mine!

1894

COMRADES

COMRADES, pour the wine to-night
For the parting is with dawn!
Oh, the clink of cups together,
With the daylight coming on!
Greet the morn
With a double horn,
When strong men drink together!

Comrades, gird your swords to-night,
For the battle is with dawn!
Oh, the clash of shields together,
With the triumph coming on!
Greet the foe,
And lay him low,
When strong men fight together!

Comrades, watch the tides to-night,
For the sailing is with dawn!
Oh, to face the spray together,
With the tempest coming on!
Greet the sea
With a shout of glee,
When strong men roam together!

Comrades, give a cheer to-night,
For the dying is with dawn!
Oh, to meet the stars together,
With the silence coming on!
Greet the end
As a friend a friend,
When strong men die together!

1894

THE SEA GYPSY

I AM fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the sea.

1896

A STEIN SONG

GIVE a rouse, then, in the Maytime
For a life that knows no fear!
Turn night-time into day-time
With the sunlight of good cheer!
For it's always fair weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba
And the birds are on the wing,
And our hearts are patting juba
To the banjo of the spring,
Then it's no wonder whether
The boys will get together,
With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty
When the spring is in the air;
And we've faith and hope a-plenty,
And we've life and love to spare;
And it's birds of a feather
When we all get together,
With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,
And the goal a golden thing,
And that God is not censorious
When his children have their fling;
And life slips its tether
When the boys get together,
With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

1896

UNMANIFEST DESTINY

To what new fates, my country, far
And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star,
Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach
The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
To mightier issues than we planned,
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
My country, serves Its dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
I only know it shall be great.

1898 1898

AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever—
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!
Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

We have striven fair in love and war,
But the wheel was always weighted;
We have lost the prize that we struggled for,
We have won the prize that was fated.
We have met our loss with a smile and a song,
And our gains with a wink and a whistle,—
For, whether we're right or whether we're wrong,
There's a rose for every thistle.
Here's luck—
And a drop to wet your whistle!

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.
There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under—
And whether we're wrong or whether we're right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck—
That we may not yet go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us,
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
Here's luck!
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

1900

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

1861–1920

THE WILD RIDE

I HEAR in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! but alert to the saddle
Weather-worn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolour and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us:
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty:
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

(I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.)

We spur to a land of no name, out-racing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

1887

A FRIEND'S SONG FOR SIMOISIUS [1]

THE breath of dew and twilight's grace
Be on the lonely battle-place,
And to so young, so kind a face,
The long protecting grasses cling!
(Alas, alas,
That one inexorable thing!)

In rocky hollows cool and deep,
The honey-bees unrifled sleep;
The early moon from Ida steep
Comes to the empty wrestling-ring;
Upon the widowed wind recede
No echoes of the shepherd's reed;
And children without laughter lead
The war-horse to the watering;

With footstep separate and slow
The father and the mother go,
Not now upon an urn they know
To mingle tears for comforting.

Thou stranger Ajax Telamon!
What to the lovely hast thou done,
That nevermore a maid may run
With him across the flowery Spring?

The world to me has nothing dear
Beyond the namesake river here:
Oh, Simios is wild and clear!
And to his brink my heart I bring;

My heart, if only this might be,
Would stay his waters from the sea,
To cover Troy, to cover me,
To haste the hour of perishing.
(Alas, alas,
That one inexorable thing!)

1893

LIZETTE REESE

1856-1936

IMMORTALITY

BATTLES nor songs can from oblivion save,
But Fame upon a white deed loves to build;
From out that cup of water Sidney gave,
Not one drop has been spilled.

1892

1 'Having to do with *Iliad*,IV,473-489.' Author's note, Guiney, *Happy Ending*(Boston, 1937),191. 'Next Telamonian Aias smote Anthemion's son, the lusty stripling Simoeisios, whom erst his mother bare beside the banks of Simoeis on the way down from Ida whither she had followed with her parents to see their flocks. Therefore they called him Simoeisios, but he repaid not his dear parents the recompense of his nurture; scanty was his span of life by reason of the spear of great-hearted Aias that laid him low. For as he went he first was smitten on his right breast beside the pap; straight through his shoulder passed the spear of bronze, and he fell to the ground in the dust like a poplar-tree, that hath grown up smooth in the lowland of a great marsh, and its branches grow upon the top thereof; this hath a wainwright felled with gleaming steel, to bend him a felloe for a goodly chariot, and so it lies drying by a river's banks. In such fashion did heaven-sprung Aias slay Simoeisios son of Anthemion . . .' Lang, trans.

IN TIME OF GRIEF

DARK, thinned, beside the wall of stone,
The box dripped in the air;
Its odor through my house was blown
Into the chamber there.

Remote and yet distinct the scent,
The sole thing of the kind,
As though one spoke a word half meant
That left a sting behind.

I knew not Grief would go from me,
And naught of it be plain,
Except how keen the box can be
After a fall of rain.

1896

TEARS [1]

When I consider Life and its few
years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the
sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our
ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of
fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do
beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening
street—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yester-
night,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the
sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see
aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to
weep;
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

1909

A PURITAN LADY

Wild Carthage held her, Rome,
Sidon. She stared to tears
Tall, golden Helen, wearying
Behind the Trojan spears.

Towered Antwerp knew her well;
She wore her quiet gown
In some hushed house in Oxford grass,
Or lane in Salem town.

Humble and high in one,
Cool, certain, different,
She lasts; scarce saint, yet half a child,
As hard, as innocent.

What grave, long afternoons,
What caged airs round her blown,
Stripped her of humor, left her bare
As cloud, or wayside stone?

Made her as clear a thing,
In this slack world as plain
As a white flower on a grave,
Or sleet sharp at a pane?

1923

GEORGE STERLING

1869–1926

THE NIGHT OF GODS

Their mouths have drunken Death's eternal wine—
The draught that Baal in oblivion sips.
Unseen about their courts the adder
slips,
Unheard the sucklings of the leopard
whine;
The toad has found a resting-place divine,
And bloats in stupor between Ammon's
lips.

O Carthage and the unreturning ships,
The fallen pinnacle, the shifting Sign!

Lo! when I hear from voiceless court and
fane
Time's adoration of Eternity—
The cry of kingdoms past and gods
undone—
I stand as one whose feet at noontide gain
A lonely shore; who feels his soul set
free,
And hears the blind sea chanting to the
sun.

1909

ALDEBARAN AT DUSK

Thou art the star for which all evening
waits—
O star of peace, come tenderly and soon,
Nor heed the drowsy and enchanted
moon,

[1] Miss Reese, with most of her public, thought 'Tears' her best poem. 'What mood brought it into being? Again I am ignorant. However, I will tell you all that I remember. My father had been a semi-invalid for years. Suddenly he died. The check for the poem came the day the crepe was hung on the door to announce his death. Now it may be that I had him in mind during the making of this poem. The scientists—who now have us in their keeping—speak about the subconscious: old-fashioned folks use the worn word "premonition." You may take your choice.' Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets* (N.Y., 1933), 14.

Who dreams in silver at the eastern gates
Ere yet she brim with light the blue estates
  Abandoned by the eagles of the noon.
  But shine thou swiftly on the darkling dune
And woodlands where the twilight hesitates.

Above that wide and ruby lake to-West,
  Wherein the sunset waits reluctantly,
  Stir silently the purple wings of Night.
She stands afar, upholding to her breast,
  As mighty murmurs reach her from the sea,
  Thy lone and everlasting rose of light.

1911

THE BLACK VULTURE

ALOOF within the day's enormous dome,
  He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
  Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
  His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
  Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm—
  Unwitting now that envious men prepare
  To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
  Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
  His roads between the thunder and the sun.

1911

THE YOUNG WITCH [1]

1698

(ELDER DAVENPORT SPEAKS)

CRY bravely, O town-crier,
  (And ye, young men, beware!)
How Yale Ratchford, the strong smith,
  Is gone God knoweth where.

Yea, the tall smith is gone,
  And comes not home again.
Though he had a shrewish wife,
  He was man among men.

He shall drink no more ale,
  Nor smoke at the tavern door,
Nor sing old songs at his forge,
  And wrestle young men no more.

This he got for being so strong,
  And this for being so bold
As to have in scorn the white witch
  Who slept in her hair of gold.

By the dark pond in the hills
  She lived when her dam died,
With a black cat which minded her,
  And a black dog at her side.

In pine-wood and marshy places
  Her low song was sung,
Where long moss is, and toadstools
  The hue of a goblin's tongue.

Where got she her sullen mouth
  And where her swaying form?
Would she live on eggs and apples
  When the blood of men is warm?

All the town people went shy of her
  When the Ratchford baby died.
Folk tell how she laughed that day,
  And no folk say she cried.

Yale Ratchford cut him a switch
  From a hickory at his door,
And he went up among the hills
  To see she laughed no more.

There were whispers of a hanging
  The day that he went forth,
As had been done by holy men
  At Salem in the north.

A bear was shot at Hadlyme
  With fur as soft as silk,
And Goodman Ames of Saybrook
  Found minnows in the milk.

That night the geese went over,
  A-belling for the pole.
Some say it was the dark hounds
  That bay a loosened soul.

1 Printed in *The Century Magazine*, CVI, iv, 588–91; and not included in any volume by Sterling.

But saved, or damned forever,
  He comes back home no more,
And we who searched at the witch's
    house
  Found grass against the door.

It was not wise to go hillward
  With hand shut on a switch;
It is not given to young men
  To rid the land of a witch—

Not with eyes so wide apart,
  And in a face so white.
Not if she wander naked
  By a shrunk moon's light.

What shall he do her of service,
  As the strong do for the fair?
Shall he forge her an iron marriage-ring,
  Or shoes for the devil's mare?

For they ha' gone forever—
  Vanished, as men say true,
In blue sky or blue water
  Or the wind between the two.

1923

AMBROSE BIERCE

1842–1914?

AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE

I

A MAN stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the sleepers supporting the metals of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners—two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as 'support,' that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest—a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the centre of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot planking that traversed it.

Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was an outpost farther along. The other bank of the stream was open ground—a gentle acclivity topped with a stockade of vertical tree trunks, loop-holed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway of the slope between bridge and fort were the spectators—a single company of infantry in line, at 'parade rest,' the butts of the rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the centre of the bridge, not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, observing the work of his subordinates, but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette silence and fixity are forms of deference.

The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the

collar of his well-fitting frock-coat. He wore a mustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark gray, and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp. Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for hanging many kinds of persons, and gentlemen are not excluded.

The preparations being complete, the two private soldiers stepped aside and each drew away the plank upon which he had been standing. The sergeant turned to the captain, saluted and placed himself immediately behind that officer, who in turn moved apart one pace. These movements left the condemned man and the sergeant standing on the two ends of the same plank, which spanned three of the cross-ties of the bridge. The end upon which the civilian stood almost, but not quite, reached a fourth. This plank had been held in place by the weight of the captain; it was now held by that of the sergeant. At a signal from the former the latter would step aside, the plank would tilt and the condemned man go down between two ties. The arrangement commended itself to his judgment as simple and effective. His face had not been covered nor his eyes bandaged. He looked a moment at his 'unsteadfast footing,' then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move! What a sluggish stream!

He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift—all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or near by—it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each stroke with impatience and—he knew not why—apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

He unclosed his eyes and saw again the water below him. 'If I could free my hands,' he thought, 'I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader's farthest advance.'

As these thoughts, which have here to be set down in words, were flashed into the doomed man's brain rather than evolved from it, the captain nodded to the sergeant. The sergeant stepped aside.

II

Peyton Farquhar was a well-to-do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a slave owner and, like other slave owners, a politician he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with the gallant army that had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in war time. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war.

One evening while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a gray-clad soldier

rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was fetching the water her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

'The Yanks are repairing the railroads,' said the man, 'and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek bridge, put it in order and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels or trains will be summarily hanged. I saw the order.'

'How far is it to the Owl Creek bridge?' Farquhar asked.

'About thirty miles.'

'Is there no force on this side the creek?'

'Only a picket post half a mile out, on the railroad, and a single sentinel at this end of the bridge.'

'Suppose a man—a civilian and student of hanging—should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel,' said Farquhar, smiling, 'what could he accomplish?'

The soldier reflected. 'I was there a month ago,' he replied. 'I observed that the flood of last winter had lodged a great quantity of driftwood against the wooden pier at this end of the bridge. It is now dry and would burn like tow.'

The lady had now brought the water, which the soldier drank. He thanked her ceremoniously, bowed to her husband and rode away. An hour later, after nightfall, he repassed the plantation, going northward in the direction from which he had come. He was a Federal scout.

III

As Peyton Farquhar fell straight downward through the bridge he lost consciousness and was as one already dead. From this state he was awakened—ages later, it seemed to him—by the pain of a sharp pressure upon his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through every fibre of his body and limbs. These pains appeared to flash along well-defined lines of ramification and to beat with an inconceivably rapid periodicity. They seemed like streams of pulsating fire heating him to an intolerable temperature. As to his head, he was conscious of nothing but a feeling of fulness—of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought. The intellectual part of his nature was already effaced; he had power only to feel, and feeling was torment. He was conscious of motion. Encompassed in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum.

Then all at once, with terrible suddenness, the light about him shot upward with the noise of a loud plash; a frightful roaring was in his ears, and all was cold and dark. The power of thought was restored; he knew that the rope had broken and he had fallen into the stream. There was no additional strangulation; the noose about his neck was already suffocating him and kept the water from his lungs. To die of hanging at the bottom of a river!—the idea seemed to him ludicrous. He opened his eyes in the darkness and saw above him a gleam of light, but how distant, how inaccessible! He was still sinking, for the light became fainter and fainter until it was a mere glimmer. Then it began to grow and brighten, and he knew that he was rising toward the surface—knew it with reluctance, for he was now very comfortable. 'To be hanged and drowned,' he thought, 'that is not so bad; but I do not wish to be shot. No; I will not be shot; that is not fair.'

He was not conscious of an effort, but a sharp pain in his wrist apprised him that he was trying to free his hands. He gave the struggle his attention, as an idler might observe the feat of a juggler, without interest in the outcome. What splendid effort! What magnificent, what superhuman strength! Ah, that was a fine endeavor! Bravo! The cord fell away; his arms parted and floated upward, the hands dimly seen on each side in the growing light. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose at his neck. They tore it away and thrust it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water-snake. 'Put it back, put it back!' He thought he shouted these words to his hands, for the undoing of the noose had

been succeeded by the direst pang that he had yet experienced. His neck ached horribly; his brain was on fire; his heart, which had been fluttering faintly, gave a great leap, trying to force itself out at his mouth. His whole body was racked and wrenched with an insupportable anguish! But his disobedient hands gave no heed to the command. They beat the water vigorously with quick, downward strokes, forcing him to the surface. He felt his head emerge; his eyes were blinded by the sunlight; his chest expanded convulsively, and with a supreme and crowning agony his lungs engulfed a great draught of air, which instantly he expelled in a shriek!

He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were, indeed, preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf—saw the very insects upon them: the locusts, the brilliant-bodied flies, the gray spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragon-flies' wings, the strokes of the water-spiders' legs, like oars which had lifted their boat—all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water.

He had come to the surface facing down the stream; in a moment the visible world seemed to wheel slowly round, himself the pivotal point, and he saw the bridge, the fort, the soldiers upon the bridge, the captain, the sergeant, the two privates, his executioners. They were in silhouette against the blue sky. They shouted and gesticulated, pointing at him. The captain had drawn his pistol, but did not fire; the others were unarmed. Their movements were grotesque and horrible, their forms gigantic.

Suddenly he heard a sharp report and something struck the water smartly within a few inches of his head, spattering his face with spray. He heard a second report, and saw one of the sentinels with his rifle at his shoulder, a light cloud of blue smoke rising from the muzzle. The man in the water saw the eye of the man on the bridge gazing into his own through the sights of the rifle. He observed that it was a gray eye and remembered having read that gray eyes were keenest, and that all famous marksmen had them. Nevertheless, this one had missed.

A counter-swirl had caught Farquhar and turned him half round; he was again looking into the forest on the bank opposite the fort. The sound of a clear, high voice in a monotonous singsong now rang out behind him and came across the water with a distinctness that pierced and subdued all other sounds, even the beating of the ripples in his ears. Although no soldier, he had frequented camps enough to know the dread significance of that deliberate, drawling, aspirated chant; the lieutenant on shore was taking a part in the morning's work. How coldly and pitilessly—with what an even, calm intonation, presaging and enforcing tranquillity in the men—with what accurately measured intervals fell those cruel words:

'Attention, company! . . . Shoulder arms! . . . Ready! . . . Aim! . . . Fire!'

Farquhar dived—dived as deeply as he could. The water roared in his ears like the voice of Niagara, yet he heard the dulled thunder of the volley and, rising again toward the surface, met shining bits of metal, singularly flattened, oscillating slowly downward. Some of them touched him on the face and hands, then fell away, continuing their descent. One lodged between his collar and neck; it was uncomfortably warm and he snatched it out.

As he rose to the surface, gasping for breath, he saw that he had been a long time under water; he was perceptibly farther down stream—nearer to safety. The soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine as they were drawn from the barrels, turned in the air, and thrust into their sockets. The two sentinels fired again, independently and ineffectually.

The hunted man saw all this over his shoulder; he was now swimming vigorously with the current. His brain was as energetic as his arms and legs; he thought with the rapidity of lightning.

'The officer,' he reasoned, 'will not make that martinet's error a second time. It is as easy to dodge a volley as a single shot. He has probably already given the command to fire at will. God help me, I cannot dodge them all!'

An appalling plash within two yards of him was followed by a loud, rushing sound, *diminuendo*, which seemed to travel back through the air to the fort and died in an explosion which stirred the very river to its deeps! A rising sheet of water curved over him, fell down upon him, blinded him, strangled him! The cannon had taken a hand in the game. As he shook his head free from the commotion of the smitten water he heard the deflected shot humming through the air ahead, and in an instant it was cracking and smashing the branches in the forest beyond.

'They will not do that again,' he thought, 'the next time they will use a charge of grape. I must keep my eye upon the gun; the smoke will apprise me—the report arrives too late; it lags behind the missile. That is a good gun.'

Suddenly he felt himself whirled round and round—spinning like a top. The water, the banks, the forests, the now distant bridge, fort and men—all were commingled and blurred. Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color—that was all he saw. He had been caught in a vortex and was being whirled on with a velocity of advance and gyration that made him giddy and sick. In a few moments he was flung upon the gravel at the foot of the left bank of the stream—the southern bank—and behind a projecting point which concealed him from his enemies. The sudden arrest of his motion, the abrasion of one of his hands on the gravel, restored him, and he wept with delight. He dug his fingers into the sand, threw it over himself in handfuls and audibly blessed it. It looked like diamonds, rubies, emeralds; he could think of nothing beautiful which it did not resemble. The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants; he noted a definite order in their arrangement, inhaled the fragrance of their blooms. A strange, roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made in their branches the music of æolian harps. He had no wish to perfect his escape—was content to remain in that enchanting spot until retaken.

A whiz and rattle of grapeshot among the branches high above his head roused him from his dream. The baffled cannoneer had fired him a random farewell. He sprang to his feet, rushed up the sloping bank, and plunged into the forest.

All that day he traveled, laying his course by the rounding sun. The forest seemed interminable; nowhere did he discover a break in it, not even a woodman's road. He had not known that he lived in so wild a region. There was something uncanny in the revelation.

By nightfall he was fatigued, footsore, famishing. The thought of his wife and children urged him on. At last he found a road which led him in what he knew to be the right direction. It was as wide and straight as a city street, yet it seemed untraveled. No fields bordered it, no dwelling anywhere. Not so much as the barking of a dog suggested human habitation. The black bodies of the trees formed a straight wall on both sides, terminating on the horizon in a point, like a diagram in a lesson in perspective. Overhead, as he looked up through this rift in the wood, shone great golden stars looking unfamiliar and grouped in strange constellations. He was sure they were arranged in some order which had a secret and malign significance. The wood on either side was full of singular noises, among which—once, twice, and again—he distinctly heard whispers in an unknown tongue.

His neck was in pain and lifting his hand to it he found it horribly swollen. He knew that it had a circle of black where the rope had bruised it. His eyes felt congested; he could no longer close them. His tongue was swollen with thirst; he relieved its fever by thrusting it forward from between his teeth into the cold air. How softly the turf had carpeted the untraveled avenue—he could no longer feel the roadway beneath his feet!

Doubtless, despite his suffering, he had fallen asleep while walking, for now he sees another scene—perhaps he has merely recovered from a delirium. He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine. He must have traveled the entire

night. As he pushes open the gate and passes up the wide white walk, he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife, looking fresh and cool and sweet, steps down from the veranda to meet him. At the bottom of the steps she stands waiting, with a smile of ineffable joy, an attitude of matchless grace and dignity. Ah, how beautiful she is! He springs forward with extended arms. As he is about to clasp her he feels a stunning blow upon the back of the neck; a blinding white light blazes all about him with a sound like the shock of a cannon—then all is darkness and silence!

Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge.

1891

PHILOSOPHERS THREE

A BEAR, a Fox and an Opossum were attacked by an inundation.

'Death loves a coward,' said the Bear, and went forward to fight the flood.

'What a fool!' said the Fox. 'I know a trick worth two of that.' And he slipped into a hollow stump.

'There are malevolent forces,' said the Opossum, 'which the wise will neither confront nor avoid. The thing is to know the nature of your antagonist.'

So saying the Opossum lay down and pretended to be dead.

1899

TWO SONS

A MAN had Two Sons. The elder was virtuous and dutiful, the younger wicked and crafty. When the father was about to die, he called them before him and said: 'I have only two things of value—my herd of camels and my blessing. How shall I allot them?'

'Give to me,' said the Younger Son, 'thy blessing, for it may reform me. The camels I should be sure to sell and squander the money.'

The Elder Son, disguising his joy, said that he would try to be content with the camels and a pious mind.

It was so arranged and the Man died. Then the wicked Younger Son went before the Cadi and said: 'Behold, my brother has defrauded me of my lawful heritage. He is so bad that our father, as is well known, denied him his blessing; is it likely that he gave him the camels?'

So the Elder Son was compelled to give up the herd and was soundly bastinadoed for his rapacity.

1899

THE ELIGIBLE SON-IN-LAW

A TRULY Clever Person who conducted a savings bank and lent money to his sisters and his cousins and his aunts was approached by a Tatterdemalion who applied for a loan of one hundred thousand dollars.

'What security have you to offer?' asked the Truly Clever Person.

'The best in the world,' the applicant replied, confidentially; 'I am about to become your son-in-law.'

'That would indeed be gilt-edged,' said the Banker, gravely; 'but what claim have you to the hand of my daughter?'

'One that cannot be lightly denied,' said the Tatterdemalion. 'I am about to become worth one hundred thousand dollars.'

Unable to detect a weak point in this scheme of mutual advantage, the Financier gave the Promoter in Disguise an order for the money and wrote a note to his wife directing her to count out the girl.

1899

MORAL PRINCIPLE AND MATERIAL INTEREST

A MORAL Principle met a Material Interest on a bridge wide enough for but one.

'Down, you base thing!' thundered the Moral Principle, 'and let me pass over you!'

The Material Interest merely looked in the other's eyes without saying anything.

'Ah,' said the Moral Principle, hesitatingly, 'let us draw lots to see which one of us shall retire till the other has crossed.'

The Material Interest maintained an unbroken silence and an unwavering stare.

'In order to avoid a conflict,' the Moral Principle resumed, somewhat uneasily, 'I shall myself lie down and let you walk over me.'

Then the Material Interest found his tongue. 'I don't think you are very good

walking,' he said. 'I am a little particular about what I have underfoot. Suppose you get off into the water.'

It occurred that way.

1899

FROM THE CYNIC'S WORD BOOK

DEFINITIONS

ABSURDITY, *n.* A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion.

AIR, *n.* A nutritious substance supplied by a bountiful Providence for the fattening of the poor.

CIRCUS, *n.* A place where horses, ponies and elephants are permitted to see men, women and children acting the fool.

COMFORT, *n.* A state of mind produced by contemplation of a neighbor's uneasiness.

CYNIC, *n.* A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be. Hence the custom among the Scythians of plucking out a cynic's eyes to improve his vision.

DELUSION, *n.* The father of a most respectable family, comprising Enthusiasm, Affection, Self-denial, Faith, Hope, Charity and many other goodly sons and daughters.

All hail, Delusion! Were it not for thee
The world turned topsy-turvy we should see;
For Vice, respectable with cleanly fancies,
Would fly abandoned Virtue's gross advances.

Mumfrey Mappel.

DUTY, *n.* That which sternly impels us in the direction of profit, along the line of desire.

Sir Lavender Portwine, in favor at court,
Was wroth at his master, who'd kissed Lady Port.
His anger provoked him to take the king's head,
But duty prevailed, and he took the king's bread,
Instead.

G.J.

ELEGY, *n.* A composition in verse, in which, without employing any of the methods of humor, the writer aims to produce in the reader's mind the dampest kind of dejection. The most famous English example begins somewhat like this:

The cur foretells the knell of parting day;
The loafing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;
The wise man homeward plods; I only stay
To fiddle-faddle in a minor key.

ERUDITION, *n.* Dust shaken out of a book into an empty skull.

So wide his erudition's mighty span,
He knew Creation's origin and plan
And only came by accident to grief—
He thought, poor man, 'twas right to be a thief.

Romach Pute.

FUTURE, *n.* That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true, and our happiness is assured.

HISTORIAN, *n.* A broad-gauge gossip.

I is the first letter of the alphabet, the first word of the language, the first thought of the mind, the first object of affection. In grammar it is a pronoun of the first person and singular number. Its plural is said to be *We*, but how there can be more than one myself is doubtless clearer to the grammarians than it is to the author of this incomparable dictionary. Conception of two myselves is difficult, but fine. The frank yet graceful use of 'I' distinguishes a good writer from a bad; the latter carries it with the manner of a thief trying to cloak his loot.

IMPUNITY, *n.* Wealth.

KLEPTOMANIAC, *n.* A rich thief.

NOVEL, *n.* A short story padded. A species of composition bearing the same relation to literature that the panorama bears to art. As it is too long to be read at a sitting the impressions made by its successive parts are successively effaced, as in the panorama. Unity, totality of effect, is impossible; for besides the few pages last read all that is carried in mind is the mere plot of what has gone before. To the romance the novel is what photography is to painting. Its distinguishing principle, probability,

corresponds to the literal actuality of the photograph and puts it distinctly into the category of reporting; whereas the free wing of the romancer enables him to mount to such altitudes of imagination as he may be fitted to attain; and the first three essentials of the literary art are imagination, imagination and imagination. The art of writing novels, such as it was, is long dead everywhere except in Russia, where it is new. Peace to its ashes—some of which have a large sale.

OCEAN, *n.* A body of water occupying about two-thirds of a world made for man —who has no gills.

PAINTING, *n.* The art of protecting flat surfaces from the weather and exposing them to the critic.

Formerly, painting and sculpture were combined in the same work: the ancients painted their statues. The only present alliance between the two arts is that the modern painter chisels his patrons.

PLATITUDE, *n.* The fundamental element and special glory of popular literature. A thought that snores in words that smoke. The wisdom of a million fools in the diction of a dullard. A fossil sentiment in artificial rock. A moral without the fable. All that is mortal of a departed truth. A demi-tasse of milk-and-morality. The Pope's-nose of a featherless peacock. A jelly-fish withering on the shore of the sea of thought. The cackle surviving the egg. A desiccated epigram.

POSITIVE, *adj.* Mistaken at the top of one's voice.

PRAY, *v.* To ask that the laws of the universe be annulled in behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy.

RADICALISM, *n.* The conservatism of to-morrow injected into the affairs of to-day.

REASON, *v.i.* To weigh probabilities in the scales of desire.

REFLECTION, *n.* An action of the mind whereby we obtain a clearer view of our relation to the things of yesterday and are able to avoid the perils that we shall not again encounter.

RESTITUTION, *n.* The founding or endowing of universities and public libraries by gift or bequest.

SAW, *n.* A trite popular saying, or proverb. (Figurative and colloquial.) So called because it makes its way into a wooden head. Following are examples of old saws fitted with new teeth.

A penny saved is a penny to squander.

A man is known by the company that he organizes.

A bad workman quarrels with the man who calls him that.

A bird in the hand is worth what it will bring.

Better late than before anybody has invited you.

Example is better than following it.

Half a loaf is better than a whole one if there is much else.

Think twice before you speak to a friend in need.

What is worth doing is worth the trouble of asking somebody to do it.

Least said is soonest disavowed.

He laughs best who laughs least.

Speak of the Devil and he will hear about it.

Of two evils choose to be the least.

Strike while your employer has a big contract.

Where there's a will there's a won't.

SELF-EVIDENT, *adj.* Evident to one's self and to nobody else.

SLANG, *n.* The grunt of the human hog (*Pignoramus intolerabilis*) with an audible memory. The speech of one who utters with his tongue what he thinks with his ear, and feels the pride of a creator in accomplishing the feat of a parrot. A means (under Providence) of setting up as a wit without a capital of sense.

ZIGZAG, *v.t.* To move forward uncertainly, from side to side, as one carrying the white man's burden. (From *zed*, z, and *jag*, an Icelandic word of unknown meaning.)

He zedjagged so uncomen wyde
Thet non coude pas on eyder syde;
So, to com saufly thruh, I been
Constreynet for to doodge betwene.
Munwele

STEPHEN CRANE

1871–1900

THE OPEN BOAT

A Tale intended to be after the Fact. Being the Experience of Four Men from the Sunk Steamer 'Commodore'

I

NONE of them knew the colour of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colours of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks.

Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small boat navigation.

The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: 'Gawd! That was a narrow clip.' As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.

The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the stern. It was a thin little oar and it seemed often ready to snap.

The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.

The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down. The mind of the master of a vessel is rooted deep in the timbers of her, though he command for a day or a decade, and this captain had on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down. Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.

'Keep 'er a little more south, Billie,' said he.

'A little more south, sir,' said the oiler in the stern.

A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and, by the same token, a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.

A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it just as important and just as nervously anxious to do something effective in the way of swamping boats. In a ten-foot dingey one can get an idea of the resources of the sea in the line of waves that is not probable to the average experience which is never at sea in a dingey. As each slaty wall of water approached, it shut all else from the view of the men in the boat, and it was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the move of the waves, and they came in silence, save for the snarling of the crests.

In the wan light, the faces of the men must have been grey. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. Viewed from a balcony, the whole thing would doubtlessly have been

weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had no time to see it, and if they had had leisure there were other things to occupy their minds. The sun swung steadily up the sky, and they knew it was broad day because the colour of the sea changed from slate to emerald-green, streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the colour of the waves that rolled toward them.

In disjointed sentences the cook and the correspondent argued as to the difference between a life-saving station and a house of refuge. The cook had said: 'There's a house of refuge just north of the Mosquito Inlet Light, and as soon as they see us, they'll come off in their boat and pick us up.'

'As soon as who see us?' said the correspondent.

'The crew,' said the cook.

'Houses of refuge don't have crews,' said the correspondent. 'As I understand them, they are only places where clothes and grub are stored for the benefit of shipwrecked people. They don't carry crews.'

'Oh, yes, they do,' said the cook.

'No, they don't,' said the correspondent.

'Well, we're not there yet, anyhow,' said the oiler, in the stern.

'Well,' said the cook, 'perhaps it's not a house of refuge that I'm thinking of as being near Mosquito Inlet Light. Perhaps it's a life-saving station.'

'We're not there yet,' said the oiler, in the stern.

II

As the boat bounced from the top of each wave, the wind tore through the hair of the hatless men, and as the craft plopped her stern down again the spray slashed past them. The crest of each of these waves was a hill, from the top of which the men surveyed, for a moment, a broad tumultuous expanse, shining and wind-riven. It was probably splendid. It was probably glorious, this play of the free sea, wild with lights of emerald and white and amber.

'Bully good thing it's an on-shore wind,' said the cook. 'If not, where would we be? Wouldn't have a show.'

'That's right,' said the correspondent.

The busy oiler nodded his assent.

Then the captain, in the bow, chuckled in a way that expressed humour, contempt, tragedy, all in one. 'Do you think we've got much of a show now, boys?' said he.

Whereupon the three were silent, save for a trifle of hemming and hawing. To express any particular optimism at this time they felt to be childish and stupid, but they all doubtless possessed this sense of the situation in their mind. A young man thinks doggedly at such times. On the other hand, the ethics of their condition was decidedly against any open suggestion of hopelessness. So they were silent.

'Oh, well,' said the captain, soothing his children, 'we'll get ashore all right.'

But there was that in his tone which made them think, so the oiler quoth: 'Yes! If this wind holds!'

The cook was bailing: 'Yes! If we don't catch hell in the surf.'

Canton flannel gulls flew near and far. Sometimes they sat down on the sea, near patches of brown seaweed that rolled over the waves with a movement like carpets on a line in a gale. The birds sat comfortably in groups, and they were envied by some in the dingey, for the wrath of the sea was no more to them than it was to a covey of prairie chickens a thousand miles inland. Often they came very close and stared at the men with black bead-like eyes. At these times they were uncanny and sinister in their unblinking scrutiny, and the men hooted angrily at them, telling them to be gone. One came, and evidently decided to alight on the top of the captain's head. The bird flew parallel to the boat and did not circle, but made short sidelong jumps in the air in chicken-fashion. His black eyes were wistfully fixed upon the captain's head. 'Ugly brute,' said the oiler to the bird. 'You look as if you were made with a jack-knife.' The cook and the correspondent swore darkly at the creature. The captain naturally wished to knock it away with the end of the heavy painter; but he did not dare do it, because anything resembling an emphatic gesture would have capsized this freighted boat, and so with his open hand, the captain gently and carefully waved the gull away. After it had been discouraged from the pursuit the captain breathed easier on account of his hair, and others breathed easier because the bird struck

their minds at this time as being somehow gruesome and ominous.

In the meantime the oiler and the correspondent rowed. And also they rowed.

They sat together in the same seat, and each rowed an oar. Then the oiler took both oars; then the correspondent took both oars; then the oiler; then the correspondent. They rowed and they rowed. The very ticklish part of the business was when the time came for the reclining one in the stern to take his turn at the oars. By the very last star of truth, it is easier to steal eggs from under a hen than it was to change seats in the dingey. First the man in the stern slid his hand along the thwart and moved with care, as if he were of Sèvres. Then the man in the rowing seat slid his hand along the other thwart. It was all done with the most extraordinary care. As the two sidled past each other, the whole party kept watchful eyes on the coming wave, and the captain cried: 'Look out now! Steady there!'

The brown mats of seaweed that appeared from time to time were like islands, bits of earth. They were travelling, apparently, neither one way nor the other. They were, to all intents, stationary. They informed the men in the boat that it was making progress slowly toward the land.

The captain, rearing cautiously in the bow, after the dingey soared on a great swell, said that he had seen the lighthouse at Mosquito Inlet. Presently the cook remarked that he had seen it. The correspondent was at the oars then, and for some reason he too wished to look at the lighthouse, but his back was toward the far shore and the waves were important, and for some time he could not seize an opportunity to turn his head. But at last there came a wave more gentle than the others, and when at the crest of it he swiftly scoured the western horizon.

'See it?' said the captain.

'No,' said the correspondent slowly, 'I didn't see anything.'

'Look again,' said the captain. He pointed. 'It's exactly in that direction.'

At the top of another wave, the correspondent did as he was bid, and this time his eyes chanced on a small still thing on the edge of the swaying horizon. It was precisely like the point of a pin. It took an anxious eye to find a lighthouse so tiny.

'Think we'll make it, captain?'

'If this wind holds and the boat don't swamp, we can't do much else,' said the captain.

The little boat, lifted by each towering sea, and splashed viciously by the crests, made progress that in the absence of seaweed was not apparent to those in her. She seemed just a wee thing wallowing, miraculously top up, at the mercy of five oceans. Occasionally, a great spread of water, like white flames, swarmed into her.

'Bail her, cook,' said the captain serenely.

'All right, captain,' said the cheerful cook.

III

It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him. They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dingey. It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. And after this devotion to the commander of the boat there was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. But no one said that it was so. No one mentioned it.

'I wish we had a sail,' remarked the captain. 'We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest.' So the cook and the correspondent held the mast and spread wide the overcoat. The oiler steered, and the little boat made good way with her new rig. Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep a sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise sailing was a success.

Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed colour, and appeared like a little grey shadow on the sky. The man at the oars could not be prevented from turning

his head rather often to try for a glimpse of this little grey shadow.

At last, from the top of each wave the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea. It certainly was thinner than paper. 'We must be about opposite New Smyrna,' said the cook, who had coasted this shore often in schooners. 'Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago.'

'Did they?' said the captain.

The wind slowly died away. The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar. But the waves continued their old impetuous swooping at the dingey, and the little craft, no longer under way, struggled woundily over them. The oiler or the correspondent took the oars again.

Shipwrecks are apropos of nothing. If men could only train for them and have them occur when the men had reached pink condition, there would be less drowning at sea. Of the four in the dingey none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dingey, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily.

For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time. The correspondent wondered ingenuously how in the name of all that was sane could there be people who thought it amusing to row a boat. It was not an amusement; it was a diabolical punishment, and even a genius of mental aberrations could never conclude that it was anything but a horror to the muscles and a crime against the back. He mentioned to the boat in general how the amusement of rowing struck him, and the weary-faced oiler smiled in full sympathy. Previously to the foundering, by the way, the oiler had worked double-watch in the engine-room of the ship.

'Take her easy, now, boys,' said the captain. 'Don't spend yourselves. If we have to run a surf you'll need all your strength, because we'll sure have to swim for it. Take your time.'

Slowly the land arose from the sea. From a black line it became a line of black and a line of white, trees and sand. Finally, the captain said that he could make out a house on the shore. 'That's the house of refuge, sure,' said the cook. 'They'll see us before long, and come out after us.'

The distant lighthouse reared high. 'The keeper ought to be able to make us out now, if he's looking through a glass,' said the captain. 'He'll notify the life-saving people.'

'None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck,' said the oiler, in a low voice. 'Else the lifeboat would be out hunting us.'

Slowly and beautifully the land loomed out of the sea. The wind came again. It had veered from the north-east to the south-east. Finally, a new sound struck the ears of the men in the boat. It was the low thunder of the surf on the shore. 'We'll never be able to make the lighthouse now,' said the captain. 'Swing her head a little more north, Billie.'

'A little more north, sir,' said the oiler.

Whereupon the little boat turned her nose once more down the wind, and all but the oarsmen watched the shore grow. Under the influence of this expansion doubt and direful apprehension was leaving the minds of the men. The management of the boat was still most absorbing, but it could not prevent a quiet cheerfulness. In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore.

Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dingey like circus men. The correspondent thought that he had been drenched to the skin, but happening to feel in the top pocket of his coat, he found therein eight cigars. Four of them were soaked with sea-water; four were perfectly scatheless. After a search, somebody produced three dry matches, and thereupon the four waifs rode impudently in their little boat, and with an assurance of an impending rescue shining in their eyes, puffed at the big cigars and judged well and ill of all men. Everybody took a drink of water.

IV

'Cook,' remarked the captain, 'there don't seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge.'

'No,' replied the cook. 'Funny they don't see us!'

A broad stretch of lowly coast lay before the eyes of the men. It was of low dunes topped with dark vegetation. The roar of the surf was plain, and sometimes they could see the white lip of a wave as it spun up the beach. A tiny house was blocked out black upon the sky. Southward, the slim lighthouse lifted its little grey length.

Tide, wind, and waves were swinging the dingey northward. 'Funny they don't see us,' said the men.

The surf's roar was here dulled, but its tone was, nevertheless, thunderous and mighty. As the boat swam over the great rollers, the men sat listening to this roar. 'We'll swamp sure,' said everybody.

It is fair to say here that there was not a life-saving station within twenty miles in either direction, but the men did not know this fact, and in consequence they made dark and opprobrious remarks concerning the eyesight of the nation's life-savers. Four scowling men sat in the dingey and surpassed records in the invention of epithets.

'Funny they don't see us.'

The light-heartedness of a former time had completely faded. To their sharpened minds it was easy to conjure pictures of all kinds of incompetency and blindness and, indeed, cowardice. There was the shore of the populous land, and it was bitter and bitter to them that from it came no sign.

'Well,' said the captain, ultimately, 'I suppose we'll have to make a try for ourselves. If we stay out here too long, we'll none of us have strength left to swim after the boat swamps.'

And so the oiler, who was at the oars, turned the boat straight for the shore. There was a sudden tightening of muscles. There was some thinking.

'If we don't all get ashore—' said the captain. 'If we don't all get ashore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?'

They then briefly exchanged some addresses and admonitions. As for the reflections of the men, there was a great deal of rage in them. Perchance they might be formulated thus: 'If I am going to be drowned —if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life? It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men's fortunes. She is an old hen who knows not her intention. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd. . . . But no, she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work.' Afterward the man might have had an impulse to shake his fist at the clouds: 'Just you drown me, now, and then hear what I call you!'

The billows that came at this time were more formidable. They seemed always just about to break and roll over the little boat in a turmoil of foam. There was a preparatory and long growl in the speech of them. No mind unused to the sea would have concluded that the dingey could ascend these sheer heights in time. The shore was still afar. The oiler was a wily surfman. 'Boys,' he said swiftly, 'she won't live three minutes more, and we're too far out to swim. Shall I take her to sea again, captain?'

'Yes! Go ahead!' said the captain.

This oiler, by a series of quick miracles, and fast and steady oarsmanship, turned the boat in the middle of the surf and took her safely to sea again.

There was a considerable silence as the boat bumped over the furrowed sea to deeper water. Then somebody in gloom spoke. 'Well, anyhow, they must have seen us from the shore by now.'

The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the grey desolate east. A squall, marked by dingy clouds, and clouds brick-red, like smoke from a burning building, appeared from the south-east.

'What do you think of those life-saving people? Ain't they peaches?'

'Funny they haven't seen us.'

'Maybe they think we're out here for sport! Maybe they think we're fishin'. Maybe they think we're damned fools.'

It was a long afternoon. A changed tide tried to force them southward, but wind and wave said northward. Far ahead, where coastline, sea, and sky formed their mighty angle, there were little dots which seemed to indicate a city on the shore.

'St. Augustine?'

The captain shook his head. 'Too near Mosquito Inlet.'

And the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed. Then the oiler rowed. It was a weary business. The human back can become the seat of more aches and pains than are registered in books for the composite anatomy of a regiment. It is a limited area, but it can become the theatre of innumerable muscular conflicts, tangles, wrenches, knots, and other comforts.

'Did you ever like to row, Billie?' asked the correspondent.

'No,' said the oiler. 'Hang it.'

When one exchanged the rowing-seat for a place in the bottom of the boat, he suffered a bodily depression that caused him to be careless of everything save an obligation to wiggle one finger. There was cold sea-water swashing to and fro in the boat, and he lay in it. His head, pillowed on a thwart, was within an inch of the swirl of a wave crest, and sometimes a particularly obstreperous sea came in-board and drenched him once more. But these matters did not annoy him. It is almost certain that if the boat had capsized he would have tumbled comfortably out upon the ocean as if he felt sure that it was a great soft mattress.

'Look! There's a man on the shore!'

'Where?'

'There! See 'im? See 'im?'

'Yes, sure! He's walking along.'

'Now he's stopped. Look! He's facing us!'

'He's waving at us!'

'So he is! By thunder!'

'Ah, now we're all right! Now we're all right! There'll be a boat out here for us in half an hour.'

'He's going on. He's running. He's going up to that house there.'

The remote beach seemed lower than the sea, and it required a searching glance to discern the little black figure. The captain saw a floating stick and they rowed to it. A bath-towel was by some weird chance in the boat, and, tying this on the stick, the captain waved it. The oarsman did not dare turn his head, so he was obliged to ask questions.

'What's he doing now?'

'He's standing still again. He's looking, I think. . . . There he goes again. Toward the house. . . . Now he's stopped again.'

'Is he waving at us?'

'No, not now! he was, though'

'Look! There comes another man!'

'He's running.'

'Look at him go, would you.'

'Why, he's on a bicycle. Now he's met the other man. They're both waving at us. Look!'

'There comes something up the beach.'

'What the devil is that thing?'

'Why, it looks like a boat.'

'Why, certainly it's a boat.'

'No, it's on wheels.'

'Yes, so it is. Well, that must be the life-boat. They drag them along shore on a wagon.'

'That's the life-boat, sure.'

'No, by—, it's—it's an omnibus.'

'I tell you it's a life-boat.'

'It is not! It's an omnibus. I can see it plain. See? One of these big hotel omnibuses.'

'By thunder, you're right. It's an omnibus, sure as fate. What do you suppose they are doing with an omnibus? Maybe they are going around collecting the life-crew, hey?'

'That's it, likely. Look! There's a fellow waving a little black flag. He's standing on the steps of the omnibus. There come those other two fellows. Now they're all talking together. Look at the fellow with the flag. Maybe he ain't waving it.'

'That ain't a flag, is it? That's his coat. Why, certainly, that's his coat.'

'So it is. It's his coat. He's taken it off and is waving it around his head. But would you look at him swing it.'

'Oh, say, there isn't any life-saving station there. That's just a winter resort hotel omnibus that has brought over some of the boarders to see us drown.'

'What's that idiot with the coat mean? What's he signaling, anyhow?'

'It looks as if he were trying to tell us to go north. There must be a life-saving station up there.'

'No! He thinks we're fishing. Just giving us a merry hand. See? Ah, there, Willie.'

'Well, I wish I could make something out of those signals. What do you suppose he means?'

'He don't mean anything. He's just playing.'

'Well, if he'd just signal us to try the surf again, or to go to sea and wait, or go north,

or go south, or go to hell—there would be some reason in it. But look at him. He just stands there and keeps his coat revolving like a wheel. The ass!'

'There come more people.'

'Now there's quite a mob. Look! Isn't that a boat?'

'Where? Oh, I see where you mean. No, that's no boat.'

'That fellow is still waving his coat.'

'He must think we like to see him do that. Why don't he quit it? It don't mean anything.'

'I don't know. I think he is trying to make us go north. It must be that there's a life-saving station there somewhere.'

'Say, he ain't tired yet. Look at 'im wave.'

'Wonder how long he can keep that up. He's been revolving his coat ever since he caught sight of us. He's an idiot. Why aren't they getting men to bring a boat out? A fishing boat—one of those big yawls—could come out here all right. Why don't he do something?'

'Oh, it's all right, now.'

'They'll have a boat out here for us in less than no time, now that they've seen us.'

A faint yellow tone came into the sky over the low land. The shadows on the sea slowly deepened. The wind bore coldness with it, and the men began to shiver.

'Holy smoke!' said one, allowing his voice to express his impious mood, 'if we keep on monkeying out here! If we've got to flounder out here all night!'

'Oh, we'll never have to stay here all night! Don't you worry. They've seen us now, and it won't be long before they'll come chasing out after us.'

The shore grew dusky. The man waving a coat blended gradually into this gloom, and it swallowed in the same manner the omnibus and the group of people. The spray, when it dashed uproariously over the side, made the voyagers shrink and swear like men who were being branded.

'I'd like to catch the chump who waved the coat. I feel like soaking him one, just for luck.'

'Why? What did he do?'

'Oh, nothing, but then he seemed so damned cheerful.'

In the meantime the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed, and then the oiler rowed. Grey-faced and bowed forward, they mechanically, turn by turn, plied the leaden oars. The form of the lighthouse had vanished from the southern horizon, but finally a pale star appeared, just lifting from the sea. The streaked saffron in the west passed before the all-merging darkness, and the sea to the east was black. The land had vanished, and was expressed only by the low and drear thunder of the surf.

'If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life?'

The patient captain, drooped over the water-jar, was sometimes obliged to speak to the oarsman.

'Keep her head up! Keep her head up!'

'"Keep her head up," sir.' The voices were weary and low.

This was surely a quiet evening. All save the oarsman lay heavily and listlessly in the boat's bottom. As for him, his eyes were just capable of noting the tall black waves that swept forward in a most sinister silence, save for an occasional subdued growl of a crest.

The cook's head was on a thwart, and he looked without interest at the water under his nose. He was deep in other scenes. Finally he spoke. 'Billie,' he murmured, dreamfully, 'what kind of pie do you like best?'

V

'Pie,' said the oiler and the correspondent, agitatedly. 'Don't talk about those things, blast you!'

'Well,' said the cook, 'I was just thinking about ham sandwiches, and—'

A night on the sea in an open boat is a long night. As darkness settled finally, the shine of the light, lifting from the sea in the south, changed to full gold. On the northern horizon a new light appeared, a small bluish gleam on the edge of the waters. These two lights were the furniture of the world. Otherwise there was nothing but waves.

Two men huddled in the stern, and distances were so magnificent in the dingey

that the rower was enabled to keep his feet partly warmed by thrusting them under his companions. Their legs indeed extended far under the rowing-seat until they touched the feet of the captain forward. Sometimes, despite the efforts of the tired oarsman, a wave came piling into the boat, an icy wave of the night, and the chilling water soaked them anew. They would twist their bodies for a moment and groan, and sleep the dead sleep once more, while the water in the boat gurgled about them as the craft rocked.

The plan of the oiler and the correspondent was for one to row until he lost the ability, and then arouse the other from his sea-water couch in the bottom of the boat.

The oiler plied the oars until his head drooped forward, and the overpowering sleep blinded him. And he rowed yet afterward. Then he touched a man in the bottom of the boat, and called his name. 'Will you spell me for a little while?' he said, meekly.

'Sure, Billie,' said the correspondent, awakening and dragging himself to a sitting position. They exchanged places carefully, and the oiler, cuddling down in the sea-water at the cook's side, seemed to go to sleep instantly.

The particular violence of the sea had ceased. The waves came without snarling. The obligation of the man at the oars was to keep the boat headed so that the tilt of the rollers would not capsize her, and to preserve her from filling when the crests rushed past. The black waves were silent and hard to be seen in the darkness. Often one was almost upon the boat before the oarsman was aware.

In a low voice the correspondent addressed the captain. He was not sure that the captain was awake, although this iron man seemed to be always awake. 'Captain, shall I keep her making for that light north, sir?'

The same steady voice answered him. 'Yes. Keep it about two points off the port bow.'

The cook had tied a life-belt around himself in order to get even the warmth which this clumsy cork contrivance could donate, and he seemed almost stove-like when a rower, whose teeth invariably chattered wildly as soon as he ceased his labour, dropped down to sleep.

The correspondent, as he rowed, looked down at the two men sleeping underfoot. The cook's arm was around the oiler's shoulders, and, with their fragmentary clothing and haggard faces, they were the babes of the sea, a grotesque rendering of the old babes in the wood.

Later he must have grown stupid at his work, for suddenly there was a growling of water, and a crest came with a roar and a swash into the boat, and it was a wonder that it did not set the cook afloat in his life-belt. The cook continued to sleep, but the oiler sat up, blinking his eyes and shaking with the new cold.

'Oh, I'm awful sorry, Billie,' said the correspondent, contritely.

'That's all right, old boy,' said the oiler, and lay down again and was asleep.

Presently it seemed that even the captain dozed, and the correspondent thought that he was the one man afloat on all the oceans. The wind had a voice as it came over the waves, and it was sadder than the end.

There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife.

Then there came a stillness, while the correspondent breathed with the open mouth and looked at the sea.

Suddenly there was another swish and another long flash of bluish light, and this time it was alongside the boat, and might almost have been reached with an oar. The correspondent saw an enormous fin speed like a shadow through the water, hurling the crystalline spray and leaving the long glowing trail.

The correspondent looked over his shoulder at the captain. His face was hidden, and he seemed to be asleep. He looked at the babes of the sea. They certainly were asleep. So, being bereft of sympathy, he leaned a little way to one side and swore softly into the sea.

But the thing did not then leave the vicinity of the boat. Ahead or astern, on one side or the other, at intervals long or short, fled the long sparkling streak, and there was to be heard the whiroo of the dark fin. The speed and power of the thing was greatly to be admired. It cut the water like a gigantic and keen projectile.

The presence of this biding thing did not affect the man with the same horror that it would if he had been a picnicker. He simply looked at the sea dully and swore in an undertone.

Nevertheless, it is true that he did not wish to be alone with the thing. He wished one of his companions to awaken by chance and keep him company with it. But the captain hung motionless over the water-jar, and the oiler and the cook in the bottom of the boat were plunged in slumber.

VI

'If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?'

During this dismal night, it may be remarked that a man would conclude that it was really the intention of the seven mad gods to drown him, despite the abominable injustice of it. For it was certainly an abominable injustice to drown a man who had worked so hard, so hard. The man felt it would be a crime most unnatural. Other people had drowned at sea since galleys swarmed with painted sails, but still—

When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples. Any visible expression of nature would surely be pelleted with his jeers.

Then, if there be no tangible thing to hoot he feels, perhaps, the desire to confront a personification and indulge in pleas, bowed to one knee, and with hands supplicant, saying: 'Yes, but I love myself.'

A high cold star on a winter's night is the word he feels that she says to him. Thereafter he knows the pathos of his situation.

The men in the dingey had not discussed these matters, but each had, no doubt, reflected upon them in silence and according to his mind. There was seldom any expression upon their faces save the general one of complete weariness. Speech was devoted to the business of the boat.

To chime the notes of his emotion, a verse mysteriously entered the correspondent's head. He had even forgotten that he had forgotten this verse, but it suddenly was in his mind.

'A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth of woman's tears;
But a comrade stood beside him, and he took that comrade's hand,
And he said: "I shall never see my own, my native land." '

In his childhood, the correspondent had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, but he had never regarded the fact as important. Myriads of his school-fellows had informed him of the soldier's plight, but the dinning had naturally ended by making him perfectly indifferent. He had never considered it his affair that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, nor had it appeared to him as a matter for sorrow. It was less to him than the breaking of a pencil's point.

Now, however, it quaintly came to him as a human, living thing. It was no longer merely a picture of a few throes in the breast of a poet, meanwhile drinking tea and warming his feet at the grate; it was an actuality—stern, mournful, and fine.

The correspondent plainly saw the soldier. He lay on the sand with his feet out straight and still. While his pale left hand was upon his chest in an attempt to thwart the going of his life, the blood came between his fingers. In the far Algerian distance, a city of low square forms was set against a sky that was faint with the last sunset hues. The correspondent, plying the oars and dreaming of the slow and slower movements of the lips of the soldier, was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.

The thing which had followed the boat and waited had evidently grown bored at the delay. There was no longer to be heard the slash of the cut-water, and there was no longer the flame of the long trail. The light in the north still glimmered, but it was apparently no nearer to the boat. Sometimes

the boom of the surf rang in the correspondent's ears, and he turned the craft seaward then and rowed harder. Southward, someone had evidently built a watch-fire on the beach. It was too low and too far to be seen, but it made a shimmering, roseate reflection upon the bluff back of it, and this could be discerned from the boat. The wind came stronger, and sometimes a wave suddenly raged out like a mountain-cat, and there was to be seen the sheen and sparkle of a broken crest.

The captain, in the bow, moved on his water-jar and sat erect. 'Pretty long night,' he observed to the correspondent. He looked at the shore. 'Those life-saving people take their time.'

'Did you see that shark playing around?'

'Yes, I saw him. He was a big fellow, all right.'

'Wish I had known you were awake.'

Later the correspondent spoke into the bottom of the boat.

'Billie!' There was a slow and gradual disentanglement. 'Billie, will you spell me?'

'Sure,' said the oiler.

As soon as the correspondent touched the cold comfortable sea-water in the bottom of the boat, and had huddled close to the cook's life-belt he was deep in sleep, despite the fact that his teeth played all the popular airs. This sleep was so good to him that it was but a moment before he heard a voice call his name in a tone that demonstrated the last stages of exhaustion. 'Will you spell me?'

'Sure, Billie.'

The light in the north had mysteriously vanished, but the correspondent took his course from the wide-awake captain.

Later in the night they took the boat farther out to sea, and the captain directed the cook to take one oar at the stern and keep the boat facing the seas. He was to call out if he should hear the thunder of the surf. This plan enabled the oiler and the correspondent to get respite together. 'We'll give those boys a chance to get into shape again,' said the captain. They curled down and, after a few preliminary chatterings and trembles, slept once more the dead sleep. Neither knew they had bequeathed to the cook the company of another shark, or perhaps the same shark.

As the boat caroused on the waves, spray occasionally bumped over the side and gave them a fresh soaking, but this had no power to break their repose. The ominous slash of the wind and the water affected them as it would have affected mummies.

'Boys,' said the cook, with the notes of every reluctance in his voice, 'she's drifted in pretty close. I guess one of you had better take her to sea again.' The correspondent, aroused, heard the crash of the toppled crests.

As he was rowing, the captain gave him some whisky-and-water, and this steadied the chills out of him. 'If I ever get ashore and anybody shows me even a photograph of an oar—'

At last there was a short conversation.

'Billie. . . . Billie, will you spell me?'

'Sure,' said the oiler.

VII

When the correspondent again opened his eyes, the sea and the sky were each of the grey hue of the dawning. Later, carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The morning appeared finally, in its splendour, with a sky of pure blue, and the sunlight flamed on the tips of the waves.

On the distant dunes were set many little black cottages, and a tall white windmill reared above them. No man, nor dog, nor bicycle appeared on the beach. The cottages might have formed a deserted village.

The voyagers scanned the shore. A conference was held in the boat. 'Well,' said the captain, 'if no help is coming, we might better try a run through the surf right away. If we stay out here much longer we will be too weak to do anything for ourselves at all.' The others silently acquiesced in this reasoning. The boat was headed for the beach. The correspondent wondered if none ever ascended the tall wind-tower, and if then they never looked seaward. This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual—nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent. It is, perhaps, plausible that a man in this situation, impressed with the unconcern of the universe, should see the innumerable flaws

of his life, and have them taste wickedly in his mind and wish for another chance. A distinction between right and wrong seems absurdly clear to him, then, in this new ignorance of the grave-edge, and he understands that if he were given another opportunity he would mend his conduct and his words, and be better and brighter during an introduction or at a tea.

'Now, boys,' said the captain, 'she is going to swamp sure. All we can do is to work her in as far as possible, and then when she swamps, pile out and scramble for the beach. Keep cool now, and don't jump until she swamps sure.'

The oiler took the oars. Over his shoulders he scanned the surf. 'Captain,' he said, 'I think I'd better bring her about, and keep her head-on to the seas and back her in.'

'All right, Billie,' said the captain. 'Back her in.' The oiler swung the boat then and, seated in the stern, the cook and the correspondent were obliged to look over their shoulders to contemplate the lonely and indifferent shore.

The monstrous in-shore rollers heaved the boat high until the men were again enabled to see the white sheets of water scudding up the slanted beach. 'We won't get in very close,' said the captain. Each time a man could wrest his attention from the rollers, he turned his glance toward the shore, and in the expression of the eyes during this contemplation there was a singular quality. The correspondent, observing the others, knew that they were not afraid, but the full meaning of their glances was shrouded.

As for himself, he was too tired to grapple fundamentally with the fact. He tried to coerce his mind into thinking of it, but the mind was dominated at this time by the muscles, and the muscles said they did not care. It merely occurred to him that if he should drown it would be a shame.

There were no hurried words, no pallor, no plain agitation. The men simply looked at the shore. 'Now, remember to get well clear of the boat when you jump,' said the captain.

Seaward the crest of a roller suddenly fell with a thunderous crash, and the long white comber came roaring down upon the boat.

'Steady now,' said the captain. The men were silent. They turned their eyes from the shore to the comber and waited. The boat slid up the incline, leaped at the furious top, bounced over it, and swung down the long back of the waves. Some water had been shipped and the cook bailed it out.

But the next crest crashed also. The tumbling boiling flood of white water caught the boat and whirled it almost perpendicular. Water swarmed in from all sides. The correspondent had his hands on the gunwale at this time, and when the water entered at that place he swiftly withdrew his fingers, as if he objected to wetting them.

The little boat, drunken with this weight of water, reeled and snuggled deeper into the sea.

'Bail her out, cook! Bail her out,' said the captain.

'All right, captain,' said the cook.

'Now, boys, the next one will do for us, sure,' said the oiler. 'Mind to jump clear of the boat.'

The third wave moved forward, huge, furious, implacable. It fairly swallowed the dingey, and almost simultaneously the men tumbled into the sea. A piece of life-belt had lain in the bottom of the boat, and as the correspondent went overboard he held this to his chest with his left hand.

The January water was icy, and he reflected immediately that it was colder than he had expected to find it off the coast of Florida. This appeared to his dazed mind as a fact important enough to be noted at the time. The coldness of the water was sad; it was tragic. This fact was somehow mixed and confused with his opinion of his own situation that it seemed almost a proper reason for tears. The water was cold.

When he came to the surface he was conscious of little but the noisy water. Afterward he saw his companions in the sea. The oiler was ahead in the race. He was swimming strongly and rapidly. Off to the correspondent's left, the cook's great white and corked back bulged out of the water, and in the rear the captain was hanging with his one good hand to the keel of the overturned dingey.

There is a certain immovable quality to a shore, and the correspondent wondered at it amid the confusion of the sea.

It seemed also very attractive, but the correspondent knew that it was a long journey, and he paddled leisurely. The piece of life-preserver lay under him, and sometimes

he whirled down the incline of a wave as if he were on a hand-sled.

But finally he arrived at a place in the sea where travel was beset with difficulty. He did not pause swimming to inquire what manner of current had caught him, but there his progress ceased. The shore was set before him like a bit of scenery on a stage, and he looked at it and understood with his eyes each detail of it.

As the cook passed, much farther to the left, the captain was calling to him, 'Turn over on your back, cook! Turn over on your back and use the oar.'

'All right, sir.' The cook turned on his back, and, paddling with an oar, went ahead as if he were a canoe.

Presently the boat also passed to the left of the correspondent with the captain clinging with one hand to the keel. He would have appeared like a man raising himself to look over a board fence, if it were not for the extraordinary gymnastics of the boat. The correspondent marvelled that the captain could still hold to it.

They passed on, nearer to shore—the oiler, the cook, the captain—and following them went the water-jar, bouncing gaily over the seas.

The correspondent remained in the grip of this strange new enemy—a current. The shore, with its white slope of sand and its green bluff, topped with little silent cottages, was spread like a picture before him. It was very near to him then, but he was impressed as one who in a gallery looks at a scene from Brittany or Algiers.

He thought: 'I am going to drown? Can it be possible? Can it be possible? Can it be possible?' Perhaps an individual must consider his own death to be the final phenomenon of nature.

But later a wave perhaps whirled him out of this small deadly current, for he found suddenly that he could again make progress toward the shore. Later still, he was aware that the captain, clinging with one hand to the keel of the dingey, had his face turned away from the shore and toward him, and was calling his name. 'Come to the boat! Come to the boat!'

In his struggle to reach the captain and the boat, he reflected that when one gets properly wearied, drowning must really be a comfortable arrangement, a cessation of hostilities accompanied by a large degree of relief, and he was glad of it, for the main thing in his mind for some moments had been horror of the temporary agony. He did not wish to be hurt.

Presently he saw a man running along the shore. He was undressing with most remarkable speed. Coat, trousers, shirt, everything flew magically off him.

'Come to the boat,' called the captain.

'All right, captain.' As the correspondent paddled, he saw the captain let himself down to bottom and leave the boat. Then the correspondent performed his one little marvel of the voyage. A large wave caught him and flung him with ease and supreme speed completely over the boat and far beyond it. It struck him even then as an event in gymnastics, and a true miracle of the sea. An overturned boat in the surf is not a plaything to a swimming man.

The correspondent arrived in water that reached only to his waist, but his condition did not enable him to stand for more than a moment. Each wave knocked him into a heap, and the under-tow pulled at him.

Then he saw the man who had been running and undressing, and undressing and running, come bounding into the water. He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded toward the captain, but the captain waved him away, and sent him to the correspondent. He was naked, naked as a tree in winter, but a halo was about his head, and he shone like a saint. He gave a strong pull, and a long drag, and a bully heave at the correspondent's hand. The correspondent, schooled in the minor formulæ, said: 'Thanks, old man.' But suddenly the man cried: 'What's that?' He pointed a swift finger. The correspondent said: 'Go.'

In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodically, between each wave, clear of the sea.

The correspondent did not know all that transpired afterward. When he achieved safe ground he fell, striking the sand with each particular part of his body. It was as if he had dropped from a roof, but the thud was grateful to him.

It seems that instantly the beach was populated with men with blankets, clothes, and flasks, and women with coffee-pots and all the remedies sacred to their minds. The

welcome of the land to the men from the sea was warm and generous, but a still and dripping shape was carried slowly up the beach, and the land's welcome for it could only be the different and sinister hospitality of the grave.

When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea's voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters.

1898

THE UPTURNED FACE

'WHAT will we do now?' said the adjutant, troubled and excited.

'Bury him,' said Timothy Lean.

The two officers looked down close to their toes where lay the body of their comrade. The face was chalk-blue; gleaming eyes stared at the sky. Over the two upright figures was a windy sound of bullets, and on the top of the hill Lean's prostrate company of Spitzbergen infantry was firing measured volleys.

'Don't you think it would be better—' began the adjutant. 'We might leave him until to-morrow.'

'No,' said Lean. 'I can't hold that post an hour longer. I've got to fall back, and we've got to bury old Bill.'

'Of course,' said the adjutant, at once. 'Your men got intrenching tools?'

Lean shouted back to his little line, and two men came slowly, one with a pick, one with a shovel. They started in the direction of the Rostina sharpshooters. Bullets cracked near their ears. 'Dig here,' said Lean gruffly. The men, thus caused to lower their glances to the turf, became hurried and frightened, merely because they could not look to see whence the bullets came. The dull beat of the pick striking the earth sounded amid the swift snap of close bullets. Presently the other private began to shovel.

'I suppose,' said the adjutant, slowly, 'we'd better search his clothes for—things.'

Lean nodded. Together in curious abstraction they looked at the body. Then Lean stirred his shoulders suddenly, arousing himself.

'Yes,' he said, 'we'd better see what he's got.' He dropped to his knees, and his hands approached the body of the dead officer. But his hands wavered over the buttons of the tunic. The first button was brick-red with drying blood, and he did not seem to dare touch it.

'Go on,' said the adjutant, hoarsely.

Lean stretched his wooden hand, and his fingers fumbled the blood-stained buttons. At last he rose with ghastly face. He had gathered a watch, a whistle, a pipe, a tobacco-pouch, a handkerchief, a little case of cards and papers. He looked at the adjutant. There was a silence. The adjutant was feeling that he had been a coward to make Lean do all the grisly business.

'Well,' said Lean, 'that's all, I think. You have his sword and revolver?'

'Yes,' said the adjutant, his face working, and then he burst out in a sudden strange fury at the two privates. 'Why don't you hurry up with that grave? What are you doing, anyhow? Hurry, do you hear? I never saw such stupid—'

Even as he cried out in his passion the two men were labouring for their lives. Ever overhead the bullets were spitting.

The grave was finished. It was not a masterpiece—a poor little shallow thing. Lean and the adjutant again looked at each other in a curious silent communication.

Suddenly the adjutant croaked out a weird laugh. It was a terrible laugh, which had its origin in that part of the mind which is first moved by the singing of the nerves. 'Well,' he said, humorously to Lean, 'I suppose we had best tumble him in.'

'Yes,' said Lean. The two privates stood waiting, bent over their implements. 'I suppose,' said Lean, 'it would be better if we laid him in ourselves.'

'Yes,' said the adjutant. Then, apparently remembering that he had made Lean search the body, he stooped with great fortitude and took hold of the dead officer's clothing. Lean joined him. Both were particular that their fingers should not feel the corpse. They tugged away; the corpse lifted, heaved, toppled, flopped into the grave, and the two officers, straightening, looked again at each other—they were always looking at each other. They sighed with relief.

The adjutant said, 'I suppose we should —we should say something. Do you know the service, Tim?'

'They don't read the service until the

grave is filled in,' said Lean, pressing his lips to an academic expression.

'Don't they?' said the adjutant, shocked that he had made the mistake.

'Oh, well,' he cried, suddenly, 'let us—let us say something—while he can hear us.'

'All right,' said Lean. 'Do you know the service?'

'I can't remember a line of it,' said the adjutant.

Lean was extremely dubious. 'I can repeat two lines, but—'

'Well, do it,' said the adjutant. 'Go as far as you can. That's better than nothing. And the beasts have got our range exactly.'

Lean looked at his two men. 'Attention,' he barked. The privates came to attention with a click, looking much aggrieved. The adjutant lowered his helmet to his knee. Lean, bareheaded, stood over the grave. The Rostina sharpshooters fired briskly.

'O Father, our friend has sunk in the deep waters of death, but his spirit has leaped toward Thee as the bubble arises from the lips of the drowning. Perceive, we beseech, O Father, the little flying bubble, and—'

Lean, although husky and ashamed, had suffered no hesitation up to this point, but he stopped with a hopeless feeling and looked at the corpse.

The adjutant moved uneasily. 'And from Thy superb heights—' he began, and then he too came to an end.

'And from Thy superb heights,' said Lean.

The adjutant suddenly remembered a phrase in the back part of the Spitzbergen burial service, and he exploited it with the triumphant manner of a man who has recalled everything, and can go on.

'O God, have mercy—'

'O God, have mercy—' said Lean.

'Mercy,' repeated the adjutant, in quick failure.

'Mercy,' said Lean. And then he was moved by some violence of feeling, for he turned suddenly upon his two men and tigerishly said, 'Throw the dirt in.'

The fire of the Rostina sharpshooters was accurate and continuous.

One of the aggrieved privates came forward with his shovel. He lifted his first shovel-load of earth, and for a moment of inexplicable hesitation it was held poised above this corpse, which from its chalk-blue face looked keenly out from the grave. Then the soldier emptied his shovel on—on the feet.

Timothy Lean felt as if tons had been swiftly lifted from off his forehead. He had felt that perhaps the private might empty the shovel on—on the face. It had been emptied on the feet. There was a great point gained there—ha, ha!—the first shovelful had been emptied on the feet. How satisfactory!

The adjutant began to babble. 'Well, of course—a man we've messed with all these years—impossible—you can't, you know, leave your intimate friends rotting on the field. Go on, for God's sake, and shovel, you!'

The man with the shovel suddenly ducked, grabbed his left arm with his right hand, and looked at his officer for orders. Lean picked the shovel from the ground. 'Go to the rear,' he said to the wounded man. He also addressed the other private. 'You get under cover, too; I'll finish this business.'

The wounded man scrambled hard still for the top of the ridge without devoting any glances to the direction from whence the bullets came, and the other man followed at an equal pace; but he was different, in that he looked back anxiously three times.

This is merely the way—often—of the hit and unhit.

Timothy Lean filled the shovel, hesitated, and then, in a movement which was like a gesture of abhorrence, he flung the dirt into the grave, and as it landed it made a sound—plop! Lean suddenly stopped and mopped his brow—a tired labourer.

'Perhaps we have been wrong,' said the adjutant. His glance wavered stupidly. 'It might have been better if we hadn't buried him just at this time. Of course, if we advance to-morrow the body would have been—'

'Damn you,' said Lean, 'shut your mouth!' He was not the senior officer.

He again filled the shovel and flung the earth. Always the earth made that sound—plop! For a space Lean worked frantically, like a man digging himself out of danger.

Soon there was nothing to be seen but

the chalk-blue face. Lean filled the shovel. 'Good God,' he cried to the adjutant. 'Why didn't you turn him somehow when you put him in? This—' Then Lean began to stutter.

The adjutant understood. He was pale to the lips. 'Go on, man,' he cried, beseechingly, almost in a shout. Lean swung back the shovel. It went forward in a pendulum curve. When the earth landed it made a sound—plop!

1902

TEN POEMS

1

In heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
'What did you do?'
Then all save one of the little blades
Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.
Presently, God said,
'And what did you do?'
The little blade answered, 'O my lord,
Memory is bitter to me,
For, if I did good deeds,
I know not of them.'
Then God, in all His splendour,
Arose from His throne.
'O best little blade of grass!' He said.

1895

2

Places among the stars,
Soft gardens near the sun,
Keep your distant beauty;
Shed no beams upon my weak heart.
Since she is here
In a place of blackness,
Not your golden days
Nor your silver nights
Can call me to you.
Since she is here
In a place of blackness,
Here I stay and wait.

1895

3

A youth in apparel that glittered
Went to walk in a grim forest.
There he met an assassin
Attired all in garb of old days;
He, scowling through the thickets,
And dagger poised quivering,
Rushed upon the youth.
'Sir,' said this latter,
'I am enchanted, believe me,
To die, thus,
In this mediæval fashion,
According to the best legends;
Ah, what joy!'
Then took he the wound, smiling,
And died, content.

1895

4

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands
toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the
regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and
die.
The unexplained glory flies above
them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his
kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow
trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and
die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of
killing
And a field where a thousand corpses
lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a
button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

1899

5

A NEWSPAPER is a collection of half-
injustices
Which, bawled by boys from mile to mile,
Spreads its curious opinion
To a million merciful and sneering men,
While families cuddle the joys of the
fireside
When spurred by tale of dire lone agony.
A newspaper is a court
Where everyone is kindly and unfairly
tried
By a squalor of honest men.
A newspaper is a market
Where wisdom sells its freedom
And melons are crowned by the crowd.
A newspaper is a game
Where his error scores the player victory
While another's skill wins death.
A newspaper is a symbol;
It is feckless life's chronicle,
A collection of loud tales
Concentrating eternal stupidities,
That in remote ages lived unhaltered,
Roaming through a fenceless world.

1899

6

THE wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck by astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
'Ha,' he said,
'I see that none has passed here
In a long time.'
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
'Well,' he mumbled at last,
'Doubtless there are other roads.'

1899

7

A SLANT of sun on dull brown walls,
A forgotten sky of bashful blue.

Toward God a mighty hymn,
A song of collisions and cries,
Rumbling wheels, hoof-beats, bells,
Welcomes, farewells, love-calls, final
moans,
Voices of joy, idiocy, warning, despair,
The unknown appeals of brutes,
The chanting of flowers,
The screams of cut trees.
The senseless babble of hens and wise
men—
A cluttered incoherency that says at the
stars:
'O God, save us!'

1899

8

IN the night
Grey heavy clouds muffled the valleys,
And the peaks looked toward God
alone.
'O Master, that movest the wind with
a finger,
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.
Grant that we may run swiftly across
the world
To huddle in worship at Thy feet.'

In the morning
A noise of men at work came the clear blue
miles,
And the little black cities were apparent.
'O Master, that knowest the meaning
of raindrops,
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.
Give voice to us, we pray, O Lord,
That we may sing Thy goodness to the
sun.'

In the evening
The far valleys were sprinkled with tiny
lights.
'O Master,
Thou that knowest the value of kings
and birds,
Thou hast made us humble, idle, futile
peaks.
Thou only needst eternal patience;
We bow to Thy wisdom, O Lord—
Humble, idle, futile peaks.'

In the night
Grey heavy clouds muffled the valleys,
And the peaks looked toward God
alone.

1899

9

A MAN said to the universe:
'Sir, I exist!'
'However,' replied the universe,
'The fact has not created in me
A sense of obligation.'

1899

10

THE trees in the garden rained flowers.
Children ran there joyously.
They gathered the flowers
Each to himself.
Now there were some
Who gathered great heaps—
Having opportunity and skill—
Until, behold, only chance blossoms
Remained for the feeble.
Then a little spindling tutor
Ran importantly to the father, crying:
'Pray, come hither!
See this unjust thing in your garden!'
But when the father had surveyed,
He admonished the tutor:
'Not so, small sage!
This thing is just.
For, look you,
Are not they who possess the flowers
Stronger, bolder, shrewder
Than they who have none?
Why should the strong—
The beautiful strong—
Why should they not have the flowers?'
Upon reflection, the tutor bowed to the ground,
'My lord,' he said,
'The stars are displaced
By this towering wisdom.'

1899

FRANK NORRIS

1870–1902

FROM THE OCTOPUS AND THE PIT

WHEAT [1]

I

THE evening before, when the foreman had blown his whistle at six o'clock, the long line of ploughs had halted upon the instant, and the drivers, unharnessing their teams, had taken them back to the division barns—leaving the ploughs as they were in the furrows. But an hour after daylight the next morning the work was resumed. After breakfast, Vanamee, riding one horse and leading the others, had returned to the line of ploughs together with the other drivers. Now he was busy harnessing the team. At the division blacksmith shop—temporarily put up—he had been obliged to wait while one of his lead horses was shod, and he had thus been delayed quite five minutes. Nearly all the other teams were harnessed, the drivers on their seats, waiting for the foreman's signal.

'All ready here?' inquired the foreman, driving up to Vanamee's team in his buggy.

'All ready, sir,' answered Vanamee, buckling the last strap.

He climbed to his seat, shaking out the reins, and turning about, looked back along the line, then all around him at the landscape inundated with the brilliant glow of the early morning.

The day was fine. Since the first rain of the season, there had been no other. Now the sky was without a cloud, pale blue, delicate, luminous, scintillating with morning. The great brown earth turned a huge flank to it, exhaling the moisture of the early dew. The atmosphere, washed clean of dust and mist, was translucent as crystal. Far off to the east, the hills on the other side of Broderson Creek stood out against the pallid saffron of the horizon as flat and as sharply outlined as if pasted on the sky. The campanile of the ancient Mission of San Juan seemed as fine as frost work. All about between the horizons, the carpet of the land unrolled itself to infinity. But now it was no longer parched with heat, cracked and warped by a merciless sun, powdered

1 These selections, to which the title has been given by the editors, are, respectively, from *The Octopus*(N.Y., 1901),126–33; and *The Pit*(N.Y., 1903),380–96. They are keystones from Norris' trilogy on wheat, which, in his brother's words, 'stood to him as a great world-force.' Of Norris' projected conclusion to the trilogy, his brother wrote: '. . . He told me of the last novel of the trilogy of "The Wheat," to which *The Octopus* and *The Pit* belonged. Not one word of this was ever written. It was not to be called *The Wolf*, however, as was announced. Its pivotal episode was to deal with a famine-stricken country of Europe, and the timely appearance, from across the sea, of three huge American schooners,—wheat-ships,—loaded to their capacity with the great crop that, in spite of the quarrels of farmers and railroads, and in spite of the manipulations of the bulls and bears on the stock market, was to fulfill its destiny as "the nourisher of nations." ' Charles Norris, *Frank Norris*(N.Y., 1916),14.

with dust. The rain had done its work; not a clod that was not swollen with fertility, not a fissure that did not exhale the sense of fecundity. One could not take a dozen steps upon the ranches without the brusque sensation that underfoot the land was alive; aroused at last from its sleep, palpitating with the desire of reproduction. Deep down there in the recesses of the soil, the great heart throbbed once more, thrilling with passion, vibrating with desire, offering itself to the caress of the plough, insistent, eager, imperious. Dimly one felt the deep-seated trouble of the earth, the uneasy agitation of its members, the hidden tumult of its womb, demanding to be made fruitful, to reproduce, to disengage the eternal renascent germ of Life that stirred and struggled in its loins.

The ploughs, thirty-five in number, each drawn by its team of ten, stretched in an interminable line, nearly a quarter of a mile in length, behind and ahead of Vanamee. They were arranged, as it were, *en échelon*, not in file—not one directly behind the other, but each succeeding plough its own width farther in the field than the one in front of it. Each of these ploughs held five shears, so that when the entire company was in motion, one hundred and seventy-five furrows were made at the same instant. At a distance, the ploughs resembled a great column of field artillery. Each driver was in his place, his glance alternating between his horses and the foreman nearest at hand. Other foremen, in their buggies or buckboards, were at intervals along the line, like battery lieutenants. Annixter himself, on horseback, in boots and campaign hat, a cigar in his teeth, overlooked the scene.

The division superintendent, on the opposite side of the line, galloped past to a position at the head. For a long moment there was a silence. A sense of preparedness ran from end to end of the column. All things were ready, each man in his place. The day's work was about to begin.

Suddenly, from a distance at the head of the line came the shrill trilling of a whistle. At once the foreman nearest Vanamee repeated it, at the same time turning down the line, and waving one arm. The signal was repeated, whistle answering whistle, till the sounds lost themselves in the distance. At once the line of ploughs lost its immobility, moving forward, getting slowly under way, the horses straining in the traces. A prolonged movement rippled from team to team, disengaging in its passage a multitude of sounds—the click of buckles, the creak of straining leather, the subdued clash of machinery, the cracking of whips, the deep breathing of nearly four hundred horses, the abrupt commands and cries of the drivers, and, last of all, the prolonged, soothing murmur of the thick brown earth turning steadily from the multitude of advancing shears.

The ploughing thus commenced, continued. The sun rose higher. Steadily the hundred iron hands kneaded and furrowed and stroked the brown, humid earth, the hundred iron teeth bit deep into the Titan's flesh. Perched on his seat, the moist living reins slipping and tugging in his hands, Vanamee, in the midst of this steady confusion of constantly varying sensation, sight interrupted by sound, sound mingling with sight, on this swaying, vibrating seat, quivering with the prolonged thrill of the earth, lapsed to a sort of pleasing numbness, in a sense, hypnotised by the weaving maze of things in which he found himself involved. To keep his team at an even, regular gait, maintaining the precise interval, to run his furrows as closely as possible to those already made by the plough in front —this for the moment was the entire sum of his duties. But while one part of his brain, alert and watchful, took cognisance of these matters, all the greater part was lulled and stupefied with the long monotony of the affair.

The ploughing, now in full swing, enveloped him in a vague, slow-moving whirl of things. Underneath him was the jarring, jolting, trembling machine; not a clod was turned, not an obstacle encountered, that he did not receive the swift impression of it through all his body, the very friction of the damp soil, sliding incessantly from the shiny surface of the shears, seemed to reproduce itself in his finger-tips and along the back of his head. He heard the horse-hoofs by the myriads crushing down easily, deeply, into the loam, the prolonged clinking of trace-chains, the working of the smooth brown flanks in the harness, the clatter of wooden hames, the champing of

bits, the click of iron shoes against pebbles, the brittle stubble of the surface ground crackling and snapping as the furrows turned, the sonorous, steady breaths wrenched from the deep, labouring chests, strap-bound, shining with sweat, and all along the line the voices of the men talking to the horses. Everywhere there were visions of glossy brown backs, straining, heaving, swollen with muscle; harness streaked with specks of froth, broad, cup-shaped hoofs, heavy with brown loam, men's faces red with tan, blue overalls spotted with axle-grease; muscled hands, the knuckles whitened in their grip on the reins, and through it all the ammoniacal smell of the horses, the bitter reek of perspiration of beasts and men, the aroma of warm leather, the scent of dead stubble—and stronger and more penetrating than everything else, the heavy, enervating odour of the upturned, living earth.

At intervals, from the tops of one of the rare, low swells of the land, Vanamee overlooked a wider horizon. On the other divisions of Quien Sabe the same work was in progress. Occasionally he could see another column of ploughs in the adjoining division—sometimes so close at hand that the subdued murmur of its movements reached his ear; sometimes so distant that it resolved itself into a long, brown streak upon the grey of the ground. Farther off to the west on the Osterman ranch other columns came and went, and, once, from the crest of the highest swell on his division, Vanamee caught a distant glimpse of the Broderson ranch. There, too, moving specks indicated that the ploughing was under way. And farther away still, far off there beyond the fine line of the horizons, over the curve of the globe, the shoulder of the earth, he knew were other ranches, and beyond these others, and beyond these still others, the immensities multiplying to infinity.

Everywhere throughout the great San Joaquin, unseen and unheard, a thousand ploughs up-stirred the land, tens of thousands of shears clutched deep into the warm, moist soil.

It was the long stroking caress, vigorous, male, powerful, for which the Earth seemed panting. The heroic embrace of a multitude of iron hands, gripping deep into the brown, warm flesh of the land that quivered responsive and passionate under this rude advance, so robust as to be almost an assault, so violent as to be veritably brutal. There, under the sun and under the speckless sheen of the sky, the wooing of the Titan began, the vast primal passion, the two world-forces, the elemental Male and Female, locked in a colossal embrace, at grapples in the throes of an infinite desire, at once terrible and divine, knowing no law, untamed, savage, natural, sublime.

From time to time the gang in which Vanamee worked halted on the signal from foreman or overseer. The horses came to a standstill, the vague clamour of the work lapsed away. Then the minutes passed. The whole work hung suspended. All up and down the line one demanded what had happened. The division superintendent galloped past, perplexed and anxious. For the moment, one of the ploughs was out of order, a bolt had slipped, a lever refused to work, or a machine had become immobilised in heavy ground, or a horse had lamed himself. Once, even, toward noon, an entire plough was taken out of the line, so out of gear that a messenger had to be sent to the division forge to summon the machinist.

Annixter had disappeared. He had ridden farther on to the other divisions of his ranch, to watch the work in progress there. At twelve o'clock, according to his orders, all the division superintendents put themselves in communication with him by means of the telephone wires that connected each of the division houses, reporting the condition of the work, the number of acres covered, the prospects of each plough traversing its daily average of twenty miles.

At half-past twelve, Vanamee and the rest of the drivers ate their lunch in the field, the tin buckets having been distributed to them that morning after breakfast. But in the evening, the routine of the previous day was repeated, and Vanamee, unharnessing his team, riding one horse and leading the others, returned to the division barns and bunk-house.

It was between six and seven o'clock. The half hundred men of the gang threw themselves upon the supper the Chinese cooks had set out in the shed of the eating-

house, long as a bowling alley, unpainted, crude, the seats benches, the table covered with oil cloth. Overhead a half-dozen kerosene lamps flared and smoked.

The table was taken as if by assault; the clatter of iron knives upon the tin plates was as the reverberation of hail upon a metal roof. The ploughmen rinsed their throats with great draughts of wine, and, their elbows wide, their foreheads flushed, resumed the attack upon the beef and bread, eating as though they would never have enough. All up and down the long table, where the kerosene lamps reflected themselves deep in the oil cloth cover, one heard the incessant sounds of mastication, and saw the uninterrupted movement of great jaws. At every moment one or another of the men demanded a fresh portion of beef, another pint of wine, another half-loaf of bread. For upwards of an hour the gang ate. It was no longer a supper. It was a veritable barbecue, a crude and primitive feasting, barbaric, homeric.

But in all this scene Vanamee saw nothing repulsive. Presley would have abhorred it—this feeding of the People, this gorging of the human animal, eager for its meat. Vanamee, simple, uncomplicated, living so close to nature and the rudimentary life, understood its significance. He knew very well that within a short half-hour after this meal the men would throw themselves down in their bunks to sleep without moving, inert and stupefied with fatigue, till the morning. Work, food, and sleep, all life reduced to its bare essentials, uncomplex, honest, healthy. They were strong, these men, with the strength of the soil they worked, in touch with the essential things, back again to the starting point of civilisation, coarse, vital, real, and sane.

For a brief moment immediately after the meal, pipes were lit, and the air grew thick with fragrant tobacco smoke. On a corner of the dining-room table, a game of poker was begun. One of the drivers, a Swede, produced an accordion; a group on the steps of the bunk-house listened, with alternate gravity and shouts of laughter, to the acknowledged story-teller of the gang. But soon the men began to turn in, stretching themselves at full length on the horse blankets in the racklike bunks. The sounds of heavy breathing increased steadily, lights were put out, and before the afterglow had faded from the sky, the gang was asleep.

1901

II

FOR on this morning of the thirteenth of June, the Board of Trade, its halls, corridors, offices, and stairways were already thrilling with a vague and terrible sound. It was only a little after nine o'clock. The trading would not begin for another half hour, but, even now, the mutter of the whirlpool, the growl of the Pit was making itself felt. The eddies were gathering; the thousands of subsidiary torrents that fed the cloaca were moving. From all over the immediate neighbourhood they came, from the offices of hundreds of commission houses, from brokers' offices, from banks, from the tall, grey buildings of LaSalle Street, from the street itself. And even from greater distances they came; auxiliary currents set in from all the reach of the Great Northwest, from Minneapolis, Duluth, and Milwaukee. From the Southwest, St. Louis, Omaha, and Kansas City contributed to the volume. The Atlantic Seaboard, New York, and Boston and Philadelphia sent out their tributary streams; London, Liverpool, Paris, and Odessa merged their influences with the vast world-wide flowing that bore down upon Chicago, and that now began slowly, slowly to centre and circle about the Wheat Pit of the Board of Trade.

Small wonder that the building to Page's ears vibrated to a strange and ominous humming. She heard it in the distant clicking of telegraph keys, in the echo of hurried whispered conversations held in dark corners, in the noise of rapid footsteps, in the trilling of telephone bells. These sounds came from all around her; they issued from the offices of the building below her, above her, and on either side. She was surrounded with them, and they mingled together to form one prolonged and muffled roar, that from moment to moment increased in volume.

The Pit was getting under way; the whirlpool was forming, and the sound of its courses was like the sound of the ocean in storm, heard at a distance.

Page and Landry were still halfway up the last stairway. Above and below, the throng was packed dense and immobilised.

But, little by little, Landry wormed a way for them, winning one step at a time. But he was very anxious; again and again he looked at his watch. At last he said:

'I've *got* to go. It's just madness for me to stay another minute. I'll give you my card.'

'Well, leave me here,' Page urged. 'It can't be helped. I'm all right. Give me your card. I'll tell the guide in the gallery that you kept the seat for me—if I ever can get there. You must go. Don't stay another minute. If you can, come for me here in the gallery, when it's over. I'll wait for you. But if you can't come, all right. I can take care of myself.'

He could but assent to this. This was no time to think of small things. He left her and bore back with all his might through the crowd, gained the landing at the turn of the balustrade, waved his hat to her and disappeared.

A quarter of an hour went by. Page, caught in the crowd, could neither advance nor retreat. Ahead of her, some twenty steps away, she could see the back rows of seats in the gallery. But they were already occupied. It seemed hopeless to expect to see anything of the floor that day. But she could no longer extricate herself from the press; there was nothing to do but stay where she was.

On every side of her she caught odds and ends of dialogues and scraps of discussions, and while she waited she found an interest in listening to these, as they reached her from time to time.

'Well,' observed the man in the tall white hat, who had discouraged Landry from attempting to reach the gallery, 'well, he's shaken 'em up pretty well. Whether he downs 'em or they down him, he's made a good fight.'

His companion, a young man with eyeglasses, who wore a wonderful white waistcoat with queer glass buttons, assented, and Page heard him add:

'Big operator, that Jadwin.'

'They're doing for him now, though.'

'I ain't so sure. He's got another fight in him. You'll see.'

'Ever see him?'

'No, no, he don't come into the Pit—these big men never do.'

Directly in front of Page two women kept up an interminable discourse.

'Well,' said the one, 'that's all very well, but Mr. Jadwin made my sister-in-law—she lives in Dubuque, you know—a rich woman. She bought some wheat, just for fun, you know, a long time ago, and held on till Mr. Jadwin put the price up to four times what she paid for it. Then she sold out. My, you ought to see the lovely house she's building, and her son's gone to Europe, to study art, if you please, and a year ago, my dear, they didn't have a cent, not a cent, but her husband's salary.'

'There's the other side, too, though,' answered her companion, adding in a hoarse whisper: 'If Mr. Jadwin fails to-day—well, honestly, Julia, I don't know what Philip will do.'

But, from another group at Page's elbow, a man's bass voice cut across the subdued chatter of the two women.

'Guess we'll pull through, somehow. Burbank & Co., though—by George! I'm not sure about them. They are pretty well involved in this thing, and there's two or three smaller firms that are dependent on them. If Gretry-Converse & Co. should suspend, Burbank would go with a crash sure. And there's that bank in Keokuk; they can't stand much more. Their depositors would run 'em quick as how-do-you-do, if there was a smash here in Chicago.'

'Oh, Jadwin will pull through.'

'Well, I hope so—by Jingo! I hope so. Say, by the way, how did you come out?'

'Me! Hoh! Say my boy, the next time I get into a wheat trade you'll know it. I was one of the merry paretics who believed that Crookes was the Great Lumtum. I tailed on to his clique. Lord love you! Jadwin put the knife into me to the tune of twelve thousand dollars. But, say, look here; aren't we ever going to get up to that blame gallery? We ain't going to see any of this, and I—*hark!—by God! there goes the gong.* They've begun. Say, say, *hear 'em, will you!* Holy Moses! say—listen to that! Did you ever hear—Lord! I wish we could see—could get somewhere where we could see something.'

His friend turned to him and spoke a sentence that was drowned in the sudden vast volume of sound that all at once shook the building.

'Hey—what?'

The other shouted into his ear. But even

then his friend could not hear. Nor did he listen. The crowd upon the staircases had surged irresistibly forward and upward. There was a sudden outburst of cries. Women's voices were raised in expostulation, and even fear.

'Oh, oh—don't push so!'

'My arm! oh!—oh, I shall faint . . . please.'

But the men, their escorts, held back furiously; their faces purple, they shouted imprecations over their shoulders.

'Here, here, you damn fools, what you doing?'

'Don't crowd so!'

'Get back, back!'

'There's a lady fainted here. Get back you! We'll all have a chance to see. Good Lord! ain't there a policeman anywheres?'

'Say, say! It's going down—the price. It broke three cents, just then, at the opening, they say.'

'This is the worst I ever saw or heard of.'

'My God! if Jadwin can only *hold* 'em.'

'You bet he'll hold 'em.'

'Hold nothing!—Oh! say my friend, it don't do you any good to crowd like that.'

'It's the people behind: I'm not doing it. Say, do you know where they're at on the floor? The wheat, I mean, is it going up or down?'

'Up, they tell me. There was a rally; I don't know. How can we tell here? We—Hi! there they go again. Lord! that must have been a smash. I guess the Board of Trade won't forget this day in a hurry. Heavens, you can't hear yourself think!'

'Glad I ain't down there in the Pit.'

But, at last, a group of policemen appeared. By main strength they shouldered their way to the top of the stairs, and then began pushing the crowd back. At every instant they shouted:

'Move on now, clear the stairway. No seats left!'

But at this Page, who, by the rush of the crowd, had been carried almost to the top of the stairs, managed to extricate an arm from the press, and hold Landry's card in the air. She even hazarded a little deception:

'I have a pass. Will you let me through, please?'

Luckily one of the officers heard her. He bore down heavily with all the mass of his two hundred pounds and the majesty of the law he represented, to the rescue and succour of this very pretty girl.

'Let the lady through,' he roared, forcing a passage with both elbows. 'Come right along, Miss. Stand back you, now. Can't you see the lady has a pass? Now then, Miss, and be quick about it, I can't keep 'em back forever.'

Jostled and hustled, her dress crumpled, her hat awry, Page made her way forward, till the officer caught her by the arm, and pulled her out of the press. With a long breath she gained the landing of the gallery.

The guide, an old fellow in a uniform of blue, with brass buttons and a visored cap, stood near by, and to him she presented Landry's card.

'Oh, yes, oh, yes,' he shouted in her ear, after he had glanced it over. 'You are the party Mr. Court spoke about. You just came in time. I wouldn't 'a dared hold your seat a minute longer.'

He led her down the crowded aisle between rows of theatre chairs, all of which were occupied, to one vacant seat in the very front row.

'You can see everything now,' he cried, making a trumpet of his palm. 'You're Mister Jadwin's niece. I know, I know. Ah, it's a wild day, Miss. They ain't done much yet, and Mr. Jadwin's holding his own, just now. But I thought for a moment they had him on the run. You see that—my, my, there was a sharp rally. But he's holding on strong yet.'

Page took her seat, and leaning forward looked down into the Wheat Pit.

Once free of the crowd after leaving Page, Landry ran with all the swiftness of his long legs down the stair, and through the corridors till, all out of breath, he gained Gretry's private office. The other Pit traders for the house, some eight or ten men, were already assembled, and just as Landry entered by one door, the broker himself came in from the customers' room. Jadwin was nowhere to be seen.

'What are the orders for to-day, sir?'

Gretry was very pale. Despite his long experience on the Board of Trade, Landry could see anxiety in every change of his expression, in every motion of his hands. The broker before answering the question crossed the room to the water cooler and

drank a brief swallow. Then emptying the glass he refilled it, moistened his lips again, and again emptied and filled the goblet. He put it down, caught it up once more, filled it, emptied it, drinking now in long draughts, now in little sips. He was quite unconscious of his actions, and Landry as he watched, felt his heart sink. Things must, indeed, be at a desperate pass when Gretry, the calm, the clear-headed, the placid, was thus upset.

'Your orders?' said the broker, at last. 'The same as yesterday; keep the market up—that's all. It must not go below a dollar fifteen. But act on the defensive. Don't be aggressive, unless I send word. There will probably be very heavy selling the first few moments. You can buy, each of you, up to half a million bushels apiece. If that don't keep the price up, if they still are selling after that . . . well'; Gretry paused a moment, irresolutely, 'well,' he added suddenly, 'if they are still selling freely after you've each bought half a million, I'll let you know what to do. And, look here,' he continued, facing the group, 'look here —keep your heads cool . . . I guess today will decide things. Watch the Crookes crowd pretty closely. I understand they're up to something again. That's all, I guess.'

Landry and the other Gretry traders hurried from the office up to the floor. Landry's heart was beating thick and slow and hard, his teeth were shut tight. Every nerve, every fibre of him braced itself with the rigidity of drawn wire, to meet the issue of the impending hours. Now was to come the last grapple. He had never lived through a crisis such as this before. Would he prevail, would he keep his head? Would he avoid or balk the thousand and one little subterfuges, tricks, and traps that the hostile traders would prepare for him—prepare with a quickness, a suddenness that all but defied the sharpest, keenest watchfulness?

Was the gong never going to strike? He found himself, all at once, on the edge of the Wheat Pit. It was jammed tight with the crowd of traders, and the excitement that disengaged itself from that tense, vehement crowd of white faces and glittering eyes was veritably sickening, veritably weakening. Men on either side of him were shouting mere incoherencies, to which nobody, not even themselves, were listening. Others, silent, gnawed their nails to the quick, breathing rapidly, audibly even, their nostrils expanding and contracting. All around roared the vague thunder that since early morning had shaken the building. In the Pit the bids leaped to and fro, though the time of opening had not yet come; the very planks under foot seemed spinning about in the first huge warning swirl of the Pit's centripetal convulsion. There was dizziness in the air. Something, some infinite immeasurable power, onrushing in its eternal courses, shook the Pit in its grasp. Something deafened the ears, blinded the eyes, dulled and numbed the mind, with its roar, with the chaff and dust of its whirlwind passage, with the stupefying sense of its power, coeval with the earthquake and glacier, merciless, allpowerful, a primal basic throe of creation itself, unassailable, inviolate, and untamed.

Had the trading begun? Had the gong struck? Landry never knew, never so much as heard the clang of the great bell. All at once he was fighting; all at once he was caught, as it were, from off the stable earth, and flung headlong into the heart and centre of the Pit. What he did, he could not say; what went on about him, he could not distinguish. He only knew that roar was succeeding roar, that there was crashing through his ears, through his very brain, the combined bellow of a hundred Niagaras. Hands clutched and tore at him, his own tore and clutched in turn. The Pit was mad, was drunk and frenzied; not a man of all those who fought and scrambled and shouted who knew what he or his neighbour did. They only knew that a support long thought to be secure was giving way, not gradually, not evenly, but by horrible collapses, and equally horrible upward leaps. Now it held, now it broke, now it reformed again, rose again, then again in hideous cataclysms fell from beneath their feet to lower depths than before. The official reporter leaned back in his place, helpless. On the wall overhead, the indicator on the dial was rocking back and forth, like the mast of a ship caught in a monsoon. The price of July wheat no man could so much as approximate. The fluctuations were no longer by fractions of a cent, but by ten cents, fifteen cents, twenty-five cents at a

time. On one side of the Pit wheat sold at ninety cents, on the other at a dollar and a quarter.

And all the while above the din upon the floor, above the tramplings and the shoutings in the Pit, there seemed to thrill and swell that appalling roar of the Wheat itself coming in, coming on like a tidal wave, bursting through, dashing barriers aside, rolling like a measureless, almighty river, from the farms of Iowa and the ranches of California, on to the East—to the bakeshops and hungry mouths of Europe.

Landry caught one of the Gretry traders by the arm.

'What shall we do?' he shouted. 'I've bought up to my limit. No more orders have come in. The market has gone from under us. What's to be done?'

'I don't know,' the other shouted back. 'I don't know. We're all gone to hell; looks like the last smash. There are no more supporting orders—something's gone wrong. Gretry hasn't sent any word.'

Then, Landry, beside himself with excitement and with actual terror, hardly knowing even yet what he did, turned sharply about. He fought his way out of the Pit; he ran hatless and panting across the floor, in and out between the groups of spectators, down the stairs to the corridor below, and into the Gretry-Converse offices.

In the outer office a group of reporters and the representatives of a great commercial agency were besieging one of the heads of the firm. They assaulted him with questions.

'Just tell us where you are at—that's all we want to know.'

'Just what is the price of July wheat?'

'Is Jadwin winning or losing?'

But the other threw out an arm in a wild gesture of helplessness.

'We don't know, ourselves,' he cried. 'The market has run clean away from everybody. You know as much about it as I do. It's simply hell broken loose, that's all. We can't tell where we are at for days to come.'

Landry rushed on. He swung open the door of the private office and entered, slamming it behind him and crying out:

'Mr. Gretry, what are we to do? We've had no orders.'

But no one listened to him. Of the group that gathered around Gretry's desk, no one so much as turned a head.

Jadwin stood there in the centre of the others, hatless, his face pale, his eyes congested with blood. Gretry fronted him, one hand upon his arm. In the remainder of the group Landry recognised the senior clerk of the office, one of the heads of a great banking house, and a couple of other men —confidential agents, who had helped to manipulate the great corner.

'But you can't,' Gretry was exclaiming. 'You can't; don't you see we can't meet our margin calls? It's the end of the game. You've got no more money.'

'It's a lie!' Never so long as he lived did Landry forget the voice in which Jadwin cried the words: 'It's a lie! Keep on buying, I tell you. Take all they'll offer. I tell you we'll touch the two-dollar mark before noon.'

'Not another order goes up to that floor,' retorted Gretry. 'Why, J., ask any of these gentlemen here. They'll tell you.'

'It's useless, Mr. Jadwin,' said the banker, quietly. 'You were practically beaten two days ago.'

'Mr. Jadwin,' pleaded the senior clerk, 'for God's sake listen to reason. Our firm—'

But Jadwin was beyond all appeal. He threw off Gretry's hand.

'Your firm, your firm—you've been cowards from the start. I know you, I know you. You have sold me out. Crookes has bought you. Get out of my way!' he shouted. 'Get out of my way! Do you hear? I'll play my hand alone from now on.'

'J., old man—why—see here, man,' Gretry implored, still holding him by the arm; 'here, where are you going?'

Jadwin's voice rang like a trumpet call:

'*Into the Pit.*'

'Look here—wait—here. Hold him back, gentlemen. He don't know what he's about.'

'If you won't execute my orders, I'll act myself. I'm going into the Pit, I tell you.'

'J., you're mad, old fellow. You're ruined—don't you understand?—you're ruined.'

'Then God curse you, Sam Gretry, for the man who failed me in a crisis.' And as he spoke Curtis Jadwin struck the broker full in the face.

Gretry staggered back from the blow, catching at the edge of his desk. His pale face flashed to crimson for an instant, his fists clinched; then his hands fell to his sides.

'No,' he said, 'let him go, let him go. The man is merely mad.'

But Jadwin, struggling for a second in the midst of the group that tried to hold him, suddenly flung off the restraining clasps, thrust the men to one side, and rushed from the room.

Gretry dropped into his chair before his desk.

'It's the end,' he said, simply.

He drew a sheet of note paper to him, and in a shaking hand wrote a couple of lines.

'Take that,' he said, handing the note to the senior clerk, 'take that to the secretary of the Board at once.'

And straight into the turmoil and confusion of the Pit, to the scene of so many of his victories, the battleground whereon again and again, his enemies routed, he had remained the victor undisputed, undismayed came the 'Great Bull.' No sooner had he set foot within the entrance to the Floor, than the news went flashing and flying from lip to lip. The galleries knew it, the public room and the Western Union knew it, the telephone booths knew it, and lastly even the Wheat Pit, torn and tossed and rent asunder by the force this man himself had unchained, knew it, and knowing, stood dismayed.

For even then, so great had been his power, so complete his dominion, and so well-rooted the fear which he had inspired, that this last move in the great game he had been playing, this unexpected, direct, personal assumption of control struck a sense of consternation into the heart of the hardiest of his enemies.

Jadwin himself, the great man, the 'Great Bull,' in the Pit! What was about to happen? Had they been too premature in their hope of his defeat? Had he been preparing some secret, unexpected manœuvre? For a second they hesitated, then moved by a common impulse, feeling the push of the wonderful new harvest behind them, they gathered themselves together for the final assault, and again offered the wheat for sale; offered it by thousands upon thousands of bushels; poured, as it were, the reapings of entire principalities out upon the floor of the Board of Trade.

Jadwin was in the thick of the confusion by now. And the avalanche, the undiked Ocean of the Wheat, leaping to the lash of the hurricane, struck him fairly in the face.

He heard it now, he heard nothing else. The Wheat had broken from his control. For months, he had, by the might of his single arm, held it back; but now it rose like the upbuilding of a colossal billow. It towered, towered, hung poised for an instant, and then, with a thunder as of the grind and crash of chaotic worlds, broke upon him, burst through the Pit and raced past him, on and on to the eastward and to the hungry nations.

And then, under the stress and violence of the hour, something snapped in his brain. The murk behind his eyes had been suddenly pierced by a white flash. The strange qualms and tiny nervous paroxysms of the last few months all at once culminated in some indefinite, indefinable crisis, and the wheels and cogs of all activities save one lapsed away and ceased. Only one function of the complicated machine persisted; but it moved with a rapidity of vibration that seemed to be tearing the tissues of being to shreds, while its rhythm beat out the old and terrible cadence:

'Wheat—wheat—wheat, wheat—wheat—wheat.'

Blind and insensate, Jadwin strove against the torrent of the Wheat. There in the middle of the Pit, surrounded and assaulted by herd after herd of wolves yelping for his destruction, he stood braced, rigid upon his feet, his head up, his hand, the great bony hand that once had held the whole Pit in its grip, flung high in the air in a gesture of defiance, while his voice like the clangour of bugles sounding to the charge of the forlorn hope, rang out again and again, over the din of his enemies:

'Give a dollar for July—give a dollar for July!'

With one accord they leaped upon him. The little group of his traders was swept aside. Landry alone, Landry who had never left his side since his rush from out Gretry's office, Landry Court, loyal to the last, his one remaining soldier, white, shaking, the sobs strangling in his throat, clung

to him desperately. Another billow of wheat was preparing. They two—the beaten general and his young armour bearer—heard it coming; hissing, raging, bellowing, it swept down upon them. Landry uttered a cry. Flesh and blood could not stand this strain. He cowered at his chief's side, his shoulders bent, one arm above his head, as if to ward off an actual physical force.

But Jadwin, iron to the end, stood erect. All unknowing what he did, he had taken Landry's hand in his and the boy felt the grip on his fingers like the contracting of a vise of steel. The other hand, as though holding up a standard, was still in the air, and his great deep-toned voice went out across the tumult, proclaiming to the end his battle cry:

'Give a dollar for July—give a dollar for July!'

But, little by little, Landry became aware that the tumult of the Pit was intermitting. There were sudden lapses in the shouting, and in these lapses he could hear from somewhere out upon the floor voices that were crying: 'Order—order, order, gentlemen.'

But again and again the clamour broke out. It would die down for an instant, in response to these appeals, only to burst out afresh as certain groups of traders started the pandemonium again, by the wild outcrying of their offers. At last, however, the older men in the Pit, regaining some measure of self-control, took up the word, going to and fro in the press, repeating 'Order, order.'

And then, all at once, the Pit, the entire floor of the Board of Trade was struck dumb. All at once the tension was relaxed, the furious struggling and stamping was stilled. Landry, bewildered, still holding his chief by the hand, looked about him. On the floor, near at hand, stood the President of the Board of Trade himself, and with him the vice-president and a group of the directors. Evidently it had been these who had called the traders to order. But it was not toward them now that the hundreds of men in the Pit and on the floor were looking.

In the little balcony on the south wall opposite the visitors' gallery a figure had appeared, a tall grave man, in a long black coat—the secretary of the Board of Trade. Landry with the others saw him, saw him advance to the edge of the railing, and fix his glance upon the Wheat Pit. In his hand he carried a slip of paper.

And then in the midst of that profound silence the secretary announced:

'All trades with Gretry, Converse & Co. must be closed at once.'

The words had not ceased to echo in the high vaultings of the roof before they were greeted with a wild, shrill yell of exultation and triumph, that burst from the crowding masses in the Wheat Pit.

Beaten; beaten at last, the 'Great Bull!' Smashed! The great corner smashed! Jadwin busted! They themselves saved, saved, saved! Cheer followed upon cheer, yell after yell. Hats went into the air. In a frenzy of delight men danced and leaped and capered upon the edge of the Pit, clasping their arms about each other, shaking each others' hands, cheering and hurrahing till their strained voices became hoarse and faint.

Some few of the older men protested. There were cries of:

'Shame, shame!'

'Order—let him alone.'

'Let him be; he's down now. Shame, shame!'

But the jubilee was irrepressible, they had been too cruelly pressed, these others; they had felt the weight of the Bull's hoof, the rip of his horn. Now they had beaten him, had pulled him down.

'Yah-h-h, whoop, yi, yi, yi. Busted, busted, busted. Hip, hip, hip, and a tiger!'

'Come away, sir. For God's sake, Mr. Jadwin, come away.'

Landry was pleading with Jadwin, clutching his arm in both his hands, his lips to his chief's ear to make himself heard above the yelping of the mob.

Jadwin was silent now. He seemed no longer to see or hear; heavily, painfully he leaned upon the young man's shoulder.

'Come away, sir—for God's sake!'

The group of traders parted before them, cheering even while they gave place, cheering with eyes averted, unwilling to see the ruin that meant for them salvation.

'Yah-h-h. Yah-h-h, busted, busted!'

Landry had put his arm about Jadwin, and gripped him close as he led him from the Pit. The sobs were in his throat again,

and tears of excitement, of grief, of anger and impotence were running down his face.

'Yah-h-h. Yah-h-h, he's done for, busted, busted!'

'Damn you all,' cried Landry, throwing out a furious fist, 'damn you all; you brutes, you beasts! If he'd so much as raised a finger a week ago, you'd have run for your lives.'

But the cheering drowned his voice; and as the two passed out of the Pit upon the floor, the gong that closed the trading struck and, as it seemed, put a period, definite and final to the conclusion of Curtis Jadwin's career as speculator.

Across the floor towards the doorway Landry led his defeated captain. Jadwin was in a daze, he saw nothing, heard nothing. Quietly he submitted to Landry's guiding arm. The visitors in the galleries bent far over to see him pass, and from all over the floor, spectators, hangers-on, corn-and-provision traders, messenger boys, clerks and reporters came hurrying to watch the final exit of the 'Great Bull,' from the scene of his many victories and his one overwhelming defeat.

In silence they watched him go by. Only in the distance from the direction of the Pit itself came the sound of dying cheers. But at the doorway stood a figure that Landry recognised at once—a small man, lean-faced, trimly dressed, his clean-shaven lips pursed like the mouth of a shut money bag, imperturbable as ever, cold, unexcited —Calvin Crookes himself.

And as Jadwin passed, Landry heard the Bear leader say:

'They can cheer now, all they want. *They* didn't do it. It was the wheat itself that beat him; no combination of men could have done it—go on, cheer, you damn fools! He was a bigger man than the best of us.'

1903

EDWIN MARKHAM

1852–1940

THE MAN WITH THE HOE [1]

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING MILLET'S WORLD-FAMOUS PAINTING

God made man in His own image,
in the image of God made He him.
GENESIS.

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And pillared the blue firmament with light?
Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,

1 Markham wrote: 'The theme of the Hoe-Man is as old as the world and as deep as the world's injustice. The tragic plight has toucht my heart from earliest boyhood. I have cried his cause in many of my poems. . . . *The Hoe-Man*, of course, is not the intelligent working man. He is not the savage of the wilderness, who has at times a step of dignity and a tongue of eloquence. The Hoe-Man is the savage of civilization.' Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets* (N.Y., 1933), 4.

The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall reply to God,
After the silence of the centuries?
1886–1898 1899

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

1852–

FIRST SNOW

THE cows are bawling in the mountains;
The snowflakes fall.
They are leaving the pools and pebbled fountains;
Troubled they bawl.
They are winding down the mountains' shoulders
Through the open pines,
The wild rose thickets and the granite boulders,
In broken lines.
Each calf trots close beside its mother;
And so they go,
Bawling and calling to one another
About the snow.
1916 1929

FROM THE POET IN THE DESERT[1]

15

BEHOLD silver-kirtled Dawn, the life-renewer,
The comforter, bringer of a new hope.
The skies are listening to Earth's silence.
The Desert is asleep, cool, grey, silent.
A shy little breeze runs across her face
And presently her fretful babies stir upon her bosom.
The comforter casts abroad her gossamer mantle.
A lean coyote, prowler of the night,
Slips to his rocky fastness
And noiselessly, through the grey sage,
Jack-rabbits shuttle.
From castellated cliffs rock ravens launch

1 '*The Poet in the Desert* had its origin in the experience of my life as a young army officer, lying down amid the majesty of the desert and looking up into the eternity above; contrasting the inexorable justice, beauty and wisdom of Nature with the relentless injustice, ugliness and folly of Man. The theme, as a whole, was not deliberately selected with the purpose aforethought, but was rather compelled little by little by the desert itself, that brooding place of the soul, with its vivid concrete evidence of Nature's universal beauty. Under its influence the vast inequality between Nature's ways and Man's are inventoried and defined, and the way of Freedom (Nature's way) through revolution indicated as man's only salvation.

'The particular problem arising from the expression of such a theme was the transmutation of the propagandistic, didactic and statistical elements involved into what is *felt* to be poetry; and, where this was not entirely possible, an effort was made to produce a poetic effect through deliberate contrast, after the manner of the Bible, with passages of pure poetry thrown into high light by contrast with the shadow-content of less poetic lines.

'The first version of *The Poet in the Desert* was composed between the years 1911 and 1915, and was published in 1915. The first revised edition was being written off and on, as the opportunity in a busy lawyer's life came, during the years 1916 to 1918, and was published in 1918. The edition of 1929 contains revisions made in that year.' Author's note.

The version used here is, with the exception of section 52, that of 1929. Section 52 is as printed in Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets*(N.Y., 1933).

On broad black sails.
Wild horses, neighing and tossing their manes,
Having drunk their fill, troop back to pasture;
A sage-brush thrasher warbles a varied ecstasy:
And the waking Desert watches breathlessly
The thin, white skirts of Dawn, Dancer of the sky,
Tripping daintily down the sunrise-molten mountain,
Emptying a golden basin, filled with roses.
Now along the irrigation ditch, from cottonwoods,
Tremulous with caress of unseen fingers,
Orioles begin a rivalry of joy,
And from a pointed poplar top
A red bird, dipped in sunrise,
Cracks an exultant whip above a silver world.

29

THIS is the pedigree of degradation:
Authority, father of laws made by the masters,
Laws, father of Privilege, snatched by the masters;
Privilege for the few, father of Poverty, to the many;
Poverty, the black bitch spawning—ignorance—crime—degradation.
I am a reaper in disordered fields
And the sheaves which I gather are
Drunkenness, crime, hate, ugliness, despair.
Palaces of the idle rich
And filthy nest of the debased poor;
Jails and churches hugging each other in a filthy incest.
A killing hunger of the body;
The hunger of the soul denied.

Shall I pity the debased ones and not pity
Those who have wrought the debasement?
Shall I forgive the criminals, haughtily,
And go my way and forget their fashioners?
What trick of the great wheel, invisible,
Gave to them their places, and to me mine?
I have not wrought myself in any part,
Nor have they wrought themselves in any part.
We are thrown off, as bubbles of the sea.
We are thistledown which voyages upon
The unseen air,
Or the globed gossamer of the dandelion
Which the wind seedeth.
There is not one who would not rather rejoice
To walk erect, knowing man's nobility,
Leading his soul up to tranquil heights,
To sit a little while beyond the clouds.
There is none who does not prefer
To walk in the fields, psalm with the birds,
And in the vastness of the morning
Drink the air of grandeur.
Even the makers of poverty shrink from its ugliness,
But they have not the courage to set aside the lesser law for the greater.
They do not know they, too, will be happier when all are happy.

38

THE desert murmurs to the sun a strange murmur
As a whisper of a bride to the bridegroom.
Larks are telling a triumph;
Magpies are screaming their summons,
And finches in wild-rose thicket recite delicate poems.
Brooks commune with their pebbled floors,
Tricking the May-flies to a gauzy dance,
And warbling to mouth-dripping kine
Music of pastures,
Of minty beds and purple bergamot.
I will go where the little rivers
Are calling almost impatiently,
'Lie down by our hurrying.
'Rest ye beside us.
'Let us whisper to you of our eternity,
'Soothing your ears with our legends.
'You are for a moment, but we are forever.
'Chattering, laughing, brawling,
'Intoning our invocation.
'We are of the Past and of the Future.
'You creep back into Earth and are gone;
'But we will soothe the ears of your children forever.'

My ears are awake to the music of the morning.
I hear the pied yellow hammer beating on the barn gable;
Drumming to drowsy Summer.
Hid marsh-wrens trill restlessly in the tules;
Making a gay noise, chirping and twittering.
From somewhere the voice of a white-crowned sparrow.
And, further off, near the irrigation-ditch,

Where the top of a poplar is lighted as a candle,
An oriole empties his heart, lest it break.

52

FROM my minaret the level desert widened
To the far pale mountains: a sheet of burnished gold;
Beaten by the hammers of the Sun.
Cattle grazed: emblems of contented peace. I saw
Far off against the distant mountains,
A storm marching across the Desert: an army of
Titans flaunting dark banners, rolling reverberant drums
And flailing the back of the Desert with flails of lightning
So she trembled and drew the sky about her.
Steadily marched the Storm, walking on water-spouts,
And slowly drawing away to its purple tents in the mountains.
The drums muttered—a sleepy child—fretful—
The mountains came forth as gladiators and the Sun threw them
Their shields of gold.
The thunder-throated bull called his people and led
Them to drink at the small river which, impatient as
A schoolboy, released, burst from under my lava citadel.
Dreamy-eyed with motherhood, the cows submitted to
The plundering calves, and the bull lifted his massive head,
Dripping with crystal water, and gazed upon his flock,
Well-satisfied. He did not know that they were by the Masters
Bred for beef: he and the mothers and their little ones,
All bred for slaughter. Their brains only bits of pulp
Quickened for procreation.
Sunset dipped the world in amethyst, and as the purple tide
Welled slowly up, the lordly bull, the patient cows,
The querulous and greedy calves, intoned a deep recessional.
Suddenly Night flung wide the sapphire gate, and the breastplate
Of the Infinite leaped forth ablaze, so I covered my eyes
That I be not made blind. Worlds on worlds—
Universe on universe, infinity upon infinity.
Among the golden swarm, I saw a bit of luminous mist, a mote:
The necklace of Andromeda—three hundred million billion miles
Its span. A wanderer in that same dark where we too are lost,
Questioning, questioning—never a question answered.
And we enter the narrow corridor
To forget all—nor ever know we have found peace.
I looked into the jeweled cup which I shall never drink.
I looked toward my cold bedfellows of the sky whom I
Shall never know nor one of them shall know another and
I whispered to Andromeda—'Yet Man makes War.'
O heavenly solitudes, you are not more unguessed
Than the vast and lonely spaces of Man's soul.
We know Canopus, giant of the sky, could swallow our
Whole universe as would a goat a thistle, and the feet
Of Light grow weary in their race to us, but who
Has ever caught his neighbor's soul within his own?
Or the soul of one, the best-beloved, or who
Shall ever know that soul which is himself—
A lone bird, lost in night: a weary wanderer,
Hopeless of rest until the Dark Hunter casts his net.
O who can know the Soul of Man?—Part of
The Primal Harmony, that has put on wings
And refusing all arbitraments of force
Soars high above the jungle—more, above all peaks
Terrestrial, and more, beyond the lantern of the Lyre,
Arcturus or Orion, on, forever endless—
Knowing itself to be part of the Whole as these are part:
Part of the Creator; itself a creator

Which has brought down from the skies the Primal Harmony:
Love—from which all else immortal comes—
The Soul continually whispering eternal verities,
And Thought, the Gleaner, continually listening;
Carefully selecting the immortal forces of the Soul,
Justice, Equality, Freedom, Mercy,
Stronger than armies or armored fleets; stronger than
Navies of the air which strangle cities in their claws,
As a hawk a sparrow—stronger than every force or power
The body can possess: the Soul of Man;
Which flies above this shadowy world as a wild swan
Flies through the night above a darkened Earth
Until at dawn, high in the coming blue
The heavenly breast is lighted by the sunrise.

1911–1933 1915–1933

TRUMBULL STICKNEY

1874–1904

FROM A DRAMATIC SCENE [1]

IN Campo Santo is a grave
Where I and the moon together
Go linger oft and cannot leave
Tho' dawn be in the weather.
Oh, let me hold her in my arms.
Cold tho' she be, there let her languish.
Only her kiss of death can warm
The snow-fields of my anguish.

1903–1904 1905

MT. LYKAION

ALONE on Lykaion since man hath been
Stand on the height two columns, where at rest
Two eagles hewn of gold sit looking East
Forever; and the sun goes up between.
Far down around the mountain's oval green
And order keeps the falling stones abreast.
Below within the chaos last and least
A river like a curl of light is seen.
Beyond the river lies the even sea,
Beyond the sea another ghost of sky,—
O God, support the sickness of my eye
Lest the far space and long antiquity
Suck out my heart, and on this awful ground
The great wind kill my little shell with sound.

1903 1905

1 The selection is one of the snatches of song from a drama on Benvenuto Cellini, and is sung by him.

THE SOUL OF TIME

TIME'S a circumference
Whereof the segment of our station seems
A long straight line from nothing into naught.
Therefore we say 'progress,' 'infinity'—
Dull words whose object
Hangs in the air of error and delights
Our boyish minds ahunt for butterflies.
For aspiration studies not the sky
But looks for stars; the victories of faith
Are soldiered none the less with certainties,
And all the multitudinous armies decked
With banners blown ahead and flute before
March not to the desert or th' Elysian fields,
But in the track of some discovery,
The grip and cognizance of something true,
Which won resolves a better distribution
Between the dreaming mind and real truth.

I cannot understand you.

'Tis because
You lean over my meaning's edge and feel
A dizziness of the things I have not said.

1904 1905

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

1869–1910

GLOUCESTER MOORS

A MILE behind is Gloucester town
Where the fishing fleets put in,
A mile ahead the land dips down
And the woods and farms begin.
Here, where the moors stretch free
In the high blue afternoon,
Are the marching sun and talking sea,
And the racing winds that wheel and flee
On the flying heels of June.

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The wild geranium holds its dew
Long in the boulder's shade.
Wax-red hangs the cup
From the huckleberry boughs,
In barberry bells the grey moths sup,
Or where the choke-cherry lifts high up
Sweet bowls for their carouse.

Over the shelf of the sandy cove
Beach-peas blossom late.
By copse and cliff the swallows rove
Each calling to his mate.
Seaward the sea-gulls go,
And the land-birds all are here;
That green-gold flash was a vireo,
And yonder flame where the marsh-flags grow
Was a scarlet tanager.

This earth is not the steadfast place
We landsmen build upon;
From deep to deep she varies pace,
And while she comes is gone.
Beneath my feet I feel
Her smooth bulk heave and dip;
With velvet plunge and soft upreel
She swings and steadies to her keel
Like a gallant, gallant ship.

These summer clouds she sets for sail,
The sun is her masthead light,
She tows the moon like a pinnace frail
Where her phosphor wake churns bright.
Now hid, now looming clear,
On the face of the dangerous blue
The star fleets tack and wheel and veer,
But on, but on does the old earth steer
As if her port she knew.

God, dear God! Does she know her port,
Though she goes so far about?
Or blind astray, does she make her sport
To brazen and chance it out?
I watched when her captains passed:
She were better captainless.
Men in the cabin, before the mast,
But some were reckless and some aghast,
And some sat gorged at mess.

By her battened hatch I leaned and caught
Sounds from the noisome hold,—
Cursing and sighing of souls distraught
And cries too sad to be told.
Then I strove to go down and see;
But they said, 'Thou art not of us!'
I turned to those on the deck with me
And cried, 'Give help!' But they said, 'Let be:
Our ship sails faster thus.'

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The alder-clump where the brook comes through
Breeds cresses in its shade.
To be out of the moiling street
With its swelter and its sin!
Who has given to me this sweet,
And given my brother dust to eat?
And when will his wage come in?

Scattering wide or blown in ranks,
Yellow and white and brown,
Boats and boats from the fishing banks
Come home to Gloucester town.
There is cash to purse and spend,
There are wives to be embraced,
Hearts to borrow and hearts to lend,
And hearts to take and keep to the end,—
O little sails, make haste!

But thou, vast outbound ship of souls,
What harbor town for thee?
What shapes, when thy arriving tolls,
Shall crowd the banks to see?
Shall all the happy shipmates then
Stand singing brotherly?

Or shall a haggard ruthless few
Warp her over and bring her to,
While the many broken souls of men
Fester down in the slaver's pen,
And nothing to say or do?
1900 1902

THE MENAGERIE

THANK God my brain is not inclined to cut
Such capers every day! I'm just about
Mellow, but then—There goes the tent-flap shut.
Rain's in the wind. I thought so: every snout
Was twitching when the keeper turned me out.

That screaming parrot makes my blood run cold.
Gabriel's trump! the big bull elephant
Squeals 'Rain!' to the parched herd. The monkeys scold,
And jabber that it's rain water they want.
(It makes me sick to see a monkey pant.)

I'll foot it home, to try and make believe
I'm sober. After this I stick to beer,
And drop the circus when the sane folks leave.
A man's a fool to look at things too near:
They look back, and begin to cut up queer.

Beasts do, at any rate; especially
Wild devils caged. They have the coolest way
Of being something else than what you see:
You pass a sleek young zebra nosing hay,
A nylghau looking bored and distingué,—

And think you've seen a donkey and a bird.
Not on your life! Just glance back, if you dare.
The zebra chews, the nylghau hasn't stirred;
But something's happened, Heaven knows what or where
To freeze your scalp and pompadour your hair.

I'm not precisely an æolian lute
Hung in the wandering winds of sentiment,
But drown me if the ugliest, meanest brute
Grunting and fretting in that sultry tent
Didn't just floor me with embarrassment!

'Twas like a thunder-clap from out the clear,—
One minute they were circus beasts, some grand,
Some ugly, some amusing, and some queer:
Rival attractions to the hobo band,
The flying jenny, and the peanut stand.

Next minute they were old hearth-mates of mine!
Lost people, eyeing me with such a stare!
Patient, satiric, devilish, divine;
A gaze of hopeless envy, squalid care,
Hatred, and thwarted love, and dim despair.

Within my blood my ancient kindred spoke,—
Grotesque and monstrous voices, heard afar
Down ocean caves when behemoth awoke,
Or through fern forests roared the plesiosaur
Locked with the giant-bat in ghastly war.

And suddenly, as in a flash of light,
I saw great Nature working out her plan;
Through all her shapes from mastodon to mite
Forever groping, testing, passing on
To find at last the shape and soul of Man.

Till in the fullness of accomplished time,
Comes brother Forepaugh,[1] upon business bent,
Tracks her through frozen and through torrid clime,
And shows us, neatly labeled in a tent,
The stages of her huge experiment;

Blabbing aloud her shy and reticent hours;
Dragging to light her blinking, slothful moods;
Publishing fretful seasons when her powers
Worked wild and sullen in her solitudes,
Or when her mordant laughter shook the woods.

Here, round about me, were her vagrant births;
Sick dreams she had, fierce projects she essayed;
Her qualms, her fiery prides, her crazy mirths;

1 A famous circus owner.

The troublings of her spirit as she strayed,
Cringed, gloated, mocked, was lordly, was afraid,

On that long road she went to seek mankind;
Here were the darkling coverts that she beat
To find the Hider she was sent to find;
Here the distracted footprints of her feet
Whereby her soul's Desire she came to greet.

But why should they, her botch-work, turn about
And stare disdain at me, her finished job?
Why was the place one vast suspended shout
Of laughter? Why did all the daylight throb
With soundless guffaw and dumb-stricken sob?

Helpless I stood among those awful cages;
The beasts were walking loose, and I was bagged!
I, I, last product of the toiling ages,
Goal of heroic feet that never lagged,—
A little man in trousers, slightly jagged.

Deliver me from such another jury!
The Judgment Day will be a picnic to't.
Their satire was more dreadful than their fury,
And worst of all was just a kind of brute
Disgust, and giving up, and sinking mute.

Survival of the fittest, adaptation,
And all their other evolution terms,
Seem to omit one small consideration,
To wit, that tumblebugs and angleworms
Have souls: there's soul in everything that squirms.

And souls are restless, plagued, impatient things,
All dream and unaccountable desire;
Crawling, but pestered with the thought of wings;
Spreading through every inch of earth's old mire
Mystical hanker after something higher.

Wishes *are* horses, as I understand.
I guess a wistful polyp that has strokes
Of feeling faint to gallivant on land
Will come to be a scandal to his folks;
Legs he will sprout, in spite of threats and jokes.

And at the core of every life that crawls,
Or runs or flies or swims or vegetates—
Churning the mammoth's heart-blood, in the galls
Of shark and tiger planting gorgeous hates,
Lighting the love of eagles for their mates;

Yes, in the dim brain of the jellied fish
That is and is not living—moved and stirred
From the beginning a mysterious wish,
A vision, a command, a fatal Word:
The name of Man was uttered, and they heard.

Upward along the æons of old war
They sought him: wing and shank-bone, claw and bill
Were fashioned and rejected; wide and far
They roamed the twilight jungles of their will;
But still they sought him, and desired him still.

Man they desired, but mind you, Perfect Man,
The radiant and the loving, yet to be!
I hardly wonder, when they came to scan
The upshot of their strenuosity,
They gazed with mixed emotions upon *me*.

Well, my advice to you is, Face the creatures,
Or spot them sideways with your weather eye,
Just to keep tab on their expansive features;
It isn't pleasant when you're stepping high
To catch a giraffe smiling on the sly.

If nature made you graceful, don't get gay
Back-to before the hippopotamus;
If meek and godly, find some place to play
Besides right where three mad hyenas fuss:
You may hear language that we won't discuss.

If you're a sweet thing in a flower-bed hat,
Or her best fellow with your tie tucked in,
Don't squander love's bright springtime girding at
An old chimpanzee with an Irish chin:
There may be hidden meaning in his grin.

1900 1902

HENRY ADAMS

1838–1918

FROM THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS

QUINCY (1838–1848) [1]

UNDER the shadow of Boston State House, turning its back on the house of John Hancock, the little passage called Hancock Avenue runs, or ran, from Beacon Street, skirting the State House grounds, to Mount Vernon Street, on the summit of Beacon Hill; and there, in the third house below Mount Vernon Place, February 16, 1838, a a child was born, and christened later by his uncle, the minister of the First Church after the tenets of Boston Unitarianism, as Henry Brooks Adams.

Had he been born in Jerusalem under the shadow of the Temple and circumcised in the Synagogue by his uncle the high priest, under the name of Israel Cohen, he would scarcely have been more distinctly branded, and not much more heavily handicapped in the races of the coming century, in running for such stakes as the century was to offer; but, on the other hand, the ordinary traveller, who does not enter the field of racing, finds advantage in being, so to speak, ticketed through life, with the safeguards of an old, established traffic. Safeguards are often irksome, but sometimes convenient, and if one needs them at all, one is apt to need them badly. A hundred years earlier, such safeguards as his would have secured any young man's success; and although in 1838 their value was not very great compared with what they would have had in 1738, yet the mere accident of starting a twentieth-century career from a nest of associations so colonial—so troglodytic—as the First Church, the Boston State House, Beacon Hill, John Hancock and John Adams, Mount Vernon Street and Quincy, all crowding on ten pounds of unconscious babyhood, was so queer as to offer a subject of curious speculation to the baby long after he had witnessed the solution. What could become of such a child of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when he should wake up to find himself required to play the game of the twentieth? Had he been consulted, would he have cared to play the game at all, holding such cards as he held, and suspecting that the game was to be one of which neither he nor any one else back to the beginning of time knew the rules or the risks or the stakes? He was not consulted and was not responsible, but had he been taken into the confidence of his parents, he would certainly have told them to change nothing as far as concerned him. He would have been astounded by his own luck. Probably no child, born in the year, held better cards than he. Whether life was an honest game of chance, or whether the cards were marked and forced, he could not refuse to play his excellent hand. He could never make the usual plea of irresponsibility. He accepted the situation as though he had been a party to it, and under the same circumstances would do it again, the more readily for knowing the exact values. To his life as a whole he was a consenting, contracting party and partner from the moment he was born to the moment he died. Only with that understanding—as a consciously assenting member in full partnership with the society of his age—had his education an interest to himself or to others.

As it happened, he never got to the point of playing the game at all; he lost himself in the study of it, watching the errors of the players; but this is the only interest in the story, which otherwise has no moral and little incident. A story of education—seventy years of it—the practical value remains to the end in doubt, like other values about which men have disputed since the birth of Cain and Abel; but the practical value of the universe has never been stated in dollars. Although every one cannot be a Gargantua-Napoleon-Bismarck and walk off with the great bells of Notre Dame, every one must bear his own universe, and most persons are moderately interested in learning how their neighbors have managed to carry theirs.

This problem of education, started in 1838, went on for three years, while the baby grew, like other babies, unconsciously.

1 The two selections are Chapters 1 and 15 from *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston, 1918). The book was privately printed in 1907.

as a vegetable, the outside world working as it never had worked before, to get his new universe ready for him. Often in old age he puzzled over the question whether, on the doctrine of chances, he was at liberty to accept himself or his world as an accident. No such accident had ever happened before in human experience. For him, alone, the old universe was thrown into the ash-heap and a new one created. He and his eighteenth-century, troglodytic Boston were suddenly cut apart—separated forever—in act if not in sentiment, by the opening of the Boston and Albany Railroad; the appearance of the first Cunard steamers in the bay; and the telegraphic messages which carried from Baltimore to Washington the news that Henry Clay and James K. Polk were nominated for the Presidency. This was in May, 1844; he was six years old; his new world was ready for use, and only fragments of the old met his eyes.

Of all this that was being done to complicate his education, he knew only the color of yellow. He first found himself sitting on a yellow kitchen floor in strong sunlight. He was three years old when he took this earliest step in education; a lesson of color. The second followed soon; a lesson of taste. On December 3, 1841, he developed scarlet fever. For several days he was as good as dead, reviving only under the careful nursing of his family. When he began to recover strength, about January 1, 1842, his hunger must have been stronger than any other pleasure or pain, for while in after life he retained not the faintest recollection of his illness, he remembered quite clearly his aunt entering the sick-room bearing in her hand a saucer with a baked apple.

The order of impressions retained by memory might naturally be that of color and taste, although one would rather suppose that the sense of pain would be first to educate. In fact, the third recollection of the child was that of discomfort. The moment he could be removed, he was bundled up in blankets and carried from the little house in Hancock Avenue to a larger one which his parents were to occupy for the rest of their lives in the neighboring Mount Vernon Street. The season was midwinter, January 10, 1842, and he never forgot his acute distress for want of air under his blankets, or the noises of moving furniture.

As a means of variation from a normal type, sickness in childhood ought to have a certain value not to be classed under any fitness or unfitness of natural selection; and especially scarlet fever affected boys seriously, both physically and in character, though they might through life puzzle themselves to decide whether it had fitted or unfitted them for success; but this fever of Henry Adams took greater and greater importance in his eyes, from the point of view of education, the longer he lived. At first, the effect was physical. He fell behind his brothers two or three inches in height, and proportionally in bone and weight. His character and processes of mind seemed to share in this fining-down process of scale. He was not good in a fight, and his nerves were more delicate than boys' nerves ought to be. He exaggerated these weaknesses as he grew older. The habit of doubt; of distrusting his own judgment and of totally rejecting the judgment of the world; the tendency to regard every question as open; the hesitation to act except as a choice of evils; the shirking of responsibility; the love of line, form, quality; the horror of ennui; the passion for companionship and the antipathy to society—all these are well-known qualities of New England character in no way peculiar to individuals but in this instance they seemed to be stimulated by the fever, and Henry Adams could never make up his mind whether, on the whole, the change of character was morbid or healthy, good or bad for his purpose. His brothers were the type; he was the variation.

As far as the boy knew, the sickness did not affect him at all, and he grew up in excellent health, bodily and mental, taking life as it was given; accepting its local standards without a difficulty, and enjoying much of it as keenly as any other boy of his age. He seemed to himself quite normal, and his companions seemed always to think him so. Whatever was peculiar about him was education, not character, and came to him, directly and indirectly, as the result of that eighteenth-century inheritance which he took with his name.

The atmosphere of education in which he lived was colonial, revolutionary, almost Cromwellian, as though he were steeped, from his greatest grandmother's birth, in the odor of political crime. Resistance to

something was the law of New England nature; the boy looked out on the world with the instinct of resistance; for numberless generations his predecessors had viewed the world chiefly as a thing to be reformed, filled with evil forces to be abolished, and they saw no reason to suppose that they had wholly succeeded in the abolition; the duty was unchanged. That duty implied not only resistance to evil, but hatred of it. Boys naturally look on all force as an enemy, and generally find it so, but the New Englander, whether boy or man, in his long struggle with a stingy or hostile universe, had learned also to love the pleasure of hating; his joys were few.

Politics, as a practice, whatever its professions, had always been the systematic organization of hatreds, and Massachusetts politics had been as harsh as the climate. The chief charm of New England was harshness of contrasts and extremes of sensibility—a cold that froze the blood, and a heat that boiled it—so that the pleasure of hating—one's self if no better victim offered—was not its rarest amusement; but the charm was a true and natural child of the soil, not a cultivated weed of the ancients. The violence of the contrast was real and made the strongest motive of education. The double exterior nature gave life its relative values. Winter and summer, cold and heat, town and country, force and freedom, marked two modes of life and thought, balanced like lobes of the brain. Town was winter confinement, school, rule, discipline; straight, gloomy streets, piled with six feet of snow in the middle; frosts that made the snow sing under wheels or runners; thaws when the streets became dangerous to cross; society of uncles, aunts, and cousins who expected children to behave themselves, and who were not always gratified; above all else, winter represented the desire to escape and go free. Town was restraint, law, unity. Country, only seven miles away, was liberty, diversity, outlawry, the endless delight of mere sense impressions given by nature for nothing, and breathed by boys without knowing it.

Boys are wild animals, rich in the treasures of sense, but the New England boy had a wider range of emotions than boys of more equable climates. He felt his nature crudely, as it was meant. To the boy Henry Adams, summer was drunken. Among senses, smell was the strongest—smell of hot pine-woods and sweet-fern in the scorching summer noon; of new-mown hay; of ploughed earth; of box hedges; of peaches, lilacs, syringas; of stables, barns, cow-yards; of salt water and low tide on the marshes; nothing came amiss. Next to smell came taste, and the children knew the taste of everything they saw or touched, from pennyroyal and flagroot to the shell of a pignut and the letters of a spelling-book—the taste of A–B, AB, suddenly revived on the boy's tongue sixty years afterwards. Light, line, and color as sensual pleasures, came later and were as crude as the rest. The New England light is glare, and the atmosphere harshens color. The boy was a full man before he ever knew what was meant by atmosphere; his idea of pleasure in light was the blaze of a New England sun. His idea of color was a peony, with the dew of early morning on its petals. The intense blue of the sea, as he saw it a mile or two away, from the Quincy hills; the cumuli in a June afternoon sky; the strong reds and greens and purples of colored prints and children's picture-books, as the American colors then ran; these were ideals. The opposites or antipathies were the cold grays of November evenings, and the thick, muddy thaws of Boston winter. With such standards, the Bostonian could not but develop a double nature. Life was a double thing. After a January blizzard, the boy who could look with pleasure into the violent snow-glare of the cold white sunshine, with its intense light and shade, scarcely knew what was meant by tone. He could reach it only by education.

Winter and summer, then, were two hostile lives, and bred two separate natures. Winter was always the effort to live; summer was tropical license. Whether the children rolled in the grass, or waded in the brook, or swam in the salt ocean, or sailed in the bay, or fished for smelts in the creeks, or netted minnows in the salt-marshes, or took to the pine-woods and the granite quarries, or chased muskrats and hunted snapping-turtles in the swamps, or mushrooms or nuts on the autumn hills, summer and country were always sensual living, while winter was always compulsory learning. Summer was the multiplicity of nature; winter was school.

The bearing of the two seasons on the education of Henry Adams was no fancy; it was the most decisive force he ever knew; it ran through life, and made the division between its perplexing, warring, irreconcilable problems, irreducible opposites, with growing emphasis to the last year of study. From earliest childhood the boy was accustomed to feel that, for him, life was double. Winter and summer, town and country, law and liberty, were hostile, and the man who pretended they were not, was in his eyes a schoolmaster—that is, a man employed to tell lies to little boys. Though Quincy was but two hours' walk from Beacon Hill, it belonged in a different world. For two hundred years, every Adams, from father to son, had lived within sight of State Street, and sometimes had lived in it, yet none had ever taken kindly to the town, or been taken kindly by it. The boy inherited his double nature. He knew as yet nothing about his great-grandfather, who had died a dozen years before his own birth: he took for granted that any great-grandfather of his must have always been good, and his enemies wicked; but he divined his great-grandfather's character from his own. Never for a moment did he connect the two ideas of Boston and John Adams; they were separate and antagonistic; the idea of John Adams went with Quincy. He knew his grandfather John Quincy Adams only as an old man of seventy-five or eighty who was friendly and gentle with him, but except that he heard his grandfather always called 'the President,' and his grandmother 'the Madam,' he had no reason to suppose that his Adams grandfather differed in character from his Brooks grandfather who was equally kind and benevolent. He liked the Adams side best, but for no other reason than that it reminded him of the country, the summer, and the absence of restraint. Yet he felt also that Quincy was in a way inferior to Boston, and that socially Boston looked down on Quincy. The reason was clear enough even to a five-year old child. Quincy had no Boston style. Little enough style had either; a simpler manner of life and thought could hardly exist, short of cave-dwelling. The flint-and-steel with which his grandfather Adams used to light his own fires in the early morning was still on the mantelpiece of his study. The idea of a livery or even a dress for servants, or of an evening toilette, was next to blasphemy. Bathrooms, water-supplies, lighting, heating, and the whole array of domestic comforts, were unknown at Quincy. Boston had already a bathroom, a water-supply, a furnace, and gas. The superiority of Boston was evident, but a child liked it no better for that.

The magnificence of his grandfather Brooks's house in Pearl Street or South Street has long ago disappeared, but perhaps his country house at Medford may still remain to show what impressed the mind of a boy in 1845 with the idea of city splendor. The President's place at Quincy was the larger and older and far the more interesting of the two; but a boy felt at once its inferiority in fashion. It showed plainly enough its want of wealth. It smacked of colonial age, but not of Boston style or plush curtains. To the end of his life he never quite overcame the prejudice thus drawn in with his childish breath. He never could compel himself to care for nineteenth-century style. He was never able to adopt it, any more than his father or grandfather or great-grandfather had done. Not that he felt it as particularly hostile, for he reconciled himself to much that was worse; but because, for some remote reason, he was born an eighteenth-century child. The old house at Quincy was eighteenth century. What style it had was in its Queen Anne mahogany panels and its Louis Seize chairs and sofas. The panels belonged to an old colonial Vassall who built the house; the furniture had been brought back from Paris in 1789 or 1801 or 1817, along with porcelain and books and much else of old diplomatic remnants; and neither of the two eighteenth-century styles—neither English Queen Anne nor French Louis Seize—was comfortable for a boy, or for any one else. The dark mahogany had been painted white to suit daily life in winter gloom. Nothing seemed to favor, for a child's objects, the older forms. On the contrary, most boys, as well as grown-up people, preferred the new, with good reason, and the child felt himself distinctly at a disadvantage for the taste.

Nor had personal preference any share in his bias. The Brooks grandfather was as amiable and as sympathetic as the Adams grandfather. Both were born in 1767, and

both died in 1848. Both were kind to children, and both belonged rather to the eighteenth than to the nineteenth centuries. The child knew no difference between them except that one was associated with winter and the other with summer; one with Boston, the other with Quincy. Even with Medford, the association was hardly easier. Once as a very young boy he was taken to pass a few days with his grandfather Brooks under charge of his aunt, but became so violently homesick that within twenty-four hours he was brought back in disgrace. Yet he could not remember ever being seriously homesick again.

The attachment to Quincy was not altogether sentimental or wholly sympathetic. Quincy was not a bed of thornless roses. Even there the curse of Cain set its mark. There as elsewhere a cruel universe combined to crush a child. As though three or four vigorous brothers and sisters, with the best will, were not enough to crush any child, every one else conspired towards an education which he hated. From cradle to grave this problem of running order through chaos, direction through space, discipline through freedom, unity through multiplicity, has always been, and must always be, the task of education, as it is the moral of religion, philosophy, science, art, politics, and economy; but a boy's will is his life, and he dies when it is broken, as the colt dies in harness, taking a new nature in becoming tame. Rarely has the boy felt kindly towards his tamers. Between him and his master has always been war. Henry Adams never knew a boy of his generation to like a master, and the task of remaining on friendly terms with one's own family, in such a relation, was never easy.

All the more singular it seemed afterwards to him that his first serious contact with the President should have been a struggle of will, in which the old man almost necessarily defeated the boy, but instead of leaving, as usual in such defeats, a lifelong sting, left rather an impression of as fair treatment as could be expected from a natural enemy. The boy met seldom with such restraint. He could not have been much more than six years old at the time—seven at the utmost—and his mother had taken him to Quincy for a long stay with the President during the summer. What became of the rest of the family he quite forgot; but he distinctly remembered standing at the house door one summer morning in a passionate outburst of rebellion against going to school. Naturally his mother was the immediate victim of his rage; that is what mothers are for, and boys also; but in this case the boy had his mother at unfair disadvantage, for she was a guest, and had no means of enforcing obedience. Henry showed a certain tactical ability by refusing to start, and he met all efforts at compulsion by successful, though too vehement protest. He was in fair way to win, and was holding his own, with sufficient energy, at the bottom of the long staircase which led up to the door of the President's library, when the door opened, and the old man slowly came down. Putting on his hat, he took the boy's hand without a word, and walked with him, paralyzed by awe, up the road to the town. After the first moments of consternation at this interference in a domestic dispute, the boy reflected that an old gentleman close on eighty would never trouble himself to walk near a mile on a hot summer morning over a shadeless road to take a boy to school, and that it would be strange if a lad imbued with the passion of freedom could not find a corner to dodge around, somewhere before reaching the school door. Then and always, the boy insisted that this reasoning justified his apparent submission; but the old man did not stop, and the boy saw all his strategical points turned, one after another, until he found himself seated inside the school, and obviously the centre of curious if not malevolent criticism. Not till then did the President release his hand and depart.

The point was that this act, contrary to the inalienable rights of boys, and nullifying the social compact, ought to have made him dislike his grandfather for life. He could not recall that it had this effect even for a moment. With a certain maturity of mind, the child must have recognized that the President, though a tool of tyranny, had done his disreputable work with a certain intelligence. He had shown no temper, no irritation, no personal feeling, and had made no display of force. Above all, he had held his tongue. During their long walk he had said nothing; he had uttered no syllable of revolting cant about the duty of obedi-

ence and the wickedness of resistance to law; he had shown no concern in the matter; hardly even a consciousness of the boy's existence. Probably his mind at that moment was actually troubling itself little about his grandson's iniquities, and much about the iniquities of President Polk, but the boy could scarcely at that age feel the whole satisfaction of thinking that President Polk was to be the vicarious victim of his own sins, and he gave his grandfather credit for intelligent silence. For this forbearance he felt instinctive respect. He admitted force as a form of right; he admitted even temper, under protest; but the seeds of a moral education would at that moment have fallen on the stoniest soil in Quincy, which is, as every one knows, the stoniest glacial and tidal drift known in any Puritan land.

Neither party to this momentary disagreement can have felt rancor, for during these three or four summers the old President's relations with the boy were friendly and almost intimate. Whether his older brothers and sisters were still more favored he failed to remember, but he was himself admitted to a sort of familiarity which, when in his turn he had reached old age, rather shocked him, for it must have sometimes tried the President's patience. He hung about the library; handled the books; deranged the papers; ransacked the drawers; searched the old purses and pocket-books for foreign coins; drew the sword-cane; snapped the travelling-pistols; upset everything in the corners, and penetrated the President's dressing-closet where a row of tumblers, inverted on the shelf, covered caterpillars which were supposed to become moths or butterflies, but never did. The Madam bore with fortitude the loss of the tumblers which her husband purloined for these hatcheries; but she made protest when he carried off her best cut-glass bowls to plant with acorns or peachstones that he might see the roots grow, but which, she said, he commonly forgot like the caterpillars.

At that time the President rode the hobby of tree-culture, and some fine old trees should still remain to witness it, unless they have been improved off the ground; but his was a restless mind, and although he took his hobbies seriously and would have been annoyed had his grandchild asked whether he was bored like an English duke, he probably cared more for the processes than for the results, so that his grandson was saddened by the sight and smell of peaches and pears, the best of their kind, which he brought up from the garden to rot on his shelves for seed. With the inherited virtues of his Puritan ancestors, the little boy Henry conscientiously brought up to him in his study the finest peaches he found in the garden, and ate only the less perfect. Naturally he ate more by way of compensation, but the act showed that he bore no grudge. As for his grandfather, it is even possible that he may have felt a certain self-reproach for his temporary rôle of schoolmaster—seeing that his own career did not offer proof of the worldly advantages of docile obedience—for there still exists somewhere a little volume of critically edited Nursery Rhymes with the boy's name in full written in the President's trembling hand on the fly-leaf. Of course there was also the Bible, given to each child at birth, with the proper inscription in the President's hand on the fly-leaf; while their grandfather Brooks supplied the silver mugs.

So many Bibles and silver mugs had to be supplied, that a new house, or cottage, was built to hold them. It was 'on the hill,' five minutes' walk above 'the old house,' with a far view eastward over Quincy Bay, and northward over Boston. Till his twelfth year, the child passed his summers there, and his pleasures of childhood mostly centered in it. Of education he had as yet little to complain. Country schools were not very serious. Nothing stuck to the mind except home impressions, and the sharpest were those of kindred children; but as influences that warped a mind, none compared with the mere effect of the back of the President's bald head, as he sat in his pew on Sundays, in line with that of President Quincy, who, though some ten years younger, seemed to children about the same age. Before railways entered the New England town, every parish church showed half-a-dozen of these leading citizens, with gray hair, who sat on the main aisle in the best pews, and had sat there, or in some equivalent dignity, since the time of St. Augustine, if not since the glacial epoch. It was unusual for boys to sit behind a President grandfather, and

to read over his head the tablet in memory of a President great-grandfather, who had 'pledged his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor' to secure the independence of his country and so forth; but boys naturally supposed, without much reasoning, that other boys had the equivalent of President grandfathers, and that churches would always go on, with the bald-headed leading citizens on the main aisle, and Presidents or their equivalents on the walls. The Irish gardener once said to the child: 'You'll be thinkin' you'll be President too!' The casualty of the remark made so strong an impression on his mind that he never forgot it. He could not remember ever to have thought on the subject; to him, that there should be a doubt of his being President was a new idea. What had been would continue to be. He doubted neither about Presidents nor about Churches, and no one suggested at that time a doubt whether a system of society which had lasted since Adam would outlast one Adams more.

The Madam was a little more remote than the President, but more decorative. She stayed much in her own room with the Dutch tiles, looking out on her garden with the box walks, and seemed a fragile creature to a boy who sometimes brought her a note or a message, and took distinct pleasure in looking at her delicate face under what seemed to him very becoming caps. He liked her refined figure; her gentle voice and manner; her vague effect of not belonging there, but to Washington or to Europe, like her furniture, and writing-desk with little glass doors above and little eighteenth-century volumes in old binding, labelled *Peregrine Pickle* or *Tom Jones* or Hannah More. Try as she might, the Madam could never be Bostonian, and it was her cross in life, but to the boy it was her charm. Even at that age, he felt drawn to it. The Madam's life had been in truth far from Boston. She was born in London in 1775, daughter of Joshua Johnson, an American merchant, brother of Governor Thomas Johnson of Maryland; and Catherine Nuth, of an English family in London. Driven from England by the Revolutionary War, Joshua Johnson took his family to Nantes, where they remained till the peace. The girl Louisa Catherine was nearly ten years old when brought back to London, and her sense of nationality must have been confused; but the influence of the Johnsons and the services of Joshua obtained for him from President Washington the appointment of Consul in London on the organization of the Government in 1790. In 1794 President Washington appointed John Quincy Adams Minister to The Hague. He was twenty-seven years old when he returned to London, and found the Consul's house a very agreeable haunt. Louisa was then twenty.

At that time, and long afterwards, the Consul's house, far more than the Minister's, was the centre of contact for travelling Americans, either official or other. The Legation was a shifting point, between 1785 and 1815; but the Consulate, far down in the City, near the Tower, was convenient and inviting; so inviting that it proved fatal to young Adams. Louisa was charming, like a Romney portrait, but among her many charms that of being a New England woman was not one. The defect was serious. Her future mother-in-law, Abigail, a famous New England woman whose authority over her turbulent husband, the second President, was hardly so great as that which she exercised over her son, the sixth to be, was troubled by the fear that Louisa might not be made of stuff stern enough, or brought up in conditions severe enough, to suit a New England climate, or to make an efficient wife for her paragon son, and Abigail was right on that point, as on most others where sound judgment was involved; but sound judgment is sometimes a source of weakness rather than of force, and John Quincy already had reason to think that his mother held sound judgments on the subject of daughters-in-law which human nature, since the fall of Eve, made Adams helpless to realize. Being three thousand miles away from his mother, and equally far in love, he married Louisa in London, July 26, 1797, and took her to Berlin to be the head of the United States Legation. During three or four exciting years, the young bride lived in Berlin; whether she was happy or not, whether she was content or not, whether she was socially successful or not, her descendants did not surely know; but in any case she could by no chance have become educated there for a life in Quincy or Boston. In 1801 the overthrow of the Federalist Party drove her and her husband

to America, and she became at last a member of the Quincy household, but by that time her children needed all her attention, and she remained there with occasional winters in Boston and Washington, till 1809. Her husband was made Senator in 1803, and in 1809 was appointed Minister to Russia. She went with him to St. Petersburg, taking her baby, Charles Francis, born in 1807; but broken-hearted at having to leave her two older boys behind. The life at St. Petersburg was hardly gay for her; they were far too poor to shine in that extravagant society; but she survived it, though her little girl baby did not, and in the winter of 1814–15, alone with the boy of seven years old, crossed Europe from St. Petersburg to Paris, in her travelling-carriage, passing through the armies, and reaching Paris in the *Cent Jours* after Napoleon's return from Elba. Her husband next went to England as Minister, and she was for two years at the Court of the Regent. In 1817 her husband came home to be Secretary of State, and she lived for eight years in F Street, doing her work of entertainer for President Monroe's administration. Next she lived four miserable years in the White House. When that chapter was closed in 1829, she had earned the right to be tired and delicate, but she still had fifteen years to serve as wife of a Member of the House, after her husband went back to Congress in 1833. Then it was that the little Henry, her grandson, first remembered her, from 1843 to 1848, sitting in her panelled room, at breakfast, with her heavy silver teapot and sugar-bowl and cream-jug, which still exist somewhere as an heirloom of the modern safety-vault. By that time she was seventy years old or more, and thoroughly weary of being beaten about a stormy world. To the boy she seemed singularly peaceful, a vision of silver gray, presiding over her old President and her Queen Anne mahogany; an exotic, like her Sèvres china; an object of deference to every one, and of great affection to her son Charles; but hardly more Bostonian than she had been fifty years before, on her wedding-day, in the shadow of the Tower of London.

Such a figure was even less fitted than that of her old husband, the President, to impress on a boy's mind, the standards of the coming century. She was Louis Seize, like the furniture. The boy knew nothing of her interior life, which had been, as the venerable Abigail, long since at peace, foresaw, one of severe stress and little pure satisfaction. He never dreamed that from her might come some of those doubts and self-questionings, those hesitations, those rebellions against law and discipline, which marked more than one of her descendants; but he might even then have felt some vague instinctive suspicion that he was to inherit from her the seeds of the primal sin, the fall from grace, the curse of Abel, that he was not of pure New England stock, but half exotic. As a child of Quincy he was not a true Bostonian, but even as a child of Quincy he inherited a quarter taint of Maryland blood. Charles Francis, half Marylander by birth, had hardly seen Boston till he was ten years old, when his parents left him there at school in 1817, and he never forgot the experience. He was to be nearly as old as his mother had been in 1845, before he quite accepted Boston, or Boston quite accepted him.

A boy who began his education in these surroundings, with physical strength inferior to that of his brothers, and with a certain delicacy of mind and bone, ought rightly to have felt at home in the eighteenth century and should, in proper self-respect, have rebelled against the standards of the nineteenth. The atmosphere of his first ten years must have been very like that of his grandfather at the same age, from 1767 till 1776, barring the battle of Bunker Hill, and even as late as 1846, the battle of Bunker Hill remained actual. The tone of Boston society was colonial. The true Bostonian always knelt in self-abasement before the majesty of English standards; far from concealing it as a weakness, he was proud of it as his strength. The eighteenth-century ruled society long after 1850. Perhaps the boy began to shake it off rather earlier than most of his mates.

Indeed this prehistoric stage of education ended rather abruptly with his tenth year. One winter morning he was conscious of a certain confusion in the house in Mount Vernon Street, and gathered, from such words as he could catch, that the President, who happened to be then staying there, on his way to Washington, had fallen and hurt himself. Then he heard the word paralysis.

After that day he came to associate the word with the figure of his grandfather, in a tall-backed, invalid armchair, on one side of the spare bedroom fireplace, and one of his old friends, Dr. Parkman or P. P. F. Degrand, on the other side, both dozing.

The end of this first, or ancestral and Revolutionary, chapter came on February 21, 1848—and the month of February brought life and death as a family habit—when the eighteenth century, as an actual and living companion, vanished. If the scene on the floor of the House, when the old President fell, struck the still simple-minded American public with a sensation unusually dramatic, its effect on a ten-year-old boy, whose boy-life was fading away with the life of his grandfather, could not be slight. One had to pay for Revolutionary patriots; grandfathers and grandmothers; Presidents; diplomats; Queen Anne mahogany and Louis Seize chairs, as well as for Stuart portraits. Such things warp young life. Americans commonly believed that they ruined it, and perhaps the practical common-sense of the American mind judged right. Many a boy might be ruined by much less than the emotions of the funeral service in the Quincy church, with its surroundings of national respect and family pride. By another dramatic chance it happened that the clergyman of the parish, Dr. Lunt, was an unusual pulpit orator, the ideal of a somewhat austere intellectual type, such as the school of Buckminster and Channing inherited from the old Congregational clergy. His extraordinarily refined appearance, his dignity of manner, his deeply cadenced voice, his remarkable English and his fine appreciation, gave to the funeral service a character that left an overwhelming impression on the boy's mind. He was to see many great functions—funerals and festivals—in after-life, till his only thought was to see no more, but he never again witnessed anything nearly so impressive to him as the last services at Quincy over the body of one President and the ashes of another.

The effect of the Quincy service was deepened by the official ceremony which afterwards took place in Faneuil Hall, when the boy was taken to hear his uncle, Edward Everett, deliver a Eulogy. Like all Mr. Everett's orations, it was an admirable piece of oratory, such as only an admirable orator and scholar could create; too good for a ten-year-old boy to appreciate at its value; but already the boy knew that the dead President could not be in it, and had even learned why he would have been out of place there; for knowledge was beginning to come fast. The shadow of the War of 1812 still hung over State Street; the shadow of the Civil War to come had already begun to darken Faneuil Hall. No rhetoric could have reconciled Mr. Everett's audience to his subject. How could he say there, to an assemblage of Bostonians in the heart of mercantile Boston, that the only distinctive mark of all the Adamses, since old Sam Adams's father a hundred and fifty years before, had been their inherited quarrel with State Street, which had again and again broken out into riot, bloodshed, personal feuds, foreign and civil war, wholesale banishments and confiscations, until the history of Florence was hardly more turbulent than that of Boston? How could he whisper the word Hartford Convention before the men who had made it? What would have been said had he suggested the chance of Secession and Civil War?

Thus already, at ten years old, the boy found himself standing face to face with a dilemma that might have puzzled an early Christian. What was he?—where was he going? Even then he felt that something was wrong, but he concluded that it must be Boston. Quincy had always been right, for Quincy represented a moral principle—the principle of resistance to Boston. His Adams ancestors must have been right, since they were always hostile to State Street. If State Street was wrong, Quincy must be right! Turn the dilemma as he pleased, he still came back on the eighteenth century and the law of Resistance; of Truth; of Duty, and of Freedom. He was a ten-year-old priest and politician. He could under no circumstances have guessed what the next fifty years had in store, and no one could teach him; but sometimes, in his old age, he wondered—and could never decide —whether the most clear and certain knowledge would have helped him. Supposing he had seen a New York stock-list of 1900, and had studied the statistics of railways, telegraphs, coal, and steel—would he have quitted his eighteenth-century, his ances-

tral prejudices, his abstract ideals, his semi-clerical training, and the rest, in order to perform an expiatory pilgrimage to State Street, and ask for the fatted calf of his grandfather Brooks and a clerkship in the Suffolk Bank?

Sixty years afterwards he was still unable to make up his mind. Each course had its advantages, but the material advantages, looking back, seemed to lie wholly in State Street.

The Dynamo and the Virgin (1900)

Until the Great Exposition of 1900 closed its doors in November, Adams haunted it, aching to absorb knowledge, and helpless to find it. He would have liked to know how much of it could have been grasped by the best-informed man in the world. While he was thus meditating chaos, Langley came by, and showed it to him. At Langley's behest, the Exhibition dropped its superfluous rags and stripped itself to the skin, for Langley knew what to study, and why, and how; while Adams might as well have stood outside in the night, staring at the Milky Way. Yet Langley said nothing new, and taught nothing that one might not have learned from Lord Bacon, three hundred years before; but though one should have known the *Advancement of Science* as well as one knew the *Comedy of Errors*, the literary knowledge counted for nothing until some teacher should show how to apply it. Bacon took a vast deal of trouble in teaching King James I and his subjects, American or other, towards the year 1620, that true science was the development or economy of forces; yet an elderly American in 1900 knew neither the formula nor the forces; or even so much as to say to himself that his historical business in the Exposition concerned only the economies or developments of force since 1893, when he began the study at Chicago.

Nothing in education is so astonishing as the amount of ignorance it accumulates in the form of inert facts. Adams had looked at most of the accumulations of art in the storehouses called Art Museums; yet he did not know how to look at the art exhibits of 1900. He had studied Karl Marx and his doctrines of history with profound attention, yet he could not apply them at Paris. Langley, with the ease of a great master of experiment, threw out of the field every exhibit that did not reveal a new application of force, and naturally threw out, to begin with, almost the whole art exhibit. Equally, he ignored almost the whole industrial exhibit. He led his pupil directly to the forces. His chief interest was in new motors to make his airship feasible, and he taught Adams the astonishing complexities of the Daimler motor, and of the automobile, which, since 1893, had become a nightmare at a hundred kilometres an hour, almost as destructive as the electric tram which was only ten years older; and threatening to become as terrible as the locomotive steam-engine itself, which was almost exactly Adams's own age.

Then he showed his scholar the great hall of dynamos, and explained how little he knew about electricity or force of any kind, even of his own special sun, which spouted heat in inconceivable volume, but which, as far as he knew, might spout less or more, at any time, for all the certainty he felt in it. To him, the dynamo itself was but an ingenious channel for conveying somewhere the heat latent in a few tons of poor coal hidden in a dirty engine-house carefully kept out of sight; but to Adams the dynamo became a symbol of infinity. As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross. The planet itself seemed less impressive, in its old-fashioned, deliberate, annual or daily revolution, than this huge wheel, revolving within arm's-length at some vertiginous speed, and barely murmuring—scarcely humming an audible warning to stand a hair's-breadth further for respect of power—while it would not wake the baby lying close against its frame. Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force. Among the thousand symbols of ultimate energy, the dynamo was not so human as some, but it was the most expressive.

Yet the dynamo, next to the steam-engine, was the most familiar of exhibits. For Adams's objects its value lay chiefly in its occult mechanism. Between the dynamo

in the gallery of machines and the engine-house outside, the break of continuity amounted to abysmal fracture for a historian's objects. No more relation could he discover between the steam and the electric current than between the Cross and the cathedral. The forces were interchangeable if not reversible, but he could see only an absolute *fiat* in electricity as in faith. Langley could not help him. Indeed, Langley seemed to be worried by the same trouble, for he constantly repeated that the new forces were anarchical, and especially that he was not responsible for the new rays, that were little short of parricidal in their wicked spirit towards science. His own rays, with which he had doubled the solar spectrum, were altogether harmless and beneficent; but Radium denied its God—or, what was to Langley the same thing, denied the truths of his Science. The force was wholly new.

A historian who asked only to learn enough to be as futile as Langley or Kelvin, made rapid progress under this teaching, and mixed himself up in the tangle of ideas until he achieved a sort of Paradise of ignorance vastly consoling to his fatigued senses. He wrapped himself in vibrations and rays which were new, and he would have hugged Marconi and Branly had he met them, as he hugged the dynamo; while he lost his arithmetic in trying to figure out the equation between the discoveries and the economies of force. The economies, like the discoveries, were absolute, super-sensual, occult; incapable of expression in horse-power. What mathematical equivalent could he suggest as the value of a Branly coherer? Frozen air, or the electric furnace, had some scale of measurement, no doubt, if somebody could invent a thermometer adequate to the purpose; but X-rays had played no part whatever in man's consciousness, and the atom itself had figured only as a fiction of thought. In these seven years man had translated himself into a new universe which had no common scale of measurement with the old. He had entered a supersensual world, in which he could measure nothing except by chance collisions of movements imperceptible to his senses, perhaps even imperceptible to his instruments, but perceptible to each other, and so to some known ray at the end of the scale. Langley seemed prepared for anything, even for an indeterminable number of universes interfused—physics stark mad in metaphysics.

Historians undertake to arrange sequences,—called stories, or histories—assuming in silence a relation of cause and effect. These assumptions, hidden in the depths of dusty libraries, have been astounding, but commonly unconscious and childlike; so much so, that if any captious critic were to drag them to light, historians would probably reply, with one voice, that they had never supposed themselves required to know what they were talking about. Adams, for one, had toiled in vain to find out what he meant. He had even published a dozen volumes of American history for no other purpose than to satisfy himself whether, by the severest process of stating, with the least possible comment, such facts as seemed sure, in such order as seemed rigorously consequent, he could fix for a familiar moment a necessary sequence of human movement. The result had satisfied him as little as at Harvard College. Where he saw sequence, other men saw something quite different, and no one saw the same unit of measure. He cared little about his experiments and less about his statesmen, who seemed to him quite as ignorant as himself and, as a rule, no more honest; but he insisted on a relation of sequence, and if he could not reach it by one method, he would try as many methods as science knew. Satisfied that the sequence of men led to nothing and that the sequence of their society could lead no further, while the mere sequence of time was artificial, and the sequence of thought was chaos, he turned at last to the sequence of force; and thus it happened that, after ten years' pursuit, he found himself lying in the Gallery of Machines at the Great Exposition of 1900, his historical neck broken by the sudden irruption of forces totally new.

Since no one else showed much concern, an elderly person without other cares had no need to betray alarm. The year 1900 was not the first to upset schoolmasters. Copernicus and Galileo had broken many professorial necks about 1600; Columbus had stood the world on its head towards 1500; but the nearest approach to the revolution of 1900 was that of 310, when Constantine

set up the Cross. The rays that Langley disowned, as well as those which he fathered, were occult, supersensual, irrational; they were a revelation of mysterious energy like that of the Cross; they were what, in terms of mediæval science, were called immediate modes of the divine substance.

The historian was thus reduced to his last resources. Clearly if he was bound to reduce all these forces to a common value, this common value could have no measure but that of their attraction on his own mind. He must treat them as they had been felt; as convertible, reversible, interchangeable attractions on thought. He made up his mind to venture it; he would risk translating rays into faith. Such a reversible process would vastly amuse a chemist, but the chemist could not deny that he, or some of his fellow physicists, could feel the force of both. When Adams was a boy in Boston, the best chemist in the place had probably never heard of Venus except by way of scandal, or of the Virgin except as idolatry; neither had he heard of dynamos or automobiles or radium; yet his mind was ready to feel the force of all, though the rays were unborn and the women were dead.

Here opened another totally new education, which promised to be by far the most hazardous of all. The knife-edge along which he must crawl, like Sir Lancelot in the twelfth century, divided two kingdoms of force which had nothing in common but attraction. They were as different as a magnet is from gravitation, supposing one knew what a magnet was, or gravitation, or love. The force of the Virgin was still felt at Lourdes, and seemed to be as potent as X-rays; but in America neither Venus nor Virgin ever had value as force—at most as sentiment. No American had ever been truly afraid of either.

This problem in dynamics gravely perplexed an American historian. The Woman had once been supreme; in France she still seemed potent, not merely as a sentiment, but as a force. Why was she unknown in America? For evidently America was ashamed of her, and she was ashamed herself, otherwise they would not have strewn fig-leaves so profusely all over her. When she was a true force, she was ignorant of fig-leaves, but the monthly-magazine-made American female had not a feature that would have been recognized by Adam. The trait was notorious, and often humorous, but any one brought up among Puritans knew that sex was sin. In any previous age, sex was strength. Neither art nor beauty was needed. Every one, even among Puritans, knew that neither Diana of the Ephesians nor any of the Oriental goddesses was worshipped for her beauty. She was goddess because of her force; she was the animated dynamo; she was reproduction—the greatest and most mysterious of all energies; all she needed was to be fecund. Singularly enough, not one of Adams's many schools of education had ever drawn his attention to the opening lines of Lucretius, though they were perhaps the finest in all Latin Literature, where the poet invoked Venus exactly as Dante invoked the Virgin:—

'Quæ quoniam rerum naturam *sola* gubernas.' [1]

The Venus of Epicurean philosophy survived in the Virgin of the Schools:

> 'Donna, sei tanto grande, e tanto vali,
> Che qual vuol grazia, e a te non ricorre,
> Sua disianza vuol volar senz' ali.' [2]

All this was to American thought as though it had never existed. The true American knew something of the facts, but nothing of the feelings; he read the letter, but he never felt the law. Before this historical chasm, a mind like that of Adams felt itself helpless; he turned from the Virgin to the Dynamo as though he were a Branly coherer. On one side, at the Louvre and at Chartres, as he knew by the record of work actually done and still before his eyes, was the highest energy ever known to man, the creator of four-fifths of his noblest art, exercising vastly more attraction over the human mind than all the steam-engines and dynamos ever dreamed of; and yet this energy was unknown to the American mind. An American Virgin would never dare command; an American Venus would never dare exist.

1 'Thou, since thou dost alone govern the nature of things.'

2 'Lady, thou so prevailest in all things
That whoso would have grace, and seeks not thee,
Would have his wish fly upward without wings.'
—Dante, *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 13–15. Fletcher, trans.

The question, which to any plain American of the nineteenth century seemed as remote as it did to Adams, drew him almost violently to study, once it was posed; and on this point Langleys were as useless as though they were Herbert Spencers or dynamos. The idea survived only as art. There one turned as naturally as though the artist were himself a woman. Adams began to ponder, asking himself whether he knew of any American artist who had ever insisted on the power of sex, as every classic had always done; but he could think only of Walt Whitman; Bret Harte, as far as the magazines would let him venture; and one or two painters, for the flesh-tones. All the rest had used sex for sentiment, never for force; to them, Eve was a tender flower, and Herodias an unfeminine horror. American art, like the American language and American education, was as far as possible sexless. Society regarded this victory over sex as its greatest triumph, and the historian readily admitted it, since the moral issue, for the moment, did not concern one who was studying the relations of unmoral force. He cared nothing for the sex of the dynamo until he could measure its energy.

Vaguely seeking a clue, he wandered through the art exhibit, and, in his stroll, stopped almost every day before Saint-Gaudens's General Sherman, which had been given the central post of honor. Saint-Gaudens himself was in Paris, putting on the work his usual interminable last touches, and listening to the usual contradictory suggestions of brother sculptors. Of all the American artists who gave to American art whatever life it breathed in the seventies, Saint-Gaudens was perhaps the most sympathetic, but certainly the most inarticulate. General Grant or Don Cameron had scarcely less instinct of rhetoric than he. All the others—the Hunts, Richardson, John La Farge, Stanford White—were exuberant; only Saint-Gaudens could never discuss or dilate on an emotion, or suggest artistic arguments for giving to his work the forms that he felt. He never laid down the law, or affected the despot, or became brutalized like Whistler by the brutalities of his world. He required no incense; he was no egoist; his simplicity of thought was excessive; he could not imitate, or give any form but his own to the creations of his hand. No one felt more strongly than he the strength of other men, but the idea that they could affect him never stirred an image in his mind.

This summer his health was poor and his spirits were low. For such a temper, Adams was not the best companion, since his own gaiety was not *folle*; but he risked going now and then to the studio on Mont Parnasse to draw him out for a stroll in the Bois de Boulogne, or dinner as pleased his moods, and in return Saint-Gaudens sometimes let Adams go about in his company.

Once Saint-Gaudens took him down to Amiens, with a party of Frenchmen, to see the cathedral. Not until they found themselves actually studying the sculpture of the western portal, did it dawn on Adams's mind that, for his purposes, Saint-Gaudens on that spot had more interest to him than the cathedral itself. Great men before great monuments express great truths, provided they are not taken too solemnly. Adams never tired of quoting the supreme phrase of his idol Gibbon, before the Gothic cathedrals: 'I darted a contemptuous look on the stately monuments of superstition.' Even in the footnotes of his history, Gibbon had never inserted a bit of humor more human than this, and one would have paid largely for a photograph of the fat little historian, on the background of Notre Dame of Amiens, trying to persuade his readers—perhaps himself—that he was darting a contemptuous look on the stately monument, for which he felt in fact the respect which every man of his vast study and active mind always feels before objects worthy of it; but besides the humor, one felt also the relation. Gibbon ignored the Virgin, because in 1789 religious monuments were out of fashion. In 1900 his remark sounded fresh and simple as the green fields to ears that had heard a hundred years of other remarks, mostly no more fresh and certainly less simple. Without malice, one might find it more instructive than a whole lecture of Ruskin. One sees what one brings, and at that moment Gibbon brought the French Revolution. Ruskin brought reaction against the Revolution. Saint-Gaudens had passed beyond all. He liked the stately monuments much more than he liked Gibbon or Ruskin; he loved their dignity; their unity; their scale; their lines; their lights and shadows; their

decorative sculpture; but he was even less conscious than they of the force that created it all—the Virgin, the Woman—by whose genius 'the stately monuments of superstition' were built, through which she was expressed. He would have seen more meaning in Isis with the cow's horns, at Edfoo, who expressed the same thought. The art remained, but the energy was lost even upon the artist.

Yet in mind and person Saint-Gaudens was a survival of the 1500; he bore the stamp of the Renaissance, and should have carried an image of the Virgin round his neck, or stuck in his hat, like Louis XI. In mere time he was a lost soul that had strayed by chance into the twentieth century, and forgotten where it came from. He writhed and cursed at his ignorance, much as Adams did at his own, but in the opposite sense. Saint-Gaudens was a child of Benvenuto Cellini, smothered in an American cradle. Adams was a quintessence of Boston, devoured by curiosity to think like Benvenuto. Saint-Gaudens's art was starved from birth, and Adams's instinct was blighted from babyhood. Each had but half of a nature, and when they came together before the Virgin of Amiens they ought both to have felt in her the force that made them one; but it was not so. To Adams she became more than ever a channel of force; to Saint-Gaudens she remained as before a channel of taste.

For a symbol of power, Saint-Gaudens instinctively preferred the horse, as was plain in his horse and Victory of the Sherman monument. Doubtless Sherman also felt it so. The attitude was so American that, for at least forty years, Adams had never realized that any other could be in sound taste. How many years had he taken to admit a notion of what Michaelangelo and Rubens were driving at? He could not say; but he knew that only since 1895 had he begun to feel the Virgin or Venus as force, and not everywhere even so. At Chartres—perhaps at Lourdes—possibly at Cnidos if one could still find there the divinely naked Aphrodite of Praxiteles—but otherwise one must look for force to the goddesses of Indian mythology. The idea died out long ago in the German and English stock. Saint-Gaudens at Amiens was hardly less sensitive to the force of the female energy than Matthew Arnold at the Grande Chartreuse. Neither of them felt goddesses as power—only as reflected emotion, human expression, beauty, purity, taste, scarcely even as sympathy. They felt a railway train as power; yet they, and all other artists, constantly complained that the power embodied in a railway train could never be embodied in art. All the steam in the world could not, like the Virgin, build Chartres.

Yet in mechanics, whatever the mechanicians might think, both energies acted as interchangeable forces on man, and by action on man all known force may be measured. Indeed, few men of science measured force in any other way. After once admitting that a straight line was the shortest distance between two points, no serious mathematician cared to deny anything that suited his convenience, and rejected no symbol, unproved or unproveable, that helped him to accomplish work. The symbol was force, as a compass-needle or a triangle was force, as the mechanist might prove by losing it, and nothing could be gained by ignoring their value. Symbol or energy, the Virgin had acted as the greatest force the Western world ever felt, and had drawn man's activities to herself more strongly than any other power, natural or super-natural, had ever done; the historian's business was to follow the track of the energy; to find where it came from and where it went to; its complex source and shifting channels; its values, equivalents, conversions. It could scarcely be more complex than radium; it could hardly be deflected, diverted, polarized, absorbed more perplexingly than other radiant matter. Adams knew nothing about any of them, but as a mathematical problem of influence on human progress, though all were occult, all reacted on his mind, and he rather inclined to think the Virgin easiest to handle.

The pursuit turned out to be long and tortuous, leading at last into the vast forests of scholastic science. From Zeno to Descartes, hand in hand with Thomas Aquinas, Montaigne, and Pascal, one stumbled as stupidly as though one were still a German student of 1860. Only with the instinct of despair could one force one's self into this old thicket of ignorance after having been repulsed at a score of entrances more promising and more popular. Thus far, no path

had led anywhere, unless perhaps to an exceedingly modest living. Forty-five years of study had proved to be quite futile for the pursuit of power; one controlled no more force in 1900 than in 1850, although the amount of force controlled by society had enormously increased. The secret of education still hid itself somewhere behind ignorance, and one fumbled over it as feebly as ever. In such labyrinths, the staff is a force almost more necessary than the legs; the pen becomes a sort of blind-man's dog, to keep him from falling into the gutters. The pen works for itself, and acts like a hand, modelling the plastic material over and over again to the form that suits it best. The form is never arbitrary, but is a sort of growth like crystallization, as any artist knows too well; for often the pencil or pen runs into sidepaths and shapelessness, loses its relations, stops or is bogged. Then it has to return on its trail, and recover, if it can, its line of force. The result of a year's work depends more on what is struck out than on what is left in; on the sequence of the main lines of thought, than on their play or variety. Compelled once more to lean heavily on this support, Adams covered more thousands of pages with figures as formal as though they were algebra, laboriously striking out, altering, burning, experimenting, until the year had expired, the Exposition had long been closed, and winter drawing to its end, before he sailed from Cherbourg, on January 19, 1901, for home.

1907

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER

(O. HENRY)

1862–1910

A MUNICIPAL REPORT

The cities are full of pride,
Challenging each to each—
This from her mountainside,
That from her burthened beach.
R. KIPLING.

Fancy a novel about Chicago or Buffalo, let us say, or Nashville, Tennessee! There are just three big cities in the United States that are 'story cities'—New York, of course, New Orleans, and, best of the lot, San Francisco.
FRANK NORRIS.

EAST is East, and West is San Francisco, according to Californians. Californians are a race of people; they are not merely inhabitants of a State. They are the Southerners of the West. Now, Chicagoans are no less loyal to their city; but when you ask them why, they stammer and speak of lake fish and the new Odd Fellows Building. But Californians go into detail.

Of course they have, in the climate, an argument that is good for half an hour while you are thinking of your coal bills and heavy underwear. But as soon as they come to mistake your silence for conviction, madness comes upon them, and they picture the city of the Golden Gate as the Bagdad of the New World. So far, as a matter of opinion, no refutation is necessary. But, dear cousins all (from Adam and Eve descended), it is a rash one who will lay his finger on the map and say: 'In this town there can be no romance—what could happen here?' Yes, it is a bold and a rash deed to challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand and McNally.

Nashville.—A city, port of delivery, and the capital of the State of Tennessee, is on the Cumberland River and on the N.C. & ST.L. and the L. & N. railroads. This city is regarded as the most important educational centre in the South.

I stepped off the train at 8 P.M. Having searched the thesaurus in vain for adjectives, I must, as a substitution, hie me to comparison in the form of a recipe.

Take of London fog 30 parts; malaria 10 parts; gas leaks 20 parts; dewdrops gathered in a brick yard at sunrise 25 parts; odor of honeysuckle 15 parts. Mix.

The mixture will give you an approxi-

mate conception of a Nashville drizzle. It is not so fragrant as a moth-ball nor as thick as pea-soup; but 'tis enough—'twill serve.

I went to a hotel in a tumbril. It required strong self-suppression for me to keep from climbing to the top of it and giving an imitation of Sidney Carton. The vehicle was drawn by beasts of a bygone era and driven by something dark and emancipated.

I was sleepy and tired, so when I got to the hotel I hurriedly paid it the fifty cents it demanded (with approximate lagniappe, I assure you). I knew its habits; and I did not want to hear it prate about its old 'marster' or anything that happened 'befo' de wah.'

The hotel was one of the kind described as 'renovated.' That means $30,000 worth of new marble pillars, tiling, electric lights and brass cuspidors in the lobby, and a new L. & N. time table and a lithograph of Lookout Mountain in each one of the great rooms above. The management was without reproach, the attention full of exquisite Southern courtesy, the service as slow as the progress of a snail and as good-humored as Rip Van Winkle. The food was worth traveling a thousand miles for. There is no other hotel in the world where you can get such chicken livers *en brochette.*

At dinner I asked a Negro waiter if there was anything doing in town. He pondered gravely for a minute, and then replied: 'Well, boss, I don't really reckon there's anything at all doin' after sundown.'

Sundown had been accomplished; it had been drowned in the drizzle long before. So that spectacle was denied me. But I went forth upon the streets in the drizzle to see what might be there.

It is built on undulating grounds; and the streets are lighted by electricity at a cost of $32,470 *per annum.*

As I left the hotel there was a race riot. Down upon me charged a company of freedmen, or Arabs, or Zulus, armed with —no, I saw with relief that they were not rifles, but whips. And I saw dimly a caravan of black, clumsy vehicles; and at the reassuring shouts, 'Kyar you anywhere in the town, boss, fuh fifty cents,' I reasoned that I was merely a 'fare' instead of a victim.

I walked through long streets, all leading uphill. I wondered how those streets ever came down again. Perhaps they didn't until they were 'graded.' On a few of the 'main streets' I saw lights in stores here and there; saw street cars go by conveying worthy burghers hither and yon; saw people pass engaged in the art of conversation, and heard a burst of semi-lively laughter issuing from a soda-water and ice-cream parlor. The streets other than 'main' seemed to have enticed upon their borders houses consecrated to peace and domesticity. In many of them lights shone behind discreetly drawn window shades; in a few pianos tinkled orderly and irreproachable music. There was, indeed, little 'doing.' I wished I had come before sundown. So I returned to my hotel.

In November, 1864, *the Confederate General Hood advanced against Nashville, where he shut up a National force under General Thomas. The latter then sallied forth and defeated the Confederates in a terrible conflict.*

All my life I have heard of, admired, and witnessed the fine marksmanship of the South in its peaceful conflicts in the tobacco-chewing regions. But in my hotel a surprise awaited me. There were twelve bright, new, imposing, capacious brass cuspidors in the great lobby, tall enough to be called urns and so wide-mouthed that the crack pitcher of a lady baseball team should have been able to throw a ball into one of them at five paces distant. But, although a terrible battle had raged and was still raging, the enemy had not suffered. Bright, new, imposing, capacious, untouched, they stood. But, shades of Jefferson Brick! the tile floor—the beautiful tile floor! I could not avoid thinking of the battle of Nashville, and trying to draw, as is my foolish habit, some deductions about hereditary marksmanship.

Here I first saw Major (by misplaced courtesy) Wentworth Caswell. I knew him for a type the moment my eyes suffered from the sight of him. A rat has no geographical habitat. My old friend, A. Tennyson, said, as he so well said almost everything:

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat.

Let us regard the word 'British' as interchangeable *ad lib.* A rat is a rat.

This man was hunting about the hotel lobby like a starved dog that had forgotten where he had buried a bone. He had a face of great acreage, red, pulpy, and with a kind of sleepy massiveness like that of Buddha. He possessed one single virtue—he was very smoothly shaven. The mark of the beast is not indelible upon a man until he goes about with a stubble. I think that if he had not used his razor that day I would have repulsed his advances, and the criminal calendar of the world would have been spared the addition of one murder.

I happened to be standing within five feet of a cuspidor when Major Caswell opened fire upon it. I had been observant enough to perceive that the attacking force was using Gatlings instead of squirrel rifles; so I side-stepped so promptly that the major seized the opportunity to apologize to a noncombatant. He had the blabbing lip. In four minutes he had become my friend and had dragged me to the bar.

I desire to interpolate here that I am a Southerner. But I am not one by profession or trade. I eschew the string tie, the slouch hat, the Prince Albert, the number of bales of cotton destroyed by Sherman, and plug chewing. When the orchestra plays Dixie I do not cheer. I slide a little lower on the leather-cornered seat and, well, order another Würzburger and wish that Longstreet had—but what's the use?

Major Caswell banged the bar with his fist, and the first gun at Fort Sumter reechoed. When he fired the last one at Appomattox I began to hope. But then he began on family trees, and demonstrated that Adam was only a third cousin of a collateral branch of the Caswell family. Genealogy disposed of, he took up, to my distaste, his private family matters. He spoke of his wife, traced her descent back to Eve, and profanely denied any possible rumor that she may have had relations in the land of Nod.

By this time I began to suspect that he was trying to obscure by noise the fact that he had ordered the drinks, on the chance that I would be bewildered into paying for them. But when they were down he crashed a silver dollar loudly upon the bar. Then, of course, another serving was obligatory. And when I had paid for that I took leave of him brusquely; for I wanted no more of him. But before I had obtained my release he had prated loudly of an income that his wife received, and showed a handful of silver money.

When I got my key at the desk the clerk said to me courteously: 'If that man Caswell has annoyed you, and if you would like to make a complaint, we will have him ejected. He is a nuisance, a loafer, and without any known means of support, although he seems to have some money most of the time. But we don't seem to be able to hit upon any means of throwing him out legally.'

'Why, no,' said I, after some reflection; 'I don't see my way clear to making a complaint. But I would like to place myself on record as asserting that I do not care for his company. Your town,' I continued, 'seems to be a quiet one. What manner of entertainment, adventure, or excitement have you to offer to the stranger within your gates?'

'Well, sir,' said the clerk, 'there will be a show here next Thursday. It is—I'll look it up and have the announcement sent up to your room with the ice water. Good night.'

After I went up to my room I looked out the window. It was only about ten o'clock, but I looked upon a silent town. The drizzle continued, spangled with dim lights, as far apart as currants in a cake sold at the Ladies' Exchange.

'A quiet place,' I said to myself, as my first shoe struck the ceiling of the occupant of the room beneath mine. 'Nothing of the life here that gives color and variety to the cities in the East and West. Just a good, ordinary, humdrum, business town.'

> *Nashville occupies a foremost place among the manufacturing centres of the country. It is the fifth boot and shoe market in the United States, the largest candy and cracker manufacturing city in the South, and does an enormous wholesale drygoods, grocery, and drug business.*

I must tell you how I came to be in Nashville, and I assure you the digression brings as much tedium to me as it does to you. I was traveling elsewhere on my own business, but I had a commission from a North-

ern literary magazine to stop over there and establish a personal connection between the publication and one of its contributors, Azalea Adair.

Adair (there was no clue to the personality except the handwriting) had sent in some essays (lost art!) and poems that had made the editors swear approvingly over their one o'clock luncheon. So they had commissioned me to round up said Adair and corner by contract his or her output at two cents a word before some other publisher offered her ten or twenty.

At nine o'clock the next morning, after my chicken livers *en brochette* (try them if you can find that hotel), I strayed out into the drizzle, which was still on for an unlimited run. At the first corner I came upon Uncle Cæsar. He was a stalwart Negro, older than the pyramids, with gray wool and a face that reminded me of Brutus, and a second afterwards of the late King Cettiwayo. He wore the most remarkable coat that I ever had seen or expect to see. It reached to his ankles and had once been a Confederate gray in colors. But rain and sun and age had so variegated it that Joseph's coat, beside it, would have faded to a pale monochrome. I must linger with that coat, for it has to do with the story—the story that is so long in coming, because you can hardly expect anything to happen in Nashville.

Once it must have been the military coat of an officer. The cape of it had vanished, but all adown its front it had been frogged and tasseled magnificently. But now the frogs and tassels were gone. In their stead had been patiently stitched (I surmised by some surviving 'black mammy') new frogs made of cunningly twisted common hempen twine. The twine was frayed and disheveled. It must have been added to the coat as a substitute for vanished splendors, with tasteless but painstaking devotion, for it followed faithfully the curves of the long-missing frogs. And, to complete the comedy and pathos of the garment, all its buttons were gone save one. The second button from the top alone remained. The coat was fastened by other twine strings tied through the buttonholes and other holes rudely pierced in the opposite side. There was never such a weird garment so fantastically bedecked and of so many mottled hues. The lone button was the size of a half-dollar, made of yellow horn and sewed on with coarse twine.

This Negro stood by a carriage so old that Ham himself might have started a hack line with it after he left the ark with the two animals hitched to it. As I approached he threw open the door, drew out a feather duster, waved it without using it, and said in deep, rumbling tones:

'Step right in, suh; ain't a speck of dust in it—jus' got back from a funeral, suh.'

I inferred that on such gala occasions carriages were given an extra cleaning. I looked up and down the street and perceived that there was little choice among the vehicles for hire that lined the curb. I looked in my memorandum book for the address of Azalea Adair.

'I want to go to 861 Jessamine Street,' I said, and was about to step into the hack.

But for an instant the thick, long, gorilla-like arm of the old Negro barred me. On his massive and saturnine face a look of sudden suspicion and enmity flashed for a moment. Then, with quickly returning conviction, he asked blandishingly: 'What are you gwine there for, boss?'

'What is that to you?' I asked, a little sharply.

'Nothin', suh, jus' nothin'. Only it's a lonesome kind of part of town and few folks ever has business out there. Step right in. The seats is clean—jes' got back from a funeral, suh.'

A mile and a half it must have been to our journey's end. I could hear nothing but the fearful rattle of the ancient hack over the uneven brick paving; I could smell nothing but the drizzle, now further flavored with coal smoke and something like a mixture of tar and oleander blossoms. All I could see through the streaming windows were two rows of dim houses.

The city has an area of 10 *square miles;* 181 *miles of streets, of which* 137 *miles are paved; a system of waterworks that cost* $2,000,000, *with* 77 *miles of mains.*

861 Jessamine Street was a decayed mansion. Thirty yards back from the street it stood, outmerged in a splendid grove of trees and untrimmed shrubbery. A row of box bushes overflowed and almost hid the

paling fence from sight; the gate was kept closed by a rope noose that encircled the gatepost and the first paling of the gate. But when you got inside you saw that 861 was a shell, a shadow, a ghost of former grandeur and excellence. But in the story, I have not yet got inside.

When the hack had ceased from rattling and the weary quadrupeds came to a rest I handed my jehu his fifty cents with an additional quarter, feeling a glow of conscious generosity, as I did so. He refused it.

'It's two dollars, suh,' he said.

'How's that?' I asked. 'I plainly heard you call out at the hotel: "Fifty cents to any part of the town." '

'It's two dollars, suh,' he repeated obstinately. 'It's a long ways from the hotel.'

'It is within the city limits and well within them,' I argued. 'Don't think that you have picked up a greenhorn Yankee. Do you see those hills over there?' I went on, pointing toward the east (I could not see them, myself, for the drizzle); 'well, I was born and raised on their other side. You old fool nigger, can't you tell people from other people when you see 'em?'

The grim face of King Cettiwayo softened. 'Is you from the South, suh? I reckon it was them shoes of yourn fooled me. They is somethin' sharp in the toes for a Southern gen'l'man to wear.'

'Then the charge is fifty cents, I suppose?' said I inexorably.

His former expression, a mingling of cupidity and hostility, returned, remained ten seconds, and vanished.

'Boss,' he said, 'fifty cents is right; but I *needs* two dollars, suh; I'm *obleeged* to have two dollars. I ain't *demandin'* it now, suh; after I knows whar you's from; I'm jus' sayin' that I *has* to have two dollars tonight, and business is mighty po'.'

Peace and confidence settled upon his heavy features. He had been luckier than he had hoped. Instead of having picked up a greenhorn, ignorant of rates, he had come upon an inheritance.

'You confounded old rascal,' I said, reaching down to my pocket, 'you ought to be turned over to the police.'

For the first time I saw him smile. He knew; *he knew*; *HE KNEW*.

I gave him two one-dollar bills. As I handed them over I noticed that one of them had seen parlous times. Its upper right-hand corner was missing, and it had been torn through in the middle, but joined again. A strip of blue tissue paper, pasted over the split, preserved its negotiability.

Enough of the African bandit for the present: I left him happy, lifted the rope and opened the creaky gate.

The house, as I said, was a shell. A paint brush had not touched it in twenty years. I could not see why a strong wind should not have bowled it over like a house of cards until I looked again at the trees that hugged it close—the trees that saw the battle of Nashville and still drew their protecting branches around it against storm and enemy and cold.

Azalea Adair, fifty years old, white-haired, a descendant of the cavaliers, as thin and frail as the house she lived in, robed in the cheapest and cleanest dress I ever saw, with an air as simple as a queen's, received me.

The reception room seemed a mile square, because there was nothing in it except some rows of books, on unpainted white-pine bookshelves, a cracked marble-top table, a rag rug, a hairless horsehair sofa and two or three chairs. Yes, there was a picture on the wall, a colored crayon drawing of a cluster of pansies. I looked around for the portrait of Andrew Jackson and the pine-cone hanging basket but they were not there.

Azalea Adair and I had conversation, a little of which will be repeated to you. She was a product of the old South, gently nurtured in the sheltered life. Her learning was not broad, but was deep and of splendid originality in its somewhat narrow scope. She had been educated at home, and her knowledge of the world was derived from inference and by inspiration. Of such is the precious, small group of essayists made. While she talked to me I kept brushing my fingers, trying, unconsciously, to rid them guiltily of the absent dust from the half-calf backs of Lamb, Chaucer, Hazlitt, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne and Hood. She was exquisite, she was a valuable discovery. Nearly everybody nowadays knows too much—oh, so much too much—of real life.

I could perceive clearly that Azalea Adair was very poor. A house and a dress she had, not much else, I fancied. So, divided be-

tween my duty to the magazine and my loyalty to the poets and essayists who fought Thomas in the valley of the Cumberland, I listened to her voice, which was like a harpsichord's, and found that I could not speak of contracts. In the presence of the nine Muses and the three Graces one hesitated to lower the topic to two cents. There would have to be another colloquy after I had regained my commercialism. But I spoke of my mission, and three o'clock of the next afternoon was set for the discussion of the business proposition.

'Your town,' I said, as I began to make ready to depart (which is the time for smooth generalities), 'seems to be a quiet, sedate place. A home town, I should say, where few things out of the ordinary ever happen.'

It carries on an extensive trade in stoves and hollow ware with the West and South, and its flouring mills have a daily capacity of more than 2,000 barrels.

Azalea Adair seemed to reflect.

'I have never thought of it that way,' she said, with a kind of sincere intensity that seemed to belong to her. 'Isn't it in the still, quiet places that things do happen? I fancy that when God began to create the earth on the first Monday morning one could have leaned out one's window and heard the drops of mud splashing from His trowel as He built up the everlasting hills. What did the noisiest project in the world—I mean the building of the tower of Babel—result in finally? A page and a half of Esperanto in the *North American Review*.'

'Of course,' said I platitudinously, 'human nature is the same everywhere; but there is more color—er—more drama and movement and—er—romance in some cities than in others.'

'On the surface,' said Azalea Adair. 'I have traveled many times around the world in a golden airship wafted on two wings—print and dreams. I have seen (on one of my imaginary tours) the Sultan of Turkey bowstring with his own hands one of his wives who had uncovered her face in public. I have seen a man in Nashville tear up his theatre tickets because his wife was going out with her face covered—with rice powder. In San Francisco's Chinatown I saw the slave girl Sing Yee dipped slowly, inch by inch, in boiling almond oil to make her swear she would never see her American lover again. She gave in when the boiling oil had reached three inches above her knee. At a euchre party in East Nashville the other night I saw Kitty Morgan cut dead by seven of her schoolmates and lifelong friends because she had married a house painter. The boiling oil was sizzling as high as her heart; but I wish you could have seen the fine little smile that she carried from table to table. Oh, yes, it is a humdrum town. Just a few miles of red brick houses and mud and stores and lumber yards.'

Some one knocked hollowly at the back of the house. Azalea Adair breathed a soft apology and went to investigate the sound. She came back in three minutes with brightened eyes, a faint flush on her cheeks, and ten years lifted from her shoulders.

'You must have a cup of tea before you go,' she said, 'and a sugar cake.'

She reached and shook a little iron bell. In shuffled a small Negro girl about twelve, barefoot, not very tidy, glowering at me with thumb in mouth and bulging eyes.

Azalea Adair opened a tiny, worn purse and drew out a dollar bill, a dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn in two pieces and pasted together again with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was one of the bills I had given the piratical Negro —there was no doubt of it.

'Go up to Mr. Baker's store on the corner, Impy,' she said, handing the girl the dollar bill, 'and get a quarter of a pound of tea—the kind he always sends me—and ten cents worth of sugar cakes. Now, hurry. The supply of tea in the house happens to be exhausted,' she explained to me.

Impy left by the back way. Before the scrape of her hard, bare feet had died away on the back porch, a wild shriek—I was sure it was hers—filled the hollow house. Then the deep, gruff tones of an angry man's voice mingled with the girl's further squeals and unintelligible words.

Azalea Adair rose without surprise or emotion and disappeared. For two minutes I heard the hoarse rumble of the man's voice; then something like an oath and a slight scuffle, and she returned calmly to her chair.

'This is a roomy house,' she said, 'and I

have a tenant for part of it. I am sorry to have to rescind my invitation to tea. It was impossible to get the kind I always use at the store. Perhaps to-morrow Mr. Baker will be able to supply me.'

I was sure that Impy had not had time to leave the house. I inquired concerning street-car lines and took my leave. After I was well on my way I remembered that I had not learned Azalea Adair's name. But to-morrow would do.

That same day I started in on the course of iniquity that this uneventful city forced upon me. I was in the town only two days, but in that time I managed to lie shamelessly by telegraph, and to be an accomplice —after the fact, if that is the correct legal term—to a murder.

As I rounded the corner nearest my hotel the Afrite coachman of the polychromatic, nonpareil coat seized me, swung open the dungeony door of his peripatetic sarcophagus, flirted his feather duster and began his ritual: 'Step right in, boss. Carriage is clean—jus' got back from a funeral. Fifty cents to any—'

And then he knew me and grinned broadly. ' 'Scuse me, boss; you is de gen'l'man what rid out with me dis mawnin'. Thank you kindly, suh.'

'I am going out to 861 again to-morrow afternoon at three,' said I, 'and if you will be here, I'll let you drive me. So you know Miss Adair?' I concluded, thinking of my dollar bill.

'I belonged to her father, Judge Adair, suh,' he replied.

'I judge that she is pretty poor,' I said. 'She hasn't much money to speak of, has she?'

For an instant I looked again at the fierce countenance of King Cettiwayo, and then he changed back to an extortionate old Negro hack driver.

'She ain't gwine to starve, suh,' he said slowly. 'She has reso'ces, suh; she has reso'ces.'

'I shall pay you fifty cents for the trip,' said I.

'Dat is puffeckly correct, suh,' he answered humbly. 'I jus' *had* to have dat two dollars dis mawnin', boss.'

I went to the hotel and lied by electricity. I wired the magazine: 'A. Adair holds out for eight cents a word.'

The answer that came back was: 'Give it to her quick, you duffer.'

Just before dinner 'Major' Wentworth Caswell bore down upon me with the greetings of a long-lost friend. I have seen few men whom I have so instantaneously hated, and of whom it was so difficult to be rid. I was standing at the bar when he invaded me; therefore I could not wave the white ribbon in his face. I would have paid gladly for the drinks, hoping, thereby, to escape another; but he was one of those despicable, roaring, advertising bibbers who must have brass bands and fireworks attend upon every cent that they waste in their follies.

With an air of producing millions he drew two one-dollar bills from a pocket and dashed one of them upon the bar. I looked once more at the dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn through the middle, and patched with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was my dollar bill again. It could have been no other.

I went up to my room. The drizzle and the monotony of a dreary, eventless Southern town had made me tired and listless. I remember that just before I went to bed I mentally disposed of the mysterious dollar bill (which might have formed the clew to a tremendously fine detective story of San Francisco) by saying to myself sleepily: 'Seems as if a lot of people here own stock in the Hack-Driver's Trust. Pays dividends promptly, too. Wonder if—' Then I fell asleep.

King Cettiwayo was at his post the next day, and rattled my bones over the stones out to 861. He was to wait and rattle me back again when I was ready.

Azalea Adair looked paler and cleaner and frailer than she had looked on the day before. After she had signed the contract at eight cents per word she grew still paler and began to slip out of her chair. Without much trouble I managed to get her up on the antediluvian horsehair sofa and then I ran out to the sidewalk and yelled to the coffee-colored Pirate to bring a doctor. With a wisdom that I had not suspected in him, he abandoned his team and struck off up the street afoot, realizing the value of speed. In ten minutes he returned with a grave, gray-haired and capable man of medicine. In a few words (worth much less than eight cents each) I explained to him

my presence in the hollow house of mystery. He bowed with stately understanding, and turned to the old Negro.

'Uncle Cæsar,' he said calmly, 'run up to my house and ask Miss Lucy to give you a cream pitcher full of fresh milk and half a tumbler of port wine. And hurry back. Don't drive—run. I want you to get back sometime this week.'

It occurred to me that Dr. Merriman also felt a distrust as to the speeding powers of the land-pirate's steeds. After Uncle Cæsar was gone, lumberingly, but swiftly, up the street, the doctor looked me over with great politeness and as much careful calculation until he had decided that I might do.

'It is only a case of insufficient nutrition,' he said. 'In other words, the result of poverty, pride, and starvation. Mrs. Caswell has many devoted friends who would be glad to aid her, but she will accept nothing except from that old Negro, Uncle Cæsar, who was once owned by her family.'

'Mrs. Caswell!' said I, in surprise. And then I looked at the contract and saw that she had signed it 'Azalea Adair Caswell.'

'I thought she was Miss Adair,' I said.

'Married to a drunken, worthless loafer, sir,' said the doctor. 'It is said that he robs her even of the small sums that her old servant contributes toward her support.'

When the milk and wine had been brought the doctor soon revived Azalea Adair. She sat up and talked of the beauty of the autumn leaves that were then in season, and their height of color. She referred lightly to her fainting seizure as the outcome of an old palpitation of the heart. Impy fanned her as she lay on the sofa. The doctor was due elsewhere, and I followed him to the door. I told him that it was within my power and intentions to make a reasonable advance of money to Azalea Adair on future contributions to the magazine, and he seemed pleased.

'By the way,' he said, 'perhaps you would like to know that you have had royalty for a coachman. Old Cæsar's grandfather was a king in Congo. Cæsar himself has royal ways, as you may have observed.'

As the doctor was moving off I heard Uncle Cæsar's voice inside: 'Did he git bofe of dem two dollars from you, Mis' Zalea?'

'Yes, Cæsar,' I heard Azalea Adair answer weakly.

And then I went in and concluded business negotiations with our contributor. I assumed the responsibility of advancing fifty dollars, putting it as a necessary formality in binding our bargain. And then Uncle Cæsar drove me back to the hotel.

Here ends all of the story as far as I can testify as a witness. The rest must be only bare statements of facts.

At about six o'clock I went out for a stroll. Uncle Cæsar was at his corner. He threw open the door of his carriage, flourished his duster, and began his depressing formula: 'Step right in, suh. Fifty cents to anywhere in the city—hack's puffickly clean, suh—jus' got back from a funeral—'

And then he recognized me. I think his eyesight was getting bad. His coat had taken on a few more faded shades of color, the twine strings were more frayed and ragged, the last remaining button—the button of yellow horn—was gone. A motley descendant of kings was Uncle Cæsar!

About two hours later I saw an excited crowd besieging the front of a drug store. In a desert where nothing happens this was manna; so I edged my way inside. On an extemporized couch of empty boxes and chairs was stretched the mortal corporeality of Major Wentworth Caswell. A doctor was testing him for the immortal ingredient. His decision was that it was conspicuous by its absence.

The erstwhile Major had been found dead on a dark street and brought by curious and ennuied citizens to the drug store. The late human being had been engaged in terrific battle—the details showed that. Loafer and reprobate though he had been, he had been also a warrior. But he had lost. His hands were yet clinched so tightly that his fingers would not be opened. The gentle citizens who had known him stood about and searched their vocabularies to find some good words, if it were possible, to speak of him. One kind-looking man said, after much thought: 'When "Cas" was about fo'teen he was one of the best spellers in school.'

While I stood there the fingers of the right hand of 'the man that was,' which hung down the side of a white pine box, relaxed, and dropped something at my feet. I covered it with one foot quietly, and a little later on I picked it up and pocketed it.

I reasoned that in his last struggle his hand must have seized that object unwittingly and held it in a death grip.

At the hotel that night the main topic of conversation, with the possible exceptions of politics and prohibition, was the demise of Major Caswell. I heard one man say to a group of listeners:

'In my opinion, gentlemen, Caswell was murdered by some of these no-account niggers for his money. He had fifty dollars this afternoon which he showed to several gentlemen in the hotel. When he was found the money was not on his person.'

I left the city the next morning at nine, and as the train was crossing the bridge over the Cumberland River I took out of my pocket a yellow horn overcoat button the size of a fifty-cent piece, with frayed ends of coarse twine hanging from it, and cast it out of the window into the slow, muddy waters below.

I wonder what's doing in Buffalo!

1910

HENRY JAMES

1843–1916

THE ART OF FICTION

I SHOULD not have affixed so comprehensive a title to these few remarks, necessarily wanting in any completeness upon a subject the full consideration of which would carry us far, did I not seem to discover a pretext for my temerity in the interesting pamphlet lately published under this name by Mr. Walter Besant. Mr. Besant's lecture at the Royal Institution—the original form of his pamphlet—appears to indicate that many persons are interested in the art of fiction, and are not indifferent to such remarks, as those who practise it may attempt to make about it. I am therefore anxious not to lose the benefit of this favourable association, and to edge in a few words under cover of the attention which Mr. Besant is sure to have excited. There is something very encouraging in his having put into form certain of his ideas on the mystery of story-telling.

It is a proof of life and curiosity—curiosity on the part of the brotherhood of novelists as well as on the part of their readers. Only a short time ago it might have been supposed that the English novel was not what the French call *discutable*. It had no air of having a theory, a conviction, a consciousness of itself behind it—of being the expression of an artistic faith, the result of choice and comparison. I do not say it was necessarily the worse for that: it would take much more courage than I possess to intimate that the form of the novel as Dickens and Thackeray (for instance) saw it had any taint of incompleteness. It was, however, *naïf* (if I may help myself out with another French word); and evidently if it be destined to suffer in any way for having lost its *naïveté* it has now an idea of making sure of the corresponding advantages. During the period I have alluded to there was a comfortable, good-humoured feeling abroad that a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding, and that our only business with it could be to swallow it. But within a year or two, for some reason or other, there have been signs of returning animation—the era of discussion would appear to have been to a certain extent opened. Art lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon variety of attempt, upon the exchange of views and the comparison of standpoints; and there is a presumption that those times when no one has anything particular to say about it, and has no reason to give for practice or preference, though they may be times of honour, are not times of development—are times, possibly even, a little of dulness. The successful application of any art is a delightful spectacle, but the theory too is interesting; and though there is a great deal of the latter without the former I suspect there has never been a genuine success that has not had a latent core of conviction. Discussion, suggestion, formulation, these things are fertilising when they are frank and sincere. Mr. Besant has set an excellent example in saying what he thinks, for his part, about the way in which fiction should be written, as well as about the way in which it should be published; for his view

of the 'art,' carried on into an appendix, covers that too. Other labourers in the same field will doubtless take up the argument, they will give it the light of their experience, and the effect will surely be to make our interest in the novel a little more what it had for some time threatened to fail to be—a serious, active, inquiring interest, under protection of which this delightful study may, in moments of confidence, venture to say a little more what it thinks of itself.

It must take itself seriously for the public to take it so. The old superstition about fiction being 'wicked' has doubtless died out in England; but the spirit of it lingers in a certain oblique regard directed toward any story which does not more or less admit that it is only a joke. Even the most jocular novel feels in some degree the weight of the proscription that was formerly directed against literary levity: the jocularity does not always succeed in passing for orthodoxy. It is still expected, though perhaps people are ashamed to say it, that a production which is after all only a 'make-believe' (for what else is a 'story'?) shall be in some degree apologetic—shall renounce the pretension of attempting really to represent life. This, of course, any sensible, wide-awake story declines to do, for it quickly perceives that the tolerance granted to it on such a condition is only an attempt to stifle it disguised in the form of generosity. The old evangelical hostility to the novel, which was as explicit as it was narrow, and which regarded it as little less favourable to our immortal part than a stage-play, was in reality far less insulting. The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life. When it relinquishes this attempt, the same attempt that we see on the canvas of the painter, it will have arrived at a very strange pass. It is not expected of the picture that it will make itself humble in order to be forgiven; and the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete. Their inspiration is the same, their process (allowing for the different quality of the vehicle) is the same, their success is the same. They may learn from each other, they may explain and sustain each other. Their cause is the same, and the honour of one is the honour of another. The Mahometans think a picture an unholy thing, but it is a long time since any Christian did, and it is therefore the more odd that in the Christian mind the traces (dissimulated though they may be) of a suspicion of the sister art should linger to this day. The only effectual way to lay it to rest is to emphasise the analogy to which I just alluded—to insist on the fact that as the picture is reality, so the novel is history. That is the only general description (which does it justice) that we may give of the novel. But history also is allowed to represent life; it is not, any more than painting, expected to apologise. The subject-matter of fiction is stored up likewise in documents and records, and if it will not give itself away, as they say in California, it must speak with assurance, with the tone of the historian. Certain accomplished novelists have a habit of giving themselves away which must often bring tears to the eyes of people who take their fiction seriously. I was lately struck, in reading over many pages of Anthony Trollope, with his want of discretion in this particular. In a digression, a parenthesis or an aside, he concedes to the reader that he and this trusting friend are only 'making believe.' He admits that the events he narrates have not really happened, and that he can give his narrative any turn the reader may like best. Such a betrayal of a sacred office seems to me, I confess, a terrible crime; it is what I mean by the attitude of apology, and it shocks me every whit as much in Trollope as it would have shocked me in Gibbon or Macaulay. It implies that the novelist is less occupied in looking for the truth (the truth, of course I mean, that he assumes, the premises that we must grant him, whatever they may be), than the historian, and in doing so it deprives him at a stroke of all his standing-room. To represent and illustrate the past, the actions of men, is the task of either writer, and the only difference that I can see is, in proportion as he succeeds, to the honour of the novelist, consisting as it does in his having more difficulty in collecting his evidence, which is so far from being purely literary. It seems to me to give him a great character, the fact that he has at once so much in common with the philosopher and the painter; this double analogy is a magnificent heritage.

It is of all this evidently that Mr. Besant is full when he insists upon the fact that

fiction is one of the *fine* arts, deserving in its turn of all the honours and emoluments that have hitherto been reserved for the successful profession of music, poetry, painting, architecture. It is impossible to insist too much on so important a truth, and the place that Mr. Besant demands for the work of the novelist may be represented, a trifle less abstractly, by saying that he demands not only that it shall be reputed artistic, but that it shall be reputed very artistic indeed. It is excellent that he should have struck this note, for his doing so indicates that there was need of it, that his proposition may be to many people a novelty. One rubs one's eyes at the thought; but the rest of Mr. Besant's essay confirms the revelation. I suspect in truth that it would be possible to confirm it still further, and that one would not be far wrong in saying that in addition to the people to whom it has never occurred that a novel ought to be artistic, there are a great many others who, if this principle were urged upon them, would be filled with an indefinable mistrust. They would find it difficult to explain their repugnance, but it would operate strongly to put them on their guard. 'Art,' in our Protestant communities, where so many things have got so strangely twisted about, is supposed in certain circles to have some vaguely injurious effect upon those who make it an important consideration, who let it weigh in the balance. It is assumed to be opposed in some mysterious manner to morality, to amusement, to instruction. When it is embodied in the work of the painter (the sculptor is another affair!) you know what it is: it stands there before you, in the honesty of pink and green and a gilt frame; you can see the worst of it at a glance, and you can be on your guard. But when it is introduced into literature it becomes more insidious—there is danger of its hurting you before you know it. Literature should be either instructive or amusing, and there is in many minds an impression that these artistic preoccupations, the search for form, contribute to neither end, interfere indeed with both. They are too frivolous to be edifying, and too serious to be diverting; and they are moreover priggish and paradoxical and superfluous. That, I think, represents the manner in which the latent thought of many people who read novels as an exercise in skipping would explain itself if it were to become articulate. They would argue, of course, that a novel ought to be 'good,' but they would interpret this term in a fashion of their own, which indeed would vary considerably from one critic to another. One would say that being good means representing virtuous and aspiring characters, placed in prominent positions; another would say that it depends on a 'happy ending,' on a distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs, and cheerful remarks. Another still would say that it means being full of incident and movement, so that we shall wish to jump ahead, to see who was the mysterious stranger, and if the stolen will was ever found, and shall not be distracted from this pleasure by any tiresome analysis or 'description.' But they would all agree that the 'artistic' idea would spoil some of their fun. One would hold it accountable for all the description, another would see it revealed in the absence of sympathy. Its hostility to a happy ending would be evident, and it might even in some cases render any ending at all impossible. The 'ending' of a novel is, for many persons, like that of a good dinner, a course of desert and ices, and the artist in fiction is regarded as a sort of meddlesome doctor who forbids agreeable aftertastes. It is therefore true that this conception of Mr. Besant's of the novel as a superior form encounters not only a negative but a positive indifference. It matters little that as a work of art it should really be as little or as much of its essence to supply happy endings, sympathetic characters, and an objective tone, as if it were a work of mechanics: the association of ideas, however incongruous, might easily be too much for it if an eloquent voice were not sometimes raised to call attention to the fact that it is at once as free and as serious a branch of literature as any other.

Certainly this might sometimes be doubted in presence of the enormous number of works of fiction that appeal to the credulity of our generation, for it might easily seem that there could be no great character in a commodity so quickly and easily produced. It must be admitted that good novels are much compromised by bad ones, and that the field at large suffers discredit from overcrowding. I think, however,

that this injury is only superficial, and that the superabundance of written fiction proves nothing against the principle itself. It has been vulgarised, like all other kinds of literature, like everything else to-day, and it has proved more than some kinds accessible to vulgarisation. But there is as much difference as there ever was between a good novel and a bad one: the bad is swept with all the daubed canvases and spoiled marble into some unvisited limbo, or infinite rubbish-yard beneath the back-windows of the world, and the good subsists and emits its light and stimulates our desire for perfection. As I shall take the liberty of making but a single criticism of Mr. Besant, whose tone is so full of the love of his art, I may as well have done with it at once. He seems to me to mistake in attempting to say so definitely beforehand what sort of an affair the good novel will be. To indicate the danger of such an error as that has been the purpose of these few pages; to suggest that certain traditions on the subject, applied *a priori*, have already had much to answer for, and that the good health of an art which undertakes so immediately to reproduce life must demand that it be perfectly free. It lives upon exercise, and the very meaning of exercise is freedom. The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel, without incurring the accusation of being arbitrary, is that it be interesting. That general responsibility rests upon it, but it is the only one I can think of. The ways in which it is at liberty to accomplish this result (of interesting us) strike me as innumerable, and such as can only suffer from being marked out or fenced in by prescription. They are as various as the temperament of man, and they are successful in proportion as they reveal a particular mind, different from others. A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and say. The tracing of a line to be followed, of a tone to be taken, of a form to be filled out, is a limitation of that freedom and a suppression of the very thing that we are most curious about. The form, it seems to me, is to be appreciated after the fact: then the author's choice has been made, his standard has been indicated; then we can follow lines and directions and compare tones and resemblances. Then in a word we can enjoy one of the most charming of pleasures, we can estimate quality, we can apply the test of execution. The execution belongs to the author alone; it is what is most personal to him, and we measure him by that. The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist, is that there is no limit to what he may attempt as an executant—no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries, successes. Here it is especially that he works, step by step, like his brother of the brush, of whom we may always say that he has painted his picture in a manner best known to himself. His manner is his secret, not necessarily a jealous one. He cannot disclose it as a general thing if he would; he would be at a loss to teach it to others. I say this with a due recollection of having insisted on the community of method of the artist who paints a picture and the artist who writes a novel. The painter *is* able to teach the rudiments of his practice, and it is possible, from the study of good work (granted the aptitude), both to learn how to paint and to learn how to write. Yet it remains true, without injury to the *rapprochement*, that the literary artist would be obliged to say to his pupil much more than the other, 'Ah, well, you must do it as you can!' It is a question of degree, a matter of delicacy. If there are exact sciences, there are also exact arts, and the grammar of painting is so much more definite that it makes the difference.

I ought to add, however, that if Mr. Besant says at the beginning of his essay that the 'laws of fiction may be laid down and taught with as much precision and exactness as the laws of harmony, perspective, and proportion,' he mitigates what might appear to be an extravagance by applying his remark to 'general' laws, and by expressing most of these rules in a manner with which it would certainly be unaccommodating to disagree. That the novelist must write from his experience, that his 'characters must be real and such as might be met with in actual life;' that 'a young lady brought up in a quiet country village should avoid descriptions of garrison life,'

and 'a writer whose friends and personal experiences belong to the lower middle-class should carefully avoid introducing his characters into society'; that one should enter one's notes in a common-place book; that one's figures should be clear in outline; that making them clear by some trick of speech or of carriage is a bad method, and 'describing them at length' is a worse one; that English Fiction should have a 'conscious moral purpose'; that 'it is almost impossible to estimate too highly the value of careful workmanship—that is, of style'; that 'the most important point of all is the story,' that 'the story is everything': these are principles with most of which it is surely impossible not to sympathise. That remark about the lower middle-class writer and his knowing his place is perhaps rather chilling; but for the rest I should find it difficult to dissent from any one of these recommendations. At the same time, I should find it difficult positively to assent to them, with the exception, perhaps, of the injunction as to entering one's notes in a common-place book. They scarcely seem to me to have the quality that Mr. Besant attributes to the rules of the novelist —the 'precision and exactness' of 'the laws of harmony, perspective, and proportion.' They are suggestive, they are even inspiring, but they are not exact, though they are doubtless as much so as the case admits of: which is a proof of that liberty of interpretation for which I just contended. For the value of these different injunctions—so beautiful and so vague—is wholly in the meaning one attaches to them. The characters, the situation, which strike one as real will be those that touch and interest one most, but the measure of reality is very difficult to fix. The reality of Don Quixote or of Mr. Micawber is a very delicate shade; it is a reality so coloured by the author's vision that, vivid as it may be, one would hesitate to propose it as a model: one would expose one's self to some very embarrassing questions on the part of a pupil. It goes without saying that you will not write a good novel unless you possess the sense of reality; but it will be difficult to give you a recipe for calling that sense into being. Humanity is immense, and reality has a myriad forms; the most one can affirm is that some of the flowers of fiction have the odour of it, and others have not; as for telling you in advance how your nosegay should be composed, that is another affair. It is equally excellent and inconclusive to say that one must write from experience; to our supposititious aspirant such a declaration might savour of mockery. What kind of experience is intended, and where does it begin and end? Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spiderweb of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations. The young lady living in a village has only to be a damsel upon whom nothing is lost to make it quite unfair (as it seems to me) to declare to her that she shall have nothing to say about the military. Greater miracles have been seen than that, imagination assisting, she should speak the truth about some of these gentlemen. I remember an English novelist, a woman of genius, telling me that she was much commended for the impression she had managed to give in one of her tales of the nature and way of life of the French Protestant youth. She had been asked where she learned so much about this recondite being, she had been congratulated on her peculiar opportunities. These opportunities consisted in her having once, in Paris, as she ascended a staircase, passed an open door where, in the household of a *pasteur*, some of the young Protestants were seated at table round a finished meal. The glimpse made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience. She had got her direct personal impression, and she turned out her type. She knew what youth was, and what Protestantism; she also had the advantage of having seen what it was to be French, so that she converted these ideas into a concrete image and produced a reality. Above all, however, she was blessed with the faculty which when you give it an inch takes an ell, and which for the artist is a much greater source of strength than any accident of residence or of place in the social scale. The power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the

implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it—this cluster of gifts may almost be said to constitute experience, and they occur in country and in town, and in the most differing stages of education. If experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions *are* experience, just as (have we not seen it?) they are the very air we breathe. Therefore, if I should certainly say to a novice, 'Write from experience and experience only,' I should feel that this was rather a tantalising monition if I were not careful immediately to add, 'Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost!'

I am far from intending by this to minimise the importance of exactness—of truth of detail. One can speak best from one's own taste, and I may therefore venture to say that the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel—the merit on which all its other merits (including that conscious moral purpose of which Mr. Besant speaks) helplessly and submissively depend. If it be not there they are all as nothing, and if these be there, they owe their effect to the success with which the author has produced the illusion of life. The cultivation of this success, the study of this exquisite process, form, to my taste, the beginning and the end of the art of the novelist. They are his inspiration, his despair, his reward, his torment, his delight. It is here in very truth that he competes with life; it is here that he competes with his brother the painter in *his* attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the colour, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle. It is in regard to this that Mr. Besant is well inspired when he bids him take notes. He cannot possibly take too many, he cannot possibly take enough. All life solicits him, and to 'render' the simplest surface, to produce the most momentary illusion, is a very complicated business. His case would be easier, and the rule would be more exact, if Mr. Besant had been able to tell him what notes to take. But this, I fear, he can never learn in any manual; it is the business of his life. He has to take a great many in order to select a few, he has to work them up as he can, and even the guides and philosophers who might have most to say to him must leave him alone when it comes to the application of precepts, as we leave the painter in communion with his palette. That his characters 'must be clear in outline,' as Mr. Besant says—he feels that down to his boots; but how he shall make them so is a secret between his good angel and himself. It would be absurdly simple if he could be taught that a great deal of 'description' would make them so, or that on the contrary the absence of description and the cultivation of dialogue, or the absence of dialogue and the multiplication of 'incident,' would rescue him from his difficulties. Nothing, for instance, is more possible than that he be of a turn of mind for which this odd, literal opposition of description and dialogue, incident and description, has little meaning and light. People often talk of these things as if they had a kind of internecine distinctness, instead of melting into each other at every breath, and being intimately associated parts of one general effort of expression. I cannot imagine composition existing in a series of blocks, nor conceive, in any novel worth discussing at all, of a passage of description that is not in its intention narrative, a passage of dialogue that is not in its intention descriptive, a touch of truth of any sort that does not partake of the nature of incident, or an incident that derives its interest from any other source than the general and only source of the success of a work of art—that of being illustrative. A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts. The critic who over the close texture of a finished work shall pretend to trace a geography of items will mark some frontiers as artificial, I fear, as any that have been known to history. There is an old-fashioned distinction between the novel of character and the novel of incident which must have cost many a smile to the intending fabulist who was keen about his work. It appears to me as little to the point as the equally celebrated distinction between the novel and the romance—to answer as little to any reality. There are bad novels and good novels, as there are bad pictures and good pictures;

but that is the only distinction in which I see any meaning, and I can as little imagine speaking of a novel of character as I can imagine speaking of a picture of character. When one says picture one says of character, when one says novel one says of incident, and the terms may be transposed at will. What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is either a picture or a novel that is *not* of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it? It is an incident for a woman to stand up with her hand resting on a table and look out at you in a certain way; or if it be not an incident I think it will be hard to say what it is. At the same time it is an expression of character. If you say you don't see it (character in *that —allons donc!*), this is exactly what the artist who has reasons of his own for thinking he *does* see it undertakes to show you. When a young man makes up his mind that he has not faith enough after all to enter the church as he intended, that is an incident, though you may not hurry to the end of the chapter to see whether perhaps he doesn't change once more. I do not say that these are extraordinary or startling incidents. I do not pretend to estimate the degree of interest proceeding from them, for this will depend upon the skill of the painter. It sounds almost puerile to say that some incidents are intrinsically much more important than others, and I need not take this precaution after having professed my sympathy for the major ones in remarking that the only classification of the novel that I can understand is into that which has life and that which has it not.

The novel and the romance, the novel of incident and that of character—these clumsy separations appear to me to have been made by critics and readers for their own convenience, and to help them out of some of their occasional queer predicaments, but to have little reality or interest for the producer, from whose point of view it is of course that we are attempting to consider the art of fiction. The case is the same with another shadowy category which Mr. Besant apparently is disposed to set up—that of the 'modern English novel'; unless indeed it be that in this matter he has fallen into an accidental confusion of standpoints. It is not quite clear whether he intends the remarks in which he alludes to it to be didactic or historical. It is as difficult to suppose a person intending to write a modern English as to suppose him writing an ancient English novel: that is a label which begs the question. One writes the novel, one paints the picture, of one's language and of one's time, and calling it modern English will not, alas! make the difficult task any easier. No more, unfortunately, will calling this or that work of one's fellow-artist a romance—unless it be, of course, simply for the pleasantness of the thing, as for instance when Hawthorne gave this heading to his story of *Blithedale*. The French, who have brought the theory of fiction to remarkable completeness, have but one name for the novel, and have not attempted smaller things in it, that I can see, for that. I can think of no obligation to which the 'romancer' would not be held equally with the novelist; the standard of execution is equally high for each. Of course it is of execution that we are talking—that being the only point of a novel that is open to contention. This is perhaps too often lost sight of, only to produce interminable confusions and cross-purposes. We must grant the artist his subject, his idea, his *donnée:* our criticism is applied only to what he makes of it. Naturally I do not mean that we are bound to like it or find it interesting: in case we do not our course is perfectly simple—to let it alone. We may believe that of a certain idea even the most sincere novelist can make nothing at all, and the event may perfectly justify our belief; but the failure will have been a failure to execute, and it is in the execution that the fatal weakness is recorded. If we pretend to respect the artist at all, we must allow him his freedom of choice, in the face, in particular cases, of innumerable presumptions that the choice will not fructify. Art derives a considerable part of its beneficial exercise from flying in the face of presumptions, and some of the most interesting experiments of which it is capable are hidden in the bosom of common things. Gustave Flaubert has written a story about the devotion of a servant-girl to a parrot, and the production, highly finished as it is, cannot on the whole be called a success. We are perfectly free to find it flat, but I think it might have been interesting; and I, for my part, am extremely glad

he should have written it; it is a contribution to our knowledge of what can be done —or what cannot. Ivan Turgénieff has written a tale about a deaf and dumb serf and a lap-dog, and the thing is touching, loving, a little masterpiece. He struck the note of life where Gustave Flaubert missed it—he flew in the face of a presumption and achieved a victory.

Nothing, of course, will ever take the place of the good old fashion of 'liking' a work of art or not liking it: the most improved criticism will not abolish that primitive, that ultimate test. I mention this to guard myself from the accusation of intimating that the idea, the subject, of a novel or a picture, does not matter. It matters, to my sense, in the highest degree, and if I might put up a prayer it would be that artists should select none but the richest. Some, as I have already hastened to admit, are much more remunerative than others, and it would be a world happily arranged in which persons intending to treat them should be exempt from confusions and mistakes. This fortunate condition will arrive only, I fear, on the same day that critics become purged from error. Meanwhile, I repeat, we do not judge the artist with fairness unless we say to him, 'Oh, I grant you your starting-point, because if I did not I should seem to prescribe to you, and heaven forbid I should take that responsibility. If I pretend to tell you what you must not take, you will call upon me to tell you then what you must take; in which case I shall be prettily caught. Moreover, it isn't till I have accepted your data that I can begin to measure you. I have the standard, the pitch; I have no right to tamper with your flute and then criticise your music. Of course I may not care for your idea at all; I may think it silly, or stale, or unclean; in which case I wash my hands of you altogether. I may content myself with believing that you will not have succeeded in being interesting, but I shall, of course, not attempt to demonstrate it, and you will be as indifferent to me as I am to you. I needn't remind you that there are all sorts of tastes: who can know it better? Some people, for excellent reasons, don't like to read about carpenters; others, for reasons even better, don't like to read about courtesans. Many object to Americans. Others (I believe they are mainly editors and publishers) won't look at Italians. Some readers don't like quiet subjects; others don't like bustling ones. Some enjoy a complete illusion, others the consciousness of large concessions. They choose their novels accordingly, and if they don't care about your idea they won't, *a fortiori*, care about your treatment.'

So that it comes back very quickly, as I have said, to the liking: in spite of M. Zola, who reasons less powerfully than he represents, and who will not reconcile himself to this absoluteness of taste, thinking that there are certain things that people ought to like, and that they can be made to like. I am quite at a loss to imagine anything (at any rate in this matter of fiction) that people *ought* to like or to dislike. Selection will be sure to take care of itself, for it has a constant motive behind it. That motive is simply experience. As people feel life, so they will feel the art that is most closely related to it. This closeness of relation is what we should never forget in talking of the effort of the novel. Many people speak of it as a factitious, artificial form, a product of ingenuity, the business of which is to alter and arrange the things that surround us, to translate them into conventional, traditional moulds. This, however, is a view of the matter which carries us but a very short way, condemns the art to an eternal repetition of a few familiar *clichés*, cuts short its development, and leads us straight up to a dead wall. Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps Fiction upon her feet. In proportion as in what she offers us we see life *without* rearrangement do we feel that we are touching the truth; in proportion as we see it *with* rearrangement do we feel that we are being put off with a substitute, a compromise and convention. It is not uncommon to hear an extraordinary assurance of remark in regard to this matter of rearranging, which is often spoken of as if it were the last word of art. Mr. Besant seems to me in danger of falling into the great error with his rather unguarded talk about 'selection.' Art is essentially selection, but it is a selection whose main care is to be typical, to be inclusive. For many people art means rose-coloured window-panes, and selection means picking a bouquet for Mrs. Grundy. They will tell

you glibly that artistic considerations have nothing to do with the disagreeable, with the ugly; they will rattle off shallow commonplaces about the province of art and the limits of art till you are moved to some wonder in return as to the province and the limits of ignorance. It appears to me that no one can ever have made a seriously artistic attempt without becoming conscious of an immense increase—a kind of revelation—of freedom. One perceives in that case—by the light of a heavenly ray—that the province of art is all life, all feeling, all observation, all vision. As Mr. Besant so justly intimates, it is all experience. That is a sufficient answer to those who maintain that it must not touch the sad things of life, who stick into its divine unconscious bosom little prohibitory inscriptions on the end of sticks such as we see in public gardens—'It is forbidden to walk on the grass; it is forbidden to touch the flowers; it is not allowed to introduce dogs or to remain after dark; it is requested to keep to the right.' The young aspirant in the line of fiction whom we continue to imagine will do nothing without taste, for in that case his freedom would be of little use to him; but the first advantage of his taste will be to reveal to him the absurdity of the little sticks and tickets. If he have taste, I must add, of course he will have ingenuity, and my disrespectful reference to that quality just now was not meant to imply that it is useless in fiction. But it is only a secondary aid; the first is a capacity for receiving straight impressions.

Mr. Besant has some remarks on the question of 'the story' which I shall not attempt to criticise, though they seem to me to contain a singular ambiguity, because I do not think I understand them. I cannot see what is meant by talking as if there were a part of a novel which is the story and part of it which for mystical reasons is not—unless indeed the distinction be made in a sense in which it is difficult to suppose that any one should attempt to convey anything. 'The story,' if it represents anything, represents the subject, the idea, the *donnée* of the novel; and there is surely no 'school'—Mr. Besant speaks of a school—which urges that a novel should be all treatment and no subject. There must assuredly be something to treat; every school is intimately conscious of that. This sense of the story being the idea, the starting-point, of the novel, is the only one that I see in which it can be spoken of as something different from its organic whole; and since in proportion as the work is successful the idea permeates and penetrates it, informs and animates it, so that every word and every punctuation-point contribute directly to the expression, in that proportion do we lose our sense of the story being a blade which may be drawn more or less out of its sheath. The story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and thread, and I never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the thread without the needle, or the needle without the thread. Mr. Besant is not the only critic who may be observed to have spoken as if there were certain things in life which constitute stories, and certain others which do not. I find the same odd implication in an entertaining article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, devoted, as it happens, to Mr. Besant's lecture. 'The story is the thing!' says this graceful writer, as if with a tone of opposition to some other idea. I should think it was, as every painter who, as the time for 'sending in' his picture looms in the distance, finds himself still in quest of a subject—as every belated artist not fixed about his theme will heartily agree. There are some subjects which speak to us and others which do not, but he would be a clever man who should undertake to give a rule—an index expurgatorius—by which the story and the no-story should be known apart. It is impossible (to me at least) to imagine any such rule which shall not be altogether arbitrary. The writer in the *Pall Mall* opposes the delightful (as I suppose) novel of *Margot la Balafrée* to certain tales in which 'Bostonian nymphs' appear to have 'rejected English dukes for psychological reasons.' I am not acquainted with the romance just designated, and can scarcely forgive the *Pall Mall* critic for not mentioning the name of the author, but the title appears to refer to a lady who may have received a scar in some heroic adventure. I am inconsolable at not being acquainted with this episode, but am utterly at a loss to see why it is a story when the rejection (or acceptance) of a duke is not, and why a reason, psychological or other, is not a subject when a cicatrix is. They are all particles of the multitudinous life with which the novel

deals, and surely no dogma which pretends to make it lawful to touch the one and unlawful to touch the other will stand for a moment on its feet. It is the special picture that must stand or fall, according as it seem to possess truth or to lack it. Mr. Besant does not, to my sense, light up the subject by intimating that a story must, under penalty of not being a story, consist of 'adventures.' Why of adventures more than of green spectacles? He mentions a category of impossible things, and among them he places 'fiction without adventure.' Why without adventure, more than without matrimony, or celibacy, or parturition, or cholera, or hydropathy, or Jansenism? This seems to me to bring the novel back to the hapless little *rôle* of being an artificial, ingenious thing—bring it down from its large, free character of an immense and exquisite correspondence with life. And what *is* adventure, when it comes to that, and by what sign is the listening pupil to recognise it? It is an adventure—an immense one—for me to write this little article; and for a Bostonian nymph to reject an English duke is an adventure only less stirring, I should say, than for an English duke to be rejected by a Bostonian nymph. I see dramas within dramas in that, and innumerable points of view. A psychological reason is, to my imagination, an object adorably pictorial; to catch the tint of its complexion—I feel as if that idea might inspire one to Titianesque efforts. There are few things more exciting to me, in short, than a psychological reason, and yet, I protest, the novel seems to me the most magnificent form of art. I have just been reading, at the same time, the delightful story of *Treasure Island*, by Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and, in a manner less consecutive, the last tale from M. Edmond de Goncourt, which is entitled *Chérie*. One of these works treats of murders, mysteries, islands of dreadful renown, hairbreadth escapes, miraculous coincidences and buried doubloons. The other treats of a little French girl who lived in a fine house in Paris, and died of wounded sensibility because no one would marry her. I call *Treasure Island* delightful, because it appears to me to have succeeded wonderfully in what it attempts; and I venture to bestow no epithet upon *Chérie*, which strikes me as having failed deplorably in what it attempts—that is in tracing the development of the moral consciousness of a child. But one of these productions strikes me as exactly as much of a novel as the other, and as having a 'story' quite as much. The moral consciousness of a child is as much a part of life as the islands of the Spanish Main, and the one sort of geography seems to me to have those 'surprises' of which Mr. Besant speaks quite as much as the other. For myself (since it comes back in the last resort, as I say, to the preference of the individual), the picture of the child's experience has the advantage that I can at successive steps (an immense luxury, near to the 'sensual pleasure' of which Mr. Besant's critic in the *Pall Mall* speaks) say Yes or No, as it may be, to what the artist puts before me. I have been a child in fact, but I have been on a quest for a buried treasure only in supposition, and it is a simple accident that with M. de Goncourt I should have for the most part to say No. With George Eliot, when she painted that country with a far other intelligence, I always said Yes.

The most interesting part of Mr. Besant's lecture is unfortunately the briefest passage—his very cursory allusion to the 'conscious moral purpose' of the novel. Here again it is not very clear whether he be recording a fact or laying down a principle; it is a great pity that in the latter case he should not have developed his idea. This branch of the subject is of immense importance, and Mr. Besant's few words point to considerations of the widest reach, not to be lightly disposed of. He will have treated the art of fiction but superficially who is not prepared to go every inch of the way that these considerations will carry him. It is for this reason that at the beginning of these remarks I was careful to notify the reader that my reflections on so large a theme have no pretension to be exhaustive. Like Mr. Besant, I have left the question of the morality of the novel till the last, and at the last I find I have used up my space. It is a question surrounded with difficulties, as witness the very first that meets us, in the form of a definite question, on the threshold. Vagueness, in such a discussion, is fatal, and what is the meaning of your morality and your conscious moral purpose? Will you not define your terms and explain how (a novel being a picture) a picture can be either moral or

immoral? You wish to paint a moral picture or carve a moral statue: will you not tell us how you would set about it? We are discussing the Art of Fiction; questions of art are questions (in the widest sense) of execution; questions of morality are quite another affair, and will you not let us see how it is that you find it so easy to mix them up? These things are so clear to Mr. Besant that he has deduced from them a law which he sees embodied in English Fiction, and which is 'a truly admirable thing and a great cause for congratulation.' It is a great cause for congratulation indeed when such thorny problems become as smooth as silk. I may add that in so far as Mr. Besant perceives that in point of fact English Fiction has addressed itself preponderantly to these delicate questions he will appear to many people to have made a vain discovery. They will have been positively struck, on the contrary, with the moral timidity of the usual English novelist; with his (or with her) aversion to face the difficulties with which on every side the treatment of reality bristles. He is apt to be extremely shy (whereas the picture that Mr. Besant draws is a picture of boldness), and the sign of his work, for the most part, is a cautious silence on certain subjects. In the English novel (by which of course I mean the American as well), more than in any other, there is a traditional difference between that which people know and that which they agree to admit that they know, that which they see and that which they speak of, that which they feel to a part of life and that which they allow to enter into literature. There is the great difference, in short, between what they talk of in conversation and what they talk of in print. The essence of moral energy is to survey the whole field, and I should directly reverse Mr. Besant's remark and say not that the English novel has a purpose, but that it has a diffidence. To what degree a purpose in a work of art is a source of corruption I shall not attempt to inquire; the one that seems to me least dangerous is the purpose of making a perfect work. As for our novel, I may say lastly on this score that as we find it in England to-day it strikes me as addressed in a large degree to 'young people,' and that this in itself constitutes a presumption that it will be rather shy. There are certain things which it is generally agreed not to discuss, not even to mention, before young people. That is very well, but the absence of discussion is not a symptom of the moral passion. The purpose of the English novel —'a truly admirable thing, and a great cause for congratulation'—strikes me therefore as rather negative.

There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. In proportion as that intelligence is fine will the novel, the picture, the statue partake of the substance of beauty and truth. To be constituted of such elements is, to my vision, to have purpose enough. No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind; that seems to me an axiom which, for the artist in fiction, will cover all needful moral ground: if the youthful aspirant take it to heart it will illuminate for him many of the mysteries of 'purpose.' There are many other useful things that might be said to him, but I have come to the end of my article, and can only touch them as I pass. The critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, whom I have already quoted, draws attention to the danger, in speaking of the art of fiction, of generalising. The danger that he has in mind is rather, I imagine, that of particularising, for there are some comprehensive remarks which, in addition to those embodied in Mr. Besant's suggestive lecture, might without fear of misleading him be addressed to the ingenuous student. I should remind him first of the magnificence of the form that is open to him, which offers to sight so few restrictions and such innumerable opportunities. The other arts, in comparison, appear confined and hampered; the various conditions under which they are exercised are so rigid and definite. But the only condition that I can think of attaching to the composition of the novel is, as I have already said, that it be sincere. This freedom is a splendid privilege, and the first lesson of the young novelist is to learn to be worthy of it. 'Enjoy it as it deserves,' I should say to him; 'take possession of it, explore it to its utmost extent, publish it, rejoice in it. All life belongs to you, and do not listen either to those who would shut you up into corners of it and tell you that it is only here and there that art in-

habits, or to those who would persuade you that this heavenly messenger wings her way outside of life altogether, breathing a superfine air, and turning away her head from the truth of things. There is no impression of life, no manner of seeing it and feeling it, to which the plan of the novelist may not offer a place; you have only to remember that talents so dissimilar as those of Alexandre Dumas and Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Gustave Flaubert have worked in this field with equal glory. Do not think too much about optimism and pessimism; try and catch the colour of life itself. In France to-day we see a prodigious effort (that of Emile Zola, to whose solid and serious work no explorer of the capacity of the novel can allude without respect), we see an extraordinary effort, vitiated by a spirit of pessimism on a narrow basis. M. Zola is magnificent, but he strikes an English reader as ignorant; he has an air of working in the dark; if he had as much light as energy, his results would be of the highest value. As for the aberrations of a shallow optimism, the ground (of English fiction especially) is strewn with their brittle particles as with broken glass. If you must indulge in conclusions, let them have the taste of a wide knowledge. Remember that your first duty is to be as complete as possible—to make as perfect a work. Be generous and delicate and pursue the prize.'

1884

CRAPY CORNELIA

THREE times within a quarter of an hour—shifting the while his posture on his chair of contemplation—had he looked at his watch as for its final sharp hint that he should decide, that he should get up. His seat was one of a group fairly sequestered, unoccupied save for his own presence, and from where he lingered he looked off at a stretch of lawn freshened by recent April showers and on which sundry small children were at play. The trees, the shrubs, the plants, every stem and twig just ruffled as by the first touch of the light finger of the relenting year, struck him as standing still in the blest hope of more of the same caress; the quarter about him held its breath after the fashion of the child who waits with the rigour of an open mouth and shut eyes for the promised sensible effect of his having been good. So, in the windless, sun-warmed air of the beautiful afternoon, the Park of the winter's end had struck White-Mason as waiting; even New York, under such an impression, was 'good,' good enough—for *him*; its very sounds were faint, were almost sweet, as they reached him from so seemingly far beyond the wooded horizon that formed the remoter limit of his large shallow glade. The tones of the frolic infants ceased to be nondescript and harsh—were in fact almost as fresh and decent as the frilled and puckered and ribboned garb of the little girls, which had always a way, in those parts, of so portentously flaunting the daughters of the strange native—that is of the overwhelmingly alien—populace at him.

Not that these things in particular were his matter of meditation now; he had wanted, at the end of his walk, to sit apart a little and think—and had been doing that for twenty minutes, even though as yet to no break in the charm of procrastination. But he had looked without seeing and listened without hearing: all that had been positive for him was that he hadn't failed vaguely to feel. He had felt in the first place, and he continued to feel—yes, at forty-eight quite as much as at any point of the supposed reign of younger intensities—the great spirit of the air, the fine sense of the season, the supreme appeal of Nature, he might have said, to his time of life; quite as if she, easy, indulgent, indifferent, cynical Power, were offering him the last chance it would rest with his wit or his blood to embrace. Then with that he had been entertaining, to the point and with the prolonged consequence of accepted immobilization, the certitude that if he did call on Mrs. Worthingham and find her at home he couldn't in justice to himself not put to her the question that had lapsed the other time, the last time, through the irritating and persistent, even if accidental, presence of others. What friends she had—the people who so stupidly, so wantonly stuck! If they *should*, he and she, come to an understanding, that would presumably have to include certain members of her singularly ill-composed circle, in whom it was incredible to him that he should ever take an interest. This defeat, to do himself justice—he had bent rather predominantly

on *that*, you see; ideal justice to *her*, with her possible conception of what it should consist of, being another and quite a different matter—he had had the fact of the Sunday afternoon to thank for; she didn't 'keep' that day for him, since they hadn't, up to now, quite begun to cultivate the appointment or assignation founded on explicit sacrifices. He might at any rate look to find this pleasant practical Wednesday—should he indeed, at his actual rate, stay it before it ebbed—more liberally and intendingly given him.

The sound he at last most wittingly distinguished in his nook was the single deep note of half-past five borne to him from some high-perched public clock. He finally got up with the sense that the time from then on *ought* at least to be felt as sacred to him. At this juncture it was—while he stood there shaking his garments, settling his hat, his necktie, his shirt-cuffs, fixing the high polish of his fine shoes as if for some reflection in it of his straight and spare and grizzled, his refined and trimmed and dressed, his altogether distinguished person, that of a gentleman abundantly settled, but of a bachelor markedly nervous—at this crisis it was, doubtless, that he at once most measured and least resented his predicament. If he should go he would almost to a certainty find her, and if he should find her he would almost to a certainty come to the point. He wouldn't put it off again—there was that high consideration for him of justice at least to himself. He had never yet denied himself anything so apparently fraught with possibilities as the idea of proposing to Mrs. Worthingham—never yet, in other words, denied himself anything he had so distinctly wanted to do; and the results of that wisdom had remained for him precisely the precious parts of experience. Counting only the offers of his honourable hand, these had been on three remembered occasions at least the consequence of an impulse as sharp and a self-respect as reasoned; a self-respect that hadn't in the least suffered, moreover, from the failure of each appeal. He had been met in the three cases—the only one she at all compared with his present case—by the frank confession that he didn't somehow, charming as he was, cause himself to be superstitiously believed in; and the lapse of life, afterward, had cleared up many doubts.

It *wouldn't* have done, he eventually, he lucidly saw, each time he had been refused; and the candour of his nature was such that he could live to think of these very passages as a proof of how right he had been—right, that is, to have put himself forward always, by the happiest instinct, only in impossible conditions. He had the happy consciousness of having exposed the important question to the crucial test, and of having escaped, by that persistent logic, a grave mistake. What better proof of his escape than the fact that he was now free to renew the all-interesting inquiry, and should be exactly, about to do so in different and better conditions? The conditions were better by as much more—as much more of his career and character, of his situation, his reputation he could even have called it, of his knowledge of life, of his somewhat extended means, of his possibly augmented charm, of his certainly improved mind and temper—as was involved in the actual impending settlement. Once he had got into motion, once he had crossed the Park and passed out of it, entering, with very little space to traverse, one of the short new streets that abutted on its east side, his step became that of a man young enough to find confidence, quite to find felicity, in the sense, in almost any sense, of action. He could still enjoy almost anything, absolutely an unpleasant thing, in default of a better, that might still remind him he wasn't so old. The standing newness of everything about him would, it was true, have weakened this cheer by too much presuming on it; Mrs. Worthingham's house, before which he stopped, had that gloss of new money, that glare of a piece fresh from the mint and ringing for the first time on any counter, which seems to claim for it, in any transaction, something more than the 'face' value.

This could but be yet more the case for the impression of the observer introduced and committed. On our friend's part I mean, after his admission and while still in the hall, the sense of the general shining immediacy, of the still unhushed clamour of the shock, was perhaps stronger than he had ever known it. That broke out from every corner as the high pitch of interest, and with a candour that—no, certainly—he had never seen equalled; every particular

expensive object shrieking at him in its artless pride that it had just 'come home.' He met the whole vision with something of the grimace produced on persons without goggles by the passage from a shelter to a blinding light; and if he had—by a perfectly possible chance—been 'snap-shotted' on the spot, would have struck you as showing for his first tribute to the temple of Mrs. Worthingham's charming presence a scowl almost of anguish. He wasn't constitutionally, it may at once be explained for him, a goggled person; and he was condemned, in New York, to this frequent violence of transition—having to reckon with it whenever he went out, as who should say, from himself. The high pitch of interest, to his taste, was the pitch of history, the pitch of acquired and earned suggestion, the pitch of association, in a word; so that he lived by preference, incontestably, if not in a rich gloom, which would have been beyond his means and spirits, at least amid objects and images that confessed to the tone of time.

He had ever felt that an indispensable presence—with a need of it moreover that interfered at no point with his gentle habit, not to say his subtle art, of drawing out what was left him of his youth, of thinly and thriftily spreading the rest of that choicest jam-pot of the cupboard of consciousness over the remainder of a slice of life still possibly thick enough to bear it; or in other words of moving the melancholy limits, the significant signs, constantly a little further on, very much as property-marks or staked boundaries are sometimes stealthily shifted at night. He positively cherished in fact, as against the too inveterate gesture of distressfully guarding his eyeballs—so many New York aspects seemed to keep him at it—an ideal of adjusted appreciation, of courageous curiosity, of fairly letting the world about him, a world of constant breathless renewals and merciless substitutions, make its flaring assault on its own inordinate terms. Newness *was* value in the piece—for the acquisitor, or at least sometimes might be, even though the act of 'blowing' hard, the act marking a heated freshness of arrival, or other form of irruption, could never minister to the peace of those already and long on the field; and this if only because maturer tone was after all most appreciable and most consoling when one staggered back to it, wounded, bleeding, blinded, from the riot of the raw —or, to put the whole experience more prettily, no doubt, from excesses of light.

II

If he went in, however, with something of his more or less inevitable scowl, there were really, at the moment, two rather valid reasons for screened observation; the first of these being that the whole place seemed to reflect as never before the lustre of Mrs. Worthingham's own polished and prosperous little person—to smile, it struck him, with her smile, to twinkle not only with the gleam of her lovely teeth, but with that of all her rings and brooches and bangles and other gewgaws, to curl and spasmodically cluster as in emulation of her charming complicated yellow tresses, to surround the most animated of pink-and-white, of ruffled and ribboned, of frilled and festooned Dresden china shepherdesses with exactly the right system of rococo curves and convolutions and other flourishes, a perfect bower of painted and gilded and moulded conceits. The second ground of this immediate impression of scenic extravagance, almost as if the curtain rose for him to the first act of some small and expensively mounted comic opera, was that she hadn't, after all, awaited him in fond singleness, but had again just a trifle inconsiderately exposed him to the drawback of having to reckon, for whatever design he might amiably entertain, with the presence of a third and quite superfluous person, a small black insignificant but none the less oppressive stranger. It was odd how, on the instant, the little lady engaged with her did affect him as comparatively black—very much as if that had absolutely, in such a medium, to be the graceless appearance of any item not positively of some fresh shade of a light colour or of some pretty pretension to a charming twist. Any witness of their meeting, his hostess should surely have felt, would have been a false note in the whole rosy glow; but what note so false as that of the dingy little presence that she might actually, by a refinement of her perhaps always too visible study of effect, have provided as a positive contrast or foil? whose name and intervention, moreover, she appeared to be no more moved to men-

tion and account for than she might have been to 'present'—whether as stretched at her feet or erect upon disciplined haunches —some shaggy old domesticated terrier or poodle.

Extraordinarily, after he had been in the room five minutes—a space of time during which his fellow-visitor had neither budged nor uttered a sound—he had made Mrs. Worthingham out as all at once perfectly pleased to see him, completely aware of what he had most in mind, and singularly serene in face of his sense of their impediment. It was as if for all the world she didn't take it for one, the immobility, to say nothing of the seeming equanimity, of their tactless companion; at whom meanwhile indeed our friend himself, after his first ruffled perception, no more adventured a look than if advised by his constitutional kindness that to notice her in any degree would perforce be ungraciously to glower. He talked after a fashion with the woman as to whose power to please and amuse and serve him, as to whose really quite organised and indicated fitness for lighting up his autumn afternoon of life his conviction had lately strained itself so clear; but he was all the while carrying on an intenser exchange with his own spirit and trying to read into the charming creature's behaviour, as he could only call it, some confirmation of his theory that she also had her inward flutter and anxiously counted on him. He found support, happily for the conviction just named, in the idea, at no moment as yet really repugnant to him, the idea bound up in fact with the finer essence of her appeal, that she had her own vision too of her quality and her price, and that the last appearance she would have liked to bristle with was that of being forewarned and eager.

He had, if he came to think of it, scarce definitely warned her, and he probably wouldn't have taken to her so consciously in the first instance without an appreciative sense that, as she was a little person of twenty superficial graces, so she was also a little person with her secret pride. She might just have planted her mangy lion—not to say her muzzled house-dog—there in his path as a symbol that she wasn't cheap and easy; which would be a thing he couldn't possibly wish his future wife to have shown herself in advance, even if to him alone. That she could make him put himself such questions was precisely part of the attaching play of her iridescent surface, the shimmering interfusion of her various aspects; that of her youth with her independence—her pecuniary perhaps in particular, that of her vivacity with her beauty, that of her facility above all with her odd novelty; the high modernity, as people appeared to have come to call it, that made her so much more 'knowing' in some directions than even he, man of the world as he certainly was, could pretend to be, though all on a basis of the most unconscious and instinctive and luxurious assumption. She was 'up' to everything, aware of everything—if one counted from a short enough time back (from week before last, say, and as if quantities of history had burst upon the world within the fortnight); she was likewise surprised at nothing, and in that direction one might reckon as far ahead as the rest of her lifetime, or at any rate as the rest of his, which was all that would concern him: it was as if the suitability of the future to her personal and rather pampered tastes was what she most took for granted, so that he could see her, for all her Dresden-china shoes and her flutter of wondrous befrilled contemporary skirts, skip by the side of the coming age as over the floor of a ball-room, keeping step with its monstrous stride and prepared for every figure of the dance.

Her outlook took form to him suddenly as a great square sunny window that hung in assured fashion over the immensity of life. There rose toward it as from a vast swarming *plaza* a high tide of emotion and sound; yet it was at the same time as if even while he looked her light gemmed hand, flashing on him in addition to those other things the perfect polish of the prettiest pink finger-nails in the world, had touched a spring, the most ingenious of recent devices for instant ease, which dropped half across the scene a soft-coloured mechanical blind, a fluttered, fringed awning of charmingly toned silk, such as would make a bath of cool shade for the favoured friend leaning with her there—that is for the happy couple itself—on the balcony. The great view would be the prospect and privilege of the very state he coveted—since didn't he covet it?—the state of being so securely at her

side; while the wash of privacy, as one might count it, the broad fine brush dipped into clear umber and passed, full and wet, straight across the strong scheme of colour, would represent the security itself, all the uplifted inner elegance, the condition, so ideal, of being shut out from nothing and yet of having, so gaily and breezily aloft, none of the burden or worry of anything. Thus, as I say, for our friend, the place itself, while his vivid impression lasted, portentously opened and spread, and what was before him took, to his vision, though indeed at so other a crisis, the form of the 'glimmering square' of the poet; yet, for a still more remarkable fact, with an incongruous object usurping at a given instant the privilege of the frame and seeming, even as he looked, to block the view.

The incongruous object was a woman's head, crowned with a little sparsely feathered black hat, an ornament quite unlike those the women mostly noticed by White-Mason were now 'wearing,' and that grew and grew, that came nearer and nearer, while it met his eyes, after the manner of images in the kinematograph. It had presently loomed so large that he saw nothing else—not only among the things at a considerable distance, the things Mrs. Worthingham would eventually, yet unmistakably, introduce him to, but among those of this lady's various attributes and appurtenances as to which he had been in the very act of cultivating his consciousness. It was in the course of another minute the most extraordinary thing in the world: everything had altered, dropped, darkened, disappeared; his imagination had spread its wings only to feel them flop all grotesquely at its sides as he recognised in his hostess's quiet companion, the oppressive alien who hadn't indeed interfered with his fanciful flight, though she had prevented his immediate declaration and brought about the thud, not to say the felt violent shock, of his fall to earth, the perfectly plain identity of Cornelia Rasch. It was she who had remained there at attention; it was she their companion hadn't introduced; it was she he had forborne to face with his fear of incivility. He stared at her—everything else went.

'Why it has been *you* all this time?'

Miss Rasch fairly turned pale. 'I was waiting to see if you'd know me.'

'Ah, my dear Cornelia'—he came straight out with it—'rather!'

'Well, it isn't,' she returned with a quick change to red now, 'from having taken much time to look at me!'

She smiled, she even laughed, but he could see how she had felt his unconsciousness, poor thing; the acquaintance, quite the friend of his youth, as she had been, the associate of his childhood, of his early manhood, of his middle age in fact, up to a few years back, not more than ten at the most; the associate too of so many of his associates and of almost all of his relations, those of the other time, those who had mainly gone for ever; the person in short whose noted disappearance, though it might have seemed final, had been only of recent seasons. She was present again now, all unexpectedly—he had heard of her having at last, left alone after successive deaths and with scant resources, sought economic salvation in Europe, the promised land of American thrift—she was present as this almost ancient and this oddly unassertive little rotund figure whom one seemed no more obliged to address than if she had been a black satin ottoman 'treated' with buttons and gimp; a class of object as to which the policy of blindness was imperative. He felt the need of some explanatory plea, and before he could think had uttered one at Mrs. Worthingham's expense. 'Why, you see we weren't introduced—!'

'No—but I didn't suppose I should have to be named to you.'

'Well, my dear woman, you haven't—do me that justice!' He could at least make this point. 'I felt all the while—!' However, it would have taken him long to say what he had been feeling; and he was aware now of the pretty projected light of Mrs. Worthingham's wonder. She looked as if, out for a walk with her, he had put her to the inconvenience of his stopping to speak to a strange woman in the street.

'I never supposed you knew her!'—it was to him his hostess excused herself.

This made Miss Rasch spring up, distinctly flushed, distinctly strange to behold, but not vulgarly nettled—Cornelia was incapable of that; only rather funnily bridling and laughing, only showing that this was all she had waited for, only saying just the right thing, the thing she could make so

clearly a jest. 'Of course if you *had* you'd have presented him.'

Mrs. Worthingham looked while answering at White-Mason. 'I didn't want you to go—which you see you do as soon as he speaks to you. But I never dreamed—!'

'That there was anything between us? Ah, there are no end of things!' He, on his side, though addressing the younger and prettier woman, looked at his fellow-guest; to whom he even continued: 'When did you get back? May I come and see you the very first thing?'

Cornelia gasped and wriggled—she practically giggled; she had lost every atom of her little old, her little young, though always unaccountable prettiness, which used to peep so, on the bare chance of a shot, from behind indefensible features, that it almost made watching her a form of sport. He had heard vaguely of her, it came back to him (for there had been no letters; their later acquaintance, thank goodness, hadn't involved that) as experimenting, for economy, and then as settling, to the same rather dismal end, somewhere in England, at one of those intensely English places, St. Leonards, Cheltenham, Bognor, Dawlish—which, awfully, *was* it?—and she now affected him for all the world as some small squirming, exclaiming, genteelly conversing old maid of a type vaguely associated with the three-volume novels he used to feed on (besides his so often encountering it in 'real life,') during a far-away stay of his own at Brighton. Odder than any element of his ex-gossip's identity itself, however, was the fact that she somehow, with it all, rejoiced his sight. Indeed the supreme oddity was that the manner of her reply to his request for leave to call should have absolutely charmed his attention. She didn't look at him; she only, from under her frumpy, crapy, curiously exotic hat, and with her good little near-sighted insinuating glare, expressed to Mrs. Worthingham, while she answered him, wonderful arch things, the overdone things of a shy woman. 'Yes, you may call—but only when this dear lovely lady has done with you!' The moment after which she had gone.

III

Forty minutes later he was taking his way back from the queer miscarriage of his adventure; taking it, with no conscious positive felicity, through the very spaces that had witnessed shortly before the considerable serenity of his assurance. He had said to himself then, or had as good as said it, that, since he might do perfectly as he liked, it couldn't fail for him that he must soon retrace those steps, humming, to all intents, the first bars of a wedding-march; so beautifully had it cleared up that he was 'going to like' letting Mrs. Worthingham accept him. He was to have hummed no wedding-march, as it seemed to be turning out—he had none, up to now, to hum; and yet, extraordinarily, it wasn't in the least because she had refused him. Why then hadn't he liked as much as he had intended to like it putting the pleasant act, the act of not refusing him, in her power? Could it all have come from the awkward minute of his failure to decide sharply, on Cornelia's departure, whether or no he would attend her to the door? He hadn't decided at all—what the deuce had been in him?—but had danced to and fro in the room, thinking better of each impulse and then thinking worse. He had hesitated like an ass erect on absurd hind legs between two bundles of hay; the upshot of which must have been his giving the falsest impression. In what way that was to be for an instant considered had their common past committed him to crapy Cornelia? He repudiated with a whack on the gravel any ghost of an obligation.

What he could get rid of with scanter success, unfortunately, was the peculiar sharpness of his sense that, though mystified by his visible flurry—and yet not mystified enough for a sympathetic question either—his hostess had been, on the whole, even more frankly diverted: which was precisely an example of that newest, freshest, finest freedom in her, the air and the candour of assuming, not 'heartlessly,' not viciously, not even very consciously, but with a bright pampered confidence which would probably end by affecting one's nerves as the most impertinent stroke in the world, that every blest thing coming up for her in any connection was somehow matter for her general recreation. There she was again with the innocent egotism, the gilded and overflowing anarchism, really, of her doubtless quite unwitting but none the less rabid

modern note. Her grace of ease was perfect, but it was all grace of ease, not a single shred of it grace of uncertainty or of difficulty—which meant, when you came to see, that, for its happy working, not a grain of provision was left by it to mere manners. This was clearly going to be the music of the future—that if people were but rich enough and furnished enough and fed enough, exercised and sanitated and manicured and generally advised and advertised and made 'knowing' enough, *avertis* enough, as the term appeared to be nowadays in Paris, all they had to do for civility was to take the amused ironic view of those who might be less initiated. In *his* time, when he was young or even when he was only but a little less middle-aged, the best manners had been the best kindness, and the best kindness had mostly been some art of not insisting on one's luxurious differences, of concealing rather, for common humanity, if not for common decency, a part at least of the intensity or the ferocity with which one might be 'in the know.'

Oh, the 'know'—Mrs. Worthingham was in it, all instinctively, inevitably, and as a matter of course, up to her eyes; which didn't, however, the least little bit prevent her being as ignorant as a fish of everything that really and intimately and fundamentally concerned *him*, poor dear old White-Mason. She didn't, in the first place, so much as know who he was—by which he meant know who and what it was to *be* a White-Mason, even a poor and a dear and old one, 'anyway.' That indeed—he did her perfect justice—was of the very essence of the newness and freshness and beautiful, brave, social irresponsibility by which she had originally dazzled him: just exactly that circumstance of her having no instinct for any old quality or quantity or identity, a single historic or social value, as he might say, of the New York of his already almost legendary past; and that additional one of his, on his side, having, so far as this went, cultivated blankness, cultivated positive prudence, as to her own personal background—the vagueness, at the best, with which all honest gentlefolk, the New Yorkers of his approved stock and conservative generation, were content, as for the most part they were indubitably wise, to surround the origins and antecedents and queer unimaginable early influences of persons swimming into their ken from those parts of the country that quite necessarily and naturally figured to their view as 'God-forsaken' and generally impossible.

The few scattered surviving representatives of a society once 'good'—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*[1]—were liable, at the pass things had come to, to meet, and even amid old shades once sacred, or what was left of such, every form of social impossibility, and, more irresistibly still, to find these apparitions often carry themselves (often at least in the case of the women) with a wondrous wild gallantry, equally imperturbable and inimitable, the sort of thing that reached its maximum in Mrs. Worthingham. Beyond that who ever wanted to look up their annals, to reconstruct their steps and stages, to dot their i's in fine, or to 'go behind' anything that was theirs? One wouldn't do that for the world—a rudimentary discretion forbade it; and yet this check from elementary undiscussable taste quite consorted with a due respect for them, or at any rate with a due respect for oneself in connection with them; as was just exemplified in what would be his own, what would be poor dear old White-Mason's, insurmountable aversion to having, on any pretext, the doubtless very queer spectre of the late Mr. Worthingham presented to him. No question had he asked, or would he ever ask, should his life—that is should the success of his courtship—even intimately depend on it, either about that obscure agent of his mistress's actual affluence or about the happy head-spring itself, and the apparently copious tributaries, of the golden stream.

From all which marked anomalies, at any rate, what was the moral to draw? He dropped into a Park chair again with that question, he lost himself in the wonder of why he had come away with his homage so very much unpaid. Yet it didn't seem at all, actually, as if he could say or conclude, as if he could do anything but keep on worrying—just in conformity with his being a person who, whether or no familiar with the need to make his conduct square with his conscience and his taste, was never wholly exempt from that of making his taste and his conscience square with his conduct. To this

1 'A few scattered men swimming in the deep.'

latter occupation he further abandoned himself, and it didn't release him from his second brooding session till the sweet spring sunset had begun to gather and he had more or less cleared up, in the deepening dusk, the effective relation between the various parts of his ridiculously agitating experience. There were vital facts he seemed thus to catch, to seize, with a nervous hand, and the twilight helping, by their vaguely whisked tails; unquiet truths that swarmed out after the fashion of creatures bold only at eventide, creatures that hovered and circled, that verily brushed his nose, in spite of their shyness. Yes, he had practically just sat on with his 'mistress'—heaven save the mark!—as if *not* to come to the point; as if it had absolutely come up that there would be something rather vulgar and awful in doing so. The whole stretch of his stay after Cornelia's withdrawal had been consumed by his almost ostentatiously treating himself to the opportunity of which he was to make nothing. It was as if he had sat and watched himself—that came back to him: Shall I now or sha'n't I? Will I now or won't I? 'Say within the next three minutes, say by a quarter past six, or by twenty minutes past, at the furthest—always if nothing more comes up to prevent.'

What had already come up to prevent was, in the strangest and drollest, or at least in the most preposterous, way in the world, that not Cornelia's presence, but her very absence, with its distraction of his thoughts, the thoughts that lumbered after her, had made the difference; and without his being the least able to tell why and how. He put it to himself after a fashion by the image that, this distraction once created, his working round to his hostess again, his reverting to the matter of his errand, began suddenly to represent a return from so far. That was simply all—or rather a little less than all; for something else had contributed. 'I never dreamed you knew her,' and 'I never dreamed *you* did,' were inevitably what had been exchanged between them—supplemented by Mrs. Worthingham's mere scrap of an explanation: 'Oh yes—to the small extent you see. Two years ago in Switzerland when I was at a high place for an "aftercure," during twenty days of incessant rain, she was the only person in an hotel full of roaring, gorging, smoking Germans with whom I could have a word of talk. She and I were the only speakers of English, and were thrown together like castaways on a desert island and in a raging storm. She was ill besides, and she had no maid, and mine looked after her, and she was very grateful—writing to me later on and saying she should certainly come to see me if she ever returned to New York. She *has* returned, you see—and there she was, poor little creature!' Such was Mrs. Worthingham's tribute—to which even his asking her if Miss Rasch had ever happened to speak of him caused her practically to add nothing. Visibly she had never thought again of any one Miss Rasch had spoken of or anything Miss Rasch had said; right as she was, naturally, about her being a little clever queer creature. This was perfectly true, and yet it was probably—by being *all* she could dream of about her—what had paralysed his proper gallantry. Its effect had been not in what it simply stated, but in what, under his secretly disintegrating criticism, it almost luridly symbolised.

He had quitted his seat in the Louis Quinze drawing-room without having, as he would have described it, done anything but give the lady of the scene a superior chance not to betray a defeated hope—not, that is, to fail of the famous 'pride' mostly supposed to prop even the most infatuated women at such junctures; by which chance, to do her justice, she had thoroughly seemed to profit. But he finally rose from his later station with a feeling of better success. He had by a happy turn of his hand got hold of the most precious, the least obscure of the flitting, circling things that brushed his ears. What he wanted—as justifying for him a little further consideration—was there before him from the moment he could put it that Mrs. Worthingham had no data. He almost hugged that word—it suddenly came to mean so much to him. No data, he felt, for a conception of the sort of thing the New York of 'his time' had been in his personal life—the New York so unexpectedly, so vividly and, as he might say, so perversely called back to all his senses by its identity with that of poor Cornelia's time: since even she had had a time, small show as it was likely to make now, and his time and hers had been the same. Cornelia fig-

ured to him while he walked away as, by contrast and opposition, a massive little bundle of data; his impatience to go to see her sharpened as he thought of this: so certainly should he find out that wherever he might touch her, with a gentle though firm pressure, he would, as the fond visitor of old houses taps and fingers a disfeatured, overpapered wall with the conviction of a wainscot-edge beneath, recognise some small extrusion of history.

IV

There would have been a wonder for us meanwhile in his continued use, as it were, of his happy formula—brought out to Cornelia Rasch within ten minutes, or perhaps only within twenty, of his having settled into the quite comfortable chair that, two days later, she indicated to him by her fireside. He had arrived at her address through the fortunate chance of his having noticed her card, as he went out, deposited, in the good old New York fashion, on one of the rococo tables of Mrs. Worthingham's hall. His eye had been caught by the pencilled indication that was to affect him, the next instant, as fairly placed there for his sake. This had really been his luck, for he shouldn't have liked to write to Mrs. Worthingham for guidance—*that* he felt, though too impatient just now to analyse the reluctance. There was nobody else he could have approached for a clue, and with this reflection he was already aware of how it testified to their rare little position, his and Cornelia's—position as conscious, ironic, pathetic survivors together of a dead and buried society—that there would have been, in all the town, under such stress, not a member of their old circle left to turn to. Mrs. Worthingham had practically, even if accidentally, helped him to knowledge; the last nail in the coffin of the poor dear extinct past had been planted for him by his having thus to reach his antique contemporary through perforation of the newest newness. The note of this particular recognition was in fact the more prescribed to him that the ground of Cornelia's return to a scene swept so bare of the associational charm was certainly inconspicuous. What had she then come back for?—he had asked himself that; with the effect of deciding that it probably would have been, a little, to 'look after' her remnant of property. Perhaps she had come to save what little might still remain of that shrivelled interest; perhaps she had been, by those who took care of it for her, further swindled and despoiled, so that she wished to get at the facts. Perhaps on the other hand—it was a more cheerful chance—her investments, decently administered, were making larger returns, so that the rigorous thrift of Bognor could be finally relaxed.

He had little to learn about the attraction of Europe, and rather expected that in the event of his union with Mrs. Worthingham he should find himself pleading for it with the competence of one more in the 'know' about Paris and Rome, about Venice and Florence, than even she could be. He could have lived on in *his* New York, that is in the sentimental, the spiritual, the more or less romantic visitation of it; but had it been positive for him that he could live on in hers?—unless indeed the possibility of this had been just (like the famous *vertige de l'abîme*, like the solicitation of danger, or otherwise of the dreadful) the very hinge of his whole dream. However that might be, his curiosity was occupied rather with the conceivable hinge of poor Cornelia's: it was perhaps thinkable that even Mrs. Worthingham's New York, once it should have become possible again at all, might have put forth to this lone exile a plea that wouldn't be in the chords of Bognor. For himself, after all, too, the attraction had been much more of the Europe over which one might move at one's ease, and which therefore could but cost, and cost much, right and left, than of the Europe adapted to scrimping. He saw himself on the whole scrimping with more zest even in Mrs. Worthingham's New York than under the inspiration of Bognor. Apart from which it was yet again odd, not to say perceptibly pleasing to him, to note where the emphasis of his interest fell in this fumble of fancy over such felt oppositions as the new, the latest, the luridest power of money and the ancient reserves and moderations and mediocrities. These last struck him as showing by contrast the old brown surface and tone as of velvet rubbed and worn, shabby, and even a bit dingy, but all soft and subtle and still velvety—which meant still dignified; whereas the angular facts of current finance

were as harsh and metallic and bewildering as some stacked 'exhibit' of ugly patented inventions, things his mediæval mind forbade his taking in. He had for instance the sense of knowing the pleasant little old Rasch fortune—pleasant as far as it went; blurred memories and impressions of what it had been and what it hadn't, of how it had grown and how languished and how melted; they came back to him and put on such vividness that he could almost have figured himself testify for them before a bland and encouraging Board. The idea of taking the field in any manner on the subject of Mrs. Worthingham's resources would have affected him on the other hand as an odious ordeal, some glare of embarrassment and exposure in a circle of hard unhelpful attention, of converging, derisive, unsuggestive eyes.

In Cornelia's small and quite cynically modern flat—the house had a grotesque name, 'The Gainsborough,' but at least wasn't an awful boarding-house, as he had feared, and she could receive him quite honourably, which was so much to the good—he would have been ready to use at once to her the greatest freedom of friendly allusion: 'Have you still your old "family interest" in those two houses in Seventh Avenue?—one of which was next to a corner grocery, don't you know? and was occupied as to its lower part by a candy-shop where the proportion of the stock of suspectedly stale popcorn to that of rarer and stickier joys betrayed perhaps a modest capital on the part of your father's, your grandfather's, or whoever's tenant, but out of which I nevertheless remember once to have come as out of a bath of sweets, with my very garments, and even the separate hairs of my head, glued together. The other of the pair, a tobacconist's, further down, had before it a wonderful huge Indian who thrust out wooden cigars at an indifferent world—you could buy candy cigars too, at the popcorn shop, and I greatly preferred them to the wooden; I remember well how I used to gape in fascination at the Indian and wonder if the last of the Mohicans was like him; besides admiring so the resources of a family whose "property" was in such forms. I haven't been round there lately—we must go round together; but don't tell me the forms have utterly perished!' It was after *that* fashion he might easily have been moved, and with almost no transition, to break out to Cornelia—quite as if taking up some old talk, some old community of gossip, just where they had left it; even with the consciousness perhaps of overdoing a little, of putting at its maximum, for the present harmony, recovery, recapture (what should he call it?) the pitch and quantity of what the past had held for them.

He didn't in fact, no doubt, dart straight off to Seventh Avenue, there being too many other old things and much nearer and long subsequent; the point was only that for everything they spoke of after he had fairly begun to lean back and stretch his legs, and after she had let him, above all, light the first of a succession of cigarettes—for everything they spoke of he positively cultivated extravagance and excess, piling up the crackling twigs as on the very altar of memory; and that by the end of half an hour she had lent herself, all gallantly, to their game. It was the game of feeding the beautiful iridescent flame, ruddy and green and gold, blue and pink and amber and silver, with anything they could pick up, anything that would burn and flicker. Thick-strown with such gleanings the occasion seemed indeed, in spite of the truth that they perhaps wouldn't have proved, under cross-examination, to have rubbed shoulders in the other life so very hard. Casual contacts, qualified communities enough, there had doubtless been, but not particular 'passages,' nothing that counted, as he might think of it, for their 'very own' together, for nobody's else at all. These shades of historic exactitude didn't signify; the more and the less that there had been made perfect terms—and just by his being there and by her rejoicing in it—with their present need to have *had* all their past could be made to appear to have given them. It was to this tune they proceeded, the least little bit as if they knowingly pretended—he giving her the example and setting her the pace of it, and she, poor dear, after a first inevitable shyness, an uncertainty of wonder, a breathlessness of courage, falling into step and going whatever length he would.

She showed herself ready for it, grasping gladly at the perception of what he must mean; and if she didn't immediately and

completely fall in—not in the first half-hour, not even in the three or four others that his visit, even whenever he consulted his watch, still made nothing of—she yet understood enough as soon as she understood that, if their finer economy hadn't so beautifully served, he might have been conveying this, that, and the other incoherent and easy thing by the comparatively clumsy method of sound and statement. 'No, I never made love to you; it would in fact have been absurd, and I don't care—though I almost know, in the sense of almost remembering!—who did and who didn't; but you were always about, and so was I, and, little as you may yourself care who *I* did it to, I dare say you remember (in the sense of having known of it!) any old appearances that told. But we can't afford at this time of day not to help each other to have had—well, everything there was, since there's no more of it now, nor any way of coming by it *except so*; and therefore let us make together, let us make over and recreate, our lost world; for which we have after all and at the worst such a lot of material. You were in particular my poor dear sisters' friend—they thought you the funniest little brown thing possible; so isn't that again to the good? You were mine only to the extent that you were so much in and out of the house—as how much, if we come to that, wasn't one in and out, south of Thirtieth Street and north of Washington Square, in those days, those spacious, sociable, Arcadian days, that we flattered ourselves we filled with the modern fever, but that were so different from any of these arrangements of pretended hourly Time that dash themselves forever to pieces as from the fiftieth floors of sky-scrapers.'

This was the kind of thing that was in the air, whether he said it or not, and that could hang there even with such quite other things as more crudely came out; came in spite of its being perhaps calculated to strike us that these last would have been rather and most the unspoken and the indirect. They were Cornelia's contribution, and as soon as she had begun to talk of Mrs. Worthingham—*he* didn't begin it!—they had taken their place bravely in the centre of the circle. There they made, the while, their considerable little figure, but all within the ring formed by fifty other allusions, fitful but really intenser irruptions that hovered and wavered and came and went, joining hands at moments and whirling round as in chorus, only then again to dash at the slightly huddled centre with a free twitch or peck or push or other taken liberty, after the fashion of irregular frolic motions in a country dance or a Christmas game.

'You're so in love with her and want to marry her!'—she said it all sympathetically and yearningly, poor crapy Cornelia; as if it were to be quite taken for granted that she knew all about it. And then when he had asked how she knew—why she took so informed a tone about it; all on the wonder of her seeming so much more 'in' it just at that hour than he himself quite felt he could figure for: 'Ah, how but from the dear lovely thing herself? Don't you suppose *she* knows it?'

'Oh, she absolutely "knows" it, does she?'—he fairly heard himself ask that; and with the oddest sense at once of sharply wanting the certitude and yet of seeing the question, of hearing himself say the words, through several thicknesses of some wrong medium. He came back to it from a distance; as he would have had to come back (this was again vivid to him) should he have got round again to his ripe intention three days before—after his now present but then absent friend, that is, had left him planted before his now absent but then present one for the purpose. 'Do you mean she—at all confidently!—expects?' he went on, not much minding if it couldn't but sound foolish; the time being given it for him meanwhile by the sigh, the wondering gasp, all charged with the unutterable, that the tone of his appeal set in motion. He saw his companion look at him, but it might have been with the eyes of thirty years ago; when—very likely!—he had put her some such question about some girl long since dead. Dimly at first, then more distinctly, didn't it surge back on him for the very strangeness that there had been some such passage as this between them—yes, about Mary Cardew!—in the autumn of '68?

'Why, don't you realise your situation?' Miss Rasch struck him as quite beautifully wailing—above all to such an effect of deep interest, that is, on her own part and in him.

'My situation?'—he echoed, he considered; but reminded afresh, by the note of

the detached, the far-projected in it, of what he had last remembered of his sentient state on his once taking ether at the dentist's.

'Yours and hers—the situation of her adoring you. I suppose you at least know it,' Cornelia smiled.

Yes, it was like the other time and yet it wasn't. *She* was like—poor Cornelia was—everything that used to be; that somehow was most definite to him. Still he could quite reply 'Do you call it—her adoring me —*my* situation?'

'Well, it's a part of yours, surely—if you're in love with her.'

'Am I, ridiculous old person! in love with her?' White-Mason asked.

'I may be a ridiculous old person,' Cornelia returned—'and, for that matter, of course I am! But she's young and lovely and rich and clever: so what could be more natural?'

'Oh, I was applying that opprobrious epithet—!' He didn't finish, though he meant he had applied it to himself. He had got up from his seat; he turned about and, taking in, as his eyes also roamed, several objects in the room, serene and sturdy, not a bit cheap-looking, little old New York objects of '68, he made, with an inner art, as if to recognise them—made so, that is, for himself; had quite the sense for the moment of asking them, of imploring them, to recognise *him*, to be for him things of his own past. Which they truly were, he could have the next instant cried out; for it meant that if three or four of them, small sallow carte-de-visite photographs, faithfully framed but spectrally faded, hadn't in every particular, frames and balloon skirts and false 'property' balustrades of unimaginable terraces and all, the tone of time, the secret for warding and easing off the perpetual imminent ache of one's protective scowl, one would verily but have to let the scowl stiffen, or to take up seriously the question of blue goggles, during what might remain of life.

V

What he actually took up from a little old Twelfth-Street table that piously preserved the plain mahogany circle, with never a curl nor a crook nor a hint of a brazen flourish, what he paused there a moment for commerce with, his back presented to crapy Cornelia, who sat taking that view of him, during this opportunity, very protrusively and frankly and fondly, was one of the wasted mementos just mentioned, over which he both uttered and suppressed a small comprehensive cry. He stood there another minute to look at it, and when he turned about still kept it in his hand, only holding it now a little behind him. 'You *must* have come back to stay—with all your beautiful things. What else does it mean?'

' "Beautiful?" ' his old friend commented with her brow all wrinkled and her lips thrust out in expressive dispraise. They might at that rate have been scarce more beautiful than she herself. 'Oh, don't talk so —after Mrs. Worthingham's! *They're* wonderful, if you will: such things, such things! But one's own poor relics and odds and ends are one's own at least; and one *has*—yes —come back to them. They're all I have in the world to come back to. They were stored, and what I was paying—!' Miss Rasch woefully added.

He had possession of the small old picture; he hovered there; he put his eyes again to it intently; then again held it a little behind him as if it might have been snatched away or the very feel of it, pressed against him, was good to his palm. 'Mrs. Worthingham's things? You think them beautiful?'

Cornelia did now, if ever, show an odd face. 'Why certainly prodigious, or whatever. Isn't that conceded?'

'No doubt every horror, at the pass we've come to, is conceded. That's just what I complain of.'

'Do you *complain*?'—she drew it out as for surprise: she couldn't have imagined such a thing.

'To me her things are awful. They're the newest of the new.'

'Ah, but the old forms!'

'Those are the most blatant. I mean the swaggering reproductions.'

'Oh but,' she pleaded, 'we can't all be *really* old.'

'No, we can't, Cornelia. But *you* can—!' said White-Mason with the frankest appreciation.

She looked up at him from where she sat as he could imagine her looking up at the curate at Bognor. 'Thank you, sir! If that's all you want—!'

'It *is*,' he said, 'all I want—or almost.'

'Then no wonder such a creature as that,' she lightly moralised, 'won't suit you!'

He bent upon her, for all the weight of his question, his smoothest stare. 'You hold she certainly won't suit me?'

'Why, what can I tell about it? Haven't you by this time found out?'

'No, but I think I'm finding.' With which he began again to explore.

Miss Rasch immensely wondered. 'You mean you don't expect to come to an understanding with her?' And then as even to this straight challenge he made at first no answer: 'Do you mean you give it up?'

He waited some instants more, but not meeting her eyes—only looking again about the room. 'What do you think of my chance?'

'Oh,' his companion cried, 'what has what I think to do with it? How can I think anything but that she must like you?'

'Yes—of course. But how much?'

'Then don't you really know?' Cornelia asked.

He kept up his walk, oddly preoccupied and still not looking at her. 'Do you, my dear?'

She waited a little. 'If you haven't really put it to her I don't suppose she knows.'

This at last arrested him again. 'My dear Cornelia, she doesn't know—!'

He had paused as for the desperate tone, or at least the large emphasis of it, so that she took him up. 'The more reason then to help her to find it out.'

'I mean,' he explained, 'that she doesn't know anything.'

'Anything?'

'Anything else, I mean—even if she does know *that*.'

Cornelia considered of it. 'But what else need she—in particular—know? Isn't that the principal thing?'

'Well'—and he resumed his circuit—'she doesn't know anything that *we* know. But nothing,' he re-emphasised—'nothing whatever!'

'Well, can't she do without that?'

'Evidently she can—and evidently she does, beautifully. But the question is whether *I* can!'

He had paused once more with his point—but she glared, poor Cornelia, with her wonder. 'Surely if you know for yourself—!'

'Ah, it doesn't seem enough for me to know for myself! One wants a woman,' he argued—but still, in his prolonged tour, quite without his scowl—'to know *for* one, to know *with* one. That's what you do now,' he candidly put to her.

It made her again gape. 'Do you mean you want to marry *me*?'

He was so full of what he did mean, however, that he failed even to notice it. 'She doesn't in the least know, for instance, how old I am.'

'That's because you're so young!'

'Ah, there you are!'—and he turned off afresh and as if almost in disgust. It left her visibly perplexed—though even the perplexed Cornelia was still the exceedingly pointed; but he had come to her aid after another turn. 'Remember, please, that I'm pretty well as old as you.'

She had all her point at least, while she bridled and blinked, for this. 'You're exactly a year and ten months older.'

It checked him there for delight. 'You remember my birthday?'

She twinkled indeed like some far-off light of home. 'I remember every one's. It's a little way I've always had—and that I've never lost.'

He looked at her accomplishment, across the room, as at some striking, some charming phenomenon. 'Well, *that's* the sort of thing I want!' All the ripe candour of his eyes confirmed it.

What could she do therefore, she seemed to ask him, but repeat her question of a moment before?—which indeed presently she made up her mind to. 'Do you want to marry *me*?'

It had this time better success—if the term may be felt in any degree to apply. All his candour, or more of it at least, was in his slow, mild, kind, considering head-shake. 'No, Cornelia—not to *marry* you.'

His discrimination was a wonder; but since she was clearly treating him now as if everything about him was, so she could as exquisitely meet it. 'Not at least,' she convulsively smiled, 'until you've honourably tried Mrs. Worthingham. Don't you really *mean* to?' she gallantly insisted.

He waited again a little; then he brought out: 'I'll tell you presently.' He came back, and as by still another mere glance over the room, to what seemed to him so

much nearer. 'That table *was* old Twelfth-Street?'

'Everything here was.'

'Oh, the pure blessings! With you, ah, with you, I haven't to wear a green shade.' And he had retained meanwhile his small photograph, which he again showed himself. 'Didn't we talk of Mary Cardew?'

'Why, do you remember it?' she marvelled to extravagance.

'You make me. You connect me with it. You connect it with *me*.' He liked to display to her this excellent use she thus had, the service she rendered. 'There are so many connections—there will *be* so many. I feel how, with you, they must all come up again for me: in fact you're bringing them out already, just while I look at you, as fast as ever you can. The fact that you knew every one—!' he went on; yet as if there were more in that too than he could quite trust himself about.

'Yes, I knew every one,' said Cornelia Rasch; but this time with perfect simplicity. 'I knew, I imagine, more than you do —or more than you did.'

It kept him there, it made him wonder with his eyes on her. 'Things about *them*—our people?'

'Our people. Ours only now.'

Ah, such an interest as he felt in this—taking from her while, so far from scowling, he almost gaped, all it might mean! 'Ours indeed—and it's awfully good they are; or that we're still here for them! Nobody else is—nobody but you: not a cat!'

'Well, I *am* a cat!' Cornelia grinned.

'Do you mean you can tell me things—?' It was too beautiful to believe.

'About what really *was*?' she artfully considered, holding him immensely now. 'Well, unless they've come to you with time; unless you've learned—or found out.'

'Oh,' he reassuringly cried—reassuringly, it most seemed, for himself—'nothing has come to me with time, everything has gone from me. How can I find out now! What creature has an idea—?'

She threw up her hands with the shrug of old days—the sharp little shrug his sisters used to imitate and that she hadn't had to go to Europe for. The only thing was that he blessed her for bringing it back. 'Ah, the ideas of people now—!'

'Yes, their ideas are certainly not about *us*.' But he ruefully faced it. 'We've none the less, however, to live with them.'

'With their ideas—?' Cornelia questioned.

'With *them*—these modern wonders; such as they are!' Then he went on: 'It must have been to help me you've come back.'

She said nothing for an instant about that, only nodding instead at his photograph. 'What has become of yours? I mean of *her*.'

This time it made him turn pale. 'You remember I *have* one?'

She kept her eyes on him. 'In a "pork-pie" hat, with her hair in a long net. That was so "smart" then; especially with one's skirt looped up, over one's hooped magenta petticoat, in little festoons, and a row of very big onyx beads over one's braided velveteen sack—braided quite plain and very broad, don't you know?'

He smiled for her extraordinary possession of these things—she was as prompt as if she had had them before her. 'Oh, rather —"don't I know?" You wore brown velveteen, and, on those remarkably small hands, funny gauntlets—like mine.'

'Oh, do *you* remember? But like yours?' she wondered.

'I mean like hers in my photograph.' But he came back to the present picture. 'This is better, however, for really showing her lovely head.'

'Mary's head was a perfection!' Cornelia testified.

'Yes—it was better than her heart.'

'Ah, don't say that!' she pleaded. 'You weren't fair.'

'Don't you think I was fair?' It interested him immensely—and the more that he indeed mightn't have been; which he seemed somehow almost to hope.

'She didn't think so—to the very end.'

'She didn't?'—ah the right things Cornelia said to him! But before she could answer he was studying again closely the small faded face. 'No, she doesn't, she doesn't. Oh, her charming sad eyes and the way they *say* that, across the years, straight into mine! But I don't know, I don't know!' White-Mason quite comfortably sighed.

His companion appeared to appreciate this effect. 'That's just the way you used to flirt with her, poor thing. Wouldn't you like to have it?' she asked.

'This—for my very own?' He looked up delighted. 'I really may?'

'Well, if you'll give me yours. We'll exchange.'

'That's a charming idea. We'll exchange. But you must come and get it at my rooms —where you'll see my things.'

For a little she made no answer—as if for some feeling. Then she said: 'You asked me just now why I've come back.'

He stared as for the connection; after which with a smile: 'Not to do *that*—?'

She waited briefly again, but with a queer little look. 'I can do those things now; and—yes!—that's in a manner why. I came,' she then said, 'because I knew of a sudden one day—knew as never before—that I was old.'

'I see. I see.' He quite understood—she had notes that so struck him. 'And how did you like it?'

She hesitated—she decided. 'Well, if I liked it, it was on the principle perhaps on which some people like high game!'

'High game—that's good!' he laughed. 'Ah, my dear, we're "high"!'

She shook her head. 'No, not you—yet. I at any rate didn't want any more adventures,' Cornelia said.

He showed their small relic again with assurance. 'You wanted *us*. Then here we are. Oh how we can talk!—with all those things you know! You *are* an invention. And you'll see there are things *I* know. I shall turn up here—well, daily.'

She took it in, but only after a moment answered. 'There was something you said just now you'd tell me. Don't you mean to try—?'

'Mrs. Worthingham?' He drew from within his coat his pocket-book and carefully found a place in it for Mary Cardew's carte-de-visite, folding it together with deliberation over which he put it back. Finally he spoke. 'No—I've decided. I can't —I don't want to.'

Cornelia marvelled—or looked as if she did. 'Not for all she has?'

'Yes—I know all she has. But I also know all she hasn't. And, as I told you, she herself doesn't—hasn't a glimmer of a suspicion of it; and never will have.'

Cornelia magnanimously thought. 'No—but she knows other things.'

He shook his head as at the portentous heap of them. 'Too many—too many. And other indeed—*so* other! Do you know,' he went on, 'that it's as if *you*—by turning up for me—had brought that home to me?'

' "For you," ' she candidly considered. 'But what—since you can't marry me!—can you do with me?'

Well, he seemed to have it all. 'Everything. I can live with you—just this way.' To illustrate which he dropped into the other chair by her fire; where, leaning back, he gazed at the flame. 'I can't give you up. It's very curious. It has come over me as it did over you when you renounced Bognor. That's it—I know it at last, and I see one can like it. I'm "high." You needn't deny it. That's my taste. I'm old.' And in spite of the considerable glow there of her little household altar he said it without the scowl.

1910

THE SENSE OF NEWPORT [1]

NEWPORT, on my finding myself back there, threatened me sharply, quite at first, with that predicament at which I have glanced in another connection or two—the felt condition of having known it too well and loved it too much for description or definition. What was one to say about it except that one *had* been so affected, so distraught, and that discriminations and reasons were buried under the dust of use? There was a chance indeed that the breath of the long years (of the interval of absence, I mean) would have blown away this dust—and that, precisely, was what one was eager to see. To go out, to look about, to recover the

1 In his preface to *The American Scene*, from which this sketch is taken, James wrote: 'There are features of the human scene, there are properties of the social air, that the newspapers, reports, surveys and blue-books would seem to confess themselves powerless to "handle," and that yet represented to me a greater array of items, a heavier expression of character, than my own pair of scales would ever weigh, keep them as clear for it as I might. I became aware soon enough, on the spot, that these elements of the human subject, the results of these attempted appreciations of life itself, would prove much too numerous even for a capacity all given to them for some ten months; but at least therefore, artistically concerned as I had been all my days with the human subject, with the appreciation of life itself, and with the consequent question of literary representation, I should not find such matters scant or simple. I was not in fact to do so, and they but led me on and on. How far this might have been my several chapters show; and yet even here I fall short.' James, *The American Scene*(N.Y., 1907),vi.

sense, was accordingly to put the question, without delay, to the proof—and with the happy consequence, I think, of an escape from a grave discomfiture. The charm was there again, unmistakably, the little old strange, very simple charm—to be expressed, as a fine proposition, or to be given up; but the answer came in the fact that to have walked about for half an hour was to have felt the question clear away. It cleared away so conveniently, so blissfully, in the light of the benign little truth, that nothing had been less possible, even in the early, ingenuous, infatuated days, than to describe or define Newport. It had clearly had nothing about it *to* describe or define, so that one's fondness had fairly rested on this sweet oddity in it. One had only to look back to recognise that it had never condescended to give a scrap of reasoned account of itself (as a favourite of fortune and the haunt of the *raffiné*); it had simply lain there like a little bare, white, open hand, with slightly-parted fingers, for the observer with a presumed sense for hands to take or to leave. The observer with a real sense never failed to pay this image the tribute of quite tenderly grasping the hand, and even of raising it, delicately, to his lips; having no less, at the same time, the instinct of not shaking it too hard, and that above all of never putting it to any rough work.

Such had been from the first, under a chastened light and in a purple sea, the dainty isle of Aquidneck; which might have avoided the weak mistake of giving up its pretty native name and of becoming thereby as good as nameless—with an existence as Rhode Island practically monopolised by the State and a Newport identity borrowed at the best and applicable but to a corner. Does not this vagueness of condition, however, fitly symbolise the small virtual promontory, of which, superficially, nothing could be predicated but its sky and its sea and its sunsets? One views it as placed there, by some refinement in the scheme of nature, just as a touchstone of taste—with a beautiful little sense to be read into it by a few persons, and nothing at all to be made of it, as to its essence, by most others. I come back, for its essence, to that figure of the little white hand, with the gracefully-spread fingers and the fine grain of skin, even the dimples at the joints and the shell-like delicacy of the pink nails—all the charms in short that a little white hand may have. I see all the applications of the image—I see a special truth in each. It is the back of the hand, rising to the swell of the wrist, that is exposed—which is the way, I think, the true lover takes and admires it. He makes out in it, bending over it—or he used to in the old days—innumerable shy and subtle beauties, almost requiring, for justice, a magnifying-glass; and he winces at the sight of certain other obtruded ways of dealing with it. The touchstone of taste was indeed to operate, for the critical, the tender spirit, from the moment the pink palm was turned up on the chance of what might be 'in' it. For nine persons out of ten, among its visitors, its purchasers of sites and builders of (in the old parlance) cottages, there had never been anything in it at all—except of course an opportunity: an opportunity for escaping the summer heat of other places, for bathing, for boating, for riding and driving, and for many sorts of more or less expensive riot. The pink palm being empty, in other words, to their vision, they had begun, from far back, to put things into it, things of their own, and of all sorts, and of many ugly, and of more and more expensive, sorts; to fill it substantially, that is, with gold, the gold that they have ended by heaping up there to an amount so oddly out of proportion to the scale of nature and of space.

This process, one was immediately to perceive with that renewal of impression, this process of injection and elaboration, of creating the palpable pile, had been going on for years to such a tune that the face of nature was now as much obliterated as possible, and the original shy sweetness as much as possible bedizened and bedevilled: all of which, moreover, might also at present be taken as having led, in turn, to the most unexpected climax, a matter of which I shall presently speak. The original shy sweetness, however, that range of effect which I have referred to as practically too latent and too modest for notation, had meanwhile had its votaries, the fond pedestrian minority, for whom the little white hand (to return for an instant to my figure, with which, as you see, I am charmed) had always been so full of treasures of its own as to discredit, from the point of view of taste,

any attempt, from without, to stuff it fuller. Such attempts had, in the nature of the case, and from far back, been condemned to show for violations; violations of taste and discretion, to begin with—violations, more intimately, as the whole business became brisker, of a thousand delicate secret places, dear to the disinterested rambler, small, mild 'points' and promontories, far away little lonely, sandy coves, rock-set, lily-sheeted ponds, almost hidden, and shallow Arcadian summer-haunted valleys, with the sea just over some stony shoulder: a whole world that called out to the long afternoons of youth, a world with its scale so measured and intended and happy, its detail so finished and pencilled and stippled (certainly for American detail!) that there comes back to me, across the many years, no better analogy for it than that of some fine foreground in an old 'line' engraving. There remained always a sense, of course, in which the superimpositions, the multiplied excrescences, were a tribute to the value of the place; where no such liberty was ever taken save exactly *because* (as even the most blundering builder would have claimed) it was all so beautiful, so solitary and so 'sympathetic.' And that indeed has been, thanks to the 'pilers-on' of gold, the fortune, the history of its beauty: that it now bristles with the villas and palaces into which the cottages have all turned, and that these monuments of pecuniary power rise thick and close, precisely, in order that their occupants may constantly remark to each other, from the windows to the 'grounds,' and from house to house, that it *is* beautiful, it *is* solitary and sympathetic. The thing has been done, it is impossible not to perceive, with the best faith in the world—though not altogether with the best light, which is always so different a matter; and it is with the general consequence only, at the end of the story, that I find myself to-day concerned.

So much concerned I found myself, I profess, after I had taken in this fact of a very distinct general consequence, that the whole interest of the vision was quickened by it; and that when, in particular, on one of the last days of June, among the densely-arrayed villas, I had followed the beautiful 'ocean drive' to its uttermost reach and back without meeting either another vehicle or a single rider, let alone a single pedestrian, I recognised matter for the intellectual thrill that attests a social revolution foreseen and completed. The term I use may appear extravagant, but it was a fact, none the less, that I seemed to take full in my face, on this occasion, the cold stir of air produced when the whirligig of time has made one of its liveliest turns. It is always going, the whirligig, but its effect is so to blow up the dust that we must wait for it to stop a moment, as it now and then does with a pant of triumph, in order to see what it has been at. I saw, beyond all doubt, on the spot—and *there* came in, exactly, the thrill; I could remember far back enough to have seen it begin to blow all the artless buyers and builders and blunderers into their places, leaving them there for half a century or so of fond security, and then to see it, of a sudden, blow them quite out again, as with the happy consciousness of some new amusing use for them, some other game still to play with them. This acquaintance, as it practically had been, with the whole rounding of the circle (even though much of it from a distance), was tantamount to the sense of having sat out the drama, the social, the local, that of a real American period, from the rise to the fall of the curtain—always assuming that truth of the reached catastrophe or *dénouement*. *How* this climax or solution had been arrived at—that, clearly, for the spectator, would have been worth taking note of; but what he made of it I shall not glance at till I have shown him as first of all, on the spot, quite modestly giving in to mere primary beguilement. It had been certain in advance that he would find the whole picture overpainted, and the question could only be, at the best, of how much of the ancient surface would here and there glimmer through. The ancient surface had been the concern, as I have hinted, of the small fond minority, the comparatively few people for whom the lurking shy charm, all there, but all to be felt rather than published, did in fact constitute a surface. The question, as soon as one arrived, was of whether some ghost of that were recoverable.

There was always, to begin with, the Old Town—we used, before we had become

Old ourselves, to speak of it that way, in the manner of an allusion to Nuremberg or to Carcassonne, since it had been leading its little historic life for centuries (as we implied) before 'cottages' and house-agents were dreamed of. It was not that we had great illusions about it or great pretensions for it; we only thought it, without interference, very 'good of its kind,' and we had as to its *being* of that kind no doubt whatever. Would it still be of that kind, and what had the kind itself been?—these questions made one's heart beat faster as one went forth in search of it. Distinctly, if it had been of a kind it *would* still be of it; for the kind wouldn't at the worst or at the best (one scarce knew how to put it) have been worth changing: so that the question for the restored absentee, who so palpitated with the sense of it, all hung, absolutely, on the validity of the past. One might well hold one's breath if the past, with the dear little blue distances in it, were in danger now of being given away. One might well pause before the possible indication that a cherished impression of youth had been but a figment of the mind. Fortunately, however, at Newport, and especially where the antiquities cluster, distances are short, and the note of reassurance awaited me almost round the first corner. One had been a hundred times right—for how *was* one to think of it all, as one went on, if one didn't think of it as Old? There played before one's eyes again, in fine, in that unmistakable silvery shimmer, a particular property of the local air, the exquisite law of the relative—the application of which, on the spot, is required to make even such places as Viterbo and Bagdad not seem new. One may sometimes be tired of the word, but anything that has succeeded in living long enough to become conscious of its *note*, is capable on occasion of making that note effectively sound. It *will* sound, we gather, if we listen for it, and the small silver whistle of the past, with its charming quaver of weak gayety, quite played the tune I asked of it up and down the tiny, sunny, empty Newport vistas, perspectives coming to a stop like the very short walks of very old ladies. What indeed but little very old ladies did they resemble, the little very old streets? with the same suggestion of present timidity and frugality of life, the same implication in their few folds of drab, of mourning, of muslin still mysteriously starched, the implication of no adventure at any time, however far back, that mightn't have been suitable to a lady.

The whole low promontory, in its wider and remoter measurements, is a region of jutting, tide-troubled 'points,' but we had admired the Old Town too for the emphasis of its peculiar point, *the* Point; a quarter distinguished, we considered, by a really refined interest. Here would have been my misadventure, if I was to have any—that of missing, on the grey page of to-day, the suggestive passages I remembered; but I was to find, to my satisfaction, that there was still no more mistaking their pleasant sense than there had ever been: a quiet, mild water-side sense, not that of the bold, bluff outer sea, but one in which shores and strands and small coast things played the greater part; with overhanging back verandas, with little private wooden piers, with painted boat-houses and boats laid up, with still-water bathing (the very words, with their old, slightly prim discrimination, as of ladies and children jumping up and down, reach me across the years), with a wide-curving Bay and dim landward distances that melted into a mysterious, rich, superior, but quite disconnected and not at all permittedly patronising Providence. There were stories, anciently, for the Point—so prescribed a feature of it that one made them up, freely and handsomely, when they were not otherwise to be come by; though one was never quite sure if they ought most to apply to the rather blankly and grimly Colonial houses, fadedly drab at their richest and mainly, as the legend ran, appurtenant to that Quaker race whom Massachusetts and Connecticut had prehistorically cast forth and the great Roger Williams had handsomely welcomed, or to the other habitations, the felicitous cottages, with their galleries on the Bay and towards the sunset, their pleasure-boats at their little wharves, and the supposition, that clung to them, of their harbouring the less fashionable of the outer Great, but also the more cultivated and the more artistic. Everything was there still, as I say, and quite as much as anything the prolonged echo of that ingenuous old-time distinction. It was a marvel, no doubt, that the handful of light elements I have

named should add up to any total deserving the name of *picture*, and if I must produce an explanation I seek it with a certain confidence in the sense of the secret enjoyed by that air for bathing or, as one figures, for dipping, the objects it deals with. It takes them uninteresting, but feels immediately what submersion can do for them; tips them in, keeps them down, holds them under, just for the proper length of time: after which they come up, as I say, irradiating vague silver—the reflection of which I have perhaps here been trying to catch even to extravagance.

I did nothing, at any rate, all an autumn morning, but discover again how 'good' everything had been—positively better than one had ventured to suppose in one's care to make the allowance for one's young simplicity. Some things indeed, clearly, had been better than one knew, and now seemed to surpass any fair probability: else why, for instance, should I have been quite awe-struck by the ancient State House that overlooks the ancient Parade?—an edifice ample, majestic, archaic, of the finest proportions and full of a certain public Dutch dignity, having brave, broad, high windows, in especial, the distinctness of whose innumerable square white-framed panes is the recall of some street view of Haarlem or Leyden. Here was the charming impression of a treasure of antiquity to the vague image of which, through the years, one hadn't done justice—any more than one had done it, positively, to three or four of the other old-time ornaments of the Parade (which, with its wide, cobbly, sleepy space, of those years, in the shadow of the State House, must have been much more of a Van der Heyden, or somebody of that sort, than one could have dreamed). There was a treasure of modernity to reckon with, in the form of one of the Commodores Perry (they are somehow much multiplied at Newport, and quite monumentally ubiquitous) engaged in his great naval act; but this was swept away in the general flood of justice to be done. I continued to do it all over the place, and I remember doing it next at a certain ample old-time house which used to unite with the still prettier and archaic Vernon, near it, to form an honourable pair. In this mild town-corner, where it was so indicated that the grass should be growing between the primitive paving-stones, and where indeed I honestly think it mainly is, amid whatever remains of them, ancient peace had appeared formerly to reign—though attended by the ghost of ancient war, inasmuch as these had indubitably been the haunts of our auxiliary French officers during the Revolution, and no self-respecting legend could fail to report that it was in the Vernon house Washington would have visited Rochambeau. There had hung about this structure, which is, architecturally speaking, all 'rusticated' and indefinable decency, the implication of an inward charm that refined even on its outward, and this was the tantalising message its clean, serious windows, never yet debased, struck me as still giving. But it was still (something told me) a question of not putting, anywhere, too many presumptions to the touch; so that my hand quitted the knocker when I was on the point of a tentative tap, and I fell back on the neighbour and mate, as to which there was unforgotten acquaintance to teach me certainty. Here, alas, cold change was installed; the place had become a public office—none of the 'artistic' super-civilised, no *raffiné* of them all, among the passing fanciers or collectors, having, strangely enough, marked it for his own. This mental appropriation it is, or it was a few months ago, really impossible not to make, at sight of its delightful hall and almost 'grand' staircase, its charming recessed, cupboarded, window-seated parlours, of its general panelled amplitude and dignity: the due taster of such things putting himself straight into possession on the spot, and, though wondering at the indifference and neglect, breathing thanks for the absence of positive ravage. For me there were special ghosts on the staircase, known voices in the brown old rooms—presences that one would have liked, however, to call a little to account. 'People don't do those things'; people didn't let so clear a case—clear for sound curiosity—go like that; they didn't, somehow, even if they were only ghosts. But I thought too, as I turned away, of all the others of the foolish, or at least of the responsible, those who for so long have swarmed in the modern quarter and who make profession of the finer sense.

This impression had been disturbing, but it had served its purpose in reconstituting,

with a touch, a link—in laying down again it had served its purpose in reconstituting, every inch of the train of association with the human, the social, personal Newport of what I may call the middle years. To go farther afield, to measure the length of the little old Avenue and tread again the little old cliff-walk, to hang over, from above, the little old white crescent of the principal bathing-sands, with the big pond, behind them, set in its stone-walled featureless fields; to do these things and many others, every one of them thus accompanied by the admission that all that *had* been had been little, was to feel dead and buried generations push off even the transparence of their shroud and get into motion for the peopling of a scene that a present posterity has outgrown. The company of the middle years, the so considerably prolonged formative, tentative, imaginative Newport time, hadn't outgrown it—this catastrophe was still to come, as it constitutes, precisely, the striking dramatic *dénouement* I have already referred to. American society—so far as that free mixture was to have arrived at cohesion—had for half a century taken its whole relation with the place seriously (which was by intention very gayly); it long remained, for its happiness, quite at one with this most favoured resort of its comparative innocence. In the attesting presence of all the constant elements, of natural conditions that have, after all, persisted more than changed, a hundred far-away passages of the extinct life and joy, and of the comparative innocence, came back to me with an inevitable grace. A glamour as of the flushed ends of beautiful old summers, making a quite rich medium, a red sunset haze, as it were, for a processional throng of charioteers and riders, fortunate folk, fortunate above all in their untouched good faith, adjourning from the pleasures of the day to those of the evening—this benignity in particular overspread the picture, hanging it there as the Newport aspect that most lived again. Those good people all could make discoveries within the frame itself—beginning of course to push it out, in all directions, so as sufficiently to enlarge it, as they fondly fancied, even for the experience of a sophisticated world. They danced and they drove and they rode, they dined and wined and dressed and flirted and yachted and polo'd and Casino'd, responding to the subtlest inventions of their age; on the old lawns and verandas I saw them gather, on the old shining sands I saw them gallop, past the low headlands I saw their white sails verily flash, and through the dusky old shrubberies came the light and sound of their feasts.

It had all been in truth a history—for the imagination that could take it so; and when once that kindly stage was offered them it was a wonder how many figures and faces, how many names and voices, images and embodiments of youth mainly, and often of Beauty, and of felicity and fortune almost always, or of what then passed for such, pushed, under my eyes, in blurred gayety, to the front. Hadn't it been above all, in its good faith, the Age of Beauties—the blessed age when it was so easy to *be*, 'on the Avenue,' a Beauty, and when it was so easy, not less, not to doubt of the unsurpassability of such as appeared there? It was through the fact that the whole scheme and opportunity satisfied them, the fact that the place was, as I say, good enough for them—it was through this that, with ingenuities and audacities and refinements of their own (some of the more primitive of which are still touching to think of) they extended the boundaries of civilisation, and fairly taught themselves to believe they were doing it in the interest of nature. Beautiful the time when the Ocean Drive had been hailed at once as a triumph of civilisation and as a proof of the possible appeal of Scenery even to the dissipated. It was spoken of as of almost boundless extent—as one of the wonders of the world; as indeed it does turn often, in the gloaming, to purple and gold, and as the small sea-coves then gleam on its edge like barbaric gems on a mantle. Yet if it was a question of waving the wand and of breathing again, till it stirred, on the quaintness of the old manners—I refer to those of the fifties, sixties, seventies, and don't exclude those of the eighties—it was most touching of all to go back to dimmest days, days, such as now appear antediluvian, when ocean-drives, engineered by landscape artists and literally macadamized all the way, were still in the lap of time; when there was only an afternoon for the Fort, and another for the Beach, and another for

the 'Boathouse'—inconceivable innocence! —and even the shortness of the Avenue seemed very long, and even its narrowness very wide, and even its shabbiness very promising for the future, and when, in fine, chariots and cavaliers took their course, across country, to Bateman's, by inelegant precarious tracts and returned, through the darkling void, with a sense of adventure and fatigue. That, I can't but think, was the *pure* Newport time, the most perfectly guarded by a sense of margin and of mystery.

It was the time of settled possession, and yet furthest removed from these blank days in which margin has been consumed and the palaces, on the sites but the other day beyond price, stare silently seaward, monuments to the *blasé* state of their absent proprietors. Purer still, however, I remind myself, was that stretch of years which I have reasons for thinking sacred, when the custom of seeking hibernation on the spot partly prevailed, when the local winter inherited something of the best social grace (as it liked at least to think) of the splendid summer, and when the strange sight might be seen of a considerable company of Americans, not gathered at a mere restcure, who confessed brazenly to not being in business. Do I grossly exaggerate in saying that this company, candidly, quite excitedly self-conscious, as all companies not commercial, in America, may be pleasantly noted as being, formed, for the time of its persistence, an almost unprecedented small body—unprecedented in American conditions; a collection of the detached, the slightly disenchanted and casually disqualified, and yet of the resigned and contented, of the socially orthodox: a handful of mild, oh delightfully mild, cosmopolites, united by three common circumstances, that of their having for the most part more or less lived in Europe, that of their sacrificing openly to the ivory idol whose name is leisure, and that, not least, of a formed critical habit. These things had been felt as making them excrescences on the American surface, where nobody ever criticised, especially after the grand tour, and where the great black ebony god of business was the only one recognised. So I see them, at all events, in fond memory, lasting as long as they could and finding no successors; and they are most embalmed for me, I confess, in that scented, somewhat tattered, but faintly spiced, wrapper of their various 'European' antecedents. I see them move about in the light of these, and I understand how it was this that made them ask what would have become of them, and where in the world, the hard American world, they *could* have hibernated, how they could even, in the Season, have bowed their economic heads and lurked, if it hadn't been for Newport. I think of that question as, in their reduced establishments, over their winter whist, under their private theatricals, and pending, constantly, their loan and their return of the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, their main conversational note. I find myself in fact tenderly evoking them as special instances of the great—or perhaps I have a right only to say of the small—American complication; the state of one's having been so pierced, betimes, by the sharp outland dart as to be able ever afterwards but to move about, vaguely and helplessly, with the shaft still in one's side.

Their nostalgia, however exquisite, was, I none the less gather, sterile, for they appear to have left no seed. They must have died, some of them, in order to 'go back'—to go back, that is, to Paris. If I make, at all events, too much of them, it is for their propriety as a delicate subjective value matching with the intrinsic Newport delicacy. They must have felt that they, obviously, notably, notoriously, did match—the proof of which was in the fact that to them alone, of the customary thousands, was the beauty of the good walk, over the lovely little land, revealed. The customary thousands here, as throughout the United States, never set foot to earth—yet this had happened so, of old, to be the particular corner of *their* earth that made that adventure most possible. At Newport, as the phrase was, in autumnal, in vernal hibernation, you *could* walk—failing which, in fact, you failed of impressions the most consolatory; and it is mainly to the far ends of the low, densely shrubbed and perfectly finished little headlands that I see our friends ramble as if to stretch fond arms across the sea. There used to be distant places beyond Bateman's, or better still on the opposite isle of Conanicut, now blighted with ugly uses, where

nursing a nostalgia on the sun-warmed rocks was almost as good as having none at all. So it was not only not our friends who had overloaded and overcrowded, but it was they at last, I infer, who gave way before that grossness. How should they have wished to leave seed only to be trampled by the white elephants?

The white elephants, as one may best call them, all cry and no wool, all house and no garden, make now, for three or four miles, a barely interrupted chain, and I dare say I think of them best, and of the distressful, inevitable waste they represent, as I recall the impression of a divine little drive, roundabout them and pretty well everywhere, taken, for renewal of acquaintance, while November was still mild. I sought another renewal, as I have intimated, in the vacant splendour of June, but the interesting evidence then only refined on that already gathered. The place itself, as man—and often, no doubt, alas, as woman, with her love of the immediate and contiguous—had taken it over, was more than ever, to the fancy, like some dim, simplified ghost of a small Greek island, where the clear walls of some pillared portico or pavilion, perched afar, looked like those of temples of the gods, and where Nature, deprived of that ease in merely massing herself on which 'American scenery,' as we lump it together, is too apt to depend for its effect, might have shown a piping shepherd on any hillside or attached a mythic image to any point of rocks. What an idea, originally, to have seen this miniature spot of earth, where the sea-nymphs on the curved sands, at the worst, might have chanted back to the shepherds, as a mere breeding-ground for white elephants! They look queer and conscious and lumpish—some of them, as with an air of the brandished proboscis, really grotesque—while their averted owners, roused from a witless dream, wonder what in the world is to be done with them. The answer to which, I think, can only be that there is absolutely nothing to be done; nothing but to let them stand there always, vast and blank, for reminder to those concerned of the prohibited degrees of witlessness, and of the peculiarly awkward vengeances of affronted proportion and discretion.

1906 1907

THREE FRAGMENTS[1]

FROM THE WINGS OF THE DOVE

Sir Luke Strett

WHAT it really came to, on the morrow this first time—the time Kate went with her—was that the great man had, a little, to excuse himself; had, by a rare accident—for he kept his consulting-hours in general rigorously free—but ten minutes to give her; ten mere minutes which he yet placed at her service in a manner that she admired still more than she could meet it: so crystal-clean the great empty cup of attention that he set between them on the table. He was presently to jump into his carriage, but he promptly made the point that he must see her again, see her within a day or two; and he named for her at once another hour—casing her off beautifully too even then in respect to her possibly failing of justice to her errand. The minutes affected her in fact as ebbing more swiftly than her little army of items could muster, and they would probably have gone without her doing much more than secure another hearing, hadn't it been for her sense, at the last, that she had gained above all an impression. The impression—all the sharp growth of the final few moments—was neither more nor less than that she might make, of a sudden, in quite another world, another straight friend, and a friend who would moreover be, wonderfully, the most appointed, the most thoroughly adjusted of the whole collection, inasmuch as he would somehow wear the character scientifically, ponderably, proveably—not just loosely and sociably. Literally, furthermore, it wouldn't really depend on herself, Sir Luke Strett's friendship, in the least: perhaps what made her most stammer and pant was its thus queerly coming over her that she might find she had interested him even beyond her intention, find she was in fact launched in some current that would lose itself in the sea of science. At the same time that she struggled, however, she also surrendered; there was a moment at which she almost dropped the form of stating, of explaining, and threw herself, without violence, only

1 These fragments, illustrative of James' highly developed use of the simile, are, consecutively, from *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*(N.Y., 1909),XIX, 230–31;XX,138–40;XXIV,3–4.

with a supreme pointless quaver that had turned the next instant to an intensity of interrogative stillness, upon his general good will. His large settled face, though firm, was not, as she had thought at first, hard; he looked, in the oddest manner, to her fancy, half like a general and half like a bishop, and she was soon sure that, within some such handsome range, what it would show her would be what was good, what was best for her. She had established, in other words, in this time-saving way, a relation with it; and the relation was the special trophy that, for the hour, she bore off. It was like an absolute possession, a new resource altogether, something done up in the softest silk and tucked away under the arm of memory. She hadn't had it when she went in, and she had it when she came out; she had it there under her cloak, but dissimulated, invisibly carried, when smiling, smiling, she again faced Kate Croy.

1902

The Play of Friendship

THESE puttings-off of the mask had finally quite become the form taken by their moments together, moments indeed not increasingly frequent and not prolonged, thanks to the consciousness of fatigue on Milly's side whenever, as she herself expressed it, she got out of harness. They flourished their masks, the independent pair, as they might have flourished Spanish fans; they smiled and sighed on removing them; but the gesture, the smiles, the sighs, strangely enough, might have been suspected the greatest reality in the business. Strangely enough, we say, for the volume of effusion in general would have been found by either on measurement to be scarce proportional to the paraphernalia of relief. It was when they called each other's attention to their ceasing to pretend, it was then that what they were keeping back was most in the air. There was a difference, no doubt, and mainly to Kate's advantage: Milly didn't quite see what her friend could keep back, was possessed of, in fine, that would be so subject to retention; whereas it was comparatively plain sailing for Kate that poor Milly had a treasure to hide. This was not the treasure of a shy, an abject affection —concealment, on that head, belonging to quite another phase of such states; it was much rather a principle of pride relatively bold and hard, a principle that played up like a fine steel spring at the lightest pressure of too near a footfall. Thus insuperably guarded was the truth about the girl's own conception of her validity; thus was a wondering pitying sister condemned wistfully to look at her from the far side of the moat she had dug round her tower. Certain aspects of the connexion of these young women show for us, such is the twilight that gathers about them, in the likeness of some dim scene in a Maeterlinck play; we have positively the image, in the delicate dusk, of the figures so associated and yet so opposed, so mutually watchful: that of the angular pale princess, ostrich-plumed, black-robed, hung about with amulets, reminders, relics, mainly seated, mainly still, and that of the upright restless slow-circling lady of her court who exchanges with her, across the black water streaked with evening gleams, fitful questions and answers. The upright lady, with thick dark braids down her back, drawing over the grass a more embroidered train, makes the whole circuit, and makes it again, and the broken talk, brief and sparingly allusive, seems more to cover than to free their sense. This is because, when it fairly comes to not having others to consider, they meet in an air that appears rather anxiously to wait for their words. Such an impression as that was in fact grave, and might be tragic; so that, plainly enough, systematically at last, they settled to a care of what they said.

1902

FROM THE GOLDEN BOWL

The Pagoda Arrangement

IT wasn't till many days had passed that the Princess began to accept the idea of having done, a little, something she was not always doing, or indeed that of having listened to any inward voice that spoke in a new tone. Yet these instinctive postponements of reflexion were the fruit, positively, of recognitions and perceptions already active; of the sense above all that she had made at a particular hour, made by the mere touch of her hand, a difference in the situation so long present to her as practically unattackable. This situation had been occupying for

months and months the very centre of the garden of her life, but it had reared itself there like some strange tall tower of ivory, or perhaps rather some wonderful beautiful but outlandish pagoda, a structure plated with hard bright porcelain, coloured and figured and adorned at the overhanging eaves with silver bells that tinkled ever so charmingly when stirred by chance airs. She had walked round and round it—that was what she felt; she had carried on her existence in the space left her for circulation, a space that sometimes seemed ample and sometimes narrow: looking up all the while at the fair structure that spread itself so amply and rose so high, but never quite making out as yet where she might have entered had she wished. She hadn't wished till now—such was the odd case; and what was doubtless equally odd besides was that though her raised eyes seemed to distinguish places that must serve from within, and especially far aloft, as apertures and outlooks, no door appeared to give access from her convenient garden level. The great decorated surface had remained consistently impenetrable and inscrutable. At present however, to her considering mind, it was as if she had ceased merely to circle and to scan the elevation, ceased so vaguely, so quite helplessly to stare and wonder: she had caught herself distinctly in the act of pausing, then in that of lingering, and finally in that of stepping unprecedentedly near. The thing might have been, by the distance at which it kept her, a Mahometan mosque, with which no base heretic could take a liberty; there so hung about it the vision of putting off one's shoes to enter and even verily of one's paying with one's life if found there as an interloper. She hadn't certainly arrived at the conception of paying with her life for anything she might do; but it was nevertheless quite as if she had sounded with a tap or two one of the rare porcelain plates. She had knocked in short —though she could scarce have said whether for admission or for what; she had applied her hand to a cool smooth spot and had waited to see what would happen. Something *had* happened; it was as if a sound, at her touch, after a little, had come back to her from within; a sound sufficiently suggesting that her approach had been noted.

1904

EDITH WHARTON

1862–1937

THE OTHER TWO

I

WAYTHORN, on the drawing-room hearth, waited for his wife to come down to dinner.

It was their first night under his own roof, and he was surprised at his thrill of boyish agitation. He was not so old, to be sure—his glass gave him little more than the five-and-thirty years to which his wife confessed—but he had fancied himself already in the temperate zone; yet here he was listening for her step with a tender sense of all it symbolised, with some old trail of verse about the garlanded nuptial door-posts floating through his enjoyment of the pleasant room and the good dinner just beyond it.

They had been hastily recalled from their honeymoon by the illness of Lily Haskett, the child of Mrs. Waythorn's first marriage. The little girl, at Waythorn's desire, had been transferred to his house on the day of her mother's wedding, and the doctor, on their arrival, broke the news that she was ill with typhoid, but declared that all the symptoms were favourable. Lily could show twelve years of unblemished health, and the case promised to be a light one. The nurse spoke as reassuringly, and after a moment of alarm Mrs. Waythorn had adjusted herself to the situation. She was very fond of Lily—her affection for the child had perhaps been her decisive charm in Waythorn's eyes—but she had the perfectly balanced nerves which her little girl had inherited, and no woman ever wasted less tissue in unproductive worry. Waythorn was therefore quite prepared to see her come in presently, a little late because of a last look at Lily, but as serene and well-appointed as if her good-night kiss had

been laid on the brow of health. Her composure was restful to him; it acted as ballast to his somewhat unstable sensibilities. As he pictured her bending over the child's bed he thought how soothing her presence must be in illness: her very step would prognosticate recovery.

His own life had been a gray one, from temperament rather than circumstance, and he had been drawn to her by the unperturbed gaiety which kept her fresh and elastic at an age when most women's activities are growing either slack or febrile. He knew what was said about her; for, popular as she was, there had always been a faint undercurrent of detraction. When she had appeared in New York, nine or ten years earlier, as the pretty Mrs. Haskett whom Gus Varick had unearthed somewhere—was it in Pittsburgh or Utica?—society, while promptly accepting her, had reserved the right to cast a doubt on its own indiscrimination. Enquiry, however, established her undoubted connection with a socially reigning family, and explained her recent divorce as the natural result of a runaway match at seventeen; and as nothing was known of Mr. Haskett it was easy to believe the worst of him.

Alice Haskett's remarriage with Gus Varick was a passport to the set whose recognition she coveted, and for a few years the Varicks were the most popular couple in town. Unfortunately the alliance was brief and stormy, and this time the husband had his champions. Still, even Varick's stanchest supporters admitted that he was not meant for matrimony, and Mrs. Varick's grievances were of a nature to bear the inspection of the New York courts. A New York divorce is in itself a diploma of virtue, and in the semi-widowhood of this second separation Mrs. Varick took on an air of sanctity, and was allowed to confide her wrongs to some of the most scrupulous ears in town. But when it was known that she was to marry Waythorn there was a momentary reaction. Her best friends would have preferred to see her remain in the rôle of the injured wife, which was as becoming to her as crape to a rosy complexion. True, a decent time had elapsed, and it was not even suggested that Waythorn had supplanted his predecessor. People shook their heads over him, however, and one grudging friend, to whom he affirmed that he took the step with his eyes open, replied oracularly: 'Yes—and with your ears shut.'

Waythorn could afford to smile at these innuendoes. In the Wall Street phrase, he had 'discounted' them. He knew that society has not yet adapted itself to the consequences of divorce, and that till the adaptation takes place every woman who uses the freedom the law accords her must be her own social justification. Waythorn had an amused confidence in his wife's ability to justify herself. His expectations were fulfilled, and before the wedding took place Alice Varick's group had rallied openly to her support. She took it all imperturbably: she had a way of surmounting obstacles without seeming to be aware of them, and Waythorn looked back with wonder at the trivialities over which he had worn his nerves thin. He had the sense of having found refuge in a richer, warmer nature than his own, and his satisfaction, at the moment, was humourously summed up in the thought that his wife, when she had done all she could for Lily, would not be ashamed to come down and enjoy a good dinner.

The anticipation of such enjoyment was not, however, the sentiment expressed by Mrs. Waythorn's charming face when she presently joined him. Though she had put on her most engaging teagown she had neglected to assume the smile that went with it, and Waythorn thought he had never seen her look so nearly worried.

'What is it?' he asked. 'Is anything wrong with Lily?'

'No; I've just been in and she's still sleeping.' Mrs. Waythorn hesitated. 'But something tiresome has happened.'

He had taken her two hands, and now perceived that he was crushing a paper between them.

'This letter?'

'Yes—Mr. Haskett has written—I mean his lawyer has written.'

Waythorn felt himself flush uncomfortably. He dropped his wife's hands.

'What about?'

'About seeing Lily. You know the courts —'

'Yes, yes,' he interrupted nervously.

Nothing was known about Haskett in New York. He was vaguely supposed to

have remained in the outer darkness from which his wife had been rescued, and Waythorn was one of the few who were aware that he had given up his business in Utica and followed her to New York in order to be near his little girl. In the days of his wooing, Waythorn had often met Lily on the doorstep, rosy and smiling, on her way 'to see papa.'

'I am so sorry,' Mrs. Waythorn murmured.

He roused himself. 'What does he want?'

'He wants to see her. You know she goes to him once a week.'

'Well—he doesn't expect her to go to him now, does he?'

'No—he has heard of her illness; but he expects to come here.'

'*Here*?'

Mrs. Waythorn reddened under his gaze. They looked away from each other.

'I'm afraid he has the right. . . . You'll see. . . .' She made a proffer of the letter.

Waythorn moved away with a gesture of refusal. He stood staring about the softly lighted room, which a moment before had seemed so full of bridal intimacy.

'I'm so sorry,' she repeated. 'If Lily could have been moved—'

'That's out of the question,' he returned impatiently.

'I suppose so.'

Her lip was beginning to tremble, and he felt himself a brute.

'He must come, of course,' he said. 'When is—his day?'

'I'm afraid—to-morrow.'

'Very well. Send a note in the morning.'

The butler entered to announce dinner.

Waythorn turned to his wife. 'Come—you must be tired. It's beastly, but try to forget about it,' he said, drawing her hand through his arm.

'You're so good, dear. I'll try,' she whispered back.

Her face cleared at once, and as she looked at him across the flowers, between the rosy candle-shades, he saw her lips waver back into a smile.

'How pretty everything is!' she sighed luxuriously.

He turned to the butler. 'The champagne at once, please. Mrs. Waythorn is tired.'

In a moment or two their eyes met above the sparkling glasses. Her own were quite clear and untroubled: he saw that she had obeyed his injunction and forgotten.

II

Waythorn, the next morning, went down town earlier than usual. Haskett was not likely to come till the afternoon, but the instinct of flight drove him forth. He meant to stay away all day—he had thoughts of dining at his club. As his door closed behind him he reflected that before he opened it again it would have admitted another man who had as much right to enter it as himself, and the thought filled him with a physical repugnance.

He caught the 'elevated' at the employés' hour, and found himself crushed between two layers of pendulous humanity. At Eighth Street the man facing him wriggled out, and another took his place. Waythorn glanced up and saw that it was Gus Varick. The men were so close together that it was impossible to ignore the smile of recognition on Varick's handsome overblown face. And after all—why not? They had always been on good terms, and Varick had been divorced before Waythorn's attentions to his wife began. The two exchanged a word on the perennial grievance of the congested trains, and when a seat at their side was miraculously left empty the instinct of self-preservation made Waythorn slip into it after Varick.

The latter drew the stout man's breath of relief. 'Lord—I was beginning to feel like a pressed flower.' He leaned back, looking unconcernedly at Waythorn. 'Sorry to hear that Sellers is knocked out again.'

'Sellers?' echoed Waythorn, starting at his partner's name.

Varick looked surprised. 'You didn't know he was laid up with the gout?'

'No, I've been away—I only got back last night.' Waythorn felt himself reddening in anticipation of the other's smile.

'Ah—yes; to be sure. And Sellers's attack came on two days ago. I'm afraid he's pretty bad. Very awkward for me, as it happens, because he was just putting through a rather important thing for me.'

'Ah?' Waythorn wondered vaguely since when Varick had been dealing in 'important things.' Hitherto he had dabbled only in the shallow pools of speculation, with

which Waythorn's office did not usually concern itself.

It occurred to him that Varick might be talking at random, to relieve the strain of their propinquity. That strain was becoming momentarily more apparent to Waythorn, and when, at Cortlandt Street, he caught sight of an acquaintance and had a sudden vision of the picture he and Varick must present to an initiated eye, he jumped up with a muttered excuse.

'I hope you'll find Sellers better,' said Varick civilly, and he stammered back: 'If I can be of any use to you—' and let the departing crowd sweep him to the platform.

At his office he heard that Sellers was in fact ill with the gout, and would probably not be able to leave the house for some weeks.

'I'm sorry it should have happened so, Mr. Waythorn,' the senior clerk said with affable significance. 'Mr. Sellers was very much upset at the idea of giving you such a lot of extra work just now.'

'Oh, that's no matter,' said Waythorn hastily. He secretly welcomed the pressure of additional business, and was glad to think that, when the day's work was over, he would have to call at his partner's on the way home.

He was late for luncheon, and turned in at the nearest restaurant instead of going to his club. The place was full, and the waiter hurried him to the back of the room to capture the only vacant table. In the cloud of cigar-smoke Waythorn did not at once distinguish his neighbours; but presently, looking about him, he saw Varick seated a few feet off. This time, luckily, they were too far apart for conversation, and Varick, who faced another way, had probably not even seen him; but there was an irony in their renewed nearness.

Varick was said to be fond of good living, and as Waythorn sat despatching his hurried luncheon he looked across half enviously at the other's leisurely degustation of his meal. When Waythorn first saw him he had been helping himself with critical deliberation to a bit of Camembert at the ideal point of liquefaction, and now, the cheese removed, he was just pouring his *café double* from its little two-storied earthen pot. He poured slowly, his ruddy profile bent above the task, and one beringed white hand steadying the lid of the coffee-pot; then he stretched his other hand to the decanter of cognac at his elbow, filled a liqueur-glass, took a tentative sip, and poured the brandy into his coffee-cup.

Waythorn watched him in a kind of fascination. What was he thinking of—only of the flavour of the coffee and the liqueur? Had the morning's meeting left no more trace in his thoughts than on his face? Had his wife so completely passed out of his life that even this odd encounter with her present husband, within a week after her remarriage, was no more than an incident in his day? And as Waythorn mused, another idea struck him: had Haskett ever met Varick as Varick and he had just met? The recollection of Haskett perturbed him, and he rose and left the restaurant, taking a circuitous way out to escape the placid irony of Varick's nod.

It was after seven when Waythorn reached home. He thought the footman who opened the door looked at him oddly.

'How is Miss Lily?' he asked in haste.

'Doing very well, sir. A gentleman—'

'Tell Barlow to put off dinner for half an hour,' Waythorn cut him off, hurrying upstairs.

He went straight to his room and dressed without seeing his wife. When he reached the drawing-room she was there, fresh and radiant. Lily's day had been good; the doctor was not coming back that evening.

At dinner Waythorn told her of Sellers' illness and of the resulting complications. She listened sympathetically, adjuring him not to let himself be overworked, and asking vague feminine questions about the routine of the office. Then she gave him the chronicle of Lily's day; quoted the nurse and doctor, and told him who had called to inquire. He had never seen her more serene and unruffled. It struck him, with a curious pang, that she was very happy in being with him, so happy that she found a childish pleasure in rehearsing the trivial incidents of her day.

After dinner they went to the library, and the servant put the coffee and liqueurs on a low table before her and left the room. She looked singularly soft and girlish in her rosy pale dress, against the dark leather of one of his bachelor armchairs. A day earlier the contrast would have charmed him.

He turned away now, choosing a cigar with affected deliberation.

'Did Haskett come?' he asked, with his back to her.

'Oh, yes—he came.'

'You didn't see him, of course?'

She hesitated a moment. 'I let the nurse see him.'

That was all. There was nothing more to ask. He swung round toward her, applying a match to his cigar. Well, the thing was over for a week, at any rate. He would try not to think of it. She looked up at him, a trifle rosier than usual, with a smile in her eyes.

'Ready for your coffee, dear?'

He leaned against the mantelpiece, watching her as she lifted the coffee-pot. The lamplight struck a gleam from her bracelets and tipped her soft hair with brightness. How light and slender she was, and how each gesture flowed into the next! She seemed a creature all compact of harmonies. As the thought of Haskett receded, Waythorn felt himself yielding again to the joy of possessorship. They were his, those white hands with their flitting motions, his the light haze of hair, the lips and eyes. . . .

She set down the coffee-pot, and reaching for the decanter of cognac, measured off a liqueur-glass and poured it into his cup.

Waythorn uttered a sudden exclamation.

'What is the matter?' she said, startled.

'Nothing; only—I don't take cognac in my coffee.'

'Oh, how stupid of me,' she cried.

Their eyes met, and she blushed a sudden agonised red.

III

Ten days later, Mr. Sellers, still housebound, asked Waythorn to call on his way down town.

The senior partner, with his swaddled foot propped up by the fire, greeted his associate with an air of embarrassment.

'I'm sorry, my dear fellow; I've got to ask you to do an awkward thing for me.'

Waythorn waited, and the other went on, after a pause apparently given to the arrangement of his phrases: 'The fact is, when I was knocked out I had just gone into a rather complicated piece of business for—Gus Varick.'

'Well?' said Waythorn, with an attempt to put him at his ease.

'Well—it's this way: Varick came to me the day before my attack. He had evidently had an inside tip from somebody, and had made about a hundred thousand. He came to me for advice, and I suggested his going in with Vanderlyn.'

'Oh, the deuce!' Waythorn exclaimed. He saw in a flash what had happened. The investment was an alluring one, but required negotiation. He listened quietly while Sellers put the case before him, and, the statement ended, he said: 'You think I ought to see Varick?'

'I'm afraid I can't as yet. The doctor is obdurate. And this thing can't wait. I hate to ask you, but no one else in the office knows the ins and outs of it.'

Waythorn stood silent. He did not care a farthing for the success of Varick's venture, but the honour of the office was to be considered, and he could hardly refuse to oblige his partner.

'Very well,' he said, 'I'll do it.'

That afternoon, apprised by telephone, Varick called at the office. Waythorn, waiting in his private room, wondered what the others thought of it. The newspapers, at the time of Mrs. Waythorn's marriage, had acquainted their readers with every detail of her previous matrimonial ventures, and Waythorn could fancy the clerks smiling behind Varick's back as he was ushered in.

Varick bore himself admirably. He was easy without being undignified, and Waythorn was conscious of cutting a much less impressive figure. Varick had no experience of business, and the talk prolonged itself for nearly an hour while Waythorn set forth with scrupulous precision the details of the proposed transaction.

'I'm awfully obliged to you,' Varick said as he rose. 'The fact is I'm not used to having much money to look after, and I don't want to make an ass of myself—' He smiled, and Waythorn could not help noticing that there was something pleasant about his smile. 'It feels uncommonly queer to have enough cash to pay one's bills. I'd have sold my soul for it a few years ago!'

Waythorn winced at the allusion. He had heard it rumoured that a lack of funds had been one of the determining causes of the Varick separation, but it did not occur to

him that Varick's words were intentional. It seemed more likely that the desire to keep clear of embarrassing topics had fatally drawn him into one. Waythorn did not wish to be outdone in civility.

'We'll do the best we can for you,' he said. 'I think this is a good thing you're in.'

'Oh, I'm sure it's immense. It's awfully good of you—' Varick broke off, embarrassed. 'I suppose the thing's settled now—but if—'

'If anything happens before Sellers is about, I'll see you again,' said Waythorn quietly. He was glad, in the end, to appear the more self-possessed of the two.

The course of Lily's illness ran smooth, and as the days passed Waythorn grew used to the idea of Haskett's weekly visit. The first time the day came round, he stayed out late, and questioned his wife as to the visit on his return. She replied at once that Haskett had merely seen the nurse downstairs, as the doctor did not wish any one in the child's sick-room till after the crisis.

The following week Waythorn was again conscious of the recurrence of the day, but had forgotten it by the time he came home to dinner. The crisis of the disease came a few days later, with a rapid decline of fever, and the little girl was pronounced out of danger. In the rejoicing which ensued the thought of Haskett passed out of Waythorn's mind, and one afternoon, letting himself into the house with a latch-key, he went straight to his library without noticing a shabby hat and umbrella in the hall.

In the library he found a small effaced-looking man with a thinnish gray beard sitting on the edge of a chair. The stranger might have been a piano-tuner, or one of those mysteriously efficient persons who are summoned in emergencies to adjust some detail of the domestic machinery. He blinked at Waythorn through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles and said mildly: 'Mr. Waythorn, I presume? I am Lily's father.'

Waythorn flushed. 'Oh—' he stammered uncomfortably. He broke off, disliking to appear rude. Inwardly he was trying to adjust the actual Haskett to the image of him projected by his wife's reminiscences. Waythorn had been allowed to infer that Alice's first husband was a brute.

'I am sorry to intrude,' said Haskett, with his over-the-counter politeness.

'Don't mention it,' returned Waythorn, collecting himself. 'I suppose the nurse has been told?'

'I presume so. I can wait,' said Haskett. He had a resigned way of speaking, as though life had worn down his natural powers of resistance.

Waythorn stood on the threshold, nervously pulling off his gloves.

'I'm sorry you've been detained. I will send for the nurse,' he said; and as he opened the door he added with an effort: 'I'm glad we can give you a good report of Lily.' He winced as the *we* slipped out, but Haskett seemed not to notice it.

'Thank you, Mr. Waythorn. It's been an anxious time for me.'

'Ah, well, that's past. Soon she'll be able to go to you.' Waythorn nodded and passed out.

In his own room he flung himself down with a groan. He hated the womanish sensibility which made him suffer so acutely from the grotesque chances of life. He had known when he married that his wife's former husbands were both living, and that amid the multiplied contacts of modern existence there were a thousand chances to one that he would run against one or the other, yet he found himself as much disturbed by his brief encounter with Haskett as though the law had not obligingly removed all difficulties in the way of their meeting.

Waythorn sprang up and began to pace the room nervously. He had not suffered half as much from his two meetings with Varick. It was Haskett's presence in his own house that made the situation so intolerable. He stood still, hearing steps in the passage.

'This way, please,' he heard the nurse say. Haskett was being taken upstairs, then: not a corner of the house but was open to him. Waythorn dropped into another chair, staring vaguely ahead of him. On his dressing-table stood a photograph of Alice, taken when he had first known her. She was Alice Varick then—how fine and exquisite he had thought her! Those were Varick's pearls about her neck. At Waythorn's instance they had been returned before her marriage. Had Haskett ever given her any trinkets—

and what had become of them, Waythorn wondered? He realised suddenly that he knew very little of Haskett's past or present situation; but from the man's appearance and manner of speech he could reconstruct with curious precision the surroundings of Alice's first marriage. And it startled him to think that she had, in the background of her life, a phase of existence so different from anything with which he had connected her. Varick, whatever his faults, was a gentleman, in the conventional, traditional sense of the term: the sense which at that moment seemed, oddly enough, to have most meaning to Waythorn. He and Varick had the same social habits, spoke the same language, understood the same allusions. But this other man . . . it was grotesquely uppermost in Waythorn's mind that Haskett had worn a made-up tie attached with an elastic. Why should that ridiculous detail symbolise the whole man? Waythorn was exasperated by his own paltriness, but the fact of the tie expanded, forced itself on him, became as it were the key to Alice's past. He could see her, as Mrs. Haskett, sitting in a 'front parlour' furnished in plush, with a pianola, and a copy of *Ben Hur* on the centre-table. He could see her going to the theatre with Haskett—or perhaps even to a 'Church Sociable'—she in a 'picture hat' and Haskett in a black frock-coat, a little creased, with the made-up tie on an elastic. On the way home they would stop and look at the illuminated shop-windows, lingering over the photographs of New York actresses. On Sunday afternoons Haskett would take her for a walk, pushing Lily ahead of them in a white enamelled perambulator, and Waythorn had a vision of the people they would stop and talk to. He could fancy how pretty Alice must have looked, in a dress adroitly constructed from the hints of a New York fashion-paper, and how she must have looked down on the other women chafing at her life, and secretly feeling that she belonged in a bigger place.

For the moment his foremost thought was one of wonder at the way in which she had shed the phase of existence which her marriage with Haskett implied. It was as if her whole aspect, every gesture, every inflection, every allusion, were a studied negation of that period of her life. If she had denied being married to Haskett she could hardly have stood more convicted of duplicity than in this obliteration of the self which had been his wife.

Waythorn started up, checking himself in the analysis of her motives. What right had he to create a fantastic effigy of her and then pass judgment on it? She had spoken vaguely of her first marriage as unhappy, had hinted, with becoming reticence, that Haskett had wrought havoc among her young illusions. . . . It was a pity for Waythorn's peace of mind that Haskett's very inoffensiveness shed a new light on the nature of those illusions. A man would rather think that his wife has been brutalised by her first husband than that the process has been reversed.

IV

'Mr. Waythorn, I don't like that French governess of Lily's.'

Haskett, subdued and apologetic, stood before Waythorn in the library, revolving his shabby hat in his hand.

Waythorn, surprised in his armchair over the evening paper, stared back perplexedly at his visitor.

'You'll excuse my asking to see you,' Haskett continued. 'But this is my last visit, and I thought if I could have a word with you it would be a better way than writing to Mrs. Waythorn's lawyer.'

Waythorn rose uneasily. He did not like the French governess either; but that was irrelevant.

'I am not so sure of that,' he returned stiffly; 'but since you wish it I will give your message to—my wife.' He always hesitated over the possessive pronoun in addressing Haskett.

The latter sighed. 'I don't know as that will help much. She didn't like it when I spoke to her.'

Waythorn turned red. 'When did you see her?' he asked.

'Not since the first day I came to see Lily—right after she was taken sick. I remarked to her then that I didn't like the governess.'

Waythorn made no answer. He remembered distinctly that, after that first visit, he had asked his wife if she had seen Haskett. She had lied to him then, but she had respected his wishes since; and the incident

cast a curious light on her character. He was sure she would not have seen Haskett that first day if she had divined that Waythorn would object, and the fact that she did not divine it was almost as disagreeable to the latter as the discovery that she had lied to him.

'I don't like the woman,' Haskett was repeating with mild persistency. 'She ain't straight, Mr. Waythorn—she'll teach the child to be underhand. I've noticed a change in Lily—she's too anxious to please—and she don't always tell the truth. She used to be the straightest child, Mr. Waythorn—' He broke off, his voice a little thick. 'Not but what I want her to have a stylish education,' he ended.

Waythorn was touched. 'I'm sorry, Mr. Haskett; but frankly, I don't quite see what I can do.'

Haskett hesitated. Then he laid his hat on the table, and advanced to the hearth-rug, on which Waythorn was standing. There was nothing aggressive in his manner, but he had the solemnity of a timid man resolved on a decisive measure.

'There's just one thing you can do, Mr. Waythorn,' he said. 'You can remind Mrs. Waythorn that, by the decree of the courts, I am entitled to have a voice in Lily's bringing up.' He paused, and went on more deprecatingly: 'I'm not the kind to talk about enforcing my rights, Mr. Waythorn. I don't know as I think a man is entitled to rights he hasn't known how to hold on to; but this business of the child is different. I've never let go there—and I never mean to.'

The scene left Waythorn deeply shaken. Shamefacedly, in indirect ways, he had been finding out about Haskett; and all that he had learned was favourable. The little man, in order to be near his daughter, had sold out his share in a profitable business in Utica, and accepted a modest clerkship in a New York manufacturing house. He boarded in a shabby street and had few acquaintances. His passion for Lily filled his life. Waythorn felt that this exploration of Haskett was like groping about with a dark-lantern in his wife's past; but he saw now that there were recesses his lantern had not explored. He had never enquired into the exact circumstances of his wife's first matrimonial rupture. On the surface all had been fair. It was she who had obtained the divorce, and the court had given her the child. But Waythorn knew how many ambiguities such a verdict might cover. The mere fact that Haskett retained a right over his daughter implied an unsuspected compromise. Waythorn was an idealist. He always refused to recognise unpleasant contingencies till he found himself confronted with them, and then he saw them followed by a spectral train of consequences. His next days were thus haunted, and he determined to try to lay the ghosts by conjuring them up in his wife's presence.

When he repeated Haskett's request a flame of anger passed over her face; but she subdued it instantly and spoke with a slight quiver of outraged motherhood.

'It is very ungentlemanly of him,' she said.

The word grated on Waythorn. 'That is neither here nor there. It's a bare question of rights.'

She murmured: 'It's not as if he could ever be a help to Lily—'

Waythorn flushed. This was even less to his taste. 'The question is,' he repeated, 'what authority has he over her?'

She looked downward, twisting herself a little in her seat. 'I am willing to see him—I thought you objected,' she faltered.

In a flash he understood that she knew the extent of Haskett's claims. Perhaps it was not the first time she had resisted them.

'My objecting has nothing to do with it,' he said coldly; 'if Haskett has a right to be consulted you must consult him.'

She burst into tears, and he saw that she expected him to regard her as a victim.

Haskett did not abuse his rights. Waythorn had felt miserably sure that he would not. But the governess was dismissed, and from time to time the little man demanded an interview with Alice. After the first outburst she accepted the situation with her usual adaptability. Haskett had once reminded Waythorn of the piano-tuner, and Mrs. Waythorn, after a month or two, appeared to class him with that domestic familiar. Waythorn could not but respect the father's tenacity. At first he had tried to cultivate the suspicion that Haskett might be 'up to' something, that he had an object in securing a foothold in the house. But in his heart Waythorn was sure of Haskett's

single-mindedness; he even guessed in the latter a mild contempt for such advantages as his relation with the Waythorns might offer. Haskett's sincerity of purpose made him invulnerable, and his successor had to accept him as a lien on the property.

Mr. Sellers was sent to Europe to recover from his gout, and Varick's affairs hung on Waythorn's hands. The negotiations were prolonged and complicated; they necessitated frequent conferences between the two men, and the interests of the firm forbade Waythorn's suggesting that his client should transfer his business to another office.

Varick appeared well in the transaction. In moments of relaxation his coarse streak appeared, and Waythorn dreaded his geniality; but in the office he was concise and clear-headed, with a flattering deference to Waythorn's judgment. Their business relations being so affably established, it would have been absurd for the two men to ignore each other in society. The first time they met in a drawing-room, Varick took up their intercourse in the same easy key, and his hostess's grateful glance obliged Waythorn to respond to it. After that they ran across each other frequently, and one evening at a ball Waythorn, wandering through the remoter rooms, came upon Varick seated beside his wife. She coloured a little, and faltered in what she was saying; but Varick nodded to Waythorn without rising, and the latter strolled on.

In the carriage, on the way home, he broke out nervously: 'I didn't know you spoke to Varick.'

Her voice trembled a little. 'It's the first time—he happened to be standing near me; I didn't know what to do. It's so awkward, meeting everywhere—and he said you had been very kind about some business.'

'That's different,' said Waythorn.

She paused a moment. 'I'll do just as you wish,' she returned pliantly. 'I thought it would be less awkward to speak to him when we meet.'

Her pliancy was beginning to sicken him. Had she really no will of her own—no theory about her relation to these men? She had accepted Haskett—did she mean to accept Varick? It was 'less awkward,' as she had said, and her instinct was to evade difficulties or to circumvent them. With sudden vividness Waythorn saw how the instinct had developed. She was 'as easy as an old shoe'—a shoe that too many feet had worn. Her elasticity was the result of tension in too many different directions. Alice Haskett—Alice Varick—Alice Waythorn—she had been each in turn, and had left hanging to each name a little of her privacy, a little of her personality, a little of the inmost self where the unknown god abides.

'Yes—it's better to speak to Varick,' said Waythorn wearily.

V

The winter wore on, and society took advantage of the Waythorns' acceptance of Varick. Harassed hostesses were grateful to them for bridging over a social difficulty, and Mrs. Waythorn was held up as a miracle of good taste. Some experimental spirits could not resist the diversion of throwing Varick and his former wife together, and there were those who thought he found a zest in the propinquity. But Mrs. Waythorn's conduct remained irreproachable. She neither avoided Varick nor sought him out. Even Waythorn could not but admit that she had discovered the solution of the newest social problem.

He had married her without giving much thought to that problem. He had fancied that a woman can shed her past like a man. But now he saw that Alice was bound to hers both by the circumstances which forced her into continued relation with it, and by the traces it had left on her nature. With grim irony Waythorn compared himself to a member of a syndicate. He held so many shares in his wife's personality and his predecessors were his partners in the business. If there had been any element of passion in the transaction he would have felt less deteriorated by it. The fact that Alice took her change of husbands like a change of weather reduced the situation to mediocrity. He could have forgiven her for blunders, for excesses; for resisting Haskett, for yielding to Varick; for anything but her acquiescence and her tact. She reminded him of a juggler tossing knives; but the knives were blunt and she knew they would never cut her.

And then, gradually, habit formed a protecting surface for his sensibilities. If he

paid for each day's comfort with the small change of his illusions, he grew daily to value the comfort more and set less store upon the coin. He had drifted into a dulling propinquity with Haskett and Varick and he took refuge in the cheap revenge of satirising the situation. He even began to reckon up the advantages which accrued from it, to ask himself if it were not better to own a third of a wife who knew how to make a man happy than a whole one who had lacked opportunity to acquire the art. For it *was* an art, and made up, like all others, of concessions, eliminations and embellishments; of lights judiciously thrown and shadows skilfully softened. His wife knew exactly how to manage the lights, and he knew exactly to what training she owed her skill. He even tried to trace the source of his obligations, to discriminate between the influences which had combined to produce his domestic happiness: he perceived that Haskett's commonness had made Alice worship good breeding, while Varick's liberal construction of the marriage bond had taught her to value the conjugal virtues; so that he was directly indebted to his predecessors for the devotion which made his life easy if not inspiring.

From this phase he passed into that of complete acceptance. He ceased to satirise himself because time dulled the irony of the situation and the joke lost its humour with its sting. Even the sight of Haskett's hat on the hall table had ceased to touch the springs of epigram. The hat was often seen there now, for it had been decided that it was better for Lily's father to visit her than for the little girl to go to his boarding-house. Waythorn, having acquiesced in this arrangement, had been surprised to find how little difference it made. Haskett was never obtrusive, and the few visitors who met him on the stairs were unaware of his identity. Waythorn did not know how often he saw Alice, but with himself Haskett was seldom in contact.

One afternoon, however, he learned on entering that Lily's father was waiting to see him. In the library he found Haskett occupying a chair in his usual provisional way. Waythorn always felt grateful to him for not leaning back.

'I hope you'll excuse me, Mr. Waythorn,' he said rising. 'I wanted to see Mrs. Waythorn about Lily, and your man asked me to wait here till she came in.'

'Of course,' said Waythorn, remembering that a sudden leak had that morning given over the drawing-room to the plumbers.

He opened his cigar-case and held it out to his visitor, and Haskett's acceptance seemed to mark a fresh stage in their intercourse. The spring evening was chilly, and Waythorn invited his guest to draw up his chair to the fire. He meant to find an excuse to leave Haskett in a moment; but he was tired and cold, and after all the little man no longer jarred on him.

The two were enclosed in the intimacy of their blended cigar-smoke when the door opened and Varick walked into the room. Waythorn rose abruptly. It was the first time that Varick had come to the house, and the surprise of seeing him, combined with the singular inopportuneness of his arrival, gave a new edge to Waythorn's blunted sensibilities. He stared at his visitor without speaking.

Varick seemed too preoccupied to notice his host's embarrassment.

'My dear fellow,' he exclaimed in his most expansive tone, 'I must apologise for tumbling in on you in this way, but I was too late to catch you down town, and so I thought—'

He stopped short, catching sight of Haskett, and his sanguine colour deepened to a flush which spread vividly under his scant blond hair. But in a moment he recovered himself and nodded slightly. Haskett returned the bow in silence, and Waythorn was still groping for speech when the footman came in carrying a tea-table.

The intrusion offered a welcome vent to Waythorn's nerves. 'What the deuce are you bringing this here for?' he said sharply.

'I beg your pardon, sir, but the plumbers are still in the drawing-room, and Mrs. Waythorn said she would have tea in the library.' The footman's perfectly respectful tone implied a reflection on Waythorn's reasonableness.

'Oh, very well,' said the latter resignedly, and the footman proceeded to open the folding tea-table and set out its complicated appointments. While this interminable process continued the three men stood motionless, watching it with a fas-

cinated stare, till Waythorn, to break the silence, said to Varick: 'Won't you have a cigar?'

He held out the case he had just tendered to Haskett, and Varick helped himself with a smile. Waythorn looked about for a match, and finding none, proffered a light from his own cigar. Haskett, in the background, held his ground mildly, examining his cigar-tip now and then, and stepping forward at the right moment to knock its ashes into the fire.

The footman at last withdrew, and Varick immediately began: 'If I could just say half a word to you about this business—'

'Certainly,' stammered Waythorn; 'in the dining-room—'

But as he placed his hand on the door it opened from without, and his wife appeared on the threshold.

She came in fresh and smiling, in her street dress and hat, shedding a fragrance from the boa which she loosened in advancing.

'Shall we have tea in here, dear?' she began; and then she caught sight of Varick. Her smile deepened, veiling a slight tremor of surprise.

'Why, how do you do?' she said with a distinct note of pleasure.

As she shook hands with Varick she saw Haskett standing behind him. Her smile faded for a moment, but she recalled it quickly, with a scarcely perceptible side-glance at Waythorn.

'How do you do, Mr. Haskett?' she said, and shook hands with him a shade less cordially.

The three men stood awkwardly before her, till Varick, always the most self-possessed, dashed into an explanatory phrase.

'We—I had to see Waythorn a moment on business,' he stammered, brick-red from chin to nape.

Haskett stepped forward with his air of mild obstinacy. 'I am sorry to intrude; but you appointed five o'clock—' he directed his resigned glance to the time-piece on the mantel.

She swept aside their embarrassment with a charming gesture of hospitality.

'I'm so sorry—I'm always late; but the afternoon was so lovely.' She stood drawing off her gloves, propitiatory and graceful, diffusing about her a sense of ease and familiarity in which the situation lost its grotesqueness. 'But before talking business,' she added brightly, 'I'm sure every one wants a cup of tea.'

She dropped into her low chair by the tea-table, and the two visitors, as if drawn by her smile, advanced to receive the cups she held out.

She glanced about for Waythorn, and he took the third cup with a laugh.

1904

PAUL ELMER MORE

1864–1937

CRITICISM [1]

Of all Matthew Arnold's books I sometimes think that not the least precious is the slender posthumous volume published by his daughter in 1902. It was long his habit to carry in his pocket a narrow diary in which he jotted down engagements for the day, mingled with short quotations from the books he was reading to serve as amulets, so to speak, against the importunities of business. The quotations for a selection of years printed by Mrs. Wodehouse from these *Notebooks* form what might be called the critic's breviary. Here, if anywhere, we seem to feel the very beating of the critic's heart, and to catch the inner voice of recollection and duty, corresponding to the poet's 'gleam,' which he followed so devoutly in his life. I do not know to what

1 More, in his preface to his *Selected Essays*, in which this essay was included, wrote: 'As it is, what strikes me most forcibly is the fact that the essays here selected will appear very old fashioned to those caught by the present trend of ideas. For the one thing characteristic of modern criticism, as exemplified by so influential a writer as I.A.Richards, is the complete absence of any search for the meaning of life, and in place of that an absorbing interest in what might be called the problem of æsthetic psychology,—which is indeed no more than a late-born offspring of the romantic heresy of art for art's sake. For this old-fashioned note I offer no apology; I am utterly convinced that literature divorced from life is an empty pursuit, and that an honest search for the meaning of life must lead to the simple faith of theism.' More, *Selected Essays*(N.Y., 1935),xii-xiii.

work in English to liken it unless it be the notebooks containing quotations from Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus written down by the author of the *Characteristics* with his comments, which Dr. Rand edited in 1900 as the *Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*.

Nor is it mere chance that Matthew Arnold and Shaftesbury should have left for posthumous publication these private memoranda, which with all their differences of form and substance are in their final impression upon the mind so curiously alike; for the two men themselves, in their outlook on life and in their relation to their respective ages, had much in common, and there is perhaps no better way to reach a dispassionate understanding of the virtue and limitations of criticism than by comparing Arnold with his great forerunner of the early eighteenth century. Both men were essentially critical in their mental habit, and both magnified the critic's office. 'I take upon me,' said Shaftesbury, 'absolutely to condemn the fashionable and prevailing custom of inveighing against critics as the common enemies, the pests and incendiaries of the commonwealth of Wit and Letters. I assert, on the contrary, that they are the props and pillars of this building; and that without the encouragement and propagation of such a race, we should remain as Gothic architects as ever.' And the purpose of Shaftesbury in upholding the function of criticism was much the same as Arnold's; he too was offended by the Gothic and barbarous self-complacency of his contemporaries—the Philistines, as he might have called them. As Arnold protested that the work of the English romantic revival was doomed 'to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs'; that Byron was 'empty of matter,' Shelley 'incoherent,' and Wordsworth 'wanting in completeness and variety,' just because they lacked critical background; so his predecessor censured the literature of his day. 'An English author would be all genius,' says Shaftesbury. 'He would reap the fruits of art, but without study, pains, or application. He thinks it necessary, indeed (lest his learning should be called in question), to show the world that he errs knowingly against the rules of art.'

Against this presumption of genius on the one hand and the self-complacency of Philistinism on the other, both critics took up the same weapons—the barbs of ridicule and irony. With Shaftesbury this method was an avowed creed. His essays are no more than sermons on two texts: that of Horace, '*Ridiculum acri Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res*—a jest often decides weighty matters better and more forcibly than can asperity'; and the saying of Gorgias Leontinus, which he misinterprets and expands for his own purpose, 'That humour was the only test of gravity; and gravity of humour. For a subject which would not bear raillery was suspicious; and a jest which would not bear a serious examination was certainly false wit.' With this touchstone of truth he proceeds to test the one-sided enthusiasm of his day, the smirking conceits, the pedantic pretensions, and the narrow dogmatisms whether of science or religion. 'There is a great difference,' he says, 'between seeking how to raise a laugh from everything, and seeking in everything what justly may be laughed at. For nothing is ridiculous except what is deformed; nor is anything proof against raillery except what is handsome and just.' The comic spirit is thus a kind of purgation of taste, and a way of return to nature. How deliberately Matthew Arnold used this weapon of ridicule in the service of sweet reasonableness, which is only his modern phrase, a little sentimentalised, for eighteenth-century nature; how magisterially he raised the laugh against his enemies, the bishops and the great austere toilers of the press and the mighty men of political Philistia, no one needs be told who has enjoyed the elaborate irony of *Culture and Anarchy* or of *Friendship's Garland*.

Sweet reasonableness, or 'sweetness and light,' to use the phrase as Arnold took it from Swift's *Battle of the Books*, is, I have suggested, little more than the modern turn for the deist's nature and reason; how nearly the two ideals approach each other you may see by comparing the 'good-breeding,' which is the aim of Shaftesbury's philosophy, with the 'culture' which is the end of Arnold's criticism. 'To philosophise,' said the former, 'in a just signification, is but to carry good-breeding a step higher. For the accomplishment of breeding is, to learn whatever is decent in company or beautiful in arts, and the sum of philosophy is, to

learn what is just in society and beautiful in Nature and the order of the world.' I have wondered sometimes whether Matthew Arnold had these words in mind when he formulated his definition of culture; whether his famous command is really but another echo from the ancient quarrel of the deists. The whole scope of the essay on *Sweetness and Light* is, he avows, 'to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world [Shaftesbury, too, like Arnold, is insistent on the *exemplaria Græca*]; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits.'

There is, I trust, something more than a pedantic curiosity in such a parallel, which might yet be much prolonged, between the author of *Culture and Anarchy* and the author of the *Characteristics*. It proves, if proof be necessary, more clearly than would any amount of direct exposition, that Matthew Arnold's method of criticism was not an isolated product of the nineteenth century, but that he belongs to one of the great families of human intelligence, which begins with Cicero, the father of them all, and passes through Erasmus and Boileau and Shaftesbury and Sainte-Beuve. These are the exemplars—not complete individually, I need not say—of what may be called the critical spirit: discriminators between the false and the true, the deformed and the normal; preachers of harmony and proportion and order, prophets of the religion of taste. If they deal much with the criticism of literature, this is because in literature more manifestly than anywhere else life displays its infinitely varied motives and results; and their practice is always to render literature itself more consciously a criticism of life. The past is the field out of which they draw their examples of what is in conformity with nature and of what departs from that norm. In that field they balance and weigh and measure; they are by intellect hesitators, but at heart very much in earnest.

These critics are sometimes contrasted to their detriment with the so-called creative writers, yet they themselves stood each among the first writers of his day, and it is not plain that, for instance, Tennyson, in any true estimation, added more to the intellectual life of the world than Matthew Arnold, or Lucretius than Cicero, though their method and aim may have been different. The more significant comparison at least is not with the so-called creative writers, but with the great fulminators of new creeds—between Matthew Arnold and the Carlyles and Ruskins and Huxleys of his day; between Shaftesbury and, let us say, Rousseau; Boileau and Descartes; Erasmus and Luther; Cicero and St. Paul. Such a contrast might seem at first to lie as much in efficiency as in quality. In the very nature of things the man who seizes on one deep-reaching idea, whether newly found or rediscovered, and with single-hearted fervour forces it upon the world, might appear to have the advantage in power over the man of critical temper, who weighs and refines; who is for ever checking the enthusiasm of the living by the authority of the dead; and whose doctrine, even though in the end he may assert it with sovereign contempt of doubters, is still the command to follow the well-tried path of common-sense. Better the half-truth that makes for action and jostles the world out of its ruts, men cry, than such a timid search for the whole truth as paralyses the will, and may after all prove only an exchange of depth for breadth. That might appear to be the plain lesson of history; yet I am not so sure. Is there not a possibility that in our estimate of these powers we are a little betrayed by the tumult of the times, just as we are prone in other things to mistake bustle for movement? The critical spirit, as it has been exercised, may have its limitations and may justly be open to censure, but I doubt if its true reproach will turn out in the end to be a lack of efficiency in comparison with the more assertive force of the reformers. I am inclined to believe, for instance, that the balancing spirit of Erasmus is really more at work among us to-day than that of the dogmatic and reforming Luther; that Cicero's philosophy, though they would gape to hear it said, is really more in the hearts of the men you will meet in the street than is the theology of St. Paul. This may be in part because the representatives of the critical spirit, by their very lack of warping origi-

nality and by their endeavour to separate the true from the false, the complete from the one-sided, stand with the great conservative forces of human nature, having their fame certified by the things that endure amid all the betrayals of time and fashion.

I know the deductions that must be made from that kind of fame. Cicero, it will be said, when in his *De Finibus* he brought together the various experiences of antiquity in regard to the meaning and values of life, weighing the claims of Stoic and Epicurean and the others, may have stood for something more comprehensive and balanced than did St. Paul with his new dogma of justification by faith. Yet St. Paul's theory of justification by faith, though it may be losing for us its cogent veracity, was the immediate driving force of history and a power that remade the world, while Cicero's nice discussions remained a luxury of the learned few. In one sense that is indisputably true; and yet, imprudent as it may sound, I question whether it is the whole truth. When I consider the part played by Stoic and Epicurean philosophies in the Renaissance and the transcendent influence of Cicero's dissertations upon the men of that day; when I consider that the impulse of Deism in the eighteenth century, as seen in Shaftesbury and his successors, was at bottom little more than a revival of this same Stoicism, as it had been subdued to the emotions by Cicero and mixed with Epicureanism; that Shaftesbury was, in fact, despite his worship of Epictetus, almost a pure Ciceronian; and when I consider that out of Deism sprang the dominant religion and social philosophy of our present world—when I consider these and many other facts, I question whether Cicero, while he certainly represents what is more enduring, has not been also, actually and personally, as dynamic an influence in civilisation as St. Paul, though the noise, no doubt, and the tumult have been around the latter.

We are still too near Matthew Arnold's day to determine the resultant of all the forces then at work, yet it would not be very rash even now to assert that his critical essays will be found in the end a broader and more lasting, as they are a saner, influence than the exaggerated æstheticism of Ruskin or the shrill prophesying of Carlyle or the scientific dogmatism of Huxley. No, if there is any deduction to be made to the value of criticism, it is not on the side of efficiency. It is well to remember Matthew Arnold's own words. 'Violent indignation with the past,' he says, 'abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future—these are the ways of Jacobinism. . . Culture [it is his word here for criticism] is always assigning to systemmakers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like.'

Perhaps it is a secret inkling of this vanity of the critic in its widest bearing, besides a natural antagonism of temper, that leads so many to carp against him and his trade. The inveterate hostility of 'creative' writers to criticism is well known, and has been neatly summed up by E. S. Dallas in *The Gay Science*:

> 'Ben Jonson spoke of critics as tinkers, who make more faults than they mend; Samuel Butler, as the fierce inquisitors of wit, and as butchers who have no right to sit on a jury; Sir Richard Steele, as of all mortals the silliest; Swift, as dogs, rats, wasps, or, at best, drones of the learned world; Shenstone, as asses, which by gnawing vines first taught the advantage of pruning them; Burns, as cut-throat bandits in the path of fame; Walter Scott, humorously reflecting the general sentiment, as caterpillars.'

The droll thing about it is that every one of these critics of criticism was so ready to act himself as butcher or ass or caterpillar. It is a common trick of the guild. For a modern instance, turn to Mr. Horace Traubel, the shirt-sleeved Boswell of Walt Whitman, and you will find pages of conversation recorded in which the seer of Camden belabours the professors of criticism and in almost the same breath exercises the art upon his brother poets with delightful frankness and at times rare penetration. But this ancient feud of the gentlemen of the pen is a special form, due in part to special causes, of the hostility that so often manifests itself against the critical spirit in general. The man of system and the man of unhesitating action are likely to

feel something like contempt for the mind that balances and waits. The imperial Mommsen felt this contempt, and showed it, in his treatment of Cicero; it is rife even yet in the current tone of condescension towards Erasmus as compared with Luther, to which Matthew Arnold replied by calling Luther 'a Philistine of genius'; Warburton showed it in his sneers at Shaftesbury as the man of taste, and Cardinal Newman has, with splendid politeness, echoed them; Matthew Arnold was equally feared and despised in his own lifetime, and it is an odd fact that you will to-day scarcely pick up a piece of third-rate criticism (in which there is likely to be anything at work rather than the critical spirit), but you will come upon some gratuitous fling against him. Most bitter of all was Henry Sidgwick's arraignment of 'The Prophet of Culture' in *Macmillan's Magazine* for August, 1867. There if anywhere the critical spirit was stabbed with its own weapon. You will recall the image of the pouncet-box:

> 'Mr. Arnold may say that he does not discourage action, but only asks for delay, in order that we may act with sufficient knowledge. This is the eternal excuse of indolence—insufficient knowledge. . . One cannot think on this subject without recalling the great man who recommended to philosophy a position very similar to that now claimed for culture. I wish to give Mr. Arnold the full benefit of his resemblance to Plato. But when we look closer at the two positions, the dissimilarity comes out: they have a very different effect on our feelings and imagination; and I confess I feel more sympathy with the melancholy philosopher looking out with hopeless placidity "from beneath the shelter of some wall" than with a cheerful modern liberal, tempered by renouncement, shuddering aloof from the rank exhalations of vulgar enthusiasm, and holding up the pouncet-box of culture betwixt the wind and his nobility.'

Such an onslaught on our prophet of culture as a languid and shrinking dilettante was fair enough in the heat of controversy and was at least justified by its own art, if not by certain affectations of its victim's style; but I protest against accepting it as essentially true. Any one might perceive that Matthew Arnold had beneath the irony and suavity of his manner a temper of determined seriousness; that, like the bride of Giacopone di Todi in his sonnet, his Muse might be young, gay, and radiant outside, but had

> 'a hidden ground
> Of thought and of austerity within.'

It would be interesting in this respect to continue the comparison of Arnold and Shaftesbury, and to show how near together they stood in their attitude towards nature and society and in their religion, and how profound was their own enthusiasm beneath their hostility to the sham or undisciplined enthusiasms of the day. Lord Shaftesbury might say that we have 'in the main a witty and good-humoured religion,' as Matthew Arnold might ridicule the sourness of the Nonconformists and the bleakness of the reformers in whose assemblies any child of nature, if he shall stray thither, is smitten with lamentation and mourning and woe; but there was solemnity enough, however we may rate their insight, in their own search for the God that sits concealed at the centre. Shaftesbury's creed became the formula of the deists. 'Still ardent in its pursuit,' the soul, he says, 'rests not here, nor satisfies itself with the beauty of a part, but, extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of all, and affects the interest and prosperity of the whole. True to its native world and higher country, 'tis here it seeks order and perfection; wishing the best, and hoping still to find a just and wise administration. And since all hope of this were vain and idle if no universal mind presided; since without such a supreme intelligence and providential care the distracted universe must be condemned to suffer infinite calamities; 'tis here the generous mind labours to discover that healing cause by which the interest of the whole is securely established, the beauty of things and the universal order happily sustained.' Matthew Arnold condensed that rhetoric into a phrase: 'The stream of tendency, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness.'

But the strongest evidence of their austerity of purpose is seen in those private notebooks which led me to couple their

names together in this study of the spirit of criticism. This is not the time to deal at length with that sober and anxious self-examination of the noble Lord, as Shaftesbury's enemies in the Church were so fond of calling him. It is one of the important documents to show how completely Deism was a revival of pagan morality. It is, in brief, no more than a translation of the great maxims of antiquity into modern purposes: the inner record of a man seeking character in the two elements of attention (*προσοχή*) and the harmony of life (*veræ numerosque modosque vitæ*), and of a man who thought that this pursuit must be maintained unrelentingly. Of the two books it may seem strange that Matthew Arnold's, which consists merely of brief quotations without comment, should really open to us more intimately the author's heart than does the direct self-questioning of Shaftesbury's. Yet a book more filled with sad sincerity, a more perfect confession of a life's purpose, will scarcely be found than these memoranda. 'I am glad to find,' he wrote once in a letter to his sister, 'that in the past year I have at least accomplished more than usual in the way of reading the books which at the beginning of the year I had put down to be read. . . The importance of reading, not slight stuff to get through the time, but the best that has been written, forces itself upon me more and more every year I live.' Now the *Notebooks* not only preserve some of these annual lists of books to be read, but show, in quintessential phrase, just what the books actually read meant to him. Some of the quotations are repeated a number of times, and if frequency of repetition can be taken as a criterion the maxim closest to Arnold's heart was the sentence, from what source I do not know: '*Semper aliquid certi proponendum est*—always some certain end must be kept in view.' It is but an expansion of the same idea that he expresses in the words set down more than once from some French author: 'A working life, a succession of labours which fill and moralise the days!' and in the beloved command of the *Imitation: 'Cum multa legeris et cognoveris, ad unum semper oportet redire principium*—when you have read and learned many things, it is necessary always to return to one principle.' That principle he sets down in aphorisms and exhortations from a hundred diverse sources—nowhere, perhaps, more succinctly than in the broken phrases of the stoic Lucan:

> 'servare modum, finemque tenere
> Naturamque sequi—
> Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo—
> In commune bonus.'
>
> '(To preserve measure, to hold fast to the end, and follow nature—To believe oneself born not for oneself alone but for all the world—good for the community of mankind.)'

He might well have applied to his own pursuit of culture the eulogy he quotes concerning another: 'Study, which for most men is only a frivolous amusement and often dangerous, was for Dom Rivet a serious occupation consecrated by religion.'

It was not a mere dilettante of sweetness and light who day by day laid such maxims as these upon his breast; it was not one who held up the pouncet-box of culture betwixt the wind and his nobility. Matthew Arnold, if any man in his generation, was by temperament a stoic for whom duty and submission and reverence made up the large part of life; and there is something of what we call the irony of fate in the thought that he who made *σπουδαιότης*, *high seriousness*, the test of great literature, should have suffered the reproach of levity. Yet, after all, fate is never quite blind in these things, and if criticism has thus drawn upon itself the censure of men like Sidgwick we may feel assured that in some way it has failed of the deeper truth. Those reproaches may in part be due to prejudice and revenge and the inevitable contrast of temperaments; they may err in ascribing to the critic a want of efficiency, as they may be wantonly perverse in denouncing him for frivolity; but they have a meaning and they cannot be overlooked. Now the future is often a strange revealer of secret things, and there is no surer way to detect the weak side of a leader than by studying the career of his disciples, or even of his successors.

You are familiar with the story of the concluding chapter of Pater's *Renaissance*—how it was withdrawn from the second edition of that book because the author 'con-

ceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall'; and how it was restored, with some slight changes, to the later editions where it now stands. And you know the moral of that essay: that life is but an uncertain interval before the universal judgment of death, a brief illusion of stability in the eternal flux, and that 'our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time.' And 'of this wisdom,' he concludes, 'the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.' That philosophy of the Oxonian Epicurus and its scandal in a very un-Epicurean land are familiar enough; but perhaps we do not always stop to think how plausibly this doctrine of crowning our moments with the highest sensations of art flows from Matthew Arnold's definition of criticism as the disinterested endeavour 'to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind.'

The next step from Pater's Epicureanism, and so by a further remove from Arnold's criticism, brings us to one whose name, unfortunately, must always be mentioned with regret, but who is more significant in the development of English letters than is sometimes allowed. At the time when Paterism, as a recent writer has said, was 'tripping indelicately along the Oxford High and by the banks of the Cherwell,' a young votary of the Muses from Dublin came upon the scene, and began to push the doctrine of Pater as far beyond what the master intended as Pater had gone beyond Matthew Arnold. This is the young man who 'would occasionally be seen walking the streets carrying a lily or a sunflower in his hand, at which he would gaze intently and admiringly.' He had fashioned himself deliberately to pose as the head of a new sect of 'æsthetes,' as they styled themselves, who expanded Arnold's excluded tribe of Philistines to embrace all the sober citizens of the world. The fate of Oscar Wilde is still like a fresh wound in the public memory. What I wish to call to your mind is the direct connection (strengthened no doubt by influences from across the Channel) between Pater's philosophy of the sensation-crowded moment and such a poem as that in which Wilde attempted to concentrate all the passionate moments of the past in his gloating revery upon *The Sphinx*. He was himself not unaware of the treachery of the path he had chosen; the sonnet which he prefixed to his book of poems is sincere with the pathos of conscious insincerity, and is a memorable comment on one of the tragic ambitions of a century:

'To drift with every passion till my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,
Is it for this that I have given away
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control?

. . . . . .

Surely there was a time I might have trod
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance—
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?'

The answer to the poet's query he was himself to write in *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*:

'Silently we went round and round,
And through each hollow mind
The Memory of dreadful things
Rushed like a dreadful wind,
And Horror stalked before each man,
And Terror crept behind.'

This Memory of dreadful things is the too logical end, step by step, of the philosophy of the sensation-crowded moment; the concealed suspicion of it in Matthew Arnold's definition of criticism was the justification, if any there be, of the contempt hurled upon him by some of his contemporaries.

It is necessary to repeat that such a derivation from Matthew Arnold is essentially unfair because it leaves out of view the real purpose and heart of the man. If we could not read his great moral energy in his *Essays*, as I trust we all of us can, and if we did not know the profound influence of his critical philosophy upon the better life of our age, we could still dispel our doubts by

looking into the *Notebooks*, in which memory is not turned to dreadful things for the soul's disgrace, but is the guide and impulse to strong resolution and beautiful forbearance. Yet withal it remains true that the Epicureanism of Pater and the hedonism of Oscar Wilde were able to connect themselves in a disquieting way with one side of Matthew Arnold's gospel of culture; and it behooves us who come upon the heels of this movement and who believe that the critical spirit is still to be one of the powers making in the world for right enjoyment, it behooves us to examine the first definition of culture or criticism—the words had about the same meaning as Arnold used them—and see whether something was not there forgotten. The fault lay not in any intrinsic want of efficiency in the critical spirit, nor in any want of moral earnestness in Matthew Arnold or Shaftesbury: that we have seen. But these men were lacking in another direction: they missed a philosophy which could bind together their moral and their æsthetic sense, a positive principle besides the negative force of ridicule and irony; and, missing this, they left criticism more easily subject to a one-sided and dangerous development.

To the nature of that omission, to the *porro unum necessarium*, we may be directed, I think, by the critical theory of the one who carried the practice, in other respects, to its lowest degradation. In Oscar Wilde's dialogue on *The Critic as Artist*, one of the most extraordinary mixtures ever compounded of truth flaunting in the robes of error and error assuming the gravity of truth, you will remember that the advocate of criticism at the height of his argument proclaims the true man of culture to be him who has learned 'the best that is known and thought in the world' (he uses Matthew Arnold's words), and who thus, as Matthew Arnold neglected to add, 'bears within himself the dreams, and ideas, and feelings of myriad generations.' The addition is important, how important, or at least how large, may be seen in the really splendid, if somewhat morbid, passage in which the idea is developed. Let me quote at some length:

> 'To know anything about oneself, one must know all about others. There must be no mood with which one cannot sympathise, no dead mode of life that one cannot make alive. Is this impossible? I think not. By revealing to us the absolute mechanism of all action, and so freeing us from the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility, the scientific principle of Heredity has become, as it were, the warrant for the contemplative life. It has shown us that we are never less free than when we try to act. It has hemmed us round with the nets of the hunter, and written upon the wall the prophecy of our doom. We may not watch it, for it is within us. We may not see it, save in a mirror that mirrors the soul. It is Nemesis without her mask. It is the last of the Fates, and the most terrible. It is the only one of the Gods whose real name we know.
>
> 'And yet, while in the sphere of practical and external life it has robbed energy of its freedom and activity of its choice, in the subjective sphere, where the soul is at work, it comes to us, this terrible shadow, with many gifts in its hands, gifts of strange temperaments and subtle susceptibilities, gifts of wild ardours and chill moods of indifference, complex multiform gifts of thoughts that are at variance with each other, and passions that war against themselves. And so, it is not our own life that we live, but the lives of the dead, and the soul that dwells within us is no single spiritual entity, making us personal and individual, created for our service, and entering into us for our joy. . . It can help us to leave the age in which we were born, and to pass into other ages, and find ourselves not exiled from their air. It can teach us how to escape from our experience, and to realise the experiences of those who are greater than we are. The pain of Leopardi crying out against life becomes our pain. Theocritus blows on his pipe, and we laugh with the lips of nymph and shepherd. In the wolfskin of Pierre Vidal we flee before the hounds, and in the armour of Lancelot we ride from the bower of the Queen. We have whispered the secret of our love beneath the cowl of Abelard, and in the stained raiment of Villon have put our shame into song. We can see the dawn through Shelley's eyes, and when

we wander with Endymion the Moon grows amorous of our youth. Ours is the anguish of Atys, and ours the weak rage and noble sorrows of the Dane. Do you think that it is the imagination that enables us to live these countless lives? Yes: it is the imagination; and the imagination is the result of heredity. It is simply concentrated race-experience.'

Now, this theory of race-experience, as Oscar Wilde formulated it, lends itself, no doubt, to an easy fallacy. I am aware of the rebuke administered to one who was by the range of his knowledge and by his historic sense much more justified in such a presumption than was Oscar Wilde. 'Is it not the strangest illusion,' exclaimed the biographer of Renan, 'to believe that the mere reading of the Acts of the martyrs is sufficient to give us their soul, to transfer to us in its real intensity the ardour which ravished them amidst their tortures? . . . Those who have lost all the energy of living and acting may, if they choose, shut themselves up in this kingdom of shadows; that is their affair. But that they should proclaim theirs as the true life, is not to be conceded to them.' Séailles was right. These men, whether it be a paradox-monger like Oscar Wilde or a great scholar like Renan, should have laid to heart the favourite maxim of Matthew Arnold, *semper aliquid certi proponendum est*: true culture has always before its eyes a definite end and is for self-discipline, not for revery. Nor am I unaware that the theory as expressed by Oscar Wilde is mixed up with his own personal taint of decadence. One thing at least is certain: that the way of the true critical spirit is not to free us, as he boasts, from 'the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility.' His avowal in the same dialogue that the sole aim of art is to produce the 'beautiful sterile emotions' so hateful to the world, his shameless vaunt that 'there is nothing sane about the worship of beauty,' his whole philosophy of the ego as above the laws of society, cannot be severed from the memory of dreadful things in which his own song ended: such a philosophy is in fact a denial of the validity of that very race-experience out of which he attempts to derive it. In this respect again he should have remembered the maxim of Matthew Arnold: 'A working life, a succession of labours that fill and moralise the days.' The aim of culture is not to merge the present in a sterile dream of the past, but to hold the past as a living force in the present. In omitting these aspects of criticism Pater and, to a greater extent, Oscar Wilde fell into extravagance far more deleterious to culture than was any omission or incompleteness on the part of Matthew Arnold.

Nevertheless, with all its false emphasis and its admixture of personal error, that positive and emotional reassumption of the past, that association of the contemplative life (the *βίος θεωρητικός*) with the rapture of memory, contains the hint of a great truth which must be grasped and properly exercised if criticism is to confirm itself against such hostility as has hitherto kept it on the defensive. I would not say even that the mysticism, out of which Oscar Wilde's critical theory really springs, though expressed in the modish language of scientific evolution, is essentially perverse. For in a very true sense the past of mankind, by the larger race-memory and particularly by that form of it which we call literature, abides as a living reality in our present. We suffer not our individual destiny alone but the fates of humanity also. We are born into an inheritance of great emotions—into the unconquerable hopes and defeated fears of an immeasurable past, the tragedies and the comedies of love, the ardent aspirations of faith, the baffled questionings of evil, the huge laughter at facts, the deep-welling passion of peace. Without that common inheritance how inconceivably poor and shallow would be this life of the world and our life in it! These recorded emotions are, indeed, not for us what they were in actuality, nor by sitting at our own ease with memory can we enter into the exact emotions of the martyr at the stake and the hero in his triumph. These things are now transmuted into something the same and different, something less and greater. The intensity of the actual moment they cannot possess, but on the other hand with this loss of separate reality they are associated with life as a whole, and in that unity of experience obtain, what they lacked before, a significance and design. They bear in a way the same re-

lation to practical life as that life bore to the ideal world out of which it arose and into which it is continually passing. And thus this larger memory, in its transmuting and unifying power, may not unmeaningly be regarded as the purpose of activity, and literature may not too presumptuously be cherished as the final end of existence. Some such mystery as this was hinted in the Greek and Gnostic doctrine of the *logos*, the Word, and in the Hindu name for the creator as *vâcas pati*, Lord of the Word. And if such a theory sounds too absurdly metaphysical for the ears of prudent common-sense, consider that Homer, no philosopher of empty phrases surely, meant nothing very different when he judged of actions by their fame in future story. To him the warring of armies for ten long years and the desolation of Troy were for no other purpose than that the inner life of the race might be enriched by memory:

'Thus the gods fated, and such ruin wove
That song might flourish for posterity.'

And in this theory of memory criticism has an important office. We are beginning to hear a good deal these days about the French metaphysician, M. Henri Bergson, of whom Prof. William James has avowed himself a willing disciple, and whose disquisitions on *Matière et mémoire* and *L'Évolution créatrice* are perhaps more talked of than any other recent books of philosophy. I do not pretend to pronounce on the full scope of his theories, but his conception of the function of memory is rich with applications to the matter we have in hand. Our consciousness, that is to say our very self, is not, he says, a thing born new with each moment, not a *mens momentanea*, but an uninterrupted stream of activity, and what we now feel is directly bound up with what we have felt before. Nor is this consciousness, on the other hand, a mere heaping together indiscriminately of perceptions and emotions, but it is an active faculty, or, I should prefer to say, the servant of some active faculty, that depresses this particular experience into the background and centres attention upon that other experience, thus by a process of criticism secreting the present, so to speak, out of the past. Such a philosophy finds a new and profound truth in the saying of Pascal: '*La mémoire est nécessaire à toutes les opérations de l'esprit*—memory is necessary to all the operations of the mind.'

This notion of the active memory is, I am told by those who should know, mixed up in Bergson with a questionable metaphysic, yet in itself alone it should seem to be nothing more than the laborious expression of a very simple fact. We have all of us met now and then in our daily intercourse a man whose conversation impressed us immediately as possessing a certain ripeness of wisdom, a certain pertinency and depth of meaning. If we wished to characterise such a man in a single word, we should perhaps say that he was essentially educated. We feel that he has within him some central force which enables him to choose consistently amidst the innumerable conflicting impulses and attractions and dissipations of life, that he moves forward, not at haphazard, but by the direction of some principle of conduct, and that he can be depended upon for counsel and comfort. Well, if you stop to analyse this quality of mind, which we will call education, you will discover in every case, I believe, that the determining trait is just the force of a critical memory. I do not mean by this the mere facility of recalling the emotions and events and spectacles which have come to a man with the years; for such undisciplined reminiscence may be but a shabby wisdom to the man himself, as it may be the very contrary of joy to his hearer. I mean rather the faculty of selection as well as of retention, the weighing of cause and effect, the constant and active assumption of the past in the present, by which the events of life are no longer regarded as isolated and fortuitous moments, but are merged into a unity of experience. Those in whom this faculty rules are commonly the possessors of practical wisdom, but there are others, a few, who by its virtue are raised into another kind of wisdom. With these men the selective, reconciling memory is associated, more or less consciously, with the Platonic reminiscence in such a manner that not only are the past and present of passing time made one but our ephemeral life is fitted into that great ring of eternity which Henry Vaughan saw as in a dream. So it is that to them the things which others behold as sudden un-

related facts are made shadows and types of the everlasting ideas; and with the accumulation of knowledge they grow ripe in vision,

'Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.'

And as our private memory is not a merely passive retention of sensations, so in literature the critical spirit is at work as a conscious energy of selection. The function of criticism, as thus understood, is far removed from the surrender to luxurious revery which the impressionists believed it to be; nor is the good critic, as Anatole France said, he who recounts the adventures of his soul amid masterpieces; he is rather one who has before him always the *aliquid certi*, the definite aim of a Matthew Arnold. He does not, like Oscar Wilde, seek by losing the present in the past to throw off 'the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility'; he is rather one whose life is 'a succession of labours that fill and moralise the days'—not in the narrow didactic sense, it need scarcely be said, but in so far as his task is a continual weighing of values. But the critical spirit is also something deeper than Matthew Arnold perceived, or, at least, clearly expressed. The error of criticism in his hands, as in the hands of his predecessors, was that in the exercise of judgment it used the past too much as a dead storehouse of precepts for schoolmastering the present; it was not sufficiently aware of the relation of this faculty of judgment to the indwelling and ever-acting memory of things. Here is the one touch of insight needed, I think, to raise criticism, while not forgetting its special duty of discrimination and judgment, to a more independent and self-respecting *genre*. In its conscious creation of the field of the present out of the past it takes an honoured, if not equal, place by the side of those impulses, more commonly recognised as creative, which are continually adding new material for its selective energy. 'Valuing is creating,' said Nietzsche; 'to value is the treasure and jewel among all things valued.' The critical spirit is thus akin to that force of design or final cause in the Aristotelian sense, which we are beginning once more to divine as the guiding principle, itself unchanged, at work within the evolutionary changes of nature; and in so far as it becomes aware of this high office it introduces into our intellectual life an element outside of alteration and growth and decay, a principle to which time is the minister and not the master.

Literary criticism is, indeed, in this sense only the specific exercise of a faculty which works in many directions. All scholars, whether they deal with history or sociology or philosophy or language or, in the narrower use of the word, literature, are servants of the critical spirit, in so far as they transmit and interpret and mould the sum of experience from man to man and from generation to generation. Might not one even say that at a certain point criticism becomes almost identical with education, and that by this standard we may judge the value of any study as an instrument of education, and may estimate the merit of any special presentation of that study? It is at least, in the existing chaos of pedagogical theories, a question worthy of consideration.

1910

GEORGE SANTAYANA

1863–

JUSTIFICATION OF ART

IT is no longer the fashion among philosophers to decry art. Either its influence seems to them too slight to excite alarm, or their systems are too lax to subject anything to censure which has the least glamour or ideality about it. Tired, perhaps, of daily resolving the conflict between science and religion, they prefer to assume silently a harmony between morals and art. Moral harmonies, however, are not given; they have to be made. The curse of superstition is that it justifies and protracts their absence by proclaiming their invisible presence. Of course a rational religion could not

conflict with a rational science; and similarly an art that was wholly admirable would necessarily play into the hand of progress. But as the real difficulty in the former case lies in saying what religion and what science would be truly rational, so here the problem is how far extant art is a benefit to mankind, and how far, perhaps, a vice or a burden.

That art is *prima facie* and in itself a good cannot be doubted. It is a spontaneous activity, and that settles the question. Yet the function of ethics is precisely to revise *prima facie* judgements of this kind and to fix the ultimate resultant of all given interests, in so far as they can be combined. In the actual disarray of human life and desire, wisdom consists in knowing what goods to sacrifice and what simples to pour into the supreme mixture. The extent to which æsthetic values are allowed to colour the resultant or highest good is a point of great theoretic importance, not only for art but for general philosophy. If art is excluded altogether or given only a trivial rôle, perhaps as a necessary relaxation, we feel at once that a philosophy so judging human arts is ascetic or post-rational. It pretends to guide life from above and from without; it has discredited human nature and mortal interests, and has thereby undermined itself, since it is at best but a partial expression of that humanity which it strives to transcend. If, on the contrary, art is prized as something supreme and irresponsible, if the poetic and mystic glow which it may bring seems its own complete justification, then philosophy is evidently still pre-rational or, rather, non-existent; for the beasts that listened to Orpheus belong to this school.

To be bewitched is not to be saved, though all the magicians and æsthetes in the world should pronounce it to be so. Intoxication is a sad business, at least for a philosopher; for you must either drown yourself altogether, or else when sober again you will feel somewhat fooled by yesterday's joys and somewhat lost in to-day's vacancy. The man who would emancipate art from discipline and reason is trying to elude rationality, not merely in art, but in all existence. He is vexed at conditions of excellence that make him conscious of his own incompetence and failure. Rather than consider his function, he proclaims his self-sufficiency. A way foolishness has of revenging itself is to excommunicate the world.

If a practice can point to its innocence, it it can absolve itself from concern for a world with which it does not interfere, it has justified itself to those who love it, though it may not yet have recommended itself to those who do not. Now art, more than any other considerable pursuit, more even than speculation, is abstract and inconsequential. Born of suspended attention, it ends in itself. It encourages sensuous abstraction, and nothing concerns it less than to influence the world. Nor does it really do so in a notable degree. Social changes do not reach artistic expression until after their momentum is acquired and their other collateral effects are fully predetermined. Scarcely is a school of art established, giving expression to prevailing sentiment, when this sentiment changes and makes that style seem empty and ridiculous. The expression has little or no power to maintain the movement it registers, as a waterfall has little or no power to bring more water down. Currents may indeed cut deep channels, but they cannot feed their own springs—at least not until the whole revolution of nature is taken into account.

In the individual, also, art registers passions without stimulating them; on the contrary, in stopping to depict them it steals away their life; and whatever interest and delight it transfers to their expression it subtracts from their vital energy. This appears unmistakably in erotic and in religious art. Though the artist's avowed purpose here be to arouse a practical impulse, he fails in so far as he is an artist in truth; for he then will seek to move the given passions only through beauty, but beauty is a rival object of passion in itself. Lascivious and pious works, when beauty has touched them, cease to give out what is wilful and disquieting in their subject and become altogether intellectual and sublime. There is a high breathlessness about beauty that cancels lust and superstition. The artist, in taking the latter for his theme, renders them innocent and interesting, because he looks at them from above, composes their attitudes and surroundings harmoniously, and makes them food for the mind. Accordingly it is only in a refined and secondary stage

that active passions like to amuse themselves with their æsthetic expression. Unmitigated lustiness and raw fanaticism will snarl at pictures. Representations begin to interest when crude passions recede, and feel the need of conciliating liberal interests and adding some intellectual charm to their dumb attractions. Thus art, while by its subject it may betray the preoccupations among which it springs up, embodies a new and quite innocent interest.

This interest is more than innocent; it is liberal. Art has met, on the whole, with more success than science or morals. Beauty gives men the best hint of ultimate good which their experience as yet can offer; and the most lauded geniuses have been poets, as if people felt that those seers, rather than men of action or thought, had lived ideally and known what was worth knowing. That such should be the case, if the fact be admitted, would indeed prove the rudimentary state of human civilization. The truly comprehensive life should be the statesman's, for whom perception and theory might be expressed and rewarded in action. The ideal dignity of art is therefore merely symbolic and vicarious. As some people study character in novels, and travel by reading tales of adventure, because real life is not yet so interesting to them as fiction, or because they find it cheaper to make their experiments in their dreams, so art in general is a rehearsal of rational living, and recasts in idea a world which we have no present means of recasting in reality. Yet this rehearsal reveals the glories of a possible performance better than do the miserable experiments until now executed on the reality.

When we consider the present distracted state of government and religion, there is much relief in turning from them to almost any art, where what is good is altogether and finally good, and what is bad is at least not treacherous. When we consider further the senseless rivalries, the vanities, the ignominy that reign in the 'practical' world, how doubly blessed it becomes to find a sphere where limitation is an excellence, where diversity is a beauty, and where every man's ambition is consistent with every other man's and even favourable to it! It is indeed so in art; for we must not import into its blameless labours the bickerings and jealousies of criticism. Critics quarrel with other critics, and that is a part of philosophy. With an artist no sane man quarrels, any more than with the colour of a child's eyes. As nature, being full of seeds, rises into all sorts of crystallizations, each having its own ideal and potential life, each a nucleus of order and a habitation for the absolute self, so art, though in a medium poorer than pregnant matter, and incapable of intrinsic life, generates a semblance of all conceivable beings. What nature does with existence, art does with appearance; and while the achievement leaves us, unhappily, much where we were before in all our efficacious relations, it entirely renews our vision and breeds a fresh world in fancy, where all form has the same inner justification that all life has in the real world. As no insect is without its rights and every cripple has his dream of happiness, so no artistic fact, no child of imagination, is without its small birthright of beauty. In this freer element, competition does not exist and everything is Olympian. Hungry generations do not tread down the ideal but only its spokesmen or embodiments, that have cast in their lot with other material things. Art supplies constantly to contemplation what nature seldom affords in concrete experience—the union of life and peace.

1905

SOCIETY AND SOLITUDE

O solitudo, sola beatitudo,[1] Saint Bernard said; but might he not have said just as well, *O societas, sola felicitas*?[2] Just as truly, I think; because when a man says that the only happiness is this or that, he is like a lover saying that Mary Jane is the one woman in the world. She may be truly the one woman for him, though even that is not probable; but he cannot mean to assert that she is the only woman living, nor to deny that each of the others might be the one woman for somebody. Now, when a Hegelian philosopher, contradicting Saint Bernard, says that society is his be-all and end-all, that he himself is nothing but an invisible point at which relations cross, and that if you removed from him his connection with Hegel, with his university, his church, his wife, and his publishers, there

1 'O Solitude, sole felicity!'
2 'O Society, sole felicity!'

would be nothing left, or at best a name and a peg to hang a gown on, far be it from me to revise his own analysis of his nature; society may be the only felicity and the only reality for him. But that cannot annul the judgement of Saint Bernard. He had a great mind and a great heart, and he knew society well; at least, he accepted the verdict which antiquity had passed on society, after a very long, brilliant, and hearty experience of it; and he knew the religious life and solitude as well; and I can't help thinking that he, too, must have been right in his self-knowledge, and that solitude must have been the only happiness for him.

Nevertheless, the matter is not limited to this confronting of divers honest judgements, or confessions of moral experience. The natures expressed in these judgements have a long history, and are on different levels; the one may be derived from the other. Thus it is evident that the beatific solitude of Saint Bernard was filled with a kind of society; he devoted it to communion with the Trinity, or to composing fervent compliments to the Virgin Mary. It was only the society to be found in inns and hovels, in castles, sacristies, and refectories, that he thought it happiness to avoid. That the wilderness to which hermits flee must be peopled by their fancy, could have been foreseen by any observer of human nature. Tormenting demons or ministering angels must needs appear, because man is rooted in society and his instincts are addressed to it; for the first nine months, or even years, of his existence he is a parasite; and scarcely are these parental bonds a little relaxed, when he instinctively forms other ties, that turn him into a husband and father, and keep him such all his days. If ever he finds happiness in solitude, it can only be by lavishing on objects of his imagination the attentions which his social functions require that he should lavish on something. Without exercising these faculties somehow his nature would be paralysed; there would be no fuel to feed a spiritual flame. All Saint Bernard could mean, then, is that happiness lies in this substitution of an ideal for a natural society, in converse with thoughts rather than with things. Such a substitution is normal, and a mark of moral vigour; we must not be misled into comparing it with a love of dolls or of lap-dogs. Dolls are not impersonal, and lap-dogs are not ideas: they are only less rebellious specimens of the genus thing; they are more portable idols. To substitute the society of ideas for that of things is simply to live in the mind; it is to survey the world of existences in its truth and beauty rather than in its personal perspectives, or with practical urgency. It is the sole path to happiness for the intellectual man, because the intellectual man cannot be satisfied with a world of perpetual change, defeat, and imperfection. It is the path trodden by ancient philosophers and modern saints or poets; not, of course, by modern writers on philosophy (except Spinoza), because these have not been philosophers in the vital sense; they have practised no spiritual discipline, suffered no change of heart, but lived on exactly like other professors, and exerted themselves to prove the existence of a God favourable to their own desires, instead of searching for the God that happens to exist. Certainly this path, in its beginnings, is arduous, and leaves the natural man somewhat spare and haggard; he seems to himself to have fasted for forty days and forty nights, and the world regards his way of living afterwards as rather ghostly and poor. But he usually congratulates himself upon it in the end; and of those who persevere some become saints and some poets and some philosophers.

Yet why, we may ask, should happiness be found exclusively in this ideal society where none intrudes? If the intellectual man cannot lay up his treasures in a world of change, the natural man can perfectly well satisfy his instincts within it; and why shouldn't the two live amicably together in a house of two stories? I can see no essential reason; but historically natural society long ago proved a moral failure. It could not harmonize nor decently satisfy even the instincts on which it rests. Hence the philosophers have felt bound not only to build themselves a superstructure but to quit the ground floor—materially, if possible, by leading a monastic life, religiously in any case by not expecting to find much except weeping and wailing in this vale of tears. We may tax this despair with being premature, and call such a flight into an imaginary world a desperate expedient; at any time the attempts of the natural man to live

his comic life happily may be renewed, and may succeed. Solitude peopled with ideas might still remain to employ the mind; but it would not be the only beatitude.

Yet the insecurity of natural society runs deeper, for natural society itself is an expedient and a sort of refuge of despair. It, too, in its inception, seemed a sacrifice and a constraint. The primitive soul hates order and the happiness founded on order. The barbarous soul hates justice and peace. The belly is always rebelling against the members. The belly was once all in all; it was a single cell floating deliciously in a warm liquid; it had no outer organs; it thought it didn't need them. It vegetated in peace; no noises, no alarms, no lusts, no nonsense. Ah, veritably solitude was blessedness then! But it was a specious solitude and a precarious blessedness, resting on ignorance. The warm liquid might cool, or might dry up; it might breed all sorts of enemies; presently heaven might crack and the cell be cleft in two. Happy the hooded microbe that put forth feelers in time, and awoke to its social or unsocial environment! I am not sure that, beneath the love of ideal society, there was not in Saint Bernard a lingering love of primeval peace, of seminal slumber; that he did not yearn for the cell biological as well as for the cell monastic. Life, mere living, is a profound ideal, pregnant with the memory of a possible happiness, the happiness of protoplasm; and the advocate of moral society must not reckon without his host. He has a rebellious material in hand; his every atom is instinct with a life of its own which it may reassert, upsetting his calculations and destroying his organic systems. Only the physical failure of solitude drove the spirit at first into society, as the moral failure of society may drive it later into solitude again. If any one said, then, that happiness lies only in society, his maxim would be no less sincere and solid than Saint Bernard's, but it would not be so profound. For beneath natural society, in the heart of each of its members, there is always an intense and jealous solitude, the sleep of elemental life which can never be wholly broken; and above natural society there is always another solitude—a placid ethereal wilderness, the heaven of ideas—beckoning the mind.

1918–1921 1922

AT HEAVEN'S GATE

SKYLARKS, if they exist elsewhere, must be homesick for England. They need these kindly mists to hide and to sustain them. Their flexible throats would soon be parched, far from these vaporous meadows and hedgerows rich in berries and loam. How should they live in arid tablelands, or at merciless altitudes, where there is nothing but scorching heat or a freezing blizzard? What space could they find for solitude and freedom in the tangle of tropical forests, amongst the monkeys and parrots? What reserve, what tenderness, what inward springs of happiness could they treasure amid those gross harlot-like flowers? No, they are the hermits of this mild atmosphere, fled to its wilderness of gentle light. Well may they leave it to eagles to rush against the naked sun, as if its round eye challenged them to single combat: not theirs the stupid ferocity of passion against fact, anger against light, swiftness against poise, beak and talons against intangible fire. Larks may not be very clever, but they are not so foolish as to be proud, or to scream hoarsely against the nature of things. Having wings and voluble throats they play with them for pure pleasure; they are little artists and little gentlemen; they disdain to employ their faculties for their mere utility, or only in order to pounce down to the earth, whenever they spy a dainty morsel, or to return to sulk shivering on some solitary crag, their voracity but half appeased, like eagles dreaming of their next victim. Of course, even the most playful songster must eat, and skylarks no doubt keep an eye open for worms, and their nest calls them back to terrene affections; but they are as forgetful of earth as they can be, and insatiable craving does not stamp itself on their bent necks, as if they were vultures, nor strain their feathers of iron. No more are they inspired by sentimental pangs and love-sick like the nightingale; they do not hide in the labyrinthine shade of ilex or cypress, from there to wail in the melancholy moonlight, as it were a seductive serenade addressed to mortal lovers. No, the trilling of larks is not for mankind. Like English poets they sing to themselves of nature, inarticulately happy in a bath of light and freedom, sporting for the sake of sport,

turning what doubts they may have into sweetness, not asking to see or to know anything ulterior. They must needs drink the dew amongst these English fields, peeping into the dark little hearts and flushed petals of these daisies, like the heart and cheeks of an English child, or into these buttercups, yellow like his Saxon hair. They could hardly have built their nests far from this maze of little streams, or from these narrow dykes and ditches, arched with the scented tracery of limes and willows. They needed this long, dull, chilly winter in which to gather their unsuspected fund of yearning and readiness for joy; so that when high summer comes at last they may mount with virgin confidence and ardour through these sunlit spaces, to pour their souls out at heaven's gate.

At heaven's gate, but not in heaven. The sky, as these larks rise higher and higher, grows colder and thinner; if they could rise high enough, it would be a black void. All this fluid and dazzling atmosphere is but the drapery of earth; this cerulean vault is only a film round the oceans. As these choristers pass beyond the nether veils of air, the sun becomes fierce and comfortless; they freeze and are dazzled; they must hurry home again to earth if they would live. They must put fuel in their little engines: after all it was flesh and blood in them that were praising the Lord. And accordingly, down they drop to their nests and peck about, anxious and silent; but their song never comes down. Up there they leave it, in the glittering desert it once ravished, in what we call the past. They bore their glad offering to the gate and returned empty; but the gladness of it, which in their palpitation and hurry they only half guessed, passed in and is a part of heaven. In the home of all good, from which their frail souls fetched it for a moment, it is still audible for any ear that ever again can attune itself to that measure. All that was loved or beautiful at any time, or that shall be so hereafter, all that never was but that ought to have been, lives in that paradise, in the brilliant treasure-house of the gods.

How many an English spirit, too modest to be heard here, has now committed its secret to that same heaven! Caught by the impulse of the hour, they rose like larks in the morning, cheerily, rashly, to meet the unforeseen, fatal, congenial adventure, the goal not seen, the air not measured, but the firm heart steady through the fog or blinding fire, making the best of what came, trembling but ready for what might come, with a simple courage which was half joy in living and half willingness to die. Their first flight was often their last. What fell to earth was only a poor dead body, one of a million; what remained above perhaps nothing to speak of, some boyish sally or wistful fancy, less than the song of a lark for God to treasure up in his omniscience and eternity. Yet these common brave fools knew as well as the lark the thing that they could do, and did it; and of other gifts and other adventures they were not envious. Boys and free men are always a little inclined to flout what is not the goal of their present desires, or is beyond their present scope; spontaneity in them has its ebb-flow in mockery. Their tight little selves are too vigorous and too clearly determined to brood much upon distant things; but they are true to their own nature, they know and love the sources of their own strength. Like the larks, those English boys had drunk here the quintessence of many a sunlit morning; they had rambled through these same fields, fringed with hedges and peeping copse and downs purple with heather; these paths and streams had enticed them often; they had been vaguely happy in these quiet, habitable places. It was enough for them to live, as for nature to revolve; and fate, in draining in one draught the modest cup of their spirit, spared them the weary dilution and waste of it in the world. The length of things is vanity, only their height is joy.

Of myself also I would keep nothing but what God may keep of me—some lovely essence, mine for a moment in that I beheld it, some object of devout love enshrined where all other hearts that have a like intelligence of love in their day may worship it; but my loves themselves and my reasonings are but a flutter of feathers weaker than a lark's, a prattle idler than his warblings, happy enough if they too may fly with him and die with him at the gate of heaven.

1914–1918 1922

O WORLD, THOU CHOOSEST NOT THE BETTER PART![1]

O WORLD, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

1884 1894

ON THE DEATH OF A METAPHYSICIAN

UNHAPPY dreamer, who outwinged in flight
The pleasant region of the things I love,
And soared beyond the sunshine, and above
The golden cornfields and the dear and bright
Warmth of the hearth,—blasphemer of delight,
Was your proud bosom not at peace with Jove,
That you sought, thankless for his guarded grove,
The empty horror of abysmal night?
Ah, the thin air is cold above the moon!
I stood and saw you fall, befooled in death,
As, in your numbèd spirit's fatal swoon,
You cried you were a god, or were to be;
I heard with feeble moan your boastful breath
Bubble from depths of the Icarian sea.

c.1890 1923

1 Of his poetry, Santayana says: 'If their prosody is worn and traditional, like a liturgy, it is because they represent the initiation of a mind into a world older and larger than itself; not the chance experiences of a stray individual, but his submission to what is not his chance experience; to the truth of nature and the moral heritage of mankind. Here is the uncertain hand of an apprentice, but of an apprentice in a great school. Verse is one of the traditions of literature. Like the orders of Greek architecture, the sonnet or the couplet or the quatrain are better than anything else that has been devised to serve the same function; and the innate freedom of poets to hazard new forms does not abolish the freedom of all men to adopt the old ones. . . . For as to the subject of these poems, it is simply my philosophy in the making.' Santayana, *Poems*(N.Y., 1935), ix–xii.

OF THEE THE NORTHMAN BY HIS BEACHÈD GALLEY[2]

OF thee the Northman by his beachèd galley
Dreamt, as he watched the never-setting Ursa
And longed for summer and thy light, O sacred
Mediterranean.

Unseen he loved thee; for the heart within him
Knew earth had gardens where he might be blessed
Putting away long dreams and aimless, barbarous
Hunger for battle.

The foretaste of thy languors thawed his bosom;
A great need drove him to thy caverned islands
From the gray, endless reaches of the outer
Desert of ocean.

He saw thy pillars, saw thy sudden mountains
Wrinkled and stark, and in their crooked gorges,
'Neath peeping pine and cypress, guessed the torrent
Smothered in flowers.

Thine incense to the sun, thy gathered vapours,
He saw suspended on the flanks of Taurus,
Or veiling the snowed bosom of the virgin
Sister of Atlas.

He saw the luminous top of wide Olympus,
Fit for the happy gods; he saw the pilgrim
River, with rains of Ethiopia flooding
Populous Egypt.

And having seen, he loved thee. His racked spirit,
By thy breath tempered and the light that clothes thee,

2 'All these "Odes" were written about the same time, inspired not by Sappho (for they are not in true Sapphics) but by a translation of her poems in Spanish which I had come upon among my father's books.' Author's note.

Forgot the monstrous gods, and made of Nature
Mistress and mother.

The more should I, O fatal sea, before thee
Of alien words make echoes to thy music;
For I was born where first the rills of Tagus
Turn to the westward,

And wandering long, alas! have need of drinking
Deep of the patience of thy perfect sadness,
O thou that constant through the change of ages,
Beautiful ever,

Never wast wholly young and void of sorrows,
Nor ever canst be old, while yet the morning
Kindles thy ripples, or the golden evening
Dyes thee in purple.

Thee, willing to be tamed but still untamable,
The Roman called his own until he perished,
As now the busy English hover o'er thee,
Stalwart and noble;

But all is naught to thee, while no harsh winter
Congeals thy fountains, and the blown Sahara
Chokes not with dreadful sand thy deep and placid
Rock-guarded havens.

Thou carest not what men may tread thy margin;
Nor I, while from some heather-scented headland
I may behold thy beauty, the eternal
Solace of mortals.

1887 1894

MY HEART REBELS AGAINST MY GENERATION

My heart rebels against my generation,
That talks of freedom and is slave to riches,
And, toiling 'neath each day's ignoble burden,
Boasts of the morrow.

No space for noonday rest or midnight watches,
No purest joy of breathing under heaven!
Wretched themselves, they heap, to make them happy,
Many possessions.

But thou, O silent Mother, wise, immortal,
To whom our toil is laughter,—take, divine one,
This vanity away, and to thy lover
Give what is needful:—

A staunch heart, nobly calm, averse to evil,
The windy sky for breath, the sea, the mountain,
A well-born, gentle friend, his spirit's brother,
Ever beside him.

What would you gain, ye seekers, with your striving,
Or what vast Babel raise you on your shoulders?
You multiply distresses, and your children
Surely will curse you.

O leave them rather friendlier gods, and fairer
Orchards and temples, and a freer bosom!
What better comfort have we, or what other
Profit in living,

Than to feed, sobered by the truth of Nature,
Awhile upon her bounty and her beauty,
And hand her torch of gladness to the ages
Following after?

She hath not made us, like her other children,
Merely for peopling of her spacious kingdoms,
Beasts of the wild, or insects of the summer,
Breeding and dying,

But also that we might, half knowing, worship
The deathless beauty of her guiding vision,
And learn to love, in all things mortal, only
What is eternal.

1890 1894

A MINUET

On Reaching the Age of Fifty

I

Old Age, on tiptoe, lays her jewelled hand
Lightly in mine.—Come, tread a stately measure,
Most gracious partner, nobly poised and bland.
Ours be no boisterous pleasure,
But smiling conversation, with quick glance
And memories dancing lightlier than we dance,
Friends who a thousand joys
Divide and double, save one joy supreme
Which many a pang alloys.
Let wanton girls and boys
Cry over lovers' woes and broken toys.
Our waking life is sweeter than their dream.

II

Dame Nature, with unwitting hand,
Has sparsely strewn the black abyss with lights
Minute, remote, and numberless. We stand
Measuring far depths and heights,
Arched over by a laughing heaven,
Intangible and never to be scaled.
If we confess our sins, they are forgiven.
We triumph, if we know we failed.

III

Tears that in youth you shed,
Congealed to pearls, now deck your silvery hair;
Sighs breathed for loves long dead
Frosted the glittering atoms of the air
Into the veils you wear
Round your soft bosom and most queenly head;
The shimmer of your gown
Catches all tints of autumn, and the dew
Of gardens where the damask roses blew;
The myriad tapers from these arches hung
Play on your diamonded crown;
And stars, whose light angelical caressed
Your virgin days,
Give back in your calm eyes their holier rays.
The deep past living in your breast
Heaves these half-merry sighs;
And the soft accents of your tongue
Breathe unrecorded charities.

IV

Hasten not; the feast will wait.
This is a master-night without a morrow.
No chill and haggard dawn, with after-sorrow,
Will snuff the spluttering candle out,
Or blanch the revellers homeward straggling late.
Before the rout
Wearies or wanes, will come a calmer trance.
Lulled by the poppied fragrance of this bower,
We'll cheat the lapsing hour,
And close our eyes, still smiling, on the dance.

1913 1923

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

1869–1935

CLIFF KLINGENHAGEN

Cliff Klingenhagen had me in to dine
With him one day; and after soup and meat,
And all the other things there were to eat,
Cliff took two glasses and filled one with wine
And one with wormwood. Then, without a sign
For me to choose at all, he took the draught
Of bitterness himself, and lightly quaffed
It off, and said the other one was mine.

And when I asked him what the deuce he meant
By doing that, he only looked at me
And smiled, and said it was a way of his.
And though I know the fellow, I have spent
Long time a-wondering when I shall be
As happy as Cliff Klingenhagen is.

1897

RICHARD CORY

WHENEVER Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
'Good-morning,' and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head. 1897

HOW ANNANDALE WENT OUT

'THEY called it Annandale—and I was there
To flourish, to find words, and to attend:
Liar, physician, hypocrite, and friend,
I watched him; and the sight was not so fair
As one or two that I have seen elsewhere:
An apparatus not for me to mend—
A wreck, with hell between him and the end,
Remained of Annandale; and I was there.

'I knew the ruin as I knew the man;
So put the two together, if you can,
Remembering the worst you know of me.
Now view yourself as I was, on the spot—
With a slight kind of engine. Do you see?
Like this. . . . You wouldn't hang me? I thought not.'

1910

MINIVER CHEEVY

MINIVER CHEEVY, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

1910

FOR A DEAD LADY

No more with overflowing light
Shall fill the eyes that now are faded,
Nor shall another's fringe with night
Their woman-hidden world as they did.
No more shall quiver down the days
The flowing wonder of her ways,
Whereof no language may requite
The shifting and the many-shaded.

The grace, divine, definitive,
Clings only as a faint forestalling;
The laugh that love could not forgive
Is hushed, and answers to no calling;
The forehead and the little ears
Have gone where Saturn keeps the years;

The breast where roses could not live
Has done with rising and with falling.

The beauty, shattered by the laws
That have creation in their keeping,
No longer trembles at applause,
Or over children that are sleeping;
And we who delve in beauty's lore
Know all that we have known before
Of what inexorable cause
Makes Time so vicious in his reaping.

1910

THE MASTER [1]

(LINCOLN)

A FLYING word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young
Nor could it wholly have been old.

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept, Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see;
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

1910

BEN JONSON ENTERTAINS A MAN FROM STRATFORD

YOU are a friend then, as I make it out,
Of our man Shakespeare, who alone of us
Will put an ass's head in Fairyland
As he would add a shilling to more shillings,
All most harmonious,—and out of his
Miraculous inviolable increase
Fills Ilion, Rome, or any town you like
Of olden time with timeless Englishmen;
And I must wonder what you think of him—
All you down there where your small Avon flows
By Stratford, and where you're an Alderman.

1 'Supposed to have been written not long after the Civil War.' Author's note, *Collected Poems* (N.Y., 1937), 317.

Some, for a guess, would have him riding back
To be a farrier there, or say a dyer;
Or maybe one of your adept surveyors;
Or like enough the wizard of all tanners.
Not you—no fear of that; for I discern
In you a kindling of the flame that saves—
The nimble element, the true caloric;
I see it, and was told of it, moreover,
By our discriminate friend himself, no other.
Had you been one of the sad average,
As he would have it,—meaning, as I take it,
The sinew and the solvent of our Island,
You'd not be buying beer for this Terpander's
Approved and estimated friend Ben Jonson;
He'd never foist it as a part of his
Contingent entertainment of a townsman
While he goes off rehearsing, as he must,
If he shall ever be the Duke of Stratford.
And my words are no shadow on your town—
Far from it; for one town's as like another
As all are unlike London. Oh, he knows it,—
And there's the Stratford in him; he denies it,
And there's the Shakespeare in him. So, God help him!
I tell him he needs Greek; but neither God
Nor Greek will help him. Nothing will help that man.
You see the fates have given him so much,
He must have all or perish,—or look out
Of London, where he sees too many lords.
They're part of half what ails him: I suppose
There's nothing fouler down among the demons
Than what it is he feels when he remembers
The dust and sweat and ointment of his calling
With his lords looking on and laughing at him.
King as he is, he can't be king *de facto*,
And that's as well, because he wouldn't like it;
He'd frame a lower rating of men then
Than he has now; and after that would come
An abdication or an apoplexy.
He can't be king, not even king of Stratford,—
Though half the world, if not the whole of it,
May crown him with a crown that fits no king
Save Lord Apollo's homesick emissary:
Not there on Avon, or on any stream
Where Naiads and their white arms are no more,
Shall he find home again. It's all too bad.
But there's a comfort, for he'll have that House—
The best you ever saw; and he'll be there
Anon, as you're an Alderman. Good God!
He makes me lie awake o'nights and laugh.

And you have known him from his origin,
You tell me; and a most uncommon urchin
He must have been to the few seeing ones—
A trifle terrifying, I dare say,
Discovering a world with his man's eyes,
Quite as another lad might see some finches,
If he looked hard and had an eye for nature.
But this one had his eyes and their foretelling,
And he had you to fare with, and what else?
He must have had a father and a mother—
In fact I've heard him say so—and a dog,
As a boy should, I venture; and the dog,
Most likely, was the only man who knew him.
A dog, for all I know, is what he needs
As much as anything right here to-day,
To counsel him about his disillusions,
Old aches, and parturitions of what's coming,—
A dog of orders, an emeritus,
To wag his tail at him when he comes home,
And then to put his paws up on his knees
And say, 'For God's sake, what's it all about?'

I don't know whether he needs a dog or not—
Or what he needs. I tell him he needs Greek;
I'll talk of rules and Aristotle with him,
And if his tongue's at home he'll say to that,
'I have your word that Aristotle knows,
And you mine that I don't know Aristotle.'
He's all at odds with all the unities,
And what's yet worse, it doesn't seem to matter;
He treads along through Time's old wilderness
As if the tramp of all the centuries
Had left no roads—and there are none, for him;

He doesn't see them, even with those eyes,—
And that's a pity, or I say it is.
Accordingly we have him as we have him—
Going his way, the way that he goes best,
A pleasant animal with no great noise
Or nonsense anywhere to set him off—
Save only divers and inclement devils
Have made of late his heart their dwelling place.
A flame half ready to fly out sometimes
At some annoyance may be fanned up in him,
But soon it falls, and when it falls goes out;
He knows how little room there is in there
For crude and futile animosities,
And how much for the joy of being whole,
And how much for long sorrow and old pain.
On our side there are some who may be given
To grow old wondering what he thinks of us
And some above us, who are, in his eyes,
Above himself,—and that's quite right and English.
Yet here we smile, or disappoint the gods
Who made it so: the gods have always eyes
To see men scratch; and they see one down here
Who itches, manor-bitten to the bone,
Albeit he knows himself—yes, yes, he knows—
The lord of more than England and of more
Than all the seas of England in all time
Shall ever wash. D'ye wonder that I laugh?
He sees me, and he doesn't seem to care;
And why the devil should he? I can't tell you.

I'll meet him out alone of a bright Sunday,
Trim, rather spruce, and quite the gentleman.
'What ho, my lord!' say I. He doesn't hear me;
Wherefore I have to pause and look at him.
He's not enormous, but one looks at him.
A little on the round if you insist,
For now, God save the mark, he's growing old;
He's five and forty, and to hear him talk
These days you'd call him eighty; then you'd add
More years to that. He's old enough to be
The father of a world, and so he is.
'Ben, you're a scholar, what's the time of day?'
Says he; and there shines out of him again
An aged light that has no age or station—
The mystery that's his—a mischievous
Half-mad serenity that laughs at fame
For being won so easy, and at friends
Who laugh at him for what he wants the most,
And for his dukedom down in Warwickshire;—
By which you see we're all a little jealous. . . .
Poor Greene! I fear the color of his name
Was even as that of his ascending soul;
And he was one where there are many others,—
Some scrivening to the end against their fate,
Their puppets all in ink and all to die there;
And some with hands that once would shade an eye
That scanned Euripides and Æschylus
Will reach by this time for a pot-house mop
To slush their first and last of royalties.
Poor devils! and they all play to his hand;
For so it was in Athens and old Rome.
But that's not here or there; I've wandered off.
Greene does it, or I'm careful. Where's that boy?

Yes, he'll go back to Stratford. And we'll miss him?
Dear sir, there'll be no London here without him.
We'll all be riding, one of these fine days,
Down there to see him—and his wife won't like us;
And then we'll think of what he never said
Of women—which, if taken all in all
With what he did say, would buy many horses.
Though nowadays he's not so much for women.
'So few of them,' he says, 'are worth the guessing.'
But there's a worm at work when he says that,
And while he says it one feels in the air
A deal of circumambient hocus-pocus.
They've had him dancing till his toes were tender,
And he can feel 'em now, come chilly rains.
There's no long cry for going into it,

However, and we don't know much about it.
But you in Stratford, like most here in London,
Have more now in the *Sonnets* than you paid for;
He's put one there with all her poison on,
To make a singing fiction of a shadow
That's in his life a fact, and always will be.
But she's no care of ours, though Time, I fear,
Will have a more reverberant ado
About her than about another one
Who seems to have decoyed him, married him,
And sent him scuttling on his way to London,—
With much already learned, and more to learn,
And more to follow. Lord! how I see him now,
Pretending, maybe trying, to be like us.
Whatever he may have meant, we never had him;
He failed us, or escaped, or what you will,—
And there was that about him (God knows what,—
We'd flayed another had he tried it on us)
That made as many of us as had wits
More fond of all his easy distances
Than one another's noise and clap-your-shoulder.
But think you not, my friend, he'd never talk!
Talk? He was eldritch at it; and we listened—
Thereby acquiring much we knew before
About ourselves, and hitherto had held
Irrelevant, or not prime to the purpose.
And there were some, of course, and there be now,
Disordered and reduced amazedly
To resignation by the mystic seal
Of young finality the gods had laid
On everything that made him a young demon;
And one or two shot looks at him already
As he had been their executioner;
And once or twice he was, not knowing it,—
Or knowing, being sorry for poor clay
And saying nothing. . . . Yet, for all his engines,
You'll meet a thousand of an afternoon
Who strut and sun themselves and see around 'em
A world made out of more that has a reason
Than his, I swear, that he sees here to-day;
Though he may scarcely give a Fool an exit
But we mark how he sees in everything
A law that, given that we flout it once too often,
Brings fire and iron down on our naked heads.
To me it looks as if the power that made him,
For fear of giving all things to one creature,
Left out the first—faith, innocence, illusion,
Whatever 'tis that keeps us out o' Bedlam,—
And thereby, for his too consuming vision,
Empowered him out of nature; though to see him,
You'd never guess what's going on inside him.
He'll break out some day like a keg of ale
With too much independent frenzy in it;
And all for cellaring what he knows won't keep,
And what he'd best forget—but that he can't.
You'll have it, and have more than I'm foretelling;
And there'll be such a roaring at the Globe
As never stunned the bleeding gladiators.
He'll have to change the color of its hair
A bit, for now he calls it Cleopatra.
Black hair would never do for Cleopatra.
But you and I are not yet two old women,
And you're a man of office. What he does
Is more to you than how it is he does it,—
And that's what the Lord God has never told him.
They work together, and the Devil helps 'em;
They do it of a morning, or if not,
They do it of a night; in which event
He's peevish of a morning. He seems old;
He's not the proper stomach or the sleep—
And they're two sovran agents to conserve him
Against the fiery art that has no mercy
But what's in that prodigious grand new House.
I gather something happening in his boyhood
Fulfilled him with a boy's determination
To make all Stratford 'ware of him. Well, well,
I hope at last he'll have his joy of it,
And all his pigs and sheep and bellowing beeves,

And frogs and owls and unicorns, moreover,
Be less than hell to his attendant ears.
Oh, past a doubt we'll all go down to see
him.

He may be wise. With London two days off,
Down there some wind of heaven may yet
revive him;
But there's no quickening breath from
anywhere
Shall make of him again the poised young
faun
From Warwickshire, who'd made, it seems,
already
A legend of himself before I came
To blink before the last of his first lightning.
Whatever there be, there'll be no more of
that;
The coming on of his old monster Time
Has made him a still man; and he has
dreams
Were fair to think on once, and all found
hollow.
He knows how much of what men paint
themselves
Would blister in the light of what they are;
He sees how much of what was great now
shares
An eminence transformed and ordinary;
He knows too much of what the world has
hushed
In others, to be loud now for himself;
He knows now at what height low enemies
May reach his heart, and high friends let
him fall;
But what not even such as he may know
Bedevils him the worst: his lark may sing
At heaven's gate how he will, and for as
long
As joy may listen, but *he* sees no gate,
Save one whereat the spent clay waits a little
Before the churchyard has it, and the worm.
Not long ago, late in an afternoon,
I came on him unseen down Lambeth way,
And on my life I was afear'd of him:
He gloomed and mumbled like a soul from
Tophet,
His hands behind him and his head bent
solemn.
'What is it now,' said I, 'another woman?'
That made him sorry for me, and he smiled.
'No, Ben,' he mused; 'it's Nothing. It's all
Nothing.
We come, we go; and when we're done,
we're done;
Spiders and flies—we're mostly one or
t'other—
We come, we go; and when we're done,
we're done';
'By God, you sing that song as if you knew
it!'
Said I, by way of cheering him; 'what ails
ye?'
'I think I must have come down here to
think,'
Says he to that, and pulls his little beard;
'Your fly will serve as well as anybody,
And what's his hour? He flies, and flies, and
flies,
And in his fly's mind has a brave
appearance;
And then your spider gets him in her net,
And eats him out, and hangs him up to dry.
That's Nature, the kind mother of us all.
And then your slattern housemaid swings
her broom,
And where's your spider? And that's
Nature, also.
It's Nature, and it's Nothing. It's all
Nothing.
It's all a world where bugs and emperors
Go singularly back to the same dust,
Each in his time; and the old, ordered stars
That sang together, Ben, will sing the same
Old stave to-morrow.'

When he talks like that,
There's nothing for a human man to do
But lead him to some grateful nook like
this
Where we be now, and there to make him
drink.
He'll drink, for love of me, and then be sick;
A sad sign always in a man of parts,
And always very ominous. The great
Should be as large in liquor as in love,—
And our great friend is not so large in
either:
One disaffects him, and the other fails him;
Whatso he drinks that has an antic in it,
He's wondering what's to pay in his insides;
And while his eyes are on the Cyprian
He's fribbling all the time with that damned
House.
We laugh here at his thrift, but after all
It may be thrift that saves him from the
devil;
God gave it, anyhow,—and we'll suppose
He knew the compound of his handiwork.
To-day the clouds are with him, but anon

He'll out of 'em enough to shake the tree
Of life itself and bring down fruit unheard-of,—
And, throwing in the bruised and whole together,
Prepare a wine to make us drunk with wonder;
And if he live, there'll be a sunset spell
Thrown over him as over a glassed lake
That yesterday was all a black wild water.

God send he live to give us, if no more,
What now's a-rampage in him, and exhibit,
With a decent half-allegiance to the ages
An earnest of at least a casual eye
Turned once on what he owes to Gutenberg,
And to the fealty of more centuries
Than are as yet a picture in our vision.
'There's time enough—I'll do it when I'm old,
And we're immortal men,' he says to that;
And then he says to me, 'Ben, what's "immortal?"
Think you by any force of ordination
It may be nothing of a sort more noisy
Than a small oblivion of component ashes
That of a dream-addicted world was once
A moving atomy much like your friend here?'
Nothing will help that man. To make him laugh,
I said then he was a mad mountebank,—
And by the Lord I nearer made him cry.
I could have eat an eft then, on my knees,
Tail, claws, and all of him; for I had stung
The king of men, who had no sting for me,
And I had hurt him in his memories;
And I say now, as I shall say again,
I love the man this side idolatry.

He'll do it when he's old, he says. I wonder.
He may not be so ancient as all that.
For such as he, the thing that is to do
Will do itself,—but there's a reckoning;
The sessions that are now too much his own,
The roiling inward of a still outside,
The churning out of all those blood-fed lines,
The nights of many schemes and little sleep,
The full brain hammered hot with too much thinking,
The vexed heart over-worn with too much aching,—
This weary jangling of conjoined affairs
Made out of elements that have no end,
And all confused at once, I understand,
Is not what makes a man to live forever.
O no, not now! He'll not be going now:
There'll be time yet for God knows what explosions
Before he goes. He'll stay awhile. Just wait:
Just wait a year or two for Cleopatra,
For she's to be a balsam and a comfort;
And that's not all a jape of mine now, either.
For granted once the old way of Apollo
Sings in a man, he may then, if he's able,
Strike unafraid whatever strings he will
Upon the last and wildest of new lyres;
Nor out of his new magic, though it hymn
The shrieks of dungeoned hell, shall he create
A madness or a gloom to shut quite out
A cleaving daylight, and a last great calm
Triumphant over shipwreck and all storms.
He might have given Aristotle creeps,
But surely would have given him his *katharsis.*

He'll not be going yet. There's too much yet
Unsung within the man. But when he goes,
I'd stake ye coin o' the realm his only care
For a phantom world he sounded and found wanting
Will be a portion here, a portion there,
Of this or that thing or some other thing
That has a patent and intrinsical
Equivalence in those egregious shillings.
And yet he knows, God help him! Tell me, now,
If ever there was anything let loose
On earth by gods or devils heretofore
Like this mad, careful, proud, indifferent Shakespeare!
Where was it, if it ever was? By heaven,
'Twas never yet in Rhodes or Pergamon—
In Thebes or Nineveh, a thing like this!
No thing like this was ever out of England;
And this he knows. I wonder if he cares.
Perhaps he does. . . . O Lord, that House in Stratford!

1916

FLAMMONDE

THE man Flammonde, from God knows where,
With firm address and foreign air,
With news of nations in his talk
And something royal in his walk,
With glint of iron in his eyes,
But never doubt, nor yet surprise,
Appeared, and stayed, and held his head
As one by kings accredited.

Erect, with his alert repose
About him, and about his clothes,
He pictured all tradition hears
Of what we owe to fifty years.
His cleansing heritage of taste
Paraded neither want nor waste;
And what he needed for his fee
To live, he borrowed graciously.

He never told us what he was,
Or what mischance, or other cause,
Had banished him from better days
To play the Prince of Castaways.
Meanwhile he played surpassing well
A part, for most, unplayable;
In fine, one pauses, half afraid
To say for certain that he played.

For that, one may as well forego
Conviction as to yes or no;
Nor can I say just how intense
Would then have been the difference
To several, who, having striven
In vain to get what he was given,
Would see the stranger taken on
By friends not easy to be won.

Moreover, many a malcontent
He soothed and found munificent;
His courtesy beguiled and foiled
Suspicion that his years were soiled;
His mien distinguished any crowd,
His credit strengthened when he bowed;
And women, young and old, were fond
Of looking at the man Flammonde.

There was a woman in our town
On whom the fashion was to frown;
But while our talk renewed the tinge
Of a long-faded scarlet fringe,
The man Flammonde saw none of that,
And what he saw we wondered at—
That none of us, in her distress,
Could hide or find our littleness.

There was a boy that all agreed
Had shut within him the rare seed
Of learning. We could understand,
But none of us could lift a hand.
The man Flammonde appraised the youth,
And told a few of us the truth;
And thereby, for a little gold,
A flowered future was unrolled.

There were two citizens who fought
For years and years, and over nought;
They made life awkward for their friends,
And shortened their own dividends.
The man Flammonde said what was wrong
Should be made right; nor was it long
Before they were again in line,
And had each other in to dine.

And these I mention are but four
Of many out of many more.
So much for them. But what of him—
So firm in every look and limb?
What small satanic sort of kink
Was in his brain? What broken link
Withheld him from the destinies
That came so near to being his?

What was he, when we came to sift
His meaning, and to note the drift
Of incommunicable ways
That make us ponder while we praise?
Why was it that his charm revealed
Somehow the surface of a shield?
What was it that we never caught?
What was he, and what was he not?

How much it was of him we met
We cannot ever know; nor yet
Shall all he gave us quite atone
For what was his, and his alone;
Nor need we now, since he knew best,
Nourish an ethical unrest:
Rarely at once will nature give
The power to be Flammonde and live.

We cannot know how much we learn
From those who never will return,
Until a flash of unforeseen
Remembrance falls on what has been.
We've each a darkening hill to climb;
And this is why, from time to time

In Tilbury Town, we look beyond
Horizons for the man Flammonde.

1910

THE MAN AGAINST THE SKY [1]

BETWEEN me and the sunset, like a dome
Against the glory of a world on fire,
Now burned a sudden hill,
Bleak, round, and high, by flame-lit height made higher,
With nothing on it for the flame to kill
Save one who moved and was alone up there
To loom before the chaos and the glare
As if he were the last god going home
Unto his last desire.

Dark, marvelous, and inscrutable he moved on
Till down the fiery distance he was gone,
Like one of those eternal, remote things
That range across a man's imaginings
When a sure music fills him and he knows
What he may say thereafter to few men,—
The touch of ages having wrought
An echo and a glimpse of what he thought
A phantom or a legend until then;
For whether lighted over ways that save,
Or lured from all repose,
If he go on too far to find a grave,
Mostly alone he goes.

Even he, who stood where I had found him,
On high with fire all round him,
Who moved along the molten west,
And over the round hill's crest
That seemed half ready with him to go down,
Flame-bitten and flame-cleft,
As if there were to be no last thing left
Of a nameless unimaginable town,—
Even he who climbed and vanished may have taken
Down to the perils of a depth not known,
From death defended though by men forsaken,
The bread that every man must eat alone;
He may have walked while others hardly dared
Look on to see him stand where many fell;
And upward out of that, as out of hell,
He may have sung and striven
To mount where more of him shall yet be given,
Bereft of all retreat,
To sevenfold heat,—
As on a day when three in Dura shared
The furnace, and were spared
For glory by that king of Babylon
Who made himself so great that God, who heard,
Covered him with long feathers, like a bird.

Again, he may have gone down easily,
By comfortable altitudes, and found,
As always, underneath him solid ground
Whereon to be sufficient and to stand
Possessed already of the promised land,
Far stretched and fair to see:
A good sight, verily,
And one to make the eyes of her who bore him
Shine glad with hidden tears.
Why question of his ease of who before him,
In one place or another where they left
Their names as far behind them as their bones,
And yet by dint of slaughter toil and theft,
And shrewdly sharpened stones,
Carved hard the way for his ascendency
Through deserts of lost years?
Why trouble him now who sees and hears
No more than what his innocence requires,
And therefore to no other height aspires
Than one at which he neither quails nor tires?
He may do more by seeing what he sees
Than others eager for iniquities;
He may, by seeing all things for the best,
Incite futurity to do the rest.

Or with an even likelihood,
He may have met with atrabilious eyes
The fires of time on equal terms and passed
Indifferently down, until at last
His only kind of grandeur would have been,
Apparently, in being seen.
He may have had for evil or for good
No argument; he may have had no care
For what without himself went anywhere
To failure or to glory, and least of all
For such a stale, flamboyant miracle;
He may have been the prophet of an art

[1] Robinson wrote, 7 Jan. 1932, in answer to a query: 'Perhaps "The Man against the Sky" comes as near as anything to representing my poetic vision—as you are good enough to call it.' *Univ. of Colorado Studies*, XIX,i, to face 318.

Immovable to old idolatries;
He may have been a player without a part,
Annoyed that even the sun should have the skies
For such a flaming way to advertise;
He may have been a painter sick at heart
With Nature's toiling for a new surprise;
He may have been a cynic, who now, for all
Of anything divine that his effete
Negation may have tasted,
Saw truth in his own image, rather small,
Forbore to fever the ephemeral,
Found any barren height a good retreat
From any swarming street,
And in the sun saw power superbly wasted;
And when the primitive old-fashioned stars
Came out again to shine on joys and wars
More primitive, and all arrayed for doom,
He may have proved a world a sorry thing
In his imagining,
And life a lighted highway to the tomb.

Or, mounting with infirm unsearching tread,
His hopes to chaos led,
He may have stumbled up there from the past,
And with an aching strangeness viewed the last
Abysmal conflagration of his dreams,—
A flame where nothing seems
To burn but flame itself, by nothing fed;
And while it all went out,
Not even the faint anodyne of doubt
May then have eased a painful going down
From pictured heights of power and lost renown,
Revealed at length to his outlived endeavor
Remote and unapproachable forever;
And at his heart there may have gnawed
Sick memories of a dead faith foiled and flawed
And long dishonored by the living death
Assigned alike by chance
To brutes and hierophants;
And anguish fallen on those he loved around him
May once have dealt the last blow to confound him,
And so have left him as death leaves a child,
Who sees it all too near;
And he who knows no young way to forget
May struggle to the tomb unreconciled.
Whatever suns may rise or set
There may be nothing kinder for him here
Than shafts and agonies;
And under these
He may cry out and stay on horribly;
Or, seeing in death too small a thing to fear,
He may go forward like a stoic Roman
Where pangs and terrors in his pathway lie,—
Or, seizing the swift logic of a woman,
Curse God and die.

Or maybe there, like many another one
Who might have stood aloft and looked ahead,
Black-drawn against wild red,
He may have built, unawed by fiery gules
That in him no commotion stirred,
A living reason out of molecules
Why molecules occurred,
And one for smiling when he might have sighed
Had he seen far enough,
And in the same inevitable stuff
Discovered an odd reason too for pride
In being what he must have been by laws
Infrangible and for no kind of cause.
Deterred by no confusion or surprise
He may have seen with his mechanic eyes
A world without a meaning, and had room,
Alone amid magnificence and doom,
To build himself an airy monument
That should, or fail him in his vague intent,
Outlast an accidental universe—
To call it nothing worse—
Or, by the burrowing guile
Of Time disintegrated and effaced,
Like once-remembered mighty trees go down
To ruin, of which by man may now be traced
No part sufficient even to be rotten,
And in the book of things that are forgotten
Is entered as a thing not quite worth while.
He may have been so great
That satraps would have shivered at his frown,
And all he prized alive may rule a state
No larger than a grave that holds a clown;
He may have been a master of his fate,
And of his atoms,—ready as another
In his emergence to exonerate
His father and his mother;
He may have been a captain of a host,
Self-eloquent and ripe for prodigies,

Doomed here to swell by dangerous degrees,
And then give up the ghost.
Nahum's great grasshoppers were such as these,
Sun-scattered and soon lost.

Whatever the dark road he may have taken,
This man who stood on high
And faced alone the sky,
Whatever drove or lured or guided him,—
A vision answering a faith unshaken,
An easy trust assumed by easy trials,
A sick negation born of weak denials,
A crazed abhorrence of an old condition,
A blind attendance on a brief ambition,—
Whatever stayed him or derided him,
His way was even as ours;
And we, with all our wounds and all our powers,
Must each await alone at his own height
Another darkness or another light;
And there, of our poor self dominion reft,
If inference and reason shun
Hell, Heaven, and Oblivion,
May thwarted will (perforce precarious,
But for our conservation better thus)
Have no misgiving left
Of doing yet what here we leave undone?
Or if unto the last of these we cleave,
Believing or protesting we believe
In such an idle and ephemeral
Florescence of the diabolical,—
If, robbed of two fond old enormities,
Our being had no onward auguries,
What then were this great love of ours to say
For launching other lives to voyage again
A little farther into time and pain,
A little faster in a futile chase
For a kingdom and a power and a Race
That would have still in sight
A manifest end of ashes and eternal night?
Is this the music of the toys we shake
So loud,—as if there might be no mistake
Somewhere in our indomitable will?
Are we no greater than the noise we make
Along one blind atomic pilgrimage
Whereon by crass chance billeted we go
Because our brains and bones and cartilage
Will have it so?
If this we say, then let us all be still
About our share in it, and live and die
More quietly thereby.

Where was he going, this man against the sky?
You know not, nor do I.
But this we know, if we know anything:
That we may laugh and fight and sing
And of our transcience here make offering
To an orient Word that will not be erased,
Or, save in incommunicable gleams
Too permanent for dreams,
Be found or known.
No tonic and ambitious irritant
Of increase or of want
Has made an otherwise insensate waste
Of ages overthrown
A ruthless, veiled, implacable foretaste
Of other ages that are still to be
Depleted and rewarded variously
Because a few, by fate's economy,
Shall seem to move the world the way it goes;
No soft evangel of equality,
Safe-cradled in a communal repose
That huddles into death and may at last
Be covered well with equatorial snows—
And all for what, the devil only knows—
Will aggregate an inkling to confirm
The credit of a sage or of a worm,
Or tell us why one man in five
Should have a care to stay alive
While in his heart he feels no violence
Laid on his humor and intelligence
When infant Science makes a pleasant face
And waves again that hollow toy, the Race;
No planetary trap where souls are wrought
For nothing but the sake of being caught
And sent again to nothing will attune
Itself to any key of any reason
Why man should hunger through another season
To find out why 'twere better late than soon
To go away and let the sun and moon
And all the silly stars illuminate
A place for creeping things,
And those that root and trumpet and have wings,
And herd and ruminate,
Or dive and flash and poise in rivers and seas,
Or by their loyal tails in lofty trees
Hang screeching lewd victorious derision
Of man's immortal vision.

Shall we, because Eternity records
'Too vast an answer for the time-born words
We spell, whereof so many are dead that once
In our capricious lexicons
Were so alive and final, hear no more
The Word itself, the living word
That none alive has ever heard
Or ever spelt,
And few have ever felt
Without the fears and old surrenderings
And terrors that began
When Death let fall a feather from his wings
And humbled the first man?
Because the weight of our humility,
Wherefrom we gain
A little wisdom and much pain,
Falls here too sore and there too tedious,
Are we in anguish or complacency,
Not looking far enough ahead
To see by what mad couriers we are led
Along the roads of the ridiculous,
To pity ourselves and laugh at faith
And while we curse life bear it?
And if we see the soul's dead end in death,
Are we to fear it?
What folly is here that has not yet a name
Unless we say outright that we are liars?
What have we seen beyond our sunset fires
That lights again the way by which we came?
Why pay we such a price, and one we give
So clamoringly, for each racked empty day
That leads one more last human hope away,
As quiet fiends would lead past our crazed eyes
Our children to an unseen sacrifice?
If after all that we have lived and thought,
All comes to Nought,—
If there be nothing after Now,
And we be nothing anyhow,
And we know that,—why live?
'Twere sure but weaklings' vain distress
To suffer dungeons where so many doors
Will open on the cold eternal shores
That look sheer down
To the dark tideless floods of Nothingness
Where all who know may drown.

1916

JOHN GORHAM

'TELL me what you're doing over here,
John Gorham,
Sighing hard and seeming to be sorry when you're not;
Make me laugh or let me go now, for long faces in the moonlight
Are a sign for me to say again a word that you forgot.'—

'I'm over here to tell you what the moon already
May have said or maybe shouted ever since a year ago;
I'm over here to tell you what you are Jane Wayland,
And to make you rather sorry, I should say, for being so.'—

'Tell me what you're saying to me now,
John Gorham,
Or you'll never see as much of me as ribbons any more;
I'll vanish in as many ways as I have toes and fingers,
And you'll not follow far for one where flocks have been before.'—

'I'm sorry now you never saw the flocks,
Jane Wayland,
But you're the one to make of them as many as you need.
And then about the vanishing. It's I who mean to vanish;
And when I'm here no longer you'll be done with me indeed.'—

'That's a way to tell me what I am, John Gorham!
How am I to know myself until I make you smile?
Try to look as if the moon were making faces at you,
And a little more as if you meant to stay a little while.'—

'You are what it is that over rose-blown gardens
Makes a pretty flutter for a season in the sun;
You are what it is that with a mouse, Jane Wayland,
Catches him and lets him go and eats him up for fun.'—

'Sure I never took you for a mouse, John
Gorham;
All you say is easy, but so far from being
true
That I wish you wouldn't ever be again the
one to think so;
For it isn't cats and butterflies that I would
be to you.'—

'All your little animals are in one picture—
One I've had before me since a year ago
to-night;
And the picture where they live will be of
you, Jane Wayland,
Till you find a way to kill them or to keep
them out of sight.'—

'Won't you ever see me as I am, John
Gorham,
Leaving out the foolishness and all I never
meant?
Somewhere in me there's a woman, if you
know the way to find her.
Will you like me any better if I prove it and
repent?'—

'I doubt if I shall ever have the time, Jane
Wayland;
And I dare say all this moonlight lying
round us might as well
Fall for nothing on the shards of broken
urns that are forgotten,
As on two that have no longer much of
anything to tell.'

1916

EROS TURANNOS

SHE fears him, and will always ask
What fated her to choose him;
She meets in his engaging mask
All reasons to refuse him;
But what she meets and what she fears
Are less than are the downward years,
Drawn slowly to the foamless weirs
Of age, were she to lose him.

Between a blurred sagacity
That once had power to sound him,
And Love, that will not let him be
The Judas that she found him,
Her pride assuages her almost,
As if it were alone the cost.—
He sees that he will not be lost,
And waits and looks around him.

A sense of ocean and old trees
Envelops and allures him;
Tradition, touching all he sees,
Beguiles and reassures him;
And all her doubts of what he says
Are dimmed with what she knows of days—
Till even prejudice delays
And fades, and she secures him.

The falling leaf inaugurates
The reign of her confusion;
The pounding wave reverberates
The dirge of her illusion;
And home, where passion lived and died,
Becomes a place where she can hide,
While all the town and harbor side
Vibrate with her seclusion.

We tell you, tapping on our brows,
The story as it should be,—
As if the story of a house
Were told, or ever could be;
We'll have no kindly veil between
Her visions and those we have seen,—
As if we guessed what hers have been,
Or what they are or would be.

Meanwhile we do no harm; for they
That with a god have striven,
Not hearing much of what we say,
Take what the god has given;
Though like waves breaking it may be,
Or like a changed familiar tree,
Or like a stairway to the sea
Where down the blind are driven.

1916

THE GIFT OF GOD

BLESSED with a joy that only she
Of all alive shall ever know,
She wears a proud humility
For what it was that willed it so,—
That her degree should be so great
Among the favored of the Lord
That she may scarcely bear the weight
Of her bewildering reward.

As one apart, immune, alone,
Or featured for the shining ones,
And like to none that she has known
Of other women's other sons,—
The firm fruition of her need,
He shines anointed; and he blurs
Her vision, till it seems indeed
A sacrilege to call him hers.

She fears a little for so much
Of what is best, and hardly dares
To think of him as one to touch
With aches, indignities, and cares;
She sees him rather at the goal,
Still shining; and her dream foretells
The proper shining of a soul
Where nothing ordinary dwells.

Perchance a canvass of the town
Would find him far from flags and shouts,
And leave him only the renown
Of many smiles and many doubts;
Perchance the crude and common tongue
Would havoc strangely with his worth;
But she, with innocence unwrung,
Would read his name around the earth.

And others, knowing how this youth
Would shine, if love could make him great,
When caught and tortured for the truth
Would only writhe and hesitate;
While she, arranging for his days
What centuries could not fulfill,
Transmutes him with her faith and praise,
And has him shining where she will.

She crowns him with her gratefulness,
And says again that life is good;
And should the gift of God be less
In him than in her motherhood,
His fame, though vague, will not be small,
As upward through her dream he fares,
Half clouded with a crimson fall
Of roses thrown on marble stairs.

1916

THE DARK HILLS

DARK hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade—as if the last of days
Were fading, and all wars were done.

1920

MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

OLD Eben Flood, climbing alone one night
Over the hill between the town below
And the forsaken upland hermitage
That held as much as he should ever know
On earth again of home, paused warily.
The road was his with not a native near;
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

'Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon
Again, and we may not have many more;
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,
And you and I have said it here before.
Drink to the bird.' He raised up to the light
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,
And answered huskily: 'Well, Mr. Flood,
Since you propose it, I believe I will.'

Alone, as if enduring to the end
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,
He stood there in the middle of the road
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.
Below him, in the town among the trees,
Where friends of other days had honored him,
A phantom salutation of the dead
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down slowly at his feet
With trembling care, knowing that most things break;
And only when assured that on firm earth
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men
Assuredly did not, he paced away,
And with his hand extended paused again:

'Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come
To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home!'
Convivially returning with himself,
Again he raised the jug up to the light;
And with an acquiescent quaver said:
'Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

'Only a very little, Mr. Flood—
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do.'
So, for the time, apparently it did,
And Eben evidently thought so too;
For soon amid the silver loneliness
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,
Secure, with only two moons listening,
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

'For auld lang syne.' The weary throat gave
out,
The last word wavered, and the song was
done.
He raised again the jug regretfully
And shook his head, and was again alone.
There was not much that was ahead of
him,
And there was nothing in the town below—
Where strangers would have shut the many
doors
That many friends had opened long ago.

1921

THE SHEAVES

WHERE long the shadows of the wind had
rolled,
Green wheat was yielding to the change
assigned;
And as by some vast magic undivined
The world was turning slowly into gold.
Like nothing that was ever bought or sold
It waited there, the body and the mind;
And with a mighty meaning of a kind
That tells the more the more it is not told.

So in a land where all days are not fair,
Fair days went on till on another day
A thousand golden sheaves were lying there,
Shining and still, but not for long to stay—
As if a thousand girls with golden hair
Might rise from where they slept and go
away.

1925

NEW ENGLAND[1]

HERE where the wind is always north-north-
east
And children learn to walk on frozen toes,
Wonder begets an envy of all those
Who boil elsewhere with such a lyric yeast
Of love that you will hear them at a feast
Where demons would appeal for some
repose,
Still clamoring where the chalice overflows
And crying wildest who have drunk the
least.

Passion is here a soilure of the wits,
We're told, and Love a cross for them to
bear;
Joy shivers in the corner where she knits
And Conscience always has the rocking-
chair,
Cheerful as when she tortured into fits
The first cat that was ever killed by Care.

1925

1 Concerning a misinterpretation of this sonnet in a correspondent's letter to *The Gardiner* [Me.] *Journal*, Robinson wrote, 7 Feb. 1924, in answer: '. . . he will see that the whole thing is a satirical attack not upon New England, but upon the same patronizing pagans whom he [the correspondent] flays with such vehemence in his own poem. As a matter of fact, I cannot quite see how the first eight lines of my sonnet are to be regarded as even intelligible if read in any other way than as an oblique attack upon all those who are forever throwing dead cats at New England for its alleged emotional and moral frigidity.' Quoted, Hogan, *A Bibliography of . . . Robinson*(New Haven, 1936),179–80.

FROM TRISTRAM

TRISTRAM AND ISOLT OF IRELAND[2]

'GOD knows,' he said,
'How far a man may be from his deserving
And yet be fated for the undeserved.
I might, were I the lord of your
misgivings,
Be worthier of them for destroying them;
And even without the mightiness in me
For that, I'll tell you, for your contem-
plation,
Time is not life. For many, and many
more,
Living is mostly for a time not dying—
But not for me. For me, a few more years
Of shows and slaughters, or the tinsel seat
Of a small throne, would not be life.
Whatever
It is that fills life high and full, till fate
Itself may do no more, it is not time.
Years are not life.'

'I have not come so far
To learn,' she said, and shook her head at
him,
'What years are, for I know. Years are not
life;
Years are the shells of life, and empty shells
When they hold only days, and days, and
days.
God knows if I know that—so let it pass.
Let me forget; and let me ask you only
Not to forget that all your feats at arms,
Your glamour that is almost above envy,
Your strength and eminence and
everything,

2 The title is given by the editors.

Leave me a woman still—a one-love
woman,
Meaning a sort of ravenous one-child
mother,
Whose one-love pictures in her composition
Panthers and antelopes, children asleep,
And all sorts of engaging animals
That most resemble a much-disordered
queen,
Her crown abandoned and her hair in peril,
And she herself a little deranged, no doubt,
With too much happiness. Whether he lives
Or dies for her, he tells her is no matter,
Wherefore she must obediently believe
him.
All he would ask of her would be as easy
As hearing waves, washing the shore down
there
For ever, and believing herself drowned.
In seeing so many of her, he might believe
her
To be as many at once as drops of rain;
Perhaps a panther and a child asleep
At the same time.'

He saw dark laughter sparkling
Out of her eyes, but only until her face
Found his, and on his mouth a moving fire
Told him why there was death, and what
lost song
Ulysses heard, and would have given his
hands
And friends to follow and to die for. Slowly,
At last, the power of helplessness there was
In all that beauty of hers that was for him,
Breathing and burning there alone with
him,
Until it was almost a part of him,
Suffused his passion with a tenderness
Attesting a sealed certainty not his
To cozen or wrench from fate, and one
withheld
In waiting mercy from oblivious eyes—
His eyes and hers, that over darker water,
Where darker things than shadows would
be coming,
Saw now no more than more stars in the
sky.
He felt her throbbing softly in his arms,
And held her closer still—with half a fear
Returning that she might not be Isolt,
And might yet vanish where she sat with
him,
Leaving him there alone, with only devils
Of hell supplanting her.

1927

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

1876–

TOM MOONEY

1

Tom Mooney sits behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
Long since he picked or peeled or bit away
The last white callous from his palms, they
say.
The crick is gone from out his back;
And all the grease and grime
Gone from each finger-nail and every
knuckle-crack.
(And that took time.)

2

Tom Mooney breathes behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
The Gold-men from ten cities hear in
sleep
Tom Mooney breathing—for he breathes
so deep.
The Gold-men from ten cities rise from
bed
To make a brass crown for Tom Mooney's
head;
They gather round great oaken desks—
each twists
Two copper bracelets for Tom Mooney's
wrists.
And down sky-scraper basements (all their
own)
They forge the spikes for his galvanic
throne.
The Gold-men love the jests of old
Misrule—
At ease at last, they'll laugh their fill;
They'll deck Tom Mooney king, they will—
King over knave and fool.
And from enameled doors of rearward
office-vaults,
Lettered in gold with names that never
crock,

They will draw back the triple iron bolts,
Then scatter from the ridges of their roofs
The affidavits of their paper-proofs
Of pallid Tomfool's low and lubber stock.

3

Tom Mooney thinks behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
(Tom Mooney free was but a laboring man;
Tom Mooney jailed's the Thinker of
Rodin.)
The Workers in ten nations now have caught
The roll and rhythm of Tom Mooney's
thought—
By that earth-girdling S.O.S.,
The subtle and immortal wireless
Of Man's strong justice in distress.
The Workers in ten nations think and plan:
The pick-ax little Naples man,
The rice-swamp coolies in Japan
(No longer mere embroidery on a screen),
The crowds that swarm from factory gates,
At yellow dusks with all their hates,
In Ireland, Austria, Argentine,
In England, France, and Russia far
(That slew a Czar),—
Or where the Teutons lately rent
The Iron Cross (on finding what it meant);
At yellow dusks with all their hates
From fiery shops or gas-choked mines,
From round-house, mill, or lumber-pines,
In the broad belt of these United States.
The Workers, like the Gold-men, plan and
wake,—
What bodes their waking?
The Workers, like the Gold-men,
something make,—
What are they making?—
The Gold-men answer often—
'They make Tom Mooney's coffin.'

4

Tom Mooney talks behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
You cannot get quite near
Against the bars to lay your ear;
You find the light too dim
To spell the lips of him.
But, like a beast's within a zoo
(That was of old a god to savage clans),
His body shakes at you—
A beast's, a god's, a man's!
And from its ponderous, ancient rhythmic
shaking
Ye'll guess what 'tis the workers now are
making.
They make for times to come
From times of old—how old!—
From sweat, from blood, from hunger, and
from tears,
From scraps of hope (conserved through
bitter years
Despite the might and mockery of gold),
They make, these haggard men, a bomb,—
These haggard men with shawl-wives
dumb
And pinched-faced children cold,
Descendants of the oldest, earth-born
stock,
Gnarled brothers of the surf, the ice, the
fire, the rock,
Gray wolf and gaunt storm-bird.
They make a bomb more fierce than
dynamite,—
They weld a Word.
And on the awful night
The Gold-men set Tom Mooney grinning
(If such an hour shall be in truth's despite)
They'll loose the places of much
underpinning
In more than ten big cities, left and right.
c.1918 1920

FROM TWO LIVES [1]

I

viii

ONE night when early winter had begun
With gusty snows and frosty stars to keep
Our lives still closer, and our love more
deep
Than even in autumn wanderings with the
sun,

1 'The austere form itself, the sonnet (if in any organic creation, whether oak-tree or poem, one can separate "form" itself from essence, meaning, end) grew inevitably out of the need, an absolute need, of an especially austere control, masterful and unrelenting, over especially intense and fierce emotional experience, while a certain freedom resulted from variations within the norm (rime-arrangement, management of the "turn," etc.) and from linking sonnets as stanzas (both in narrative progress and in end-enjambements). *Two Lives* is *not* a "sonnet-sequence." I seemed to be speaking directly to a few friends. The reworking of the raw stuff of life was in part the impersonal urge of art—as in the simplifications of time and action, and in the college atmosphere conceived as a little more intimate than that of a latter-day State university. . . . The speech I used I had learned from my father's house, from schoolmates, from New England farmers, from Agatha

One night when we together, one-and-one,
Were sitting in the cushioned window-space,
Planning some purple flower-beds for the place
After our marriage, with new vines to run
About the basement wall; one night when time
Seemed all to come, and at its coming ours,
And we (as by an irony, sublime
In its gaunt mockery of human powers!)
Drifted at last backward to clime and clime
And years and years of uncompanioned hours,

From her own lips I learned the awful truth—
Which, like a child of hope with perfect smile,
She babbled, O so innocent of guile—
As some adventure of an alien youth,
Rescued by white sails from a midsea isle
Of shrieking beaks and fins and claws uncouth,
Or eery dream demanding never ruth
Because but dream and vanished the long while—
As something far and strange that I should hear. . . .
And why? Because she would conceal me naught,
As bound in honor? No. Because of fear
I'd learn of others some day? No.—She thought
Her lover would rejoice—rejoice to share
Her exaltation after *such* despair.

From her own lips—yes, even as they smiled—
I learned full truth: 'In France, five years ago
(When father was ambassador, you know),
I lived with a band of ladies wan and wild,—
Myself a shuddering maniac, exiled
With strange physicians, and behind locked door
Mumbling in bed, or tracing on the floor,
"The Lord is my shepherd, I . . ."'
'Goodnight, my child'—
(That none had told me, seems, you fancy, odd?)—
And so I kissed and left her. Did I cry?—
I've never cried. Or did I moan 'My God'?—
Nor that. Or walk out under starry sky?—
I went upstairs, undressed, put out the light;
And shook with pity and terror all the night.

ix [1]

. . . . . .

We act in crises not as one who dons
A judge's robe and sits to praise or blame
With walnut gavel, before high window-frame,
Beside a Justice-and-her-scales in bronze;
We act in crises not by pros and cons
Of volumes in brown calfskin still the same;
But, like the birds and beasts from which we came,
By the long trend of character—the *fons*,
Fons et origo—fountainhead and source—
Of deeper conduct, whether in unleashed hound
That tears the fleeing stag unto the ground,
Or thrush in battle for its fledgeling's corse,
Or boy who sees the cracked dam, hears a sound,
And down the peopled valley spurs his horse.

xiii

Mid-morning of mid-June: Her sudden whim
Among the guests (who chatted ill at ease):
'O let's be married out beneath the trees—
This mantel with its garlands is so prim.'

herself, and from some old acquaintances, like Shakspere, Byron, Wordsworth, and Emerson. For me one organic complex of speech. This was in 1913, remember, before the Poetic Renascence. Hence, some reviewers in 1925, otherwise friendly, regretted an unemancipated diction and "helpless inversions." But English diction in higher art is still for me more than the usage of the twentieth century . . . *o'er* beside *over* on occasion—if you have the instinct for the occasion. And English syntax and word order, in the higher art, loses, not gains, by reduction of its old plasticity to the rigidity of modern French. It is all a question of means to ends—of sincerity too of ends.' Leonard, *The Locomotive God*(N.Y., 1927),339–41.

1 Of this sonnet Leonard has said: 'It seems to combine my own authentic ethical bent with intellectual analysis, concentrated feeling, concrete symbolic pictures from nature and human life, and homely honest phrasing—without the cant of sentiment or the worse cant of "originality." ' Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets*(N.Y., 1933), 40.

As if she said, 'Let's row an hour or swim;'
As if she said, 'Let's pick the white sweet pease,
And leave the pink and purple for the bees;'
As if she said, 'Let's get the shears and trim
The lilac stems.' . . . Blue lake and bluer sky
Merged with the green of earth, of odorous earth,
A scarlet tanager went flashing by,
The unseen thrasher sang with all his mirth. . . .
The old dame neighbor said with happy tears:
'The sweetest wedding of my eighty years.'

. . . . . .

II

iii

. . . . . .

BUT I, grown fatuous in my love and lore—
Love that I thought was round her as a buoy
Lore that I thought was cunning to destroy
Disease and doom—toiled with her more and more:
My skill at mind should train the wild away,
The wild and eery, from that brow I kissed,
Till she should grow like girls of everyday
Through me (triumphant lover-alienist!),—
Thus to establish her in selfhood strong
Against disasters I was fearsome of—
Pain, slander, grief, and all gaunt broods of Life,—
Thus, also, to establish her as wife—
As apt in judgment as she was in song,
As fixed in purpose as she was in love.

. . . . . .

I FOUND a paper on her chiffonier—
Manila wrapping of a scarf or gloves,—
I read its penciling: 'He says, my love's
More than my tact . . . a child of fifteen year. . . .
He says he wishes I were more like sister. . . .
He says he needs'—and there I saw her stand
In the door, white-plume on head, her shopping in hand,
Smiles on her lips. She came to me. . . . I kissed her. . . .
She marked. . . . Her face fell on my shoulder; so
We clung together. 'I'm so sorry, friend,
You found my scrawl.'—'I love you, child.'—'I know.'—
'Forgive.'—' 'Twas for my good—and there's an end.'
The rest was silence—the embrace and kiss
Of love with love upon the precipice.

xi

. . . . . .

THAT afternoon the Postman brought, among
The notes of condolence for father dead,
Our monthly magazine. I opened, read,
And found at last, at last, the song I'd sung
(Two years before) in print for old and young,
In print at last for every clime and zone—
'*Amor Triumphans—Love is on the Throne*'—
And ran to her with news upon my tongue. . . .
Sitting in parlor, by the jardinière
Under the mother's portrait, with a book:
An instant flashed to life her olden look;
Her olden crimson glowed an instant there;
'Dear husband, thank you.'—But upon her knees
Lay the 'Alcestis' of Euripides.

Thereafter I found these Greek lines underscored:
κἄπειτα θάλαμον—and her chamber then— . . .
(. . . O? . . .) ἐσπεσοῦσα—hurrying, hurrying toward— . . .
(. . . So? . . .) καὶ λέχος —and couch— ἐνταῦθα δὴ—
Ah, there—'δάκρυσε—she did weep again—
(. . . Yes . . .) καὶ λέγει τάδε—and this did say—
Ὦ λέκτρον —O bed—ἔνθα παρθένει
ἔλυσ' ἐγὼ κορεύματ'—where I unbound
My virgin girdle—ἐκ τοῦδ' ἀνδρός—for This man, my lover—οὗ θνήσκω πέρι
For whose dear sake I die— . . . (And here I found

The margin with blurred letters scribbled o'er—
Was it some final message meant for me?) . . .
χαῖρ'—*O farewell.* . . . (Dear, χαῖρε evermore!)

. . . . . .

III

xxix

Indian Summer

(*O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,*
She is not by, to know my task is done!)

In the brown grasses slanting with the wind,
Lone as a lad whose dog's no longer near,
Lone as a mother whose only child has sinned,
Lone on the loved hill . . . and below me here
The thistle-down in tremulous atmosphere
Along red clusters of the sumach streams;
The shriveled stalks of goldenrod are sere,
And crisp and white their flashing old racemes.
(. . . forever . . . forever . . . forever . . .)
This is the lonely season of the year,
This is the season of our lonely dreams.

(*O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,*
She is not by, to know my task is done!)

The corn-shocks westward on the stubble plain
Show like an Indian village of dead days;
The long smoke trails behind the crawling train,
And floats atop the distant woods ablaze
With orange, crimson, purple. The low haze
Dims the scarped bluffs above the inland sea,
Whose wide and slaty waters in cold glaze
Await yon full-moon of the night-to-be.
(. . . far . . . and far . . . and far . . .)
These are the solemn horizons of man's ways,
These the horizons of solemn thought to me.

(*O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,*
She is not by to know my task is done!)

And this the hill she visited, as friend;
And this the hill she lingered on, as bride—
Down in the yellow valley is the end:
They laid her . . . in no evening Autumn tide. . . .
Under fresh flowers of that May morn, beside
The queens and cave-women of ancient earth. . . .

This is the hill . . . and over my city's towers,
Across the world from sunset, yonder in air,
Shines, through its scaffoldings, a civic dome
Of pilèd masonry, which shall be ours
To give, completed, to our children there. . . .
And yonder far roof of my abandoned home
Shall house new laughter. . . . Yet I tried. . . . I tried. . . .
And, ever wistful of the doom to come,
I built her many a fire for love . . . for mirth. . . .
(When snows were falling on our oaks outside,
Dear, many a winter fire upon the hearth) . . .
(. . . farewell . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .)
We dare not think too long on those who died,
While still so many yet must come to birth.

1913 1922

ROBERT FROST

1875–

MOWING

THERE was never a sound beside the wood but one,
And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.
What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;
Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,
Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound—
And that was why it whispered and did not speak.
It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:
Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak
To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,
Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers
(Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.
The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.
My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

1901 1913

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I WENT to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,

'As all must be,' I said within my heart,
'Whether they work together or apart.'

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,
Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

'Men work together,' I told him from the heart,
'Whether they work together or apart.'
1904 1913

MENDING WALL

SOMETHING there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
1913 1914

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

MARY sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. 'Silas is back.'
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. 'Be kind,' she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

'When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back,' he said.
'I told him so last haying, didn't I?
"If he left then," I said, "that ended it."
What good is he? Who else will harbor him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
"He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden."
"All right," I say, "I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could."

"Someone else can." "Then someone else will have to."
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,
When he begins like that, there's someone at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done.'

'Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you,' Mary said.

'I want him to: he'll have to soon or late.'

'He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—
You needn't smile—I didn't recognize him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see.'

'Where did you say he'd been?'

'He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels.
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off.'

'What did he say? Did he say anything?'

'But little.'

'Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me.'

'Warren!'

'But did he? I just want to know.'

'Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't begrudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on.'

'Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot.'

'Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathize. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like a violin
Because he liked it—that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong—
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay—'

'I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it

In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like big birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself.'

'He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different.'

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard some tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
'Warren,' she said, 'he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time.'

'Home,' he mocked gently.

'Yes, what else but home?
It all depends on what you mean by home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail.'
'Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in.'

'I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve.'

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
'Silas has better claim on us you think
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank.'

'He never told us that.'

'We know it though.'

'I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?'

'I wonder what's between them.'

'I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anybody. Worthless though he is,
He won't be made ashamed to please his brother.'

'I can't think Si ever hurt anyone.'

'No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there to-night.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it.'

'I'd not be in a hurry to say that.'

'I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon.'

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

'Warren?' she questioned.

'Dead,' was all he answered.

1905 1914

HOME BURIAL

He saw her from the bottom of the stairs
Before she saw him. She was starting down,
Looking back over her shoulder at some fear.
She took a doubtful step and then undid it
To raise herself and look again. He spoke
Advancing toward her: 'What is it you see
From up there always—for I want to know.'
She turned and sank upon her skirts at that,
And her face changed from terrified to dull.
He said to gain time: 'What is it you see,'
Mounting until she cowered under him.
'I will find out now—you must tell me, dear.'
She, in her place, refused him any help
With the least stiffening of her neck and silence.
She let him look, sure that he wouldn't see,
Blind creature; and a while he didn't see.
But at last he murmured, 'Oh,' and again, 'Oh.'

'What is it—what?' she said.

'Just that I see.'

'You don't,' she challenged. 'Tell me what it is.'

'The wonder is I didn't see at once.
I never noticed it from here before.
I must be wonted to it—that's the reason.
The little graveyard where my people are!
So small the window frames the whole of it.
Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it?
There are three stones of slate and one of marble,
Broad-shouldered little slabs there in the sunlight
On the sidehill. We haven't to mind *those*.
But I understand: it is not the stones,
But the child's mound—'

'Don't, don't, don't, don't,' she cried.

She withdrew shrinking from beneath his arm
That rested on the banister, and slid downstairs;
And turned on him with such a daunting look,
He said twice over before he knew himself:
'Can't a man speak of his own child he's lost?'

'Not you! Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!
I must get out of here. I must get air.
I don't know rightly whether any man can.'

'Amy! Don't go to someone else this time.
Listen to me. I won't come down the stairs.'
He sat and fixed his chin between his fists.
'There's something I should like to ask you, dear.'

'You don't know how to ask it.'

'Help me, then.'

Her fingers moved the latch for all reply.

'My words are nearly always an offence.
I don't know how to speak of anything
So as to please you. But I might be taught
I should suppose. I can't say I see how.
A man must partly give up being a man
With women-folk. We could have some arrangement
By which I'd bind myself to keep hands off
Anything special you're a-mind to name.
Though I don't like such things 'twixt those that love.
Two that don't love can't live together without them.
But two that do can't live together with them.'
She moved the latch a little. 'Don't—don't go.
Don't carry it to someone else this time.
Tell me about it if it's something human.
Let me into your grief. I'm not so much

Unlike other folks as your standing there
Apart would make me out. Give me my chance.
I do think, though, you overdo it a little.
What was it brought you up to think it the thing
To take your mother-loss of a first child
So inconsolably—in the face of love.
You'd think his memory might be satisfied—'

'There you go sneering now!'

'I'm not, I'm not!
You make me angry. I'll come down to you.
God, what a woman! And it's come to this,
A man can't speak of his own child that's dead.'

'You can't because you don't know how to speak.
If you had any feelings, you that dug
With your own hand—how could you?—his little grave;
I saw you from that very window there,
Making the gravel leap and leap in air,
Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly
And roll back down the mound beside the hole.
I thought, Who is that man? I didn't know you.
And I crept down the stairs and up the stairs
To look again, and still your spade kept lifting.
Then you came in. I heard your rumbling voice
Out in the kitchen, and I don't know why,
But I went near to see with my own eyes.
You could sit there with the stains on your shoes
Of the fresh earth from your own baby's grave
And talk about your everyday concerns.
You had stood the spade up against the wall
Outside there in the entry, for I saw it.'

'I shall laugh the worst laugh I ever laughed.
I'm cursed. God, if I don't believe I'm cursed.'

'I can repeat the very words you were saying.
"Three foggy mornings and one rainy day
Will rot the best birch fence a man can build."
Think of it, talk like that at such a time!
What had how long it takes a birch to rot
To do with what was in the darkened parlor.
You *couldn't* care! The nearest friends can go
With any one to death, comes so far short
They might as well not try to go at all.
No, from the time when one is sick to death,
One is alone, and he dies more alone.
Friends make pretence of following to the grave,
But before one is in it, their minds are turned
And making the best of their way back to life
And living people, and things they understand.
But the world's evil. I won't have grief so
If I can change it. Oh, I won't, I won't!'

'There, you have said it all and you feel better.
You won't go now. You're crying. Close the door.
The heart's gone out of it: why keep it up.
Amy! There's someone coming down the road!'

'*You*—oh, you think the talk is all. I must go—
Somewhere out of this house. How can I make you—'

'If—you—do!' She was opening the door wider.
'Where do you mean to go? First tell me that.
I'll follow and bring you back by force. I *will*!—'

1913 1914

AFTER APPLE-PICKING

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's the barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three

Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

1913 1914

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

1915 1916

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in

With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

1916 1916

FROM THE HILL WIFE

THE OFT-REPEATED DREAM

SHE had no saying dark enough
For the dark pine that kept
Forever trying the window-latch
Of the room where they slept.

The tireless but ineffectual hands
That with every futile pass
Made the great tree seem as a little bird
Before the mystery of glass!

It never had been inside the room,
And only one of the two
Was afraid in an oft-repeated dream
Of what the tree might do.

1916 1916

'OUT, OUT—'

THE buzz-saw snarled and rattled in the yard
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.
And from there those that lifted eyes could count
Five mountain ranges one behind the other
Under the sunset far into Vermont.
And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,
As it ran light, or had to bear a load.
And nothing happened: day was all but done.
Call it a day, I wish they might have said
To please the boy by giving him the half hour
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.
His sister stood beside them in her apron
To tell them 'Supper.' At the word, the saw,
As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,
Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap—
He must have given the hand. However it was,
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!
The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh.
As he swung toward them holding up the hand

Half in appeal, but half as if to keep
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—
Since he was old enough to know, big boy
Doing a man's work, though a child at heart—
He saw all spoiled. 'Don't let him cut my hand off—
The doctor, when he comes. Don't let him, sister!'
So. But the hand was gone already.
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.
And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.
No one believed. They listened at his heart.
Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.
No more to build on there. And they, since they
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

1916 1916

THE SOUND OF THE TREES

I WONDER about the trees.
Why do we wish to bear
Forever the noise of these
More than another noise
So close to our dwelling place?
We suffer them by the day
Till we lose all measure of pace,
And fixity in our joys,
And acquire a listening air.
They are that that talks of going
But never gets away;
And that talks no less for knowing,
As it grows wiser and older,
That now it means to stay.
My feet tug at the floor
And my head sways to my shoulder
Sometimes when I watch trees sway,
From the window or the door.
I shall set forth for somewhere,
I shall make the reckless choice
Some day when they are in voice
And tossing so as to scare
The white clouds over them on.
I shall have less to say,
But I shall be gone.

1915 1916

THE GRINDSTONE

HAVING a wheel and four legs of its own
Has never availed the cumbersome grindstone
To get it anywhere that I can see.
These hands have helped it go, and even race;
Not all the motion, though, they ever lent,
Not all the miles it may have thought it went,
Have got it one step from the starting place.
It stands beside the same old apple tree.
The shadow of the apple tree is thin
Upon it now, its feet are fast in snow.
All other farm machinery's gone in,
And some of it on no more legs and wheel
Than the grindstone can boast to stand or go.
(I'm thinking chiefly of the wheelbarrow.)
For months it hasn't known the taste of steel,
Washed down with rusty water in a tin.
But standing outdoors hungry, in the cold,
Except in towns at night, is not a sin.
And, anyway, its standing in the yard
Under a ruinous live apple tree
Has nothing any more to do with me,
Except that I remember how of old
One summer day, all day I drove it hard,
And someone mounted on it rode it hard,
And he and I between us ground a blade.

I gave it the preliminary spin,
And poured on water (tears it might have been;)
And when it almost gayly jumped and flowed,
A Father-Time-like man got on and rode,
Armed with a scythe and spectacles that glowed.
He turned on will-power to increase the load
And slow me down—and I abruptly slowed,
Like coming to a sudden railroad station.
I changed from hand to hand in desperation.
I wondered what machine of ages gone
This represented an improvement on.
For all I knew it may have sharpened spears
And arrowheads itself. Much use for years
Had gradually worn it an oblate
Spheroid that kicked and struggled in its gait,

Appearing to return me hate for hate;
(But I forgive it now as easily
As any other boyhood enemy
Whose pride has failed to get him anywhere.)
I wondered who it was the man thought ground—
The one who held the wheel back or the one
Who gave his life to keep it going round?
I wondered if he really thought it fair
For him to have the say when we were done.
Such were the bitter thoughts to which I turned.

Not for myself was I so much concerned.
Oh no!—although, of course, I could have found
A better way to pass the afternoon
Than grinding discord out of a grindstone,
And beating insects at their gritty tune.
Nor was I for the man so much concerned.
Once when the grindstone almost jumped its bearing
It looked as if he might be badly thrown
And wounded on his blade. So far from caring,
I laughed inside, and only cranked the faster,
(It ran as if it wasn't greased but glued;)
I'd welcome any moderate disaster
That might be calculated to postpone
What evidently nothing could conclude.
The thing that made me more and more afraid
Was that we'd ground it sharp and hadn't known,
And now were only wasting precious blade.
And when he raised it dripping once and tried
The creepy edge of it with wary touch,
And viewed it over his glasses funny-eyed,
Only disinterestedly to decide
It needed a turn more, I could have cried
Wasn't there danger of a turn too much?
Mightn't we make it worse instead of better?
I was for leaving something to the whetter.
What if it wasn't all it should be? I'd
Be satisfied if he'd be satisfied.

1921 1923

FIRE AND ICE

SOME say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

1919 1923

DUST OF SNOW

THE way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

1906 1923

THE RUNAWAY

ONCE when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say, 'Whose colt?'
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted at us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled,
And we saw him, or thought we saw him, dim and grey,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
'I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, "Sakes,
It's only weather." He'd think she didn't know!
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone.'
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies

'Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in.'

1917 1923

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

WHOSE woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

1923 1923

TO EARTHWARD

LOVE at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
The flow of—was it musk
From hidden grapevine springs
Down hill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt
That is not dashed with pain
And weariness and fault;
I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermark
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

1914 1923

GOOD-BYE AND KEEP COLD

THIS saying good-bye on the edge of the dark
And cold to an orchard so young in the bark
Reminds me of all that can happen to harm
An orchard away at the end of the farm
All winter, cut off by a hill from the house.
I don't want it girdled by rabbit and mouse,
I don't want it dreamily nibbled for browse
By deer, and I don't want it budded by grouse.
(If certain it wouldn't be idle to call
I'd summon grouse, rabbit, and deer to the wall
And warn them away with a stick for a gun.)
I don't want it stirred by the heat of the sun
(We made it secure against being, I hope,
By setting it out on a northerly slope.)
No orchard's the worse for the wintriest storm;
But one thing about it, it mustn't get warm.
'How often already you've had to be told,
Keep cold, young orchard. Good-bye and keep cold.
Dread fifty above more than fifty below.'
I have to be gone for a season or so.
My business awhile is with different trees,
Less carefully nurtured, less fruitful than these,
And such as is done to their wood with an axe—
Maples and birches and tamaracks.
I wish I could promise to lie in the night
And think of an orchard's arboreal plight

When slowly (and nobody comes with a light)
Its heart sinks lower under the sod.
But something has to be left to God.
1919 1923

NOT TO KEEP

THEY sent him back to her. The letter came
Saying . . . And she could have him. And before
She could be sure there was no hidden ill
Under the formal writing, he was in her sight,
Living. They gave him back to her alive—
How else? They are not known to send the dead—
And not disfigured visibly. His face?
His hands? She had to look, to ask,
'What is it, dear?' And she had given all
And still she had all—*they* had—they the lucky!
Wasn't she glad now? Everything seemed won,
And all the rest for them permissible ease.
She had to ask, 'What was it, dear?'

'Enough,
Yet not enough. A bullet through and through,
High in the breast. Nothing but what good care
And medicine and rest, and you a week,
Can cure me of to go again.' The same
Grim giving to do over for them both.
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes
How was it with him for a second trial.
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.
They had given him back to her, but not to keep.
1915 1923

ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT

I HAVE been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.
1925 1928

CANIS MAJOR

THE great Overdog,
That heavenly beast
With a star in one eye,
Gives a leap in the east.

He dances upright
All the way to the west,
And never once drops
On his forefeet to rest.

I'm a poor underdog,
But to-night I will bark
With the great Overdog
That romps through the dark.
1925 1928

THE BEAR

THE bear puts both arms around the tree above her
And draws it down as if it were a lover
And its choke cherries lips to kiss good-bye,
Then lets it snap back upright in the sky.
Her next step rocks a boulder on the wall
(She's making her cross-country in the fall.)
Her great weight creaks the barbed-wire in its staples
As she flings over and off down through the maples,
Leaving on one wire tooth a lock of hair.
Such is the uncaged progress of the bear.
The world has room to make a bear feel free;
The universe seems cramped to you and me.
Man acts more like the poor bear in a cage
That all day fights a nervous inward rage,
His mood rejecting all his mind suggests.
He paces back and forth and never rests
The toe-nail click and shuffle of his feet,
The telescope at one end of his beat,

And at the other end the microscope,
Two instruments of nearly equal hope,
And in conjunction giving quite a spread.
Or if he rests from scientific tread,
'Tis only to sit back and sway his head
Through ninety odd degrees of arc, it seems,
Between two metaphysical extremes.
He sits back on his fundamental butt
With lifted snout and eyes (if any) shut,
(He almost looks religious but he's not,)
And back and forth he sways from cheek to cheek,
At one extreme agreeing with one Greek,
At the other agreeing with another Greek
Which may be thought, but only so to speak.
A baggy figure, equally pathetic
When sedentary and when peripatetic.
1926 1928

TWO TRAMPS IN MUD TIME

OR, A FULL-TIME INTEREST

OUT of the mud two strangers came
And caught me splitting wood in the yard.
And one of them put me off my aim
By hailing cheerily 'Hit them hard!'
I knew pretty well why he dropped behind
And let the other go on a way.
I knew pretty well what he had in mind:
He wanted to take my job for pay.

Good blocks of beech it was I split,
As large around as the chopping block;
And every piece I squarely hit
Fell splinterless as a cloven rock.
The blows that a life of self-control
Spares to strike for the common good
That day, giving a loose to my soul,
I spent on the unimportant wood.

The sun was warm but the wind was chill.
You know how it is with an April day
When the sun is out and the wind is still,
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But if you so much as dare to speak,
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
A wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back in the middle of March.

A bluebird comes tenderly up to alight
And fronts the wind to unruffle a plume,
His song so pitched as not to excite
A single flower as yet to bloom.
It is snowing a flake: and he half knew
Winter was only playing possum.
Except in color he isn't blue,
But he wouldn't advise a thing to blossom.

The water for which we may have to look
In summertime with a witching-wand,
In every wheelrut's now a brook,
In every print of a hoof a pond.
Be glad of water, but don't forget
The lurking frost in the earth beneath
That will steal forth after the sun is set
And show on the water its crystal teeth.

The time when most I loved my task
These two must make me love it more
By coming with what they came to ask.
You'd think I never had felt before
The weight of an axe-head poised aloft,
The grip on earth of outspread feet,
The life of muscles rocking soft
And smooth and moist in vernal heat.

Out of the woods two hulking tramps
(From sleeping God knows where last night,
But not long since in the lumber camps.)
They thought all chopping was theirs of right.
Men of the woods and lumberjacks,
They judged me by their appropriate tool.
Except as a fellow handled an axe,
They had no way of knowing a fool.

Nothing on either side was said.
They knew they had but to stay their stay
And all their logic would fill my head:
As that I had no right to play
With what was another man's work for gain.
My right might be love but theirs was need.
And where the two exist in twain
Theirs was the better right—agreed.

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.
Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future's sakes.
1934 1936

NEITHER OUT FAR NOR IN DEEP

THE people along the sand
All turn and look one way.
They turn their back on the land.
They look at the sea all day.

As long as it takes to pass
A ship keeps raising its hull;
The wetter ground like glass
Reflects a standing gull.

The land may vary more;
But wherever the truth may be—
The water comes ashore,
And the people look at the sea.

They cannot look out far.
They cannot look in deep.
But when was that ever a bar
To any watch they keep?

1932 1936

A LONE STRIKER

OR, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO INDUSTRY

THE swinging mill bell changed its rate
To tolling like the count of fate,
And though at that the tardy ran,
One failed to make the closing gate.
There was a law of God or man
That on the one who came too late
The gate for half an hour be locked,
His time be lost, his pittance docked.
He stood rebuked and unemployed.
The straining mill began to shake.
The mill, though many, many eyed,
Had eyes inscrutably opaque;
So that he couldn't look inside
To see if some forlorn machine
Was standing idle for his sake.
(He couldn't hope its heart would break.)

And yet he thought he saw the scene:
The air was full of dust of wool.
A thousand yarns were under pull,
But pull so slow, with such a twist,
All day from spool to lesser spool,
It seldom overtaxed their strength;
They safely grew in slender length.
And if one broke by any chance,
The spinner saw it at a glance.
The spinner still was there to spin.
That's where the human still came in.
Her deft hand showed with finger rings
Among the harp-like spread of strings.
She caught the pieces end to end
And, with a touch that never missed,
Not so much tied as made them blend.
Man's ingenuity was good.
He saw it plainly where he stood,
Yet found it easy to resist.

He knew another place, a wood,
And in it, tall as trees, were cliffs;
And if he stood on one of these,
'Twould be among the tops of trees,
Their upper branches round him
wreathing,
Their breathing mingled with his
breathing.
If—if he stood! Enough of ifs!
He knew a path that wanted walking;
He knew a spring that wanted drinking;
A thought that wanted further thinking;
A love that wanted re-renewing.
Nor was this just a way of talking
To save him the expense of doing.
With him it boded action, deed.

The factory was very fine;
He wished it all the modern speed.
Yet, after all, 'twas not divine,
That is to say, 'twas not a church.
He never would assume that he'd
Be any institution's need.
But he said then and still would say
If there should ever come a day
When industry seemed like to die
Because he left it in the lurch,
Or even merely seemed to pine
For want of his approval, why
Come get him—they knew where to search.

1934 1936

VACHEL LINDSAY

1879–1931

FROM A GOSPEL OF BEAUTY

3. ON THE BUILDING OF SPRINGFIELD [1]

LET not our town be large, remembering
That little Athens was the Muses' home,
That Oxford rules the heart of London still,
That Florence gave the Renaissance to Rome.

Record it for the grandson of your son—
A city is not builded in a day:
Our little town cannot complete her soul
Till countless generations pass away.

Now let each child be joined as to a church
To her perpetual hopes, each man ordained:
Let every street be made a reverent aisle
Where Music grows and Beauty is unchained.

Let Science and Machinery and Trade
Be slaves of her, and make her all in all,
Building against our blatant, restless time
An unseen, skilful, medieval wall.

Let every citizen be rich toward God.
Let Christ the beggar, teach divinity.
Let no man rule who holds his money dear.
Let this, our city, be our luxury.

We should build parks that students from afar
Would choose to starve in, rather than go home,
Fair little squares, with Phidian ornament,
Food for the spirit, milk and honeycomb.

Songs shall be sung by us in that good day,
Songs we have written, blood within the rhyme
Beating, as when Old England still was glad,—
The purple, rich Elizabethan time.

Say, is my prophecy too fair and far?
I only know, unless her faith be high,
The soul of this, our Nineveh, is doomed,
Our little Babylon will surely die.

Some city on the breast of Illinois
No wiser and no better at the start
By faith shall rise redeemed, by faith shall rise
Bearing the western glory in her heart.

The genius of the Maple, Elm and Oak,
The secret hidden in each grain of corn,
The glory that the prairie angels sing
At night when sons of Life and Love are born,

Born but to struggle, squalid and alone,
Broken and wandering in their early years.
When will they make our dusty streets their goal,
Within our attics hide their sacred tears?

When will they start our vulgar blood athrill
With living language, words that set us free?
When will they make a path of beauty clear
Between our riches and our liberty?

We must have many Lincoln-hearted men.
A city is not builded in a day.
And they must do their work, and come and go,
While countless generations pass away.

c1908 1912

. . . . . .

1 This poem was one of the three Lindsay recited on his travels, 'which three in series contain my whole gospel, directly or by implication.' It is mostly here.

FROM ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

1. MY FATHERS CAME FROM KENTUCKY

I WAS born in Illinois,—
Have lived there many days.
And I have Northern words,
And thoughts,
And ways.

But my great-grandfathers came
To the west with Daniel Boone,
And taught his babes to read,
And heard the redbird's tune;

And heard the turkey's call,
And stilled the panther's cry,
And rolled on the blue-grass
hills,
And looked God in the eye.

And feud and Hell were theirs;
Love, like the moon's desire,
Love like a burning-mine,
Love like rifle-fire.

I tell tales out of school
Till these Yankees hate my style.
Why should the young cad cry,
Shout with joy for a mile?

Why do I faint with love
Till the prairies dip and reel?
My heart is a kicking horse
Shod with Kentucky steel.

No drop of my blood from north
Of Mason and Dixon's line.
And this racer in my breast
Tears my ribs for a sign.

But I ran in Kentucky hills
Last week. They were hearth and
home.
And the church at Grassy Springs,
Under the redbird's wings
Was peace and honeycomb.

1920

THE LEADEN-EYED

LET not young souls be smothered out before
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride.
It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull,
Its poor are ox-like, limp and leaden-eyed.

Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly,
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap,
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve,
Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

1912

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN [1]

(JOHN P. ALTGELD. BORN DECEMBER 30, 1847; DIED MARCH 12, 1902)

SLEEP softly . . . eagle forgotten . . .
under the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the
clay has its own.

'We have buried him now,' thought your
foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning,
their hatred unvoiced.
They had snarled at you, barked at you,
foamed at you day after day.
Now you were ended. They praised you
. . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and
terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her crust, and the boy
without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the
wounded, the lame and the
poor
That should have remembered forever
. . . remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what
name do they call,
The lost, that in armies wept over your
funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-
valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen the sons
of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your
dreaming began
The valor that wore out your soul in the
service of man.

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . .
under the stone,
Time has its way with you there and the
clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man,
that kindled the flame—

1 Altgeld, as Governor of Illinois, pardoned anarchistic agitators convicted for their part in the Chicago Haymarket riot, protested President Cleveland's sending the regular army to Chicago during the Pullman strike, and generally championed the down-trodden. It cost him his governorship, but made him for a time a symbol.

To live in mankind is far more than to live
in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more . . .
than to live in a name. 1912

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN [1]

(To be sung to the tune of 'The Blood of the Lamb' with indicated instrument.)

I

(Bass drum beaten loudly.)
BOOTH led boldly with his big bass drum—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
The Saints smiled gravely and they said:
'He's come.'
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends
pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers
frail:—
Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

(Banjos.)
Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over. (Booth had groaned
for more.)
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang,
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang:—
'Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?'
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make
free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare,
blare
On, on upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

2

(Bass drum slower and softer.)
Booth died blind and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

(Sweet flute music.)
Jesus came from out the court-house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing
poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty court-house
square.
Then, in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered
limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet
world.

(Bass drum louder.)
Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the
jowl!
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

(Grand chorus of all instruments. Tambourines to the foreground.)
The hosts were sandalled, and their wings
were fire!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
But their noise played havoc with the
angel-choir.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Oh, shout Salvation! It was good to see
Kings and Princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens.

(Reverently sung, no instruments.)
And when Booth halted by the curb for
prayer
He saw his Master thro' the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier, while the throng
knelt down.
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
1912 1913

1 Lindsay's ideal Democracy was to 'come through the services of three kinds of men in wise coöperation: the priests, the statesmen and the artists. Our priests shall be religious men like St. Francis, or John Wesley, or General Booth, or Cardinal Newman.' Lindsay, *Adventures while Preaching* . . . (N.Y., 1914),184–85.

'In my poem I merely turned into rhyme as well as I could, word for word, General Booth's own account of his life, and the telegraph dispatches of his death after going blind. I set it to the tune that is not a tune, but a speech, a refrain used most frequently in the meetings of the Army on any public square to this day.' Lindsay, *Collected Poems*(N.Y., 1923),22.

THE CONGO [1]

A Study of the Negro Race

1. *Their Basic Savagery*

FAT black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
And 'BLOOD' screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
'BLOOD' screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,
'Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,'
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,
Torch-eyed and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
HOO, HOO, HOO.
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,

A deep rolling bass.

More deliberate. Solemnly chanted.

A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket.

With a philosophic pause.

Shrilly and with a heavily accented meter.

Like the wind in the chimney.

1 'The thought of the third section was inspired by a passage in a sermon by my pastor, F.W.Burnham, when he spoke of the death of Ray Eldred, a heroic missionary, who had recently perished on the Congo River. It is logical there should be six lines conforming to the original hymn-theory and set to the tune, "Hark ten thousand harps and voices." But the remainder of "The Congo" is based, however poorly, on the most conventional English tradition of imitative verbal music, going back through Southey's "Cataract of Lodore" to Dryden's "Alexander's Feast." In reciting "The Congo" I unconsciously introduced a new element of chanting, akin to the Gregorian Chant I had heard in the Paulist Fathers' Church, New York. . . . I added this to my usual effort to elaborate the tone-color effects, and as a result of the two "The Congo" became the first recitation of my life to which big conventional gatherings of people would listen. All my sympathetic audiences up to that time had been the fireside sort, with chums, or on the road.' Lindsay, *Letter about My Four Programmes*(Springfield, Ill.,n.d.),5.

Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
'Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.'

All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered.

2. *Their Irrepressible High Spirits*

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
A negro fairyland swung into view,
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic-land.

Rather shrill and high.

Read exactly as in first section.

Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:—
'Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.' . . .
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(O rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

With pomposity.

With a great deliberation and ghostliness.

With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.

With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm.

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of 'Boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,'

While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:—
'Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
BOOM.'
Oh rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.

Slow philosophic calm.

3. *The Hope of Their Religion*

A good old negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,
Starting the jubilee revival shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed with their hymn books till they shook the room
With 'Glory, glory, glory,'
And 'Boom, boom, BOOM.'
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—
'Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you.'

Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.

Exactly as in the first section.

Sung to the tune of 'Hark, ten thousand harps and voices.'

Then along that river, a thousand miles,
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.
There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation;
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—

With growing deliberation and joy.

In a rather high key—as delicately as possible.

'Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you.'

To the tune of 'Hark, ten thousand harps and voices.'

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—
'Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you.'

Dying down into a penetrating, terrified whisper.

1913–1914 1914

FROM THE BOOKER WASHINGTON TRILOGY

I. SIMON LEGREE—A NEGRO SERMON [1]

(To be read in your own variety of negro dialect.)

LEGREE'S big house was white and green.
His cotton-fields were the best to be seen.
He had strong horses and opulent cattle,
And bloodhounds bold, with chains that would rattle.
His garret was full of curious things:
Books of magic, bags of gold,
And rabbits' feet on long twine strings.
But he went down to the Devil.

Legree, he sported a brass-buttoned coat,
A snake-skin necktie, a blood-red shirt.
Legree he had a beard like a goat,
And a thick hairy neck, and eyes like dirt.
His puffed-out cheeks were fish-belly white,
He had great long teeth, and an appetite.
He ate raw meat, 'most every meal,
And rolled his eyes till the cat would squeal.

His fist was an enormous size
To mash poor niggers that told him lies:
He was surely a witch-man in disguise.
But he went down to the Devil.

He wore hip-boots, and would wade all day
To capture his slaves that had fled away.
But he went down to the Devil.

He beat poor Uncle Tom to death
Who prayed for Legree with his last breath.
Then Uncle Tom to Eva flew,
To the high sanctoriums bright and new;
And Simon Legree stared up beneath,
And cracked his heels, and ground his teeth:
And went down to the Devil.

He crossed the yard in the storm and gloom;
He went into his grand front room.
He said, 'I killed him, and I don't care.'
He kicked a hound, he gave a swear;
He tightened his belt, he took a lamp,
Went down cellar to the webs and damp.
There in the middle of the mouldy floor
He heaved up a slab, he found a door—
And went down to the Devil.

His lamp blew out, but his eyes burned bright.
Simon Legree stepped down all night—
Down, down to the Devil.
Simon Legree he reached the place,
He saw one half of the human race,
He saw the Devil on a wide green throne,
Gnawing the meat from a big ham-bone,
And he said to Mister Devil:

'I see that you have much to eat—
A red ham-bone is surely sweet.
I see that you have lion's feet;

1 'Ideas are raging through the brains of even the duskiest of the negro leaders, and one can handle for such an audience almost any large thought he thinks he understands. He can put it into negro poetry, I maintain, if he is man enough, and still have it negro poetry. But he must keep his manner bright-colored, full-throated, relaxed and tropical. By the manner I do not mean dialect. There are innumerable Pullman porters who speak English in a close approach to the white man's way. But their thoughts and fancies are still straight from the jungle. . . . "Simon Legree" is an Afro-American grotesque, . . . is a serious attempt to record the devil-fear that haunts the race, though it is written with a humorous close. . . . Almost any reading negro, whatever his shrewd silence during working hours, is bound to remember *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with gratitude, and John Brown as well. He is bound to have an infinite variety of thoughts about them, grave and gay.' Lindsay, *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, VIII,iii,146–47.

I see your frame is fat and fine,
I see you drink your poison wine—
Blood and burning turpentine.'

And the Devil said to Simon Legree:
'I like your style, so wicked and free.
Come sit and share my throne with me,
And let us bark and revel.'
And there they sit and gnash their teeth,
And each one wears a hop-vine wreath.
They are matching pennies and shooting craps,
They are playing poker and taking naps.
And old Legree is fat and fine:
He heats the fire, he drinks the wine—
Blood and burning turpentine—
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil.

1917

THE GHOST OF THE BUFFALOES

LAST night at black midnight I woke with a cry,
The windows were shaking, there was thunder on high,
The floor was atremble, the door was ajar,
White fires, crimson fires, shone from afar.
I rushed to the dooryard. The city was gone.
My home was a hut without orchard or lawn.
It was mud-smear and logs near a whispering stream,
Nothing else built by man could I see in my dream . . .
Then . . .
Ghost-kings came headlong, row upon row,
Gods of the Indians, torches aglow.

They mounted the bear and the elk and the deer,
And eagles gigantic, aged and sere,
They rode long-horn cattle, they cried 'A-la-la.'
They lifted the knife, the bow, and the spear,
They lifted ghost-torches from dead fires below,
The midnight made grand with the cry 'A-la-la.'
The midnight made grand with a red-god charge,
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
'A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la.'

With bodies like bronze, and terrible eyes
Came the rank and the file, with catamount cries,
Gibbering, yipping, with hollow-skull clacks,
Riding white bronchos with skeleton backs,
Scalp-hunters, beaded and spangled and bad,
Naked and lustful and foaming and mad,
Flashing primeval demoniac scorn,
Blood-thirst and pomp amid darkness reborn.
Power and glory that sleep in the grass
While the winds and the snows and the great rains pass.
They crossed the gray river, thousands abreast,
They rode in infinite lines to the west,
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags were furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep.
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

And the wind crept by
Alone, unkempt, unsatisfied,
The wind cried and cried—
Muttered of massacres long past,
Buffaloes in shambles vast . . .
An owl said: 'Hark, what is a-wing?'
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling.

Then . . .
Snuffing the lightning that crashed from on high
Rose royal old buffaloes, row upon row.
The lords of the prairie came galloping by.
And I cried in my heart 'A-la-la, a-la-la.
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la.'

Buffaloes, buffaloes, thousands abreast,
A scourge and amazement, they swept to the west.

With black bobbing noses, with red rolling tongues,
Coughing forth steam from their leather-wrapped lungs,
Cows with their calves, bulls big and vain,
Goring the laggards, shaking the mane,
Stamping flint feet, flashing moon eyes
Pompous and owlish, shaggy and wise.
Like sea-cliffs and caves resounded their ranks
With shoulders like waves, and undulant flanks.
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

I heard a cricket's cymbals play,
A scarecrow lightly flapped his rags,
And a pan that hung by his shoulder rang,
Rattled and thumped in a listless way,
And now the wind in the chimney sang,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
Seemed to say:—
'Dream, boy, dream,
If you anywise can.
To dream is the work
Of beast or man.
Life is the west-going dream-storms' breath,
Life is a dream, the sigh of the skies,
The breath of the stars, that nod on their pillows
With their golden hair mussed over their eyes.'
The locust played on his musical wing,
Sang to his mate of love's delight.
I heard the whippoorwill's soft fret.
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket say: 'Good-night, good-night,
Good-night, good-night, . . . good-night.'

1914 1917

THE BRONCHO THAT WOULD NOT BE BROKEN [1]

A LITTLE colt—broncho, loaned to the farm
To be broken in time without fury or harm,
Yet black crows flew past you, shouting alarm,
Calling 'Beware,' with lugubrious singing . . .
The butterflies there in the bush were romancing,
The smell of the grass caught your soul in a trance,
So why be a-fearing the spurs and the traces,
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing?

You were born with the pride of the lords great and olden
Who danced, through the ages, in corridors golden.
In all the wide farm-place the person most human.
You spoke out so plainly with squealing and capering,
With whinnying, snorting, contorting and prancing,
As you dodged your pursuers, looking askance,
With Greek-footed figures, and Parthenon paces,
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.

The grasshoppers cheered. 'Keep whirling,' they said.
The insolent sparrows called from the shed
'If men will not laugh, make them wish they were dead.'
But arch were your thoughts, all malice displacing,
Though the horse-killers came, with snake-whips advancing.
You bantered and cantered away your last chance.

1 Lindsay felt something of himself in this broncho whose breaking he saw on one of his journeys. He wrote: 'The broncho should not have been called Dick. He should have been called Daniel Boone, or Davy Crockett or Custer or Richard, yes, Richard the Lion Hearted. . . . I think I want on my coat of arms a broncho, rampant.' Lindsay, *Adventures while Preaching . . .* (N.Y., 1914), 136–37.

And they scourged you, with Hell in their speech and their faces,
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.

'Nobody cares for you,' rattled the crows,
As you dragged the whole reaper, next day down the rows.
The three mules held back, yet you danced on your toes.
You pulled like a racer, and kept the mules chasing.
You tangled the harness with bright eyes side-glancing,
While the drunk driver bled you—a pole for a lance—
And the giant mules bit at you—keeping their places.
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.

In that last afternoon your boyish heart broke.
The hot wind came down like a sledge-hammer stroke.
The blood-sucking flies to a rare feast awoke.
And they searched out your wounds, your death-warrant tracing.
And the merciful men, their religion enhancing,
Stopped the red reaper, to give you a chance.
Then you died on the prairie, and scorned all disgraces,
O broncho that would not be broken of dancing.

1917

THE CHINESE NIGHTINGALE [1]

A Song in Chinese Tapestries

'How, how,' he said. 'Friend Chang,' I said,
'San Francisco sleeps as the dead—
Ended license, lust and play:
Why do you iron the night away?

Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round.
While the monster shadows glower and creep,
What can be better for man than sleep?'

'I will tell you a secret,' Chang replied;
'My breast with vision is satisfied,
And I see green trees and fluttering wings,
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings.'
Then he lit five firecrackers in a pan.
'Pop, pop,' said the firecrackers, 'cra-cra-crack.'
He lit a joss stick long and black.
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;
On his wrist appeared a gray small bird,
And this was the song of the gray small bird:
'Where is the princess, loved forever,
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?'

And the joss in the corner stirred again;
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,
And there on the snowy table wide
Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face. . . .
Yet she put away all form and pride,
And laid her glimmering veil aside
With a childlike smile for Chang and for me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,
The table gleamed in a moonlit bower,
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,
Ironed and ironed, all alone.
And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:
'Have you forgotten . . .
Deep in the ages, long, long ago,
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand—
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?

[1] 'Mr. Lindsay wrote "The Chinese Nightingale" in Springfield and New York, between May and October, 1914, while his father and mother were in China visiting their son-in-law and daughter, who are medical missionaries at Lu-Chow-Fu. The poet, who has never seen China himself, says of the poem: "The intention of the piece is to combine such elements of Chinese decoration and whim as are to be found by the superficial observer in the cafe-store, the chop-suey restaurant, the laundry, the Chinese theatre. To these are to be added such general ideas of China as may be acquired in any brief résumé of their religion, their customs and temperament."' *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, V.v.247.

We sold our grain in the peacock town—
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown—
Built on the edge of the sea-sands
brown. . . .

When all the world was drinking blood
From the skulls of men and bulls
And all the world had swords and clubs of
stone,
We drank our tea in China beneath the
sacred spice-trees,
And heard the curled waves of the harbor
moan.
And this gray bird, in Love's first spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-
brown wing,
Captured the world with his carolling.
Do you remember, ages after,
At last the world we were born to own?
You were the heir of the yellow throne—
The world was the field of the Chinese
man
And we were the pride of the sons of Han?
We copied deep books and we carved in
jade,
And wove blue silks in the mulberry
shade. . . .'

'I remember, I remember
That Spring came on forever,
That Spring came on forever,'
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream,
Though I saw the western street-lamps
gleam,
Though dawn was bringing the western
day,
Though Chang was a laundryman ironing
away. . . .
Mingled there with the streets and alleys,
The railroad-yard and the clock-tower
bright,
Demon clouds crossed ancient valleys;
Across wide lotus-ponds of light
I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,
Flourished her fan, her shimmering fan,
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and
said:
'Do you remember,
Ages after,
Our palace of heart-red stone?
Do you remember
The little doll-faced children
With their lanterns full of moon-fire,
That came from all the empire
Honoring the throne?—
The loveliest fête and carnival
Our world had ever known?
The sages sat about us
With their heads bowed in their beards.
With proper meditation on the sight.
Confucius was not born;
We lived in those great days
Confucius later said were lived aright. . . .
And this gray bird, on that day of spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-
brown wing,
Captured the world with his carolling.
Late at night his tune was spent.
Peasants,
Sages,
Children,
Homeward went,
And then the bronze bird sang for you and
me.
We walked alone. Our hearts were high and
free.
I had a silvery name, I had a silvery
name,
I had a silvery name—do you remember
The name you cried beside the tumbling
sea?'

Chang turned not to the lady slim—
He bent to his work, ironing away;
But she was arch, and knowing and
glowing,
For the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

'Darling . . . darling . . . darling . . .
darling . . .'
Said the Chinese nightingale.

. . . . . .

The great gray joss on the rustic shelf,
Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,
Sang impolitely, as though by himself,
Drowning with his bellowing the
nightingale's cry:
'Back through a hundred, hundred years
Hear the waves as they climb the piers.
Hear the howl of the silver seas,
Hear the thunder.
Hear the gongs of holy China
How the waves and tunes combine
In a rhythmic clashing wonder,

Incantation old and fine:
"Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons,
Red firecrackers, and green firecrackers,
And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons." '

Then the lady, rosy-red,
Turned to her lover Chang and said:
'Dare you forget that turquoise dawn
When we stood in our mist-hung velvet lawn,
And worked a spell this great joss taught,
Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?
From the flag high over our palace home
He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam—
A king of beauty and tempest and thunder
Panting to tear our sorrows asunder,
A dragon of fair adventure and wonder.
We mounted the back of that royal slave
With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.
We swam down the shore to the dragon-mountains,
We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.
To our secret ivory house we were borne.
We looked down the wonderful wing-filled regions
Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.
Right by my breast the nightingale sang;
The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist
That we this hour regain—
Song-fire for the brain.
When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,
When you cried for your heart's new pain,
What was my name in the dragon-mist,
In the rings of rainbowed rain?'

'Sorrow and love, glory and love,'
Said the Chinese nightingale.
'Sorrow and love, glory and love,'
Said the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:
'Dying ember, bird of Chang,
Soul of Chang, do you remember?—
Ere you returned to the shining harbor
There were pirates by ten thousand
Descended on the town
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown,
Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;
I stood upon the sand;
With lifted hand I looked upon them
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.
Deep, deep below the bay, the seaweed and the spray,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies.'

Then this did the noble lady say:
'Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day
When you flew like a courier on before
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,
And we drove the steed in your singing path—
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath:
And found our city all aglow,
And knighted this joss that decked it so?
There were golden fishes in the purple river
And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.
There were golden junks in the laughing river,
And silver junks and rainbow junks:
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,
And silver lilies and tiger-lilies,
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town
By the black-lacquer gate
Where walked in state
The kind king Chang
And his sweetheart mate. . . .
With his flag-born dragon
And his crown of pearl . . . and . . . jade,
And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,
And priests who bowed them down to your song—
By the city called Han, the peacock town,
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,
The nightingale town.'

Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,
A vague, unravelling, final tune,
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;
Sang as though for the soul of him
Who ironed away in that bower dim:—

'I have forgotten
Your dragons great,
Merry and mad and friendly and bold.
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.
I vaguely know
There were heroes of old,
Troubles more than the heart could hold,
There were wolves in the woods
Yet lambs in the fold,
Nests in the top of the almond tree. . . .
The evergreen tree . . . and the mulberry tree . . .
Life and hurry and joy forgotten,
Years on years I but half-remember . . .
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,
May and June, then dead December,
Dead December, then again June.
Who shall end my dream's confusion?
Life is a loom, weaving illusion . . .
I remember, I remember
There were ghostly veils and laces . . .
In the shadowy bowery places . . .
With lovers' ardent faces
Bending to one another,
Speaking each his part.
They infinitely echo
In the red cave of my heart.
"Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart,"
They said to one another.
They spoke, I think, of perils past.
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.
One thing I remember:
Spring came on forever,
Spring came on forever,'
Said the Chinese nightingale.

1914 1917

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

1869–

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FROM SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY [1]

THE HILL

WHERE are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozer, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all, are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful childbirth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,
One after life in far-away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and Mag—
All, all, are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

1 There are two hundred and forty-four characters in the book, not counting those who figure in the Spooniad and the Epilogue. There are nineteen stories developed by interrelated portraits. Practically every ordinary human occupation is covered, except those of the barber, the miller, the cobbler, the tailor and the garage man . . . and all these were depicted later in the New Spoon River. What critics overlook when they call the Anthology Zolaesque, and by doing so mean to degrade it, is the fact that when the book was put together in its definitive order, . . . the fools, the drunkards, the failures came first, the people of one-birth minds got second place, and the heroes and the enlightened spirits came last, a sort of Divine Comedy, which some critics were acute enough to point out at once.

'The names I drew from both the Spoon River and the Sangamon river neighborhoods, combining first names here with surnames there, and taking some also from the constitutions and State papers of Illinois.' Masters, 'The Genesis of Spoon River,' *The American Mercury*, XXVIII,cix,50.

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all, are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

Lucinda Matlock

I WENT to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

Thomas Trevelyan

READING in Ovid the sorrowful story of Itys,
Son of the love of Tereus and Procne, slain
For the guilty passion of Tereus for Philomela,
The flesh of him served to Tereus by Procne,
And the wrath of Tereus, the murderess pursuing
Till the gods made Philomela a nightingale,
Lute of the rising moon, and Procne a swallow!
Oh livers and artists of Hellas centuries gone,
Sealing in little thuribles dreams and wisdom,
Incense beyond all price, forever fragrant,
A breath whereof makes clear the eyes of the soul!
How I inhaled its sweetness here in Spoon River!
The thurible opening when I had lived and learned
How all of us kill the children of love, and all of us,
Knowing not what we do, devour their flesh;
And all of us change to singers, although it be
But once in our lives, or change—alas!—to swallows,
To twitter amid cold winds and falling leaves!

Fiddler Jones

THE earth keeps some vibration going
There in your heart, and that is you.
And if the people find you can fiddle,
Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.
What do you see, a harvest of clover?
Or a meadow to walk through to the river?
The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands
For beeves hereafter ready for market;
Or else you hear the rustle of skirts
Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.
To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust
Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;
They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy
Stepping it off, to 'Toor-a-Loor.'
How could I till my forty acres
Not to speak of getting more,
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos

Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
And the creak of a wind-mill—only these?
And I never started to plow in my life
That some one did not stop in the road
And take me away to a dance or picnic.
I ended up with forty acres;
I ended up with a broken fiddle—
And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
And not a single regret.

Benjamin Pantier

Together in this grave lie Benjamin Pantier, attorney at law,
And Nig, his dog, constant companion, solace and friend.
Down the gray road, friends, children, men and women,
Passing one by one out of life, left me till I was alone
With Nig for partner, bed-fellow, comrade in drink.
In the morning of life I knew aspiration and saw glory.
Then she, who survives me, snared my soul
With a snare which bled me to death,
Till I, once strong of will, lay broken, indifferent,
Living with Nig in a room back of a dingy office.
Under my jaw-bone is snuggled the bony nose of Nig—
Our story is lost in silence. Go by, mad world!

Mrs. Benjamin Pantier

I know that he told that I snared his soul
With a snare which bled him to death.
And all the men loved him,
And most of the women pitied him.
But suppose you are really a lady, and have delicate tastes,
And loathe the smell of whiskey and onions.
And the rhythm of Wordsworth's 'Ode' runs in your ears,
While he goes about from morning till night
Repeating bits of that common thing;
'Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?'
And then, suppose:
You are a woman well endowed,
And the only man with whom the law and morality
Permit you to have the marital relation
Is the very man that fills you with disgust
Every time you think of it—while you think of it
Every time you see him?
That's why I drove him away from home
To live with his dog in a dingy room
Back of his office.

Reuben Pantier

Well, Emily Sparks, your prayers were not wasted,
Your love was not all in vain.
I owe whatever I was in life
To your hope that would not give me up,
To your love that saw me still as good.
Dear Emily Sparks, let me tell you the story.
I pass the effect of my father and mother;
The milliner's daughter made me trouble
And out I went in the world,
Where I passed through every peril known
Of wine and women and joy of life.
One night, in a room in the Rue de Rivoli,
I was drinking wine with a black-eyed cocotte,
And the tears swam into my eyes.
She thought they were amorous tears and smiled
For thought of her conquest over me.
But my soul was three thousand miles away,
In the days when you taught me in Spoon River.
And just because you no more could love me,
Nor pray for me, nor write me letters,
The eternal silence of you spoke instead.
And the black-eyed cocotte took the tears for hers,
As well as the deceiving kisses I gave her.
Somehow, from that hour, I had a new vision—
Dear Emily Sparks!

Emily Sparks

Where is my boy, my boy—
In what far part of the world?
The boy I loved best of all in the school?—
I, the teacher, the old maid, the virgin heart,
Who made them all my children.
Did I know my boy aright,
Thinking of him as spirit aflame,
Active, ever aspiring?

Oh, boy, boy, for whom I prayed and
prayed
In many a watchful hour at night,
Do you remember the letter I wrote you
Of the beautiful love of Christ?
And whether you ever took it or not,
My boy, wherever you are,
Work for your soul's sake,
That all the clay of you, all the dross of you,
May yield to the fire of you,
Till the fire is nothing but light! . . .
Nothing but light!

Trainor, the Druggist

Only the chemist can tell, and not always
the chemist,
What will result from compounding
Fluids or solids.
And who can tell
How men and women will interact
On each other, or what children will result?
There were Benjamin Pantier and his wife,
Good in themselves, but evil toward each
other:
He oxygen, she hydrogen,
Their son, a devastating fire.
I Trainor, the druggist, a mixer of
chemicals,
Killed while making an experiment,
Lived unwedded.

Daisy Fraser

Did you ever hear of Editor Whedon
Giving to the public treasury any of the
money he received
For supporting candidates for office?
Or for writing up the canning factory
To get people to invest?
Or for suppressing the facts about the bank,
When it was rotten and ready to break?
Did you ever hear of the Circuit Judge
Helping anyone except the 'Q' railroad,
Or the bankers? Or did Rev. Peet or Rev.
Sibley
Give any part of their salary, earned by
keeping still,
Or speaking out as the leaders wished them
to do,
To the building of the water works?
But I, Daisy Fraser, who always passed
Along the streets through rows of nods and
smiles,
And coughs and words such as 'there she
goes,'
Never was taken before Justice Arnett
Without contributing ten dollars and costs
To the school fund of Spoon River!

Anne Rutledge

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
'With malice toward none, with charity for
all.'
Out of me the forgiveness of millions
toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath
these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

The Village Atheist

Ye young debaters over the doctrine
Of the soul's immortality,
I who lie here was the village atheist,
Talkative, contentious, versed in the
arguments
Of the infidels.
But through a long sickness
Coughing myself to death
I read the *Upanishads* and the poetry of
Jesus.
And they lighted a torch of hope and
intuition
And desire which the Shadow,
Leading me swiftly through the caverns of
darkness,
Could not extinguish.
Listen to me, ye who live in the senses
And think through the senses only:
Immortality is not a gift,
Immortality is an achievement;
And only those who strive mightily
Shall possess it.

William and Emily

There is something about Death
Like love itself!
If with some one with whom you have know
passion,
And the glow of youthful love,
You also, after years of life
Together, feel the sinking of the fire,
And thus fade away together,
Gradually, faintly, delicately,
As it were in each other's arms,

Passing from the familiar room—
That is a power of unison between souls
Like love itself!
1914–1915 1915

FROM THE NEW SPOON RIVER

ROBERT CHAIN

THERE are two ways in life,
And I tried them both:
First a life of no change,
Life like a gull, which has no dream
But to be a gull, fly over the waters,
Seeking its food, and to nest and sleep!
And then I became a creature that nurses
Growth and mutation in the brain,
Swims to land and turns its fins to legs.
Sensing a shriveled life ahead,
And loathing the weary hour,
I changed myself to renew myself,
And lost myself!

FRANCES CORDELL

WHAT a moment of strange dying! Quickly
All my vision girdled earth and showed me
Temples in far India, tombs in Persia,
Down the Appian way, and over Florence,
Home of Dante, wandering place of Browning.
And how strange, how prying was the vision:
For the coffin of old Landor opened;
Showed me what was left of that imperious,
Proud and lonely singer of strange beauty.
There he lay, gone down to bits of nothing—
Just a few stray hairs, a piece of shoulder,
Nothing else of him who wrote these verses:
'Proud word you never spoke, but in some future
'Day you will keep not speaking of me these words,
'Over my open volume you will linger,
'You will say in reading: "This man loved me." '
Who was she and where is gone her beauty?
In what place of cypress or of willows,
In what separation from her poet,
Lies the woman, never speaking proud words?
Only these, as I have said while reading:
'This man loved me,' tears upon the pages!

RICHARD HARNED

GOLDEN bees at the heart of violets,
Heavy with starry wine of the flower,
The lizard lurks for you there in the thickets
Armed in mimesis green as the leaves.
The emerald wasp is watching the clay pots,
All day filled with your spoil of the June;
The Fab in terminal scarf of azure,
And breast bedecked in Florentine gold
Thirsts for the fruit of your toil for children
Born of her, pressed by the will to life.
And the small gray flies come trooping after
Wasps and Fabs with shark toothed jaws.
What is it all but a great devouring?
What but Nature that passes us on
From stomach to stomach, till man the spirit
Fights against spirit, devouring, devoured?
Golden bees! I died believing
All mounts up to some finest life,
All is love, and the death of loving;
And if there is life that is higher than Art
It's peace that shines in God!

HENRY ZOLL, THE MILLER

HAVE you ever noticed the mill pond in the dog days?
How it breeds wriggling life,
And seethes and crackles with poisonous froth,
Then lies as still as a snake gone blind?
And how can the mill pond know itself
When its water has caked to scum and worms?
And how can it know the world or the sky
When it has no mirror with which to see them?
But the river above the bend is wise:
Its waters are swift and cold and clear,
Always changing and always fresh,
And full of ripples and swirls and waves,
That image a thousand stars by night,
And a thousand phases of sun and clouds,
By a changing movie of forest and hills!
And down in its healthful depths the pickerel
Chase each other like silver shadows;
And the swift game fish swim up the stream.
Well, this is the soul of a man, my friend:
You brood at first, then froth with regret,

Then cake with hatred, and sink to dullness;
Or else you struggle and keep on the move,
Forget and solve and learn and emerge,
Full of sparkle and stars.
And down in your depths there's flashing laughter,
Swimming against the current!

1924

JOHNNY APPLESEED [1]

WHEN the air of October is sweet and cold as the wine of apples
Hanging ungathered in frosted orchards along the Grand River,
I take the road that winds by the resting fields and wander
From Eastmanville to Nuncia down to the Villa Crossing.

I look for old men to talk with, men as old as the orchards,
Men to tell me of ancient days, of those who built and planted,
Lichen gray, branch broken, bent and sighing,
Hobbling for warmth in the sun and for places to sit and smoke.

For there is a legend here, a tale of the croaking old ones
That Johnny Appleseed came here, planted some orchards around here,
When nothing was here but the pine trees, oaks and the beeches,
And nothing was here but the marshes, lake and the river.

Peter Van Zylen is ninety and this he tells me:
My father talked with Johnny Appleseed there on the hill-side,
There by the road on the way to Fruitport, saw him
Clearing pines and oaks for a place for an apple orchard.

Peter Van Zylen says: He got that name from the people
For carrying apple-seed with him and planting orchards
All the way from Ohio, through Indiana across here,
Planting orchards, they say, as far as Illinois.

Johnny Appleseed said, so my father told me:
I go to a place forgotten, the orchards will thrive and be here
For children to come, who will gather and eat hereafter.
And few will know who planted, and none will understand.

I laugh, said Johnny Appleseed: Some fellow buys this timber
Five years, perhaps from to-day, begins to clear for barley.
And here in the midst of the timber is hidden an apple orchard.
How did it come here? Lord! Who was it here before me?

Yes, I was here before him, to make these places of worship,
Labor and laughter and gain in the late October.
Why did I do it, eh? Some folks say I am crazy.
Where do my labors end? Far west, God only knows!

Said Johnny Appleseed there on the hill-side: Listen!
Beware the deceit of nurseries, sellers of seeds of the apple.
Think! You labor for years in trees not worth the raising.
You planted what you knew not, bitter or sour for sweet.

No luck more bitter than poor seed, but one as bitter:
The planting of perfect seed in soil that feeds and fails,
Nourishes for a little, and then goes spent forever.
Look to your seed, he said, and remember the soil.

And after that is the fight: the foe curled up at the root,
The scale that crumples and deadens, the moth in the blossoms,

[1] John Chapman (c.1775–1847), known as 'Johnny Appleseed,' was a Swedenborgian lover of nature who wandered through the Middle West, planting freely apple-orchards and herbs. His eccentricities and gentle goodness made him even in his own time into a half-legendary personage.

Becoming a life that coils at the core of a thing of beauty:
You bite your apple, a worm is crushed on your tongue!

And it's every bit the truth, said Peter Van Zylen.
So many things love an apple as well as ourselves.
A man must fight for the thing he loves, to possess it:
Apples, freedom, heaven, said Peter Van Zylen.
1918 1918

BEETHOVEN'S NINTH SYMPHONY AND THE KING COBRA

I

In the days of steaming swamps and tropic ferns,
When life was fermenting and crackling, and trying to escape
The trance of Nature, and get beyond itself,
Footless creatures chose legs, and conquered the land.
Then they abandoned the conquest, and took back to the water,
And became the drooling sea-crocodile,
The laughing mosasaur,
And the silly giant called the ichthyosaur,
And the pleisiosaur, with a mouth like a goose,
All flapping, floundering, and laughing to be back in the water,
Unenvious of their relatives who got wings,
And long tails, and bat-like rudders,
And turtle-beaks, which stood agape, grinning like Moloch,
Roosting on sun-hot rocks.

Those were the days when there was nothing but demons,
Nothing but horns, hoofs, teeth and fangs.

Somewhere here the crawling, footless, coiling
Worm of hell lost his father and mother,
And went on without ancestors, and without memory of ancestors,
Or any worship of ancestors, and ended up as hell's perfection,
Ended as the cobra, crawling forever as abandoned diabolism,
As embodied hate and sullen loneliness.
But the footless creatures who clove to the land,
And longed till their ears could catch
Something beside this sound and the next sound,
Sounds without recurring periods and pauses,
Without continuity or rhythm;
The footless creatures which longed themselves to claws,
And then longed their claws to fingers,
Which at last could set down the signs of eternity for oboes,
For clarinets, horns and strings—
These footless creatures started the breed which fathered Beethoven at last;
And thus came the finale, the consummation:
Beethoven and the King Cobra.

2

Nature is a sleeping spirit.
Nature is a trance, a mass drugged by eternity,
A petrifaction, a solid jelly, a self-containment,
A contemplation which cannot arise from itself,
Or get out of itself, or look upon itself.
Man has escaped from this deep catalepsy:
He has soared up, and can look down;
He has flown forward, and can glance back;
He can turn upon the past, and see the future.
But as he ages he ceases gradually to be outside himself,
Or see himself.
He becomes again all-self-contained, reduced to one mood of Nature,
Reduced to the eye which contemplates, but does not know.
So he descends to the mind of the cobra,
On the way to the unconsciousness of Nature,
Which is Death, the cobra's cousin.

Nature is spirit, but the spirit of calm swamp-slush;
Nature is unconscious, but it casts upon matter
The reflection of what has created Nature.
Nature as the whole of things lies locked in the unconsciousness

Which is the primal condition of all terraqueous things.
The same power which slumbers in the stone,
And dreams in the flower, and sends half-legged beings
Out of the water to the land, then back to the water,
And into trees, and on to rocks—
This same power awakes in the cobra;
It awakes in Beethoven.
It awakes when anything separates itself from Nature,
And becomes two instead of one;
And becomes outside as well as inside;
And becomes something more than a landscape's mood,
Something more than a motionless eye;
Becomes in truth an eye that knows enemies,
And a head that knows that pain is in the flesh,
And comes from turning from one to two;
And that pain brings something into existence
Which is an advance upon a mere stare.

It is here that a separation takes place between Nature, the creator,
And any mind created.
Pain is the penalty, and fear, both births of consciousness.
And thus with this state of being common to both Beethoven and the cobra
Beethoven can disturb the cobra
By shocking its ear to be aware of sounds and octaves
Too much for an ear which is a tympanum and cochlea of mere snake grisle and bone,
Murmurous with its swamp nativity, and fitted to listen
For enemies and food, nothing else;
For the sound of a twig snapping, not polyphones.

What but irritation, disturbance,
What but annoyance and pain,
Made the thing at one with Nature
Become the thing escaped and fighting Nature,
Both because it resists being jailed again,
And because it resents ever being turned loose?
What are irritation, disturbance, annoyance, pain?
Are they not evil?
So Beethoven's music must be evil to the cobra,
For it forces the cobra's ear to do more than listen
For enemies and for food.
The cobra evoked from the great trance
Continues as an evil, we say.
But Beethoven so evoked after long aeons
Is he not evil, too?
Is he truth and beauty, yet a sufferer, and producing suffering?
Is he truth and beauty, who awakens greater consciousness?
Or is he continued evil, bringing pain and despair,
And deeper looks into the nothingness whence we came,
And a forecast of the resumption of sleep whither we tend?
Is he then evil as he shows these things to the full?
Does he not disturb us, as he does the cobra,
Which crawls and writhes and lifts itself
As it hears Beethoven through oboes
Tell of his sorrows and sufferings,
The neglect that the world heaped upon him,
His poverty and loneliness,
Loneliness as lonely as this glass-cage of the cobra;
All of which Beethoven uttered in music, and in the cry:
'I have no friend,
'I am alone in the world.
'O God, my Rock, my All,
'Thou Unutterable, hear Thy unhappy,
'Thy most unhappy of mortals.'
Is not the cobra also alone and unhappy?
And these cries of Beethoven
Do they not set vibrating
The unutterable, and the unhappy,
And the loneliness which is the cobra?

3

Beethoven was miserable, in agony, in the trap of life.
But the king cobra is all misery, all agony,
All embodied evil, being by Nature trapped to be within itself,
And by man trapped to be within this glass cage.

It is trapped by being fated to be constantly
aware of its venom genius,
That is the groundwork, the essence and all
of its being;
And the shape of its head, the stare of its
eyes show this.
With this goes the sense of enmity between
the cobra and man,
And fear of man, and fear of the jungle and
night; and that is being trapped.
Its life is poison, and that is its wisdom also;
and that is being trapped.
Its wisdom is hate for the Power which has
invented traps,
Hate for the Power which has trapped its
thought in a shallow skull,
And locked its thought in a trap of
contemplation,
Where all the traps are contemplated
dimly.
It is trapped to the life of sensuous
particulars,
While the whole teases, and is never
known,
The whole is a slowed-down film.
It is trapped by will without knowledge;
It is trapped by a small speck of brain
plasm
From which has issued narrow channels
Of sight and hearing,
Through which the world of visible and
audible things:
Man the keeper before the cage, standing
safe;
And Beethoven with strings, clarinets and
horns
Gorges through like a freshet, and bursts
the channels, and tortures the brain.
It is trapped when guessing the life blisses
of other creatures;
It is trapped, being shut from some realer
realm of life;
It is trapped, and compelled to crawl and
coil,
And lick forth a tongue to aid half-eyes;
It is trapped in loneliness, not able to live
loneliness as the soul can,
Not able in loneliness to sink into the trance
of the ancient swamps;
But by its loneliness made more aware
Of its separateness, and of enemies and
dangers without—
Such a curse upon anything that can feel!
Such loneliness at the dark bottom-point of
hell's cone!
It is trapped by dim memory of heredity,
But kept from going back to water,
And kept from taking to the air,
And cut off bitterly from the lineage of
man:
For man descended not from the snake,
But from old, patriarchal, drowsy,
dreaming reptiles.
It is trapped to the life of the jungle
forever;
It is trapped by hate of the Cause of
consciousness,
And it brews venom in revenge.
It is trapped forever to the shape of a
gorilla's cylindrical excrement;
It is stripped and exposed forever like the
phallus of Polyphemus,
The horror and disgust of worst and best
eyes!
It is trapped by regret for vanished æons of
earth
When there was peace in the pulse of the
earth mood
Which made a oneness of plants, rocks,
ooze, and primordial plasm.
It is trapped because the chance is now
gone forever to get feet or wings,
and fly the jungle.
It is trapped by the will which has made
this elongated frightfulness,
The will—from what source?—which has
made
Teeth and fangs and poison,
And the hunger of cannibalism.
For there is a Dual Thing
Which might have made the cobra half
good,
Not all evil.
And this the cobra feels, and licks forth its
forked tongue
In hate of this Dual Thing.
It is trapped by the power within it
From the Power without it, which has
implanted in it
This insane will of dealing death.
It is trapped by being the contemplation of
the motionless eye,
Where no smile lurks, no sense of
voluptuous content;
But where alert malice sparkles and burns,
and winks like a half-ashed coal,
And flashes hate and hunger and irritable
watchfulness.
It is trapped by being engendered and then
spurned by a superior soul;

It is trapped by being set aside and
deserted by a soul becoming
superior as man, as Beethoven;
It is trapped by being life which looks
neither to what is above,
Nor to what is below,
But to what is ahead in the weeds, the
gopher snake as food.
And thus barred from worlds and worlds of
life,
And crushed by exultant trumpets,
By horns and strings,
And by drums that echo frightful dangers
and depths
The cobra lies stretched in the cage with
motionless eye.
The cobra is a monist. All is Hate,
And the cobra is all hate.
The cobra is the hate of man, made pure
poison,
Condensed in one organism of
flesh,
For life as horror, as cancer, as war,
As ruin and unreason and madness.

4

It is more than a hundred years past and
gone
Since Beethoven cried:
'God, O God, my Guardian, my Rock, my
All!
'Thou seest my heart, and knowest how it
distresses me
'To do harm to others, though doing right
to my darling Karl.
'Hear, Thou Unutterable, hear Thy
unhappy,
'Most unhappy of mortals:
'I have no friend, and am alone in the
world.'

Shall this cry never die out?
Never be hushed as the crackling of weeds
is hushed
After the giant thunder-lizard has walked
on?
Shall it never vanish as the rib-marks of the
serpent in the sand
Are erased by the wind?
It is more than a hundred years now since
Beethoven
Set down his misery and his ecstasy,
His wounded and baffled spirit,
His climbing and sun-lit and triumphant
spirit

In dots and curves, in numerals and time
signatures,
In key signatures, in braves and semi-
braves,
In major and minor keys, and ledger lines
and clefs,
In bars of duple, triple and quadruple time,
in rests and scales,
In indications for winds and strings,
Flutes, horns, bassoons, and viols—
All set down, and all to say in harmony:
Alone! Alone! Alone!
All set down so to direct forever the players
of instruments
How to pass from the earthquake rumble of
the lost city of the soul
To the sunlight and song of the safe slopes;
How to pass with whisperings and
falterings,
Almost as of children in fear,
To fathomless depths of courage and
wisdom;
How to pace the harmony of the going-out,
And the returning-in of the blood of the
Universe,
When the heart of the Great Law opens and
closes its valves.
And how with plucked strings of
summoned courage,
And the clamor of drums, to climb, to
stand
Where no cobra crawls, no devil walks,
No charms of hell are worked;
And where the silence of a great summit
Opens out as a flower trembles and unfolds,
Revealing the drone of spheres, the song,
the infinite music
Of light, which is also sound,
And which is impulse at the root of all
motion,
And which is without end in space or time.

It is more than a hundred years since the
secrets
Of Beethoven's soul, of his vision,
Were noted on paper in these cryptograms.
Yet, and because this was done
Beethoven's suffering and rapture
reverberate still,
And by the instantaneous penetration of
invisible fire
Can pass through granite, through steel,
through measureless space;
Can pass through the glass of the cobra's
cage,

And assail the stagnant, green-scum of his hate,
Lying sprawled with motionless eye,
Neither immersed in the unconsciousness of Nature,
Nor separated from it, and by that truth in mastery of it.
So by magnetic waves of fire
Does Beethoven enter the cage of the cobra,
And start to torture it with colossal mystery,
Which the cobra cannot strike.
The cobra can only weave and writhe and stretch,
And lift up long lengths of its body in the corner,
And crawl and lie with slight shivers, like the flank of a fly-plagued horse—
All before a presence invulnerable to fangs and venom.

The king cobra has much attention just now:
An oyster-white thickness has overgrown his right eye,
So that he sees only with his left eye.
The cobra has shed his skin several times,
And each time has failed to slough off
The scale from his right eye.
And now he must be helped by his keeper,
Or the eye will be wholly blind, and that will double his loneliness,
As much so as deafness increased the loneliness of Beethoven.
The oyster-white thickness is seven-layered,
Made up of semi-globular beads,
Half translucent, but massed together impenetrable to light.
And the cobra should see, says the cobra's keeper.
Hence the keeper traps him into a box,
Where the cobra's head is held while the oyster scales are snipped off.
The cobra was fierce with anger, and fought.
But when the cobra looked from that eye,
And could see the black and white of the cage,
Like squares embroidered on canvas,
(Having no yellow spot in either eye),
It acted glad, and glided happily on to the floor of the cage again,
And devoured a five-foot gopher snake
Provided for it by the keeper;
Devoured the gopher snake as a man kills and eats a hog or steer,
Or as men destroy men in business or war.
The cobra took the gopher snake by the head,
And swallowed it inch by inch, foot by foot,
All the way down, gurgitating its spasms,
Until only the end of the tail flicked,
And vanished.

5

This is the way Beethoven entered the cage of the cobra:
The next day after the seven-fold scale was removed,
The next day after the cobra swallowed the gopher snake,
The Ninth Symphony was played at the Park;
And the keeper turned on the radio in the reptile room
To see what the cobra would do,
When the sounds of the Scherzo, and the Ode to Joy
Echoed and re-echoed about the stone walls.
The cobra was lying outstretched with motionless eye;
He was not hungry—he had swallowed the gopher snake the day before.
He wanted no mate—the rutting season was past.
He could see—the seven-fold scale had been snipped.
He lay there slick as a gray, glazed cob-web,
Dulled like slivered nacre, and yellow
As the inside of a clam-shell, and gray as agate.
He was a length of dimmed iridescence of saffron and pearl,
And scaled like the permian gar-fish,
Or the legs of the ancient archæopterix.
What but an enemy or music could disturb him?
Thus he lay calm as hate which is softly seething
When the radio began to sound,
As the musicians at the Park took the soul of Beethoven
From the dots, dashes, signs and symbols of score sheets,
And gave it voice as lettered there, forever sealed, and forever unsealed at will
As the echo of Beethoven's soul echoing the Great Mystery somewhere,

Not as an imitation of Nature, or of anything in Nature,
But as a response to Something,
Even as the agitation of the cobra is a response to Beethoven.

The second violins and cellos, the first violins, tenors and basses
Begin to whisper their way from the top to the bottom of the treble stave
To the bottom of the bass.
A clarinet breaks in like the call of a lonesome summer bird;
And one by one the wind-instruments enter,
And then the flutes and oboes divide the lamentation.
They are saying: 'God, O God, my Guardian,
'My Rock, my All! Hear Thou, Unutterable,
'Hear Thy unhappy, most unhappy of mortals.'

6

The cobra stirs;
The cobra sends a ripple of skin down its length.
The cobra knows nothing of poverty: it has swallowed the gopher snake.
The cobra knows nothing of a nephew's ingratitude,
Or the slight of friends, or the neglect of the world,
Or the hatefulness of business.
But this is restless music, and the cobra grows restless.
This is sound which is first impatience, and then melancholy;
And the cobra grows impatient, melancholy waves stir him.
For fire can burn beings which know not what fire is.
This is tenderness, and the cobra resents tenderness,
As he would strike the hand that petted his head.
These sorrows of Beethoven have found the language of sound
Through magnetic waves, which are light and vibration,
And vibrating themselves set vibrations singing and surging
In the cobra itself, which becomes thus vibrating particles.
The waves of Beethoven's music advance through the cobra's nerves,
Making rhythmic motions of the particles in the nerves of the cobra,
And that is like a man in pain before the mystery of his fate.

The cobra shifts his place, and licks forth his tongue.
He may be shocked into hereditary memory of the steaming swamps
When the tyrannosaur and the diplodocus went mad,
And trampled the lizards and the crocodiles,
And the first snake one hundred feet long;
And when the pteranodon with twenty-four feet of outstretched wings
Flapped in fear among the fronds
Of gigantic tree ferns.
This may be the cause of the cobra's shifting and moving;
Or it may be only that this sound stirs him,
As fire would stir him, or the tap of the keeper on the glass of the cage.
But he does not crawl from his place yet.
Like a rope slightly shaken a rhythm goes through him
From head to tail, but he keeps his place
Amid the reverberating music of Beethoven.

The Scherzo changes all.
Beethoven's soul stepped from darkness to brilliant light,
From despair to the rapture of strength
Overcoming the world.
Beethoven caught the spirit of a fresh May morning,
And it inspired him to exult with trumpets and strings,
And drums and trombones.
There are no such mornings in the jungle.
The rhythm of three bars changed to the rhythm of four bars
Is nothing less than the secret ecstasy of May;
It is nothing less than the thrill of life
Making the worm feel the blisses of creation,
And making man himself a dweller with Eternity.

And now this ecstatic storm of harmony
Is not only the voices of strong men,

And the creak of great pulleys worked by them
To lift colossal blocks of granite to the terraces
Of timeless pyramids;
It is not merely discords resolved;
It is not the mere toppling and crash of colossi,
Followed by the silence of Egyptian palm groves;
It is not merely the audible silence
Which comes before the hollow sound,
And is followed by the hollow silence
When covers are lifted and placed on great earthen jars
Which have been filled with water for thirsty villages.
It is not merely the trumpeting of mastodons
Amid carboniferous thickets,
Or along level valleys of lava and giant cactus—
It is not merely these,
Nor merely Democritus laughing and shouting as he chases the discovered atom
Near the orbit of Uranus where time and space become one;
It is not merely any of these.
But it is the song of infinite cranes
Lifting worlds into their orbits;
It is the deep sighing of æons of time;
It is the chuckle of vast ages;
It is the puffing and the halloos of periodic cycles
Toiling up the spirals of infinitude;
It is the sound of smooth-lipped lids of crystal
Being placed on the huge vials of despair and fear,
After their bitter waters have been poured into the flaming rivers
Of all old Hells to the roar of steam.
It is the sound of ponderable slabs
Being laid and fitted to the sarcophagi of dead demi-gorgons;
It is the happy laughter from the cradle of the infant Heracles
As he strangled the snakes sent by the enmity of Hera;
It is the shout of Heracles despising the common kingdom
Of which Hera, the jealous goddess, deprived him.
It is the howl of fire from worlds which should be burned,
Amid the drift and swirl of apocalyptic smoke;
It is the splash of the lake of fire
When death is hurled down and engulfed;
It is the thunder of mountain-high gates being opened,
Which reveal the landscapes of eternity;
It is the shout and the song of Apollo
As he races and shoots arrows after fleeing dragons.
It is the chant of the sun as god of this world,
Worthy of worship as the source of life!

7

And now it was that the keeper returned to the cage
To see what the cobra was doing.
The cobra had crawled to the corner.
It had lifted one third of its length aloft
There in the corner;
It was reaching up with its head, licking out its tongue;
It was leaning back unsteadily being unable to hold
So much of its length aloft
There in the presence of Beethoven.

1932 1933

CARL SANDBURG

1878–

CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:
They tell me you are wicked, and I believe them; for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked, and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal, and my reply is: On the faces of women and

children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shovelling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

1913 1916

TO A CONTEMPORARY BUNKSHOOTER

You come along . . . tearing your shirt . . . yelling about Jesus.
Where do you get that stuff?
What do you know about Jesus?
Jesus had a way of talking soft and outside of a few bankers and higher-ups among the con men of Jerusalem everybody liked to have this Jesus around because he never made any fake passes and everything he said went and he helped the sick and gave the people hope.

You come along squirting words at us, shaking your fist and call us all dam fools so fierce the froth slobbers over your lips . . . always blabbing we're all going to hell straight off and you know all about it.

I've read Jesus' words. I know what he said. You don't throw any scare into me. I've got your number. I know how much you know about Jesus.
He never came near clean people or dirty people but they felt cleaner because he came along. It was your crowd of bankers and business men and lawyers hired the sluggers and murderers who put Jesus out of the running.
I say the same bunch backing you nailed the nails into the hands of this Jesus of Nazareth. He had lined up against him the same crooks and strong-arm men now lined up with you paying your way.

This Jesus was good to look at, smelled good, listened good. He threw out something fresh and beautiful from the skin of his body and the touch of his hands wherever he passed along.
You slimy bunkshooter, you put a smut on every human blossom in reach of your rotten breath belching about hell-fire and hiccupping about this Man who lived a clean life in Galilee.
When are you going to quit making the carpenters build emergency hospitals for women and girls driven crazy with wrecked nerves from your gibberish about Jesus?—I put it to you again: Where do you get that stuff? What do you know about Jesus?

Go ahead and bust all the chairs you want to. Smash a whole wagon-load of furniture at every performance. Turn sixty somersaults and stand on your nutty head. If it wasn't for the way you scare the women and kids I'd feel sorry for you and pass the hat.
I like to watch a good four-flusher work, but not when he starts people puking and calling for the doctors.
I like a man that's got nerve and can pull off a great original performance, but you—you're only a bug-house pedlar of second-hand gospel—you're only shoving out a phoney imitation of the goods this Jesus wanted free as air and sunlight.

You tell people living in shanties Jesus is going to fix it up all right with them by giving them mansions in the skies after they're dead and the worms have eaten 'em.
You tell $6 a week department store girls all they need is Jesus; you take a steel trust wop, dead without having lived, grey and shrunken at forty years of age, and you tell him to look at Jesus on the cross and he'll be all right.
You tell poor people they don't need any more money on pay day and even if it's fierce to be out of a job, Jesus'll fix that up all right, all right—all they gotta do is take Jesus the way you say.
I'm telling you Jesus wouldn't stand for the stuff you're handing out. Jesus played it different. The bankers and lawyers of Jerusalem got their sluggers and murderers to go after Jesus just because Jesus wouldn't play their game. He didn't sit in with the big thieves.

I don't want a lot of gab from a bunk-shooter in my religion.
I won't take my religion from any man who never works except with his mouth and never cherishes any memory except the face of the woman on the American silver dollar.
I ask you to come through and show me where you're pouring out the blood of your life.
I've been to this suburb of Jerusalem they call Golgotha, where they nailed Him, and I know if the story is straight it was real blood ran from His hands and the nail-holes, and it was real blood spurted in red drops where the spear of the Roman soldier rammed in between the ribs of this Jesus of Nazareth.

1914 1916

FOG

THE fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

1912 1916

JOY

LET a joy keep you.
Reach out your hands
And take it when it runs by,
As the Apache dancer
Clutches his woman.
I have seen them
Live long and laugh loud,
Sent on singing, singing,
Smashed to the heart
Under the ribs
With a terrible love.
Joy always,
Joy everywhere—
Let joy kill you!
Keep away from the little deaths.

1913 1916

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

STUFF of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

1910 1916

GONE

EVERYBODY loved Chick Lorimer in our town
Far off.
Everybody loved her.
So we all love a wild girl keeping a hold
On a dream she wants.
Nobody knows now where Chick Lorimer went.
Nobody knows why she packed her trunk . . . a few old things
And is gone,
Gone with her little chin
Thrust ahead of her
And her soft hair blowing careless
From under a wide hat,
Dancer, singer, a laughing passionate lover.

Were there ten men or a hundred hunting
Chick?
Were there five men or fifty with aching
hearts?
Everybody loved Chick Lorimer.
Nobody knows where she's gone.

1913 1916

I AM THE PEOPLE, THE MOB

I AM the people—the mob—the crowd—
the mass.
Do you know that all the great work of the
world is done through me?
I am the workingman, the inventor, the
maker of the world's food and clothes.
I am the audience that witnesses history.
The Napoleons come from me and the
Lincolns. They die. And then I send
forth more Napoleons and Lincolns.
I am the seed ground. I am a prairie that
will stand for much plowing. Terrible
storms pass over me. I forget. The best
of me is sucked out and wasted. I forget.
Everything but Death comes to me and
makes me work and give up what I have.
And I forget.
Sometimes I growl, shake myself and spat-
ter a few red drops for history to remem-
ber. Then—I forget.
When I, the People, learn to remember,
when I, the People, use the lessons of
yesterday and no longer forget who
robbed me last year, who played me for a
fool—then there will be no speaker in all
the world say the name: 'The People,'
with any fleck of a sneer in his voice or
any far-off smile of derision.
The mob—the crowd—the mass—will ar-
rive then.

1914 1916

CABOOSE THOUGHTS

IT'S going to come out all right—do you
know?
The sun, the birds, the grass—they know.
They get along—and we'll get along.

Some days will be rainy and you will sit
waiting
And the letter you wait for won't come,
And I will sit watching the sky tear off grey
and grey
And the letter I wait for won't come.

There will be ac-ci-dents.
I know ac-ci-dents are coming.
Smash-ups, signals wrong, washouts,
trestles rotten,
Red and yellow ac-ci-dents.
But somehow and somewhere the end of
the run
The train gets put together again
And the caboose and the green tail
lights
Fade down the right of way like a new white
hope.

I never heard a mocking-bird in Kentucky
Spilling its heart in the morning.

I never saw the snow on Chimborazo.
It's a high white Mexican hat, I hear.

I never had supper with Abe Lincoln.
Nor a dish of soup with Jim Hill.

But I've been around.
I know some of the boys here who can go a
little.
I know girls good for a burst of speed any
time.

I heard Williams and Walker
Before Walker died in the bughouse.

I knew a mandolin player
Working in a barber shop in an Indiana
town,
And he thought he had a million dollars.

I knew a hotel girl in Des Moines.
She had eyes; I saw her and said to
myself
The sun rises and the sun sets in her
eyes.
I was her steady and her heart went pit-a-
pat.
We took away the money for a prize waltz
at a Brotherhood dance.
She had eyes; she was safe as the bridge
over the Mississippi at Burlington;
I married her.

Last summer we took the cushions going
west.
Pike's Peak is a big old stone, believe
me.
It's fastened down; something you can
count on.

It's going to come out all right—do you know?
The sun, the birds, the grass—they know.
They get along—and we'll get along.
1916 1918

WILDERNESS

THERE is a wolf in me . . . fangs pointed for tearing gashes . . . a red tongue for raw meat . . . and the hot lapping of blood—I keep this wolf because the wilderness gave it to me and the wilderness will not let it go.

There is a fox in me . . . a silver-grey fox . . . I sniff and guess . . . I pick things out of the wind and air . . . I nose in the dark night and take sleepers and eat them and hide the feathers . . . I circle and loop and double-cross.

There is a hog in me—a snout and a belly . . . a machinery for eating and grunting . . . a machinery for sleeping satisfied in the sun—I got this too from the wilderness and the wilderness will not let it go.

There is a fish in me . . . I know I came from salt-blue water-gates . . . I scurried with shoals of herring . . . I blew waterspouts with porpoises . . . before land was . . . before the water went down . . . before Noah . . . before the first chapter of Genesis.

There is a baboon in me . . . clambering-clawed . . . dog-faced . . . yawping a galoot's hunger . . . hairy under the armpits . . . here are the hawk-eyed hankering men . . . here are the blond and blue-eyed women . . . here they hide curled asleep waiting . . . ready to snarl and kill . . . ready to sing and give milk . . . waiting—I keep the baboon because the wilderness says so.

There is an eagle in me and a mocking-bird . . . and the eagle flies among the Rocky Mountains of my dreams and fights among the Sierra crags of what I want . . . and the mocking-bird warbles in the early forenoon before the dew is gone, warbles in the underbrush of my Chattanoogas of hope, gushes over the blue Ozark foothills of my wishes—And I got the eagle and the mocking-bird from the wilderness.

O, I got a zoo, I got a menagerie, inside my ribs, under my bony head, under my red-valve heart—and I got something else: it is a man-child heart, a woman-child heart: it is a father and mother and lover: it came from God-Knows-Where: it is going to God-Knows-Where—For I am the keeper of the zoo: I say yes and no: I sing and kill and work: I am a pal of the world: I came from the wilderness.
1917 1918

SINGING NIGGER

YOUR bony head, Jazbo, O dock walloper,
Those grappling hooks, those wheelbarrow handlers,
The dome and the wings of you, nigger,
The red roof and the door of you,
I know where your songs came from.
I know why God listens to your, 'Walk All Over God's Heaven.'
I heard you shooting craps, 'My baby's going to have a new dress.'
I heard you in the cinders, 'I'm going to live anyhow until I die.'
I saw five of you with a can of beer on a summer night and I listened to the five of you harmonizing six ways to sing, 'Way Down Yonder in the Cornfield.'
I went away asking where I come from.
1917 1918

PRAYERS OF STEEL

LAY me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.
1917 1918

COOL TOMBS

WHEN Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

1915 1918

SHENANDOAH

IN the Shenandoah Valley, one rider grey and one rider blue, and the sun on the riders wondering.

Piled in the Shenandoah, riders blue and riders grey, piled with shovels, one and another, dust in the Shenandoah taking them quicker than mothers take children done with play.

The blue nobody remembers, the grey nobody remembers, it's all old and old nowadays in the Shenandoah.

And all is young, a butter of dandelions slung on the turf, climbing blue flowers of the wishing woodlands wondering: a midnight purple violet claims the sun among old heads, among old dreams of repeating heads of a rider blue and a rider grey in the Shenandoah.

1916 1918

GRASS

PILE the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

1918 1918

OLD TIMERS

I AM an ancient reluctant conscript.

On the soup wagons of Xerxes I was a cleaner of pans.

On the march of Miltiades' phalanx I had a haft and head;
I had a bristling gleaming spear-handle.

Red-headed Cæsar picked me for a teamster.
He said, 'Go to work, you Tuscan bastard
Rome calls for a man who can drive horses.'

The units of conquest led by Charles the Twelfth,
The whirling whimsical Napoleonic columns:
They saw me one of the horseshoers.

I trimmed the feet of a white horse
Bonaparte swept the night stars with.

Lincoln said, 'Get into the game; your nation takes you.'
And I drove a wagon and team, and I had my arm shot off
At Spotsylvania Court House.

I am an ancient reluctant conscript.

1916 1918

BROKEN-FACE GARGOYLES

ALL I can give you is broken-face gargoyles.
It is too early to sing and dance at funerals,
Though I can whisper to you I am looking for an undertaker humming a lullaby and throwing his feet in a swift and mystic buck-and-wing, now you see it and now you don't.

Fish to swim a pool in your garden flashing
a speckled silver,
A basket of wine-saps filling your room
with flame-dark for your eyes and the
tang of valley orchards for your nose,
Such a beautiful pail of fish, such a beauti-
ful peck of apples, I cannot bring you now.
It is too early and I am not footloose yet.

I shall come in the night when I come with
a hammer and saw.
I shall come near your window, where you
look out when your eyes open in the
morning,
And there I shall slam together bird-
houses and bird-baths for wing-loose
wrens and hummers to live in, birds with
yellow wing tips to blur and buzz soft all
summer,
So I shall make little fool homes with doors,
always open doors for all and each to run
away when they want to.
I shall come just like that even though now
it is early and I am not yet footloose,
Even though I am still looking for an un-
dertaker with a raw, wind-bitten face and
a dance in his feet.
I make a date with you (put it down) for six
o'clock in the evening a thousand years
from now.

All I can give you now is broken-face gar-
goyles.
All I can give you now is a double gorilla
head with two fish mouths and four eagle
eyes hooked on a street wall, spouting
water and looking two ways to the ends of
the street for the new people, the young
strangers, coming, coming, always com-
ing.

It is early.
I shall yet be footloose.

1919 1921

SHIRT

My shirt is a token and symbol,
more than a cover for sun and rain,
my shirt is a signal,
and a teller of souls.

I can take off my shirt and tear it,
and so make a ripping razzly noise,
and the people will say,
'Look at him tear his shirt.'

I can keep my shirt on.
I can stick around and sing like a little
bird
and look 'em all in the eye and never be
fazed.
I can keep my shirt on.

1919 1921

JAZZ FANTASIA

Drum on your drums, batter on your ban-
joes, sob on the long cool winding saxo-
phones. Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the
happy tin pans, let your trombones ooze,
and go husha-husha-hush with the slip-
pery sand-paper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the
lonesome tree-tops, moan soft like you
wanted somebody terrible, cry like a
racing car slipping away from a motor-
cycle cop, bang-bang! you jazzmen, bang
altogether drums, traps, banjoes, horns,
tin cans—make two people fight on the
top of a stairway and scratch each other's
eyes in a clinch tumbling down the
stairs.

Can the rough stuff . . . now a Missis-
sippi steamboat pushes up the night
river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo . . . and
the green lanterns calling to the high
soft stars . . . a red moon rides on the
humps of the low river hills . . . go to
it, O jazzmen.

1919 1921

OSSAWATOMIE

I don' t know how he came,
shambling, dark, and strong.

He stood in the city and told men:
My people are fools, my people are young
and strong, my people must learn,
my people are terrible workers and
fighters.
Always he kept on asking: Where did that
blood come from?

They said: You for the fool killer,
you for the booby hatch
and a necktie party.

They hauled him into jail.
They sneered at him and spit on him,
And he wrecked their jails,
Singing, 'God damn your jails,'
And when he was most in jail
Crummy among the crazy in the dark
Then he was most of all out of jail
Shambling, dark, and strong,
Always asking: Where did that blood come from?

They laid hands on him
And the fool killers had a laugh
And the necktie party was a go, by God.
They laid hands on him and he was a goner.
They hammered him to pieces and he stood up.
They buried him and he walked out of the grave, by God,
Asking again: Where did that blood come from?

1919 1921

LOSERS

IF I should pass the tomb of Jonah
I would stop there and sit for awhile;
Because I was swallowed one time deep in the dark
And came out alive after all.

If I pass the burial spot of Nero
I shall say to the wind, 'Well, well!'—
I who have fiddled in a world on fire,
I who have done so many stunts not worth doing.

I am looking for the grave of Sinbad too.
I want to shake his ghost-hand and say,
'Neither of us died very early, did we?'

And the last sleeping-place of Nebuchadnezzar—
When I arrive there I shall tell the wind:
'You ate grass; I have eaten crow—
Who is better off now or next year?'

Jack Cade, John Brown, Jesse James,
There too I could sit down and stop for awhile.
I think I could tell their headstones:
'God, let me remember all good losers.'
I could ask people to throw ashes on their heads
In the name of that sergeant at Belleau Woods,
Walking into the drumfires, calling his men,
'Come on, you . . . Do you want to live forever?'

1919 1921

THREES

I WAS a boy when I heard three red words
a thousand Frenchmen died in the streets
for: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—I asked
why men die for words.

I was older; men with mustaches, sideburns,
lilacs, told me the high golden words are:
Mother, Home, and Heaven—other older men with
face decorations said: God, Duty, Immortality
—they sang these threes slow from deep lungs.

Years ticked off their say-so on the great clocks
of doom and damnation, soup and nuts: meteors flashed
their say-so: and out of great Russia came three
dusky syllables workmen took guns and went out to die
for: Bread, Peace, Land.

And I met a marine of the U.S.A., a leatherneck with
a girl on his knee for a memory in ports circling the
earth and he said: Tell me how to say three things
and I always get by—gimme a plate of ham and eggs—
how much?—and—do you love me, kid?

1919 1921

NIGHT STUFF

LISTEN a while, the moon is a lovely woman, a lonely woman, lost in a silver dress, lost in a circus rider's silver dress.

Listen a while, the lake by night is a lonely woman, a lovely woman, circled with birches and pines mixing their green and white among stars shattered in spray clear nights.

I know the moon and the lake have twisted the roots under my heart the same as a lonely woman, a lovely woman, in a silver dress, in a circus rider's silver dress.

1917 1921

UPSTREAM

THE strong men keep coming on.
They go down shot, hanged, sick, broken.
They live on fighting, singing, lucky as plungers.
The strong mothers pulling them on . . .
The strong mothers pulling them from a dark sea, a great prairie, a long mountain.
Call hallelujah, call amen, call deep thanks.
The strong men keep coming on.

1920 1922

FROM THE PEOPLE, YES

THE PEOPLE WILL LIVE ON

The people will live on.
The learning and blundering people will live on.
They will be tricked and sold and again sold
And go back to the nourishing earth for rootholds,
The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it.
The mammoth rests between his cyclonic dramas.

The people so often sleepy, weary, enigmatic, is a vast huddle with many units saying:
'I earn my living.
I make enough to get by
and it takes all my time.
If I had more time
I could do more for myself
and maybe for others.
I could read and study
and talk things over
and find out about things.
It takes time.
I wish I had the time.'

The people is a tragic and comic two-face: hero and hoodlum: phantom and gorilla twisting to moan with a gargoyle mouth: 'They buy me and sell me . . . it's a game . . . sometime I'll break loose . . .'

Once having marched
Over the margins of animal necessity,
Over the grim line of sheer subsistence
Then man came
To the deeper rituals of his bones,
To the lights lighter than any bones,
To the time for thinking things over,
To the dance, the song, the story,
Or the hours given over to dreaming,
Once having so marched.

Between the finite limitations of the five senses and the endless yearnings of man for the beyond the people hold to the humdrum bidding of work and food while reaching out when it comes their way for lights beyond the prison of the five senses, for keepsakes lasting beyond any hunger or death.
This reaching is alive.
The panderers and liars have violated and smutted it.
Yet this reaching is alive yet
for lights and keepsakes.

The people know the salt of the sea
and the strength of the winds
lashing the corners of the earth.
The people take the earth
as a tomb of rest and a cradle of hope.
Who else speaks for the Family of Man?
They are in tune and step
with constellations of universal law.

The people is a polychrome,
a spectrum and a prism
held in a moving monolith,
a console organ of changing themes,
a clavilux of color poems
wherein the sea offers fog
and the fog moves off in rain
and the labrador sunset shortens
to a nocturne of clear stars
serene over the shot spray
of northern lights.

The steel mill sky is alive.
The fire breaks white and zigzag
shot on a gun-metal gloaming.
Man is a long time coming.
Man will yet win.
Brother may yet line up with brother:

This old anvil laughs at many broken
hammers.
There are men who can't be bought.
The fireborn are at home in fire.
The stars make no noise.
You can't hinder the wind from blowing.
Time is a great teacher.
Who can live without hope?

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief
the people march.
In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars
for keeps, the people march:
'Where to? what next?'

1935 1936

THEODORE DREISER

1871–

FROM AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

AN AMERICAN PROBLEM [1]

Two incidents which occurred at this time tended still more to sharpen the contrary points of view holding between Clyde and Roberta. One of these was no more than a glimpse which Roberta had one evening of Clyde pausing at the Central Avenue curb in front of the post-office to say a few words to Arabella Stark, who in a large and impressive-looking car, was waiting for her father who was still in the Stark Building opposite. And Miss Stark, fashionably outfitted according to the season, her world and her own pretentious taste, was affectedly posed at the wheel, not only for the benefit of Clyde but the public in general. And to Roberta, who by now was reduced to the verge of distraction between Clyde's delay and her determination to compel him to act in her behalf, she appeared to be little less than an epitome of all the security, luxury and freedom from responsibility which so enticed and hence caused Clyde to delay and be as indifferent as possible to the dire state which confronted her. For, alas, apart from this claim of her condition, what had she to offer him comparable to all he would be giving up in case he acceded to her request? Nothing—a thought which was far from encouraging.

Yet, at this moment contrasting her own wretched and neglected state with that of this Miss Stark, for example, she found herself a prey to an even more complaining and antagonistic mood than had hitherto characterized her. It was not right. It was not fair. For during the several weeks that had passed since last they had discussed this matter, Clyde had scarcely said a word to her at the factory or elsewhere, let alone called upon her at her room, fearing as he did the customary inquiry which he could not satisfy. And this caused her to feel that not only was he neglecting but resenting her most sharply.

And yet as she walked home from this trivial and fairly representative scene, her heart was not nearly so angry as it was sad and sore because of the love and comfort that had vanished and was not likely ever to come again . . . ever . . . ever . . . ever. Oh, how terrible, . . . how terrible!

On the other hand, Clyde, and at approximately this same time, was called upon to witness a scene identified with Roberta, which, as some might think, only an ironic and even malicious fate could have intended or permitted to come to pass. For motoring north the following Sunday to Arrow Lake to the lodge of the Trumbulls' to take advantage of an early spring week-end planned by Sondra, the party on nearing Biltz, which was in the direct line of the trip, was compelled to detour east in the direction of Roberta's home. And coming finally to a north and south road which ran directly from Trippettsville past the Alden farm, they turned north into that. And a few minutes later, came directly to the corner adjoining the Alden farm, where an east and west road led to Biltz. Here Tracy

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is Chapter 40 from Book II of *An American Tragedy*(N.Y., 1925),II,10–14.

Trumbull, driving at the time, requested that some one should get out and inquire at the adjacent farm-house as to whether this road did lead to Biltz. And Clyde, being nearest to one door, jumped out. And then, glancing at the name on the mail-box which stood at the junction and evidently belonged to the extremely dilapidated old farm-house on the rise above, he was not a little astonished to note that the name was that of Titus Alden—Roberta's father. Also, as it instantly came to him, since she had described her parents as being near Biltz, this must be her home. It gave him pause, caused him for the moment to hesitate as to whether to go on or not, for once he had given Roberta a small picture of himself, and she might have shown it up here. Again the mere identification of this lorn, dilapidated realm with Roberta and hence himself, was sufficient to cause him to wish to turn and run.

But Sondra, who was sitting next him in the car and now noting his hesitation, called: 'What's the matter, Clyde? Afraid of the bow-wow?' And he, realizing instantly that they would comment further on his actions if he did not proceed at once, started up the path. But the effect of this house, once he contemplated it thoroughly, was sufficient to arouse in his brain the most troubled and miserable of thoughts. For what a house, to be sure! So lonely and bare, even in this bright, spring weather! The decayed and sagging roof. The broken chimney to the north—rough lumps of cemented field stones lying at its base; the sagging and semi-toppling chimney to the south, sustained in place by a log chain. The unkempt path from the road below, which slowly he ascended! He was not a little dejected by the broken and displaced stones which served as steps before the front door. And the unpainted dilapidated out-buildings, all the more dreary because of these others.

'Gee!' To think that this was Roberta's home. And to think, in the face of all that he now aspired to in connection with Sondra and this social group at Lycurgus, she should be demanding that he marry her! And Sondra in the car with him here to see —if not know. The poverty! The reduced grimness of it all. How far he had traveled away from just such a beginning as this!

With a weakening and sickening sensation at the pit of his stomach, as of some blow administered there, he now approached the door. And then, as if to further distress him, if that were possible, the door was opened by Titus Alden, who, in an old, thread-bare and out-at-elbows coat, as well as baggy, worn, jean trousers and rough, shineless, ill-fitting country shoes, desired by his look to know what he wanted. And Clyde, being taken aback by the clothes, as well as a marked resemblance to Roberta about the eyes and mouth, now as swiftly as possible asked if the east and west road below ran through Biltz and joined the main highway north. And although he would have preferred a quick 'yes' so that he might have turned and gone, Titus preferred to step down into the yard and then, with a gesture of the arm, indicated that if they wanted to strike a really good part of the road, they had better follow this Trippettsville north and south road for at least two more miles, and then turn west. Clyde thanked him briefly and turned almost before he had finished and hurried away.

For, as he now recalled, and with an enormous sense of depression, Roberta was thinking and at this very time, that soon now, and in the face of all Lycurgus had to offer him—Sondra—the coming spring and summer—the love and romance, gayety, position, power—he was going to give all that up and go away with and marry her. Sneak away to some out-of-the-way place! Oh, how horrible! And with a child at his age! Oh, why had he ever been so foolish and weak as to identify himself with her in this intimate way? Just because of a few lonely evenings! Oh, why, why couldn't he have waited and then this other world would have opened up to him just the same? If only he could have waited!

And now unquestionably, unless he could speedily and easily disengage himself from her, all this other splendid recognition would be destined to be withdrawn from him, and this other world from which he sprang might extend its gloomy, poverty-stricken arms to him and envelop him once more, just as the poverty of his family had enveloped and almost strangled him from the first. And it even occurred to him, in a vague way for the first time, how

strange it was that this girl and he, whose origin had been strikingly similar, should have been so drawn to each other in the beginning. Why should it have been? How strange life was, anyway? But even more harrowing than this, was the problem of a way out that was before him. And his mind from now on, on this trip, was once more searching for some solution. A word of complaint from Roberta or her parents to his uncle or Gilbert, and assuredly he would be done for.

The thought so troubled him that once in the car, and although previously he had been chattering along with the others about what might be in store ahead in the way of divertissement, he now sat silent. And Sondra, who sat next to him and who previously had been whispering at intervals of her plans for the summer, now, instead of resuming the patter, whispered: 'What come over de sweet phing?' (When Clyde appeared to be the least reduced in mind she most affected this patter with him, since it had an almost electric, if sweetly tormenting effect on him. 'His baby-talking girl,' he sometimes called her.) 'Facey all dark now. Little while ago facey all smiles. Come make facey all nice again. Smile at Sondra. Squeeze Sondra's arm like good boy, Clyde.'

She turned and looked up into his eyes to see what if any effect this baby-worded cajolery was having, and Clyde did his best to brighten, of course. But even so, and in the face of all this amazingly wonderful love on her part for him, the specter of Roberta and all that she represented now in connection with all this, was ever before him—her state, her very recent edict in regard to it, the obvious impossibility of doing anything now but go away with her.

Why—rather than let himself in for a thing like that—would it not be better, and even though he lost Sondra once and for all, for him to decamp as in the instance of the slain child in Kansas City—and be heard of nevermore here. But then he would lose Sondra, his connections here, and his uncle —this world! The loss! The loss! The misery of once more drifting about here and there; of being compelled to write his mother once more concerning certain things about his flight, which some one writing from here might explain to her afterwards—and so much more damagingly. And the thoughts concerning him on the part of his relatives! And of late he had been writing his mother that he was doing so well. What was it about his life that made things like this happen to him? Was this what his life was to be like? Running away from one situation and another just to start all over somewhere else—perhaps only to be compelled to flee from something worse. No, he could not run away again. He must face it and solve it in some way. He must!

God!

1925

JAMES BRANCH CABELL

1879–

THE DEMIURGE [1]

—What is man, that his welfare be considered?—an ape who chatters to himself of kinship with the archangels while filthily he digs for groundnuts. . . .

—Yet more clearly do I perceive that this same man is a maimed god. . . . He is under penalty condemned to compute eternity with false weights and to estimate infinity with a yardstick; and he very often does it. . . .

—There lies the choice which every man must make—or rationally to accept his own limitations? or stupendously to play the fool and swear that he is at will omnipotent?

—DIZAIN DES REINES

I

OFF-HAND (began John Charteris), I would say that books are best insured against oblivion through practise of the auctorial virtues of distinction and clarity, of beauty and symmetry, of tenderness and truth and urbanity. That covers the ground, I think: and so it remains merely to cite supporting

1 The essay is printed from the author's revised version of *Beyond Life* in the *Storisende Edition*(N.Y., 1927).

instances here and there, by mentioning a few writers who have observed these requirements, and thus to substantiate my formula without unnecessary divagation. . . .

Therefore I shall be very brief. And even so, I imagine, you will not be inclined to listen to much of what I am about to say, if only because, like most of us, you are intimidated by that general attitude toward culture and the humanities which has made of American literature, among foreign penmen, if not precisely an object of despairing envy, at least of feeling comment. In particular, I imagine that my frequent references to the affairs and people of fled years will annoy you, since the American book-purchaser shies from such pedantic, and indeed from any, allusion to the past, with that distrust peculiar to persons with criminal records. In fact, this murderer, too, is often haunted, I dare say, by memories of his victim, in thinking of the time he has killed, whether with the 'uplifting' or with the 'daring' current novels of yesterday.

But you perceive, I trust, that your personal indifference, and the lazy contempt of America as a whole, toward art matters no more affects the eternal verity and the eternal importance of art than do the religious practises of Abyssinia, say, affect the verity and importance of the New Testament. You perceive, I trust, that you ought to be interested in art matters, whatever is your actual emotion. You understand, in fine—as a mere abstract principle—what your feeling 'ought to be.' Well, it is precisely that tendency to imagine yourself and your emotions as these things 'ought to be' which convicts you, over any verbal disclaimer, of a vital interest in art matters: and it is that tendency about which I propose to speak very briefly. . . .

And yet, so insidious is the influence of general opinion, even when manifested as plain unreason, that, I confess, whenever anyone talks of 'art' and 'æsthetic theories,' I myself am inclined to find him vaguely ridiculous, and to detect in every word he utters a flavor of affectation. So should you prove quite as susceptible as I to the herd-instinct I shall have no ground for complaint. Meanwhile in theory—without of necessity accompanying my friend Felix Kennaston all the way to his conclusion that the sum of corporeal life represents an essay in romantic fiction,—I can perceive plainly enough that the shape-giving principle of all sentient beings is artistic. That is a mere matter of looking at living creatures and noticing their forms. . . . But the principle goes deeper, in that it shapes too the minds of men, by this universal tendency to imagine—and to think of as in reality existent—all the tenants of earth and all the affairs of earth, not as they are, but 'as they ought to be.' And so it comes about that romance has invariably been the demiurgic and beneficent force, not merely in letters, but in every matter which concerns mankind; and that 'realism,' with its teaching that the mile-posts along the road are as worthy of consideration as the goal, has always figured as man's chief enemy. . . .

2

Indeed, that scathing criticism which Sophocles passed, howsoever anciently on a contemporary, remains no less familiar than significant,—'He paints men as they are: I paint them as they ought to be.' It is aside from the mark that in imputing such veracity to Euripides the singer of Colonos was talking nonsense: the point is that Sophocles saw clearly what was, and what continues to be, the one unpardonable sin against art and human welfare.

For the Greeks, who were nurtured among art's masterworks, recognized, with much of that perturbing candor wherewith children everywhere appraise their associates, that gracefully to prevaricate about mankind and human existence was art's signal function. As a by-product of this perception, Hellenic literature restrained its endeavors, quite naturally, to embroidering events that were incontestable because time had erased the evidence for or against their actual occurrence: and the poets, in their quest of protagonists worth noble handling, evoked them from bright mists of antiquity, wherethrough, as far as went existent proofs, men might in reality have moved 'as they ought to be.' Thus, even Homer, the most ancient of great verbal artists, elected to deal with legends that in his day were venerable: and in Homer when Ajax lifts a stone it is with the strength of ten warriors, and Odysseus, when such a procedure at all promotes the

progress of the story, becomes invisible. It seems—upon the whole,—less probable that Homer drew either of these accomplishments from the actual human life about him, than from simple consciousness that it would be very gratifying if men could do these things. And, indeed, as touches enduring art, to write 'with the eye upon the object' appears a relatively modern pretence, perhaps not unconnected with the coetaneous phrase of 'all my eye.'

Then, when the Attic drama came to flowerage, the actors were masked, so that their features might display unhuman perfection; the actors were mounted upon cothurni, to lend impressiveness to man's physical mediocrity; and the actors were clothed in draperies which philanthropically eclipsed humanity's frugal graces. In painting or sculpture, where the human body could be idealized with a free hand, the Greek rule was nakedness: in drama, where the artist's material was incorrigible flesh, there was nothing for it save to disguise the uncaptivating ground-work through some discreet employment of fair apparel. Thus only could the audience be hoodwinked into forgetting for a while what men and women really looked like. In drama, therefore, Theseus declaimed in imperial vestments, and in sculpture wore at the very most a fig-leaf. It is hardly necessary to point out that the Greeks shared few of our delusions concerning 'decency': for, of course, they had no more moral aversion to a man's appearing naked in the street than to a toad's doing so, and objected simply on the ground that both were ugly. So they resolutely wrote about—and carved and painted, for that matter—men 'as they ought to be' doing such things as it would be gratifying for men to do if these feats were humanly possible. . . . And in the twilit evening of Greek literature you will find Theocritus clinging with unshaken ardor to unreality, and regaling the townfolk of Alexandria with tales of an improbable Sicily, where the inhabitants are on terms of friendly intimacy with cyclopes, water-nymphs and satyrs.

3

Equally in the Middle Ages did literature avoid deviation into the credible. When carpets of brocade were spread in April meadows it was to the end that barons and ladies might listen with delight to peculiarly unplausible accounts of how Sire Roland held the pass at Roncevaux single-handed against an army, and of Lancelot's education at the bottom of a pond by elfin pedagogues, and of how Virgil builded Naples upon eggshells. When English-speaking tale-tellers began to concoct homespun romances they selected such themes as Bevis of Southampton's addiction to giant-killing, and Guy of Warwick's encounter with a man-eating cow eighteen feet long, and the exploits of Thomas of Reading, who exterminated an infinity of dragons and eloped with Prester John's daughter after jilting the Queen of Fairyland. Chaucer, questionless, was so injudicious as to dabble in that muddy stream of contemporaneous happenings which time alone may clarify: but the parts of Chaucer that endure are a Knight's story of mythological events, a Prioress's unsubstantiated account of a miracle, a Nun's Priest's anticipation of Rostand's barnyard fantasy, and a ream or two of other delightful flim-flams. From his contemporaries Chaucer got such matter as the Miller's tale of a clerk's misadventures in osculation.

4

But with the invention of printing, thoughts spread so expeditiously that it became possible to acquire quite serviceable ideas without the trouble of thinking: and very few of us since then have cared to risk impairment of our minds by using them. A consequence was that, with inaction, man's imagination in general grew more sluggish, and demurred, just as mental indolence continues to balk, over the exertion of conceiving an unfamiliar *locale*, in any form of art. The deterioration, of course, was gradual, and for a considerable while theatrical audiences remained receptively illiterate. And it seems at first sight gratifying to note that for a lengthy period Marlowe was the most 'popular' of the Elizabethan playwrights: for in Marlowe's superb verse there is really very little to indicate that the writer had ever encountered any human beings, and certainly nothing whatever to show that he had seriously considered this especial division of fauna: whereas all his

scenes are laid somewhere a long way west of the Hesperides. Yet Marlowe's popularity, one cannot but suspect, was furthered by unæsthetic aids, in divers 'comic' scenes which time has beneficently destroyed. At all events, complaisant dramatists, out of a normal preference for butter with their daily bread, soon began to romance about contemporary life. It is not Shakespeare's least claim to applause that he sedulously avoided doing anything of the sort. To the other side, being human, Shakespeare was not untainted by the augmenting trend toward 'realism,' and in depicting his fellows was prone to limit himself to exaggeration of their powers of fancy and diction. This, as we now know, is a too sparing employment of untruthfulness: and there is ground for sharp arraignment of the imbecility attributed to Lear, and Othello, and Hamlet, and Macbeth, and Romeo—to cite only a few instances,—by any candid estimate of their actions, when deprived of the transfiguring glow wherewith Shakespeare invests what is being done, by evoking a haze of lovely words. For, really, to go mad because a hostess resents your bringing a hundred servants on a visit, or to murder your wife because she has misplaced a handkerchief, is much the sort of conduct which is daily chronicled by the morning-paper; and in charity to man's self-respect should be restricted to the ostentatious impermanence of journalism. But at bottom Shakespeare never displayed any very hearty admiration for humanity as a race, and would seem to have found not many more commendable traits in general exercise among mankind than did the authors of the Bible.

Few of the art-reverencing Elizabethans, however, or of the earlier Jacobeans, handled the surrounding English life: when they dealt with the contemporaneous it was with a reassuringly remote Italian background, against which almost anything might be supposed to happen, in the way of picturesque iniquity and poisoned wine: so that they composed with much of that fine irresponsibility wherewith American journalists expose the court-life of Madrid and Vienna. But the maturing Jacobean drama, under the insidious and dreadful influence of common-sense, tended spasmodically toward untruths about the workaday life of its audience, with such depressing results as *Hyde Park*, *The Roaring Girl* and *The New Inn*, by men who in the field of unrestricted imagination had showed themselves to be possessed of genuine ability. It should always be remembered in favor of the Puritans that when they closed the theatres 'realism' was sprawling upon the stage.

5

Then came the gallant protest of the Restoration, when Wycherley and his successors in drama, commenced to write of contemporary life in much the spirit of modern musical comedy, which utilizes a fac-simile of the New York Pennsylvania Railway Station, or of the Capitol at Washington, as an appropriate setting for a ballet and a comedian's colloquy with the orchestra leader. Thus here the scenes are in St. James's Park, outside Westminster, in the New Exchange, and in other places familiar to the audience; and the characters barter jokes on current events: but the laws of the performers' mimic existence are frankly extra-mundane, and their antics, in Restoration days as now, would have subjected the perpetrators to immediate arrest upon the auditorial side of footlights. A great deal of queer nonsense has been printed concerning the comedy of Gallantry, upon the startling assumption that its authors copied the life about them. It is true that Wycherley, in this well-nigh the first of English authors to go astray, began the pernicious practise of depicting men as being not very much better than they actually are: of that I will speak later: but Wycherley had the saving grace to present his men and women as trammeled by the social restrictions of Cloud-Cuckoo-Land alone. And, were there nothing else, it seems improbable that Congreve, say, really believed that every young fellow spoke habitually in terms of philosophic wit and hated his father; and that every old hunks possessed, more or less vicariously, a beautiful second wife; and that people married without noticing either that the parson or the bride was a familiar acquaintance pretending to be somebody else; and that monetary competence and happiness and all-important documents, as well as a sudden turn for heroic verse, were regularly

accorded to everybody toward eleven o'clock in the evening.

6

Thus far the illiterate ages, when as yet so few persons could read that literature tended generally toward the acted drama. The stage could supply much illusory assistance, in the way of pads and wigs and grease-paints and soft lightings, toward making men appear heroic and women charming: but, after all, the rôles were necessarily performed by human beings, and the charitable deceit was not continuous. The audience was ever and anon being reminded, against its firm-set will, that men were mediocre creatures.

Now could the poets, howsoever rapidly now multiplied their verse-books, satisfactorily delude their patrons into overlooking this unpleasant fact. For one reason or another, men as a whole have never taken kindlily to printed poetry: most of us are unable to put up with it at all, and even to the exceptional person verse after an hour's reading becomes unaccountably tiresome. Prose—for no very patent cause—is much easier going. So the poets proved ineffectual comforters, who could but rarely be-drug even the few to whom their charms did not seem gibberish.

With the advent of the novel, all this was changed. Not merely were you relieved from metrical fatigue, but there came no commonplace flesh-and-blood to give the lie to the artist's pretensions. It was possible, really for the first time, acceptably to present in literature men 'as they ought to be.' Richardson could dilate as unrestrainedly as he pleased upon the super-eminence in virtue and sin, respectively, of his Grandison and his Lovelace emboldened by the knowledge that there was nothing to check him off save the dubious touchstone of his reader's common-sense. Fielding was not only able to conduct a broad-shouldered young ruffian to fortune and a lovely wife, but could moreover endow Tom Jones with all sorts of heroic and estimable qualities such as (in mere unimportant fact) rascals do not display in actual life. When the novel succeeded the drama it was no longer necessary for the artist to represent human beings with even partial veracity: and this new style of writing at once became emblematic.

And so it has been ever since. Novelists have severally evolved their pleasing symbols wherewith approximately to suggest human beings and the business of human life, much as remote Egyptians drew serrated lines to convey the idea of water and a circle to indicate eternity. The symbols have often varied: but there has rarely been any ill-advised attempt to depict life as it seems in the living of it, or to crystallize the vague notions and feeble sensations with which human beings, actually, muddle through to an epitaph; if only because all sensible persons, obscurely aware that this routine is far from what it ought to be, have always preferred to deny its existence. And moreover, we have come long ago to be guided in any really decisive speech or action by what we have read somewhere; and so, may fairly claim that literature should select (as it does) such speeches and such actions as typical of our essential lives, rather than the gray interstices, which we perforce fill in extempore, and botch.

As concerns the novelists of the day before yesterday, this evasion of veracity is already more or less conceded: the 'platitudinous heroics' of Scott and the 'exaggerated sentimentalism' of Dickens are notorious in quite authoritative circles whose *ducdame* is the honest belief that art is a branch of pedagogy. Thackeray, as has been pointed out elsewhere, avoids many a logical outcome of circumstance, when recognition thereof would be inconvenient, by killing off somebody and blinding the reader with a tear-drenched handkerchief. And when we sanely appraise the most cried-up writer of genteel 'realism,' matters are not conducted much more candidly. Here is a fair sample:—'From the very beginning of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that ground-work of disapprobation on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike, and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry.' It is Miss Austen's most famous, most beloved, and most 'natural' character replying—not by means of a stilted letter, but colloquially, under the stress of emotion—to a proposal

of marriage by the man she loves. This is a crisis which in human life a normal young women simply does not meet with any such rhetorical architecture. . . . So there really seems small ground for wonder that Mr. Darcy observed, 'You have said quite enough, madam'; and no cause whatever for surprise that he hastily left the room, and was heard to open the front-door and quit the house. . . . Yet, be it forthwith added, Scott and Dickens and Thackeray, and even Miss Austen, were in the right, from one or another æsthetic standpoint, in thus variously editing and revising their contemporaries' unsatisfactory disposition of life. Indeed, upon no plea could they be bound to emulate malfeasance.

Criticism as to the veracity of more recent writers is best dismissed with the well-merited commendation that novelists to-day continue rigorously to respect the Second Commandment. Meanwhile it may, with comparative safety, be pointed out that no interred writer of widely conceded genius has ever displayed in depicting the average of human speech and thought and action, and general endowments, such exactness as would be becoming in an affidavit; but rather, when his art touched on these dangerous topics, has regarded romantic prevarication as a necessity. The truth about ourselves is the one truth, above all others, which we are adamantine not to face. And this determination springs, not wholly from vanity, but from a profound race-sense that by such denial we have little to lose, and a great deal to gain.

7

For, as has been said before, an inveterate Sophocles notes clearly that veracity is the one unpardonable sin, not merely against art, but against human welfare. . . . You will observe that the beginnings of fiction everywhere, among all races, take with curious unanimity the same form. It is always the history of the unlooked-for achievements and the ultimate, very public triumph of the ill-used youngest son. From the myth of Zeus, third son of Chronos, to the third prince of the fairy-tale, there is no exception. Everywhere it is to the despised weakling that romance accords the final and very public victory. For in the life-battle for existence it was of course the men of puniest build who first developed mental ability, since hardier compeers, who took with bloodied hands that which they wanted, had no especial need of less reliable makeshifts: and everywhere this weakling, quite naturally, afforded himself in imagination what the force of circumstance denied him in fact. Competent persons, then as now, had neither the time nor ability for literature.

By and by a staggering stroke of genius improved the tale by adding the handicap of sex-weakness: and Cinderella (whom romance begot and deified as Psyche) straightway led captive every dreamer's hitherto unvoiced desire. This is the most beloved story in the world's library, and, barring a tremendous exception to which I shall presently return, will always remain without rival. Any author anywhere can gain men's love by remodeling (not too drastically) the history of Cinderella: thousands of calligraphic persons have, of course, availed themselves of this fortunate circumstance: and the seeming miracle is that the naïve and the most sophisticated continue to thrill, at each re-telling of the hackneyed story, with the instant response of fiddlestrings, to an interpretation of life which one is tempted to describe as fiddlesticks. Yet an inevitable, very public triumph of the downtrodden—with all imaginable pomp and fanfare—is of necessity a tenet generally acceptable to a world of ineffectual inhabitants, each one of whom is a monarch of dreams incarcerated in a prison of flesh; and each of whom is hourly fretted, no less by the indifference of nature to his plight, than by the irrelevancy thereto of those social orderings he dazedly ballots into existence. . . . Christianity, with its teaching that the oppressed shall be exalted, and the unhappy made free of eternal bliss, thus came in the nick of occasion, to promise what the run of men were eager to believe. Such a delectable prospect, irrespective of its plausibility, could not in the nature of things fail to become popular: as has been strikingly attested by man's wide acceptance of the rather exigent requirements of Christianity, and his honest endeavors ever since to interpret them as meaning whatever happens to be convenient.

In similar fashion, humanity would seem

at an early period to have wrenched comfort from prefiguring man as the hero of the cosmic romance. For it was unpleasantly apparent that man did not excel in physical strength, as set against the other creatures of a planet whereon may be encountered tigers and elephants. His senses were of low development, as compared with the senses of insects: and, indeed, senses possessed by some of these small contemporaries man presently found he did not share, nor very clearly understand. The luxury of wings, and even the common comfort of a caudal appendage, was denied him. He walked painfully, without hoofs, and, created naked as a shelled almond, with difficulty outlived a season of inclement weather. Physically, he displayed in not a solitary trait a product of nature's more ambitious labor. . . . He, thus, surpassed the rest of vital creation in nothing except, as was beginning to be rumored, the power to reason; and even so, was apparently too magnanimous to avail himself of the privilege.

But to acknowledge such disconcerting facts would never do: just as inevitably, therefore, as the peafowl came to listen with condescension to the nightingale, and the tortoise to deplore the slapdash ways of his contemporaries, man probably began very early to regale himself with flattering narratives as to his nature and destiny. Among the countless internecine animals that roamed earth, puissant with claw and fang and sinew, an ape reft of his tail, and grown rusty at climbing, was the most formidable, and in the end would triumph. It was of course considered blasphemous to inquire into the grounds for this belief, in view of its patent desirability, for the race was already human. So the prophetic portrait of man treading among cringing pleosauri to browbeat a frightened dinosaur was duly scratched upon the cave's wall, and art began forthwith to accredit human beings with every trait and destiny which they desiderated. . . .

And so to-day, as always, we delight to hear about invincible men and women of unearthly loveliness—corrected and considerably augmented versions of our family circle,—performing feats illimitably beyond our modest powers. And so to-day no one upon the preferable side of Bedlam wishes to be reminded of what we are in actuality, even were it possible, by any disastrous miracle, ever to dispel the mist which romance has evoked about all human doings; and to the golden twilight of which old usage has so accustomed us that, like nocturnal birds, our vision grows perturbed in a clearer atmosphere. And we have come very firmly to believe in the existence of men everywhere, not as in fact they are, but 'as they ought to be.'

8

Now art, like all the other noteworthy factors in this remarkable world, serves in the end utilitarian purposes. When a trait is held up as desirable, for a convincingly long while, the average person, out of self-respect, pretends to possess it: with time, he acts letter-perfect as one endowed therewith, and comes unshakably to believe that it has guided him from infancy. For while everyone is notoriously swayed by appearances, this is more especially true of his own appearance: cleanliness is, if not actually next to godliness, so far a promoter of benevolence that no man feels upon quite friendly terms with his fellow-beings when conscious that he needs a shave; and if in grief you resolutely contort your mouth into a smile you somehow do become forthwith aware of a considerable mitigation of misery. . . . So it is that man's vanity and hypocrisy and lack of clear thinking are in a fair way to prove in the outcome his salvation.

All is vanity, quoth the son of David, inverting the truth for popular consumption, as became a wise Preacher who knew that vanity is all. For man alone of animals plays the ape to his dreams. That a dog dreams vehemently is matter of public knowledge: it is perfectly possible that in his more ecstatic visions he usurps the shape of his master, and visits Elysian pantries in human form: with awakening, he observes that in point of fact he is a dog, and as a rational animal, makes the best of canineship. But with man the case is otherwise, in that when logic leads to any humiliating conclusion, the sole effect is to discredit logic.

So has man's indomitable vanity made a harem of his instincts, and walled off a seraglio wherein to beget the virtues and refinements and all ennobling factors in man's long progress from gorillaship. As has been

suggested, creative literature would seem to have sprung simply from the instinct of any hurt animal to seek revenge,—and 'to get even,' as the phrase runs, in the field of imagination when such revenge was not feasible in any other arena. . . . Then, too, it is an instinct common to brute creatures that the breeding or even the potential mother must not be bitten,—upon which modest basis a little by a little mankind builded the fair code of domnei, or woman-worship, which for so long a while did yeoman service among legislators toward keeping half our citizens 'out of the mire of politics,' and, which still enables any reputable looking married woman to kill whatsoever male she elects with impunity. From the shuddering dread that beasts manifest toward uncomprehended forces, such as wind and thunder and tall waves, man developed religion, and a consoling assurance of divine paternity. And when you come to judge what he made of sexual desire, appraising the deed in view as against the wondrous overture of courtship and that infinity of high achievements which time has seen performed as grace-notes, words fail before his egregious thaumaturgy. For after any such stupendous bit of hocus-pocus, there seems to be no limit fixed to the conjurations of human vanity.

9

And these aspiring notions blended a great while since, into what may be termed the Chivalrous attitude toward life. Thus it is that romance, the real demiurge, the first and loveliest daughter of human vanity, contrives all those dynamic illusions which are used to further the ultimate ends of romance. . . . The cornerstone of Chivalry I take to be the idea of vicarship: for the chivalrous person is, in his own eyes at least, the child of God, and goes about this world as his Father's representative in an alien country. It was very adroitly to human pride, through an assumption of man's personal responsibility in his tiniest action, that Chivalry made its appeal; and exhorted every man to keep faith, not merely with the arbitrary will of a strong god, but with himself. There is no cause for wonder that the appeal was irresistible, when to each man it thus admitted that he himself was the one thing seriously to be considered. . . . So man became a chivalrous animal; and about this flattering notion of divine vicarship builded his elaborate mediæval code, to which, in essentials, a great number of persons adhere even nowadays. Questionless, however, the Chivalrous attitude does not very happily fit in with modern conditions, whereby the self-elected obligations of the knight-errant toward repressing evil are (in theory at all events) more efficaciously discharged by an organized police and a jury system.

And perhaps it was never, quite, a 'practical' attitude,—no, *mais quel geste!* as was observed by a pre-eminently chivalrous person. At worst, it is an attitude which one finds very taking to the fancy as the posture is exemplified by divers mediæval chroniclers, who had sound notions about portraying men 'as they ought to be.' . . . There is Nicolas de Caen, for instance, who in his *Dizain des Reines* (with which I am familiar, I confess, in the English version alone) presents with some naïveté this notion of divine vicarship, in that he would seem to restrict it to the nobility and gentry. 'For royal persons and their immediate associates,' Dom Nicolas assumes at outset, 'are the responsible stewards of Heaven': and regarding them continuously as such, he selects from the lives of various queens ten crucial moments wherein (as Nicolas phrases it), 'Destiny has thrust her sceptre into the hands of a human being, and left the weakling free to steer the pregnant outcome. Now prove thyself to be at bottom a god or else a beast, saith Destiny, and now eternally abide that choice.' Yet this, and this alone, when you come to think of it, is what Destiny says, not merely to 'royal persons and their immediate associates,' but to everyone. . . . And in his *Roman de Lusignan* Nicolas deals with that quaint development of the Chivalrous attitude to which I just alluded, that took form, as an allied but individual illusion, in domnei, or woman-worship; and found in a man's mistress an ever-present reminder, and sometimes a rival of God. There is something not unpathetic in the thought that this once world-controlling force is restricted to-day to removing a man's hat in an elevator and occasionally compelling a surrender of his seat in a streetcar. . . . But this *Roman de*

Lusignan also has been put into English, with an Afterword by the translator wherein the theories of domnei are rather painstakingly set forth: and thereto I shall presently recur, for further consideration of this illusion of domnei.

Always, of course, the Chivalrous attitude was an intelligent attitude, in which one spun romances and accorded no meticulous attention to mere facts. . . . For thus to spin romances is to bring about, in every sense, man's recreation, since man alone of animals can, actually, acquire a trait by assuming, in defiance of reason, that he already possesses it. To spin romances is, indeed, man's proper and peculiar function in a world wherein he only of created beings can make no profitable use of the truth about himself. For man alone of animals plays the ape to his dreams. So he fares onward chivalrously, led by ignes fatui no doubt, yet moving onward. And that the goal remains ambiguous seems but a trivial circumstance to any living creature who knows, he knows not how, that to stay still can be esteemed a virtue only in the dead.

10

Indeed, when I consider the race to which I have the honor to belong, I am filled with respectful wonder. . . . All about us flows and gyrates unceasingly the material universe,—an endless inconceivable jumble of rotatory blazing gas and frozen spheres and detonating comets, wherethrough spins Earth like a frail midge. And to this blown molecule adhere what millions and millions and millions of parasites just such as I am, begetting and dreaming and slaying and abnegating and toiling and making mirth, just as did aforetime those countless generations of our forebears, every one of whom was likewise a creature just such as I am! Were the human beings that have been subjected to confinement in flesh each numbered, as is customary in other penal institutes, with what interminable row of digits might one set forth your number, say, or mine?

Nor is this everything. For my reason, such as it is, perceives this race, in its entirety, in the whole outcome of its achievement, to be beyond all wording petty and ineffectual: and no more than thought can estimate the relative proportion to the material universe of our poor Earth, can thought conceive with what quintillionths to express that fractional part which I, as an individual parasite, add to Earth's negligible fretting by ephemeræ.

And still—behold the miracle!—still I believe life to be a personal transaction between myself and Omnipotence; I believe that what I do is somehow of importance; and I believe that I am on a journey toward some very public triumph not unlike that of the third prince in the fairy-tale. . . . Even to-day I believe in this dynamic illusion. For that creed was the first great inspiration of the demiurge,—man's big romantic idea of Chivalry, of himself as his Father's representative in an alien country;—and it is a notion at which mere fact and reason yelp denial unavailingly. For every one of us is so constituted that he knows the romance to be true, and corporal fact and human reason in this matter, as in divers others, to be the suborned and perjured witnesses of 'realism.'

1917–1918 1919

JOHN REED

1887–1920

FROM TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

MOSCOW [1]

THE Military Revolutionary Committee, with a fierce intensity, followed up its victory:

NOVEMBER 14TH.

To all Army, corps, divisional and regimental Committees, to all Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, to all, all, all.

Conforming to the agreement between the Cossacks, *yunkers*, soldiers, sailors and workers, it has been decided to arraign Alexander Feodorvitch Kerensky

1 The selection is Chapter 10 of *Ten Days That Shook the World* (N.Y., 1919).

before a tribunal of the people. We demand that Kerensky be arrested, and that he be ordered, in the name of the organizations hereinafter mentioned, to come immediately to Petrograd and present himself to the tribunal.

SIGNED,

The Cossacks of the First Division of Ussuri Cavalry; the Committee of Yunkers of the Petrograd detachment of Franc-Tireurs; the delegate of the Fifth Army.

PEOPLE'S COMMISSAR DYBENKO

The Committee for Salvation, the Duma, the Central Committee of the Socialist Revolutionary party—proudly claiming Kerensky as a member—all passionately protested that he could only be held responsible to the Constituent Assembly.

On the evening of November 16th I watched two thousand Red Guards swing down the Zagorodny Prospekt behind a military band playing the *Marseillaise*—and how appropriate it sounded—with blood-red flags over the dark ranks of workmen, to welcome home again their brothers who had defended 'Red Petrograd.' In the bitter dusk they tramped, men and women, their tall bayonets swaying; through streets faintly lighted and slippery with mud, between silent crowds of bourgeois, contemptuous but fearful. . . .

All were against them—business men, speculators, investors, land-owners, army officers, politicians, teachers, students, professional men, shop-keepers, clerks, agents. The other Socialist parties hated the Bolsheviki with an implacable hatred. On the side of the Soviets were the rank and file of the workers, the sailors, all the undemoralized soldiers, the landless peasants, and a few—a very few—intellectuals. . . .

From the farthest corners of great Russia, whereupon desperate street-fighting burst like a wave, news of Kerensky's defeat came echoing back the immense roar of proletarian victory. Kazan, Saratov, Novgorod, Vinnitza—where the streets had run with blood; Moscow, where the Bolsheviki had turned their artillery against the last stronghold of the bourgeoisie—the Kremlin.

'They are bombarding the Kremlin!' The news passed from mouth to mouth in the streets of Petrograd, almost with a sense of terror. Travellers from 'white and shining little mother Moscow' told fearful tales. Thousands killed; the Tverskaya and the Kuznetsky Most in flames; the church of Vasili Blazheiny a smoking ruin; Usspensky Cathedral crumbling down; the Spasskaya Gate of the Kremlin tottering; the Duma burned to the ground.

Nothing that the Bolsheviki had done could compare with this fearful blasphemy in the heart of Holy Russia. To the ears of the devout sounded the shock of guns crashing in the face of the Holy Orthodox Church, and pounding to dust the sanctuary of the Russian nation. . . .

On November 15th, Lunatcharsky, Commissar of Education, broke into tears at the session of the Council of People's Commissars, and rushed from the room, crying, 'I cannot stand it! I cannot bear the monstrous destruction of beauty and tradition. . . .'

That afternoon his letter of resignation was published in the newspapers:

> I have just been informed, by people arriving from Moscow, what has happened there.
>
> The Cathedral of St. Basil the Blessed, the Cathedral of the Assumption, are being bombarded. The Kremlin, where are now gathered the most important art treasures of Petrograd and of Moscow, is under artillery fire. There are thousands of victims.
>
> The fearful struggle there has reached a pitch of bestial ferocity.
>
> What is left? What more can happen?
>
> I cannot bear this. My cup is full. I am unable to endure these horrors. It is impossible to work under the pressure of thoughts which drive me mad!
>
> That is why I am leaving the Council of People's Commissars.
>
> I fully realize the gravity of this decision. But I can bear no more. . . .

That same day the White Guards and *yunkers* in the Kremlin surrendered, and

were allowed to march out unharmed. The treaty of peace follows:

1. The Committee of Public Safety ceases to exist.

2. The White Guard gives up its arms and dissolves. The officers retain their swords and regulation side-arms. In the Military Schools are retained only the arms necessary for instruction; all others are surrendered by the *yunkers*. The Military Revolutionary Committee guarantees the liberty and inviolability of the person.

3. To settle the question of disarmament, as set forth in section 2, a special commission is appointed, consisting of representatives from all organisations which took part in the peace negotiations.

4. From the moment of the signature of this peace treaty, both parties shall immediately give order to cease firing and halt all military operations, taking measures to ensure punctual obedience to this order.

5. At the signature of the treaty, all prisoners made by the two parties shall be released. . . .

For two days now the Bolsheviki had been in control of the city. The frightened citizens were creeping out of their cellars to seek their dead; the barricades in the streets were being removed. Instead of diminishing, however, the stories of destruction in Moscow continued to grow. . . . And it was under the influence of these fearful reports that we decided to go there.

Petrograd, after all, in spite of being for a century the seat of Government, is still an artificial city. Moscow is real Russia, Russia as it was and will be; in Moscow we would get the true feeling of the Russian people about the Revolution. Life was more intense there.

For the past week the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, aided by the rank and file of the Railway Workers, had seized control of the Nicolai Railroad, and hurled trainload after trainload of sailors and Red Guards southwest. . . . We were provided with passes from Smolny, without which no one could leave the capital. . . . When the train backed into the station, a mob of shabby soldiers, all carrying huge sacks of eatables, stormed the doors, smashed the windows, and poured into all the compartments, filling up the aisles and even climbing onto the roof. Three of us managed to wedge our way into a compartment, but almost immediately about twenty soldiers entered. . . . There was room for only four people; we argued, expostulated, and the conductor joined us—but the soldiers merely laughed. Were they to bother about the comfort of a lot of *boorzhui* (bourgeois)? We produced the passes from Smolny; instantly the soldiers changed their attitude.

'Come, comrades,' cried one, 'these are American *tovarishtchi*. They have come thirty thousand versts to see our Revolution, and they are naturally tired. . . .'

With polite and friendly apologies the soldiers began to leave. Shortly afterward we heard them breaking into a compartment occupied by two stout, well-dressed Russians, who had bribed the conductor and locked their door. . . .

About seven o'clock in the evening we drew out of the station, an immense long train drawn by a weak little locomotive burning wood, and stumbled along slowly, with many stops. The soldiers on the roof kicked with their heels and sang whining peasant songs; and in the corridor, so jammed that it was impossible to pass, violent political debates raged all night long. Occasionally the conductor came through, as a matter of habit, looking for tickets. He found very few except ours, and after a half-hour of futile wrangling, lifted his arms despairingly and withdrew. The atmosphere was stifling, full of smoke and foul odours; if it hadn't been for the broken windows we would doubtless have smothered during the night.

In the morning, hours late, we looked out upon a snowy world. It was bitter cold. About noon a peasant woman got on with a basket-full of bread-chunks and a great can of luke warm coffee-substitute. From then on until dark there was nothing but the packed train, jolting and stopping, and occasional stations where a ravenous mob swooped down on the scantily-furnished buffet and swept it clean. . . . At one of these halts I ran into Nogin and Rykov, the seceding Commissars, who were returning to Moscow to put their grievances before

their own Soviet; and further along was Bukharin, a short, red-bearded man with the eyes of a fanatic—'more Left than Lenin,' they said of him. . . .

Then the three strokes of the bell and we made a rush for the train, worming our way through the packed and noisy aisle. . . . A good-natured crowd, bearing the discomfort with humorous patience, interminably arguing about everything from the situation in Petrograd to the British Trade-Union system, and disputing loudly with the few *boorzhui* who were on board. Before we reached Moscow almost every car had organized a Committee to secure and distribute food, and these Committees became divided into political factions, who wrangled over fundamental principles. . . .

The station at Moscow was deserted. We went to the office of the Commissar, in order to arrange for our return tickets. He was a sullen youth with the shoulder-straps of a Lieutenant; when we showed him our papers from Smolny, he lost his temper and declared that he was no Bolshevik, that he represented the Committee of Public Safety. . . . It was characteristic—in the general turmoil attending the conquest of the city, the chief railway station had been forgotten by the victors. . . .

Not a cab in sight. A few blocks down the street, however, we woke up a grotesquely-padded *izvostchik* asleep upright on the box of his little sleigh. 'How much to the centre of the town?'

He scratched his head. 'The *barini* won't be able to find a room in any hotel,' he said. 'But I'll take you around for a hundred rubles. . . .' Before the Revolution it cost *two*! We objected, but he simply shrugged his shoulders. 'It takes a good deal of courage to drive a sleigh nowadays,' he went on. We could not beat him down below fifty. . . . As we sped along the silent, snowy half-lighted streets, he recounted his adventures during the six days' fighting. 'Driving along, or waiting for a fare on the corner,' he said, 'all of a sudden *pooff*! a cannon ball exploding here, *pooff*! a cannon ball there, *ratt-ratt*! a machine-gun. . . . I gallop, the devils shooting all around. I get to a nice quiet street and stop, doze a little, *pooff*! another cannon ball, *ratt-ratt*. . . . Devils! Devils! Devils! Brrr!'

In the centre of the town the snow-piled streets were quiet with the stillness of convalescence. Only a few arc-lights were burning, only a few pedestrians hurried along the side-walks. An icy wind blew from the great plain, cutting to the bone. At the first hotel we entered an office illuminated by two candles.

'Yes, we have some very comfortable rooms, but all the windows are shot out. If the *gospodin* does not mind a little fresh air. . . .'

Down the Tverskaya the shop-windows were broken, and there were shell-holes and torn-up paving stones in the street. Hotel after hotel, all full, or the proprietors still so frightened that all they could say was, 'No, no, there is no room! There is no room!' On the main streets, where the great banking-houses and mercantile houses lay, the Bolshevik artillery had been indiscriminately effective. As one Soviet official told me, 'Whenever we didn't know just where the *yunkers* and White Guards were, we bombarded their pocket-books. . . .'

At the big Hotel National they finally took us in; for we were foreigners, and the Military Revolutionary Committee had promised to protect the dwellings of foreigners. . . . On the top floor the manager showed us where shrapnel had shattered several windows. 'The animals!' said he, shaking his fist at imaginary Bolsheviki. 'But wait! Their time will come; in just a few days now their ridiculous Government will fall, and then we shall make them suffer!'

We dined at a vegetarian restaurant with the enticing name, 'I Eat Nobody,' and Tolstoy's picture prominent on the walls, and then sallied out into the streets.

The headquarters of the Moscow Soviet was in the palace of the former Governor-General, an imposing white building fronting Skobeliev Square. Red Guards stood sentry at the door. At the head of the wide, formal stairway, whose walls were plastered with announcements of committee-meetings and addresses of political parties, we passed through a series of lofty ante-rooms, hung with red-shrouded pictures in gold frames, to the splendid state salon, with its magnificent crystal lustres and gilded cornices. A low-voiced hum of talk, underlaid with the whirring bass of a score of sewing machines, filled the place. Huge bolts of

red and black cotton cloth were unrolled, serpentining across the parqueted floor and over tables, at which sat half a hundred women, cutting and sewing streamers and banners for the Funeral of the Revolutionary Dead. The faces of these women were roughened and scarred with life at its most difficult; they worked now sternly, many of them with eyes red from weeping. . . .The losses of the Red Army had been heavy.

At a desk in one corner was Rogov, an intelligent, bearded man with glasses, wearing the black blouse of a worker. He invited us to march with the Central Executive Committee in the funeral procession next morning. . . .

'It is impossible to teach the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviki anything!' he exclaimed. 'They compromise from sheer habit. Imagine! They proposed that we hold a joint funeral with the *yunkers*!'

Across the hall came a man in a ragged soldier-coat and *shapka*, whose face was familiar; I recognized Melnichansky, whom I had known as the watch-maker George Melcher in Bayonne, New Jersey, during the great Standard Oil strike. Now, he told me, he was secretary of the Moscow Metal-Workers' Union, and a Commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee during the fighting. . . .

'You see me!' he cried, showing his decrepit clothing. 'I was with the boys in the Kremlin when the *yunkers* came the first time. They shut me up in the cellar and swiped my overcoat, my money, watch and even the ring on my finger. This is all I've got to wear!'

From him I learned many details of the bloody six-day battle which had rent Moscow in two. Unlike in Petrograd, in Moscow the City Duma had taken command of the *yunkers* and White Guards. Rudnev, the Mayor, and Minor, president of the Duma, had directed the activities of the Committee of Public Safety and the troops. Riabtsev, Commandant of the city, a man of democratic instincts, had hesitated about opposing the Military Revolutionary Committee; but the Duma had forced him. . . . It was the Mayor who had urged the occupation of the Kremlin; 'They will never dare fire on you there,' he said. . . .

One garrison regiment, badly demoralized by long inactivity, had been approached by both sides. The regiment held a meeting to decide what action to take. Resolved, that the regiment remain neutral, and continue its present activities—which consisted in peddling rubbers and sunflower seeds!

'But worst of all,' said Melnichansky, 'we had to organize while we were fighting. The other side knew just what it wanted; but here the soldiers had their Soviet and the workers theirs. . . . There was a fearful wrangle over who should be Commander-in-chief; some regiments talked for days before they decided what to do; and when the officers suddenly deserted us, we had no battle-staff to give orders. . . .'

Vivid little pictures he gave me. On a cold grey day he had stood at a corner of the Nikitskaya, which was swept by blasts of machine-gun fire. A throng of little boys were gathered there—street waifs who used to be newsboys. Shrill, excited as if with a new game, they waited until the firing slackened, and then tried to run across the street. . . . Many were killed, but the rest dashed backward and forward, laughing, daring each other. . . .

Late in the evening I went to the *Dvorianskoye Sobranie*—the Nobles' Club—where the Moscow Bolsheviki were to meet and consider the report of Nogin, Rykov and the others who had left the Council of People's Commissars.

The meeting-place was a theatre, in which, under the old régime, to audiences of officers and glittering ladies, amateur presentations of the latest French comedy had once taken place.

At first the place filled with the intellectuals—those who lived near the centre of the town. Nogin spoke, and most of his listeners were plainly with him. It was very late before the workers arrived; the working-class quarters were on the outskirts of the town, and no street-cars were running. But about midnight they began to clump up the stairs, in groups of ten or twenty—big, rough men, in coarse clothes, fresh from the battle-line, where they had fought like devils for a week, seeing their comrades fall all about them.

Scarcely had the meeting formally opened before Nogin was assailed with a

tempest of jeers and angry shouts. In vain he tried to argue, to explain; they would not listen. He had left the Council of People's Commissars; he had deserted his post while the battle was raging. As for the bourgeois press, here in Moscow there was no more bourgeois press; even the City Duma had been dissolved. Bukharin stood up, savage, logical, with a voice which plunged and struck, plunged and struck. . . . Him they listened to with shining eyes. Resolution, to support the action of the Council of People's Commissars, passed by overwhelming majority. So spoke Moscow. . . .

Late in the night we went through the empty streets and under the Iberian Gate to the great Red Square in front of the Kremlin. The church of Vasili Blazheiny loomed fantastic, its bright-coloured, convoluted and blazoned cupolas vague in the darkness. There was no sign of any damage. . . . Along one side of the square the dark towers and walls of the Kremlin stood up. On the high walls flickered redly the light of hidden flames; voices reached us across the immense place, and the sound of picks and shovels. We crossed over.

Mountains of dirt and rock were piled high near the base of the wall. Climbing these we looked down into two massive pits, ten or fifteen feet deep and fifty yards long, where hundreds of soldiers and workers were digging in the light of huge fires.

A young student spoke to us in German. 'The Brotherhood Grave,' he explained. 'To-morrow we shall bury here five hundred proletarians who died for the Revolution.'

He took us down into the pit. In frantic haste swung the picks and shovels, and the earth-mountains grew. No one spoke. Overhead the night was thick with stars, and the ancient Imperial Kremlin wall towered up immeasurably.

'Here in this holy place,' said the student, 'holiest of all Russia, we shall bury our most holy. Here where are the tombs of the Tsars, our Tsar—the People—shall sleep. . . .' His arm was in a sling, from a bullet-wound gained in the fighting. He looked at it. 'You foreigners look down on us Russians because so long we tolerated a mediæval monarchy,' said he. 'But we saw that the Tsar was not the only tyrant in the world; capitalism was worse, and in all the countries of the world capitalism was Emperor. . . . Russian revolutionary tactics are best. . . .'

As we left, the workers in the pit, exhausted and running with sweat in spite of the cold, began to climb wearily out. Across the Red Square a dark knot of men came hurrying. They swarmed into the pits, picked up the tools and began digging, digging, without a word. . . .

So, all the long night volunteers of the People relieved each other, never halting in their driving speed, and the cold light of the dawn laid bare the great Square, white with snow, and the yawning brown pits of the Brotherhood Grave, quite finished.

We rose before sunrise, and hurried through the dark streets to Skobeliev Square. In all the great city not a human being could be seen; but there was a faint sound of stirring, far and near, like a deep wind coming. In the pale half-light a little group of men and women were gathered before the Soviet headquarters, with a sheaf of gold-lettered red banners—the Central Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviets. It grew light. From afar the vague stirring sound deepened and became louder, a steady and tremendous bass. The city was rising. We set out down the Tverskaya, the banners flapping overhead. The little street chapels along our way were locked and dark, as was the Chapel of the Iberian Virgin, which each new Tsar used to visit before he went to the Kremlin to crown himself, and which, day or night, was always open and crowded, and brilliant with the candles of the devout gleaming on the gold and silver and jewels of the ikons. Now, for the first time since Napoleon was in Moscow, they say, the candles were out.

The Holy Orthodox Church had withdrawn the light of its countenance from Moscow, the nest of irreverent vipers who had bombarded the Kremlin. Dark and silent and cold were the churches; the priests had disappeared. There were no popes to officiate at the Red Burial, there had been no sacrament for the dead, nor were any prayers to be said over the grave of the blasphemers. Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow, was soon to excommunicate the Soviets. . . .

Also the shops were closed, and the propertied classes stayed at home—but for

other reasons. This was the Day of the People, the rumour of whose coming was thunderous as surf. . . .

Already through the Iberian Gate a human river was flowing, and the vast Red Square was spotted with people, thousands of them. I remarked that as the throng passed the Iberian Chapel, where always before the passerby had crossed himself, they did not seem to notice it. . . .

We forced our way through the dense mass packed near the Kremlin wall, and stood upon one of the dirt-mountains. Already several men were there, among them Muranov, the soldier who had been elected Commandant of Moscow—a tall, simple-looking, bearded man with a gentle face.

Through all the streets to the Red Square the torrents of people poured, thousands upon thousands of them, all with the look of the poor and the toiling. A military band came marching up, playing the *Internationale*, and spontaneously the song caught and spread like wind-ripples on a sea, slow and solemn. From the top of the Kremlin wall gigantic banners unrolled to the ground; red, with great letters in gold and in white, saying, 'Martyrs of the Beginning of World Social Revolution,' and 'Long Live the Brotherhood of Workers of the World.'

A bitter wind swept the Square, lifting the banners. Now from the far quarters of the city the workers of the different factories were arriving, with their dead. They could be seen coming through the Gate, the blare of their banners, and the dull red—like blood—of the coffins they carried. These were rude boxes, made of unplaned wood and daubed with crimson, borne high on the shoulders of rough men who marched with tears streaming down their faces, and followed by women who sobbed and screamed, or walked stiffly, with white, dead faces. Some of the coffins were open, the lid carried behind them; others were covered with gilded or silvered cloth, or had a soldier's hat nailed on the top. There were many wreaths of hideous artificial flowers. . . .

Through an irregular lane that opened and closed again the procession slowly moved toward us. Now through the Gate was flowing an endless stream of banners, all shades of red, with silver and gold lettering, knots of crepe hanging from the top—and some Anarchist flags, black with white letters. The band was playing the Revolutionary Funeral March, and against the immense singing of the mass of people, standing uncovered, the paraders sang hoarsely, choked with sobs. . . .

Between the factory-workers came companies of soldiers with their coffins, too, and squadrons of cavalry, riding at salute, and artillery batteries, the cannon wound with red and black—forever, it seemed. Their banners said, 'Long Live the Third International!' or 'We Want an Honest, General, Democratic Peace!'

Slowly the marchers came with their coffins to the entrance of the grave, and the bearers clambered up with their burdens and went down into the pit. Many of them were women—squat, strong proletarian women. Behind the dead came other women—women young and broken, or old, wrinkled women making noises like hurt animals, who tried to follow their sons and husbands into the Brotherhood Grave, and shrieked when compassionate hands restrained them. The poor love each other so!

All the long day the funeral procession passed, coming in by the Iberian Gate and leaving the Square by way of the Nikolskaya, a river of red banners, bearing words of hope and brotherhood and stupendous prophecies, against a back-ground of fifty thousand people,—under the eyes of the world's workers and their descendants forever. . . .

One by one the five hundred coffins were laid in the pits. Dusk fell, and still the banners came drooping and fluttering, the band played the Funeral March, and the huge assemblage chanted. In the leafless branches of the trees above the grave the wreaths were hung, like strange, multicoloured blossoms. Two hundred men began to shovel in the dirt. It rained dully down upon the coffins with a thudding sound, audible beneath the singing. . . .

The lights came out. The last banners passed, and the last moaning women, looking back with awful intensity as they went. Slowly from the great Square ebbed the proletarian tide. . . .

I suddenly realized that the devout Rus-

sian people no longer needed priests to pray them into heaven. On earth they were building a kingdom more bright than any heaven had to offer, and for which it was a glory to die. . . .

1918 1919

HENRY L. MENCKEN

1880–

BRYAN

HAS it been duly marked by historians that the late William Jennings Bryan's last secular act on this globe of sin was to catch flies? A curious detail, and not without its sardonic overtones. He was the most sedulous fly-catcher in American history, and in many ways the most successful. His quarry, of course, was not *Musca domestica* but *Homo neandertalensis*. For forty years he tracked it with coo and bellow, up and down the rustic backways of the Republic. Wherever the flambeaux of Chautauqua smoked and guttered, and the bilge of Idealism ran in the veins, and Baptist pastors dammed the brooks with the sanctified, and men gathered who were weary and heavy laden, and their wives who were full of Peruna and as fecund as the shad (*Alosa sapidissima*)—there the indefatigable Jennings set up his traps and spread his bait. He knew every country town in the South and West, and he could crowd the most remote of them to suffocation by simply winding his horn. The city proletariat, transiently flustered by him in 1896, quickly penetrated his buncombe and would have no more of him; the cockney gallery jeered him at every Democratic national convention for twenty-five years. But out where the grass grows high, and the horned cattle dream away the lazy afternoons, and men still fear the powers and principalities of the air—out there between the corn-rows he held his old puissance to the end. There was no need of beaters to drive in his game. The news that he was coming was enough. For miles the flivver dust would choke the roads. And when he rose at the end of the day to discharge his Message there would be such breathless attention, such a rapt and enchanted ecstasy, such a sweet rustle of amens as the world had not known since Johann fell to Herod's sardonic ax.

There was something peculiarly fitting in the fact that his last days were spent in a one-horse Tennessee village, and that death found him there. The man felt at home in such simple and Christian scenes. He liked people who sweated freely, and were not debauched by the refinements of the toilet. Making his progress up and down the Main Street of little Dayton, surrounded by gaping primates from the upland valleys of the Cumberland Range, his coat laid aside, his bare arms and hairy chest shining damply, his bald head sprinkled with dust—so accoutred and on display he was obviously happy. He liked getting up early in the morning, to the tune of cocks crowing on the dunghill. He liked the heavy, greasy victuals of the farmhouse kitchen. He liked country lawyers, country pastors, all country people. He liked country sounds and country smells. I believe that this liking was sincere—perhaps the only sincere thing in the man. His nose showed no uneasiness when a hillman in faded overalls and hickory shirt accosted him on the street, and besought him for light upon some mystery of Holy Writ. The simian gabble of the cross-roads was not gabble to him, but wisdom of an occult and superior sort. In the presence of city folks he was palpably uneasy. Their clothes, I suspect, annoyed him, and he was suspicious of their too delicate manners. He knew all the while that they were laughing at him—if not at his baroque theology, then at least at his alpaca pantaloons. But the yokels never laughed at him. To them he was not the huntsman but the prophet, and toward the end, as he gradually forsook mundane politics for more ghostly concerns, they began to elevate him in their hierarchy. When he died he was the peer of Abraham. His old enemy, Wilson, aspiring to the same white and shining robe, came down with a thump. But Bryan made the grade. His place in the Tennessee hagiography is secure. If the village barber saved any of his hair, then it

is curing gall-stones down there to-day. But what label will he bear in more urbane regions? One, I fear, of a far less flattering kind. Bryan lived too long, and descended too deeply into the mud, to be taken seriously hereafter by fully literate men, even of the kind who write school-books. There was a scattering of sweet words in his funeral notices, but it was no more than a response to conventional sentimentality. The best verdict the most romantic editorial writer could dredge up, save in the humorless South, was to the general effect that his imbecilities were excused by his earnestness—that under his clowning, as under that of the juggler of Notre Dame, there was the zeal of a steadfast soul. But this was apology, not praise; precisely the same thing might be said of Mary Baker G. Eddy, the late Czar Nicholas, or Czolgosz. The truth is that even Bryan's sincerity will probably yield to what is called, in other fields, definitive criticism. Was he sincere when he opposed imperialism in the Philippines, or when he fed it with deserving Democrats in Santo Domingo? Was he sincere when he tried to shove the Prohibitionists under the table, or when he seized their banner and began to lead them with loud whoops? Was he sincere when he bellowed against war, or when he dreamed of himself as a tin-soldier in uniform, with a grave reserved among the generals? Was he sincere when he denounced the late John W. Davis, or when he swallowed Davis? Was he sincere when he fawned over Champ Clark, or when he betrayed Clark? Was he sincere when he pleaded for tolerance in New York, or when he bawled for the faggot and the stake in Tennessee?

This talk of sincerity, I confess, fatigues me. If the fellow was sincere, then so was P. T. Barnum. The word is disgraced and degraded by such uses. He was, in fact, a charlatan, a mountebank, a zany without shame or dignity. His career brought him into contact with the first men of his time; he preferred the company of rustic ignoramuses. It was hard to believe, watching him at Dayton, that he had traveled, that he had been received in civilized societies, that he had been a high officer of state. He seemed only a poor clod like those around him, deluded by a childish theology, full of an almost pathological hatred of all learning, all human dignity, all beauty, all fine and noble things. He was a peasant come home to the barnyard. Imagine a gentleman, and you have imagined everything that he was not. What animated him from end to end of his grotesque career was simply ambition—the ambition of a common man to get his hand upon the collar of his superiors, or, failing that, to get his thumb into their eyes. He was born with a roaring voice, and it had the trick of inflaming half-wits. His whole career was devoted to raising those half-wits against their betters, that he himself might shine. His last battle will be grossly misunderstood if it is thought of as a mere exercise in fanaticism—that is, if Bryan the Fundamentalist Pope is mistaken for one of the bucolic Fundamentalists. There was much more in it than that, as everyone knows who saw him on the field. What moved him, at bottom, was simply hatred of the city men who had laughed at him so long, and brought him at last to so tatterdemalion an estate. He lusted for revenge upon them. He yearned to lead the anthropoid rabble against them, to punish them for their execution upon him by attacking the very vitals of their civilization. He went far beyond the bounds of any merely religious frenzy, however inordinate. When he began denouncing the notion that man is a mammal even some of the hinds at Dayton were agape. And when, brought upon Darrow's cruel hook, he writhed and tossed in a very fury of malignancy, bawling against the baldest elements of sense and decency like a man frantic—when he came to that tragic climax of his striving there were snickers among the hinds as well as hosannas.

Upon that hook, in truth, Bryan committed suicide, as a legend as well as in the body. He staggered from the rustic court ready to die, and he staggered from it ready to be forgotten, save as a character in a third-rate farce, witless and in poor taste. It was plain to everyone who knew him, when he came to Dayton, that his great days were behind him—that, for all the fury of his hatred, he was now definitely an old man, and headed at last for silence. There was a vague, unpleasant manginess about his appearance; he somehow seemed dirty, though a close glance showed him as carefully shaven as an actor, and clad in immaculate linen. All the

hair was gone from the dome of his head, and it had begun to fall out, too, behind his ears, in the obscene manner of the late Samuel Gompers. The resonance had departed from his voice; what was once a bugle blast had become reedy and quavering. Who knows that, like Demosthenes, he had a lisp? In the old days, under the magic of his eloquence, no one noticed it. But when he spoke at Dayton it was always audible.

When I first encountered him, on the sidewalk in front of the office of the rustic lawyers who were his associates in the Scopes case, the trial was yet to begin, and so he was still expansive and amiable. I had printed in the *Nation*, a week or so before, an article arguing that the Tennessee anti-evolution law, whatever its wisdom, was at least constitutional—that the rustics of the State had a clear right to have their progeny taught whatever they chose, and kept secure from whatever knowledge violated their superstitions. The old boy professed to be delighted with the argument, and gave the gaping bystanders to understand that I was a publicist of parts. Not to be outdone, I admired the preposterous country shirt that he wore—sleeveless and with the neck cut very low. We parted in the manner of two ambassadors. But that was the last touch of amiability that I was destined to see in Bryan. The next day the battle joined and his face became hard. By the end of the week he was simply a walking fever. Hour by hour he grew more bitter. What the Christian Scientists call malicious animal magnetism seemed to radiate from him like heat from a stove. From my place in the courtroom, standing upon a table, I looked directly down upon him, sweating horribly and pumping his palm-leaf fan. His eyes fascinated me; I watched them all day long. They were blazing points of hatred. They glittered like occult and sinister gems. Now and then they wandered to me, and I got my share, for my reports of the trial had come back to Dayton, and he had read them. It was like coming under fire.

Thus he fought his last fight, thirsting savagely for blood. All sense departed from him. He bit right and left, like a dog with rabies. He descended to demagogy so dreadful that his very associates at the trial table blushed. His one yearning was to keep his yokels heated up—to lead his forlorn mob of imbeciles against the foe. That foe, alas, refused to be alarmed. It insisted upon seeing the whole battle as a comedy. Even Darrow, who knew better, occasionally yielded to the prevailing spirit. One day he lured poor Bryan into the folly I have mentioned: his astounding argument against the notion that man is a mammal. I am glad I heard it, for otherwise I'd never believe in it. There stood the man who had been thrice a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic—there he stood in the glare of the world, uttering stuff that a boy of eight would laugh at! The artful Darrow led him on: he repeated it, ranted for it, bellowed it in his cracked voice. So he was prepared for the final slaughter. He came into life a hero, a Galahad, in bright and shining armor. He was passing out a poor mountebank.

The chances are that history will put the peak of democracy in America in his time; it has been on the downward curve among us since the campaign of 1896. He will be remembered perhaps, as its supreme impostor, the *reductio ad absurdum* of its pretension. Bryan came very near being President. In 1896, it is possible, he was actually elected. He lived long enough to make patriots thank the inscrutable gods for Harding, even for Coolidge. Dullness has got into the White House, and the smell of cabbage boiling, but there is at least nothing to compare to the intolerable buffoonery that went on in Tennessee. The President of the United States may be an ass, but he at least doesn't believe that the earth is square, and that witches should be put to death, and that Jonah swallowed the whale. The Golden Text is not painted weekly on the White House wall, and there is no need to keep ambassadors waiting while Pastor Simpson, of Smithville, prays for rain in the Blue Room. We have escaped something—by a narrow margin, but still we have escaped.

That is, so far. The Fundamentalists, once apparently sweeping all before them, now face minorities prepared for battle even in the South—here and there with some assurance of success. But it is too early, it seems to me, to send the firemen home; the fire is still burning on many a far-flung hill, and it may begin to roar again at any moment. The evil that men do lives after them. Bryan, in his malice, started something that

it will not be easy to stop. In ten thousand country towns his old heelers, the evangelical pastors, are propagating his gospel, and everywhere the yokels are ready for it. When he disappeared from the big cities, the big cities made the capital error of assuming that he was done for. If they heard of him at all, it was only as a crimp for real-estate speculators—the heroic foe of the unearned increment hauling it in with both hands. He seemed preposterous, and thence harmless. But all the while he was busy among his old lieges, preparing for a *jacquerie* that should floor all his enemies at one blow. He did his job competently. He had vast skill at such enterprises. Heave an egg out of a Pullman window, and you will hit a Fundamentalist almost everywhere in the United States to-day. They swarm in the country towns, inflamed by their *shamans*, and with a saint, now, to venerate. They are thick in the mean streets behind the gasworks. They are everywhere where learning is too heavy a burden for mortal minds to carry, even the vague, pathetic learning on tap in little red schoolhouses. They march with the Klan, with the Christian Endeavor Society, with the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, with the Epworth League, with all the rococo bands that poor and unhappy folk organize to bring some light of purpose into their lives. They have had a thrill, and they are ready for more.

Such is Bryan's legacy to his country. He couldn't be President, but he could at least help magnificently in the solemn business of shutting off the Presidency from every intelligent and self-respecting man. The storm, perhaps, won't last long, as time goes in history. It may help, indeed, to break up the democratic delusion, now already showing weakness, and so hasten its own end. But while it lasts it will blow off some roofs.

1926

WILLA CATHER

1876–

FROM DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP

MISSIONARY JOURNEYS [1]

I

The White Mules

IN mid-March, Father Vaillant was on the road, returning from a missionary journey to Albuquerque. He was to stop at the *rancho* of a rich Mexican, Manuel Lujon, to marry his men and maid servants who were living in concubinage, and to baptize the children. There he would spend the night. To-morrow or the day after he would go on to Santa Fé, halting by the way at the In-

1 'My book was a conjunction of the general and the particular, like most works of the imagination. I had all my life wanted to do something in the style of legend, which is absolutely the reverse of dramatic treatment. Since I first saw the Puvis de Chavannes frescoes of the life of Saint Geneviève in my student days, I have wished that I could try something a little like that in prose; something without accent, with none of the artificial elements of composition. In the Golden Legend the martyrdoms of the saints are no more dwelt upon than are the trivial incidents of their lives; it is as though all human experiences, measured against one supreme spiritual experience, were of about the same importance. The essence of such writing is not to hold the note, not to use an incident for all there is in it—but to touch and pass on. I felt that such writing would be a delightful kind of discipline in these days when the "situation" is made to count for so much in writing, when the general tendency is to force things up. In this kind of writing the mood is the thing—all the little figures and stories are mere improvisation that come out of it. What I got from Father Machebeuf's letters was the mood, the spirit in which they accepted the accidents and hardships of a desert country, the joyful energy that kept them going. To attempt to convey this hardihood of spirit one must use language a little stiff, a little formal, one must not be afraid of the old trite phraseology of the frontier. Some of those time-worn phrases I used as the note from the piano by which the violinist tunes his instrument. Not that there was much difficulty in keeping the pitch. I did not sit down to write the book until the feeling of it had so teased me that I could not get on with other things. The writing of it took only a few months, because the book had all been lived many times before it was written, and the happy mood in which I began never paled. It was like going back and playing the early composers after a surfeit of modern music.' Cather, 'A Letter from Willa Cather,' *The Commonweal*, VII,iii,714. The selection, here printed in the revised version of the 'Autograph Edition,' is Book II of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (N.Y., 1927).

dian pueblo of Santo Domingo to hold service. There was a fine old mission church at Santo Domingo, but the Indians were of a haughty and suspicious disposition. He had said Mass there on his way to Albuquerque, nearly a week ago. By dint of canvassing from house to house, and offering medals and religious colour prints to all who came to church, he had got together a considerable congregation. It was a large and prosperous pueblo, set among clean sand-hills, with its rich irrigated farm-lands lying just below, in the valley of the Rio Grande. His congregation was quiet, dignified, attentive. They sat on the earth floor, wrapped in their best blankets, repose in every line of their strong, stubborn backs. He harangued them in such Spanish as he could command, and they listened with respect. But bring their children to be baptized, they would not. The Spaniards had treated them very badly long ago, and they had been meditating upon their grievance for many generations. Father Vaillant had not baptized one infant there, but he meant to stop to-morrow and try again. Then back to his Bishop, provided he could get his horse up La Bajada Hill.

He had bought his horse from a Yankee trader and had been woefully deceived. One week's journey of from twenty to thirty miles a day had shown the beast up for a wind-broken wreck. Father Vaillant's mind was full of material cares as he approached Manuel Lujon's place beyond Bernalillo. The *rancho* was like a little town, with all its stables, corrals, and stake fences. The *casa grande* was long and low, with glass windows and bright blue doors, a *portale* running its full length, supported by blue posts. Under this *portale* the adobe wall was hung with bridles, saddles, great boots and spurs, guns and saddle-blankets, strings of red peppers, foxskins, and the skins of two great rattlesnakes.

When Father Vaillant rode in through the gateway, children came running from every direction, some with no clothing but a little shirt, and women with no shawls over their black hair came running after the children. They all disappeared when Manuel Lujon walked out of the great house, hat in hand, smiling and hospitable. He was a man of thirty-five, settled in figure and somewhat full under the chin. He greeted the priest in the name of God and put out a hand to help him alight, but Father Vaillant sprang quickly to the ground.

'God be with you, Manuel, and with your house. But where are those who are to be married?'

'The men are all in the field, Padre. There is no hurry. A little wine, a little bread, coffee, repose—and then the ceremonies.'

'A little wine, very willingly, and bread, too. But not until afterward. I meant to catch you all at dinner, but I am two hours late because my horse is bad. Have someone bring in my saddle-bags, and I will put on my vestments. Send out to the fields for your men, Señor Lujon. A man can stop work to be married.'

The swarthy host was dazed by this dispatch. 'But one moment, Padre. There are all the children to baptize; why not begin with them, if I cannot persuade you to wash the dust from your sainted brow and repose a little.'

'Take me to a place where I can wash and change my clothes, and I will be ready before you can get them here. No, I tell you, Lujon, the marriages first, the baptisms afterward; that order is but Christian. I will baptize the children to-morrow morning, and their parents will at least have been married overnight.'

Father Joseph was conducted to his chamber, and the older boys were sent running off across the fields to fetch the men. Lujon and his two daughters began constructing an altar at one end of the *sala*. Two old women came to scrub the floor, and another brought chairs and stools.

'My God, but he is ugly, the Padre!' whispered one of these to the others. 'He must be very holy. And did you see the great wart he has on his chin? My grandmother could take that away for him if she were alive, poor soul! Somebody ought to tell him about the holy mud at Chimayo. That mud might dry it up. But there is nobody left now who can take warts away.'

'No, the times are not so good any more,' the other agreed. 'And I doubt if all this marrying will make them any better. Of what use is it to marry people after they have lived together and had children? and the man is maybe thinking about another woman, like Pablo. I saw him coming out of

the brush with that oldest girl of Trinidad's, only Sunday night.'

The reappearance of the priest upon the scene cut short further scandal. He knelt down before the improvised altar and began his private devotions. The women tiptoed away. Señor Lujon himself went out toward the servants' quarters to hurry the candidates for the marriage sacrament. The women were giggling and snatching up their best shawls. Some of the men had even washed their hands. The household crowded into the *sala*, and Father Vaillant married couples with great dispatch.

'To-morrow morning, the baptisms,' he announced. 'And the mothers see to it that the children are clean, and that there are sponsors for all.'

After he had resumed his travelling-clothes, Father Joseph asked his host at what hour he dined, remarking that he had been fasting since an early breakfast.

'We eat when it is ready—a little after sunset, usually. I have had a young lamb killed for your Reverence.'

Father Joseph kindled with interest. 'Ah, and how will it be cooked?'

Señor Lujon shrugged. 'Cooked? Why, they put it in a pot with chili, and some onions, I suppose.'

'Ah, that is the point. I have had too much stewed mutton. Will you permit me to go into the kitchen and cook my portion in my own way?'

Lujon waved his hand. 'My house is yours, Padre. Into the kitchen I never go—too many women. But there it is, and the woman in charge is named Rosa.'

When the Father entered the kitchen, he found a crowd of women discussing the marriages. They quickly dispersed, leaving old Rosa by her fireplace, where hung a kettle from which issued the savour of cooking mutton fat, all too familiar to Father Joseph. He found a half sheep hanging outside the door, covered with a bloody sack, and asked Rosa to heat the oven for him, announcing that he meant to roast the hind leg.

'But, Padre, I baked before the marriages. The oven is almost cold. It will take an hour to heat it, and it is only two hours till supper.'

'Very well. I can cook my roast in an hour.'

'Cook a roast in an hour!' cried the old woman. 'Mother of God, Padre, the blood will not be dried in it!'

'Not if I can help it!' said Father Joseph fiercely. 'Now hurry with the fire, my good woman.'

When the Padre carved his roast at the supper-table, the serving-girls stood behind his chair and looked with horror at the delicate stream of pink juice that followed the knife. Manuel Lujon took a slice for politeness, but he did not eat it. Father Vaillant had his *gigot* to himself.

All the men and boys sat down at the long table with the host, the women and children would eat later. Father Joseph and Lujon, at one end, had a bottle of white Bordeaux between them. It had been brought from Mexico City on mule-back, Lujon said. They were discussing the road back to Santa Fé, and when the missionary remarked that he would stop at Santo Domingo, the host asked him why he did not get a horse there. 'I am afraid you will hardly get back to Santa Fé on your own. The pueblo is famous for breeding good horses. You might make a trade.'

'No,' said Father Vaillant. 'Those Indians are of a sullen disposition. If I were to have dealings with them, they would suspect my motives. If we are to save their souls, we must make it clear that we want no profit for ourselves, as I told Father Gallegos in Albuquerque.'

Manuel Lujon laughed and glanced down the table at his men, who were all showing their white teeth. 'You said that to the Padre at Albuquerque? You have courage. He is a rich man, Padre Gallegos. All the same, I respect him. I have played poker with him. He is a great gambler and takes his losses like a man. He stops at nothing, plays like an American.'

'And I,' retorted Father Joseph, 'I have not much respect for a priest who either plays cards or manages to get rich.'

'Then you do not play?' asked Lujon. 'I am disappointed. I had hoped we could have a game after supper. The evenings are dull enough here. You do not even play dominoes?'

'Ah, that is another matter!' Father Joseph declared. 'A game of dominoes, there by the fire, with coffee, or some of that excellent grape brandy you allowed

me to taste, that I would find refreshing. And tell me, Manuelito, where do you get that brandy? It is like a French liqueur.'

'It is well seasoned. It was made at Bernalillo in my grandfather's time. They make it there still, but it is not so good now.'

The next morning, after coffee, while the children were being got ready for baptism, the host took Father Vaillant through his corrals and stables to show him his stock.

He exhibited with peculiar pride two cream-coloured mules, stalled side by side. With his own hand he led them out of the stable, in order to display to advantage their handsome coats, not bluish-white, as with white horses, but a rich, deep ivory, that in shadow changed to fawn-colour. Their tails were clipped at the ends into the shape of bells.

'Their names,' said Lujon, 'are Contenta and Angelica, and they are as good as their names. It seems that God has given them intelligence. When I talk to them, they look up at me like Christians; they are very companionable. They are always ridden together and have a great affection for each other.'

Father Joseph took one by the halter and led it about. 'Ah, but they are rare creatures! I have never seen a mule or horse coloured like a young fawn before.' To his host's astonishment, the wiry little priest sprang upon Contenta's back with the agility of a grasshopper. The mule, too, was astonished. She shook herself violently, bolted toward the gate of the barnyard, and at the gate stopped suddenly. Since this did not throw her rider, she seemed satisfied, trotted back, and stood placidly beside Angelica.

'But you are a *caballero*, Father Vaillant!' Lujon exclaimed. 'I doubt if Father Gallegos would have kept his seat—though he is something of a hunter.'

'The saddle is to be my home in your country, Lujon. What an easy gait this mule has, and what a narrow back! I notice that especially. For a man with short legs, like me, it is a punishment to ride eight hours a day on a wide horse. And this I must do day after day. From here I go to Santa Fé, and, after a day in conference with the Bishop, I start for Mora.'

'For Mora?' exclaimed Lujon. 'Yes, that is far, and the roads are very bad. On your mare you will never do it. She will drop dead under you.' While he talked, the Father remained upon the mule's back, stroking her with his hand.

'Well, I have no other. God grant that she does not drop somewhere far from food and water. I can carry very little with me except my vestments and the sacred vessels.'

The Mexican had been growing more and more thoughtful, as if he were considering something profound and not altogether cheerful. Suddenly his brow cleared, and he turned to the priest with a radiant smile, quite boyish in its simplicity.

'Father Vaillant,' he burst out in a slightly oratorical manner, 'you have made my house right with Heaven, and you charge me very little. I will do something very nice for you; I will give you Contenta for a present, and I hope to be particularly remembered in your prayers.'

Springing to the ground, Father Vaillant threw his arms about his host. 'Manuelito!' he cried, 'for this darling mule I think I could almost pray you into Heaven!'

The Mexican laughed, too, and warmly returned the embrace. Arm-in-arm they went in to begin the baptisms.

The next morning, when Lujon went to call Father Vaillant for breakfast, he found him in the barnyard, leading the two mules about and smoothing their fawn-coloured flanks, but his face was not the cheerful countenance of yesterday.

'Manuel,' he said at once, 'I cannot accept your present. I have thought upon it overnight, and I see that I cannot. The Bishop works as hard as I do, and his horse is little better than mine. You know he lost everything on his way out here, in a shipwreck at Galveston—among the rest a fine wagon he had had built for travel on these plains. I could not go about on a mule like this when my Bishop rides a common hack. It would be inappropriate. I must ride away on my old mare.'

'Yes, Padre?' Manuel looked troubled and somewhat aggrieved. Why should the Padre spoil everything? It had all been very pleasant yesterday, and he had felt like a prince of generosity. 'I doubt if she will make La Bajada Hill,' he said slowly, shaking his head. 'Look my horses over and take

the one that suits you. They are all better than yours.'

'No, no,' said Father Vaillant decidedly. 'Having seen these mules, I want nothing else. They are the colour of pearls, really! I will raise the price of marriages until I can buy this pair from you. A missionary must depend upon his mount for companionship in his lonely life. I want a mule that can look at me like a Christian, as you said of these.'

Señor Lujon sighed and looked about his barnyard as if he were trying to find some escape from this situation.

Father Joseph turned to him with vehemence. 'If I were a rich *ranchero*, like you, Manuel, I would do a splendid thing; I would furnish the two mounts that are to carry the Word of God about this heathen country, and then I would say to myself: *There go my Bishop and my Vicario, on my beautiful cream-coloured mules.*'

'So be it, Padre,' said Lujon with a mournful smile. 'But I ought to get a good many prayers. On my whole estate there is nothing I prize like those two. True, they might pine if they were parted for long. They have never been separated, and they have a great affection for each other. Mules, as you know, have strong affections. It is hard for me to give them up.'

'You will be all the happier for that, Manuelito,' Father Joseph cried heartily. 'Every time you think of these mules, you will feel pride in your good deed.'

Soon after breakfast Father Vaillant departed, riding Contenta, with Angelica trotting submissively behind, and from his gate Señor Lujon watched them disconsolately until they disappeared. He felt he had been worried out of his mules, and yet he bore no resentment. He did not doubt Father Joseph's devotedness, nor his singleness of purpose. After all, a Bishop was a Bishop, and a Vicar was a Vicar, and it was not to their discredit that they worked like a pair of common parish priests. He believed he would be proud of the fact that they rode Contenta and Angelica. Father Vaillant had forced his hand, but he was rather glad of it.

II

The Lonely Road to Mora

THE Bishop and his Vicar were riding through the rain in the Truchas Mountains. The heavy, lead-coloured drops were driven slantingly through the air by an icy wind from the peak. These raindrops, Father Latour kept thinking, were the shape of tadpoles, and they broke against his nose and cheeks, exploding with a splash, as if they were hollow and full of air. The priests were riding across high mountain meadows, which in a few weeks would be green, though just now they were slate-coloured. On every side lay ridges covered with blue-green fir trees; above them rose the horny backbones of mountains. The sky was very low; purplish lead-coloured clouds let down curtains of mist into the valleys between the pine ridges. There was not a glimmer of white light in the dark vapours working overhead—rather, they took on the cold green of the evergreens. Even the white mules, their coats wet and matted into tufts, had turned a slaty hue, and the faces of the two priests were purple and spotted in that singular light.

Father Latour rode first, sitting straight upon his mule, with his chin lowered just enough to keep the drive of rain out of his eyes. Father Vaillant followed, unable to see much—in weather like this his glasses were of no use, and he had taken them off. He crouched down in the saddle, his shoulders well over Contenta's neck. Father Joseph's sister, Philomène, who was Mother Superior of a convent in her native town in the Puy-de-Dôme, often tried to picture her brother and Bishop Latour on these long missionary journeys of which he wrote her; she imagined the scene and saw the two priests moving through it in their cassocks, bareheaded, like the pictures of Saint Francis Xavier with which she was familiar. The reality was less picturesque—but for all that, no one could have mistaken these two men for hunters or traders. They wore clerical collars about their necks instead of neckerchiefs, and on the breast of his buckskin jacket the Bishop's silver cross hung by a silver chain.

They were on their way to Mora, the third day out, and they did not know just how far they had still to go. Since morning they had not met a traveller or seen a human habitation. They believed they were on the right trail, for they had seen no other. The first night of their journey they had spent at Santa Cruz, lying in the warm,

wide valley of the Rio Grande, where the fields and gardens were already softly coloured with early spring. But since they had left the Española country behind them, they had contended first with wind and sand-storms, and now with cold. The Bishop was going to Mora to assist the Padre there in disposing of a crowd of refugees who filled his house. A new settlement in the Conejos Valley had lately been raided by Indians; many of the inhabitants were killed, and the survivors, who were originally from Mora, had managed to get back there, utterly destitute.

Before the travellers had crossed the mountain meadows, the rain turned to sleet. Their wet buckskins quickly froze, and the rattle of icy flakes struck them and bounded off. The prospect of a night in the open was not cheering. It was too wet to kindle a fire, their blankets would become soaked on the ground. As they were descending the mountain on the Mora side, the grey daylight seemed already beginning to fail, though it was only four o'clock.

Father Latour turned in his saddle and spoke over his shoulder.

'The mules are certainly very tired, Joseph. They ought to be fed.'

'Push on,' said Father Vaillant. 'We will come to shelter of some kind before night sets in.' The Vicar had been praying steadfastly while they crossed the meadows, and he felt confident that Saint Joseph would not turn a deaf ear.

Before the hour was done, they did indeed come upon a wretched adobe house, so poor and mean that they might not have seen it had it not lain close beside the trail, on the edge of a steep ravine. The stable looked more habitable than the house, and the priests thought perhaps they could spend the night in it.

As they rode up to the door, a man came out, bareheaded, and they saw to their surprise that he was not a Mexican, but an American, of a very unprepossessing type. He spoke to them in some drawling dialect they could scarcely understand and asked if they wanted to stay the night. During the few words they exchanged with him, Father Latour felt a growing reluctance to remain even for a few hours under the roof of this ugly, evil-looking fellow. He was tall, gaunt, and ill-formed, with a snake-like neck, terminating in a small, bony head. Under his close-clipped hair this repellent head showed a number of thick ridges, as if the skull joinings were overgrown by layers of superfluous bone. With its small, rudimentary ears, this head had a positively malignant look. The man seemed not more than half human, but he was the only householder on the lonely road to Mora.

The priests dismounted and asked him whether he could put their mules under shelter and give them grain feed.

'As soon as I git my coat on I will. You kin come in.'

They followed him into a room where a piñon fire blazed in the corner, and went toward it to warm their stiffened hands. Their host made an angry, snarling sound in the direction of the partition, and a woman came out of the next room. She was a Mexican.

Father Latour and Father Vaillant addressed her courteously in Spanish, greeting her in the name of the Holy Mother, as was customary. She did not open her lips, but stared at them blankly for a moment, then dropped her eyes and cowered as if she were terribly frightened. The priests looked at each other; it struck them both that this man had been abusing her in some way. Suddenly he turned on her.

'Clear off them cheers fur the strangers. They won't eat ye, if they air priests.'

She began distractedly snatching rags and wet socks and dirty clothes from the chairs. Her hands were shaking so that she dropped things. She was not old, she might have been very young, but she was probably half-witted. There was nothing in her face but blankness and fear.

Her husband put on his coat and boots, went to the door, and stopped with his hand on the latch, throwing over his shoulder a crafty, hateful glance at the bewildered woman.

'Here, you! Come right along, I'll need ye!'

She took her black shawl from a peg and followed him. Just at the door she turned and caught the eyes of the visitors, who were looking after her in compassion and perplexity. Instantly that stupid face became intense, prophetic, full of awful meaning. With her finger she pointed them away, away!—two quick thrusts into the air.

Then, with a look of horror beyond anything language could convey, she threw back her head and drew the edge of her palm quickly across her distended throat—and vanished. The doorway was empty; the two priests stood staring at it, speechless. That flash of electric passion had been so swift, the warning it communicated so vivid and definite, that they were struck dumb.

Father Joseph was the first to find his tongue.

'There is no doubt of her meaning. Your pistol is loaded, Jean?'

'Yes, but I neglected to keep it dry. No matter.'

They hurried out of the house. It was still light enough to see the stable through the grey drive of rain, and they went toward it.

'Señor American,' the Bishop called, 'will you be good enough to bring out our mules?'

The man came out of the stable. 'What do you want?'

'Our mules. We have changed our minds. We will push on to Mora. And here is a dollar for your trouble.'

The man took a threatening attitude. As he looked from one to the other his head played from side to side exactly like a snake's. 'What's the matter? My house ain't good enough for ye?'

'No explanation is necessary. Go into the barn and get the mules, Father Joseph.'

'You dare go into my stable, you—— priest!'

The Bishop drew his pistol. 'No profanity, Señor. We want nothing from you but to get away from your uncivil tongue. Stand where you are.'

The man was unarmed. Father Joseph came out with the mules, which had not been unsaddled. The poor things were each munching a mouthful, but they needed no urging to be gone; they did not like this place. The moment they felt their riders on their backs they trotted quickly along the road, which dropped immediately into the arroyo. While they were descending, Father Joseph remarked that the man would certainly have a gun in the house, and that he had no wish to be shot in the back.

'Nor I. But it is growing too dark for that, unless he should follow us on horseback,' said the Bishop. 'Were there horses in the stable?'

'Only a burro.'

Father Vaillant was relying upon the protection of Saint Joseph, whose office he had fervently said that morning. The warning given them by that poor woman, with such scant opportunity, seemed evidence that some protecting power was mindful of them.

By the time they had ascended the far side of the arroyo, night had closed down and the rain was pouring harder than ever.

'I am by no means sure that we can keep in the road,' said the Bishop. 'But at least I am sure we are not being followed. We must trust to these intelligent beasts. Poor woman! He will suspect her and abuse her, I am afraid.' He kept seeing her in the darkness as he rode on, her face in the firelight, and her terrible pantomime.

They reached the town of Mora a little after midnight. The Padre's house was full of refugees, and two of them were put out of a bed in order that the Bishop and his Vicar could get into it.

In the morning a boy came from the stable and reported that he had found a crazy woman lying in the straw, and that she begged to see the two Padres who owned the white mules. She was brought in, her clothing cut to rags, her legs and face and even her hair so plastered with mud that the priests could scarcely recognize the woman who had saved their lives the night before.

She said she had never gone back to the house at all. When the two priests rode away, her husband had run to the house to get his gun, and she had plunged down a washout behind the stable into the arroyo, and had been on the way to Mora all night. She had supposed he would overtake her and kill her, but he had not. She reached the settlement before daybreak, and crept into the stable to warm herself among the animals and wait until the household was awake. Kneeling before the Bishop, she began to relate such horrible things that he stopped her and turned to the native priest.

'This is a case for the civil authorities. Is there a magistrate here?'

There was no magistrate, but there was a retired fur trapper who acted as notary and could take evidence. He was sent for, and in the interval Father Latour instructed the refugee women from Conejos to bathe this

poor creature and put decent clothes on her, and to care for the cuts and scratches on her legs.

An hour later the woman, whose name was Magdalena, calmed by food and kindness, was ready to tell her story. The notary had brought along his friend, Saint Vrain, a Canadian trapper who understood Spanish better than he. The woman was known to Saint Vrain, moreover, who confirmed her statement that she was born Magdalena Valdez, at Los Ranchos de Taos, and that she was twenty-four years old. Her husband, Buck Scales, had drifted into Taos with a party of hunters from somewhere in Wyoming. All white men knew him for a dog and a degenerate—but to Mexican girls, marriage with an American meant coming up in the world. She had married him six years ago, and had been living with him ever since in that wretched house on the Mora trail. During that time he had robbed and murdered four travellers who had stopped there for the night. They were all strangers, not known in the country. She had forgot their names, but one was a German boy who spoke very little Spanish and little English; a nice boy with blue eyes, and she had grieved for him more than for the others. They were all buried in the sandy soil behind the stable. She was always afraid their bodies might wash out in a storm. Their horses Buck had ridden off by night and sold to Indians somewhere in the north. Magdalena had borne three children since her marriage, and her husband had killed each of them a few days after birth, by ways so horrible that she could not relate it. After he killed the first baby, she ran away from him, back to her parents at Ranchos. He came after her and made her go home with him by threatening harm to the old people. She was afraid to go anywhere for help, but twice before she had managed to warn travellers away, when her husband happened to be out of the house. This time she had found courage because, when she looked into the faces of these two Padres, she knew they were good men, and she thought if she ran after them they could save her. She could not bear any more killing. She asked nothing better than to die herself, if only she could hide near a church and a priest for a while, to make her soul right with God.

Saint Vrain and his friend got together a search-party at once. They rode out to Scales's place and found the remains of four men buried under the corral behind the stable, as the woman had said. Scales himself they captured on the road from Taos, where he had gone to look for his wife. They brought him back to Mora, but Saint Vrain rode on to Taos to fetch a magistrate.

There was no *calabozo* in Mora, so Scales was put into an empty stable, under guard. This stable was soon surrounded by a crowd of people, who loitered to hear the blood-curdling threats the prisoner shouted against his wife. Magdalena was kept in the Padre's house, where she lay on a mat in the corner, begging Father Latour to take her back to Santa Fé, so that her husband could not get at her. Though Scales was bound, the Bishop felt alarmed for her safety. He and the American notary, who had a pistol of the new revolver model, sat in the *sala* and kept watch over her all night.

In the morning the magistrate and his party arrived from Taos. The notary told him the facts of the case in the plaza, where everyone could hear. The Bishop enquired whether there was any place for Magdalena in Taos, as she could not stay on here in such a state of terror. A man dressed in buckskin hunting-clothes stepped out of the crowd and asked to see Magdalena. Father Latour conducted him into the room where she lay on her mat. The stranger went up to her, removing his hat. He bent down and put his hand on her shoulder. Although he was clearly an American, he spoke Spanish in the native manner.

'Magdalena, don't you remember me?'

She looked up at him as out of a dark well; something became alive in her deep, haunted eyes. She caught with both hands at his fringed buckskin knees.

'Cristobal!' she wailed. 'Oh, Cristobal!'

'I'll take you home with me, Magdalena, and you can stay with my wife. You wouldn't be afraid in my house, would you?'

'No, no, Cristobal, I would not be afraid with you. I am not a wicked woman.'

He smoothed her hair. 'You're a good girl, Magdalena—always were. It will be all right. Just leave things to me.'

Then he turned to the Bishop. 'Señor

Vicario, she can come to me. I live near Taos. My wife is a native woman, and she'll be good to her. That varmint won't come about my place, even if he breaks jail. He knows me. My name is Carson.'

Father Latour had looked forward to meeting the scout. He had supposed him to be a very large man, of powerful body and commanding presence. This Carson was not so tall as the Bishop himself, was very slight in frame, modest in manner, and he spoke English with a soft Southern drawl. His face was both thoughtful and alert; anxiety had drawn a permanent ridge between his blue eyes. Under his blond moustache his mouth had a singular refinement. The lips were full and delicately modelled. There was something curiously unconscious about his mouth, reflective, a little melancholy—and something that suggested a capacity for tenderness.

The Bishop felt a quick glow of pleasure in looking at the man. As he stood there in his buckskin clothes one felt in him standards, loyalties, a code which is not easily put into words, but which is instantly felt when two men who live by it come together by chance. He took the scout's hand.

'I have long wanted to meet Kit Carson,' he said, 'even before I came to New Mexico. I have been hoping you would pay me a visit at Santa Fé.'

The other smiled. 'I'm right shy, sir, and I'm always afraid of being disappointed. But I guess it will be all right from now on.'

This was the beginning of a long friendship.

On their ride back to Carson's ranch, Magdalena was put in Father Vaillant's care, and the Bishop and the scout rode together. Carson said he had become a Catholic merely as a matter of form, as Americans usually did when they married a Mexican girl. His wife was a good woman and very devout; but religion had seemed to him pretty much a woman's affair until his last trip to California. He had been sick out there, and the Fathers at one of the missions took care of him

'I began to see things different, and thought I might some day be a Catholic in earnest. I was brought up to think priests were rascals, and that the nuns were bad women—all the stuff they talk back in Missouri. A good many of the native priests here bear out that story. Our Padre Martínez at Taos is an old scapegrace, if ever there was one; he's got children and grandchildren in almost every settlement around here. And Padre Lucero at Arroyo Hondo is a miser, takes everything a poor man's got to give him a Christian burial.'

The Bishop discussed the needs of his people at length with Carson. He felt great confidence in his judgment. The two men were about the same age, both a little over forty, and both had been sobered and sharpened by wide experience. Carson had been guide in world-renowned explorations, but he was still almost as poor as in the days when he was a beaver trapper. He lived in a little adobe house with his Mexican wife. The great country of desert and mountain ranges between Santa Fé and the Pacific coast was not yet mapped or charted; the most reliable map of it was in Kit Carson's brain. This Missourian, whose eye was so quick to read a landscape or a human face, could not read a printed page. He could at that time barely write his own name. Yet one felt in him a quick and discriminating intelligence. That he was illiterate was an accident; he had got ahead of books, gone where the printing-press could not follow him. Out of the hardships of his boyhood—from fourteen to twenty picking up a bare living as cook or mule-driver for wagon trains, often in the service of brutal and desperate characters—he had preserved a clean sense of honour and a compassionate heart. In talking to the Bishop of poor Magdalena he said sadly: 'I used to see her in Taos when she was such a pretty girl. Ain't it a pity?'

The degenerate murderer, Buck Scales, was hanged after a short trial. Early in April the Bishop left Santa Fé on horseback and rode to St. Louis, on his way to attend the Provincial Council at Baltimore. When he returned in September, he brought back with him five courageous nuns, Sisters of Loretto, to found a school for girls in letterless Santa Fé. He sent at once for Magdalena and took her into the service of the Sisters. She became housekeeper and manager of the Sisters' kitchen. She was devoted to the nuns, and so happy in the service of the Church that when the Bishop

visited the school he used to enter by the kitchen-garden in order to see her serene and handsome face. For she became beautiful, as Carson said she had been as a girl. After the blight of her horrible youth was over, she seemed to bloom again in the household of God.

1926

OLE RÖLVAAG

1876–1931

FROM GIANTS IN THE EARTH

STRANGELY STILL THE DAYS [1]

I

DURING the first days of October a few white, downy snowflakes hung quivering in the air . . . floated about . . . fell in great oscillating circles. They seemed headed for nowhere; they followed no common course; but finally they reached the ground and disappeared.

The air cleared again. There came a drowsy, sun-filled interval . . . nothing but golden haze . . . quite bereft of all life. . . .

The sun had no strength these days. It peeped out in the morning, glided across the sky as before, yet life it had not until toward evening, as it was nearing the western rim of the prairie. Then it awoke, grew big and blushing, took on a splendour which forced everyone to stop and look; the western sky foamed and flooded with a wanton richness of colour, which ran up in streams to meet the coming night. Folks would walk about in the evenings speaking in low tones. . . . Never in their lives had they seen such sunsets! . . .

. . . Day after day the same . . . evening after evening. Strangely still the days . . . the evenings more mysteriously quiet. How could one lift one's voice against such silence! . . .

Then one morning—October was nearly passed—the sun could not get his eye open at all; the heavens rested close above the plain, grey, dense, and still. The chill of this greyness drove through the air though no wind stirred. People went indoors to put on more clothes, came out again, but froze worse than ever. . . . Bleak, grey, God-forsaken, the empty desolation stretched on every hand. . . .

Sometime in the afternoon snowflakes began to fall. They came sailing down from the north until the air was a close-packed swarm of greyish-white specks, all bound in the same direction. The evening was short-lived that day, and died in a pitch-black night that weighed down the heart. . . .

. . . Again day came, and brought no other light than that which the greyish-white specks gave. . . . All that day the snow fell—all the next night. . . .

At last it grew light once more—but the day had no sun. A cold wind howled about the huts—left them, and tore down into the white snow blanket, shaking out of it blinding swirls. . . . The swirls vanished and reappeared—died down, flared up again and tore on. . . . New ones constantly rose . . . many. . . .

II

Per Hansa and his boys worked like firebrands during the last days before winter set in. Every task that came to their hands delighted them; they went from one fairy tale into the next—came out again, and there was a new one at hand; they gave themselves no peace, either by night or by day. . . . But Beret could not share their mood; she would watch them absently as they left the house; or when they were due to return, she would wander about with And-Ongen on her arm, looking for them through the window, and keeping a hot dish in readiness on the stove. They were sure to be cold, poor fellows! . . . Then when they were seated around the table, wrapped up in all their remarkable experiences, the talk would jump from one incident to another, and she would find herself unable to follow it. Their liveliness and loud laughter only drove her heavy thoughts into a still deeper darkness.

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *Giants in the Earth*(N.Y., 1927),197–208. Book I of the novel, prior to its translation into English, appeared as *I De Dage*(Oslo, Norway, 1924).

She had to admit, however, that Per Hansa could accomplish the most marvellous things; she could not imagine where he had learned it all. . . . There were the walls, for example, of which he himself was especially proud, and which Store-Hans never tired of admiring. He had begun work on these walls immediately after he had returned from the trip east to the Hallings' with the potatoes. The lime had been mixed according to directions, and spread over the walls—three coats of it, no less; now the sod hut shone so brightly inside that it dazzled the eyes. . . . Before the snow came, Beret thought it delightful to have such walls; but after there was nothing but whiteness outside—pure whiteness as far as the eye could see and the thought could reach—she regretted that he had touched them. Her eyes were blinded wherever she looked, either outdoors or indoors; the black-brown earthen floor was the only object on which she could rest them comfortably; and so she always looked down now, as she sat in the house. But hint at it, and thus ruin his pleasure, she could not. . . . And it really didn't matter much to her; she would endure it for the brief time that remained! . . .

She was thankful enough, though, for all the fine fish that he had brought home. Per Hansa had taken both boys with him on the great expedition east to the Sioux River; there they had made a tremendous catch with the help of the net, and Per Hansa had talked with the Trönders about many extraordinary things, and had gained much valuable information. . . . Heaps of frozen fish now lay outside all along the wall; Per Hansa explained to her what a God-send it was that the snow finally had come. Hm! Good Heavens! If it hadn't come soon he would have been obliged to go out and get it! Now he was spared that trouble; with the aid of the snowdrifts they could have fresh fish through the whole winter. . . . 'Hey, woman!' he said with a laugh, whenever she complained of how desolate it was since the snow had come. 'Can't you understand that we could never manage things without the snow? . . . Hey, wife—white and fine, both outdoors and indoors! . . . Wonder if something couldn't be done to the floor, too?'. . .

Now it came to light what had been working in Per Hansa's mind when he had bought all that salt; he salted down quantities of the fish, and packed them away in all the vessels they could spare.

But in the opinion of the boys, the duck hunt with the net was the crowning adventure. Never had there been such an enthusiastic party; the father was almost the worst of the three! Now the great secret of his planning and scheming over the ducks was revealed. While Store-Hans and his brother had only talked about capturing them and wondered what could be done, Per Hansa had figured out every detail in his mind; if the ducks got the best of him on one tack, he would fool them on another; into the net somehow they must go! . . . For three nights they had all stayed out in the swamps to the westward, toiling and fighting among the myriads of birds; in the morning they would come home after daylight, wet as crows, numb all over, and blue in the face with cold. But they always brought a catch! . . . As soon as the evening came they would be off again.

Each time Beret pleaded sadly, both by word and glance, for them to stay at home. . . . They would wear themselves out this way. What could they possibly do with all these fowl? Just wait and see; they might not need so much food—something might happen. . . . The boys only laughed at these objections; their mother sounded just like Sofie; probably all women were alike—they had no sense. Just imagine such a ridiculous idea—catch no more birds! . . . The father joined in with them and poked mild fun at the mother. How silly it would be not to grab good food when it lay right at their door! Suppose the swamps were to freeze up to-night? And after they had picked the ducks, there would be fine feather beds for both herself and Little Per! . . . Per Hansa's voice softened. . . . And besides, there was no more delicate fare than those ducks on any king's table! . . .

But she would not be carried along. . . . 'We won't need them!' she said, dispiritedly . . . and fell into silence.

Dusk settled, the menfolk left—and she was alone with the child again.

But at last winter shut down in earnest; the swamps froze up and duck hunting came to an end for that year.

'I think we ought to carry some soup meat to our neighbours,' said Per Hansa. . . . 'This time it'll be something better than badger stew!'. . .

Every person in the little settlement had been rushed with work during the last days before Father Winter came. They all had a feeling that he wasn't very far away, that old fellow, and thought it best to be well prepared to receive him. Hans Olsa, Tönseten, and the Solum boys had been east to the Sioux River again for wood; they had made two trips, and home had seen very little of them lately. Few visits had been made; everyone had been busy with his own affairs. . . . For other reasons than this, visitors came but seldom to Per Hansa's now; there was something queer about the woman in that place; she said so little; at times people felt that they were unwelcome there. She was apt to break out suddenly with some remark that they could only wonder at; they hardly knew whether to be surprised or offended.

But on the day when the boys carried a gift of ducks to all the houses in the neighbourhood, proud of the dainty food they brought, and relating what sounded like a fairy tale, everyone went over to Per Hansa's to learn how he had gone about catching these birds. For Ole and Store-Hans wouldn't tell, though they plied them with questions. . . . The Solum boys came first, with Tönseten and Kjersti hard upon their heels; last of all came Hans Olsa and Sörine.

Once inside, they completely forgot their curiosity about the duck hunting; they stood with their mouths open, looking up one wall and down the next.

. . . Why . . . why . . . what in the wide world was this? Had they plastered *snow* on the walls? Sam thought it really was snow, and touched it gingerly with his finger. . . . What *was* it, anyway? Could it possibly be paint? . . . My stars, how fine it looked! . . . Per Hansa sat there, sucking his pipe and enjoying his little triumph; it seemed to him that he had never liked his neighbours so well as at this moment. . . . Beret went about listening quietly; in her face was a troubled expression. Not for all the world would she have had the work on the walls undone! . . .

Amazement was universal. . . . Sörine smiled in her pleasant, kindly way; she went over to Beret and said with warm sympathy:

'Now you certainly have got a fine house! . . . You'll thrive all the better for it.' . . . At that, she began to help her with the work. But Kjersti, with an emphatic slap on her thigh, voiced it as her opinion that it was a dirty shame that she and Sörrina had picked up such poor sticks for husbands! Why couldn't *they* ever hatch up some nice scheme? Why was Per Hansa the only man among them with his head on the right end? Yes, they certainly ought to feel ashamed of themselves, sitting there! . . . Tönseten took offence at this; he felt constrained to remind her that he was the fellow who had risen to the occasion and captured the Sognings! She'd better remember that; for what would have become of them all in the long run if the Sognings hadn't joined them? . . . 'And I don't exactly see what this new notion of Per Hansa's is really good for,' he spluttered on. 'It's getting to be so damned swell in here that pretty soon a fellow can't even *spit*!' . . . Tönseten looked accusingly at Beret; it was from her that Per Hansa got these stuck-up airs. She was never willing to be like plain folks, that woman! . . . The Solum boys took great delight in the white walls; this was really beautiful. When they got married they would do the very same thing!

Hans Olsa sucked his pipe and said but little. This seemed very queer to him; he turned it over and over in his mind, but couldn't solve the problem. Was this like Per Hansa, who had always confided everything to him? . . . But here he was going about doing everything alone! When he had learned how a black earthen wall could be made shining white at so small a cost, why hadn't he told the others? There was so little cheer out here; they all sorely needed to share whatever they found. . . . The big, rugged features were very sober; he had to look hard at Per Hansa. No, it was the same good-natured face that one liked so well to have near by! This affair was just one of his many pranks; the longer Hans Olsa gazed at his neighbour, the more plausible grew this solution inside that big head of his.

Awhile later, as the two men stood together outside the door, watching the falling snow, he said, quietly:

'You have made it pretty fine inside, Per Hansa; but He Who is now whitening the outside of your walls does fully as well. . . . You shouldn't be vain in your own strength, you know!'

'Oh, nonsense, Hans Olsa!' laughed Per Hansa. 'What are you prating about? . . . Here, take along a couple more ducks for Sörrina!' . . .

III

It was well enough that winter had come at last, thought Per Hansa; he really needed to lay off and rest awhile. After a good square meal of ducks or fresh fish, he would light his pipe and stretch himself, saying:

'Ha!—now we're really as well off here, my Beret-girl, as anybody could ever wish to be!' . . . He did not always expect an answer, and seldom got one. Then he would throw himself on the bed and take a good after-dinner nap, often sleeping continuously on into the night. . . . Life seemed very pleasant now!

In this fashion he spent quite a number of days; the bad weather still held out. Per Hansa continued to do full justice to the fare. When he had eaten his fill he would point out again to Beret how well off they were, and go to his couch to sleep the sleep of the righteous. It was almost uncanny—he could never seem to get sleep enough! He slept both day and night; and still he felt the need of more rest. . . . Now and then he would go to the door to look out at the weather, and glance across toward the neighbours. No . . . nothing to do outside—the weather was too beastly! He would come in again, and stretch himself, and yawn. . . .

The days wore on.

Yes, they wore on. . . . One exactly like the other. . . . Per Hansa couldn't grasp the strange contradiction that had begun to impress him; he knew that the days were actually growing shorter—were being shorn more closely by every passing night; but—weren't they growing longer?

Indeed they were—no question about it! They finally grew so long that he was at a dead loss to find something to do with which to end them. He assured himself that all this leisure was very fine; that he needed to ease up a bit; during the fall he hadn't spared himself; now it felt like a blessing to sit around and play the gentleman. Times would be strenuous enough for him once more, when spring came with fair weather and his great estate needed to be planted; he would just lay off and rest for a while yet! . . .

The days only grew longer and longer.

In the end, this enforced idleness began to gall him. The landscape showed a monotonous sameness . . . never the slightest change. . . . Grey sky—damp, icy cold. . . . Snow fell . . . snow flew. . . . He could only guess now where the huts of Hans Olsa lay. There wasn't a thing to do outdoors; plenty of wood lay chopped and ready for use; it took but a little while to do the chores. . . . Beyond this, everything took care of itself outside.

Per Hansa sat by the table, or lay down on the bed when he got tired of sitting up; tried to sleep as long as possible; woke up with a start; turned over and tried to sleep again; rose and sat by the table once more, when he grew weary of lying down.

The days wore on, and yet got nowhere. . . . Time had simply come to a standstill! He had never seen the like; this was worse than the deadest lay-up in Lofoten!

The boys were almost as badly off; they too sat restless and idle; and because they had nothing at all to occupy their minds they often came to blows, so that the father had to interfere. . . . But he was never very rough with them; poor boys, what else could they find for amusement? . . . The mother always reminded him of their books. . . . Yes, of course—certainly they must learn to read, the father said; no heathen were going to grow up in his house! He tried to be stern with them over this matter; but then . . . after all, boys were boys, he remembered!

At length he realized that this sort of life could not go on. He didn't give a hang for the weather—put on his coat and bade the boys do the same; then they went out and attacked the woodpile. They sawed and they chopped; they lugged in wood and piled it up; first they stacked up as much chopped wood as they could stow in the odd corners of the house; then they built a curious little fort of chopped wood out in the yard—very neatly and craftily constructed—and piled it full, too; this work cheered them up and kept their minds oc-

cupied, though the weather was bitterly cold and inclement. They toiled at it from early morning until late at night, and hardly took time off to eat their dinner; the boys began to get sick of the job and complained of being tired. The woodpile lasted exactly four days; when they had chopped up the last stick there was nothing left for them to do outside.

Then they sat idle again.

The bad spell of weather held out interminably. A cold, piercing wind from the northeast blew the livelong day, and moaned about the corners at night. . . . Snow flew . . . more snow fell.

No sun. . . . No sky. . . . The air was a grey, ashen mist which breathed a deathly chill; it hung around and above them thick and frozen. . . . In the course of time there was a full moon at night, somewhere behind the veil. Then the mist grew luminous and alive—strange to behold. . . . Night after night the ghostly spectacle would return.

Per Hansa would gaze at it and think: Now the trolls are surely abroad! . . . .

One evening Tönseten and Kjersti came over. They sat and talked until it grew very late. One could readily see that Syvert was out of sorts about something; he puffed at his pipe in glum, ill humor, glared at Per Hansa's walls, and didn't have much to say. When he did speak his voice was unnecessarily loud.

Kjersti and Beret sat together on the bed; they seemed to be finding a good deal to chat about.

Kjersti was in an unusually neighbourly mood; she had come over to ask if . . . well, if she couldn't do something for Beret? She had some woollen yarn at home in her chest, very soft and very fine. Would Beret be offended if she knitted a pair of socks for the little newcomer they were all awaiting? . . . It was fine yarn, the very finest! Beret must just try to imagine how lonesome she was, sitting at home all alone with that useless husband of hers—and no little newcomer to wait for! . . . She had plenty of yarn; she could easily make the socks long enough to serve as leggings, too. The work would really bring joy to her—and to Syvert, too, poor fellow, to whom no little newcomer would ever arrive!

. . . Ah, well! . . . God pity us, Syvert wasn't so bad, after all—far be it from her to complain! . . . At that, Kjersti happened to think of a story she had heard, about a couple who couldn't seem to get a child though they wanted one very badly. Here the story was, since they happened to be talking about such matters. . . . This wife had so little sense that she sought the aid of a witch woman, who gave her both *devil's drink* and *beaver-geld*; she rubbed herself with the stuff and drank some of it, too, but no change came; that is, not until one summer when a shoal of herring came into the fjord and with it a fleet of strange fishermen. . . . Alas! desire makes a hot fire, once it has been kindled! But what do you suppose?—her husband became just as fond of that child as if he had been the father of it! . . . Wasn't that a queer thing? . . . But when the boy was a year old and was on the point of being christened —well, on that very Sunday it happened, as they were sailing across the fjord, that the boat capsized and the Lord took both mother and child, right there and then! He had taken away what he had refused to give in honour, and more besides. . . . There was something mysterious about such things, didn't Beret think so? And wasn't it strange that the father should have been so fond of *that* child? . . . Kjersti had known them both very well.

Beret listened attentively to this tale, putting in a word here and there.

Over at the table, the men had pricked up their ears as the story began; they heard it all. Per Hansa looked at Syvert and laughed; Syvert, in turn, glared at the wall and said, angrily:

'I should think you'd be able to find something American to talk about! . . . We're through now with all that troll business over in Norway!' . . . He got up and started to go. . . .

But Per Hansa wouldn't listen to their leaving just yet; since they had braved the weather to make a call they might as well sit awhile longer. . . . 'You'll have the wind astern, Syvert, going home! . . . Come on, sit down and behave yourself!'

On another afternoon all of Hans Olsa's household came over. They stayed till dark; then they began to say that perhaps they'd

better be going now—but they made no move to leave. . . . Sörine had brought a gift for Beret. There had been a few bits of cloth lying around the house, for which she could find no use; it had been rather lonesome these days and she had needed something to do, so she had made a little article for this newcomer whom everyone was waiting for! . . . At that, Sörine drew out from her ample bosom a child's cap, of red, white, and blue stripes, with long silk ribbons, all sewed with the greatest care. It was a beautiful cap; all had to see it; there were many warm words of praise. Beret received it in silence; her eyes were wet as she took the cap and laid it carefully in the big chest. . . .

To-night it was Beret who refused to let the visitors leave. She absolutely insisted. Such quantities of food lay outside around the house—far more than they would ever need—that they might as well stay for supper and help to eat it! . . . This proposal overjoyed Per Hansa. It was the plain truth, as Beret said, they had more than they needed—and there was plenty left in the Sioux River, for that matter; to-night they were going to celebrate with fresh fish for supper! . . . He went outside and brought in a generous supply of the frozen fish, which he scaled and cut up; he was in the finest of spirits—it seemed just like the good old days in Lofoten.

. . . That evening was a happy interlude for them all.

1923 1924, 1927

SINCLAIR LEWIS

1885–

FROM MAIN STREET

WELCOME TO OUR CITY! [1]

This is America—a town of a few thousand, in a region of wheat and corn and dairies and little groves.

The town is, in our tale, called 'Gopher Prairie, Minnesota.' But its Main Street is the continuation of Main Streets everywhere. The story would be the same in Ohio or Montana, in Kansas or Kentucky or Illinois, and not very differently would it be told Up York State or in the Carolina hills.

Main Street is the climax of civilization. That this Ford car might stand in front of the Bon Ton Store, Hannibal invaded Rome and Erasmus wrote in Oxford cloisters. What Ole Jenson the grocer says to Ezra Stowbody the banker is the new law for London, Prague, and the unprofitable isles of the sea; whatsoever Ezra does not know and sanction, that thing is heresy, worthless for knowing and wicked to consider.

Our railway station is the final aspiration of architecture. Sam Clark's annual hardware turnover is the envy of the four counties which constitute God's Country. In the sensitive art of the Rosebud Movie Palace there is a Message, and humor strictly moral.

Such is our comfortable tradition and sure faith. Would he not betray himself an alien cynic who should otherwise portray Main Street, or distress the citizens by speculating whether there may not be other faiths?

I

UNDER the rolling clouds of the prairie a moving mass of steel. An irritable clank and rattle beneath a prolonged roar. The sharp scent of oranges cutting the soggy smell of unbathed people and ancient baggage.

Towns as planless as a scattering of pasteboard boxes on an attic floor. The stretch of faded gold stubble broken only by clumps of willows encircling white houses and red barns.

No. 7, the way-train, grumbling through Minnesota, imperceptibly climbing the giant tableland that slopes in a thousand-mile rise from hot Mississippi bottoms to the Rockies.

It is September, hot, very dusty.

There is no smug Pullman attached to the train, and the day coaches of the East are replaced by free chair cars, with each seat cut into two adjustable plush chairs,

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *Main Street*(N.Y., 1920),foreword and 20–53.

the head-rests covered with doubtful linen towels. Halfway down the car is a semi-partition of carved oak columns, but the aisle is of bare, splintery, grease-blackened wood. There is no porter, no pillows, no provision for beds, but all today and all tonight they will ride in this long steel box—farmers with perpetually tired wives and children who seem all to be of the same age; workmen going to new jobs; traveling salesmen with derbies and freshly shined shoes.

They are parched and cramped, the lines of their hands filled with grime; they go to sleep curled in distorted attitudes, heads against the window-panes or propped on rolled coats on seat-arms, and legs thrust into the aisle. They do not read; apparently they do not think. They wait. An early-wrinkled, young-old mother, moving as though her joints were dry, opens a suitcase in which are seen creased blouses, a pair of slippers worn through at the toes, a bottle of patent medicine, a tin cup, a paper-covered book about dreams which the news-butcher has coaxed her into buying. She brings out a graham cracker which she feeds to a baby lying flat on a seat and wailing hopelessly. Most of the crumbs drop on the red plush of the seat, and the woman sighs and tries to brush them away, but they leap up impishly and fall back on the plush.

A soiled man and woman munch sandwiches and throw the crusts on the floor. A large brick-colored Norwegian takes off his shoes, grunts in relief, and props his feet in their thick gray socks against the seat in front of him.

An old woman whose toothless mouth shuts like a mud-turtle's, and whose hair is not so much white as yellow like moldy linen, with bands of pink skull apparent between the tresses, anxiously lifts her bag, opens it, peers in, closes it, puts it under the seat, and hastily picks it up and opens it and hides it all over again. The bag is full of treasures and of memories: a leather buckle, an ancient band-concert program, scraps of ribbon, lace, satin. In the aisle beside her is an extremely indignant parrakeet in a cage.

Two facing seats, overflowing with a Slovene iron-miner's family, are littered with shoes, dolls, whisky bottles, bundles wrapped in newspapers, a sewing bag. The oldest boy takes a mouth-organ out of his coat pocket, wipes the tobacco crumbs off, and plays 'Marching through Georgia' till every head in the car begins to ache.

The news-butcher comes through selling chocolate bars and lemon drops. A girl-child ceaselessly trots down to the water-cooler and back to her seat. The stiff paper envelope which she uses for cup drips in the aisle as she goes, and on each trip she stumbles over the feet of a carpenter, who grunts, 'Ouch! Look out!'

The dust-caked doors are open, and from the smoking-car drifts back a visible blue line of stinging tobacco smoke, and with it a crackle of laughter over the story which the young man in the bright blue suit and lavender tie and light yellow shoes has just told to the squat man in garage overalls.

The smell grows constantly thicker, more stale.

2

To each of the passengers his seat was his temporary home, and most of the passengers were slatternly housekeepers. But one seat looked clean and deceptively cool. In it were an obviously prosperous man and a black-haired, fine-skinned girl whose pumps rested on an immaculate horsehide bag.

They were Dr. Will Kennicott and his bride, Carol.

They had been married at the end of a year of conversational courtship, and they were on their way to Gopher Prairie after a wedding journey in the Colorado mountains.

The hordes of the way-train were not altogether new to Carol. She had seen them on trips from St. Paul to Chicago. But now that they had become her own people, to bathe and encourage and adorn, she had an acute and uncomfortable interest in them. They distressed her. They were so stolid. She had always maintained that there is no American peasantry, and she sought now to defend her faith by seeing imagination and enterprise in the young Swedish farmers, and in a traveling man working over his order-blanks. But the older people, Yankees as well as Norwegians, Germans, Finns, Canucks, had settled into submission to poverty. They were peasants, she groaned.

'Isn't there any way of waking them up?

What would happen if they understood scientific agriculture?' she begged of Kennicott, her hand groping for his.

It had been a transforming honeymoon. She had been frightened to discover how tumultuous a feeling could be roused in her. Will had been lordly—stalwart, jolly, impressively competent in making camp, tender and understanding through the hours when they had lain side by side in a tent pitched among pines high up on a lonely mountain spur.

His hand swallowed hers as he started from thoughts of the practise to which he was returning. 'These people? Wake 'em up? What for? They're happy.'

'But they're so provincial. No, that isn't what I mean. They're—oh, so sunk in the mud.'

'Look here, Carrie. You want to get over your city idea that because a man's pants aren't pressed, he's a fool. These farmers are mighty keen and up-and-coming.'

'I know! That's what hurts. Life seems so hard for them—these lonely farms and this gritty train.'

'Oh, they don't mind it. Besides, things are changing. The auto, the telephone, rural free delivery; they're bringing the farmers in closer touch with the town. Takes time, you know, to change a wilderness like this was fifty years ago. But already, why, they can hop into the Ford or the Overland and get into the movies on Saturday evening quicker than you could get down to 'em by trolley in St. Paul.'

'But if it's these towns we've been passing that the farmers run to for relief from their bleakness—Can't you understand? Just *look* at them!'

Kennicott was amazed. Ever since childhood he had seen these towns from trains on this same line. He grumbled, 'Why, what's the matter with 'em? Good hustling burgs. It would astonish you to know how much wheat and rye and corn and potatoes they ship in a year.'

'But they're so ugly.'

'I'll admit they aren't comfy like Gopher Prairie. But give 'em time.'

'What's the use of giving them time unless some one has desire and training enough to plan them? Hundreds of factories trying to make attractive motor cars, but these towns—left to chance. No! That can't be true. It must have taken genius to make them so scrawny!'

'Oh, they're not so bad,' was all he answered. He pretended that his hand was the cat and hers the mouse. For the first time she tolerated him rather than encouraged him. She was staring out at Schoenstrom, a hamlet of perhaps a hundred and fifty inhabitants, at which the train was stopping.

A bearded German and his puckermouthed wife tugged their enormous imitation-leather satchel from under a seat and waddled out. The station agent hoisted a dead calf aboard the baggage-car. There were no other visible activities in Schoenstrom. In the quiet of the halt, Carol could hear a horse kicking his stall, a carpenter shingling a roof.

The business-center of Schoenstrom took up one side of one block, facing the railroad. It was a row of one-story shops covered with galvanized iron, or with clapboards painted red and bilious yellow. The buildings were as ill-assorted, as temporary-looking, as a mining camp street in the motion-pictures. The railroad station was a one-room frame box, a mirey cattle-pen on one side and a crimson wheat-elevator on the other. The elevator, with its cupola on the ridge of a shingled roof, resembled a broad-shouldered man with a small, vicious, pointed head. The only habitable structures to be seen were the florid red-brick Catholic church and rectory at the end of Main Street.

Carol picked at Kennicott's sleeve. 'You wouldn't call this a not-so-bad town, would you?'

'These Dutch burgs *are* kind of slow. Still, at that—See that fellow coming out of the general store there, getting into the big car? I met him once. He owns about half the town, besides the store. Rauskukle, his name is. He owns a lot of mortgages, and he gambles in farm-lands. Good nut on him, that fellow. Why, they say he's worth three or four hundred thousand dollars! Got a dandy great big yellow brick house with tiled walks and a garden and everything, other end of town—can't see it from here—I've gone past it when I've driven through here. Yes sir!'

'Then, if he has all that, there's no excuse whatever for this place! If his three hundred thousand went back into the town, where it

belongs, they could burn up these shacks, and build a dream-village, a jewel! Why do the farmers and the townpeople let the Baron keep it?'

'I must say I don't quite get you sometimes, Carrie. Let him? They can't help themselves! He's a dumm old Dutchman, and probably the priest can twist him around his finger, but when it comes to picking good farming land, he's a regular wiz!'

'I see. He's their symbol of beauty. The town erects him, instead of erecting buildings.'

'Honestly, don't know what you're driving at. You're kind of played out, after this long trip. You'll feel better when you get home and have a good bath, and put on the blue negligee. That's some vampire costume, you witch!'

He squeezed her arm, looked at her knowingly.

They moved on from the desert stillness of the Schoenstrom station. The train creaked, banged, swayed. The air was nauseatingly thick. Kennicott turned her face from the window, rested her head on his shoulder. She was coaxed from her unhappy mood. But she came out of it unwillingly, and when Kennicott was satisfied that he had corrected all her worries and had opened a magazine of saffron detective stories, she sat upright.

Here—she meditated—is the newest empire of the world; the Northern Middlewest; a land of dairy herds and exquisite lakes, of new automobiles and tar-paper shanties and silos like red towers, of clumsy speech and a hope that is boundless. An empire which feeds a quarter of the world —yet its work is merely begun. They are pioneers, these sweaty wayfarers, for all their telephones and bank-accounts and automatic pianos and co-operative leagues. And for all its fat richness, theirs is a pioneer land. What is its future? she wondered. A future of cities and factory smut where now are loping empty fields? Homes universal and secure? Or placid châteaux ringed with sullen huts? Youth free to find knowledge and laughter? Willingness to sift the sanctified lies? Or creamy-skinned fat women, smeared with grease and chalk, gorgeous in the skins of beasts and the bloody feathers of slain birds, playing bridge with puffy pink-nailed jeweled fingers, women who after much expenditure of labor and bad temper still grotesquely resemble their own flatulent lap-dogs? The ancient stale inequalities, or something different in history, unlike the tedious maturity of other empires? What future and what hope?

Carol's head ached with the riddle.

She saw the prairie, flat in giant patches or rolling in long hummocks. The width and bigness of it, which had expanded her spirit an hour ago, began to frighten her. It spread out so; it went on so uncontrollably; she could never know it. Kennicott was closeted in his detective story. With the loneliness which comes most depressingly in the midst of many people she tried to forget problems, to look at the prairie objectively.

The grass beside the railroad had been burnt over; it was a smudge prickly with charred stalks of weeds. Beyond the undeviating barbed-wire fences were clumps of golden rod. Only this thin hedge shut them off from the plains—shorn wheatlands of autumn, a hundred acres to a field, prickly and gray near-by but in the blurred distance like tawny velvet stretched over dipping hillocks. The long rows of wheatshocks marched like soldiers in worn yellow tabards. The newly plowed fields were black banners fallen on the distant slope. It was a martial immensity, vigorous, a little harsh, unsoftened by kindly gardens.

The expanse was relieved by clumps of oaks with patches of short wild grass; and every mile or two was a chain of cobalt slews, with the flicker of blackbirds' wings across them.

All this working land was turned into exuberance by the light. The sunshine was dizzy on open stubble; shadows from immense cumulus clouds were forever sliding across low mounds; and the sky was wider and loftier and more resolutely blue than the sky of cities . . . she declared.

'It's a glorious country; a land to be big in,' she crooned.

Then Kennicott startled her by chuckling, 'D' you realize the town after the next is Gopher Prairie? Home!'

3

That one word—home—it terrified her. Had she really bound herself to live, ines-

capably, in this town called Gopher Prairie? And this thick man beside her, who dared to define her future, he was a stranger! She turned in her seat, stared at him. Who was he? Why was he sitting with her? He wasn't of her kind! His neck was heavy; his speech was heavy; he was twelve or thirteen years older than she; and about him was none of the magic of shared adventures and eagerness. She could not believe that she had ever slept in his arms. That was one of the dreams which you had but did not officially admit.

She told herself how good he was, how dependable and understanding. She touched his ear, smoothed the plane of his solid jaw, and, turning away again, concentrated upon liking his town. It wouldn't be like these barren settlements. It couldn't be! Why, it had three thousand population. That was a great many people. There would be six hundred houses or more. And—The lakes near it would be so lovely. She'd seen them in the photographs. They had looked charming . . . hadn't they?

As the train left Wahkeenyan she began nervously to watch for the lakes—the entrance to all her future life. But when she discovered them, to the left of the track, her only impression of them was that they resembled the photographs.

A mile from Gopher Prairie the track mounts a curving low ridge, and she could see the town as a whole. With a passionate jerk she pushed up the window, looked out, the arched fingers of her left hand trembling on the sill, her right hand at her breast.

And she saw that Gopher Prairie was merely an enlargement of all the hamlets which they had been passing. Only to the eyes of a Kennicott was it exceptional. The huddled low wooden houses broke the plains scarcely more than would a hazel thicket. The fields swept up to it, past it. It was unprotected and unprotecting; there was no dignity in it nor any hope of greatness. Only the tall red grain-elevator and a few tinny church-steeples rose from the mass. It was a frontier camp. It was not a place to live in, not possibly, not conceivably.

The people—they'd be as drab as their houses, as flat as their fields. She couldn't stay here. She would have to wrench loose from this man, and flee.

She peeped at him. She was at once helpless before his mature fixity, and touched by his excitement as he sent his magazine skittering along the aisle, stooped for their bags, came up with flushed face, and gloated, 'Here we are!'

She smiled loyally, and looked away. The train was entering town. The houses on the outskirts were dusky old red mansions with wooden frills, or gaunt frame shelters like grocery boxes, or new bungalows with concrete foundations imitating stone.

Now the train was passing the elevator, the grim storage-tanks for oil, a creamery, a lumber yard, a stock-yard muddy and trampled and stinking. Now they were stopping at a squat red frame station, the platform crowded with unshaven farmers and with loafers—unadventurous people with dead eyes. She was here. She could not go on. It was the end—the end of the world. She sat with closed eyes, longing to push past Kennicott, hide somewhere in the train, flee on toward the Pacific.

Something large arose in her soul and commanded, 'Stop it! Stop being a whining baby!' She stood up quickly; she said, 'Isn't it wonderful to be here at last!'

He trusted her so. She would make herself like the place. And she was going to do tremendous things—

She followed Kennicott and the bobbing ends of the two bags which he carried. They were held back by the slow line of disembarking passengers. She reminded herself that she was actually at the dramatic moment of the bride's home-coming. She ought to feel exalted. She felt nothing at all except irritation at their slow progress toward the door.

Kennicott stooped to peer through the windows. He shyly exulted:

'Look! Look! There's a bunch come down to welcome us! Sam Clark and the missus and Dave Dyer and Jack Elder, and, yes sir, Harry Haydock and Juanita, and a whole crowd! I guess they see us now. Yuh, yuh sure, they see us! See 'em waving!'

She obediently bent her head to look out at them. She had hold of herself. She was ready to love them. But she was embarrassed by the heartiness of the cheering group. From the vestibule she waved to them, but she clung a second to the sleeve of the brakeman who helped her down before she had the courage to dive into the

cataract of hand-shaking people, people whom she could not tell apart. She had the impression that all the men had coarse voices, large damp hands, toothbrush mustaches, bald spots, and Masonic watch-charms.

She knew that they were welcoming her. Their hands, their smiles, their shouts, their affectionate eyes overcame her. She stammered, 'Thank you, oh, thank you!'

One of the men was clamoring at Kennicott, 'I brought my machine down to take you home, doc.'

'Fine business, Sam!' cried Kennicott; and, to Carol, 'Let's jump in. That big Paige over there. Some boat, too, believe me! Sam can show speed to any of these Marmons from Minneapolis!'

Only when she was in the motor car did she distinguish the three people who were to accompany them. The owner, now at the wheel, was the essence of decent self-satisfaction; a baldish, largish, level-eyed man, rugged of neck but sleek and round of face —face like the back of a spoon bowl. He was chuckling at her, 'Have you got us all straight yet?'

'Course she has! Trust Carrie to get things straight and get 'em darn quick! I bet she could tell you every date in history!' boasted her husband.

But the man looked at her reassuringly and with a certainty that he was a person whom she could trust she confessed, 'As a matter of fact I haven't got anybody straight.'

'Course you haven't, child. Well, I'm Sam Clark, dealer in hardware, sporting goods, cream separators, and almost any kind of heavy junk you can think of. You can call me Sam—anyway, I'm going to call you Carrie, seein' 's you've been and gone and married this poor fish of a bum medic that we keep round here.' Carol smiled lavishly, and wished that she called people by their given names more easily. 'The fat cranky lady back there beside you, who is pretending that she can't hear me giving her away, is Mrs. Sam'l Clark; and this hungry-looking squirt up here beside me is Dave Dyer, who keeps his drug store running by not filling your hubby's prescriptions right—fact you might say he's the guy that put the "shun" in "prescription." So! Well, leave us take the bonny bride home. Say, doc, I'll sell you the Candersen place for three thousand plunks. Better be thinking about building a new home for Carrie. Prettiest *Frau* in G.P., if you asks me!'

Contentedly Sam Clark drove off, in the heavy traffic of three Fords and the Minniemashie House Free 'Bus.

'I shall like Mr. Clark . . . I *can't* call him "Sam"! They're all so friendly.' She glanced at the houses; tried not to see what she saw; gave way in: 'Why do these stories lie so? They always make the bride's homecoming a bower of roses. Complete trust in noble spouse. Lies about marriage. I'm *not* changed. And this town—O my God! I can't go through with it. This junk-heap!'

Her husband bent over her. 'You look like you were in a brown study. Scared? I don't expect you to think Gopher Prairie is a paradise, after St. Paul. I don't expect you to be crazy about it, at first. But you'll come to like it so much—life's so free here and best people on earth.'

She whispered to him (while Mrs. Clark considerately turned away), 'I love you for understanding. I'm just—I'm beastly oversensitive. Too many books. It's my lack of shoulder-muscles and sense. Give me time, dear.'

'You bet! All the time you want!'

She laid the back of his hand against her cheek, snuggled near him. She was ready for her new home.

Kennicott had told her that, with his widowed mother as housekeeper, he had occupied an old house, 'but nice and roomy, and well-heated, best furnace I could find on the market.' His mother had left Carol her love, and gone back to Lac-qui-Meurt.

It would be wonderful, she exulted, not to have to live in Other People's Houses, but to make her own shrine. She held his hand tightly and stared ahead as the car swung round a corner and stopped in the street before a prosaic frame house in a small parched lawn.

4

A concrete sidewalk with a 'parking' of grass and mud. A square smug brown house, rather damp. A narrow concrete walk up to it. Sickly yellow leaves in a windrow with dried wings of box-elder seed and snags of wool from the cotton

woods. A screened porch with pillars of thin painted pine surmounted by scrolls and brackets and bumps of jigsawed wood. No shrubbery to shut off the public gaze. A lugubrious bay-window to the right of the porch. Window curtains of starched cheap lace revealing a pink marble table with a conch shell and a Family Bible.

'You'll find it old-fashioned—what do you call it?—Mid-Victorian. I left it as is, so you could make any changes you felt were necessary.' Kennicott sounded doubtful for the first time since he had come back to his own.

'It's a real home!' She was moved by his humility. She gaily motioned good-by to the Clarks. He unlocked the door—he was leaving the choice of a maid to her, and there was no one in the house. She jiggled while he turned the key, and scampered in. . . . It was next day before either of them remembered that in their honeymoon camp they had planned that he should carry her over the sill.

In hallway and front parlor she was conscious of dinginess and lugubriousness and airlessness, but she insisted, 'I'll make it all jolly.' As she followed Kennicott and the bags up to their bedroom she quavered to herself the song of the fat little gods of the hearth:

> I have my own home,
> To do what I please with,
> To do what I please with,
> My den for me and my mate and my cubs,
> My own!

She was close in her husband's arms; she clung to him; whatever of strangeness and slowness and insularity she might find in him, none of that mattered so long as she could slip her hands beneath his coat, run her fingers over the warm smoothness of the satin back of his waistcoat, seem almost to creep into his body, find in him strength, find in the courage and kindness of her man a shelter from the perplexing world.

'Sweet, so sweet,' she whispered.

II

'The Clarks have invited some folks to their house to meet us, tonight,' said Kennicott, as he unpacked his suit-case.

'Oh, that is nice of them!'

'You bet. I told you you'd like 'em. Squarest people on earth. Uh, Carrie—Would you mind if I sneaked down to the office for an hour, just to see how things are?'

'Why, no. Of course not. I know you're keen to get back to work.'

'Sure you don't mind?'

'Not a bit. Out of my way. Let me unpack.'

But the advocate of freedom in marriage was as much disappointed as a drooping bride at the alacrity with which he took that freedom and escaped to the world of men's affairs. She gazed about their bedroom, and its full dismalness crawled over her: the awkward knuckly L-shape of it; the black walnut bed with apples and spotty pears carved on the headboard; the imitation maple bureau, with pink-daubed scent-bottles and a petticoated pin-cushion on a marble slab uncomfortably like a gravestone; the plain pine washstand and the garlanded waterpitcher and bowl. The scent was of horsehair and plush and Florida Water.

'How could people ever live with things like this?' she shuddered. She saw the furniture as a circle of elderly judges, condemning her to death by smothering. The tottering brocade chair squeaked, 'Choke her—choke her—smother her.' The old linen smelled of the tomb. She was alone in this house, this strange still house, among the shadows of dead thoughts and haunting repressions. 'I hate it! I hate it!' she panted. 'Why did I ever—'

She remembered that Kennicott's mother had brought these family relics from the old home in Lac-qui-Meurt. 'Stop it! They're perfectly comfortable things. They're—comfortable. Besides—Oh, they're horrible! We'll change them, right away.'

Then, 'But of course he *has* to see how things are at the office—'

She made a pretense of busying herself with unpacking. The chintz-lined, silver-fitted bag which had seemed so desirable a luxury in St. Paul was an extravagant vanity here. The daring black chemise of frail chiffon and lace was a hussy at which the deep-bosomed bed stiffened in disgust, and she hurled it into a bureau drawer, hid it beneath a sensible linen blouse.

She gave up unpacking. She went to the

window, with a purely literary thought of village charm—hollyhocks and lanes and apple-cheeked cottagers. What she saw was the side of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church—a plain clapboard wall of a sour liver color; the ash-pile back of the church; an unpainted stable; and an alley in which a Ford delivery-wagon had been stranded. This was the terraced garden below her boudoir; this was to be her scenery for—

'I mustn't! I mustn't! I'm nervous this afternoon. Am I sick? . . . Good Lord, I hope it isn't that! Not now! How people lie! How these stories lie! They say the bride is always so blushing and proud and happy when she finds that out, but—I'd hate it! I'd be scared to death! Some day but—Please, dear nebulous Lord, not now! Bearded sniffy old men sitting and demanding that we bear children. If *they* had to bear them—! I wish they did have to! Not now! Not till I've got hold of this job of liking the ash-pile out there! . . . I must shut up. I'm mildly insane. I'm going out for a walk. I'll see the town by myself. My first view of the empire I'm going to conquer!'

She fled from the house.

She stared with seriousness at every concrete crossing, every hitching-post, every rake for leaves; and to each house she devoted all her speculation. What would they come to mean? How would they look six months from now? In which of them would she be dining? Which of these people whom she passed, now mere arrangements of hair and clothes, would turn into intimates, loved or dreaded, different from all the other people in the world?

As she came into the small business-section she inspected a broad-beamed grocer in an alpaca coat who was bending over the apples and celery on a slanted platform in front of his store. Would she ever talk to him? What would he say if she stopped and stated, 'I am Mrs. Dr. Kennicott. Some day I hope to confide that a heap of extremely dubious pumpkins as a window-display doesn't exhilarate me much.'

(The grocer was Mr. Frederick F. Ludelmeyer, whose market is at the corner of Main Street and Lincoln Avenue. In supposing that only she was observant Carol was ignorant, misled by the indifference of cities. She fancied that she was slipping through the streets invisible; but when she had passed, Mr. Ludelmeyer puffed into the store and coughed at his clerk, 'I seen a young woman, she come along the side street. I bet she iss Doc Kennicott's new bride, good-looker, nice legs, but she wore a hell of a plain suit, no style, I wonder will she pay cash, I bet she goes to Howland & Gould's more as she does here, what you done with the poster for Fluffed Oats?')

2

When Carol had walked for thirty-two minutes she had completely covered the town, east and west, north and south; and she stood at the corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue and despaired.

Main Street with its two-story brick shops, its story-and-a-half wooden residences, its muddy expanse from concrete walk to walk, its huddle of Fords and lumber-wagons, was too small to absorb her. The broad, straight, unenticing gashes of the streets let in the grasping prairie on every side. She realized the vastness and the emptiness of the land. The skeleton iron windmill on the farm a few blocks away, at the north end of Main Street, was like the ribs of a dead cow. She thought of the coming of the Northern winter, when the unprotected houses would crouch together in terror of storms galloping out of that wild waste. They were so small and weak, the little brown houses. They were shelters for sparrows, not homes for warm laughing people.

She told herself that down the street the leaves were a splendor. The maples were orange; the oaks a solid tint of raspberry. And the lawns had been nursed with love. But the thought would not hold. At best the trees resembled a thinned woodlot. There was no park to rest the eyes. And since not Gopher Prairie but Wakamin was the county-seat, there was no court-house with its grounds.

She glanced through the fly-specked windows of the most pretentious building in sight, the one place which welcomed strangers and determined their opinion of the charm and luxury of Gopher Prairie—the Minniemashie House. It was a tall lean shabby structure, three stories of yellow-streaked wood, the corners covered with sanded pine slabs purporting to symbolize

stone. In the hotel office she could see a stretch of bare unclean floor, a line of rickety chairs with brass cuspidors between, a writing-desk with advertisements in mother-of-pearl letters upon the glass-covered back. The dining-room beyond was a jungle of stained table-cloths and catsup bottles.

She looked no more at the Minniemashie House.

A man in cuffless shirt-sleeves with pink arm-garters, wearing a linen collar but no tie, yawned his way from Dyer's Drug Store across to the hotel. He leaned against the wall, scratched a while, sighed, and in a bored way gossiped with a man tilted back in a chair. A lumber-wagon, its long green box filled with large spools of barbed-wire fencing, creaked down the block. A Ford, in reverse, sounded as though it were shaking to pieces, then recovered and rattled away. In the Greek candy-store was the whine of a peanut-roaster, and the oily smell of nuts.

There was no other sound nor sign of life.

She wanted to run, fleeing from the encroaching prairie, demanding the security of a great city. Her dreams of creating a beautiful town were ludicrous. Oozing out from every drab wall, she felt a forbidding spirit which she could never conquer.

She trailed down the street on one side, back on the other, glancing into the cross streets. It was a private Seeing Main Street tour. She was within ten minutes beholding not only the heart of a place called Gopher Prairie, but ten thousand towns from Albany to San Diego:

Dyer's Drug Store, a corner building of regular and unreal blocks of artificial stone. Inside the store, a greasy marble soda-fountain with an electric lamp of red and green and curdled-yellow mosaic shade. Pawed-over heaps of toothbrushes and combs and packages of shaving-soap. Shelves of soap-cartons, teething-rings, garden-seeds, and patent medicines in yellow packages—nostrums for consumption, for 'women's diseases'—notorious mixtures of opium and alcohol, in the very shop to which her husband sent patients for the filling of prescriptions.

From a second-story window the sign 'W. P. Kennicott, Phys. & Surgeon,' gilt on black sand.

A small wooden motion-picture theater called 'The Rosebud Movie Palace.' Lithographs announcing a film called 'Fatty in Love.'

Howland & Gould's Grocery. In the display window, black, overripe bananas and lettuce on which a cat was sleeping. Shelves lined with red crêpe paper which was now faded and torn and concentrically spotted. Flat against the wall of the second story the signs of lodges—the Knights of Pythias, the Maccabees, the Woodmen, the Masons.

Dahl & Oleson's Meat Market—a reek of blood.

A jewelry shop with tinny-looking wrist-watches for women. In front of it, at the curb, a huge wooden clock which did not go.

A fly-buzzing saloon with a brilliant gold and enamel whisky sign across the front. Other saloons down the block. From them a stink of stale beer, and thick voices bellowing pidgin German or trolling out dirty songs—vice gone feeble and unenterprising and dull—the delicacy of a mining-camp minus its vigor. In front of the saloons, farmwives sitting on the seats of wagons, waiting for their husbands to become drunk and ready to start home.

A tobacco shop called 'The Smoke House,' filled with young men shaking dice for cigarettes. Racks of magazines, and pictures of coy fat prostitutes in striped bathing-suits.

A clothing store with a display of 'ox-blood-shade Oxfords with bull-dog toes.' Suits which looked worn and glossless while they were still new, flabbily draped on dummies like corpses with painted cheeks.

The Bon Ton Store—Haydock & Simons'—the largest shop in town. The first-story front of clear glass, the plates cleverly bound at the edges with brass. The second story of pleasant tapestry brick. One window of excellent clothes for men, interspersed with collars of floral piqué which showed mauve daisies on a saffron ground. Newness and an obvious notion of neatness and service. Haydock & Simons. Haydock. She had met a Haydock at the station; Harry Haydock; an active person of thirty-five. He seemed great to her, now, and very like a saint. His shop was clean!

Axel Egge's General Store, frequented

by Scandinavian farmers. In the shallow dark window-space heaps of sleazy sateens, badly woven galateas, canvas shoes designed for women with bulging ankles, steel and red glass buttons upon cards with broken edges, a cottony blanket, a graniteware frying-pan reposing on a sun-faded crêpe blouse.

Sam Clark's Hardware Store. An air of frankly metallic enterprise. Guns and churns and barrels of nails and beautiful shiny butcher knives.

Chester Dashaway's House Furnishing Emporium. A vista of heavy oak rockers with leather seats, asleep in a dismal row.

Billy's Lunch. Thick handleless cups on the wet oilcloth-covered counter. An odor of onions and the smoke of hot lard. In the doorway a young man audibly sucking a tooth-pick.

The warehouse of the buyer of cream and potatoes. The sour smell of a dairy.

The Ford Garage and the Buick Garage, competent one-story brick and cement buildings opposite each other. Old and new cars on grease-blackened concrete floors. Tire advertisements. The roaring of a tested motor; a racket which beat at the nerves. Surly young men in khaki union-overalls. The most energetic and vital places in town.

A large warehouse for agricultural implements. An impressive barricade of green and gold wheels, of shafts and sulky seats, belonging to machinery of which Carol knew nothing—potato-planters, manure-spreaders, silage-cutters, disk-harrows, breaking-plows.

A feed store, its windows opaque with the dust of bran, a patent medicine advertisement painted on its roof.

Ye Art Shoppe, Prop. Mrs. Mary Ellen Wilks, Christian Science Library open daily free. A touching fumble at beauty. A one-room shanty of boards recently covered with rough stucco. A show-window delicately rich in error: vases starting out to imitate tree-trunks but running off into blobs of gilt—an aluminum ash-tray labeled 'Greetings from Gopher Prairie'—a Christian Science magazine—a stamped sofa-cushion portraying a large ribbon tied to a small poppy, the correct skeins of embroidery-silk lying on the pillow. Inside the shop, a glimpse of bad carbon prints of bad and famous pictures, shelves of phonograph records and camera films, wooden toys, and in the midst an anxious small woman sitting in a padded rocking chair.

A barber shop and pool room. A man in shirt sleeves, presumably Del Snafflin the proprietor, shaving a man who had a large Adam's apple.

Nat Hicks's Tailor Shop, on a side street off Main. A one-story building. A fashion-plate showing human pitchforks in garments which looked as hard as steel plate.

On another side street a raw red-brick Catholic Church with a varnished yellow door.

The post-office—merely a partition of glass and brass shutting off the rear of a mildewed room which must once have been a shop. A tilted writing-shelf against a wall rubbed black and scattered with official notices and army recruiting-posters.

The damp, yellow-brick schoolbuilding in its cindery grounds.

The State Bank, stucco masking wood.

The Farmers' National Bank. An Ionic temple of marble. Pure, exquisite, solitary. A brass plate with 'Ezra Stowbody, Pres't.'

A score of similar shops and establishments.

Behind them and mixed with them, the houses, meek cottages or large, comfortable, soundly uninteresting symbols of prosperity.

In all the town not one building save the Ionic bank which gave pleasure to Carol's eyes; not a dozen buildings which suggested that, in the fifty years of Gopher Prairie's existence, the citizens had realized that it was either desirable or possible to make this, their common home, amusing or attractive.

It was not only the unsparing unapologetic ugliness and the rigid straightness which overwhelmed her. It was the planlessness, the flimsy temporariness of the buildings, their faded unpleasant colors. The street was cluttered with electric-light poles, telephone poles, gasoline pumps for motor cars, boxes of goods. Each man had built with the most valiant disregard of all the others. Between a large new 'block' of two-story brick shops on one side, and the fire-brick Overland garage on the other side, was a one-story cottage turned into a millinery shop. The white temple of the Farmer's

Bank was elbowed back by a grocery of glaring yellow brick. One store-building had a patchy galvanized iron cornice; the building beside it was crowned with battlements and pyramids of brick capped with blocks of red sandstone.

She escaped from Main Street, fled home.

She wouldn't have cared, she insisted, if the people had been comely. She had noted a young man loafing before a shop, one unwashed hand holding the cord of an awning; a middle-aged man who had a way of staring at women as though he had been married too long and too prosaically; an old farmer, solid, wholesome, but not clean—his face like a potato fresh from the earth. None of them had shaved for three days.

'If they can't build shrines, out here on the prairie, surely there's nothing to prevent their buying safety-razors!' she raged.

She fought herself: 'I must be wrong. People do live here. It *can't* be as ugly as—as I know it is! I must be wrong. But I can't do it. I can't go through with it.'

She came home too seriously worried for hysteria; and when she found Kennicott waiting for her, and exulting, 'Have a walk? Well, like the town? Great lawns and trees, eh?' she was able to say, with a self-protective maturity new to her, 'It's very interesting.'

3

The train which brought Carol to Gopher Prairie also brought Miss Bea Sorenson.

Miss Bea was a stalwart, corn-colored, laughing young woman, and she was bored by farm-work. She desired the excitements of city-life, and the way to enjoy city-life was, she had decided, to 'go get a yob as hired girl in Gopher Prairie.' She contentedly lugged her pasteboard telescope from the station to her cousin, Tina Malmquist, maid of all work in the residence of Mrs. Luke Dawson.

'Vell, so you come to town,' said Tina.

'Ya. Ay get a yob,' said Bea.

'Vell. . . . You got a fella now?'

'Ya. Yim Yacobson.'

'Vell. I'm glat to see you. How much you vant a veek?'

'Sex dollar.'

'There ain't nobody pay dat. Vait! Dr. Kennicott, I t'ink he marry a girl from de Cities. Maybe she pay dat. Vell. You go take a valk.'

'Ya,' said Bea.

So it chanced that Carol Kennicott and Bea Sorenson were viewing Main Street at the same time.

Bea had never before been in a town larger than Scandia Crossing, which has sixty-seven inhabitants.

As she marched up the street she was meditating that it didn't hardly seem like it was possible there could be so many folks all in one place at the same time. My! It would take years to get acquainted with them all. And swell people, too! A fine big gentleman in a new pink shirt with a diamond, and not no washed out blue denim working-shirt. A lovely lady in a longery dress (but it must be an awful hard dress to wash). And the stores!

Not just three of them, like there were at Scandia Crossing, but more than four whole blocks!

The Bon Ton Store—big as four barns—my! it would simply scare a person to go in there, with seven or eight clerks all looking at you. And the men's suits, on figures just like human. And Axel Egge's, like home, lots of Swedes and Norskes in there, and a card of dandy buttons, like rubies.

A drug store with a soda fountain that was just huge, awful long, and all lovely marble; and on it there was a great big lamp with the biggest shade you ever saw—all different kinds colored glass stuck together; and the soda spouts, they were silver, and they came right out of the bottom of the lampstand! Behind the fountain there were glass shelves, and bottles of new kinds of soft drinks, that nobody ever heard of. Suppose a fella took you *there*!

A hotel, awful high, higher than Oscar Tollefson's new red barn; three stories, one right on top of another; you had to stick your head back to look clear up to the top. There was a swell traveling man in there—probably been to Chicago, lots of times.

Oh, the dandiest people to know here! There was a lady going by, you wouldn't hardly say she was any older than Bea herself; she wore a dandy new gray suit and black pumps. She almost looked like she was looking over the town, too. But you couldn't tell what she thought. Bea would

like to be that way—kind of quiet, so nobody would get fresh. Kind of—oh, elegant.

A Lutheran Church. Here in the city there'd be lovely sermons, and church twice on Sunday, *every* Sunday!

And a movie show!

A regular theater, just for movies. With the sign 'Change of bill every evening.' Pictures every evening!

There were movies in Scandia Crossing, but only once every two weeks, and it took the Sorensons an hour to drive in—papa was such a tightwad he wouldn't get a Ford. But here she could put on her hat any evening, and in three minutes' walk be to the movies, and see lovely fellows in dress-suits and Bill Hart and everything!

How could they have so many stores? Why! There was one just for tobacco alone, and one (a lovely one—the Art Shoppy it was) for pictures and vases and stuff, with oh, the dandiest vase made so it looked just like a tree trunk!

Bea stood on the corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue. The roar of the city began to frighten her. There were five automobuls on the street all at the same time—and one of 'em was a great big car that must of cost two thousand dollars—and the 'bus was starting for a train with five elegant-dressed fellows, and a man was pasting up red bills with lovely pictures of washing-machines on them, and the jeweler was laying out bracelets and wrist-watches and *everything* on real velvet.

What did she care if she got six dollars a week? Or two! It was worth while working for nothing, to be allowed to stay here. And think how it would be in the evening, all lighted up—and not with no lamps, but with electrics! And maybe a gentleman friend taking you to the movies and buying you a strawberry ice cream soda!

Bea trudged back.

'Vell? You lak it?' said Tina.

'Ya. Ay lak it. Ay t'ink maybe Ay stay here,' said Bea.

4

The recently built house of Sam Clark, in which was given the party to welcome Carol, was one of the largest in Gopher Prairie. It had a clean sweep of clapboards, a solid squareness, a small tower, and a large screened porch. Inside, it was as shiny, as hard, and as cheerful as a new oak upright piano.

Carol looked imploringly at Sam Clark as he rolled to the door and shouted, 'Welcome, little lady! The keys of the city are yourn!'

Beyond him, in the hallway and the living-room, sitting in a vast circle as though they were attending a funeral, she saw the guests. They were *waiting* so! They were waiting for her! The determination to be all one pretty flowerlet of appreciation leaked away. She begged of Sam, 'I don't dare face them! They expect so much. They'll swallow me in one mouthful—glump!—like that!'

'Why, sister, they're going to love you—same as I would if I didn't think the doc here would beat me up!'

'B-but—I don't dare! Faces to the right of me, faces in front of me, volley and wonder!'

She sounded hysterical to herself; she fancied that to Sam Clark she sounded insane. But he chuckled, 'Now you just cuddle under Sam's wing, and if anybody rubbers at you too long, I'll shoo 'em off. Here we go! Watch my smoke—Sam'l, the ladies' delight and the bridegrooms' terror!'

His arm about her, he led her in and bawled, 'Ladies and worser halves, the bride! We won't introduce her round yet, because she'll never get your bum names straight anyway. Now bust up this star-chamber!'

They tittered politely, but they did not move from the social security of their circle, and they did not cease staring.

Carol had given creative energy to dressing for the event. Her hair was demure, low on her forehead with a parting and a coiled braid. Now she wished that she had piled it high. Her frock was an ingénue slip of lawn, with a wide gold sash and a low square neck, which gave a suggestion of throat and molded shoulders. But as they looked her over she was certain that it was all wrong. She wished alternately that she had worn a spinsterish high-necked dress, and that she had dared to shock them with a violent brick-red scarf which she had bought in Chicago.

She was led about the circle. Her voice mechanically produced safe remarks:

'Oh, I'm sure I'm going to like it here

ever so much,' and 'Yes, we did have the best time in Colorado—mountains,' and 'Yes, I lived in St. Paul several years. Euclid P. Tinker? No, I don't *remember* meeting him, but I'm pretty sure I've heard of him.'

Kennicott took her aside and whispered, 'Now I'll introduce you to them, one at a time.'

'Tell me about them first.'

'Well, the nice-looking couple over there are Harry Haydock and his wife, Juanita. Harry's dad owns most of the Bon Ton, but it's Harry who runs it and gives it the pep. He's a hustler. Next to him is Dave Dyer the druggist—you met him this afternoon—mighty good duck-shot. The tall husk beyond him is Jack Elder—Jackson Elder—owns the planing-mill, and the Minniemashie House, and quite a share in the Farmers' National Bank. Him and his wife are good sports—him and Sam and I go hunting together a lot. The old cheese there is Luke Dawson, the richest man in town. Next to him is Nat Hicks, the tailor.'

'Really? A tailor?'

'Sure. Why not? Maybe we're slow, but we are democratic. I go hunting with Nat same as I do with Jack Elder.'

'I'm glad. I've never met a tailor socially. It must be charming to meet one and not have to think about what you owe him. And do you—Would you go hunting with your barber, too?'

'No but—No use running this democracy thing into the ground. Besides, I've known Nat for years, and besides, he's a mighty good shot and—That's the way it is, see? Next to Nat is Chet Dashaway. Great fellow for chinning. He'll talk your arm off, about religion or politics or books or anything.'

Carol gazed with a polite approximation to interest at Mr. Dashaway, a tan person with a wide mouth. 'Oh, I know! He's the furniture-store man!' She was much pleased with herself.

'Yump, and he's the undertaker. You'll like him. Come shake hands with him.'

'Oh no, no! He doesn't—he doesn't do the embalming and all that—himself? I couldn't shake hands with an undertaker!'

'Why not? You'd be proud to shake hands with a great surgeon, just after he'd been carving up people's bellies.'

She sought to regain her afternoon's calm of maturity. 'Yes. You're right. I want—oh, my dear, do you know how much I want to like the people you like? I want to see people as they are.'

'Well, don't forget to see people as other folks see them as they are! They have the stuff. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here? Born and brought up here!'

'Bresnahan?'

'Yes—you know—president of the Velvet Motor Company of Boston, Mass.—make the Velvet Twelve—biggest automobile factory in New England.'

'I think I've heard of him.'

'Sure you have. Why, he's a millionaire several times over! Well, Perce comes back here for the black-bass fishing almost every summer, and he says if he could get away from business, he'd rather live here than in Boston or New York or any of those places. *He* doesn't mind Chet's undertaking.'

'Please! I'll—I'll like everybody! I'll be the community sunbeam!'

He led her to the Dawsons.

Luke Dawson, lender of money on mortgages, owner of Northern cut-over land, was a hesitant man in unpressed soft gray clothes, with bulging eyes in a milky face. His wife had bleached cheeks, bleached hair, bleached voice, and a bleached manner. She wore her expensive green frock, with its passementerie bosom, bead tassels, and gaps between the buttons down the back, as though she had bought it second-hand and was afraid of meeting the former owner. They were shy. It was 'Professor' George Edwin Mott, superintendent of schools, a Chinese mandarin turned brown, who held Carol's hand and made her welcome.

When the Dawsons and Mr. Mott had stated that they were 'pleased to meet her,' there seemed to be nothing else to say, but the conversation went on automatically.

'Do you like Gopher Prairie?' whimpered Mrs. Dawson.

'Oh, I'm sure I'm going to be ever so happy.'

'There's so many nice people.' Mrs. Dawson looked to Mr. Mott for social and intellectual aid. He lectured:

'There's a fine class of people. I don't like some of these retired farmers who come

here to spend their last days—especially the Germans. They hate to pay school-taxes. They hate to spend a cent. But the rest are a fine class of people. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here? Used to go to school right at the old building!'

'I heard he did.'

'Yes. He's a prince. He and I went fishing together, last time he was here.'

The Dawsons and Mr. Mott teetered upon weary feet, and smiled at Carol with crystallized expressions. She went on:

'Tell me, Mr. Mott: Have you ever tried any experiments with any of the new educational systems? The modern kindergarten methods or the Gary system?'

'Oh. Those. Most of these would-be reformers are simply notoriety-seekers. I believe in manual training, but Latin and mathematics always will be the backbone of sound Americanism, no matter what these faddists advocate—heaven knows what they do want—knitting, I suppose, and classes in wiggling the ears!'

The Dawsons smiled their appreciation of listening to a savant. Carol waited till Kennicott should rescue her. The rest of the party waited for the miracle of being amused.

Harry and Juanita Haydock, Rita Simons and Dr. Terry Gould—the young smart set of Gopher Prairie. She was led to them. Juanita Haydock flung at her in a high, cackling, friendly voice:

'Well, this is *so* nice to have you here. We'll have some good parties—dances and everything. You'll have to join the Jolly Seventeen. We play bridge and we have a supper once a month. You play, of course?'

'N-no, I don't.'

'Really? In St. Paul?'

'I've always been such a book-worm.'

'We'll have to teach you. Bridge is half the fun of life.' Juanita had become patronizing, and she glanced disrespectfully at Carol's golden sash, which she had previously admired.

Harry Haydock said politely, 'How do you think you're going to like the old burg?'

'I'm sure I shall like it tremendously.'

'Best people on earth here. Great hustlers, too. Course I've had lots of chances to go live in Minneapolis, but we like it here. Real he-town. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here?'

Carol perceived that she had been weakened in the biological struggle by disclosing her lack of bridge. Roused to nervous desire to regain her position she turned on Dr. Terry Gould, the young and pool-playing competitor of her husband. Her eyes coquetted with him while she gushed:

'I'll learn bridge. But what I really love most is the outdoors. Can't we all get up a boating party, and fish, or whatever you do, and have a picnic supper afterwards?'

'Now you're talking!' Dr. Gould affirmed. He looked rather too obviously at the cream-smooth slope of her shoulder. 'Like fishing? Fishing is my middle name. I'll teach you bridge. Like cards at all?'

'I used to be rather good at bezique.'

She knew that bezique was a game of cards—or a game of something else. Roulette, possibly. But her lie was a triumph. Juanita's handsome, high-colored, horsey face showed doubt. Harry stroked his nose and said humbly, 'Bezique? Used to be great gambling game, wasn't it?'

While others drifted to her group, Carol snatched up the conversation. She laughed and was frivolous and rather brittle. She could not distinguish their eyes. They were a blurry theater-audience before which she self-consciously enacted the comedy of being the Clever Little Bride of Doc Kennicott:

'These-here celebrated Open Spaces, that's what I'm going out for. I'll never read anything but the sporting-page again. Will converted me on our Colorado trip. There were so many mousey tourists who were afraid to get out of the motor 'bus that I decided to be Annie Oakley, the Wild Western Wampire, and I bought oh! a vociferous skirt which revealed my perfectly nice ankles to the Presbyterian glare of all the Ioway schoolma'ams, and I leaped from peak to peak like the nimble chamoys, and—You may think that Herr Doctor Kennicott is a Nimrod, but you ought to have seen me daring him to strip to his B.V.D.'s and go swimming in an icy mountain brook.'

She knew that they were thinking of becoming shocked, but Juanita Haydock was admiring, at least. She swaggered on:

'I'm sure I'm going to ruin Will as a re-

spectable practitioner—Is he a good doctor, Dr. Gould?'

Kennicott's rival gasped at this insult to professional ethics, and he took an appreciable second before he recovered his social manner. 'I'll tell you, Mrs. Kennicott.' He smiled at Kennicott, to imply that whatever he might say in the stress of being witty was not to count against him in the commercio-medical warfare. 'There's some people in town that say the doc is a fair to middlin' diagnostician and prescription-writer, but let me whisper this to you—but for heaven's sake don't tell him I said so—don't you ever go to him for anything more serious than a pendectomy of the left ear or a strabismus of the cardiograph.'

No one save Kennicott knew exactly what this meant, but they laughed, and Sam Clark's party assumed a glittering lemon-yellow color of brocade panels and champagne and tulle and crystal chandeliers and sporting duchesses. Carol saw that George Edwin Mott and the blanched Mr. and Mrs. Dawson were not yet hypnotized. They looked as though they wondered whether they ought to look as though they disapproved. She concentrated on them:

'But I know whom I wouldn't have dared to go to Colorado with! Mr. Dawson there! I'm sure he's a regular heart-breaker. When we were introduced he held my hand and squeezed it frightfully.'

'Haw! Haw! Haw!' The entire company applauded. Mr. Dawson was beatified. He had been called many things—loan-shark, skinflint, tightwad, pussyfoot—but he had never before been called a flirt.

'He is wicked, isn't he, Mrs. Dawson? Don't you have to lock him up?'

'Oh no, but maybe I better,' attempted Mrs. Dawson, a tint on her pallid face.

For fifteen minutes Carol kept it up. She asserted that she was going to stage a musical comedy, that she preferred café parfait to beefsteak, that she hoped Dr. Kennicott would never lose his ability to make love to charming women, and that she had a pair of gold stockings. They gaped for more. But she could not keep it up. She retired to a chair behind Sam Clark's bulk. The smile-wrinkles solemnly flattened out in the faces of all the other collaborators in having a party, and again they stood about hoping but not expecting to be amused.

Carol listened. She discovered that conversation did not exist in Gopher Prairie. Even at this affair, which brought out the young smart set, the hunting squire set, the respectable intellectual set, and the solid financial set, they sat up with gaiety as with a corpse.

Juanita Haydock talked a good deal in her rattling voice but it was invariably of personalities: the rumor that Raymie Wutherspoon was going to send for a pair of patent leather shoes with gray buttoned tops; the rheumatism of Champ Perry; the state of Guy Pollock's grippe; and the dementia of Jim Howland in painting his fence salmon-pink.

Sam Clark had been talking to Carol about motor cars, but he felt his duties as host. While he droned, his brows popped up and down. He interrupted himself, 'Must stir 'em up.' He worried at his wife, 'Don't you think I better stir 'em up?' He shouldered into the center of the room, and cried:

'Let's have some stunts, folks.'

'Yes, let's!' shrieked Juanita Haydock.

'Say, Dave, give us that stunt about the Norwegian catching a hen.'

'You bet; that's a slick stunt; do that, Dave!' cheered Chet Dashaway.

Mr. Dave Dyer obliged.

All the guests moved their lips in anticipation of being called on for their own stunts.

'Ella, come on and recite "Old Sweetheart of Mine," for us,' demanded Sam.

Miss Ella Stowbody, the spinster daughter of the Ionic Bank, scratched her dry palms and blushed. 'Oh, you don't want to hear that old thing again.'

'Sure we do! You bet!' asserted Sam.

'My voice is in terrible shape tonight.'

'Tut! Come on!'

Sam loudly explained to Carol, 'Ella is our shark at elocuting. She's had professional training. She studied singing and oratory and dramatic art and shorthand for a year, in Milwaukee.'

Miss Stowbody was reciting. As encore to 'An Old Sweetheart of Mine,' she gave a peculiarly optimistic poem regarding the value of smiles.

There were four other stunts: one Jewish, one Irish, one juvenile, and Nat Hicks's parody of Mark Antony's funeral oration.

During the winter Carol was to hear Dave Dyer's hen-catching impersonation seven times, 'An Old Sweetheart of Mine' nine times, the Jewish story and the funeral oration twice; but now she was ardent, and, because she did so want to be happy and simple-hearted, she was as disappointed as the others when the stunts were finished, and the party instantly sank back into coma.

They gave up trying to be festive; they began to talk naturally, as they did at their shops and homes.

The men and women divided, as they had been tending to do all evening. Carol was deserted by the men, left to a group of matrons who steadily pattered of children, sickness, and cooks—their own shop-talk. She was piqued. She remembered visions of herself as a smart married woman in a drawing-room, fencing with clever men. Her dejection was relieved by speculation as to what the men were discussing, in the corner between the piano and the phonograph. Did they rise from these housewifely personalities to a larger world of abstractions and affairs?

She made her best curtsy to Mrs. Dawson; she twittered, 'I won't have my husband leaving me so soon! I'm going over and pull the wretch's ears.' She rose with a *jeune fille* bow. She was self-absorbed and self-approving because she had attained the quality of sentimentality. She proudly dipped across the room and, to the interest and commendation of all beholders, sat on the arm of Kennicott's chair.

He was gossiping with Sam Clark, Luke Dawson, Jackson Elder of the planing-mill, Chet Dashaway, Dave Dyer, Harry Haydock, and Ezra Stowbody, president of the Ionic bank.

Ezra Stowbody was a troglodyte. He had come to Gopher Prairie in 1865. He was a distinguished bird of prey—swooping thin nose, turtle mouth, thick brows, port-wine cheeks, floss of white hair, contemptuous eyes. He was not happy in the social changes of thirty years. Three decades ago, Dr. Westlake, Julius Flickerbaugh the lawyer, Merriman Peedy the Congregational pastor and himself had been the arbiters. That was as it should be; the fine arts—medicine, law, religion, and finance—recognized as aristocratic; four Yankees democratically chatting with but ruling the Ohioans and Illini and Swedes and Germans who had ventured to follow them. But Westlake was old, almost retired; Julius Flickerbaugh had lost much of his practice to livelier attorneys; Reverend (not The Reverend) Peedy was dead; and nobody was impressed in this rotten age of automobiles by the 'spanking grays' which Ezra still drove. The town was as heterogeneous as Chicago. Norwegians and Germans owned stores. The social leaders were common merchants. Selling nails was considered as sacred as banking. These upstarts—the Clarks, the Haydocks—had no dignity. They were sound and conservative in politics, but they talked about motor cars and pump-guns and heaven only knew what new-fangled fads. Mr. Stowbody felt out of place with them. But his brick house with the mansard roof was still the largest residence in town, and he held his position as squire by occasionally appearing among the younger men and reminding them by a wintry eye that without the banker none of them could carry on their vulgar businesses.

As Carol defied decency by sitting down with the men, Mr. Stowbody was piping to Mr. Dawson, 'Say, Luke, when was't Biggins first settled in Winnebago Township? Wa'n't it in 1879?'

'Why no 'twa'n't!' Mr. Dawson was indignant. 'He come out from Vermont in 1867—no, wait, in 1868, it must have been —and took a claim on the Rum River, quite a ways above Anoka.'

'He did not!' roared Mr. Stowbody. 'He settled first in Blue Earth County, him and his father!'

('What's the point at issue?' Carol whispered to Kennicott.

('Whether this old duck Biggins had an English setter or a Llewellyn. They've been arguing it all evening!')

Dave Dyer interrupted to give tidings, 'D' tell you that Clara Biggins was in town couple days ago? She bought a hot-water bottle—expensive one, too—two dollars and thirty cents!'

'Yaaaaaah!' snarled Mr. Stowbody. 'Course. She's just like her grandad was. Never save a cent. Two dollars and twenty —thirty, was it?—two dollars and thirty cents for a hot-water bottle! Brick wrapped up in a flannel petticoat just as good, anyway!'

'How's Ella's tonsils, Mr. Stowbody?' yawned Chet Dashaway.

While Mr. Stowbody gave a somatic and psychic study of them, Carol reflected, 'Are they really so terribly interested in Ella's tonsils, or even in Ella's esophagus? I wonder if I could get them away from personalities? Let's risk damnation and try.'

'There hasn't been much labor trouble around here, has there, Mr. Stowbody?' she asked innocently.

'No, ma'am, thank God, we've been free from that, except maybe with hired girls and farm-hands. Trouble enough with these foreign farmers; if you don't watch these Swedes they turn socialist or populist or some fool thing on you in a minute. Of course, if they have loans you can make 'em listen to reason. I just have 'em come into the bank for a talk, and tell 'em a few things. I don't mind their being democrats, so much, but I won't stand having socialists around. But thank God, we ain't got the labor trouble they have in these cities. Even Jack Elder here gets along pretty well, in the planing-mill, don't you, Jack?'

'Yep. Sure. Don't need so many skilled workmen in my place, and it's a lot of these cranky, wage-hogging, half-baked skilled mechanics that start trouble—reading a lot of this anarchist literature and union papers and all.'

'Do you approve of union labor?' Carol inquired of Mr. Elder.

'Me? I should say not! It's like this: I don't mind dealing with my men if they think they've got any grievances—though Lord knows what's come over workmen, nowadays—don't appreciate a good job. But still, if they come to me honestly, as man to man, I'll talk things over with them. But I'm not going to have any outsider, any of these walking delegates, or whatever fancy names they call themselves now—bunch of rich grafters, living on the ignorant workmen! Not going to have any of those fellows butting in and telling *me* how to run *my* business!'

Mr. Elder was growing more excited, more belligerent and patriotic. 'I stand for freedom and constitutional rights. If any man don't like my shop, he can get up and git. Same way, if I don't like him, he gits. And that's all there is to it. I simply can't understand all these complications and hoop-te-doodles and government reports and wage-scales and God knows what all that these fellows are balling up the labor situation with, when it's all perfectly simple. They like what I pay 'em, or they get out. That's all there is to it!'

'What do you think of profit-sharing?' Carol ventured.

Mr. Elder thundered his answer, while the others nodded, solemnly and in tune, like a shop-window of flexible toys, comic mandarins and judges and ducks and clowns, set quivering by a breeze from the open door:

'All this profit-sharing and welfare work and insurance and old-age pension is simply poppycock. Enfeebles a workman's independence—and wastes a lot of honest profit. The half-baked thinker that isn't dry behind the ears yet, and these suffragettes and God knows what all buttinskis there are that are trying to tell a business man how to run his business, and some of these college professors are just about as bad, the whole kit and bilin' of 'em are nothing in God's world but socialism in disguise! And it's my bounden duty as a producer to resist every attack on the integrity of American industry to the last ditch. Yes—SIR!'

Mr. Elder wiped his brow.

Dave Dyer added, 'Sure! You bet! What they ought to do is simply to hang every one of these agitators, and that would settle the whole thing right off. Don't you think so, doc?'

'You bet,' agreed Kennicott.

The conversation was at last relieved of the plague of Carol's intrusions and they settled down to the question of whether the justice of the peace had sent that hobo drunk to jail for ten days or twelve. It was a matter not readily determined. Then Dave Dyer communicated his carefree adventures on the gipsy trail:

'Yep. I get good time out of the flivver. 'Bout a week ago I motored down to New Wurttemberg. That's forty-three—No, let's see: It's seventeen miles to Belldale, and 'bout six and three-quarters, call it seven, to Torgenquist, and it's a good nineteen miles from there to New Wurttemberg—seventeen and seven and nineteen, that makes, uh, let me see: seventeen and seven 's twenty-four, plus nineteen, well say

plus twenty, that makes forty-four, well anyway, say about forty-three or -four miles from here to New Wurttemberg. We got started about seven-fifteen, prob'ly seven-twenty, because I had to stop and fill the radiator, and we ran along, just keeping up a good steady gait—'

Mr. Dyer did finally, for reasons and purposes admitted and justified, attain to New Wurttemberg.

Once—only once—the presence of the alien Carol was recognized. Chet Dashaway leaned over and said asthmatically, 'Say, uh, have you been reading this serial "Two Out" in *Tingling Tales*? Corking yarn! Gosh, the fellow that wrote it certainly can sling baseball slang!'

The others tried to look literary. Harry Haydock offered, 'Juanita is a great hand for reading high-class stuff, like "Mid the Magnolias" by this Sara Hetwiggin Butts, and "Riders of Ranch Reckless." Books. But me,' he glanced about importantly, as one convinced that no other hero had ever been in so strange a plight, 'I'm so darn busy I don't have much time to read.'

'I never read anything I can't check against,' said Sam Clark.

Thus ended the literary portion of the conversation, and for seven minutes Jackson Elder outlined reasons for believing that the pike-fishing was better on the west shore of Lake Minniemashie than on the east—though it was indeed quite true that on the east shore Nat Hicks had caught a pike altogether admirable.

The talk went on. It did go on! Their voices were monotonous, thick, emphatic. They were harshly pompous, like men in the smoking-compartments of Pullman cars. They did not bore Carol. They frightened her. She panted, 'They will be cordial to me, because my man belongs to their tribe. God help me if I were an outsider!'

Smiling as changelessly as an ivory figurine she sat quiescent, avoiding thought, glancing about the living-room and hall, noting their betrayal of unimaginative commercial prosperity. Kennicott said, 'Dandy interior, eh? My idea of how a place ought to be furnished. Modern.' She looked polite, and observed the oiled floors, hardwood staircase, unused fireplace with tiles which resembled brown linoleum, cut-glass vases standing upon doilies, and the barred, shut, forbidding unit bookcases that were half filled with swashbuckler novels and unread-looking sets of Dickens, Kipling, O. Henry, and Elbert Hubbard.

She perceived that even personalities were failing to hold the party. The room filled with hesitancy as with a fog. People cleared their throats, tried to choke down yawns. The men shot their cuffs and the women stuck their combs more firmly into their back hair.

Then a rattle, a daring hope in every eye, the swinging of a door, the smell of strong coffee, Dave Dyer's mewing voice in a triumphant, 'The eats!' They began to chatter. They had something to do. They could escape from themselves. They fell upon the food—chicken sandwiches, maple cake, drug-store ice cream. Even when the food was gone they remained cheerful. They could go home, any time now, and go to bed!

They went, with a flutter of coats, chiffon scarfs, and good-bys.

Carol and Kennicott walked home.

'Did you like them?' he asked.

'They were terribly sweet to me.'

'Uh, Carrie —You ought to be more careful about shocking folks. Talking about gold stockings, and about showing your ankles to schoolteachers and all!' More mildly: 'You gave 'em a good time, but I'd watch out for that, 'f I were you. Juanita Haydock is such a damn cat. I wouldn't give her a chance to criticize me.'

'My poor effort to lift up the party! Was I wrong to try to amuse them?'

'No! No! Honey, I didn't mean—You were the only up-and-coming person in the bunch. I just mean—Don't get onto legs and all that immoral stuff. Pretty conservative crowd.'

She was silent, raw with the shameful thought that the attentive circle might have been criticizing her, laughing at her.

'Don't, please don't worry!' he pleaded.

Silence.

'Gosh, I'm sorry I spoke about it. I just meant—But they were crazy about you. Sam said to me, "That little lady of yours is the slickest thing that ever came to this town," he said; and Ma Dawson—I didn't hardly know whether she'd like you or not, she's such a dried-up old bird, but she said, "Your bride is so quick and bright, I declare, she just wakes me up." '

Carol liked praise, the flavor and fatness of it, but she was so energetically being sorry for herself that she could not taste this commendation.

'Please! Come on! Cheer up!' His lips said it, his anxious shoulder said it, his arm about her said it, as they halted on the obscure porch of their house.

'Do you care if they think I'm flighty, Will?'

'Me? Why, I wouldn't care if the whole world thought you were this or that or anything else. You're my—well, you're my soul!'

He was an undefined mass, as solid-seeming as rock. She found his sleeve, pinched it, cried, 'I'm glad! It's sweet to be wanted! You must tolerate my frivolousness. You're all I have!'

He lifted her, carried her into the house, and with her arms about his neck she forgot Main Street.

1920

RING LARDNER

1885–1933

THE GOLDEN HONEYMOON

MOTHER says that when I start talking I never know when to stop. But I tell her the only time I get a chance is when she ain't around, so I have to make the most of it. I guess the fact is neither one of us would be welcome in a Quaker meeting, but as I tell Mother, what did God give us tongues for if He didn't want we should use them? Only she says He didn't give them to us to say the same thing over and over again, like I do, and repeat myself. But I say:

'Well, Mother,' I say, 'when people is like you and I and been married fifty years, do you expect everything I say will be something you ain't heard me say before? But it may be new to others, as they ain't nobody else lived with me as long as you have.'

So she says:

'You can bet they ain't, as they couldn't nobody else stand you that long.'

'Well,' I tell her, 'you look pretty healthy.'

'Maybe I do,' she will say, 'but I looked even healthier before I married you.'

You can't get ahead of Mother.

Yes, sir, we was married just fifty years ago the seventeenth day of last December and my daughter and son-in-law was over from Trenton to help us celebrate the Golden Wedding. My son-in-law is John H. Kramer, the real estate man. He made $12,000 one year and is pretty well thought of around Trenton; a good, steady, hard worker. The Rotarians was after him a long time to join, but he kept telling them his home was his club. But Edie finally made him join. That's my daughter.

Well, anyway, they come over to help us celebrate the Golden Wedding and it was pretty crimpy weather and the furnace don't seem to heat up no more like it used to and Mother made the remark that she hoped this winter wouldn't be as cold as the last, referring to the winter previous. So Edie said if she was us, and nothing to keep us home, she certainly wouldn't spend no more winters up here and why didn't we just shut off the water and close up the house and go down to Tampa, Florida? You know we was there four winters ago and staid five weeks, but it cost us over three hundred and fifty dollars for hotel bill alone. So Mother said we wasn't going no place to be robbed. So my son-in-law spoke up and said that Tampa wasn't the only place in the South, and besides we didn't have to stop at no high price hotel but could rent us a couple rooms and board out somewheres, and he had heard that St. Petersburg, Florida, was *the* spot and if we said the word he would write down there and make inquiries.

Well, to make a long story short, we decided to do it and Edie said it would be our Golden Honeymoon and for a present my son-in-law paid the difference between a section and a compartment so as we could have a compartment and have more privatecy. In a compartment you have an upper and lower berth just like the regular sleeper, but it is a shut in room by itself and

got a wash bowl. The car we went in was all compartments and no regular berths at all. It was all compartments.

We went to Trenton the night before and staid at my daughter and son-in-law and we left Trenton the next afternoon at 3.23 p.m.

This was the twelfth day of January. Mother set facing the front of the train, as it makes her giddy to ride backwards. I set facing her, which does not affect me. We reached North Philadelphia at 4.03 p.m. and we reached West Philadelphia at 4.14, but did not go into Broad Street. We reached Baltimore at 6.30 and Washington, D.C., at 7.25. Our train laid over in Washington two hours till another train come along to pick us up and I got out and strolled up the platform and into the Union Station. When I come back, our car had been switched on to another track, but I remembered the name of it, the La Belle, as I had once visited my aunt out in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, where there was a lake of that name, so I had no difficulty in getting located. But Mother had nearly fretted herself sick for fear I would be left.

'Well,' I said, 'I would of followed you on the next train.'

'You could of,' said Mother, and she pointed out that she had the money.

'Well,' I said, 'we are in Washington and I could of borrowed from the United States Treasury. I would of pretended I was an Englishman.'

Mother caught the point and laughed heartily.

Our train pulled out of Washington at 9.40 p.m. and Mother and I turned in early, I taking the upper. During the night we passed through the green fields of old Virginia, though it was too dark to tell if they was green or what color. When we got up in the morning, we was at Fayetteville, North Carolina. We had breakfast in the dining car and after breakfast I got in conversation with the man in the next compartment to ours. He was from Lebanon, New Hampshire, and a man about eighty years of age. His wife was with him, and two unmarried daughters and I made the remark that I should think the four of them would be crowded in one compartment, but he said they had made the trip every winter for fifteen years and knowed how to keep out of each other's way. He said they was bound for Tarpon Springs.

We reached Charleston, South Carolina, at 12.50 p.m. and arrived at Savannah, Georgia, at 4.20. We reached Jacksonville, Florida, at 8.45 p.m. and had an hour and a quarter to lay over there, but Mother made a fuss about me getting off the train, so we had the darky make up our berths and retired before we left Jacksonville. I didn't sleep good as the train done a lot of hemming and hawing, and Mother never sleeps good on a train as she says she is always worrying that I will fall out. She says she would rather have the upper herself, as then she would not have to worry about me, but I tell her I can't take the risk of having it get out that I allowed my wife to sleep in an upper berth. It would make talk.

We was up in the morning in time to see our friends from New Hampshire get off at Tarpon Springs, which we reached at 6.53 a.m.

Several of our fellow passengers got off at Clearwater and some at Belleair, where the train backs right up to the door of the mammoth hotel. Belleair is the winter headquarters for the golf dudes and everybody that got off there had their bag of sticks, as many as ten and twelve in a bag. Women and all. When I was a young man we called it shinny and only needed one club to play with and about one game of it would of been a-plenty for some of these dudes, the way we played it.

The train pulled into St. Petersburg at 8.20 and when we got off the train you would think they was a riot, what with all the darkies barking for the different hotels.

I said to Mother, I said:

'It is a good thing we have got a place picked out to go to and don't have to choose a hotel, as it would be hard to choose amongst them if every one of them is the best.'

She laughed.

We found a jitney and I give him the address of the room my son-in-law had got for us and soon we was there and introduced ourselves to the lady that owns the house, a young widow about forty-eight years of age. She showed us our room, which was light and airy with a comfortable bed and bureau and washstand. It was twelve dollars a week, but the location was

good, only three blocks from Williams Park.

St. Pete is what folks calls the town, though they also call it the Sunshine City, as they claim they's no other place in the country where they's fewer days when Old Sol don't smile down on Mother Earth, and one of the newspapers gives away all their copies free every day when the sun don't shine. They claim to of only give them away some sixty-odd times in the last eleven years. Another nickname they have got for the town is 'the Poor Man's Palm Beach,' but I guess they's men that comes there that could borrow as much from the bank as some of the Willie boys over to the other Palm Beach.

During our stay we paid a visit to the Lewis Tent City, which is the headquarters for the Tin Can Tourists. But maybe you ain't heard about them. Well, they are an organization that takes their vacation trips by auto and carries everything with them. That is, they bring along their tents to sleep in and cook in and they don't patronize no hotels or cafeterias, but they have got to be bona fide auto campers or they can't belong to the organization.

They tell me they's over 200,000 members to it and they call themselves the Tin Canners on account of most of their food being put up in tin cans. One couple we seen in the Tent City was a couple from Brady, Texas, named Mr. and Mrs. Pence, which the old man is over eighty years of age and they had came in their auto all the way from home, a distance of 1,641 miles. They took five weeks for the trip, Mr. Pence driving the entire distance.

The Tin Canners hails from every State in the Union and in the summer time they visit places like New England and the Great Lakes region, but in the winter the most of them comes to Florida and scatters all over the State. While we was down there, they was a national convention of them at Gainesville, Florida, and they elected a Fredonia, New York, man as their president. His title is Royal Tin Can Opener of the World. They have got a song wrote up which everybody has got to learn it before they are a member:

'The tin can forever! Hurrah, boys! Hurrah!
Up with the tin can! Down with the foe!
We will rally round the campfire, we'll
rally once again,
Shouting, "We auto camp forever!" '

That is something like it. And the members has also got to have a tin can fastened on to the front of their machine.

I asked Mother how she would like to travel around that way and she said:

'Fine, but not with an old rattle brain like you driving.'

'Well,' I said, 'I am eight years younger than this Mr. Pence who drove here from Texas.'

'Yes,' she said, 'but he is old enough to not be skittish.'

You can't get ahead of Mother.

Well, one of the first things we done in St. Petersburg was to go to the Chamber of Commerce and register our names and where we was from as they's great rivalry amongst the different States in regards to the number of their citizens visiting in town and of course our little State don't stand much of a show, but still every little bit helps, as the fella says. All and all, the man told us, they was eleven thousand names registered, Ohio leading with some fifteen hundred-odd and New York State next with twelve hundred. Then come Michigan, Pennsylvania and so on down, with one man each from Cuba and Nevada.

The first night we was there, they was a meeting of the New York-New Jersey Society at the Congregational Church and a man from Ogdensburg, New York State, made the talk. His subject was Rainbow Chasing. He is a Rotarian and a very convicting speaker, though I forget his name.

Our first business, of course, was to find a place to eat and after trying several places we run on to a cafeteria on Central Avenue that suited us up and down. We eat pretty near all our meals there and it averaged about two dollars per day for the two of us, but the food was well cooked and everything nice and clean. A man don't mind paying the price if things is clean and well cooked.

On the third day of February, which is Mother's birthday, we spread ourselves and eat supper at the Poinsettia Hotel and they charged us seventy-five cents for a sirloin steak that wasn't hardly big enough for one.

I said to Mother: 'Well,' I said, 'I guess

it's a good thing every day ain't your birthday or we would be in the poorhouse.'

'No,' says Mother, 'because if every day was my birthday, I would be old enough by this time to of been in my grave long ago.'

You can't get ahead of Mother.

In the hotel they had a card-room where they was several men and ladies playing five hundred and this new fangled whist bridge. We also seen a place where they was dancing, so I asked Mother would she like to trip the light fantastic toe and she said no, she was too old to squirm like you have got to do now days. We watched some of the young folks at it awhile till Mother got disgusted and said we would have to see a good movie to take the taste out of our mouth. Mother is a great movie heroyne and we go twice a week here at home.

But I want to tell you about the Park. The second day we was there we visited the Park, which is a good deal like the one in Tampa, only bigger, and they's more fun goes on here every day than you could shake a stick at. In the middle they's a big bandstand and chairs for the folks to set and listen to the concerts, which they give you music for all tastes, from Dixie up to classical pieces like Hearts and Flowers.

Then all around they's places marked off for different sports and games—chess and checkers and dominoes for folks that enjoys those kind of games, and roque and horseshoes for the nimbler ones. I used to pitch a pretty fair shoe myself, but ain't done much of it in the last twenty years.

Well, anyway, we bought a membership ticket in the club which costs one dollar for the season, and they tell me that up to a couple years ago it was fifty cents, but they had to raise it to keep out the riffraff.

Well, Mother and I put in a great day watching the pitchers and she wanted I should get in the game, but I told her I was all out of practice and would make a fool of myself, though I seen several men pitching who I guess I could take their measure without no practice. However, they was some good pitchers, too, and one boy from Akron, Ohio, who could certainly throw a pretty shoe. They told me it looked like he would win the championship of the United States in the February tournament. We come away a few days before they held that and I never did hear if he win. I forget his name, but he was a clean cut young fella and he has got a brother in Cleveland that's a Rotarian.

Well, we just stood around and watched the different games for two or three days and finally I set down in a checker game with a man named Weaver from Danville, Illinois. He was a pretty fair checker player, but he wasn't no match for me, and I hope that don't sound like bragging. But I always could hold my own on a checker-board and the folks around here will tell you the same thing. I played with this Weaver pretty near all morning for two or three mornings and he beat me one game and the only other time it looked like he had a chance, the noon whistle blowed and we had to quit and go to dinner.

While I was playing checkers, Mother would set and listen to the band, as she loves music, classical or no matter what kind, but anyway she was setting there one day and between selections the woman next to her opened up a conversation. She was a woman about Mother's own age, seventy or seventy-one, and finally she asked Mother's name and Mother told her her name and where she was from and Mother asked her the same question, and who do you think the woman was?

Well, sir, it was the wife of Frank M. Hartsell, the man who was engaged to Mother till I stepped in and cut him out, fifty-two years ago!

Yes, sir!

You can imagine Mother's surprise! And Mrs. Hartsell was surprised, too, when Mother told her she had once been friends with her husband, though Mother didn't say how close friends they had been, or that Mother and I was the cause of Hartsell going out West. But that's what we was. Hartsell left his town a month after the engagement was broke off and ain't never been back since. He had went out to Michigan and become a veterinary, and that is where he had settled down, in Hillsdale, Michigan, and finally married his wife.

Well, Mother screwed up her courage to ask if Frank was still living and Mrs. Hartsell took her over to where they was pitching horse-shoes and there was old Frank, waiting his turn. And he knowed Mother as soon as he seen her, though it was over

fifty years. He said he knowed her by her eyes.

'Why, it's Lucy Frost!' he says, and he throwed down his shoes and quit the game.

Then they come over and hunted me up and I will confess I wouldn't of knowed him. Him and I is the same age to the month, but he seems to show it more, some way. He is balder for one thing. And his beard is all white, where mine has still got a streak of brown in it. The very first thing I said to him, I said:

'Well, Frank, that beard of yours makes me feel like I was back north. It looks like a regular blizzard.'

'Well,' he said, 'I guess yourn would be just as white if you had it dry cleaned.'

But Mother wouldn't stand that.

'Is that so!' she said to Frank. 'Well, Charley ain't had no tobacco in his mouth for over ten years!'

And I ain't!

Well, I excused myself from the checker game and it was pretty close to noon, so we decided to all have dinner together and they was nothing for it only we must try their cafeteria on Third Avenue. It was a little more expensive than ours and not near as good, I thought. I and Mother had about the same dinner we had been having every day and our bill was $1.10. Frank's check was $1.20 for he and his wife. The same meal wouldn't of cost them more than a dollar at our place.

After dinner we made them come up to our house and we all set in the parlor, which the young woman had give us the use of to entertain company. We begun talking over old times and Mother said she was a-scared Mrs. Hartsell would find it tiresome listening to we three talk over old times, but as it turned out they wasn't much chance for nobody else to talk with Mrs. Hartsell in the company. I have heard lots of women that could go it, but Hartsell's wife takes the cake of all the women I ever seen. She told us the family history of everybody in the State of Michigan and bragged for a half hour about her son, who she said is in the drug business in Grand Rapids, and a Rotarian.

When I and Hartsell could get a word in edgeways we joked one another back and forth and I chafed him about being a horse doctor.

'Well, Frank,' I said, 'you look pretty prosperous, so I suppose they's been plenty of glanders around Hillsdale.'

'Well,' he said, 'I've managed to make more than a fair living. But I've worked pretty hard.'

'Yes,' I said, 'and I suppose you get called out all hours of the night to attend births and so on.'

Mother made me shut up.

Well, I thought they wouldn't never go home and I and Mother was in misery trying to keep awake, as the both of us generally always takes a nap after dinner. Finally they went, after we had made an engagement to meet them in the Park the next morning, and Mrs. Hartsell also invited us to come to their place the next night and play five hundred. But she had forgot that they was a meeting of the Michigan Society that evening, so it was not till two evenings later that we had our first card game.

Hartsell and his wife lived in a house on Third Avenue North and had a private setting room besides their bedroom. Mrs. Hartsell couldn't quit talking about their private setting room like it was something wonderful. We played cards with them, with Mother and Hartsell partners against his wife and I. Mrs. Hartsell is a miserable card player and we certainly got the worst of it.

After the game she brought out a dish of oranges and we had to pretend it was just what we wanted, though oranges down there is like a young man's whiskers; you enjoy them at first, but they get to be a pesky nuisance.

We played cards again the next night at our place with the same partners and I and Mrs. Hartsell was beat again. Mother and Hartsell was full of compliments for each other on what a good team they made, but the both of them knowed well enough where the secret of their success laid. I guess all and all we must of played ten different evenings and they was only one night when Mrs. Hartsell and I come out ahead. And that one night wasn't no fault of hern.

When we had been down there about two weeks, we spent one evening as their guest in the Congregational Church, at a social give by the Michigan Society. A talk was made by a man named Bitting of De-

troit, Michigan, on How I was Cured of Story Telling. He is a big man in the Rotarians and give a witty talk.

A woman named Mrs. Oxford rendered some selections which Mrs. Hartsell said was grand opera music, but whatever they was my daughter Edie could of give her cards and spades and not made such a hullaballoo about it neither.

Then they was a ventriloquist from Grand Rapids and a young woman about forty-five years of age that mimicked different kinds of birds. I whispered to Mother that they all sounded like a chicken, but she nudged me to shut up.

After the show we stopped in a drug store and I set up the refreshments and it was pretty close to ten o'clock before we finally turned in. Mother and I would of preferred tending the movies, but Mother said we mustn't offend Mrs. Hartsell, though I asked her had we came to Florida to enjoy ourselves or to just not offend an old chatterbox from Michigan.

I felt sorry for Hartsell one morning. The women folks both had an engagement down to the chiropodist's and I run across Hartsell in the Park and he foolishly offered to play me checkers.

It was him that suggested it, not me, and I guess he repented himself before we had played one game. But he was too stubborn to give up and set there while I beat him game after game and the worst part of it was that a crowd of folks had got in the habit of watching me play and there they all was, looking on, and finally they seen what a fool Frank was making of himself, and they began to chafe him and pass remarks. Like one of them said:

'Who ever told you you was a checker player!'

And:

'You might maybe be good for tiddle-dewinks, but not checkers!'

I almost felt like letting him beat me a couple games. But the crowd would of knowed it was a put up job.

Well, the women folks joined us in the Park and I wasn't going to mention our little game, but Hartsell told about it himself and admitted he wasn't no match for me.

'Well,' said Mrs. Hartsell, 'checkers ain't much of a game anyway, is it?' She said: 'It's more of a children's game, ain't it? At least, I know my boy's children used to play it a good deal.'

'Yes, ma'am,' I said. 'It's a children's game the way your husband plays it, too.'

Mother wanted to smooth things over, so she said:

'Maybe they's other games where Frank can beat you.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Hartsell, 'and I bet he could beat you pitching horse-shoes.'

'Well,' I said, 'I would give him a chance to try, only I ain't pitched a shoe in over sixteen years.'

'Well,' said Hartsell, 'I ain't played checkers in twenty years.'

'You ain't never played it,' I said.

'Anyway,' says Frank, 'Lucy and I is your master at five hundred.'

Well, I could of told him why that was, but had decency enough to hold my tongue.

It had got so now that he wanted to play cards every night and when I or Mother wanted to go to a movie, any one of us would have to pretend we had a headache and then trust to goodness that they wouldn't see us sneak into the theater. I don't mind playing cards when my partner keeps their mind on the game, but you take a woman like Hartsell's wife and how can they play cards when they have got to stop every couple seconds and brag about their son in Grand Rapids?

Well, the New York-New Jersey Society announced that they was goin to give a social evening too and I said to Mother, I said:

'Well, that is one evening when we will have an excuse not to play five hundred.'

'Yes,' she said, 'but we will have to ask Frank and his wife to go to the social with us as they asked us to go to the Michigan social.'

'Well,' I said, 'I had rather stay home than drag that chatterbox everywheres we go.'

So Mother said:

'You are getting too cranky. Maybe she does talk a little too much but she is good hearted. And Frank is always good company.'

So I said:

'I suppose if he is such good company you wished you had of married him.'

Mother laughed and said I sounded like I was jealous. Jealous of a cow doctor!

Anyway we had to drag them along to the social and I will say that we give them a much better entertainment than they had given us.

Judge Lane of Paterson made a fine talk on business conditions and a Mrs. Newell of Westfield imitated birds, only you could really tell what they was the way she done it. Two young women from Red Bank sung a choral selection and we clapped them back and they gave us Home to Our Mountains and Mother and Mrs. Hartsell both had tears in their eyes. And Hartsell, too.

Well, some way or another the chairman got wind that I was there and asked me to make a talk and I wasn't even going to get up, but Mother made me, so I got up and said:

'Ladies and gentlemen,' I said. 'I didn't expect to be called on for a speech on an occasion like this or no other occasion as I do not set myself up as a speech maker, so will have to do the best I can, which I often say is the best anybody can do.'

Then I told them the story about Pat and the motorcycle, using the brogue, and it seemed to tickle them and I told them one or two other stories, but altogether I wasn't on my feet more than twenty or twenty-five minutes and you ought to of heard the clapping and hollering when I set down. Even Mrs. Hartsell admitted that I am quite a speechifier and said if I ever went to Grand Rapids, Michigan, her son would make me talk to the Rotarians.

When it was over, Hartsell wanted we should go to their house and play cards, but his wife reminded him that it was after 9.30 p.m., rather a late hour to start a card game, but he had went crazy on the subject of cards, probably because he didn't have to play partners with his wife. Anyway, we got rid of them and went home to bed.

It was the next morning, when we met over to the Park, that Mrs. Hartsell made the remark that she wasn't getting no exercise so I suggested that why didn't she take part in the roque game.

She said she had not played a game of roque in twenty years, but if Mother would play she would play. Well, at first Mother wouldn't hear of it, but finally consented, more to please Mrs. Hartsell than anything else.

Well, they had a game with a Mrs. Ryan from Eagle, Nebraska, and a young Mrs. Morse from Rutland, Vermont, who Mother had met down to the chiropodist's. Well, Mother couldn't hit a flea and they all laughed at her and I couldn't help from laughing at her myself and finally she quit and said her back was too lame to stoop over. So they got another lady and kept on playing and soon Mrs. Hartsell was the one everybody was laughing at, as she had a long shot to hit the black ball, and as she made the effort her teeth fell out on to the court. I never seen a woman so flustered in my life. And I never heard so much laughing, only Mrs. Hartsell didn't join in and she was madder than a hornet and wouldn't play no more, so the game broke up.

Mrs. Hartsell went home without speaking to nobody, but Hartsell stayed around and finally he said to me, he said:

'Well, I played you checkers the other day and you beat me bad and now what do you say if you and me play a game of horseshoes?'

I told him I hadn't pitched a shoe in sixteen years, but Mother said:

'Go ahead and play. You used to be good at it and maybe it will come back to you.'

Well, to make a long story short, I give in. I oughtn't to of never tried it, as I hadn't pitched a shoe in sixteen years, and I only done it to humor Hartsell.

Before we started, Mother patted me on the back and told me to do my best, so we started in and I seen right off that I was in for it, as I hadn't pitched a shoe in sixteen years and didn't have my distance. And besides, the plating had wore off the shoes so that they was points right where they stuck into my thumb and I hadn't throwed more than two or three times when my thumb was raw and it pretty near killed me to hang on to the shoe, let alone pitch it.

Well, Hartsell throws the awkwardest shoe I ever seen pitched and to see him pitch you wouldn't think he would ever come nowheres near, but he is also the luckiest pitcher I ever seen and he made some pitches where the shoe lit five and six feet short and then schoonered up and was a ringer. They's no use trying to beat that kind of luck.

They was a pretty fair size crowd watching us and four or five other ladies besides Mother, and it seems like, when Hartsell pitches, he has got to chew and it kept the ladies on the anxious seat as he don't seem to care which way he is facing when he leaves go.

You would think a man as old as him would of learnt more manners.

Well, to make a long story short, I was just beginning to get my distance when I had to give up on account of my thumb, which I showed it to Hartsell and he seen I couldn't go on, as it was raw and bleeding. Even if I could of stood it to go on myself, Mother wouldn't of allowed it after she seen my thumb. So anyway I quit and Hartsell said the score was nineteen to six, but I don't know what it was. Or don't care, neither.

Well, Mother and I went home and I said I hoped we was through with the Hartsells as I was sick and tired of them, but it seemed like she had promised we would go over to their house that evening for another game of their everlasting cards.

Well, my thumb was giving me considerable pain and I felt kind of out of sorts and I guess maybe I forgot myself, but anyhow, when we was about through playing Hartsell made the remark that he wouldn't never lose a game of cards if he could always have Mother for a partner.

So I said:

'Well, you had a chance fifty years ago to always have her for a partner, but you wasn't man enough to keep her.'

I was sorry the minute I had said it and Hartsell didn't know what to say and for once his wife couldn't say nothing. Mother tried to smooth things over by making the remark that I must of had something stronger than tea or I wouldn't talk so silly. But Mrs. Hartsell had froze up like an iceberg and hardly said good night to us and I bet her and Frank put in a pleasant hour after we was gone.

As we was leaving, Mother said to him: 'Never mind Charley's nonsense, Frank. He is just mad because you beat him all hollow pitching horse-shoes and playing cards.'

She said that to make up for my slip, but at the same time she certainly riled me. I tried to keep ahold of myself, but as soon as we was out of the house she had to open up the subject and begun to scold me for the break I had made.

Well, I wasn't in no mood to be scolded. So I said:

'I guess he is such a wonderful pitcher and card player that you wished you had married him.'

'Well,' she said, 'at least he ain't a baby to give up pitching because his thumb has got a few scratches.'

'And how about you,' I said, 'making a fool of yourself on the roque court and then pretending your back is lame and you can't play no more!'

'Yes,' she said, 'but when you hurt your thumb I didn't laugh at you, and why did you laugh at me when I sprained my back?'

'Who could help from laughing!' I said.

'Well,' she said, 'Frank Hartsell didn't laugh.'

'Well,' I said, 'why didn't you marry him?'

'Well,' said Mother, 'I almost wished I had!'

'And I wished so, too!' I said.

'I'll remember that!' said Mother, and that's the last word she said to me for two days.

We seen the Hartsells the next day in the Park and I was willing to apologize, but they just nodded to us. And a couple days later we heard they had left for Orlando, where they have got relatives.

I wished they had went there in the first place.

Mother and I made it up setting on a bench.

'Listen, Charley,' she said. 'This is our Golden Honeymoon and we don't want the whole thing spoilt with a silly old quarrel.'

'Well,' I said, 'did you mean that about wishing you had married Hartsell?'

'Of course not,' she said, 'that is, if you didn't mean that you wished I had, too.'

So I said:

'I was just tired and all wrought up. I thank God you chose me instead of him as they's no other woman in the world who I could of lived with all these years.'

'How about Mrs. Hartsell?' says Mother.

'Good gracious!' I said. 'Imagine being married to a woman that plays five hundred

like she does and drops her teeth on the roque court!'

'Well,' said Mother, 'it wouldn't be no worse than being married to a man that expectorates towards ladies and is such a fool in a checker game.'

So I put my arm around her shoulder and she stroked my hand and I guess we got kind of spoony.

They was two days left of our stay in St. Petersburg and the next to the last day Mother introduced me to a Mrs. Kendall from Kingston, Rhode Island, who she had met at the chiropodist's.

Mrs. Kendall made us acquainted with her husband, who is in the grocery business. They have got two sons and five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. One of their sons lives in Providence and is way up in the Elks as well as a Rotarian.

We found them very congenial people and we played cards with them the last two nights we was there. They was both experts and I only wished we had met them sooner instead of running into the Hartsells. But the Kendalls will be there again next winter and we will see more of them, that is, if we decide to make the trip again.

We left the Sunshine City on the eleventh day of February, at 11 a.m. This give us a day trip through Florida and we seen all the country we had passed through at night on the way down.

We reached Jacksonville at 7 p.m. and pulled out of there at 8.10 p.m. We reached Fayetteville, North Carolina, at nine o'clock the following morning, and reached Washington, D.C., at 6.30 p.m., laying over there half an hour.

We reached Trenton at 11.01 p.m. and had wired ahead to my daughter and son-in-law and they met us at the train and we went to their house and they put us up for the night. John would of made us stay up all night, telling about our trip, but Edie said we must be tired and made us go to bed. That's my daughter.

The next day we took our train for home and arrived safe and sound, having been gone just one month and a day.

Here comes Mother, so I guess I better shut up. 1924

LOLA RIDGE
1883–1941

FACES

A LATE snow beats
With cold white fists upon the tenements—
Hurriedly drawing blinds and shutters,
Like tall old slatterns
Pulling aprons about their heads.

Lights slanting out of Mott Street
Gibber out,
Or dribble through bar-room slits,
Anonymous shapes
Conniving behind shuttered panes
Caper and disappear . . .
Where the Bowery
Is throbbing like a fistula
Back of her ice-scabbed fronts.

Livid faces
Glimmer in furtive doorways,
Or spill out of the black pockets of
alleys,
Smears of faces like muddied beads,
Making a ghastly rosary
The night mumbles over
And the snow with its devilish and silken
whisper . . .
Patrolling arcs
Blowing shrill blasts over the Bread Line
Stalk them as they pass,
Silent as though accouched of the
darkness,
And the wind noses among them
Like a skunk
That roots about the heart . . .

Colder:
And the Elevated slams upon the silence
Like a ponderous door.
Then all is still again,
Save for the wind fumbling over
The emptily swaying faces—
The wind rummaging
Like an old Jew . . .

Faces in glimmering rows . . .
(No sign of the abject life—
Not even a blasphemy . . .)
But the spindle legs keep time
To a limping rhythm,

And the shadows twitch upon the snow
Convulsively—
As though death played
With some ungainly dolls.
1917 1918

SONS OF BELIAL

1

We are old,
Old as song.
Before Rome was
Or Cyrene.
Mad nights knew us
And old men's wives.
We knew who spilled the sacred oil
For young-gold harlots of the town. . . .
We knew where the peacocks went
And the white doe for sacrifice.

2

We were the sons of Belial.
One black night
Centuries ago
We beat at a door
In Gilead. . . .
We took the Levite's concubine
We plucked her hands from off the door. . . .
We choked the cry into her throat
And stuck the stars among her hair. . . .
We glimpsed the madly swaying stars
Between the rhythms of her hair . . .
And all our mute and separate strings
Swelled in a raging symphony. . . .
Our blood sang pæans
All that night
Till dawn fell like a wounded swan
Upon the fields of Gilead.

3

We are old. . . .
Old as song. . . .
We are dumb song.
(*Epics tingled*
In our blood
When we haled Hypatia
Over the stones
In Alexandria.)

Could we loose
The wild rhythms clinched in us. . . .
March in bands of troubadours. . . .
We would be of gentle mood.
When Christ healed us
Who were dumb—
When he freed our shut-in song—
We strewed green palms
At his pale feet . . .
We sang hosannas
In Jerusalem.
And all our fumbling voices blent
In a brief white harmony.
(*But a mightier song*
Was in us pent
When we nailed Christ
To a four-armed tree.)

4

We are young.
When we rise up with singing roots,
(*Warm rains washing*
Gutters of Berlin
Where we stamped Rosa . . . Luxemburg
On a night in spring.)
Rhythms skurry in our blood.
Little nimble rats of song
In our feet run crazily
And all is dust . . . we trample . . . on.

Mad nights when we make ritual
(*Feet running before the sleuth-light . . .*
And the smell of burnt flesh
By a flame-ringed hut
In Missouri,
Sweet as on Rome's pyre. . . .)
We make ropes do rigadoons
With copper feet that jig on air
We are the Mob. . . .
Old as song.
Tyre knew us
And Israel.
1919 1920

REVEILLE

Come forth, you workers!
Let the fires go cold—
Let the iron spill out, out of the troughs—
Let the iron run wild
Like a red bramble on the floors—
Leave the mill and the foundry and the mine
And the shrapnel lying on the wharves—
Leave the desk and the shuttle and the loom—
Come,
With your ashen lives,
Your lives like dust in your hands.

I call upon you, workers.
It is not yet light
But I beat upon your doors.
You say you await the Dawn
But I say you are the Dawn.
Come, in your irresistible unspent force
And make new light upon the mountains.

You have turned deaf ears to others—
Me you shall hear.
Out of the mouths of turbines,
Out of the turgid throats of engines,
Over the whistling steam,
You shall hear me shrilly piping.
Your mills I shall enter like the wind,
And blow upon your hearts,
Kindling the slow fire.

They think they have tamed you, workers—
Beaten you to a tool
To scoop up hot honor
Till it be cool—
But out of the passion of the red frontiers
A great flower trembles and burns and glows
And each of its petals is a people.

Come forth, you workers—
Clinging to your stable
And your wisp of warm straw—
Let the fires grow cold,
Let the iron spill out of the troughs,
Let the iron run wild
Like a red bramble on the floors. . . .

As our forefathers stood on the prairies
So let us stand in a ring,
Let us tear up their prisons like grass
And beat them to barricades—
Let us meet the fire of their guns
With a greater fire,
Till the birds shall fly to the mountains
For one safe bough.

1918 1920

FROM FIREHEAD

LIGHT SONG [1]

ON the taut string He was the night bowed somberly its ancient music;
And He, attuned to diapasons,
Heard in the conch shell of darkness the murmur of many peoples.

He felt strange fluxions in him and tender and sharp vibrations;
Mob cries, the kisses of the whip that were as mouths pressed too close, the faltered
Kiss of Judas, faintly malodorous like a jonquil that had lain too long on the breast of a dead man,
Chill yet on his cheek; the warm kiss of Mary and pressure of John's bright head
All blent in a vast music, not again
To sound apart in any separate strain
But move in the clear whole wherein He whirled
Incandescent, in the pillared flame
Of music that is time made audible
With all its massed formations high in air
And wheeling columns streaming out of sight—
To what bright conquest or achieved despair
Or flaming end past compass or compute?
Music, over time made absolute,
Holding eternal, in the light that moves
From sun to sun, an octave in its flight
The little hatreds and the chiming loves.

Light grew in him like a stalk . . . up and up . . . to meet the far shining,
As it was in the beginning . . . the first stammering upon the waters . . .
He expanded, treading upon space, through him sweetly flowing
The effluvia in which all things move; He saw
Earth watching out of her seas, great eyes lidded in darkness; sluggishly lifting
The night that drooped upon them, earth supine

[1] Miss Ridge says: 'The passage, from "He," the first book of *Firehead*, is not, of course, given in its entirety or even in the exact form in which it appears in the long poem. For in order to give some kind of unity to the fragment presented I have separated the central light-theme from its context, very much as one might draw a single white-thread from a multi-colored weave.

'*Firehead* was commenced in August 1927, shortly after my return from Boston, where like many others I had gone to protest against the legal killing of Sacco and Vanzetti—who, as most of us know, were falsely accused and died for a crime of which they were innocent. In the days following I wrote a number of verses about the men, and then started to go on with some other work. Suddenly one day, and without premeditation, I wrote some lyrics on the theme of the Crucifixion. Only then did I begin to plan the structure of the poem and to study my background.' Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets* (N.Y., 1933), 52–53.

In the vast equations of the night that
upbore her as on immense wings;
He heard
Out of the unfathomable arches and
stretches of the night
The moments falling. Summers endlessly
uncoiling from off the golden
Spool of the sun and dawns like barefoot
virgins, with the early
Wonder in their eyes, passed him in silvery
procession . . .
He, privy with the delicate speech of
things, knowing their infinite
gestures, telling
Trees by the differing cadences of leaves
that prattle to the ear sweetly of no
thing . . .
Knowing the vanity of a rose . . . and how
stone
Cries at the emergence of great waters . . .
Heard now the feet of centuries . . . in
these
Enormous footfalls other sounds were lost.
It was a silent world,
Until into its silence that was as the heart of
a song or as the quiet at the core of
hurricanes,

A word out-leapt, an overgrowth
A bloody hand shaped like his own,
To a separate life from out his mouth.
(The wind blew salt in each nail-hole
It fanned into a living coal)

In vast semi-circle thrown
Sleeping lay the curved horizon,
Till the hand that spanned the zone,
The streaming hand shaped like his own,
Seized and swung it like a scythe.

He saw the spinning blade divide
The ancient body of the night,
A humming scimitar it cleft
The blue deep parts within her nave
No other vaulting thing had reft
And plunged in some high fountain-head
That trumpeted with light.

Light gushed out of the rift and made
A radiance upon the mountains,
Light supernal, turning the rocks to fire,
Holding the seas before it like a glass,
Compelling to its own fabulous desire
The small pure waters of his sight
So that for a moment the Omnipotent,
Blazoning his face above the mountains,
Might look therein and be made glad;

Light omnivorous and without mercy
Consuming all things for fuel—
Denying no toad, beast, man, fowl, worm—
Seizing, transfixing the mean norm,
Leaving it starrily, as it left Peter
Pierced with the white crow of dawn,
In the arrested moment like a spear
To remain without falling and without
flight,
A cynosure to burn forever there
Impaled on the implacable light.

Light making bright things its own,
Implicit in it all dark gestations
Of life that terribly flowers and burns again
to the white bone;
Light no god might blow out with his
jealous breath
Nor the chained mountains stamp on with
a ponderous foot,
Informing the night's arteries, swelling the
great hill-roots,
Down,
Full veins of earth, purpling the dim
strata,
Down
Through the dark declivities, touching the
riant fire under the world . . .

Until his spirit merging into the light's
excess
Grew one with that which fed on it . . .
Light, falling on Judea, smiting her rocks to
song . . .
All things resolving into light and light into
love . . . love denying
No toad, beast, man, fowl, worm . . .
In one song of monstrous adoration.
1927–1929 1929

FROM VIA IGNIS

I

THOU, multi-one, whose contours none
may mark
In spinning whole, for the brief shapes
which thrust
Their wilding heads from ferment of this
dust
Thou leavenest with tumultuous spark,
Art all-equating; no offending part
From part divided but has stance in thee.

The flame consuming and the smoking heart
Have place in thy shining advocacy.

Thou, who art termless only in degree
More than the lightnings that of thee suspire,
Over the lilies and the working grain
And the rumorous epoch of the brain,
Shalt pass with the arrogant caste of fire—
One in the orders of eternity.

3

O lovely Light, look on thy ray perverse!
That makes a puny transit of the night
The generations of the suns traverse.
What star shall be its period of flight?
On what horizon shall the light constrain,
To move, in thy design, in shining order
With docile bodies of the fire, this vain
Brief ray addict to rapine and to murder?

Is there no peace, but heritage of wars,
Here, where we drive to impact on the dark,
For us, thy progeny, of the fire born
To weave our broken rhythms in the stars—
Is there no rest for this infuriate spark
And the blood singing to the ancient horn?

7

O Light, forsake not thy adoring hills,
Belovèd of the mornings, earliest
To stretch from out the longing of her breast
In flight forever theeward. Earth fulfills
Her pact with thee; let not the void engulf
This goodly loam. Though its contentious brood
Die in some final dissonance, each self
Hath fumbled toward thee in his solitude.

Though none be left, some spring when lilacs close,
Petitioning in fragrance, incomplete,
Earth shall attend thee; as in first of days,
In some new Eden with the loam at heat,
Bring forth new eyes to widen on a rose
That could not bear its beauty without praise.

8

For thee, the lion and the burning dove,
Earth wears the rose of morning on her brow
With the old iridescent luster. Now
The prostrate horizons toward thee move.
Thy rays attach to each pale trancèd sense,
In bond to shining, until flowers of pain
Of thee begot, grow in all innocence
Through this intrepid dust to light again.

O fount of mornings, functioning through time
In dateless ardors, this—before the sea
Conceived or rock delivered without cry—
Was in the covenant. The awkward slime
Miscarried a long age till in the first eye
The light streamed upward to identity.

9

Is not this April of our brief desire
That stirs the robins to a twittering
But waste vibration of some vaster spring
Which moves the void to utterance. This fire
Once babbled on our hills (that have forgot
Their fiery accents) when the earth was cleft
And flooding in her canyons, raging hot,
Ere this intricate, fair design was left.

Long, long before strange creatures overhead
Cast wheeling shadows on the desert, wings
Flamed from out the mountains; radiant things,
That stood erect upon each blazing rim
Of horned horizons, shone like seraphim
And shook the earth with their enormous tread.

13

To leap and having leapt touch privity
Of light . . . and reel back from its edge and fall;
This is to be more humbled than a wall
Detowered and left bare before the high-
Browed mornings without loophole. Thus the quest
Ends and is begun; the new blood flowing
To lift the sagging spirit in the breast.
But that which shed upon the dark of knowing

A lucent beam has sped on, as a ray
Of sunlight when the leaf is shorn away
That gave it pattern, to be resolved and soar
Where no clipt vision may identify,
Nor fledgling hand assemble any more
Its lambent dust in form before the eye.

1935

SARA TEASDALE

1884–1933

I SHALL NOT CARE

WHEN I am dead and over me bright
April
Shakes out her rain-drenched
hair,
Tho' you should lean above me broken-
hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are
peaceful
When rain bends down the bough,
And I shall be more silent and cold-
hearted
Than you are now.

1911 1915

THE ANSWER

WHEN I go back to earth
And all my joyous body
Puts off the red and white
That once had been so proud,
If men should pass above
With false and feeble pity,
My dust will find a voice
To answer them aloud:

'Be still, I am content,
Take back your poor compassion,
Joy was a flame in me
Too steady to destroy;
Lithe as a bending reed
Loving the storm that sways her—
I found more joy in sorrow
Than you could find in joy.'

1914 1915

MORNING

I WENT out on an April morning
All alone, for my heart was high,
I was a child of the shining meadow,
I was a sister of the sky.

There in the windy flood of morning
Longing lifted its weight from me,
Lost as a sob in the midst of cheering,
Swept as a sea-bird out to sea.

1914 1915

I REMEMBERED

THERE never was a mood of mine,
Gay or heart-broken, luminous or dull,
But you could ease me of its fever
And give it back to me more beautiful.

In many another soul I broke the bread,
And drank the wine and played the
happy guest,
But I was lonely, I remembered you;
The heart belongs to him who knew it
best.

1920 1920

'LET IT BE FORGOTTEN'

LET it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing
gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
In a long forgotten snow.

1919 1920

ARCTURUS IN AUTUMN

WHEN, in the gold October dusk, I saw you
near to setting,
Arcturus, bringer of spring,
Lord of the summer nights, leaving us now
in autumn,
Having no pity on our withering;

Oh then I knew at last that my own autumn
was upon me,
I felt it in my blood,
Restless as dwindling streams that still
remember
The music of their flood.

There in the thickening dark a wind-bent
tree above me
Loosed its last leaves in flight—
I saw you sink and vanish, pitiless Arcturus,
You will not stay to share our lengthening
night. 1926

WITTER BYNNER

1881–

GRENSTONE RIVER

THINGS you heard that blessed be
You shall tell to men like me:

What you heard my lover say
In the golden yesterday,
Leaving me a childish heart,
Glad to revel, quick to start.

And though she awhile is gone
And I come today alone,
'Tis the self-same whisper slips
Through your ripple from her lips.

Long shall she and I be dead,
While you whisper what she said;
You, when I no word can give her,
Shall forever whisper, river:

Things you heard that blessed be,
Telling them to men like me.

1905 1907

GRIEVE NOT FOR BEAUTY

GRIEVE not for the invisible transported
brow
On which like leaves the dark hair grew,
Nor for the lips of laughter that are now
Laughing inaudibly in sun and dew,
Nor for the limbs that, fallen low
And seeming faint and slow,
Shall alter and renew
Their shape and hue
Like birches white before the moon
Or a young apple-tree
In spring or the round sea
And shall pursue
More ways of swiftness than the swallow
dips
Among . . . and find more winds than
ever blew
The straining sails of unimpeded ships!

1910 1916

A TENT SONG

TILL we watch the last low star,
Let us love and let us take
Of each other all we are.
On some morning with that star
One of us shall lie awake,
Lonely for the other's sake.

1910 1917

PASSING NEAR

I HAD not till today been sure,
But now I know:
Dead men and women come and go
Under the pure
Sequestering snow.

And under the autumnal fern
And carmine bush,
Under the shadow of a thrush,
They move and learn;
And in the rush

Of all the mountain-brooks that wake
With upward fling,
To brush and break the loosening cling
Of ice, they shake
The air with spring!

I had not till today been sure,
But now I know:
Dead youths and maidens come and go
Beneath the lure
And undertow

Of cities, under every street
Of empty stress,
Or heart of an adulteress—
Each loud retreat
Of lovelessness.

For only by the stir we make
In passing near
Are we confused and cannot hear
The ways they take
Certain and clear.

Today I happened in a place
Where all around
Was silence; until, underground,
I heard a pace,
A happy sound—

And people there, whom I could see,
Tenderly smiled,

While under a wood of silent wild
Antiquity
Wandered a child,

Leading his mother by the hand,
Happy and slow,
Teaching his mother where to go
Under the snow . . .
Not even now I understand.
I only know.

1915 1917

TILES

CHINESE magicians had conjured their chance,
And they hunted, with their hooded birds of glee,
The heat that rises from the summer-grass
And shakes against the sea.
And when they had caught a wide expanse
In nets of careful wizardry,
They coloured it like molten glass
For roofs, imperially,
With blue from a cavern, green from a morass
And yellow from weeds in the heart of the sea,
And they laid long rows on the dwellings of romance
In perfect alchemy—
And before they ascended like a peal of brass,
They and their tiptoeing hawks of glee
Had topped all China with a roof that slants
And shakes against the sea.

1917 1920

THE OLD MEN AND THE YOUNG MEN

SAID the old men to the young men,
'Who will take arms to be free?'
Said the young men to the old men,
'We.'

Said the old men to the young men,
'It is finished. You may go.'
Said the young men to the old men,
'No.'

Said the old men to the young men,
'What is there left to do?'
Said the young men to the old men,
'You.'

1919 1925

A DANCE FOR RAIN[1]

(COCHITI)

YOU may never see rain, unless you see
A dance for rain at Cochiti,
Never hear thunder in the air
Unless you hear the thunder there,
Nor know the lightning in the sky
If there's no pole to know it by.
They dipped the pole just as I came,
And I can never be the same
Since those feathers gave my brow
The touch of wind that's on it now,
Bringing over the arid lands
Butterfly gestures from Hopi hands
And holding me, till earth shall fail,
As close to earth as a fox's tail.
I saw them, naked, dance in line
Before the candles of a leafy shrine:
Before a saint in a Christian dress
I saw them dance their holiness,
I saw them reminding him all day long
That death is weak and life is strong
And urging the fertile earth to yield
Seed from the loin and seed from the field.
A feather in the hair and a shell at the throat
Were lifting and falling with every note
Of the chorus-voices and the drum,
Calling for the rain to come.
A fox on the back, and shaken on the thigh
Rain-cloth woven from the sky,
And under the knee a turtle-rattle
Clacking with the toes of sheep and cattle—
These were the men, their bodies painted
Earthen, with a white rain slanted;
These were the men, a windy line,
Their elbows green with a growth of pine.
And in among them, close and slow,
Women moved, the way things grow,

1 'Cochiti is a village of Pueblo Indians, whose inhabitants perform each summer rituals which we call dances but which are actually stylized religious ceremonies or prayer dances for rain. It is one of these which I have recorded in my poem, and the events recorded actually happened: the sudden coming of so much rain in the midst of the dance that it formed a lake in the village plaza, into which the koshares, or delight makers—dancers representing the spirits of the dead who return to encourage and inspirit the living—plunged and rolled with frenzied acknowledgment to the gods. Although nominally Catholic, our Indians have been permitted to amalgamate the elements of their old religion with the new; and the old religion would seem, despite their tolerant acceptance of the new, to be far the closer to their marrow.' Author's note.

With a mesa-tablet on the head
And a little grassy creeping tread
And with sprays of pine moved back and forth,
While the dance of the men blew from the north,
Blew from the south and east and west
Over the field and over the breast.
And the heart was beating in the drum,
Beating for the rain to come.
Dead men out of earlier lives,
Leaving their graves, leaving their wives,
Were partly flesh and partly clay,
And their heads were corn that was dry and gray.
They were ghosts of men and once again
They were dancing like a ghost of rain;
For the spirits of men, the more they eat,
Have happier hands and lighter feet,
And the better they dance the better they know
How to make corn and children grow.
And so in Cochiti that day,
They slowly put the sun away
And they made a cloud and they made it break
And they made it rain for the children's sake.
And they never stopped the song or the drum
Pounding for the rain to come.
The rain made many suns to shine,
Golden bodies in a line
With leaping feather and swaying pine.
And the brighter the bodies, the brighter the rain
Where thunder heaped it on the plain.
Arroyos had been empty, dry,
But now were running with the sky;
And the dancers' feet were in a lake,
Dancing for the people's sake.
And the hands of a ghost had made a cup
For scooping handfuls of water up;
And he poured it into a ghostly throat,
And he leaped and waved with every note
Of the dancers' feet and the songs of the drum
That had called the rain and made it come.
For this was not a god of wood,
This was a god whose touch was good,
You could lie down in him and roll
And wet your body and wet your soul;
For this was not a god in a book,
This was a god that you tasted and took
Into a cup that you made with your hands,
Into your children and into your lands—
This was a god that you could see,
Rain, rain, in Cochiti!

1924 1925

ELINOR WYLIE

1885–1928

FROM MR. HODGE AND MR. HAZARD

SEPULCHRAL MOTH [1]

MR. Hazard's liveliness had fled away in spectral laughter long before he had cracked a single walnut for the children or refused a single glass of Mr. Hartleigh's port. Annamaria might have forgiven him for not drinking his soup, for then he was talking rather wittily about 'Yarrow Revisited,' but it was impossible to forgive him for not eating his dessert, for then he was silent and listless while Hartleigh chattered about reform. Mr. Hazard seemed to have lost his appetite for politics together with his appetite for almonds and raisins. His elegance remained to him, but it was a graveyard elegance little to Annamaria's florid taste. 'A moth of which a coffin might have been the chrysalis'; someone had written that from Venice in a letter to Mr. Peacock. Perhaps the writer had been thinking of gondolas, but to Annamaria's mind the words fitted Mr. Hazard like a long black cloak.

'Bitter,' said Annamaria to herself regretfully, 'bitter as gall. And I can remember him when he was the most affectionate, open-hearted boy in the world, with such pretty manners too, and so grateful for the little kindnesses we were able to show him when we lived in the Vale of Health.'

'Hazard,' said Mr. Hartleigh to his friend, 'I think you ought to go back to

1 The selection is Chapter 9 from Book I of *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard, Collected Prose of Elinor Wylie* (N.Y., 1933),675–79.

Spain; the climate of England does not suit you at all. It never did, my dear fellow.'

Mr. Hazard glanced at Mr. Hartleigh with a quick suspicion that he was being impertinent. An affectionate, open-hearted boy would never have harboured this suspicion for an instant, but perhaps while Mr. Hazard's hair had been changing from bronze into silver, the virgin gold of his heart had been mixed with a sad alloy. If a heart is open, iron may very easily enter it, to alter the first purity of its metal.

But even the new Mr. Hazard, whose heart was sealed and seared with fire, could not long suspect Mr. Hartleigh of impertinence. The looming eyes were shabby brown velvet like a pair of bat's-wings. They were too soft for Mr. Hazard's irritable taste; too kind by half, he called them to himself, yet not so kind as Mr. Hartleigh. Mr. Hazard answered him politely, but his voice was a plucked fiddle-string of impatience.

'I cannot go back to Spain,' said Mr. Hazard, 'until I have seen certain people whom I hope to meet in England.'

Both Annamaria and Mr. Hartleigh jumped to the comfortable conclusion that he meant his father and sisters, and even possibly his daughter. His other daughter was dead, of course; dead long since, in a vanished September, and the eldest boy, the one whom his father had taken, was dead of a decline these seven years. The second boy, he who had been so dear to Mr. Hazard, had lain quietly in his grave for so long that only Mr. Hazard remembered that he would have been seventeen years old had he lived. So, since his wife and Lionel were in San Sebastian, and since he had already seen Mr. Piggott and Mr. Bird, Annamaria and Hartleigh fell back on the soft cushioned thought that Mr. Hazard must mean his father, and thence were lulled to a dream of reconciliation and filial joy.

In spite of the sound but inexpensive port now warming their vitals, their hearts would have withered in their bosoms with pure horror had they suspected the truth. Mr. Hazard had no hope of meeting his father, or even the most broadminded of his sisters. It was precisely these same dead children whom Mr. Hazard so improbably hoped to meet before leaving England.

Not all the port and brandy in Annamaria's best cut-glass decanters could have removed the chill from their hearts could they have seen this hope within the secret mind of Mr. Hazard. But, even supposing that his mind had suddenly become transparent to their eyes, they would certainly have been so dazzled and amazed that this flying hope must have escaped them. Against the interwoven and concentric circles of his thought, against the colours of fire and crystal which informed its moons and stars, they would surely in their amazement have mistaken this hope for a darting bird or a dead leaf. It must have escaped them, even as it escaped them now in Mr. Hazard's few and casual words.

Deliberately he veiled his eyes against their wonder; he did not speak again for several long minutes. Annamaria was annoyed; she had taken a great deal of pains with the dinner, and had gone to the trouble of making the trifle herself. Mr. Hazard had eaten nothing to speak of, but that was no reason why he should not speak at all. He might have spoken about politics or literature, or the green April leaves waving like seaweed in the pool of the evening sky.

'Then you had better have a month in the country,' said Mr. Hartleigh; he said it as he might have said: 'Then you had better have some hot whisky and water,' and indeed he thought of the country as a medicinal tonic rather than a spring of natural delight, for he was a true Cockney.

'I shall need a month, or even two months,' said Mr. Hazard carelessly; he did not trouble to conceal his secret plan, for he knew that the influenza had done it for him. No one could possibly suspect Mr. Hazard of going to the country to chase wild geese or ghostly swans while he remained so excessively thin. To anyone with an ounce of common sense it must appear that Mr. Hazard was going to the country to eat butter and eggs, or new green peas and ducklings.

'The seaside, I suppose?' asked Annamaria, with kindly interest. 'You wouldn't like Brighton?'

'No,' said Mr. Hazard; the exquisite finality of the word was like a soundless

charge of gunpowder to demolish the sea-front and lay the pavilion in ruins.

'The true pastoral country will be your best restorative,' said Mr. Hartleigh. 'The valleys and the verdant hills, the apple blossoms and the lilacs.' Mr. Hartleigh saw no reason why a medicinal tonic should not be flavoured with honey and the extracted juice of flowers.

'Doubtless,' said Mr. Hazard; courtesy drove him to a dissyllable, but he would have preferred a shorter word, or, better still, to be silent. It was too much trouble to unravel the spliced ends of the nerves which bound his body to his brain, but he was either very much bored or very much wearied by the Hartleighs' conversation. Already his laziness was cracking almonds instead of walnuts for the children, and now he began to make a neat and idle list of words of one syllable which might be employed in decent society. 'Yes'; 'no'; 'quite'; 'ah'; 'oh'; 'still' (this might be cleverly prolonged); 'well' (the same rule applied); 'thanks' (that was slightly vulgar); 'so' (that was Germanic); 'good' (excellent); 'but' (French and affected; a shrug was implicit). Really, reflected Mr. Hazard above the litter of papery almond shells upon his plate, it was disgraceful, his native tongue's poverty in those polite monosyllables which may save the weariest breath to cool the bitterest porridge.

The room was a cube of hot bright air, moored fast among the thinner airs of twilight. It did not float, as the trees' branches floated and waved visibly in the green element above them, a sky like a lake reversed, grained and patterned like the surface of water, crossed by cool streams of radiance from the west. The room lay heavy and immovable like a drowned hulk at the bottom of this pool of ether; it did not hang suspended like the tree-tops, it was hopelessly weighed down by the soft imponderable air. It lay like a sunken ship, solid, painted with shining phosphorescence. The evening, so light over the tree-tops, was heavy enough to press upon the room, to crush its thick bright atmosphere closer and closer upon Mr. Hazard's mind. The flame of the lamp and the more gaseous flame of the fire, the dust spangling the bars of brightness with innumerable golden notes, these were emanations too difficult to breathe, too hot and dense for the delicate rhythm of breathing. Mr. Hazard thought how pleasant it would be if only he might be allowed to lift the black marble clock from the mantelpiece and hurl it through the shut window. The glittering splinters of glass would be neither so thin nor so sharp as the April air rushing in through the broken pane. Of course even to open the window in the old-fashioned way would be better than nothing, but Annamaria would be sure to shut it again. She would remind Mr. Hazard that he ought to be careful; she would pull the shawl about her shoulders and talk about toothache.

'I'll write to you, Hartleigh,' said Mr. Hazard. 'I'll send you an address when I write. Annamaria, I do not know how to thank you for your kindness. . . .'

1928

BEAUTY

SAY not of Beauty she is good,
Or aught but beautiful,
Or sleek to doves' wings of the wood
Her wild wings of a gull.

Call her not wicked; that word's touch
Consumes her like a curse;
But love her not too much, too much,
For that is even worse.

O, she is neither good nor bad,
But innocent and wild!
Enshrine her and she dies, who had
The hard heart of a child.

1921

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

AVOID the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

1921

WILD PEACHES

1

WHEN the world turns completely upside down
You say we'll emigrate to the Eastern Shore
Aboard a river-boat from Baltimore;
We'll live among wild peach trees, miles from town,
You'll wear a coonskin cap, and I a gown
Homespun, dyed butternut's dark gold colour.
Lost, like your lotus-eating ancestor,
We'll swim in milk and honey till we drown.

The winter will be short, the summer long,
The autumn amber-hued, sunny and hot,
Tasting of cider and of scuppernong;
All seasons sweet, but autumn best of all.
The squirrels in their silver fur will fall
Like falling leaves, like fruit, before your shot.

2

The autumn frosts will lie upon the grass
Like bloom on grapes of purple-brown and gold.
The misted early mornings will be cold;
The little puddles will be roofed with glass.
The sun, which burns from copper into brass,
Melts these at noon, and makes the boys unfold
Their knitted mufflers; full as they can hold,
Fat pockets dribble chestnuts as they pass.

Peaches grow wild, and pigs can live in clover;
A barrel of salted herrings lasts a year;
The spring begins before the winter's over.
By February you may find the skins
Of garter snakes and water moccasins
Dwindled and harsh, dead-white and cloudy-clear.

3

When April pours the colours of a shell
Upon the hills, when every little creek
Is shot with silver from the Chesapeake
In shoals new-minted by the ocean swell,
When strawberries go begging, and the sleek
Blue plums lie open to the blackbird's beak,
We shall live well—we shall live very well.

The months between the cherries and the peaches
Are brimming cornucopias which spill
Fruits red and purple, sombre-bloomed and black;
Then, down rich fields and frosty river beaches
We'll trample bright persimmons, while you kill
Bronze partridge, speckled quail, and canvasback.

4

Down to the Puritan marrow of my bones
There's something in this richness that I hate.
I love the look, austere, immaculate,
Of landscapes drawn in pearly monotones.
There's something in my very blood that owns
Bare hills, cold silver on a sky of slate,
A thread of water, churned to milky spate
Streaming through slanted pastures fenced with stones.

I love those skies, thin blue or snowy gray,
Those fields sparse-planted, rendering meagre sheaves;
That spring, briefer than apple-blossom's breath,
Summer, so much too beautiful to stay,
Swift autumn, like a bonfire of leaves,
And sleepy winter, like the sleep of death.

1921

ESCAPE

WHEN foxes eat the last gold grape,
And the last white antelope is killed,
I shall stop fighting and escape
Into a little house I'll build.

But first I'll shrink to fairy size,
With a whisper no one understands,
Making blind moons of all your eyes,
And muddy roads of all your hands.

And you may grope for me in vain
In hollows under the mangrove root,
Or where, in apple-scented rain,
The silver wasp-nests hang like fruit.

1921

VELVET SHOES

LET us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

1921

LET NO CHARITABLE HOPE

Now let no charitable hope
Confuse my mind with images
Of eagle and of antelope:
I am in nature none of these.

I was, being human, born alone;
I am, being woman, hard beset;
I live by squeezing from a stone
The little nourishment I get.

In masks outrageous and austere
The years go by in single file;
But none has merited my fear,
And none has quite escaped my smile.

1923

ON A SINGING GIRL [1]

MUSA of the sea-blue eyes,
Silver nightingale, alone
In a little coffin lies:
A stone beneath a stone.

She, whose song we loved the best,
Is voiceless in a sudden night:
On your light limbs, O loveliest,
May the dust be light!

1923

CONFESSION OF FAITH

I LACK the braver mind
That dares to find
The lover friend, and kind.

I fear him to the bone;
I lie alone
By the beloved one,

And, breathless for suspense,
Erect defense
Against love's violence

Whose silences portend
A bloody end
For lover never friend.

But, in default of faith,
In futile breath,
I dream no ill of Death.

1928

TRUE VINE

THERE is a serpent in perfection tarnished,
The thin shell pierced, the purity grown fainter,

1 This is paraphrase of Mackail's translation of an epitaph (*CIG*,6261), of the same title, from the *Greek Anthology*. The translation: 'Blue-eyed Musa, the sweet-voiced nightingale, suddenly this little grave holds voiceless, and she lies like a stone who was so accomplished and so famous; fair Musa be this dust light over thee.' Mackail, *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology*(London, 1906),164.

The virgin silver shield no longer burnished,
The pearly fruit with ruin for its centre.

The thing that sits expectant in our bosoms
Contriving heaven out of very little
Demands such delicate immaculate blossoms
As no malicious verity makes brittle.

This wild fastidious hope is quick to languish;
Its smooth diaphanous escape is swifter
Than the pack of truth; no mortal can distinguish
Its trace upon the durable hereafter.

Not so the obdurate and savage lovely
Whose roots are set profoundly upon trouble;
This flower grows so fiercely and so bravely
It does not even know that it is noble.

This is the vine to love, whose balsams flourish
Upon a living soil corrupt and faulty,
Whose leaves have drunk the skies, and stooped to nourish
The earth again with honey sweet and salty.

1928

PETER AND JOHN

TWELVE good friends
Walked under the leaves,
Binding the ends
Of the barley sheaves.

Peter and John
Lay down to sleep
Pillowed upon
A haymaker's heap

John and Peter
Lay down to dream.
The air was sweeter
Than honey and cream.

Peter was bred
In the salty cold:
His hair was red
And his eyes were gold.

John had a mouth
Like a wing bent down:
His brow was smooth
And his eyes were brown.

Peter to slumber
Sank like a stone,
Of all their number
The bravest one.

John more slowly
Composed himself,
Young and holy
Among the Twelve.

John as he slept
Cried out in grief,
Turned and wept
On the golden leaf:

'Peter, Peter,
Stretch me your hand
Across the glitter
Of the harvest land!

'Peter, Peter,
Give me a sign!
This was a bitter
Dream of mine—

'Bitter as aloes
It parched my tongue.
Upon the gallows
My life was hung.

'Sharp it seemed
As a bloody sword.
Peter, I dreamed
I was Christ the Lord!'

Peter turned
To holy Saint John:
His body burned
In the falling sun.

In the falling sun
He burned like flame:
'John, Saint John,
I have dreamed the same!

'My bones were hung
On an elder tree;
Bells were rung
Over Galilee.

'A silver penny
Sealed each of my eyes.

Many and many
A cock crew thrice.'

When Peter's word
Was spoken and done,
'Were you Christ the Lord
In your dream?' said John.

'No,' said the other,
'That I was not.
I was our brother
Iscariot.'

1928

ADDRESS TO MY SOUL

My soul, be not disturbed
By planetary war;
Remain securely orbed
In this contracted star.

Fear not, pathetic flame;
Your sustenance is doubt:
Glassed in translucent dream
They cannot snuff you out.

Wear water, or a mask
Of unapparent cloud;
Be brave and never ask
A more defunctive shroud.

The universal points
Are shrunk into a flower;
Between its delicate joints
Chaos keeps no power.

The pure integral form,
Austere and silver-dark,
Is balanced on the storm
In its predestined arc.

Small as a sphere of rain
It slides along the groove
Whose path is furrowed plain
Among the suns that move.

The shapes of April buds
Outlive the phantom year:
Upon the void at odds
The dewdrop falls severe.

Five-petalled flame, be cold:
Be firm, dissolving star:
Accept the stricter mould
That makes you singular.

1928

ONE PERSON

Although these words are false, none shall prevail
To prove them in translation less than true
Or overthrow their dignity, or undo
The faith implicit in a fabulous tale;
The ashes of this error shall exhale
Essential verity, and two by two
Lovers devout and loyal shall renew
The legend, and refuse to let it fail.
Even the betrayer and the fond deceived,
Having put off the body of this death,
Shall testify with one remaining breath,
From sepulchres demand to be believed:
These words are true, although at intervals
The unfaithful clay contrive to make them false.

1

Now shall the long homesickness have an end
Upon your heart, which is a part of all
The past no human creature may recall
Save you, who are persuasive to unbend
The brows of death, and name him for a friend:
This ecstasy is supernatural;
I have survived to see the heavens fall
Into my hands, which on your hands depend.

Time has prepared us an enduring bed
Within the earth of this beloved land;
And, lying side by side and hand in hand,
We sleep coeval with the happy dead
Who are ourselves, a little earlier bound
To one another's bosom in the ground.

2

What other name had half expressed the whole
Of that incomparable and touching grace
Which spells the shape of danger in your face?
It is the very pattern of your soul;
The eagle's home, above the moon's control,
Above the seas, the high precipitate place;
The stairway cut from planetary space;
The crystal steps which climb a steeper goal.

The shadow of its light is only this:
That all your beauty is the work of wars

Between the upper and the nether stars;
Its symmetry is perfect and severe
Because the barbarous force of agonies
Broke it, and mended it, and made it clear.

3

'Children and dogs are subject to my power,'
You said, and smiled, and I beside you smiled,
Perceiving my unwisdom of a child,
My courage of a wolf new-taught to cower:
Upon the grass, beneath the falling flower,
I saw my spirit silent and beguiled
Standing at gaze; a brute no longer wild;
An infant wearied by the difficult hour.

And am I not your child who has come home?
And am I not your hound for faithfulness?
Put forth your hand, put forth your hand to bless
A creature stricken timorous and dumb,
Who now regards you with a lover's eyes
And knows that you are merciful and wise.

4

Now am I Orson to your Valentine
Forever, and I choose it shall be so;
For how should the uncivil brier grow
Germane in nature to the noble vine?
The savage should be servant to the fine;
The falcon fly superior to the crow;
O dear my lord, believe me that I know
How far your virtues have outnumbered mine.

And you have levied final tribute now—
Your chivalry demanding the pretence—
You have constrained your vassal to avow
That we are equals, lest a violence
Be suffered by our love, and so I must
Deny the intrinsic difference in our dust.

5

The little beauty that I was allowed—
The lips new-cut and coloured by my sire,
The polished hair, the eyes' perceptive fire—
Has never been enough to make me proud:
For I have moved companioned by a cloud,
And lived indifferent to the blood's desire
Of temporal loveliness in vain attire:
My flesh was but a fresh-embroidered shroud.

Now do I grow indignant at the fate
Which made me so imperfect to compare
With your degree of noble and of fair;
Our elements are the farthest skies apart;
And I enjoin you, ere it is too late,
To stamp your superscription on my heart.

6

I have believed that I prefer to live
Preoccupied by a Platonic mind;
I have believed me obdurate and blind
To those sharp ecstasies the pulses give:
The clever body five times sensitive
I never have discovered to be kind
As the poor soul, deceived and half-divined,
Whose hopes are water in a witch's sieve.

O now both soul and body are unfit
To apprehend this miracle, my lord!
Not all my senses, striving in accord
With my pure essence, are aware of it
Save as a power remote and exquisite,
Not seen or known, but fervently adored.

7

Would I might make subliminal my flesh
And so contrive a gentle atmosphere
To comfort you because I am not there;
Or else incorporate and carve afresh
A lady, from the chilly heaven and clear
Which flows around you like a stream of air,
To warm and wind you in her body's mesh.

So would I cherish you a loving twice;
Once in a mist made matter; once again
In my true substance made ethereal:
And yet I cannot succour you at all
Whose letter cries, 'My hands are cold as ice,'
The while I kiss the colder air in vain.

8

O love, how utterly am I bereaved
By Time, who sucks the honey of our days,
Sets sickle to our Aprils, and betrays
To killing winter all the sun achieved!
Our parted spirits are perplexed and grieved
Severed by cold, and change that never stays;
And what the clock, and what the season says
Is rumour neither valued nor believed.

Thus absence chills us to apparent death
And withers up our virtue, but together
We grow beyond vagaries of the weather
And make a summer of our mingled breath
Wherein we flourish, and forget to know
We must lie murdered by predestined
snow.

9

A subtle spirit has my path attended,
In likeness not a lion but a pard;
And when the arrows flew like hail, and
hard,
He licked my wounds, and all my wounds
were mended;
And happy I, who walked so well-defended,
With that translucid presence for a guard,
Under a sky reversed and evil-starred;
A woman by an archangel befriended.

Now must I end the knightly servitude
Which made him my preserver, and
renounce
That heavenly aid forever and at once;
For it were neither courteous nor good
If we, who are but perishable things,
Should hang another weight between his
wings.

10

When I perceive the sable of your hair
Silvered, and deep within those caverns are
Your eyesockets, a double-imaged star,
And your fine substance fretted down by
care,
Then do I marvel that a woman dare
Prattle of mortal matters near and far
To one so wounded in demonic war
Against some prince of Sirius or Altair.

How is it possible that this hand of clay,
Though white as porcelain, can contrive a
touch
So delicate it shall not hurt too much?
What voice can my invention find to say
So soft, precise, and scrupulous a word
You shall not take it for another sword?

11

'Before I die, let me be happy here.'
The glass of heaven was split, and by that
token
I knew the bubble of my heart had broken;
The cool and chaste, the iridescent sphere,
Filled, in that vernal season of the year,
With sapling's blood, the beechen and the
oaken
And the green willow's; when the word was
spoken
This innocence did faint and disappear.

So have I lost my only wedding dower,
The veins of spring, enclosed within my
heart,
Traced small in silver like a celestial chart;
And I am vanished in the leaf and flower,
Since, at your voice, my body's core and
pith
Dissolves in air, and is destroyed forthwith.

12

In our content, before the autumn came
To shower sallow droppings on the mould,
Sometimes you have permitted me to fold
Your grief in swaddling-bands, and smile to
name
Yourself my infant, with an infant's claim
To utmost adoration as of old,
Suckled with kindness, fondled from the
cold,
And loved beyond philosophy or shame.

I dreamt I was the mother of a son
Who had deserved a manger for a crib;
Torn from your body, furbished from your
rib,
I am the daughter of your skeleton,
Born of your bitter and excessive pain:
I shall not dream you are my child again.

13

O, mine is Psyche's heavy doom reversed
Who meet at noon, part by diminished light,
But never feel the subtle balm of night
Fall merciful upon a body pierced
By extreme love; and I considered first
That you, a god more prodigally bright
Than the lessor Eros, had enriched my sight,
Made your own morning, and the stars
immersed.

But secondly I saw my soul arise
And, in the hushed obscure, presume to
creep
Tiptoe upon your spirit laid asleep,
And slant the impious beam across your
eyes;
And I believe I have my just deserts
Lacking the shadow of peace upon our
hearts.

14

My fairer body and perfected spirit,
Beyond metempsychosis, and beyond
The faults you must forgive me to be fond,
Are yours in any death that I may merit;
Mortality has wearied us who wear it,
And they are wiser creatures who have shunned
This miry world, this slough of man's despond,
To fortify the skies we shall inherit.

I have entreated you to grant me Time
To memorize the pure appointed task;
Today it is Eternity I ask
In which to learn the lesson of this rhyme:
Its liberal periods are not too wide.
To educate me fitly for your bride.

15

My honoured lord, forgive the unruly tongue
That utters blasphemies; forgive the brain
Borne on a whirlwind of unhallowed pain:
Remember only the intrepid song;
The flag defended and the gauntlet flung;
The love that speech can never render plain;
The mind's resolve to turn and strive again;
The fortitude that has endured so long.

My cherished lord, in charity forgive
A starveling hope that may at times desire
To warm its frozen fingers at your fire;
'Tis by such trifles that your lovers live,
And so rise up, and in the starlight cold
Frighten the foxes from your loneliest fold.

16

I hereby swear that to uphold your house
I would lay my bones in quick destroying lime
Or turn my flesh to timber for all time;
Cut down my womanhood; lop off the boughs
Of that perpetual ecstasy that grows
From the heart's core; condemn it as a crime
If it be broader than a beam, or climb
Above the stature that your roof allows.

I am not the hearthstone nor the cornerstone
Within this noble fabric you have builded;
Not by my beauty was its cornice gilded;
Not on my courage were its arches thrown:
My lord, adjudge my strength, and set me where
I bear a little more than I can bear.

17

Upon your heart, which is the heart of all
My late discovered earth and early sky,
Give me the dearest privilege to die;
Your pity for the velvet of my pall;
Your patience for my grave's inviolate wall;
And for my passing bell, in passing by,
Your voice itself, diminished to a sigh
Above all other sounds made musical.

Meanwhile I swear to you I am content
To live without a sorrow to my name;
To live triumphant, and to die the same,
Upon the fringes of this continent,
This map of Paradise, this scrap of earth
Whereon you burn like flame upon a hearth.

18

Let us leave talking of angelic hosts
Of nebulæ, and lunar hemispheres,
And what the days, and what the Uranian years
Shall offer us when you and I are ghosts;
Forget the festivals and pentecosts
Of metaphysics, and the lesser fears
Confound us, and seal up our eyes and ears
Like little rivers locked below the frosts.

And let us creep into the smallest room
That any hunted exile has desired
For him and for his love when he was tired;
And sleep oblivious of any doom
Which is beyond our reason to conceive;
And so forget to weep, forget to grieve,
And wake, and touch each other's hands, and turn
Upon a bed of juniper and fern.

1929

O VIRTUOUS LIGHT

A PRIVATE madness has prevailed
Over the pure and valiant mind;
The instrument of reason failed
And the star-gazing eyes struck blind.

Sudden excess of light has wrought
Confusion in the secret place

Where the slow miracles of thought
Take shape through patience into grace.

Mysterious as steel and flint
The birth of this destructive spark
Whose inward growth has power to print
Strange suns upon the natural dark.

O break the walls of sense in half
And make the spirit fugitive!
This light begotten of itself
Is not a light by which to live!

The fire of farthing tallow dips
Dispels the menace of the skies
So it illuminate the lips
And enter the discerning eyes.

O virtuous light, if thou be man's
Or matter of the meteor stone,
Prevail against this radiance
Which is engendered of its own!

1929

HYMN TO EARTH

FAREWELL, incomparable element,
Whence man arose, where he shall not return;
And hail, imperfect urn
Of his last ashes, and his firstborn fruit;
Farewell, the long pursuit,
And all the adventures of his discontent;
The voyages which sent
His heart averse from home:
Metal of clay, permit him that he come
To thy slow-burning fire as to a hearth;
Accept him as a particle of earth.

Fire, being divided from the other three,
It lives removed, or secret at the core;
Most subtle of the four,
When air flies not, nor water flows,
It disembodied goes,
Being light, elixir of the first decree,
More volatile than he;
With strength and power to pass
Through space, where never his least atom was:
He has no part in it, save as his eyes
Have drawn its emanation from the skies.

A wingless creature heavier than air,
He is rejected of its quintessence;
Coming and going hence,
In the twin minutes of his birth and death,
He may inhale as breath,
As breath relinquish heaven's atmosphere,
Yet in it have no share,
Nor can survive therein
Where its outer edge is filtered pure and thin:
It doth but lend its crystal to his lungs
For his early crying, and his final songs.

The element of water has denied
Its child; it is no more his element;
It never will relent;
Its silver harvests are more sparsely given
Than the rewards of heaven,
And he shall drink cold comfort at its side:
The water is too wide:
The seamew and the gull
Feather a nest made soft and pitiful
Upon its foam; he has not any part
In the long swell of sorrow at its heart.

Hail and farewell, beloved element,
Whence he departed, and his parent once;
See where thy spirit runs
Which for so long hath had the moon to wife;
Shall this support his life
Until the arches of the waves be bent
And grow shallow and spent?
Wisely it cast him forth
With his dead weight of burdens nothing worth,
Leaving him, for the universal years,
A little seawater to make his tears.

Hail, element of earth, receive thy own,
And cherish, at thy charitable breast,
This man, this mongrel beast:
He ploughs the sand, and, at his hardest need,
He sows himself for seed;
He ploughs the furrow, and in this lies down
Before the corn is grown;
Between the apple bloom
And the ripe apple is sufficient room
In time, and matter, to consume his love
And make him parcel of a cypress grove.

Receive him as thy lover for an hour
Who will not weary, by a longer stay,
The kind embrace of clay;
Even within thine arms he is dispersed
To nothing, as at first;

The air flings downward from its four-
quartered tower
Him whom the flames devour;
At the full tide, at the flood,
The sea is mingled with his salty
blood:
The traveller dust, although the dust be
vile,
Sleeps as thy lover for a little while.

1929

THIS CORRUPTIBLE

THE Body, long oppressed
And pierced, then prayed for rest
(Being but apprenticed to the other
Powers);
And kneeling in that place
Implored the thrust of grace
Which makes the dust lie level with the
flowers.

Then did that fellowship
Of three, the Body strip;
Beheld his wounds, and none among them
mortal;
The Mind severe and cool;
The Heart still half a fool;
The fine-spun Soul, a beam of sun can
startle.

These three, a thousand years
Had made adventurers
Amid all villainies the earth can offer,
Applied them to resolve
From the universal gulph
What pangs the poor material flesh may
suffer.

'This is a pretty pass;
To hear the growing grass
Complain; the clay cry out to be
translated;
Will not this grosser stuff
Receive reward enough
If stabled after labouring, and baited?'

Thus spoke the Mind in scorn:
The Heart, which had outworn
The Body, and was weary of its
fashion,
Preferring to be dressed
In skin of bird or beast,
Replied more softly, in a feigned
compassion.

'Anatomy most strange
Crying to chop and change;
Inferior copy of a higher image;
While I, the noble guest,
Sick of your second-best
Sigh for embroidered archangelic plumage:

'For shame, thou fustian cloak!'
And then the Spirit spoke;
Within the void it swung securely
tethered
By strings composed of cloud;
It spoke both low and loud
Above a storm no lesser star had weathered.

'O lodging for the night!
O house of my delight!
O lovely hovel builded for my pleasure!
Dear tenement of clay
Endure another day
As coffin sweetly fitted to my measure.

'Take Heart, and call to Mind
Although we are unkind;
Although we steal your shelter, strength,
and clothing;
'Tis you who shall escape
In some enchanting shape
Or be dissolved to elemental nothing.

'You, the unlucky slave,
Are the lily on the grave;
The wave that runs above the bones
a-whitening;
You are the new-mown grass;
And the wheaten bread of the Mass;
And the fabric of the rain, and the
lightning.

'If one of us elect
To leave the poor suspect
Imperfect bosom of the earth our parent;
And from the world avert
The Spirit or the Heart
Upon a further and essential errand;

'His chain he cannot slough
Nor cast his substance off;
He bears himself upon his flying shoulder;
The Heart, infirm and dull;
The Mind, in any skull;
Are captive still, and wearier and colder.

' 'Tis you who are the ghost,
Disintegrated, lost;

The burden shed; the dead who need not bear it;
O grain of God in power,
Endure another hour!
It is but for an hour,' said the Spirit.

1929

FAREWELL, SWEET DUST

Now I have lost you, I must scatter
All of you on the air henceforth;
Not that to me it can ever matter
But it's only fair to the rest of earth.

Now especially, when it is winter
And the sun's not half so bright as he was,
Who wouldn't be glad to find a splinter
That once was you, in the frozen grass?

Snowflakes, too, will be softer feathered,
Clouds, perhaps, will be whiter plumed;
Rain, whose brilliance you caught and gathered,
Purer silver have reassumed.

Farewell, sweet dust; I was never a miser:
Once, for a minute, I made you mine:
Now you are gone, I am none the wiser
But the leaves of the willow are bright as wine.

1929

BIRTHDAY SONNET

TAKE home Thy prodigal child, O Lord of Hosts!
Protect the sacred from the secular danger;
Advise her, that Thou never needst avenge her;
Marry her mind neither to man's nor ghost's
Nor holier domination's, if the costs
Of such commingling should transport or change her;
Defend her from familiar and stranger
And earth's and air's contagions and rusts.

Instruct her strictly to preserve Thy gift
And alter not its grain in atom sort;
Angels may wed her to their ultimate hurt
And men embrace a spectre in a shift
So that no drop of the pure spirit fall
Into the dust: defend Thy prodigal.

1932

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

1892–

WHEN THE YEAR GROWS OLD

I CANNOT but remember
When the year grows old—
October—November—
How she disliked the cold!

She used to watch the swallows
Go down across the sky,
And turn from the window
With a little sharp sigh.

And often when the brown leaves
Were brittle on the ground,
And the wind in the chimney
Made a melancholy sound.

She had a look about her
That I wish I could forget—
The look of a scared thing
Sitting in a net!

Oh, beautiful at nightfall
The soft spitting snow!
And beautiful the bare boughs
Rubbing to and fro!

But the roaring of the fire,
And the warmth of fur,
And the boiling of the kettle
Were beautiful to her!

I cannot but remember
When the year grows old—
October—November—
How she disliked the cold!

1917

I SHALL FORGET YOU PRESENTLY, MY DEAR

I SHALL forget you presently, my dear,
So make the most of this, your little day,
Your little month, your little half a year,

Ere I forget, or die, or move away,
And we are done forever; by and by
I shall forget you, as I said, but now,
If you entreat me with your loveliest lie
I will protest you with my favorite vow.
I would indeed that love were longer-lived,
And vows were not so brittle as they are,
But so it is, and nature has contrived
To struggle on without a break thus far,—
Whether or not we find what we are seeking
Is idle, biologically speaking.

1920

THE POET AND HIS BOOK

Down, you mongrel, Death!
Back into your kennel!
I have stolen breath
In a stalk of fennel!
You shall scratch and you shall whine
Many a night, and you shall worry
Many a bone, before you bury
One sweet bone of mine!

When shall I be dead?
When my flesh is withered,
And above my head
Yellow pollen gathered
All the empty afternoon?
When sweet lovers pause and wonder
Who am I that lie thereunder,
Hidden from the moon?

This my personal death?—
That my lungs be failing
To inhale the breath
Others are exhaling?
This my subtle spirit's end?—
Ah, when the thawed winter splashes
Over these chance dust and ashes,
Weep not me, my friend!

Me, by no means dead
In that hour, but surely
When this book, unread,
Rots to earth obscurely,
And no more to any breast,
Close against the clamorous swelling
Of the thing there is no telling,
Are these pages pressed!

When this book is mould,
And a book of many
Waiting to be sold
For a casual penny,
In a little open case,
In a street unclean and cluttered,
Where a heavy mud is spattered
From the passing drays,

Stranger, pause and look;
From the dust of ages
Lift this little book,
Turn the tattered pages,
Read me, do not let me die!
Search the fading letters, finding
Steadfast in the broken binding
All that once was I!

When these veins are weeds,
When these hollowed sockets
Watch the rooty seeds
Bursting down like rockets,
And surmise the spring again,
Or, remote in that black cupboard,
Watch the pink worms writhing
upward
At the smell of rain,

Boys and girls that lie
Whispering in the hedges,
Do not let me die,
Mix me with your pledges;
Boys and girls that slowly walk
In the woods, and weep, and quarrel,
Staring past the pink wild laurel,
Mix me with your talk,

Do not let me die!
Farmers at your raking,
When the sun is high,
While the hay is making,
When, along the stubble strewn,
Withering on their stalks uneaten,
Strawberries turn dark and sweeten
In the lapse of noon;

Shepherds on the hills;
In the pastures, drowsing
To the tinkling bells
Of the brown sheep browsing;
Sailors crying through the storm;
Scholars at your study; hunters
Lost amid the whirling winter's
Whiteness uniform;

Men that long for sleep;
Men that wake and revel;—
If an old song leap
To your senses' level

At such moments, may it be
  Sometimes, though a moment only,
  Some forgotten, quaint and homely
Vehicle of me!

Women at your toil,
  Women at your leisure
Till the kettle boil,
  Snatch of me your pleasure,
Where the broom-straw marks the leaf;
  Women quiet with your weeping
  Lest you wake a workman sleeping,
Mix me with your grief!

Boys and girls that steal
  From the shocking laughter
Of the old, to kneel
  By a dripping rafter
Under the discoloured eaves,
  Out of trunks with hingeless covers
  Lifting tales of saints and lovers,
Travelers, goblins, thieves,

Suns that shine by night,
  Mountains made from valleys,—
Bear me to the light,
  Flat upon your bellies
By the webby window lie,
  Where the little flies are crawling,—
  Read me, margin me with scrawling,
Do not let me die!

Sexton, ply your trade!
  In a shower of gravel
Stamp upon your spade!
  Many a rose shall ravel,
Many a metal wreath shall rust
  In the rain, and I go singing
  Through the lots where you are flinging
Yellow clay on dust!

1921

AND YOU AS WELL MUST DIE, BELOVÈD DUST

And you as well must die, belovèd dust,
And all your beauty stand you in no stead;
This flawless, vital hand, this perfect head,
This body of flame and steel, before the gust
Of Death, or under his autumnal frost,
Shall be as any leaf, be no less dead
Than the first leaf that fell,—this wonder fled.
Altered, estranged, disintegrated, lost.
Nor shall my love avail you in your hour.
In spite of all my love, you will arise
Upon that day and wander down the air
Obscurely as the unattended flower,
It mattering not how beautiful you were,
Or how belovèd above all else that dies.

1921

LAMENT

Listen, children:
Your father is dead.
From his old coats
I'll make you little jackets;
I'll make you little trousers
From his old pants.
There'll be in his pockets
Things he used to put there,
Keys and pennies
Covered with tobacco;
Dan shall have the pennies
To save in his bank;
Anne shall have the keys
To make a pretty noise with.
Life must go on,
And the dead be forgotten;
Life must go on,
Though good men die;
Anne, eat your breakfast;
Dan, take your medicine;
Life must go on;
I forget just why.

1921

FROM MEMORIAL TO D.C.

(Vassar College, 1918)

(1921)

Elegy

Let them bury your big eyes
In the secret earth securely,
Your thin fingers, and your fair,
Soft, indefinite-coloured hair,—
All of these in some way, surely,
From the secret earth shall rise;
Not for these I sit and stare,
Broken and bereft completely;
Your young flesh that sat so neatly
On your little bones will sweetly
Blossom in the air.

But your voice,—never the rushing
Of a river underground,

Not the rising of the wind
In the trees before the rain,
Not the woodcock's watery call,
Not the note the white-throat utters,
Not the feet of children pushing
Yellow leaves along the gutters
In the blue and bitter fall,
Shall content my musing mind
For the beauty of that sound
That in no new way at all
Ever will be heard again.

Sweetly through the sappy stalk
Of the vigorous weed,
Holding all it held before,
Cherished by the faithful sun,
On and on eternally
Shall your altered fluid run,
Bud and bloom and go to seed;
But your singing days are done;
But the music of your talk
Never shall the chemistry
Of the secret earth restore.
All your lovely words are spoken.
Once the ivory box is broken,
Beats the golden bird no more.

1921

PITY ME NOT BECAUSE THE LIGHT OF DAY

PITY me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field and thicket as the year goes by;
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
And you no longer look with love on me.
This have I known always: Love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails,
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales;
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

1923

EUCLID ALONE HAS LOOKED ON BEAUTY BARE

EUCLID alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.
O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

1923

DIRGE WITHOUT MUSIC

I AM not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground.
So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, time out of mind:
Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned
With lilies and with laurel they go; but I am not resigned.

Lovers and thinkers, into the earth with you.
Be one with the dull, the indiscriminate dust.
A fragment of what you felt, of what you knew,
A formula, a phrase remains,—but the best is lost.

The answers quick and keen, the honest look, the laughter, the love,—
They are gone. They are gone to feed the roses. Elegant and curled
Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I know. But I do not approve.
More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses of the world.

Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave
Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave.
I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

1928

THE CAMEO

FOREVER over now, forever, forever gone
That day. Clear and diminished like a scene
Carven in cameo, the lighthouse, and the cove between
The sandy cliffs, and the boat drawn up on the beach;
And the long skirt of a lady innocent and young,
Her hand resting on her bosom, her head hung;
And the figure of a man in earnest speech.

Clear and diminished like a scene cut in cameo
The lighthouse, and the boat on the beach, and the two shapes
Of the woman and the man; lost like the lost day
Are the words that passed, and the pain,—discarded, cut away
From the stone, as from the memory the heat of the tears escapes.

O troubled forms, O early love unfortunate and hard,
Time has estranged you into a jewel cold and pure;
From the action of the waves and from the action of sorrow forever secure,
White against a ruddy cliff you stand, chalcedony on sard.

1928

ON HEARING A SYMPHONY OF BEETHOVEN

SWEET sounds, oh, beautiful music, do not cease!
Reject me not into the world again.
With you alone is excellence and peace,
Mankind made plausible, his purpose plain.
Enchanted in your air benign and shrewd,
With limbs a-sprawl and empty faces pale,
The spiteful and the stingy and the rude
Sleep like the scullions in the fairy-tale.
This moment is the best the world can give:
The tranquil blossom on the tortured stem.
Reject me not, sweet sounds! oh, let me live,
Till Doom espy my towers and scatter them,
A city spell-bound under the aging sun,
Music my rampart, and my only one.

1928

FROM FATAL INTERVIEW

16

I DREAMED I moved among the Elysian fields,
In converse with sweet women long since dead;
And out of blossoms which that meadow yields
I wove a garland for your living head.
Danæ, that was the vessel for a day
Of golden Jove, I saw, and at her side,
Whom Jove the Bull desired and bore away,
Europa stood, and the Swan's featherless bride.
All these were mortal women, yet all these
Above the ground had had a god for guest;
Freely I walked beside them and at ease,
Addressing them, by them again addressed,
And marvelled nothing, for remembering you,
Wherefore I was among them well I knew.

52

Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave,
Mortal Endymion, darling of the Moon!
Her silver garments by the senseless wave
Shouldered and dropped and on the shingle strewn,
Her fluttering hand against her forehead pressed,
Her scattered looks that trouble all the sky,
Her rapid footsteps running down the west—
Of all her altered state, oblivious lie!
Whom earthen you, by deathless lips adored,
Wild-eyed and stammering to the grasses thrust,
And deep into her crystal body poured
The hot and sorrowful sweetness of the dust:
Whereof she wanders mad, being all unfit
For mortal love, that might not die of it.

1931

THE RETURN

EARTH does not understand her child,
  Who from the loud gregarious town
Returns, depleted and defiled,
  To the still woods, to fling him down.

Earth can not count the sons she bore:
  The wounded lynx, the wounded man
Come trailing blood unto her door;
  She shelters both as best she can.

But she is early up and out,
  To trim the year or strip its bones;
She has no time to stand about
  Talking of him in undertones

Who has no aim but to forget,
  Be left in peace, be lying thus
For days, for years, for centuries yet,
  Unshaven and anonymous;

Who, marked for failure, dulled by grief,
  Has traded in his wife and friend
For this warm ledge, this alder leaf:
  Comfort that does not comprehend.

1934

A SONNET IN MEMORY

(NICOLA SACCO—BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI)
Executed August 23, 1927

WHERE can the heart be hidden in the ground
And be at peace, and be at peace forever,
Under the world, untroubled by the sound
Of mortal tears, that cease from pouring never?
Well for the heart, by stern compassion harried,
If death be deeper than the churchmen say,—
Gone from this world indeed what's graveward carried,
And laid to rest indeed what's laid away.
Anguish enough while yet the indignant breather
Have blood to spurt upon the oppressor's hand;
Who would eternal be, and hang in ether
A stuffless ghost above his struggling land,
Retching in vain to render up the groan
That is not there, being aching dust's alone?

1934

HOW NAKED, HOW WITHOUT A WALL

How naked, how without a wall
  Against the wind and the sharp sleet,
He fares at night, that fares at all
  Forth from the stove's heat.

Or if the moon be in the sky,
  Or if the stars, and the late moon
Not rising till an hour goes by,
  And Libra setting soon,

How naked, how without a stitch
  To shut him from the earnest air,
He goes, that by the whispering ditch
  Alone at night will fare.

Nor is it but the rising chill
  From the warm weeds, that strikes him cold;
Nor that the stridulant hedge grows still,
  Like what has breath to hold,

Until his tiny foot go past
  At length, with its enormous sound;
Nor yet his helpless shadow cast
  To any wolf around.

Bare to the moon and her cold rays
  He takes the road, who by and by
Goes bare beneath the moony gaze
  Of his own awful eye.

He sees his motive, like a fox
  Hid in a badger's hole; he sees
His honour, strangled, in a box,
  Her neck lashed to her knees.

The man who ventures forth alone
  When other men are snug within
Walks on his marrow, not his bone,
  And lacks his outer skin.

The draughty caverns of his breath
  Grow visible, his heart shines through:
Surely a thing which only death
  Can have the right to do.

1934

FROM EPITAPH FOR THE RACE OF MAN

17

ONLY the diamond and the diamond's dust
Can render up the diamond unto Man;
One and invulnerable as it began
Had it endured, but for the treacherous thrust
That laid its hard heart open, as it must,
And ground it down and fitted it to span
A turbaned brow or fret an ivory fan,

Lopped of its stature, pared of its proper crust.
So Man, by all the wheels of heaven unscored,
Man, the stout ego, the exuberant mind
No edge could cleave, no acid could consume,
Being split along the vein by his own kind,
Gives over, rolls upon the palm abhorred,
Is set in brass on the swart thumb of Doom.

18

Here lies, and none to mourn him but the sea,
That falls incessant on the empty shore,
Most various Man, cut down to spring no more;
Before his prime, even in his infancy
Cut down, and all the clamour that was he,
Silenced; and all the riveted pride he wore,
A rusted iron column whose tall core
The rains have tunnelled like an aspen tree.
Man, doughty Man, what power has brought you low,
That heaven itself in arms could not persuade
To lay aside the lever and the spade
And be as dust among the dusts that blow?
Whence, whence the broadside? whose the heavy blade? . . .
Strive not to speak, poor scattered mouth; I know.

1934

EZRA POUND

1885–

A RETROSPECT [1]

THERE has been so much scribbling about a new fashion in poetry, that I may perhaps be pardoned this brief recapitulation and retrospect.

In the spring or early summer of 1912, 'H.D.,' Richard Aldington and myself decided that we were agreed upon the three principles following:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.

2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

Upon many points of taste and of predilection we differed, but agreeing upon these three positions we thought we had as much right to a group name, at least as much right, as a number of French 'schools' proclaimed by Mr. Flint in the August number of Harold Munro's magazine for 1911.

This school has since been 'joined' or 'followed' by numerous people who, whatever their merits, do not show any signs of agreeing with the second specification. Indeed vers libre has become as prolix and as verbose as any of the flaccid varieties that preceded it. It has brought faults of its own. The actual language and phrasing is often as bad as that of our elders without even the excuse that the words are shoveled in to fill a metric pattern or to complete the noise of a rhyme-sound. Whether or no the phrases followed by the followers are musical must be left to the reader's decision. At times I can find a marked metre in 'vers libres,' as stale and hackneyed as any pseudo-Swinburnian, at times the writers seem to follow no musical structure whatever. But it is, on the whole, good that the field should be ploughed. Perhaps a few good poems have come from the new method, and if so it is justified.

Criticism is not a circumscription or a set of prohibitions. It provides fixed points of departure. It may startle a dull reader into alertness. That little of it which is good is mostly in stray phrases; or if it be an older artist helping a younger it is in great measure but rules of thumb, cautions gained by experience.

I set together a few phrases on practical working about the time the first remarks on imagisme were published. The first use of the word 'Imagiste' was in my note to

1 The selection is from a group of Pound's early essays grouped together under this title in *Pavannes and Divisions*(N.Y., 1918).

T.E. Hulme's five poems, printed at the end of my 'Ripostes' in the autumn of 1912. I reprint my cautions from *Poetry* for March, 1913.

A FEW DON'TS

AN 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term 'complex' rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application.

It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.

It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works.

All this, however, some may consider open to debate. The immediate necessity is to tabulate A LIST OF DON'TS for those beginning to write verses. I can not put all of them into Mosaic negative.

To begin with, consider the three propositions (demanding direct treatment, economy of words, and the sequence of the musical phrase), not as dogma—never consider anything as dogma—but as the result of long contemplation, which, even if it is some one else's contemplation, may be worth consideration.

Pay no attention to the criticism of men who have never themselves written a notable work. Consider the discrepancies between the actual writing of the Greek poets and dramatists, and the theories of the Græco-Roman grammarians, concocted to explain their metres.

LANGUAGE

USE no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something.

Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands *of peace*.' It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol.

Go in fear of abstractions. Do not retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. Don't think any intelligent person is going to be deceived when you try to shirk all the difficulties of the unspeakably difficult art of good prose by chopping your composition into line lengths.

What the expert is tired of today the public will be tired of tomorrow.

Don't imagine that the art of poetry is any simpler than the art of music, or that you can please the expert before you have spent at least as much effort on the art of verse as the average piano teacher spends on the art of music.

Be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it.

Don't allow 'influence' to mean merely that you mop up the particular decorative vocabulary of some one or two poets whom you happen to admire. A Turkish war correspondent was recently caught red-handed babbling in his dispatches of 'dove-gray' hills, or else it was 'pearl-pale,' I can not remember.

Use either no ornament or good ornament.

RHYTHM AND RHYME

LET the candidate fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover, preferably in a foreign language [1] so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement; e.g., Saxon charms, Hebridean Folk Songs, the verse of Dante, and the lyrics of Shakespeare—if he can dissociate the vocabulary from the cadence. Let him dissect the lyrics of Goethe coldly into their component sound values, syllables long and short, stressed and unstressed, into vowels and consonants.

It is not necessary that a poem should rely on its music, but if it does rely on its music that music must be such as will delight the expert.

Let the neophyte know assonance and alliteration, rhyme immediate and delayed, simple and polyphonic, as a musician would expect to know harmony and counterpoint and all the minutiæ of his craft. No time is too great to give to these matters or to any one of them, even if the artist seldom have need of them.

1 'This is for rhythm; his vocabulary must of course be found in his native tongue.' Author's note, ibid., 98.

Don't imagine that a thing will 'go' in verse just because it's too dull to go in prose.

Don't be 'viewy'—leave that to the writers of pretty little philosophic essays. Don't be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a deal more about it.

When Shakespeare talks of the 'Dawn in russet mantle clad' he presents something which the painter does not present. There is in this line of his nothing that one can call description; he presents.

Consider the way of the scientists rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap.

The scientist does not expect to be acclaimed as a great scientist until he has *discovered* something. He begins by learning what has been discovered already. He goes from that point onward. He does not bank on being a charming fellow personally. He does not expect his friends to applaud the results of his freshman class work. Freshmen in poetry are unfortunately not confined to a definite and recognizable class room. They are 'all over the shop.' Is it any wonder 'the public is indifferent to poetry?'

Don't chop your stuff into separate *iambs*. Don't make each line stop dead at the end, and then begin every next line with a heave. Let the beginning of the next line catch the rise of the rhythm wave, unless you want a definite longish pause.

In short, behave as a musician, a good musician, when dealing with that phase of your art which has exact parallels in music. The same laws govern, and you are bound by no others.

Naturally, your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning. It is improbable that, at the start, you will be able to get a rhythm-structure strong enough to affect them very much, though you may fall a victim to all sorts of false stopping due to line ends and cæsuræ.

The musician can rely on pitch and the volume of the orchestra. You can not. The term harmony is misapplied to poetry; it refers to simultaneous sounds of different pitch. There is, however, in the best verse a sort of residue of sound which remains in the ear of the hearer and acts more or less as an organ-base.

A rhyme must have in it some slight element of surprise if it is to give pleasure; it need not be bizarre or curious, but it must be well used if used at all.

Vide further Vildrac and Duhamel's notes on rhyme in 'Technique Poetique.'

That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative *eye* of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue; that which appeals to the ear can reach only those who take it in the original.

Consider the definiteness of Dante's presentation, as compared with Milton's rhetoric. Read as much of Wordsworth as does not seem too unutterably dull.[1]

If you want the gist of the matter go to Sappho, Catullus, Villon, Heine when he is in the vein, Gautier when he is not too frigid; or, if you have not the tongues, seek out the leisurely Chaucer. Good prose will do you no harm, and there is good discipline to be had by trying to write it.

Translation is likewise good training, if you find that your original matter 'wobbles' when you try to rewrite it. The meaning of the poem to be translated can not 'wobble.'

If you are using a symmetrical form, don't put in what you want to say and then fill up the remaining vacuums with slush.

Don't mess up the perception of one sense by trying to define it in terms of another. This is usually only the result of being too lazy to find the exact word. To this clause there are possibly exceptions.

The first three simple proscriptions will throw out nine-tenths of all the bad poetry now accepted as standard and classic; and will prevent you from many a crime of production.

'. . . *Mais d'abord il faut être un poète*,'[2] as MM. Duhamel and Vildrac have said at the end of their little book, 'Notes sur la Technique Poetique.'

Since March, 1913, Ford Madox Hueffer has pointed out that Wordsworth was so intent on the ordinary or plain word that he never thought of hunting for *le mot juste*.

John Butler Yeats has handled or manhandled Wordsworth and the Victorians, and his criticism, contained in letters to his son, is now printed and available.

1 'Vide infra.' Author's note, ibid., 100.

2 'But first one must be a poet.'

I do not like writing *about* art, my first, at least I think it was my first essay on the subject, was a protest against it. . . .

CREDO

Rhythm.—I believe in an 'absolute rhythm,' a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be interpretative, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable.

Symbols.—I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use 'symbols' he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that *a* sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk.

Technique.—I believe in technique as the test of a man's sincerity; in law when it is ascertainable; in the trampling down of every convention that impedes or obscures the determination of the law, or the precise rendering of the impulse.

Form.—I think there is a 'fluid' as well as a 'solid' content, that some poems may have form as a tree has form, some as water poured into a vase. That most symmetrical forms have certain uses. That a vast number of subjects cannot be precisely, and therefore not properly rendered in symmetrical forms.

'Thinking that alone worthy wherein the whole art is employed,'[1] I think the artist should master all known forms and systems of metric, and I have with some persistence set about doing this, searching particularly into those periods wherein the systems came to birth or attained their maturity. It has been complained, with some justice, that I dump my note-books on the public. I think that only after a long struggle will poetry attain such a degree of development, of, if you will, modernity, that it will vitally concern people who are accustomed, in prose, to Henry James and Anatole France, in music to Debussy. I am constantly contending that it took two centuries of Provence and one of Tuscany to develop the media of Dante's masterwork, that it took the latinists of the Renaissance, and the Pleiade, and his own age of painted speech to prepare Shakespeare his tools. It is tremendously important that great poetry be written, it makes no jot of difference who writes it. The experimental demonstrations of one man may save the time of many—hence my furore over Arnaut Daniel—if a man's experiments try out one new rime, or dispense conclusively with one iota of currently accepted nonsense, he is merely playing fair with his colleagues when he chalks up his result.

No man ever writes very much poetry that 'matters.' In bulk, that is, no one produces much that is final, and when a man is not doing this highest thing, this saying the thing once for all and perfectly; when he is not matching Ποικιλόθρον', ἀθανάτ' Ἀφρόδιτα,[2] or 'Hist—said Kate the Queen,' he had much better be making the sorts of experiment which may be of use to him in his later work, or to his successors.

'The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne.' It is a foolish thing for a man to begin his work on a too narrow foundation, it is a disgraceful thing for a man's work not to show steady growth and increasing fineness from first to last.

As for 'adaptations'; one finds that all the old masters of painting recommend to their pupils that they begin by copying masterwork, and proceed to their own composition.

As for 'Every man his own poet.' The more every man knows about poetry the better. I believe in every one writing poetry who wants to; most do. I believe in every man knowing enough of music to play 'God bless our home' on the harmonicum, but I do not believe in every man giving concerts and printing his sin.

The mastery of any art is the work of a lifetime. I should not discriminate between the 'amateur' and the 'professional,' or rather I should discriminate quite often in favour of the amateur, but I should discriminate between the amateur and the expert. It is certain that the present chaos will endure until the Art of poetry has been preached down the amateur gullet, until there is such a general understanding of the fact that poetry is an art and not a pastime; such a knowledge of technique; of tech-

1 'Dante, *De Volgari Eloquio*.' Author's note, ibid.,104.

2 'Immortal Aphrodite of the vari-coloured throne.' The first line of Sappho's 'Ode to Aphrodite.'

nique of surface and technique of content, that the amateurs will cease to try to drown out the masters.

If a certain thing was said once for all in Atlantis or Arcadia, in 450 Before Christ or in 1290 after, it is not for us moderns to go saying it over, or to go obscuring the memory of the dead by saying the same thing with less skill and less conviction.

My pawing over the ancients and semi-ancients has been one struggle to find out what has been done, once for all, better than it can ever be done again, and to find out what remains for us to do, and plenty does remain, for if we still feel the same emotions as those which launched the thousand ships, it is quite certain that we come on these feelings differently, through different nuances, by different intellectual gradations. Each age has its own abounding gifts, yet only some ages transmute them into matter of duration. No good poetry is ever written in a manner twenty years old, for to write in such a manner shows conclusively that the writer thinks from books, convention and *cliché*, and not from life, yet a man feeling the divorce of life and his art may naturally try to resurrect a forgotten mode if he find in that mode some leaven, or if he think he sees in it some element lacking in contemporary art which might unite that art again to its sustenance, life.

In the art of Daniel and Cavalcanti, I have seen that precision which I miss in the Victorians—that explicit rendering, be it of external nature, or of emotion. Their testimony is of the eyewitness, their symptoms are first hand.

As for the nineteenth century, with all respect to its achievements, I think we shall look back upon it as a rather blurry, messy sort of a period, a rather sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of a period. I say this without any self-righteousness, with no self-satisfaction.

As for there being a 'movement' or my being of it, the conception of poetry as a 'pure art' in the sense in which I use the term, revived with Swinburne. From the puritanical revolt to Swinburne, poetry had been merely the vehicle—yes, definitely, Arthur Symons' scruples and feelings about the word not withholding—the ox-cart and post-chaise for transmitting thoughts poetic or otherwise. And perhaps the 'great Victorians,' though it is doubtful, and assuredly the 'nineties' continued the development of the art, confining their improvements, however, chiefly to sound and to refinements of manner.

Mr. Yeats has once and for all stripped English poetry of its perdamnable rhetoric. He has boiled away all that is not poetic—and a good deal that is. He has become a classic in his own lifetime and *nel mezzo del cammin.*[1] He has made our poetic idiom a thing pliable, a speech without inversions.

Robert Bridges, Maurice Hewlett and Frederic Manning are [2] in their different ways seriously concerned with overhauling the metric, in testing the language and its adaptability to certain modes. Ford Hueffer is making some sort of experiments in modernity. The Provost of Oriel continues his translation of the *Divina Commedia.*

As to Twentieth century poetry, and the poetry which I expect to see written during the next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppy-cock, it will be harder and saner, it will be what Mr. Hewlett calls 'nearer the bone.' It will be as much like granite as it can be, its force will lie in its truth, its interpretative power (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither.

1918

SESTINA: ALTAFORTE [3]

Loquitur: 'En' Bertrans de Born.
Dante Alighieri put this man in hell for that he was a stirrer up of strife.
Eccovi!
Judge ye!
Have I dug him up again?
The scene is at his castle, Altaforte. 'Papiols' is his jongleur.
'The Leopard,' the 'device' of Richard Cœur de Lion.

1 'Even by middle-age.'

2 'Dec., 1911.' Author's note, *Pavannes and Divisions* (N.Y., 1918),107.

3 This is a free translation into the sestina form of a Provençal poem, 'In Praise of War,' by Bertrans de Born (c.1140–c.1207), master of the satirical *sirvantes*, who will be most remembered, as Pound says: 'for the goad of his tongue, and for his voiced scorn of sloth,

I

DAMN it all! all this our South stinks peace.
You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!
I have no life save when the swords clash.
But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing
And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson,
Then howls my heart nigh mad with rejoicing.

2

In hot summer have I great rejoicing
When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace,
And the lightnings from black heav'n flash crimson,
And the fierce thunders roar me their music
And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing,
And through all the riven skies God's swords clash.

3

Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
And the shrill neighs of destriers in battle rejoicing,
Spiked breast to spiked breast opposing!
Better one hour's stour than a year's peace
With fat boards, bawds, wine and frail music!
Bah! there's no wine like the blood's crimson!

4

And I love to see the sun rise blood-crimson.
And I watch his spears through the dark clash
And it fills all my heart with rejoicing
And pries wide my mouth with fast music
When I see him so scorn and defy peace,
His lone might 'gainst all darkness opposing.

peace, cowardice, and the barons of the Province.' Pound, *The Spirit of Romance*(London, 1910),40. Pound has called the cult of the Province 'a cult of the emotion,' and described the sestina, which 'like all fine poetry . . . can be well judged only when heard spoken,' as 'a form like a thin sheet of flame folding and infolding upon itself.' Ibid.,18.

5

The man who fears war and squats opposing
My words for stour, hath no blood of crimson
But is fit only to rot in womanish peace
Far from where worth's won and the swords clash
For the death of such sluts I go rejoicing;
Yea, I fill all the air with my music.

6

Papiols, Papiols, to the music!
There's no sound like to swords swords opposing,
No cry like the battle's rejoicing
When our elbows and swords drip the crimson
And our charges 'gainst 'The Leopard's' rush clash.
May God damn for ever all who cry 'Peace!'

7

And let the music of the swords make them crimson!
Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
Hell blot black for alway the thought 'Peace'!

1909

FOR E. McC

THAT WAS MY COUNTER-BLADE UNDER LEONARDO TERRONE, MASTER OF FENCE

GONE while your tastes were keen to you,
Gone where the grey winds call to you,
By that high fencer, even Death,
Struck of the blade that no man parrieth;
Such is your fence, one saith,
One that hath known you.
Drew you your sword most gallantly
Made you your pass most valiantly
'Gainst that grey fencer, even Death.

Gone as a gust of breath
Faith! no man tarrieth,
'*Se il cor ti manca*,' but it failed thee not!
'*Non ti fidar*,' it is the sword that speaks
'*In me*.' [1]

1 'Sword-rune: "If thy heart fail thee trust not in me."' Author's note, *Personæ*(N.Y., 1926),19.

Thou trusted'st in thyself and met the
blade
'Thout mask or gauntlet, and art laid
As memorable broken blades that be
Kept as bold trophies of old pageantry.
As old Toledos past their days of war
Are kept mnemonic of the strokes thy
bore,
So art thou with us, being good to keep
In our heart's sword-rack, though thy
sword-arm sleep.

Envoi

STRUCK of the blade that no man parrieth,
Pierced of the point that toucheth lastly all,
'Gainst that grey fencer, even Death,
Behold the shield! He shall not take thee all.

1909

PROVINCIA DESERTA

AT Rochecoart,
Where the hills part
in three ways,
And three valleys, full of winding roads,
Fork out to south and north,
There is a place of trees . . . grey with
lichen.
I have walked there
thinking of old days.

At Chalais
is a pleached arbour;
Old pensioners and old protected women
Have the right there—
it is charity.
I have crept over old rafters,
peering down
Over the Dronne,
over a stream full of lilies.
Eastward the road lies,
Aubeterre is eastward,
With a garrulous old man at the inn.
I know the roads in that place:
Mareuil to the north-east,
La Tour,
There are three keeps near Mareuil,
And an old woman,
glad to hear Arnaut,
Glad to lend one dry clothing.

I have walked
into Perigord,
I have seen the torch-flames, high-leaping,
Painting the front of that church;
Heard, under the dark, whirling laughter.
I have looked back over the stream
and seen the high building,
Seen the long minarets, the white shafts.
I have gone in Ribeyrac
and in Sarlat,
I have climbed rickety stairs, heard talk of
Croy,
Walked over En Bertran's old layout,
Have seen Narbonne, and Cahors and
Chalus,
Have seen Excideuil, carefully fashioned.

I have said:
'Here such a one walked.
'Here Cœur-de-Lion was slain.
'Here was good singing.
'Here one man hastened his step.
'Here one lay panting.'
I have looked south from Hautefort,
thinking of Montaignac,
southward.
I have lain in Rocafixada,
level with sunset,
Have seen the copper come down
tingeing the mountains,
I have seen the fields, pale, clear as an
emerald,
Sharp peaks, high spurs, distant castles.
I have said: 'The old roads have lain here.
'Men have gone by such and such valleys
'Where the great halls were closer
together.'
I have seen Foix on its rock, seen Toulouse,
and
Arles greatly altered,
I have seen the ruined 'Dorata.'
I have said:
'Riquier! Guido.'
I have thought of the second
Troy,
Some little prized place in Auvergnat:
Two men tossing a coin, one keeping a
castle,
One set on the highway to sing.
He sang a woman.
Auvergne rose to the song;
The Dauphin backed him.
'The castle to Austors!'
'Pieire kept the singing—
'A fair man and a pleasant.'
He won the lady,
Stole her away for himself, kept her against
armed force:

So ends that story.
That age is gone;
Pieire de Mænsac is gone.
I have walked over these roads;
I have thought of them living.

1916

THE SEAFARER

(From the Anglo-Saxon)

MAY I for my own self song's truth reckon,
Journey's jargon, how I in harsh days
Hardship endured oft.
Bitter breast-cares have I abided,
Known on my keel many a care's hold,
And dire sea-urge, and there I oft spent
Narrow nightwatch nigh the ship's head
While she tossed close to cliffs. Coldly afflicted,
My feet were by frost benumbed.
Chill its chains are; chafing sighs
Hew my heart round and hunger begot
Mere-weary mood. Lest man know not
That he on dry land loveliest liveth,
List how I, care-wretched, on ice-cold sea,
Weathered the winter, wretched outcast
Deprived of my kinsmen;
Hung with hard ice-flakes, where hail-scur flew,
There I heard naught save the harsh sea
And ice-cold wave, at whiles the swan cries,
Did for my games the gannet's clamour,
Sea-fowls' loudness was for me laughter,
The mews' singing all my mead-drink.
Storms, on the stone-cliffs beaten, fell on the stern
In icy feathers; full oft the eagle screamed
With spray on his pinion.
Not any protector
May make merry man faring needy.
This he little believes, who aye in winsome life
Abides 'mid burghers some heavy business,
Wealthy and wine-flushed, how I weary oft
Must bide above brine.
Neareth nightshade, snoweth from north,
Frost froze the land, hail fell on earth then,
Corn of the coldest. Nathless there knocketh now
The heart's thought that I on high streams
The salt-wavy tumult traverse alone.
Moaneth alway my mind's lust
That I fare forth, that I afar hence
Seek out a foreign fastness.
For this there's no mood-lofty man over earth's midst,
Not though he be given his good, but will have in his youth greed;
Nor his deed to the daring, nor his king to the faithful
But shall have his sorrow for sea-fare
Whatever his lord will.
He hath not heart for harping, nor in ring-having
Nor winsomeness to wife, nor world's delight
Nor any whit else save the wave's slash,
Yet longing comes upon him to fare forth on the water.
Bosque taketh blossom, cometh beauty of berries,
Fields to fairness, land fares brisker,
All this admonisheth man eager of mood,
The heart turns to travel so that he then thinks
On flood-ways to be far departing.
Cuckoo calleth with gloomy crying,
He singeth summerward, bodeth sorrow,
The bitter heart's blood. Burgher knows not—
He the prosperous man—what some perform
Where wandering them widest draweth.
So that but now my heart burst from my breastlock,
My mood 'mid the mere-flood,
Over the whale's acre, would wander wide.
On earth's shelter cometh oft to me,
Eager and ready, the crying lone-flyer,
Whets for the whale-path the heart irresistibly,
O'er tracks of ocean; seeing that anyhow
My lord deems to me this dead life
On loan and on land, I believe not
That any earth-weal eternal standeth
Save there be somewhat calamitous
That, ere a man's tide go, turn it to twain.
Disease or oldness or sword-hate
Beats out the breath from doom-gripped body.
And for this, every earl whatever, for those speaking after—
Laud of the living, boasteth some last word,
That he will work ere he pass onward,
Frame on the fair earth 'gainst foes his malice,
Daring ado, . . .
So that all men shall honour him after

And his laud beyond them remain 'mid the English,
Aye, for ever, a lasting life's-blast,
Delight 'mid the doughty.
Days little durable,
And all arrogance of earthen riches,
There come now no kings nor Cæsars
Nor gold-giving lords like those gone.
Howe'er in earth most magnified,
Whoe'er lived in life most lordliest,
Drear all this excellence, delights undurable!
Waneth the watch, but the world holdeth.
Tomb hideth trouble. The blade is layed low.
Earthly glory ageth and seareth.
No man at all going the earth's gait,
But age fares against him, his face paleth,
Grey-haired he groaneth, knows gone companions,
Lordly men, are to earth o'ergiven,
Nor may he then the flesh-cover, whose life ceaseth,
Nor eat the sweet nor feel the sorry,
Nor stir hand nor think in mid heart,
And though he strew the grave with gold,
His born brothers, their buried bodies
Be an unlikely treasure hoard.

1912

THE RETURN

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering!

See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear, as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back;
These were the 'Wing'd-with-Awe,'
Inviolable.

Gods of the wingèd shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry;
These the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.
Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men!

1912

BALLAD OF THE GOODLY FERE [1]

Simon Zelotes Speaketh It Somewhile after the Crucifixion

HA' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
'First let these go!' quo' our Goodly Fere,
'Or I'll see ye damned,' says he.

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
'Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?' says he.

Oh we drunk his 'Hale' in the good red wine
When we last made company,
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no' get him a' in a book I think
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
'I'll go to the feast,' quo' our Goodly Fere,
'Though I go to the gallows tree.'

'Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead,' says he,
'Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree.'

1 'Fere = Mate, Companion.' Author's note, *Umbra* (London, 1920),43.

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I have seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free,
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee,
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the grey o' the sea,

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Genseret
Wi' twey words spoke' suddenly.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea,
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

1909

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS

COME, my songs, let us express our baser passions,
Let us express our envy of the man with a steady job and no worry about the future.
You are very idle, my songs.
I fear you will come to a bad end.
You stand about in the streets,
You loiter at the corners and bus-stops,
You do next to nothing at all.

You do not even express our inner nobilities,
You will come to a very bad end.

And I?
I have gone half cracked,
I have talked to you so much that I almost see you about me,
Insolent little beasts, shameless, devoid of clothing!

But you, newest song of the lot,
You are not old enough to have done much mischief,
I will get you a green coat out of China
With dragons worked upon it,
I will get you the scarlet silk trousers
From the statue of the infant Christ in Santa Maria Novella,
Lest they say we are lacking in taste,
Or that there is no caste in this family.

1916

THE RIVER MERCHANT'S WIFE: A LETTER [1]

WHILE my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
For ever and for ever and for ever.
Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.
You dragged your feet when you went out.
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!

1 The poem is a translation from Li Po(701–762), the Japanese form of whose name Pound has englished. Li Po, often called the greatest of Chinese poets, flourished under the Tangs in China's golden age of poetry. With him, Pound says: 'the visual art in poetry reached its zenith.' Pound, 'The Island of Paris,' *The Dial*,LXIX,vi,636.

The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
The paired butterflies are already yellow
with August
Over the grass in the West garden;
They hurt me. I grow older.
If you are coming down through the
narrows of the river Kiang,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

By Rihaku.
1916

IN A STATION OF THE METRO [1]

THE apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

1916

1 'Three years ago in Paris I got out of a "metro" train at La Concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another, and then a beautiful child's face, and then another beautiful woman, and I tried all that day to find words for what this had meant to me, and I could not find any words that seemed to me worthy, or as lovely as that sudden emotion. And that evening . . . I was still trying and I found, suddenly, the expression. I do not mean that I found words, but there came an equation . . . not in speech, but in little splotches of colour. . . . It was a word, the beginning, for me, of a language in colour. . . . Any mind that is worth calling a mind must have needs beyond the existing categories of language, just as a painter must have pigments or shades more numerous than the existing names of the colours. Perhaps this is enough to explain the words in my "Vortex": "Every concept, every emotion, presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form. It belongs to the art of this form." That is to say, my experience in Paris should have gone into paint. . . . Colour, was, in that instance, the "primary pigment." . . . The Vorticist uses the "primary pigment." Vorticism is art before it has spread itself into flaccidity, into elaboration and secondary applications. . . . All poetic language is the language of exploration. Since the beginning of bad writing, writers have used images as ornaments. The point of Imagisme is that it does not use images *as ornaments*. The image is itself the speech. The image is the word beyond formulated language. . . . One is tired of ornamentations; they are all a trick, and any sharp person can learn them. The Japanese have had the sense of exploration. They have understood the beauty of this sort of knowing. A Chinaman said long ago that if a man can't say what he has to say in twelve lines he had better keep quiet. The Japanese have evolved the still shorter form of *hokku*. . . . The "one image poem" is a form of super-position, that is to say, it is one idea set on top of another. I found it useful in getting out of the impasse in which I had been left by my metro emotion. I wrote a thirty-line poem, and destroyed it because it was what we call work "of second intensity." Six months later I made a poem half that length; a year later I made the following *hokku*-like sentence: [the poem above]. . . . In a poem of this sort one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective.' Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*(London, 1916), 100–03.

THE GAME OF CHESS [2]

DOGMATIC STATEMENT CONCERNING THE GAME OF CHESS: THEME FOR A SERIES OF PICTURES

RED knights, brown bishops, bright queens,
Striking the board, falling in strong 'L's of
colour.
Reaching and striking in angles,
holding lines in one colour.
This board is alive with light;
these pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern:
luminous green from the rooks,
Clashing with 'X's of queens,
looped with the knight-leaps.

Y' pawns, cleaving, embanking!
Whirl! Centripetal! Mate! King down in the
vortex,
Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of
hard colour,
Blocked lights working in. Escapes.
Renewal of contest.

1916

A VIRGINAL

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser
brightness.
For my surrounding air hath a new
lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound
me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of
æther;
As with sweet leaves; as with subtle
clearness.

2 'The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing. . . . It is as true for the painting and sculpture as it is for the poetry. Mr. Wadsworth and Mr. Lewis are not using words, they are using shape and colour. Mr. Brzeska and Mr. Epstein are using "planes in relation"; they are dealing with a relation of planes different from the sort of relation of planes dealt with in geometry, hence, what is called "the need of organic forms in sculpture." . . . The organization of forms is a much more energetic and creative action than the copying of light on a haystack. There is undoubtedly a language of form and colour.' Ibid.,106–07.

Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.
No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

1912

VILLANELLE: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HOUR

I

I HAD over-prepared the event,
that much was ominous.
With middle-ageing care
I had laid out just the right books.
I had almost turned down the pages.

Beauty is so rare a thing.
So few drink of my fountain.

So much barren regret,
So many hours wasted!
And now I watch, from the window,
the rain, the wandering buses.

'Their little cosmos is shaken'—
the air is alive with that fact.
In their parts of the city
they are played on by diverse forces.
How do I know?
Oh, I know well enough.
For them there is something afoot.
As for me;
I had over-prepared the event—

Beauty is so rare a thing.
So few drink of my fountain.

Two friends: a breath of the forest . . .
Friends? Are people less friends
because one has just, at last, found them?
Twice they promised to come.

'*Between the night and morning?*'
Beauty would drink of my mind.
Youth would awhile forget
my youth is gone from me.

2

('Speak up! You have danced so stiffly?
Some one admired your works,
And said so frankly.

'Did you talk like a fool,
The first night?
The second evening?'

'*But* they promised again:
"To-morrow at tea-time." ')

3

Now the third day is here—
no word from either;
No word from her nor him,
Only another man's note:
'Dear Pound, I am leaving England.'

1915

HUGH SELWYN MAUBERLEY [1]

(LIFE AND CONTACTS)

Vocat Æstus in Umbram [2]

Nemesianus Ec. IV.

I

E. P. Ode pour l'Election de son Sepulchre [3]

FOR three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain 'the sublime'
In the old sense. Wrong from the start—

1 Of 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' T.S.Eliot says: 'This seems to me a great poem. . . . I know very well that the apparent roughness and *naïvete* of the verse and rhyming of "Mauberley" are inevitably the result of many years of hard work: if you cannot appreciate the dexterity of "Altaforte" you cannot appreciate the dexterity of "Mauberley." On the other side, the poem seems to me, when you have marked the sophistication and the great variety of the verse, verse of a man who knows his way about, to be a positive document of sensibility. It is compact of the experience of a certain man in a certain place at a certain time; and it is also a document of an epoch; it is genuine tragedy and comedy; and it is, in the best sense of Arnold's worn phrase, "a criticism of life." ' Eliot, ed., *Ezra Pound, Selected Poems*(London, 1928),xxiii–iv.

2 'The summer calls us into the shade.'

3 'E.P. Ode on the Choice of his Tomb.'

No, hardly, but seeing he had been born
In a half-savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the
acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

Ἴδμεν γάρ τοι πάνθ', ὅσ' ἐνὶ Τροίῃ [1]
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that
year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by 'the march of events,'
He passed from men's memory in *l'an*
trentiesme
De son eage; [2] the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

2

The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage,
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
Better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The 'age demanded' chiefly a mould in
plaster,
Made with no loss of time,
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
Or the 'sculpture' of rhyme.

3

The tea-rose tea-gown, etc.
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,
The pianola 'replaces'
Sappho's barbitos.

Christ follows Dionysus,
Phallic and ambrosial
Made way for macerations;
Caliban casts out Ariel.

All things are a flowing,
Sage Heracleitus says;
But a tawdry cheapness
Shall outlast our days.

Even the Christian beauty
Defects—after Samothrace;
We see *τὸ καλὸν* [3]
Decreed in the market-place.

Faun's flesh is not to us,
Nor the saint's vision.
We have the Press for wafer;
Franchise for circumcision.

All men, in law, are equals.
Free of Pisistratus,
We choose a knave or an eunuch
To rule over us.

O bright Apollo,

τίν' ἄνδρα, τίν' ἤρωα, τίνα θεὸν [4]
What god, man, or hero
Shall I place a tin wreath upon!

4

These fought in any case,
and some believing,
pro domo,[5] in any case . . .

Some quick to arm,
some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness,
some from fear of censure,
some for love of slaughter, in
imagination,
learning later . . .
some in fear, learning love of slaughter;

Died some, pro patria,
non 'dulce' non 'et decor' [6] . . .
walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old men's lies, then
unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,
home to old lies and new infamy;
usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

1 'For we know all the things which are in Troy.'
2 Pound has altered to the third person, Villon's opening line of his *Grand Testament*: 'In the thirtieth year of my life.' The phrase has become a contemporary cliché, as a cue for poetic retrospection.
3 'The beautiful.'
4 'What man, what hero, what god.'
5 'For the home.'
6 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori (It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country).' Horace, *C.* III,ii,13.

Daring as never before, wastage as never
before.
Young blood and high blood,
fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

5

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization,

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

Yeux Glauques [1]

Gladstone was still respected,
When John Ruskin produced
'King's Treasuries'; Swinburne
And Rossetti still abused.

Fœtid Buchanan lifted up his voice
When that faun's head of hers
Became a pastime for
Painters and adulterers.

The Burne-Jones cartons
Have preserved her eyes;
Still, at the Tate, they teach
Cophetua to rhapsodize;

Thin like brook-water,
With a vacant gaze.
The English Rubaiyat was still-born
In those days.

The thin, clear gaze, the same
Still darts out faun-like from the half-
ruin'd face,
Questing and passive. . . .
'Ah, poor Jenny's case' . . .

Bewildered that a world
Shows no surprise
At her last maquero's
Adulteries.

'Siena Mi Fe; Disfecemi Maremma' [2]

Among the pickled fœtuses and bottled
bones,
Engaged in perfecting the catalogue,
I found the last scion of the
Senatorial families of Strasbourg, Monsieur
Verog.

For two hours he talked of Gallifet;
Of Dowson; of the Rhymers' Club;
Told me how Johnson (Lionel) died
By falling from a high stool in a pub . . .

But showed no trace of alcohol
At the autopsy, privately performed—
Tissue preserved—the pure mind
Arose toward Newman as the whisky
warmed.

Dowson found harlots cheaper than
hotels;
Headlam for uplift; Image impartially
imbued
With raptures for Bacchus, Terpsichore and
the Church.
So spoke the author of 'The Dorian
Mood,'

M. Verog, out of step with the
decade,
Detached from his contemporaries,
Neglected by the young,
Because of these reveries.

Brennbaum

The sky-like limpid eyes,
The circular infant's face,
The stiffness from spats to collar
Never relaxing into grace;

The heavy memories of Horeb, Sinai and
the forty years,
Showed only when the daylight fell
Level across the face
Of Brennbaum 'The Impeccable.'

1 'Glaucous Eyes.'

2 'Sienna made me; Maremma was my undoing.' Dante, *Purgatory*, V, 134. It is said to Dante by Pia de' Tolomei, one of the souls, who was secretly put to death by her husband, either because of suspected infidelity or because he wished another marriage.

Mr. Nixon

In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht
Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer
Dangers of delay. 'Consider
Carefully the reviewer.

'I was as poor as you are;
When I began I got, of course,
Advance on royalties, fifty at first,' said Mr. Nixon,
'Follow me, and take a column,
Even if you have to work free.

'Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred
I rose in eighteen months;
The hardest nut I had to crack
Was Dr. Dundas.

'I never mentioned a man but with the view
Of selling my own works.
The tip's a good one, as for literature
It gives no man a sinecure.

'And no one knows, at sight, a masterpiece.
And give up verse, my boy,
There's nothing in it.'

. . . . . .

Likewise a friend of Bloughram's once advised me:
Don't kick against the pricks,
Accept opinion. The 'Nineties' tried your game
And died, there's nothing in it.

10

Beneath the sagging roof
The stylist has taken shelter,
Unpaid, uncelebrated,
At last from the world's welter

Nature receives him;
With a placid and uneducated mistress
He exercises his talents
And the soil meets his distress.

The haven from sophistications and contentions
Leaks through its thatch;
He offers succulent cooking;
The door has a creaking latch.

11

'Conservatrix of Milésian'
Habits of mind and feeling,
Possibly. But in Ealing
With the most bank-clerkly of Englishmen?

No, 'Milésian' is an exaggeration.
No instinct has survived in her
Older than those her grandmother
Told her would fit her station.

12

'Daphne with her thighs in bark
Stretches toward me her leafy hands,'—
Subjectively. In the stuffed-satin drawing-room
I await The Lady Valentine's commands,

Knowing my coat has never been
Of precisely the fashion
To stimulate, in her,
A durable passion;

Doubtful, somewhat, of the value
Of well-gowned approbation
Of literary effort,
But never of The Lady Valentine's vocation:

Poetry, her border of ideas,
The edge, uncertain, but a means of blending
With other strata
Where the lower and higher have ending;

A hook to catch the Lady Jane's attention,
A modulation toward the theatre,
Also, in the case of revolution,
A possible friend and comforter.

. . . . . .

Conduct, on the other hand, the soul
'Which the highest cultures have nourished'
To Fleet St. where
Dr. Johnson flourished;

Beside this thoroughfare
The sale of half-hose has
Long since superseded the cultivation
Of Pierian roses.

Envoi (1919)

Go, dumb-born book,
Tell her that sang me once that song of
Lawes:
Hadst thou but song
As thou hast subjects known,
Then were there cause in thee that should
condone
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie,
And build her glories their longevity.

Tell her that sheds
Such treasure in the air,
Recking naught else but that her graces give
Life to the moment,
I would bid them live
As roses might, in magic amber laid,
Red overwrought with orange and all made
One substance and one colour
Braving time.

Tell her that goes
With song upon her lips
But sings not out the song, nor knows
The maker of it, some other mouth,
May be as fair as hers,
Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers,
When our two dusts with Waller's shall be
laid,
Siftings on siftings in oblivion,
Till change hath broken down
All things save Beauty alone.

Mauberley

1920

'*Vacuos exercet aera morsus.*' [1]

I

Turned from the 'eau-forte
Par Jaquemart'
To the strait head
Of Messalina:

'His true Penelope
Was Flaubert,'
And his tool
The engraver's.

Firmness,
Not the full smile,
His art, but an art
In profile;

Colourless
Pier Francesca,
Pisanello lacking the skill
To forge Achaia.

2

'Qu'est ce qu'ils savent de l'amour, et
qu'est ce qu'ils peuvent comprendre?
S'ils ne comprennent pas la poésie,
s'ils ne sentent pas la musique, qu'est ce
qu'ils peuvent comprendre de cette passion en
comparaison avec laquelle la rose est grossière
et le parfum des violettes un tonnerre?' [2]
CAID ALI

For three years, diabolus in the
scale,
He drank ambrosia,
All passes, ANANGKE [3] prevails,
Came end, at last, to that Arcadia.

He had moved amid her phantasmagoria,
Amid her galaxies,
NUKTOS 'AGALMA [4]

. . . . . .

Drifted . . . drifted precipitate,
Asking time to be rid of . . .
Of his bewilderment; to designate
His new found orchid. . . .

To be certain . . . certain . . .
(Amid aerial flowers) . . . time for
arrangements—
Drifted on
To the final estrangement;

Unable in the supervening blankness
To sift TO AGATHON [5] from the chaff
Until he found his sieve . . .
Ultimately, his seismograph:

—Given that is his 'fundamental
passion,'
This urge to convey the relation
Of eyelid and cheek-bone
By verbal manifestations;

1 'He bites vainly at the air.' Ovid, *Met.*, VII, 786.

2 'What do they know of love, and what can they understand? If they don't understand poetry, if they don't feel music, what can they understand of this passion, compared to which the rose is gross and the perfume of violets a clap of thunder.'

3 'Necessity.'

4 'Night's ornament.'

5 'The good.'

To present the series
Of curious heads in medallion—

He had passed, inconscient, full gaze,
The wide-banded irides
And botticellian sprays implied
In their diastasis;

Which anæthesis, noted a year late,
And weighed, revealed his great affect,
(Orchid), mandate
Of Eros, a retrospect.

. . . . . .

Mouths biting empty air,
The still stone dogs,
Caught in metamorphosis, were
Left him as epilogues.

'*The Age Demanded*'

Vide Poem 2. *Page* 1278

For this agility chance found
Him of all men, unfit
As the red-beaked steeds of
The Cytheræan for a chain bit.

The glow of porcelain
Brought no reforming sense
To his perception
Of the social inconsequence.

Thus, if her colour
Came against his gaze,
Tempered as if
It were through a perfect glaze

He made no immediate application
Of this to relation of the state
To the individual, the month was more
temperate
Because this beauty had been.

The coral isle, the lion-coloured sand
Burst in upon the porcelain revery:
Impetuous troubling
Of his imagery.

Mildness, amid the neo-Nietzschean
clatter,
His sense of graduations,
Quite out of place amid
Resistance to current exacerbations,

Invitation, mere invitation to perceptivity
Gradually led him to the isolation
Which these presents place
Under a more tolerant, perhaps,
examination.

By constant elimination
The manifest universe
Yielded an armour
Against utter consternation,

A Minoan undulation,
Seen, we admit, amid ambrosial
circumstances,
Strengthened him against
The discouraging doctrine of chances,

And his desire for survival,
Faint in the most strenuous moods,
Became an Olympian *apathein* [1]
In the presence of selected
perceptions.

A pale gold, in the aforesaid pattern,
The unexpected palms
Destroying, certainly, the artist's
urge,
Left him delighted with the
imaginary
Audition of the phantasmal sea-surge,

Incapable of the least utterance or
composition,
Emendation, conservation of the 'better
tradition,'
Refinement of medium, elimination of
superfluities,
August attraction or concentration.

Nothing, in brief, but maudlin
confession,
Irresponse to human aggression,
Amid the precipitation, down-float
Of insubstantial manna,
Lifting the faint susurrus
Of his subjective hosannah.

Ultimate affronts to
Human redundancies;

Non-esteem of self-styled 'his betters'
Leading, as he well knew,
To his final
Exclusion from the world of letters.

1 'Impassivity.'

Scattered Moluccas
Not knowing, day to day,
The first day's end, in the next noon;
The placid water
Unbroken by the Simoon;

Thick foliage
Placid beneath warm suns,
Tawn foreshores
Washed in the cobalt of oblivions;

Or through dawn-mist
The grey and rose
Of the juridical
Flamingoes;

A consciousness disjunct,
Being but this overblotted
Series
Of intermittences;

Coracle of Pacific voyages,
The unforecasted beach;
Then on an oar
Read this:

'I was
And I no more exist;
Here drifted
An hedonist.'

Medallion

Luini in porcelain!
The grand piano
Utters a profane
Protest with her clear soprano.

The sleek head emerges
From the gold-yellow frock
As Anadyomene in the opening
Pages of Reinach.

Honey-red, closing the face-oval,
A basket-work of braids which seem as if
they were
Spun in King Minos' hall
From metal, or intractable amber;

The face-oval beneath the glaze,
Bright in its suave bounding-line, as,
Beneath half-watt rays,
The eyes turn topaz.

1920

FROM CANTOS [1]

I

AND then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea,
and
We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, and winds from
sternward

1 The clearest statement as to the ultimate structure of the Cantos has been made by William Butler Yeats, based on a conversation with Pound at Rapallo: 'For the last hour we have sat upon the roof which is also a garden, discussing that immense poem of which but seven and twenty Cantos are already published. I have often found there some scene of distinguished beauty but have never discovered why all the suits could not be dealt out in some quite different order. Now at last he explains that it will, when the hundredth Canto is finished, display a structure like that of a Bach Fugue. There will be no plot, no chronicle of events, no logic of discourse, but two themes, the descent into Hades from Homer, a metamorphosis from Ovid, and mixed with these mediæval or modern historical characters. He has tried to produce that picture Porteous commended to Nicholas Poussin in *Le Chef-d'œuvre Inconnu* where everything rounds or thrusts itself without edges, without contours—conventions of the intellect—from a splash of tints and shades, to achieve a work as characteristic of the art of our time as the paintings of Cézanne, avowedly suggested by Porteous, as *Ulysses* and its dream association of words and images, a poem in which there is nothing that can be taken out and reasoned over, nothing that is not a part of the poem itself. He has scribbled on the back of an envelope certain sets of letters that represent emotions or archetypal events—I cannot find any adequate definition—A B C D and then J K L M, and then each set of letters repeated, and then A B C D inverted and this repeated, and then a new element X Y Z, then certain letters that never recur and then all sorts of combinations of X Y Z and J K L M and A B C D and D C B A and all set whirling together. He has shown me upon the wall a photograph of a Cosimo Tura decoration in three compartments, in the upper the Triumph of Love and the Triumph of Chastity, in the middle Zodiacal signs, and in the lower certain events in Cosimo Tura's day. The descent and the metamorphosis—A B C D and J K L M—his fixed elements, took the place of the Zodiac, the archetypal persons—X Y Z—that of the Triumphs, and certain modern events—his letters that do not recur—that of those events in Cosimo Tura's day.

'I may, now that I have recovered leisure, find that the mathematical structure, when taken up into the imagination, is more than mathematical, that seemingly irrelevant details fit together into a single theme, that here is no batch of tone and colour—Hodos Chameliontos—except for some odd corner where one discovers beautiful detail like that finely modelled foot in Porteous' disastrous picture.

'It is almost impossible to understand the art of a generation younger than one's own. I was wrong about *Ulysses* when I had read but some first frag-

Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller,
Thus with stretched sail, we went over sea till day's end.
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean,
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands, and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever
With glitter of sun-rays
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there.
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin;
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour.
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads;
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods,
A sheep to Tiresias only, black and a bell-sheep.
Dark blood flowed in the fosse,
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead, of brides
Of youths and of the old who had borne much;
Souls stained with recent tears, girls tender,
Men many, mauled with bronze lance heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreory arms,
These many crowded about me; with shouting,
Pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts;
Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze;
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine;
Unsheathed the narrow sword,
I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead,
Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth,
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in sepulchre, since toils urged other.
Pitiful spirit. And I cried in hurried speech:
'Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?
'Cam'st thou afoot, outstripping seamen?'
And he in heavy speech:
'Ill fate and abundant wine. I slept in Circe's ingle.
'Going down the long ladder unguarded,
'I fell against the buttress,
'Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
'But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied,
'Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-bord, and inscribed:
'*A man of no fortune, and with a name to come.*
'And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows.'

And Anticlea came, whom I beat off, and then Tiresias Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me, and spoke first:
'A second time? why? man of ill star,
'Facing the sunless dead and this joyless region?
'Stand from the fosse, leave me my bloody bever
'For soothsay.'
And I stepped back,
And he strong with the blood, said then:
'Odysseus
'Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
'Lose all companions.' And then Anticlea came.
Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is Andreas Divus,
In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.
And he sailed, by Sirens and thence outward and away

ments, and I do not want to be wrong again—above all in judging verse. Perhaps when the sudden Italian spring has come I may have discovered what will seem all the more, because it is the opposite of all I have attempted, unique and unforgettable.' Yeats, *A Packet for Ezra Pound* (Dublin, 1929), 2–4.

And unto Circe.
Venerandam,[1]
In the Cretan's phrase, with the golden
crown, Aphrodite,
Cypri munimenta sortita est,[2] mirthful,
oricalchi,[3] with golden
Girdles and breast bands, thou with dark
eyelids
Bearing the golden bough of Argicida. So
that:

1924

2

HANG it all, Robert Browning,
there can be but the one 'Sordello.'
But Sordello, and my Sordello? [4]
Lo Sordels si fo di Mantovana.
So-shu churned in the sea.
Seal sports in the spray-whited circles of
cliff-wash,
Sleek head, daughter of Lir,
eyes of Picasso
Under black fur-hood, lithe daughter of
Ocean;
And the wave runs in the beach-groove:
'Eleanor, ἐλέναυς and ἑλέπτολις!' [5]
And poor old Homer blind, blind,
as a bat,
Ear, ear for the sea-surge, murmur of old
men's voices:
'Let her go back to the ships,
Back among Grecian faces, lest evil come
on our own,
Evil and further evil, and a curse cursed on
our children,
Moves, yes she moves like a goddess
And has the face of a god
and the voice of Schoeney's
daughters,
And doom goes with her in walking,
Let her go back to the ships,
back among Grecian voices.'
And by the beach-run, Tyro,
Twisted arms of the sea-god,
Lithe sinews of water, gripping her,
cross-hold,
And the blue-gray glass of the wave tents
them,
Glare azure of water, cold-welter, close
cover.

1 'To be worshiped.'
2 'She was allotted the protection of Cyprus.'
3 'Of brass.'
4 'Sordello was from around Mantua.'
5 'A hell to ships, a hell to cities.' Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, 689. The epithet was punningly said of Helen.

Quiet sun-tawny sand-stretch,
The gulls broad out their wings,
nipping between the splay
feathers;
Snipe come for their bath,
bend out their wing-joints,
Spread wet wings to the sun-film,
And by Scios,
to left of the Naxos passage,
Naviform rock overgrown,
algæ cling to its edge,
There is a wine-red glow in the shallows,
a tin flash in the sun-dazzle.

The ship landed in Scios,
men wanting spring-water,
And by the rock-pool a young boy loggy
with vine-must,
'To Naxos? Yes, we'll take you to
Naxos,
Cum' along lad.' 'Not that way!'
'Aye, that way is Naxos.'
And I said: 'It's a straight ship.'
And an ex-convict out of Italy
knocked me into the fore-stays,
(He was wanted for manslaughter in
Tuscany)
And the whole twenty against me,
Mad for a little slave money.
And they took her out of Scios
And off her course . . .
And the boy came to, again, with
the racket,
And looked out over the bows,
and to eastward, and to the Naxos
passage.
God-sleight then, god-sleight:
Ship stock fast in sea-swirl,
Ivy upon the oars, King Pentheus,
grapes with no seed but sea-foam,
Ivy in scupper-hole.
Aye, I, Acœtes, stood there,
and the god stood by me,
Water cutting under the keel,
Sea-break from stern forrards,
wake running off from the bow,
And where was gunwale, there now was
vine-trunk,
And tenthril where cordage had been,
grape-leaves on the rowlocks,
Heavy vine on the oarshafts,
And, out of nothing, a breathing,
hot breath on my ankles,
Beasts like shadows in glass,
a furred tail upon nothingness.

Lynx-purr, and heathery smell of beasts,
where tar smell had been,
Sniff and pad-foot of beasts,
eye-glitter out of black air.
The sky overshot, dry, with no tempest,
Sniff and pad-foot of beasts,
fur brushing my knee-skin,
Rustle of airy sheaths,
dry forms in the *æther*.
And the ship like a keel in ship-yard,
slung like an ox in smith's sling,
Ribs stuck fast in the ways,
grape-cluster over pin-rack,
void air taking pelt.
Lifeless air become sinewed,
feline leisure of panthers,
Leopards sniffing the grape shoots by
scupper-hole,
Crouched panthers by fore-hatch,
And the sea blue-deep about us,
green-ruddy in shadows,
And Lyæus: 'From now, Accetes, my
altars,
Fearing no bondage,
fearing no cat of the wood,
Safe with my lynxes,
feeding grapes to my leopards,
Olibanum is my incense,
the vines grow in my homage.'

The back-swell now smooth in the rudder-
chains,
Black snout of a porpoise
where Lycabs had been,
Fish-scales on the oarsmen.
And I worship.
I have seen what I have seen.
When they brought the boy I said:
'He has a god in him,
though I do not know which god.'
And they kicked me into the fore-stays.
I have seen what I have seen:
Medon's face like the face of a dory,
Arms shrunk into fins. And you, Pentheus,
Had as well listen to Tiresias, and to
Cadmus,
or your luck will go out of you.
Fish-scales over groin muscles,
lynx-purr amid sea . . .

And of a later year,
pale in the wine-red algæ,
If you will lean over the rock,
the coral face under wave-tinge,
Rose-paleness under water-shift,
Ileuthyeria, fair Dafne of sea-bords,
The swimmer's arms turned to branches,
Who will say in what year,
fleeing what band of tritons,
The smooth brows, seen, and half seen,
now ivory stillness.

And So-shu churned in the sea, So-shu
also,
using the long moon for a churn-
stick . . .
Lithe turning of water,
sinews of Poseidon,
Black azure and hyaline,
glass wave over Tyro,
Close cover, unstillness,
bright welter of wave-cords,
Then quiet water,
quiet in the buff sands,
Sea-fowl stretching wing-joints,
splashing in rock-hollows and
sand-hollows
In the wave-runs by the half-dune;
Glass-glint of wave in the tide-rips against
sunlight,
pallor of Hesperus,
Gray peak of the wave,
wave, colour of grape's pulp.

Olive gray in the near,
far, smoke gray of the rock-slide,
Salmon-pink wings of the fish-hawk
cast gray shadows in water,
The tower like a one-eyed great goose
cranes up out of the olive-grove,

And we have heard the fauns chiding
Proteus
in the smell of hay under the olive-
trees,
And the frogs singing against the fauns
in the half-light.
And . . .

1924

HILDA DOOLITTLE
(H.D.)
1886–

A NOTE ON POETRY

GLANCING at random over the sheaf of poems in this selection, I fall on 'Lethe' and 'Song.' Those, I know, I wrote in Cornwall, spring-summer 1918. I turn next to 'Fragment 36' and 'The Islands.' Those, definitely, were written at Corfe Castle, in 1916, the year conscription came in. The season was indefinite—rain beat against a high dormer window in a picturesque cobbled street, under the famous ruins of a castle where a young king was done to death while actually reaching, I believe, for the ceremonial stirrup-cup. Anyhow, that town was reputably haunted, as was the actual house I stayed in, in Cornwall.

Poetry? I am to say, why I wrote, when I wrote and how I wrote these fragments. I am to state this simply, for people who may not be altogether in sympathy with my own sort of work. I wish I could do that. I am so afraid I can not. But the inner world of imagination, the ivory tower, where poets presumedly do live, in memory, does stand stark with the sun-lit isles around it, while battle and din of battle and the whole dreary, tragic spectacle of our times seems blurred and sodden and not to be recalled, save in moments of repudiation, historical necessity. I had not the power to repudiate at that time nor to explain. But I do so well remember one shock—a letter from Miss Monroe,[1] timed nicely to arrive to greet me when I had staggered home, exhausted and half-asphixiated. (I and my companion had been shoved off the pavements, protesting to a special policeman that we would rather be killed on the pavement than suffocated in the underground.) Miss Monroe was one of the first to print and recognize my talent. But how strangely, farcically blind to our predicament! The letter suggested with really staggeringly inept solicitude that H.D. would do so well,—maybe, finally,—if she could get into 'life,' into the rhythm of our time, in touch with events, and so on and so on and so on. I don't know what else she said. I was laughing too much.

Ivory tower?

That was and is still, I believe with many, the final indictment of this sort of poetry.

We don't live. We don't see life. And so on.

In order to speak adequately of my poetry and its aims, I must, you see, drag in a whole deracinated epoch. Perhaps specifically, I might say that the house next door was struck one night. We came home and simply waded through glass, while wind from now unshuttered windows made the house a barn, an unprotected dug-out. What does that sort of shock do to the mind, the imagination—not solely of myself, but of an epoch? One of the group found some pleasure in the sight of the tilted shelves and the books tumbled on the floor. He gave a decisive foot-ball kick with his army boot to the fattest volume. It happened actually to be Browning. He demanded dramatically, 'what is the use of all this—now?' To me, *Fortu* and the *yellow-melon flower* answered by existing. They were in another space, another dimension, never so clear as at that very moment. The *unexpected isle in the far seas* remained. Remains.

Life?

Poetry?

Times and places?

'Leda' was done at the same time as 'Lethe.' Lotus-land, all this. It is nostalgia for a lost land. I call it Hellas. I might, psychologically just as well, have listed the Casco Bay islands off the coast of Maine, but I called my islands Rhodes, Samos and Cos. They are symbols. And, symbolically, the first island of memory was dredged away or lost, like a miniature Atlantis. It was a thickly wooded island in the Lehigh river and, believe it or not, was actually named Calypso's island.

I don't know whether I finally shaped 'Lais,' 'Helen' and 'Fragment 113' in London or in Vaud. I was back and forth those years, usually tempering my dash across

1 Harriet Monroe (1860–1936) was the founder and first editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, foremost among the many little magazines which were the chief outlet for the renaissance of poetry in the English language during the second decade of this century.

the continent with a day or so in Paris. There I saw a few people, picked up a few threads. Those poems belong to 1923–24, roughly. As to the song from the play 'Hippolytus Temporizes,' that is more difficult. I had made a few rough notes and jotted down a few metres in 1920 in the Ionian island of Corfu. I didn't get the play under way or shaped to my satisfaction till many years later. I think I made a rough outline in Vaud, and finally in London (I remember it was a particularly stuffy, dank, damp summer) I got the play finished. So the actual song might be dated Corfu, spring 1920, or London, summer 1926. The times of publication of this and the others were naturally different.

This leaves the early group, 'O, wind,' 'Orchard,' 'Sea Gods,' 'Oread,' 'The Pool.' I let my pencil run riot in those early days of my apprenticeship, in an old-fashioned school copy-book—when I could get one. Then I would select from many pages of automatic or pseudo-automatic writing the few lines that satisfied me. I was doing this anywhere, my first days in a dark London, autumn 1912, then in Italy where I spent that winter, Capri especially, where I had some time and space and found the actual geographical Greece for the first time—Syren isle of the Odyssey. I can not give actual dates to these early finished fragments, but they would be just pre-war and at latest, early-war period. Finished fragments? Yes, I suppose they are that—stylistic slashings, definitely self-conscious, though, as I say, impelled by some inner conflict.

The 'lost' world of the classics and the neo-classics is the world of childhood. 'What are the islands to me?' They are, I suppose, an inner region of defence, escape; these are the poems of escapism—if there is any such word. And of memory—suppressed memory, maybe. (And what about the mother of the Muses? Mnemosene, if I remember?) Actual memory, repressed memory, desire to escape, desire to create (music), intellectual curiosity, a wish to make real to myself what is most real, the fragmentary pages of the early Greek poets,—to tear, if it be even the barest fragment of vibrant, electric parchment from hands not always worthy to touch, to fingers whose sterile 'intellectuality' is so often a sort of inverted curse of Midas—these are some of the ingredients of my poetry. Times, places, dates don't seem so much to matter. Yet here are the times and places of these fragments, as well as I can time and place them.

And most dramatically, last Sunday I was called to the telephone. 'Your islands were on the air,' I was informed, 'and read beautifully.' 'Where?' I asked. 'Radio City, just a few minutes ago,' was the answer; 'didn't you hear your poem?' No. I did not. I should have liked, in time, in actuality to have heard my 'islands on the air,' here in this island, to have made that link with those other islands, Calypso's island or Catalpa island as some called it, vanished Atlantis in a river in Pennsylvania, sea-islands off the coast of Maine, Aegean islands sensed in passing and the actual Ionian island of Corfu, the early Capri, Syren island of Magna Graecia, and specifically, that island, noted in Phoenician days for its tin (a track ran past the house where I stayed in Cornwall, reputedly first used by the mules carrying tin from the mines to the Phoenician galleys)—England. I should like to have heard my 'islands on the air,' here in this island, the latest in my phantasy of islands, final link and perhaps 'clasp of the white necklace.'

1938

December 12, 1937
New York City

FROM GARDEN

2

O WIND, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat—
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

1912–1914 1916

ORCHARD

I SAW the first pear
as it fell—
the honey-seeking, golden-banded,
the yellow swarm
was not more fleet than I,
(spare us from loveliness)
and I fell prostrate
crying:
you have flayed us
with your blossoms,
spare us the beauty
of fruit-trees.

The honey-seeking
paused not,
the air thundered their song,
and I alone was prostrate.

O rough-hewn
god of the orchard,
I bring you an offering—
do you, alone unbeautiful,
son of the god,
spare us from loveliness:

these fallen hazel-nuts,
stripped late of their green sheaths,
grapes, red-purple,
their berries
dripping with wine,
pomegranates already broken,
and shrunken figs
and quinces untouched,
I bring you as offering.

1912–1914 1916

SEA GODS

1

THEY say there is no hope—
sand—drift—rocks—rubble of the sea—
the broken hulk of a ship,
hung with shreds of rope,
pallid under the cracked pitch.

They say there is no hope
to conjure you—
no whip of the tongue to anger you—
no hate of words
you must rise to refute.

They say you are twisted by the sea,
you are cut apart
by wave-break upon wave-break,
that you are misshapen by the sharp
rocks,
broken by the rasp and after-rasp.

That you are cut, torn, mangled,
torn by the stress and beat,
no stronger than the strips of sand
along your ragged beach.

2

But we bring violets,
great masses—single, sweet,
wood-violets, stream-violets,
violets from a wet marsh.

Violets in clumps from hills,
tufts with earth at the roots,
violets tugged from rocks,
blue violets, moss, cliff, river-violets.

Yellow violets' gold,
burnt with a rare tint—
violets like red ash
among tufts of grass.

We bring deep-purple
bird-foot violets.

We bring the hyacinth-violet,
sweet, bare, chill to the touch—
and violets whiter than the in-rush
of your own white surf.

3

For you will come,
you will yet haunt men in ships,
you will trail across the fringe of strait
and circle the jagged rocks.

You will trail across the rocks
and wash them with your salt,
you will curl between sand-hills—
you will thunder along the cliff—
break—retreat—get fresh strength—
gather and pour weight upon the beach.

You will draw back,
and the ripple on the sand-shelf
will be witness of your track.
O privet-white, you will paint
the lintel of wet sand with froth.

You will bring myrrh-bark
and drift laurel-wood from hot coasts!

when you hurl high—high—
we will answer with a shout.

For you will come,
you will come,
you will answer our taut hearts,
you will break the lie of men's thoughts,
and cherish and shelter us.
1912–1914 1916

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
whirl your pointed pines,
splash your great pines
on our rocks,
hurl your green over us,
cover us with your pools of fir.
1912–1914 1924

THE POOL

Are you alive?
I touch you.
You quiver like a sea-fish.
I cover you with my net.
What are you—banded one?
1912–1914 1924

LEDA

Where the slow river
meets the tide,
a red swan lifts red wings
and darker beak,
and underneath the purple down
of his soft breast
uncurls his coral feet.

Through the deep purple
of the dying heat
of sun and mist,
the level ray of sun-beam
has caressed
the lily with dark breast,
and flecked with richer gold
its golden crest.

Where the slow lifting
of the tide,
floats into the river
and slowly drifts
among the reeds,
and lifts the yellow flags,
he floats
where tide and river meet.

Ah kingly kiss—
no more regret
nor old deep memories
to mar the bliss;
where the low sedge is thick,
the gold day-lily
outspreads and rests
beneath soft fluttering
of red swan wings
and the warm quivering
of the red swan's breast.
1916 1921

THE ISLANDS

1

What are the islands to me,
what is Greece,
what is Rhodes, Samos, Chios,
what is Paros facing west,
what is Crete?

What is Samothrace,
rising like a ship,
what is Imbros rending the storm-waves
with its breast?

What is Naxos, Paros, Milos,
what the circle about Lycia,
what, the Cyclades'
white necklace?

What is Greece—
Sparta, rising like a rock,
Thebes, Athens,
what is Corinth?

What is Euboia
with its island violets,
what is Euboia, spread with grass,
set with swift shoals,
what is Crete?

What are the islands to me,
what is Greece?

2

What can love of land give to me
that you have not—
what do the tall Spartans know,
and gentler Attic folk?

What has Sparta and her women
more than this?

What are the islands to me
if you are lost—
what is Naxos, Tinos, Andros,
and Delos, the clasp
of the white necklace?

3

What can love of land give to me
that you have not,
what can love of strife break in me
that you have not?

Though Sparta enter Athens,
Thebes wrack Sparta,
each changes as water,
salt, rising to wreak terror
and fall back.

4

'What has love of land given to you
that I have not?'

I have questioned Tyrians
where they sat
on the black ships,
weighted with rich stuffs,
I have asked the Greeks
from the white ships,
and Greeks from ships whose hulks
lay on the wet sand, scarlet
with great beaks.
I have asked bright Tyrians
and tall Greeks—
'what has love of land given you?'
And they answered—'peace.'

5

But beauty is set apart,
beauty is cast by the sea,
a barren rock,
beauty is set about
with wrecks of ships,
upon our coast, death keeps
the shallows—death waits
clutching toward us
from the deeps.

Beauty is set apart;
the winds that slash its beach,
swirl the coarse sand
upward toward the rocks.

Beauty is set apart
from the islands
and from Greece.

6

In my garden
the winds have beaten
the ripe lilies;
in my garden, the salt
has wilted the first flakes
of young narcissus,
and the lesser hyacinth,
and the salt has crept
under the leaves of the white hyacinth.

In my garden
even the wind-flowers lie flat,
broken by the wind at last.

7

What are the islands to me
if you are lost,
what is Paros to me
if your eyes draw back,
what is Milos
if you take fright of beauty,
terrible, torturous, isolated,
a barren rock?

What is Rhodes, Crete,
what is Paros facing west,
what, white Imbros?

What are the islands to me
if you hesitate,
what is Greece if you draw back
from the terror
and cold splendour of song
and its bleak sacrifice?
1916 1927

SAPPHIC FRAGMENTS

36

I know not what to do:
my mind is divided.
—Sappho.

I KNOW not what to do,
my mind is reft:
is song's gift best?
is love's gift loveliest?
I know not what to do,
now sleep has pressed
weight on your eyelids.

Shall I break your rest
devouring, eager?

is love's gift best?
nay, song's the loveliest:
yet were you lost,
what rapture
could I take from song?
what song were left?

I know not what to do:
to turn and slake
the rage that burns,
with my breath burn
and trouble your cool breath?
so shall I turn and take
snow in my arms?
(is love's gift best?)
yet flake on flake
of snow were comfortless,
did you lie wondering,
wakened yet unawake.

Shall I turn and take
comfortless snow within my arms?
press lips to lips
that answer not,
press lips to flesh
that shudders not nor breaks?

Is love's gift best?
shall I turn and slake
all the wild longing?
O I am eager for you!
as the Pleiads shake
white light in whiter water
so shall I take you?

My mind is quite divided,
my minds hesitate,
so perfect matched,
I know not what to do:
each strives with each
as two white wrestlers
standing for a match,
ready to turn and clutch
yet never shake muscle nor nerve nor tendon;
so my mind waits
to grapple with my mind,
yet I lie quiet,
I would seem at rest.

I know not what to do:
strain upon strain,
sound surging upon sound
makes my brain blind;
as a wave-line may wait to fall
yet (waiting for its falling)
still the wind may take
from off its crest,
white flake on flake of foam,
that rises,
seeming to dart and pulse
and rend the light,
so my mind hesitates
above the passion
quivering yet to break,
so my mind hesitates
above my mind,
listening to song's delight.

I know not what to do:
will the sound break,
rending the night
with rift on rift of rose
and scattered light?
will the sound break at last
as the wave hesitant,
or will the whole night pass
and I lie listening awake?
1916 1924

113

Neither honey nor bee for me.
—Sappho.

Not honey,
not the plunder of the bee
from meadow or sand-flower
or mountain bush;
from winter-flower or shoot
born of the later heat:
not honey, not the sweet
stain on the lips and teeth:
not honey, not the deep
plunge of soft belly
and the clinging of the gold-edged
pollen-dusted feet;

Not so—
though rapture blind my eyes,
and hunger crisp
dark and inert my mouth,
not honey, not the south,
not the tall stalk
of red twin-lilies,
nor light branch of fruit tree
caught in flexible light branch;

Not honey, not the south;
ah flower of purple iris,
flower of white,

or of the iris, withering the grass—
for fleck of the sun's fire,
gathers such heat and power,
that shadow-print is light,
cast through the petals
of the yellow iris flower;

Not iris—old desire—old passion—
old forgetfulness—old pain—
not this, nor any flower,
but if you turn again,
seek strength of arm and throat,
touch as the god;
neglect the lyre-note;
knowing that you shall feel
about the frame,
no trembling of the string
but heat, more passionate
of bone and the white shell
and fiery tempered steel.

1921

SONG

You are as gold
as the half-ripe grain
that merges to gold again,
as white as the white rain
that beats through
the half-opened flowers
of the great flower tufts
thick on the black limbs
of an Illyrian apple bough.

Can honey distill such fragrance
as your bright hair—
for your face is as fair as rain,
yet as rain that lies clear
on white honey-comb,
lends radiance to the white wax,
so your hair on your brow
casts light for a shadow.

1918 1921

LETHE

Nor skin nor hide nor fleece
Shall cover you,
Nor curtain of crimson nor fine
Shelter of cedar-wood be over you,
Nor the fir-tree
Nor the pine.

Nor sight of whin nor gorse
Nor river-yew,
Nor fragrance of flowering bush,
Nor wailing of reed-bird to waken you,
Nor of linnet,
Nor of thrush.

Nor word nor touch nor sight
Of lover, you
Shall long through the night but for this:
The roll of the full tide to cover you
Without question,
Without kiss.

1918 1924

LAIS [1]

Let her who walks in Paphos
take the glass,
let Paphos take the mirror
and the work of frosted fruit,
gold apples set
with silver apple-leaf,
white leaf of silver
wrought with vein of gilt.

Let Paphos lift the mirror,
let her look
into the polished centre of the disk.

Let Paphos take the mirror;
did she press
flowerlet of flame-flower
to the lustrous white
of the white forehead?
did the dark veins beat
a deeper purple
than the wine-deep tint
of the dark flower?

Did she deck black hair
one evening, with the winter-white
flower of the winter-berry,
did she look (reft of her lover)
at a face gone white
under the chaplet
of white virgin-breath?

Lais, exultant, tyrannizing Greece,
Lais who kept her lovers in the porch,
lover on lover waiting,
(but to creep
where the robe brushed the threshold
where still sleeps Lais)
so she creeps, Lais,

1 'The poem "Lais" has in italics a translation of the Plato epigram [*Anthol.Pal.*,vi,1] in the *Greek Anthology*.' Author's note, *Collected Poems*(N.Y., 1925), 214.

to lay her mirror at the feet
of her who reigns in Paphos.

Lais has left her mirror
for she sees no longer in its depth
the Lais' self
that laughed exultant
tyrannizing Greece.

Lais has left her mirror,
for she weeps no longer,
finding in its depth,
a face, but other
than dark flame and white
feature of perfect marble.

Lais has left her mirror,
(so one wrote)
to her who reigns in Paphos;
Lais who laughed a tyrant over Greece,
Lais who turned the lovers from the porch,
that swarm for whom now
Lais has no use;
Lais is now no lover of the glass,
seeing no more the face as once it was,
wishing to see that face and finding this.

1923–1924 1924

HELEN

All Greece hates
the still eyes in the white face,
the lustre as of olives
where she stands,
and the white hands.

All Greece reviles
the wan face when she smiles,
hating it deeper still
when it grows wan and white,
remembering past enchantments
and past ills.

Greece sees unmoved,
God's daughter, born of love,
the beauty of cool feet
and slenderest knees,
could love indeed the maid,
only if she were laid,
white ash amid funereal cypresses.

1923–1924 1924

FROM HIPPOLYTUS TEMPORIZES

Where is the nightingale,
in what myrrh-wood and dim?
O let the night come black
for we would conjure back
all that enchanted him,
all that enchanted him.

Where is the bird of fire,
in what packed hedge of rose?
in what roofed ledge of flower?
no other creature knows
what magic lurks within,
what magic lurks within.

Bird, bird, bird, bird we cry,
hear, pity us in pain,
hearts break in the sunlight,
hearts break in daylight rain,
only night heals again,
only night heals again.

1920–1926 1927

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

1886–

GREEN SYMPHONY [1]

I

The glittering leaves of the rhododendrons
Balance and vibrate in the cool air;
While in the sky above them
White clouds chase each other.

Like scampering rabbits,
Flashes of sunlight sweep the lawn;
They fling in passing
Patterns of shadow,
Golden and green.

1 'The material in the "Symphonies" is autobiographic; they were printed in the order as written, with the exception of "Midsummer Dreams" ("Symphony in White and Blue") and "Poppies of the Red Year" ("Symphony in Scarlet") which come from the summer following the year 1914 when all the others were written. Many elements went to their making. The vivid, luminous colour of Gauguin—the vowel-nuances of Mallarmé—the shifting, rhythmic diversity of Debussy—all these I tried to combine with their emotional and tonal patterns. The "Green Symphony"

With long cascades of laughter,
The mating birds dart and swoop to the turf:
'Mid their mad trillings
Glints the gay sun behind the trees.

Down there are deep blue lakes:
Orange blossom droops in the water.

In the tower of the winds,
All the bells are set adrift:
Jingling
For the dawn.

Thin fluttering streamers
Of breeze lash through the swaying boughs,
Palely expectant
The earth receives the slanting rain.

I am a glittering raindrop
Hugged close by the cool rhododendron.
I am a daisy starring
The exquisite curves of the close-cropped
turf.

The glittering leaves of the rhododendron
Are shaken like blue-green blades of grass,
Flickering, cracking, falling:
Splintering in a million fragments.

The wind runs laughing up the slope
Stripping off handfuls of wet green leaves,
To fling in peoples' faces.
Wallowing on the daisy-powdered turf,
Clutching at the sunlight,
Cavorting in the shadow.

Like baroque pearls,
Like cloudy emeralds,
The clouds and the trees clash together;
Whirling and swirling,
In the tumult
Of the spring,
And the wind.

2

The trees splash the sky with their fingers,
A restless green rout of stars.

With whirling movement
They swing their boughs
About their stems:
Planes on planes of light and shadow
Pass among them,
Opening fan-like to fall.

The trees are like a sea;
Tossing,
Trembling,
Roaring,
Wallowing,
Darting their long green flickering fronds
up at the sky,
Spotted with white blossom-spray.

The trees are roofs:
Hollow caverns of cool blue shadow,
Solemn arches
In the afternoons.
The whole vast horizon
In terrace beyond terrace,
Pinnacle above pinnacle,
Lifts to the sky
Serrated ranks of green on green.

They caress the roofs with their fingers,
They sprawl about the river to look into it;
Up the hill they come
Gesticulating challenge:
They cower together
In dark valleys;
They yearn out over the fields.

Enamelled domes
Tumble upon the grass,
Crashing in ruin
Quiet at last.

The trees lash the sky with their leaves,
Uneasily shaking their dark green
manes.

3

Far let the voices of the mad wild birds be
calling me,
I will abide in this forest of pines.

When the wind blows
Battling through the forest,
I hear it distantly,
The crash of a perpetual sea.

When the rain falls,
I watch silver spears slanting downwards
From pale river-pools of sky,
Enclosed in dark fronds.

is peculiarly a poem of spring—spring seen in three aspects: morning, noon, and afternoon fading to evening. In general, the "Symphonies" have no meaning beyond the primary statement of the moods they recall. The identification of self and object was, in them, deliberately made as close as possible.' Author's note.

When the sun shines,
I weave together distant branches till they
enclose mighty circles,
I sway to the movement of hooded
summits,
I swim leisurely in deep blue seas of
air.

I hug the smooth bark of stately red pillars
And with cones carefully scattered
I mark the progression of dark dial-
shadows
Flung diagonally downwards through the
afternoon.

This turf is not like turf:
It is a smooth dry carpet of velvet,
Embroidered with brown patterns of
needles and cones.
These trees are not like trees:
They are innumerable feathery pagoda-
umbrellas,
Stiffly ungracious to the wind,
Teetering on red-lacquered stems.

In the evening I listen to the winds' lisping,
While the conflagrations of the sunset
flicker and clash behind me,
Flamboyant crenellations of glory amid the
charred ebony boles.

In the night the fiery nightingales
Shall clash and trill through the silence:
Like the voices of mermaids crying
From the sea.

Long ago has the moon whelmed this
uncompleted temple.
Stars swim like gold fish far above the black
arches.

Far let the timid feet of dawn fly to catch
me:
I will abide in this forest of pines:
For I have unveiled naked beauty,
And the things that she whispered to me in
the darkness,
Are buried deep in my heart.

Now let the black tops of the pine-trees
break like a spent wave,
Against the grey sky:
These are tombs and memorials and tem-
ples and altars sun-kindled for me.

1914 1916

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI [1]

1

Embarkation

DULL masses of dense green,
The forests range their sombre platforms;
Between them silently, like a spirit,
The river finds its own mysterious path.

Loosely the river sways out, backward,
forward,
Always fretting the outer side;
Shunning the invisible focus of each
crescent,
Seeking to spread into shining loops over
fields.

Like an enormous serpent, dilating,
uncoiling,
Displaying a broad scaly back of earth-
smeared gold;
Swaying out sinuously between the dull
motionless forests,
As molten metal might glide down the lip
of a vase of dark bronze;

It goes, while the steamboat drifting out
upon it,
Seems now to be floating not only outwards
but upwards;
In the flight of a petal detached and
gradually moving skyward
Above the pink explosion of the calyx of the
dawn.

2

Heat

As if the sun had trodden down the
sky,
Until it holds living air no more, but only
humid vapour,

1 'Both these poems ["Midsummer Dreams" and "Poppies of the Red Year"], in conformity with my original intentions in the "symphonies," were stated in terms of subjective vision, rather than as terms of objective fact. . . . With these two final fusions of dream and reality I finally put the entire series of "Symphonies" behind me, and entered a fresh phase of development. . . . On the trip down I had written the series of poems, "Down the Mississippi," in which I gave my new technique of description derived from natural objects themselves, rather than from my feelings about them, a full chance to show what it could do.' Fletcher, *Life Is My Song* (N.Y., 1937), 210–11.

Heat pressing upon earth with irresistible
langour,
Turns all the solid forest into half-liquid
smudge.

The heavy clouds like cargo-boats strain
slowly against its current;
And the flickering of the haze is like the
thunder of ten thousand paddles
Against the heavy wall of the horizon, pale-
blue and utterly windless,
Whereon the sun hangs motionless, a
brassy disc of flame.

3

Full Moon

Flinging its arc of silver bubbles, quickly
shifts the moon
From side to side of us as we go down its
path;
I sit on the deck at midnight and watch it
slipping and sliding,
Under my tilted chair, like a thin film of
spilt water.

It is weaving a river of light to take the place
of this river;
A river where we shall drift all night, then
come to rest in its shallows;
And then I shall wake from my drowsiness
and look down from some dim
treetop
Over white lakes of cotton, like moonfields
on every side.

4

The Moon's Orchestra

When the moon lights up
Its dull red campfire through the
trees;
And floats out, like a white bal-
loon,
Into the blue cup of the night, borne by a
casual breeze;
The moon-orchestra then begins to
stir.
Jiggle of fiddles commence their crazy
dance in the darkness.
Crickets churr
Against the stark reiteration of the rusty
flutes which frogs
Puff at from rotted logs
In the swamp.

And then the moon begins her dance of
frozen pomp
Over the lightly quivering floor of the flat
and mournful river.
Her white feet slightly twist and swirl.
She is a mad girl
In an old unlit ball room
Whose walls, half-guessed at through the
gloom,
Are hung with the rusty crape of stark
black cypress
Which show, through gaps and tatters, red
stains half hidden away.

5

The Stevedores

Frieze of warm bronze that glides with
catlike movements
Over the gangplank poised and yet
awaiting,
The sinewy thudding rhythm of forty
shuffling feet
Falling like muffled drumbeats on the
stillness.
O roll the cotton down,
Roll, roll the cotton down,
From the further side of Jordan,
O roll the cotton down!

And the river waits,
The river listens,
Chuckling little banjo-notes that break
with a flop on the stillness;
And by the low dark shed that holds the
heavy freights,
Two lonely cypress trees stand up and
point with stiffened fingers
Far southward where a single chimney
stands out aloof in the sky.

6

Night Landing

After the whistle's roar has bellowed and
shuddered,
Shaking the sleeping town and the
somnolent river,
The deep toned floating of the pilot's bell
Suddenly warns the engines.

They stop like heart-beats that abruptly
stop,
The shore glides to us, in a wide low
curve.

And then—supreme revelation of the river—
The tackle is loosed—the long gangplank swings outwards—
And poised at the end of it, half-naked beneath the searchlight,
A blue-black negro with gleaming teeth waits for his chance to leap.

7

The Silence

There is a silence I carry about with me always;
A silence perpetual, for it is self-created;
A silence of heat, of water, of unchecked fruitfulness
Through which each year the heavy harvests bloom, and burst and fall.

Deep, matted green silence of my South,
Often within the push and scorn of great cities,
I have seen that mile-wide waste of water swaying out to you,
And on its current glimmering, I am going to the sea.

There is a silence I have achieved: I have walked beyond its threshold;
I know it is without horizons, boundless, fathomless, perfect.
And some day maybe, far away,
I will curl up in it at last and sleep an endless sleep.

1915 1921

A NOTE ON POLYPHONIC PROSE

In a recent essay on Shelley, the English critic Herbert Read has said, 'Poetry is mainly a function of language—the exploitation of a medium, a vocal and mental material, in the interests of a personal mood or emotion, or of the thoughts evoked by such moods and emotions. I do not think we can say much more about it; according to our sensitivity we recognize its success. The rest of our reasoning about it is either mere prejudice, ethical anxiety, or academic pride.' Earlier, in one of his critical volumes, the same critic pointed out that there is no hard and fast dividing line to be drawn between poetry and prose. The dividing line, if one is to be sought, must be found not in the form employed, but in the quality of the experience conveyed: 'Poetry is intensive experience, prose is extensive experience.' These remarks, with which I am entirely in agreement, will serve, I think, to illuminate much that has happened in the development of poetry in the English language for the last twenty-five years, including the still vexed question as to the place to be occupied by the unusual form known as polyphonic prose.

The period from 1913 to 1929 was, in England, and still more in America, immensely fecund in technical poetic experiment. It has been followed by a period in which the relation of the poets' ideas to tradition, to society, to dogmatic theology, or to schemes for social justice has been the chief topic debated. As a result both English and American poetry have become progressively more and more intellectualized, while the rich repertory of new forms which the poets, notably the Imagists, of the earlier years evolved has been somewhat overlooked. Whether the process of intellectualization has now reached its limit, it is too early as yet to say. But it is still worth while to reflect for a moment on some of the poetic novelties of twenty years ago and to evaluate their potentialities.

Polyphonic prose is an attempt to employ some of the most time-hallowed rhythmic devices of poetry, such as rhyme, refrain, assonance and alliteration, for the sake of rendering more vividly thereby a range of experience that lies halfway between the domain of poetry and that of prose. In order to describe this range of experience clearly and accurately, one has to go back and examine closely the materials out of which most long poems are composed—inasmuch as polyphonic prose is in itself a form more suitable to extended experience than the stricter kind of Imagism. Somewhat over a century ago Poe declared that the long poem, as such, was a contradiction in terms: being composed of long passages of versified prose interspersed with other passages of poetry. Since then other theorists have raised the issue in another form and have debated the question of 'pure poetry.' Just how much pure poetry exists in any language, and where may it be found? This question, however, as to whether 'pure poetry' does

exist, and if so for how long in poems of an extended type, need not detain us. There is sufficient agreement among the critics of all schools that one of the leading characteristics of poetry as distinguished from prose is its compressed, intensive utterance. Or, as T. S. Eliot once remarked, one of the chief reasons for writing poetry today is that it saves space.

Polyphonic prose represents the first attempt in English to convey intense poetic experience within a form which takes as its basis that which academic critics, to distinguish it from ordinary prose or from the elaborate and subtly varied prose of Sir Thomas Brown and De Quincey, have called 'oratorical prose.' The difference between this type of 'oratorical prose,' intended to be spoken aloud, and ordinary prose is that in the former the cadences are in general more regular and more marked. Anyone who will take the trouble to read aloud some famous oration of the past, such as Webster's reply to Hayne, or Burke's indictment of Warren Hastings, will find therein long passages which scan rhythmically. The New England writers of the last century knew this very well, and continually employed passages which in effect are blank verse written as prose, whenever they wanted to be especially eloquent and poetical. One can find such passages in Melville and Hawthorne; and the famous first preface to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* could be transposed entirely into an oratorical type of versification, akin to Whitman's own, with practically no loss. The only difference, strictly speaking, between such passages and polyphonic prose is that these earlier attempts to write a more poetical and vocal type of prose tend for the most part to recall English blank verse; while the later form of polyphonic prose admits no such constancy. It attempts to follow as its basis a rhythm that is kept continually shifting between verse and prose.

It is no derogation to the form itself to say that it was discovered entirely by accident. Miss Amy Lowell, to whom the discovery is entirely due, became interested in the form through her admiration for the *Ballades Françaises* of M. Paul Fort. As she pointed out in her introduction to *Can Grande's Castle*, M. Fort's work constantly interspersed passages written in prose with others written in the regular classic French measure, the Alexandrine. Inasmuch as the Alexandrine itself is not an easy rhythm for ears attuned to English to sustain over long periods, Miss Lowell realized that some other English rhythm must be devised. Iambic pentameter, the usual alternative, was rejected by Miss Lowell, as she herself stated, because it was difficult to depart from and go back to; so she finally hit upon the expedient of basing her form 'on the long, flowing cadence of oratorical prose.'

The two examples printed in this anthology may give some idea of the possibilities of the range and the flexibility inherent in the form. To take Miss Lowell's contribution, 'The Cross-Roads,' first: Here we have a dramatic narrative, owing something to Browning's dramatic narratives in its mingling of suspense and atmosphere and vivid movement from one episode to another; but owing still more to Miss Lowell's own command over the narrative style, so manifest in many of her other poems; and constantly recalling by its 'recurrence of a dominating thought or image, coming in irregularly and in varying words,' the effect of a ballad. My own 'Clipper-Ships' is somewhat different. It attempts to display a verbal panorama of the whole Clipper-Ship era of New England, with a marked refrain based on the combination of an old sea-chantey and the single dominating image of the ship, 'beautiful as a tiered cloud.' My poem in short is a brief descriptive epic, while Miss Lowell's is a dramatic ballad.

The form of polyphonic prose is thus flexible enough to permit a considerable variety of subject matter. I can see no reason why good polyphonic prose poems should not be written dealing with themes drawn from experiences of love, of personal bereavement, or of religion. But the surcharging of the prose paragraph with all the possible effects of rhyme, assonance, alliteration and refrain which the form itself implies makes it only applicable to poems which deal with states of high emotion rather than intellectual tension. I cannot imagine any ultra-modern intellectualist-poet using this form for his metaphysical cogitations on the meaning of life,

death, the Catholic dogma, or the proletarian revolution.

Since Miss Lowell and I first began to write in polyphonic prose, not many poets have cared to continue with the experiment. It would seem that there is a considerable and general prejudice against the acceptance as poetical of any form which appears typographically to be prose, even though it may possess in ways capable of great variation so many characteristics of fine poetry. Miss Lowell herself referred to this typographical difficulty in her discussion of the form; but she pointed out that if polyphonic prose is read aloud from the page the difficulty immediately disappears. This is indeed the case, though I also fancy that most poetry when not read aloud from the page similarly loses a considerable part of its effect. Nevertheless, polyphonic prose does demand a special effort on the part of the reader to follow. But so does all fine poetry!

Various prose writers seeking for an extension of prose into realms beyond the naturalistic have recently put into their novels long passages of lyrical and emotional description that recall the devices first discovered by the writers of polyphonic prose. One might cite here Thomas Wolfe and his use of the refrain, 'O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again,' throughout his *Look Homeward, Angel*; or Conrad Aiken's use in his novel, *Great Circle*, of the 'stream of consciousness' monologue elaborated in a more poetic and rhythmic way than Joyce had allowed himself in *Ulysses*. These attempts, and some others like them, show that variations of polyphonic prose have by no means been abandoned, and that the vein is very far from being worked out.

I myself, however, feel it necessary to warn the reader that I did not continue my writing in polyphonic prose form beyond the year 1920. The few specimens which I was able to produce, all—with one exception which still remains in manuscript—published in my *Breakers and Granite*, cost me so much time and effort, and met with such poor response, that I decided after much thinking to abandon the form in favour of a type of verse which more closely approached the familiar stanzaic forms. Whether I was right or wrong in my direction I cannot say. Sufficient for me to assert that I still believe polyphonic prose to be a medium with very remarkable possibilities; sufficient for me to wish with all my heart that more modern poets would some day try their hands at it.

1937 1938

CLIPPER-SHIPS

BEAUTIFUL as a tiered cloud, skysails set and shrouds twanging, she emerges from the surges that keep running away before day on the low Pacific shore. With the roar of the wind blowing half a gale after, she heels and lunges, and buries her bows in the smother, lifting them swiftly, and scattering the glistening spray-drops from her jibsails with laughter. Her spars are cracking, her royals are half splitting, her lower stunsail booms are bent aside, like bowstrings ready to loose, and the water is roaring into her scuppers, but she still staggers out under a full press of sail, her upper trucks enkindled by the sun into shafts of rosy flame.

Oh, the anchor is up and the sails they are set, and it's 'way Rio; 'round Cape Stiff and up to Boston, ninety days hauling at the ropes: the decks slope and the stays creak as she lurches into it, sending her jib awash at every thrust, and a handful of dust and a thirst to make you weep, are all we get for being two years away to sea.

Topgallant stunsail has carried away! Ease the spanker! The anchor is rusted on the deck. Men in short duck trousers, wide-brimmed straw hats, with brown mahogany faces, pace up and down, spinning the wornout yarns they told a year ago. Some are coiling rope; some smoke; 'Chips' is picking oakum near the boats. Ten thousand miles away lies their last port. In the rigging climbs a hairy monkey, and a green parakeet screams at the masthead. In the dead calm of a boiling noonday near the line, she lifts her spread of shining canvas from heel to truck, from jib o' jib to ringtail, from moonsails to watersails. Men have hung their washing in the stays so she can get more way on her. She ghosts along before an imperceptible breeze, the sails hanging limp in the cross-trees, and clashing against the masts. She is a proud white albatross skimming across the ocean, beautiful as a tiered cloud. Oh, a Yankee ship

comes down the river; blow, boys, blow: her masts and yards they shine like silver: blow, my bully boys, blow: she's a crack ship, a dandy clipper, nine hundred miles from land; she's a down-Easter from Massachusetts, and she's bound to the Rio Grande!

Where are the men who put to sea in her on her first voyage? Some have piled their bones in California among the hides; some died frozen off the Horn in snowstorms; some slipped down between two greybacks, when the yards were joggled suddenly. Still she glistens beautifully, her decks snow-white with constant scrubbing as she sweeps into some empty sailless bay which sleeps all day, where the wild deer skip away when she fires her eighteen pounder, the sound reverberating about the empty hills. San Francisco? No: San Francisco will not be built for a dozen years to come. Meanwhile she hums with the tumult of loading. The mutineers, even, are let out of their irons and flogged and fed. Every day from when the dawn flares up red amid the hills to the hour it drops dead to westward, men walk gawkily, balancing on their heads the burden of heavy, stiff hides. Now the anchor is up and the sails they are set and it's 'way, Rio. Boston girls are pulling at the ropes: only three months of trouble yet: time for us to go!

Beautiful as a tiered cloud she flies out seaward, and on her decks loaf and stumble a luckless crowd; and filthy sweepings of the stews. In a week, in a day, they have spent a year's wages, swilling it away and letting the waste of it run down among the gutters. How were these deadbeats bribed to go? Only the Ann Street runners know. Dagos, Dutchmen, Souwegians, niggers, crimp-captured greenhorns, they loaf up on the after deck, some of them already wrecks, so sick they wish they had never been born. Before them all the 'old man' calls for a bucket of salt water to wash off his shore face. While he is at it, telling them how he will haze them till they are dead if they try soldiering, but it will be good grub and easy work if they hand, reef and steer and heave the lead, his officers are below, rummaging through the men's dunnage, pulling out heavers, prickers, rum bottles, sheath knives, and pistols. On each grizzled half-cowed face appears something between a sheepish grin, a smirk of fear, a threat of treachery, and the dogged resignation of a brute. But the mate—Bucko Dougles is his name—is the very same that booted three men off the masthead when they were shortening sail in the teeth of a Cape Horn snorter. Two of them fell into the sea, and the third was tossed still groaning into the water. Only last night the captain stuck his cigar butt into one poor swabber's face for not minding the compass, and gave Jim Baines a taste of ratline hash for coming up on deck with dirty hands. Meanwhile under a grand spread of canvas, one hundred feet from side to side, the ship rides up the parallels. From aloft through the blue stillness of a tropic night, crammed with stars, with thunder brewing in the horizon, a mournful echo rises and swells:

> Oh, my name is hanging Johnny,
> Hooray, hooray!
> Oh, my name is hanging Johnny,
> So hang, boys, hang.

The *Great Republic*, launched before thirty thousand people, her main truck overlooking the highest steeple of the town, the eagle at her bows, and colours flying, now in her first and last port, is slowly dying. She is a charred hulk, with toppling masts, seared gilding, and blistered sides. The *Alert* no more slides pertly through the bergs of the Horn. The desolate barrens of Staten Land, where no man was ever born, hold her bones. The Black Baller *Lightning*, that took eighty thousand dollars' worth of cargo around the world in one quick trip, was hurled and ripped to pieces on some unchartered reef or other. The *Dreadnought* disappeared in a hurricane's smother of foam. The *Sovereign of the Seas*, that never furled her top-sails for ten years, was sheared clean amidships by the bows of an iron steamer as she left her last port. The slaver, *Bald Eagle*, cut an unlucky career short when she parted with her anchor and piled up on the Paracels where the pirate junks are waiting for every ship that swells out over the horizon. The *Antelope* was caught off the Grande Ladrone in the northeast monsoon; she's gone. The *Flying Cloud*, proud as she was of beating every ship that carried the Stars and Stripes or the St. George's flag, could not race

faster than a thunder-bolt that fell one day on her deck and turned her to a cloud of flame—everything burned away but her fame! No more will California hear the little *Pilgrim's* parting cheer. The crew took to an open boat when their ship was scuttled by a privateer. So they die out, year after year.

Sometimes the lookout on a great steamer wallowing and threshing through the heavy seas by night, sees far off on his lee quarter something like a lofty swinging light. Beautiful as a tiered cloud, a ghostly clipper-ship emerges from the surges that keep running away before day on the low Pacific shore. Her upper works are enkindled by the sun into shafts of rosy flame. Swimming like a duck, steering like a fish, easy yet dry, lively yet stiff, she lifts cloud on cloud of crowded stainless sail. She creeps abeam, within hail, she dips, she chases, she outpaces like a mettlesome racer the lumbering tea-kettle that keeps her company. Before she fades into the weather quarter, the lookout cries: 'Holy Jiggers, are you the *Flying Dutchman*, that you go two knots to our one?' Hoarsely comes back this answer from the sail: '*Challenge* is our name: America our nation: Bully Waterman our master: we can beat Creation.'

And it's 'way, Rio;
Way—hay—hay, Rio:
O, fare you well, my pretty young girl,
For we're bound to the Rio Grande.

1915 1921

THE SWAN [1]

UNDER a wall of bronze,
Where beeches dip and trail
Thin branches in the water,
With red-tipped head and wings,
A beaked ship under sail,
There glides a great black swan.

Under the autumn trees
He goes. The branches quiver,
Dance in the wraith-like water,
Which ripples beneath the sedge
With the slackening furrow that glides
In his wake when he is gone:
The beeches bow dark heads.

Into the windless dusk,
Where in mist great towers stand
Guarding a lonely strand
That is bodiless and dim,
He speeds with easy stride;
And I would go beside,
Till the low brown hills divide
At last, for me and him.

1919 1927

ELEGY ON TINTERN ABBEY

THAT 'something far more deeply
interfused
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns'
Has changed direction now. And that
which woke
In one man's vision, fired by the setting sun
Of faith from these old altars, has gone down
Like life-blood trickling from the wounds
of Christ
Slowly, to the dumb grass. And that which
stirred
Within the silence of the cemetery
That followed after the proud challenge
pealed
From lips that loved America and France,
Was a loud mocking hoot from factories
Crying, 'Come out; be filled.' And so the
world
Turned backward from its path and
followed gold's
False rushlight gleaming from the dismal
swamp,
Mocking the prophets always and their
creed.

And thus the music of humanity,
'Of ample power to chasten and subdue,'

1 Fletcher says: 'I recall plainly the circumstances under which this poem was composed. I was walking along the Thames, on a beautiful sunny October day, at a spot where the opposite bank of the river was bordered by a row of beech trees fringing the water, with long branches and copper-coloured foliage. Suddenly from a small creek, appeared a black swan which swam straight down the river, breaking its perfectly still and mirror-like surface into wide ripples. The towers of Oxford University loomed up in the distance, softened and mellowed by the hazy sunlight of autumn. It was this scene and the mood it evoked that I tried to convey in my verse. The mingling of exact rhyme with assonance (for example "sedge" and "heads" in the second stanza), the free stanzaic form, the combination of words denoting colour with vowel sounds suggesting the flow of the river, are all effects that may be found in some of my longer poems, such as the "Symphonies," but here shortened and compressed.' Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets*(N.Y., 1933),72–73.

That still sad music breathed from out these stones,
Was lost amidst the mounting shriek and blare
Of 'sell quick and buy cheap.' And so the world
Grew one vast Manchester of laisser-faire,
Low and victorious, 'mong which stranger-folk
Who clinked the spurs of Cavaliers, or swore
The oaths of the mad Puritans, went down
To drink the stream of Lethe with their peers.

God of the world, Who suffers the unjust,
Poured out His potent spell. It fumed like wine,
In many brains. One merely spelled out words
In some newspaper, and the morning's sun
Rose clear to greet them. Long as outward white
Was inward black, one was content to swear
That all was well with earth. Meanwhile the wheels
Turned furious, and the little wheels of Time
Beside them, saw they ran the faster as
New nations learned the trick to make them turn.

No one can say what happened then, nor how.
Men had no time to pause and gather thought.
Earth in its furious dance spun one mad twirl,
And then beyond the wheels were sudden come
The lean grey throats of guns uneasily crouching
And searching skies for prey. What made the world
Grow dark, and then the awful echoes start,
Rebounding here and echoing there, none knew;
Only the wheels had got at last their way
Not three hours then, but four years Calvary.

Meantime the dawn kept to its 'priestlike task'
Of waking worlds too brutalized to ask,
Aught but 'how long?' too agonized to know
Aught but the need of fitting on anew
One's gas-mask, fixing bayonets again
Against attacks unseen. To such a strain
As this now blew 'the misty mountain-winds'
That once spoke liberty. And to this came
Songs of man's triumph in the swelling main
Full-tide set towards progress. Till, at last,
The sullen guns grew weary riddling earth
To rubbish-heaps and so withdrew again,
Leaving the beaten folk to cower there,
Behind the barrier of an empty word.

And then men saw, as dawn at last released
The last long trenchline furrowing earth defiled,
That man was fastened hand and foot alike
To his machines; not as Prometheus now
Chained to his sad rock and yet nobler than
The god that doomed him: but Ixion cursed,
Who raped great Hera, and hence, self-condemned,
Must roll through Hell forever on his wheel.

What then can free our fingers or dispel
The chill delusion of dark crawling thoughts
That haunt too close the tomb? Can madness save
The sanity of the void? Is there a tune
Not torn from man's guts by the fiddling bow
Of greed and ignorance hired each day anew
To play on them? Well, if there is, not here
May it be found, where, as a numbing spell,
Some ancient acquiescence haunts the dust;
But rather where the shells and shards are piled,
Vain effort, with the souls that strove in vain;
There you may find some outcast sons of men
Who see, but will not yield to their despair.

1925 1935

ELEGY ON AN EMPTY SKYSCRAPER[1]

I

AGAINST the wall of this sky,
Leaden pall threaded with cardboard
boxes, the pale light of the towers
Flickers unearthly still,
Long leaden streets between them:
Against the wall of this sky, the cream-
white faces
Of stone blocks bound in glittering steel
gleam high;
Jut to the sky, and break
Packed huddled ranks of clouds and roofs
apart
Thrusting their own horizon yet a little
higher.

Beauty is spread
Here over hollow voids; beneath these
walls
Clamour of traffic slides through
corridors,
Long elevator-shafts shoot mountainously
downwards.
Steel on the surface repels
This drizzling daylight; through the inner
core
Vertical darkness spreads,
Extends its empire upwards,
Forces the tower to tremble with dull
sound.

Noise of wheels tuned to wheels
Driving the darkness skyward,
Forcing the human darkness that should
hide
The earth in fruitfulness, still bleakly
upward;
In a stark affirmation,
Stone flanged to steel here to repel the
daylight;
Void affirmation, since the sky goes higher
And men drift past, unseeing,
Bowed deeper by the weight of locked-in
stone:—

Balancing bodies against the heat that holds
Its swift course vertically downwards;
Dragging their heavy feet into its molten
pavements,
Swaying their shrinking flesh against its
reverberant walls;
Noise of wheels tuned to wheels,
Bewildered by the men that move amid
them;
While still the tower lurches
Upwards with its long shadow,
Flight of white ripples four-square on the
sky.

Here is this drift against the wall of the sky,
Steel arms that lift,
Tackle that rattles,
Torches that sputter,
Chattering hammers that shake the empty
brain,
The roar and the mutter
Of the swift elevated train;
And the ships at the dockside,
The pencilled lines of the bridges,
The dull green carpet of park,
The wide grey floor of the bay—
Is all this living to-day?
The fuming and looping line of the surly
river to westward,
Stained by the sunset to red—
Is all this living, or dead?
Dead are the twinkling lights and the
sombre reflections
Of the earth-dwellers stretched
heavenwards here from below?
Who is there living to know?
Only the wide hollow offices, the corridors
empty of light,
Tier after tier going downwards here into
the night.

2

Thick pencil of shadow stretched across the
street,
If I could lift

1 'The Empire State Building, the tallest in New York and in the world, was finished in the spring of 1931, but thanks to the depression has still remained largely empty on its upper floors. When I first saw it, in July 1931, on a day of threatening thunderstorms to north and coppery sunset to westward, I could not escape the impression that I was standing on the summit of a spot as uninhabited as Everest. I stayed there three or four hours, filling several pages of a notebook with such scattered fragments of impression as "leaden pall threaded with cardboard boxes" to describe the sky, or "noise of wheels tuned to wheels" to describe the traffic. It was not until two months and more had passed, on the return journey to England, that on going over my notebook I found the fragments I had assembled could be shaped into a poem. The form is loosely stanzaic; and the second section aims, by repetition of rhymes from one stanza to another, to give something of the effect of climbing upwards.' Author's note.

Your weight and make you write;
Or if at night
I could make move that fixed and arrogant light
That stands there emptily glaring to repeat,
In higher guise, the street-lamp's signal-flight;
What against all the words that we repeat
In vain to-day,
What is the one word I would make you say?

'Here where once stared in dumb hope to the sky
Man by his naked blaze, and saw smoke take away
In folds of undulating grey
His prayer, not knowing walls however high:
Here wall on wall is heaped, steel thread to thread
Is riveted to extend the ever-dead:
Vain flight of shadow where the chasms cry.'

Is this the word, or is some other thing
That which I seek; the sky gives no reply,
Will man grow wise and grow another wing
As powerful as the one that set on high
This thing?
I do not know:
But slow the darkness gathers; echoes bring
Only the wild cries of mechanic woe.

3

Could I but strip you down,
Tear steel from steel in long peeled strips, and break
The interlocking blocks of cream-white stone,
Send them like autumn leaves swift spinning down,
Or level, near and far,
This city, spread about you greening fields,
Leave you alone, all empty as you are,
Gleaming-nerved flower that no grass reveals,

Either I'd do:
But it is vain within your walls to go,
To feel in your dead heart the beat and strain
Of hopes grown panic-smitten, to and fro
Millions of meaningless lights,
When all about you is the soundless night's.

There is wide space between
Man's topmast and his keel, and in it death
Comes without sign or sound or stir of breath.
No one shall fill that room, or take his place
In it, as stowaway or come-aboard;
Nor shall the meagre window-blind be lowered,
Nor shall the dark be levelled by a face.
1931 1935

AMY LOWELL

1874–1925

FIREWORKS

You hate me and I hate you,
And we are so polite, we two!

But whenever I see you, I burst apart
And scatter the sky with my blazing heart.
It spits and sparkles in stars and balls,
Buds into roses—and flares, and falls.

Scarlet buttons, and pale green disks,
Silver spirals and asterisks,
Shoot and tremble in a mist
Peppered with mauve and amethyst.
I shine in the windows and light up the trees,
And all because I hate you, if you please.

And when you meet me, you rend asunder
And go up in a flaming wonder
Of saffron cubes, and crimson moons,
And wheels all amaranths and maroons.

Golden lozenges and spades,
Arrows of malachites and jades,
Patens of copper, azure sheaves.
As you mount, you flash in the glossy leaves.

Such fireworks as we make, we two!
Because you hate me and I hate you.

1919

PATTERNS

I WALK down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whalebone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime-tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden-paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword-hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover.
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom,
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
'Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight.'
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
'Any answer, Madam?' said my footman.
'No,' I told him.
'See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer.'
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;

He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, 'It shall be as you have said.'
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

1915

LILACS

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Colour of lilac,
Your great puffs of flowers
Are everywhere in this my New England.
Among your heart-shaped leaves
Orange orioles hop like music-box birds and sing
Their little weak soft songs;
In the crooks of your branches
The bright eyes of song sparrows sitting on spotted eggs
Peer restlessly through the light and shadow
Of all Springs.
Lilacs in dooryards
Holding quiet conversations with an early moon;
Lilacs watching a deserted house
Settling sideways into the grass of an old road;
Lilacs, wind-beaten, staggering under a lopsided shock of bloom
Above a cellar dug into a hill.
You are everywhere.
You were everywhere.
You tapped the window when the preacher preached his sermon,
And ran along the road beside the boy going to school.
You stood by pasture-bars to give the cows good milking,
You persuaded the housewife that her dish pan was of silver
And her husband an image of pure gold.
You flaunted the fragrance of your blossoms
Through the wide doors of Custom Houses—
You, and sandal-wood, and tea,
Charging the noses of quill-driving clerks
When a ship was in from China.
You called to them: 'Goose-quill men, goose-quill men,
May is a month for flitting,'
Until they writhed on their high stools
And wrote poetry on their letter-sheets behind the propped-up ledgers.
Paradoxical New England clerks,
Writing inventories in ledgers, reading the 'Song of Solomon' at night,
So many verses before bed-time,
Because it was the Bible.
The dead fed you
Amid the slant stones of graveyards.
Pale ghosts who planted you
Came in the night-time
And let their thin hair blow through your clustered stems.
You are of the green sea,
And of the stone hills which reach a long distance.
You are of elm-shaded streets with little shops where they sell kites and marbles,
You are of great parks where everyone walks and nobody is at home.
You cover the blind sides of greenhouses
And lean over the top to say a hurry-word through the glass
To your friends, the grapes, inside.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Colour of lilac,

You have forgotten your Eastern origin,
The veiled women with eyes like panthers,
The swollen, aggressive turbans of jeweled Pashas.
Now you are a very decent flower,
A reticent flower,
A curiously clear-cut, candid flower,
Standing beside clean doorways,
Friendly to a house-cat and a pair of spectacles,
Making poetry out of a bit of moonlight
And a hundred or two sharp blossoms.

Maine knows you,
Has for years and years;
New Hampshire knows you,
And Massachusetts
And Vermont.
Cape Cod starts you along the beaches to Rhode Island;
Connecticut takes you from a river to the sea.
You are brighter than apples,
Sweeter than tulips,
You are the great flood of our souls
Bursting above the leaf-shapes of our hearts,
You are the smell of all Summers,
The love of wives and children,
The recollection of the gardens of little children,
You are State Houses and Charters
And the familiar treading of the foot to and fro on a road it knows.
May is lilac here in New England,
May is a thrush singing 'Sun up!' on a tip-top ash-tree,
May is white clouds behind pine-trees
Puffed out and marching upon a blue sky.
May is a green as no other,
May is much sun through small leaves,
May is soft earth,
And apple-blossoms,
And windows open to a South wind.
May is a full light wind of lilac
From Canada to Narragansett Bay.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Colour of lilac,
Heart-leaves of lilac all over New England,
Roots of lilac under all the soil of New England,
Lilac in me because I am New England,
Because my roots are in it,
Because my leaves are of it,
Because my flowers are for it,
Because it is my country
And I speak to it of itself
And sing of it with my own voice
Since certainly it is mine.

1915

THE CROSS-ROADS

A BULLET through his heart at dawn. On the table a letter signed with a woman's name. A wind that goes howling round the house, and weeping as in shame. Cold November dawn peeping through the windows, cold dawn creeping over the floor, creeping up his cold legs, creeping over his cold body, creeping across his cold face. A glaze of thin yellow sunlight on the staring eyes. Wind howling through bent branches. A wind which never dies down. Howling, wailing. The gazing eyes glitter in the sunlight. The lids are frozen open and the eyes glitter.

The thudding of a pick on hard earth. A spade grinding and crunching. Overhead, branches writhing, winding, interlacing, unwinding, scattering; tortured twinings, tossings, creakings. Wind flinging branches apart, drawing them together, whispering and whining among them. A waning, lob-sided moon cutting through black clouds. A stream of pebbles and earth and the empty spade gleams clear in the moonlight, then is rammed again into the black earth. Tramping of feet. Men and horses. Squeaking of wheels.

'Whoa! Ready, Jim?'

'All ready.'

Something falls, settles, is still. Suicides have no coffin.

'Give us the stake, Jim. Now.'

Pound! Pound!

'He'll never walk. Nailed to the ground.'

An ash stick pierces his heart, if it buds the roots will hold him. He is a part of the earth now, clay to clay. Overhead the branches sway, and writhe, and twist in the wind. He'll never walk with a bullet in his heart, and an ash stick nailing him to the cold, black ground.

Six months he lay still. Six months. And the water welled up in his body, and soft blue spots chequered it. He lay still, for the ash stick held him in place. Six months! Then her face came out of a mist of green. Pink and white and frail like Dresden china, lilies-of-the-valley at her breast, puce-coloured silk sheening about her. Under the young green leaves, the horse at a foot-pace, the high yellow wheels of the chaise scarcely turning, her face, rippling like grain a-blowing, under her puce-coloured bonnet; and burning beside her, flaming within his correct blue coat and brass buttons, is someone. What has dimmed the sun? The horse steps on a rolling stone; a wind in the branches makes a moan. The little leaves tremble and shake, turn and quake, over and over, tearing their stems. There is a shower of young leaves, and a sudden-sprung gale wails in the trees.

The yellow-wheeled chaise is rocking—rocking, and all the branches are knocking—knocking. The sun in the sky is a flat, red plate, the branches creak and grate. She screams and cowers, for the green foliage is a lowering wave surging to smother her. But she sees nothing. The stake holds firm. The body writhes, the body squirms. The blue spots widen, the flesh tears, but the stake wears well in the deep, black ground. It holds the body in the still, black ground.

Two years! The body has been in the ground two years. It is worn away; it is clay to clay. Where the heart moulders, a greenish dust, the stake is thrust. Late August it is, and night; a night flauntingly jewelled with stars, a night of shooting stars and loud insect noises. Down the road to Tilbury, silence—and the slow flapping of large leaves. Down the road to Sutton, silence—and the darkness of heavy-foliaged trees. Down the road to Wayfleet, silence—and the whirring scrape of insects in the branches. Down the road to Edgarstown, silence—and stars like stepping-stones in a pathway overhead. It is very quiet at the cross-roads, and the sign-board points the way down the four roads, endlessly points the way where nobody wishes to go.

A horse is galloping, galloping up from Sutton. Shaking the wide, still leaves as he goes under them. Striking sparks with his iron shoes; silencing the katydids. Dr. Morgan riding to a child-birth over Tilbury way; riding to deliver a woman of her first-born son. One o'clock from Wayfleet bell tower, what a shower of shooting stars! And a breeze all of a sudden, jarring the big leaves and making them jerk up and down. Dr. Morgan's hat is blown from his head, the horse swerves, and curves away from the sign-post. An oath—spurs—a blurring of grey mist. A quick left twist, and the gelding is snorting and racing down the Tilbury road with the wind dropping away behind him.

The stake has wrenched, the stake has started, the body, flesh from flesh, has parted. But the bones hold tight, socket and ball, and clamping them down in the hard, black ground is the stake, wedged through ribs and spine. The bones may twist, and heave, and twine, but the stake holds them still in line. The breeze goes down, and the round stars shine, for the stake holds the fleshless bones in line.

Twenty years now! Twenty long years! The body has powdered itself away; it is clay to clay. It is brown earth mingled with brown earth. Only flaky bones remain, lain together so long they fit, although not one bone is knit to another. The stake is there too, rotted through, but upright still, and still piercing down between ribs and spine in a straight line.

Yellow stillness is on the cross-roads, yellow stillness is on the trees. The leaves hang drooping, wan. The four roads point four yellow ways, saffron and gamboge ribbons to the gaze. A little swirl of dust blows up Tilbury road, the wind which fans it has not strength to do more; it ceases, and the dust settles down. A little whirl of wind comes up Tilbury road. It brings a sound of wheels and feet. The wind reels a moment and faints to nothing under the sign-post. Wind again, wheels and feet louder. Wind again—again—again. A drop of rain, flat into the dust. Drop!—Drop! Thick heavy raindrops, and a shrieking wind bending the great trees and wrenching off their leaves.

Under the black sky, bowed and dripping with rain, up Tilbury road, comes the procession. A funeral procession, bound

for the graveyard at Wayfleet. Feet and wheels—feet and wheels. And among them one who is carried.

The bones in the deep, still earth shiver and pull. There is a quiver through the rotted stake. Then stake and bones fall together in a little puffing of dust.

Like meshes of linked steel the rain shuts down behind the procession, now well along the Wayfleet road.

He wavers like smoke in the buffeting wind. His fingers blow out like smoke, his head ripples in the gale. Under the signpost, in the pouring rain, he stands, and watches another quavering figure drifting down the Wayfleet road. Then swiftly he streams after it. It flickers among the trees. He licks out and winds about them. Over, under, blown, contorted. Spindrift after spindrift; smoke following smoke. There is a wailing through the trees, a wailing of fear, and after it laughter—laughter—laughter, skirling up to the black sky. Lightning jags over the funeral procession. A heavy clap of thunder. Then darkness and rain, and the sound of feet and wheels.

1916

THE DINNER-PARTY

FISH

'So . . .' they said,
With their wine-glasses delicately poised,
Mocking at the thing they cannot
understand.
'So . . .' they said again,
Amused and insolent.
The silver on the table glittered,
And the red wine in the glasses
Seemed the blood I had wasted
In a foolish cause.

GAME

The gentleman with the grey-and-black
whiskers
Sneered languidly over his quail.
Then my heart flew up and laboured,
And I burst from my own holding
And hurled myself forward.
With straight blows I beat upon him,
Furiously, with red-hot anger, I thrust
against him.
But my weapon slithered over his polished
surface,
And I recoiled upon myself,
Panting.

DRAWING-ROOM

In a dress all softness and half-tones,
Indolent and half-reclined,
She lay upon a couch,
With the firelight reflected in her jewels.
But her eyes had no reflection,
They swam in a grey smoke,
The smoke of smouldering ashes,
The smoke of her cindered heart.

COFFEE

They sat in a circle with their coffee-cups.
One dropped in a lump of sugar,
One stirred with a spoon.
I saw them as a circle of ghosts
Sipping blackness out of beautiful china,
And mildly protesting against my
coarseness
In being alive.

TALK

They took dead men's souls
And pinned them on their breasts for
ornament;
Their cuff-links and tiaras
Were gems dug from a grave;
They were ghouls battening on exhumed
thoughts;
And I took a green liqueur from a servant
So that he might come near me
And give me the comfort of a living thing.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK

The front door was hard and heavy,
It shut behind me on the house of ghosts.
I flattened my feet on the pavement
To feel it solid under me;
I ran my hand along the railings
And shook them,
And pressed their pointed bars
Into my palms.
The hurt of it reassured me,
And I did it again and again
Until they were bruised.
When I woke in the night
I laughed to find them aching,
For only living flesh can suffer.

1916

FROM 1777

2 THE CITY OF FALLING LEAVES

LEAVES fall,
Brown leaves,
Yellow leaves streaked with brown.
They fall,
Flutter,
Fall again.
The brown leaves,
And the streaked yellow leaves,
Loosen on their branches
And drift slowly downwards.
One,
One, two, three,
One, two, five.
All Venice is a falling of autumn leaves—
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.

'That sonnet, *Abate*,
Beautiful,
I am quite exhausted by it.
Your phrases turn about my heart
And stifle me to swooning.
Open the window, I beg.
Lord! What a strumming of fiddles and mandolins!
'Tis really a shame to stop indoors.
Call my maid, or I will make you lace me yourself.
Fie, how hot it is, not a breath of air!
See how straight the leaves are falling.
Marianna, I will have the yellow satin caught up with silver fringe,
It peeps out delightfully from under a mantle.
Am I well painted to-day, *caro Abate mio*?
You will be proud of me at the *Ridotto*, hey?
Proud of being *Cavalier Servente* to such a lady?'
'Can you doubt it, *Bellissima Contessa*?
A pinch more rouge on the right cheek,
And Venus herself shines less . . .'
'You bore me, *Abate*;
I vow I must change you!
A letter, Achmet?
Run and look out of the window, *Abate*.
I will read my letter in peace.'
The little black slave with the yellow satin turban
Gazes at his mistress with strained eyes.
His yellow turban and black skin
Are gorgeous—barbaric.
The yellow satin dress with its silver flashings
Lies on a chair
Beside a black mantle and a black mask.
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
The lady reads her letter,
And the leaves drift slowly
Past the long windows.
'How silly you look, my dear *Abate*,
With that great brown leaf in your wig.
Pluck it off, I beg you,
Or I shall die of laughing.'

A yellow wall,
Aflare in the sunlight,
Chequered with shadows,
Shadows of vine-leaves,
Shadows of masks.
Masks coming, printing themselves for an instant,
Then passing on,
More masks always replacing them.
Masks with tricorns and rapiers sticking out behind
Pursuing masks with veils and high heels,
The sunlight shining under their insteps.
One,
One, two,
One, two, three,
There is a thronging of shadows on the hot wall,
Filigreed at the top with moving leaves.
Yellow sunlight and black shadows,
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
Two masks stand together,
And the shadow of a leaf falls through them,
Marking the wall where they are not.
From hat-tip to shoulder-tip,
From elbow to sword-hilt,
The leaf falls.
The shadows mingle,
Blur together,
Slide along the wall and disappear.

Gold of mosaics and candles,
And night blackness lurking in the ceiling beams.
Saint Mark's glitters with flames and reflections.
A cloak brushes aside,
And the yellow of satin

Licks out over the coloured inlays of the pavement.
Under the gold crucifixes
There is a meeting of hands
Reaching from black mantles.
Sighing embraces, bold investigations,
Hide in confessionals,
Sheltered by the shuffling of feet.
Gorgeous—barbaric
In its mail of jewels and gold,
Saint Mark's looks down at the swarm of black masks;
And outside in the palace gardens brown leaves fall,
Flutter,
Fall.
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.

Blue-black the sky over Venice,
With a pricking of yellow stars.
There is no moon,
And the waves push darkly against the prow
Of the gondola,
Coming from Malamocco
And streaming toward Venice.
It is black under the gondola hood,
But the yellow of a satin dress
Glares out like the eye of a watching tiger.
Yellow compassed about with darkness,
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
The boatman sings,
It is Tasso that he sings;
The lovers seek each other beneath their mantles,
And the gondola drifts over the lagoon, aslant to the coming dawn.
But at Malamocco in front,
In Venice behind,
Fall the leaves,
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.
They fall,
Flutter,
Fall.

1916

LITTLE IVORY FIGURES PULLED WITH STRING

Is it the tinkling of mandolins which disturbs you?
Or the dropping of bitter-orange petals among the coffee-cups?
Or the slow creeping of the moonlight between the olive-trees?
Drop! drop! the rain
Upon the thin plates of my heart.

String your blood to chord with this music,
Stir your heels upon the cobbles to the rhythm of a dance-tune.
They have slim thighs and arms of silver;
The moon washes away their garments;
They make a pattern of fleeing feet in the branch shadows,
And the green grapes knotted about them
Burst as they press against one another.
The rain knocks upon the plates of my heart,
They are crumpled with its beating.

Would you drink only from your brains, Old Man?
See, the moonlight has reached your knees,
It falls upon your head in an accolade of silver.
Rise up on the music,
Fling against the moon-drifts in a whorl of young light bodies:
Leaping grape-clusters,
Vine leaves tearing from a grey wall.
You shall run, laughing, in a braid of women,
And weave flowers with the frosty spines of thorns.
Why do you gaze into your glass,
And jar the spoons with your finger-tapping?
The rain is rigid on the plates of my heart.
The murmur of it is loud—loud.

1919

MEETING-HOUSE HILL

I MUST be mad, or very tired,
When the curve of a blue bay beyond a railroad track
Is shrill and sweet to me like the sudden springing of a tune,
And the sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire

Is cool, and candid,
Rising into an unresisting sky.
Strange meeting-house
Pausing a moment upon a squalid hill-top.
I watch the spire sweeping the sky,
I am dizzy with the movement of the sky,
I might be watching a mast
With its royals set full
Straining before a two-reef breeze.
I might be sighting a tea-clipper,
Tacking into the blue bay,
Just back from Canton
With her hold full of green and blue porcelain,
And a Chinese coolie leaning over the rail
Gazing at the white spire
With dull, sea-spent eyes.

1925

THE ON-LOOKER

SUPPOSE I plant you
Like wide-eyed Helen
On the battlements
Of weary Troy,
Clutching the parapet with desperate hands.
She, too, gazes at a battle-field
Where bright vermilion plumes and metal whiteness
Shock and sparkle and go down with groans.
Her glances strike the rocking battle,
Again—again—
Recoiling from it
Like baffled spear-heads fallen from a brazen shield.
The ancients at her elbow counsel patience and contingencies;
Such to a woman stretched upon a bed of battle,
Who bargained for this only in the whispering arras
Enclosed about a midnight of enchantment.

1925

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

1883–

A NOTE ON POETRY

THE American writer, insofar as he is child of the Anglo Saxon tradition, uses a language which stems largely from Elizabethan England but which has been modified by time and the accidents of place to acquire a character differing greatly from that of present day english. For the appreciation of American poetry it is necessary that the English reader accept this language difference from the beginning.

Its effects are discernible in many ways. Pace is one of the most important of its manifestations. This is particularly significant in versification since it is the direct forerunner of poetic form. It is by paying attention to the character of the spoken language that form is detected in its beginnings and later refined for exact use.

By listening to the language of his locality the poet begins to learn his craft. It is his function to lift, by use of his imagination and the language he hears, the material conditions and appearances of his environment to the sphere of the intelligence where they will have new currency. Thus anything that the poet can effectively lift from its dull bed by force of the imagination becomes his material. Anything. The commonplace, the tawdry, the sordid all have their poetic uses if the imagination can lighten them. This broadening of the choice in the materials of poetry has great modern significance; there is an older parallel to it in painting, where by dwelling upon light itself the artist has often drawn many otherwise unsightly objects into his works.

Emotion clusters about common things, the pathetic often stimulates the imagination to new patterns—but the job of the poet is to use language effectively, his own language, the only language which is to him authentic. In my own work it has always sufficed that the object of my attention be presented without further comment. This in general might be termed the objective method. But all art is sensual and poetry particularly so. It is directly, that is, of the senses, and since the senses do not exist without an object for their employment all art is necessarily objective. It doesn't declaim or explain; it presents.

But an image is not a poem, for that would leave the language and the form of the poem at loose ends. A poem is a whole, an object in itself, a 'word' with a particular meaning old or new. The whole poem, image and form, that is, constitutes a single meaning. This is the full meaning of the term 'objective' as I employ it.

Times change and forms and their meanings alter. Thus new poems are necessary. Their forms must be discovered in the spoken, the living language of their day, or old forms, embodying exploded concepts, will tyrannize over the imagination, depriving us of its greatest benefits. In the forms of new poems will lie embedded the essences of future enlightenment.

1937 1938

PEACE ON EARTH

THE Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue
An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till to-morrow.

The Bears are abroad!
The Eagle is screaming!
Gold against blue
Their eyes are gleaming!
Sleep!
Sleep safe till to-morrow.

The Sisters lie
With their arms intertwining;
Gold against blue
Their hair is shining!
The Serpent writhes!
Orion is listening!
Gold against blue
His sword is glistening!
Sleep!
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till to-morrow.

1911 1913

THE BULL

IT is in captivity—
ringed, haltered, chained
to a drag
the bull is godlike

Unlike the cows
he lives alone, nozzles
the sweet grass gingerly
to pass the time away

He kneels, lies down
and stretching out
a foreleg licks himself
about the hoof

then stays
with half-closed eyes,
Olympian commentary on
the bright passage of days.

—The round sun
smooths his lacquer
through
the glossy pinetrees

his substance hard
as ivory or glass—
through which the wind
yet plays—
Milkless

he nods
the hair between his horns
and eyes matted
with hyacinthine curls

1921 1934

THE RED WHEELBARROW

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

1922 1923

THE SEA-ELEPHANT

TRUNDLED from
the strangeness of the sea—
a kind of
heaven—

Ladies and Gentlemen!
the greatest
sea-monster ever exhibited
alive

the gigantic
sea-elephant—O wallow
of flesh where
are

there fish enough for
that
appetite stupidity
cannot lessen?

Sick
of April's smallness
the little
leaves—

Flesh has lief of you
enormous sea—
Speak!
Blouaugh! (feed

me) my
flesh is riven—
fish after fish into his maw
unswallowing

to let them glide down
gulching back
half spittle half
brine

the
troubled eyes—torn
from the sea.
(In

a practical voice) They
ought
to put it back where
it came from.

Gape.
Strange head—
told by old sailors—
rising

bearded
to the surface—and
the only
sense out of them
is that woman's
Yes
it's wonderful but they
ought to

put it
back into the sea where
it came from.
Blouaugh!

Swing—ride
walk
on wires—toss balls
stoop and

contort yourselves—
But I
am love. I am
from the sea—

Blouaugh!
there is no crime save
the too heavy
body

the sea
held playfully—comes
to the surface
the water

boiling
about the head the cows
scattering
fish dripping from

the bounty
of . . . and Spring,
they say
Spring is icummen in—

1927 1934

RAIN

As the rain falls
so does
your love

bathe every
open
Object of the world—

In houses
the priceless dry
rooms

of illicit love
where we live
hear the wash of the
rain—

There
paintings
and fine
metalware
woven stuffs—
all the whoreishness
of our
delight
sees
from its window
the spring wash
of your love
the falling
rain—

The trees
are become
beasts fresh risen
from
the sea—
water

trickles
from the crevices of
their hides—

So my life is spent
to keep out love
with which
she rains upon

the world

of spring

drips

so spreads

the words

far apart to let in

her love—

And running in between
the drops

the rain

is a kind physician

the rain
of her thoughts over
the ocean
every

where

walking with
invisible swift feet
over

the helpless
waves—

Unworldly love
that has no hope
of the world

and that
cannot change the world
to its delight—

The rain

falls upon the earth
and grass and flowers
come
perfectly

into form from its
liquid

clearness

But love is
unworldly

and nothing
comes of it but love

following

and falling endlessly
from
her thoughts

1927 1934

THE BOTTICELLIAN TREES

THE alphabet of
the trees

is fading in the
song of the leaves

the crossing
bars of the thin

letters that spelled
winter

and the cold
have been illumined

with
pointed green

by the rain and sun—
The strict simple

principles of
straight branches

are being modified
by pinched out

ifs of color, devout
conditions

the smiles of love—
. . . . .

until the stript
sentences

move as a woman's
limbs under cloth

and praise from secrecy
with hot ardor

love's ascendancy
in summer—

In summer the song
sings itself

above the muffled words—

1927 1934

NANTUCKET

FLOWERS through the window
lavender and yellow

changed by white curtains—
Smell of cleanliness—

Sunshine of late afternoon—
On the glass tray

a glass pitcher, the tumbler
turned down, by which

a key is lying—And the
immaculate white bed

1929 1934

THE RED LILY

To the bob-white's call
and drone of reaper

tumbling daisies in the sun—
one by one

about the smutting panels of
white doors

gray shingles slip and fall—
But you, a loveliness

of even lines
curving to the throat, the

crossroads is your home.
You are, upon

your steady stem
one trumpeted wide flower

slightly tilted
above a scale of buds—

Sometimes a farmer's wife
gathers an armful

for her pitcher on the porch—
Topping a stone wall

against the shale-ledge
a field full—

By the road, the river
the edge of the woods

—opening in the sun
closing with the dark—

everywhere
Red Lily

in your common cup
all beauty lies—
1933 1934

THIS IS JUST TO SAY

I HAVE eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold
1934 1934

THE YACHTS

CONTEND in a sea which the land partly encloses
shielding them from the too heavy blows
of an ungoverned ocean which when it chooses

tortures the biggest hulls, the best man knows
to pit against its beatings, and sinks them pitilessly.
Mothlike in mists, scintillant in the minute

brilliance of cloudless days, with broad bellying sails
they glide to the wind tossing green water
from their sharp prows while over them the crew crawls

ant-like, solicitously grooming them, releasing,
making fast as they turn, lean far over and having
caught the wind again, side by side, head for the mark.

In a well guarded arena of open water surrounded by
lesser and greater craft which, sycophant, lumbering

and flittering follow them, they appear youthful, rare
as the light of a happy eye, live with the grace
of all that in the mind is feckless, free and
naturally to be desired. Now the sea which holds them

is moody, lapping their glossy sides, as if feeling
for some slightest flaw but fails completely.
Today no race. Then the wind comes again. The yachts

move, jockeying for a start, the signal is set and they
are off. Now the waves strike at them but they are too
well made, they slip through, though they take in canvas.

Arms with hands grasping seek to clutch at the prows.
Bodies thrown recklessly in the way are cut aside.
It is a sea of faces about them in agony, in despair

until the horror of the race dawns staggering the mind,
the whole sea becomes an entanglement of watery bodies
lost to the world, bearing what they cannot hold. Broken

beaten, desolate, reaching from the dead to be taken up
they cry out, failing, failing! their cries rising
in waves still as the skillful yachts pass over.
1935 1935

FINE WORK WITH PITCH AND COPPER

Now they are resting
in the fleckless light
separately in unison

like the sacks
of sifted stone stacked
regularly by twos

about the flat roof
ready after lunch
to be opened and strewn

The copper in eight
foot strips has been
beaten lengthwise

down the center at right
angles and lies ready
to edge the coping

One still chewing
picks up a copper strip
and runs his eye along it

1936 1936

MARIANNE MOORE

1887–

A NOTE ON POETRY

I TEND to write in a patterned arrangement, with rhymes; stanza as it follows stanza being identical in number of syllables and rhyme-plan, with the first stanza. (Regarding the stanza as the unit, rather than the line, I sometimes divide a word at the end of a line, relying on a general straightforwardness of treatment to counteract the mannered effect.) I have a liking for the long syllable followed by three (or more) short syllables,—'ly*ing on the* air *there is a* bird,' and for the inconspicuous or light rhyme,—'let' in flageolet, for instance, being rhymed with 'set' in the lines,

> Its leaps should be set
> to the flageolet.

I try to secure an effect of flowing continuity and am more and more impressed by the many correspondences between verse and instrumental music. I am against the stock phrase and an easier use of words in verse than would be tolerated in prose. I feel that the form is the outward equivalent of a determining inner conviction, and that the rhythm is the person.

FROM THE JERBOA [1]

ABUNDANCE

AFRICANUS meant
the conqueror sent
from Rome. It should mean the
untouched: the sand-brown jumping-rat
—free-born; and
the blacks, that choice race with an
elegance
ignored by one's ignorance.

Part terrestrial,
and part celestial,
Jacob saw, cudgel staff
in claw-hand—steps of air and air
angels; his
friends were the stones. The
translucent mistake
of the desert, does not make

hardship for one who
can rest and then do
the opposite—launching
as if on wings, from its match-thin hind
legs, in
daytime or at night; that departs with
great
speed, followed by, as a weight,

a double length, thin
tail furred like the skin;
that curls round it when it
sleeps 'round'—the nose nested in fur,
a hind leg
at each side of the head—or lies
lengthwise,
in view, when the body lies

flat. Seen by daylight,
the body is white
in front; and on the back,
buffy-brown like the breast of the fawn-
breasted
bower-bird. It hops like the fawn-
breast, but has
chipmunk contours—perceived as

1 '"There are little rats called jerboas which run on long hind-legs as thin as a match. The forelimbs are mere tiny hands." Dr.R.L.Ditmars: p.274, *Strange Animals I Have Known*.' Author's note, *Collected Poems*(N.Y., 1935),109.

it turns its bird head—
the nap directed
  neatly back and blending
  with the ear which reiterates the slimness
    of the body. The fine hairs on the tail,
    repeating the other pale

markings, lengthen till
at the tip they fill
  out in a tuft—black and
  white; strange detail of the simplified
      creature,
    fish-shaped and silvered to steel by the
      force
    of the large desert moon. Course

the jerboa, or
plunder its food store,
  and you will be cursed. It
  honours the sand by assuming its colour;
    closed upper paws seeming one with
      the fur
    in its flight from a danger.

By fifths and sevenths,
in leaps of two lengths,
  like the uneven notes
  of the Bedouin flute, it stops its gleaning
    on little wheel castors, and makes
      fern-seed
    foot-prints with kangaroo speed.

Its leaps should be set
to the flageolet;
  pillar body erect
  on a three-cornered smooth-working
      Chippendale
    claw—propped on hind legs, and tail
      as third toe,
    between leaps to its burrow.

1935

NO SWAN SO FINE [1]

'No water so still as the
  dead fountains of Versailles.' No swan,
with swart blind look askance
and gondoliering legs, so fine
  as the chintz china one with fawn-
brown eyes and toothed gold
collar on to show whose bird it was.
Lodged in the Louis Fifteenth
  candelabrum-tree of cockscomb-
tinted buttons, dahlias,
sea-urchins, and everlastings,
  it perches on the branching foam
of polished sculptured
flowers—at ease and tall. The king is
    dead.

1935

THE FRIGATE PELICAN [2]

RAPIDLY cruising or lying on the air there is
    a bird
  that realizes Rasselas's friend's project
  of wings uniting levity with strength.
      This
    hell-diver, frigate-bird, hurricane-
bird; unless swift is the proper word
    for him, the storm omen when
  he flies close to the waves, should be seen
      fishing, although oftener
      he appears to prefer

to take, on the wing, from industrious
      cruder-winged species
  the fish they have caught, and is seldom
      successless.
  A marvel of grace, no matter how fast his
    victim may fly or how often may
turn, the dishonest pelican's ease
    in pursuit, bears him away
  with the fish that the badgered bird
      drops.
    A kind of superlative
    swallow, that likes to live

on food caught while flying, he is not a
      pelican. The toe
  with slight web, air-boned body, and
      very long wings
  with the spread of a swan's—
      duplicating a
    bow-string as he floats overhead—feel
the changing V-shaped scissor swallow-
    tail direct the rigid keel.
  And steering beak to windward always,
      the fleetest foremost fairy
      among birds, outflies the

1 '"There is no water so still as the dead fountains of Versailles." Percy Phillip, *New York Times Magazine*, 10thMay,1931.
'A pair of Louis XV candelabra with Dresden figures of swans belonging to Lord Balfour.' Author's note, ibid.,110.

2 '*Fregata aquila*. The Frigate Pelican of Audubon.
'*Giant tame armadillo*. Photograph and description by W.StephenThomas of New York.
'*Red-spotted orchids*. The blood, supposedly, of natives slain by Pizarro.
'"If I do well, I am blessed," etc. Hindoo saying.' Author's note,ibid.,111.

aeroplane which cannot flap its wings nor
alter any quill-
tip. For him, the feeling in a hand, in
fins, is
in his unbent downbent crafty oar. With
him
other pelicans aimlessly soar
as he does; separating, until
not flapping they rise once more,
closing in without looking and move
outward again to the top
of the circle and stop

and blow back, allowing the wind to reverse
their direction.
This is not the stalwart swan that can
ferry the
woodcutter's two children home; no.
Make hay; keep
the shop; I have one sheep; were a
less
limber animal's mottoes. This one
finds sticks for the swan's-down
dress
of his child to rest upon and would
not know Gretel from Hänsel.
As impassioned Handel—

meant for a lawyer and a masculine German
domestic
career—clandestinely studied the
harpsichord
and never was known to have fallen in
love,
the unconfiding frigate-bird
hides
in the height and in the majestic
display of his art. He glides
a hundred feet or quivers about
as charred paper behaves—full
of feints; and an eagle

of vigilance, earns the term aquiline;
keeping at a height
so great the feathers look black and the
beak does not
show. It is not retreat but exclusion
from
which he looks down and observes
what went
secretly, as it thought, out of sight
among dense jungle plants. Sent
ahead of the rest, there goes the true
knight in his jointed coat that
covers all but his bat

ears; a-trot, with stiff pig gait—our tame
armadillo, loosed by
his master and as pleased as a dog.
Beside the
spattered blood—that orchid which the
native fears—
the fer-de-lance lies sleeping;
centaur-
like, this harmful couple's amity
is apropos. A jaguar
and crocodile are fighting. Sharp-
shinned
hawks and peacock-freckled small
cats, like the literal

merry-go-round, come wandering within
the circular view
of the high bird for whom from the air
they are ants
keeping house all their lives in the crack
of a
crag with no view from the top. And
here,
unlikely animals learning to
dance, crouch on two steeds that rear
behind a leopard with a frantic
face, tamed by an Artemis
who wears a dress like his,

and hampering haymaker's hat. *Festina*
lente. Be gay
civilly. How so? 'If I do well I am
blessed
whether any bless me or not, and if I do
ill I am cursed.' We watch the moon
rise
on the Susquehanna. In his way
this most romantic bird, flies
to a more mundane place, the mangrove
swamp, to sleep. He wastes the
moon.
But he, and others, soon

rise from the bough, and though flying are
able to foil the tired
moment of danger, that lays on heart and
lungs the
weight of the python that crushes to
powder.
The tune's illiterate footsteps fail;
the steam hacks are not to be admired.
These, unturbulent, avail
themselves of turbulence to fly—pleased
with the faint wind's varyings,
on which to spread fixed wings.

The reticent lugubrious ragged immense
minuet
descending to leeward, ascending to
windward
again without flapping, in what seems to
be
a way of resting, are now nearer,
but as seemingly bodiless yet
as they were. Theirs are sombre
quills for so wide and lightboned a bird
as the frigate pelican
of the Carribean.

1935

THE FISH

wade
through black jade.
Of the crow-blue mussel-shells, one
keeps
adjusting the ash-heaps;
opening and shutting itself like

an
injured fan.
The barnacles which encrust the side
of the wave, cannot hide
there for the submerged shafts of
the

sun,
split like spun
glass, move themselves with spotlight
swiftness
into the crevices—
in and out, illuminating

the
turquoise sea
of bodies. The water drives a wedge
of iron through the iron edge
of the cliff; whereupon the stars,

pink
rice-grains, ink
bespattered jelly-fish, crabs like green
lilies, and submarine
toadstools, slide each on the other.

All
external
marks of abuse are present on this
defiant edifice—
all the physical features of

ac-
cident—lack
of cornice, dynamite grooves, burns, and
hatchet strokes, these things stand
out on it; the chasm-side is

dead.
Repeated
evidence has proved that it can live
on what cannot revive
its youth. The sea grows old in it.

1921

POETRY [1]

I, TOO, dislike it: there are things that are
important beyond all this fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect
contempt for it, one discovers in
it after all, a place for the genuine.
Hands that can grasp, eyes
that can dilate, hair that can rise
if it must, these things are important
not because a

high-sounding interpretation can be put
upon them but because they are
useful. When they become so derivative
as to become unintelligible,
the same thing may be said for all of us,
that we
do not admire what
we cannot understand: the bat
holding on upside down or in quest
of something to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking
a roll, a tireless wolf under
a tree, the immovable critic twitching his
skin like a horse that feels a flea,
the base-

1 '*Diary of Tolstoy* (Dutton), p. 84. "Where the boundary between prose and poetry lies, I shall never be able to understand. The question is raised in manuals of style, yet the answer to it lies beyond me. Poetry is verse: prose is not verse. Or else poetry is everything with the exception of business documents and school books." '

'"Literalists of the imagination." Yeats: *Ideas of Good and Evil* (A. H. Bullen), p. 182. "The limitation of his view was from the very intensity of his vision; he was a too literal realist of imagination, as others are of nature; and because he believed that the figures seen by the mind's eye, when exalted by inspiration were 'eternal existences,' symbols of divine essences, he hated every grace of style that might obscure their lineaments." ' Author's note, ibid., 112–13.

ball fan, the statistician—
nor is it valid
to discriminate against 'business
documents and

school-books'; all these phenomena are
important. One must make a
distinction
however: when dragged into promi-
nence by half poets, the
result is not poetry,
nor till the poets among us can be
'literalists of
the imagination'—above
insolence and triviality and can
present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real
toads in them, shall we have
it. In the meantime, if you demand on the
one hand,
the raw material of poetry in
all its rawness and
that which is on the other hand
genuine, then you are interested in
poetry.

1921

THE MONKEYS

winked too much and were afraid of
snakes. The zebras, supreme
in
their abnormality; the elephants with their
fog-coloured skin
and strictly practical appendages
were there, the small cats; and the
parrakeet—
trivial and humdrum on
examination, destroying
bark and portions of the food it could
not eat.

I recall their magnificence, now not more
magnificent
than it is dim. It is difficult to recall the
ornament,
speech, and precise manner of what one
might
call the minor acquaintances
twenty
years back; but I shall not forget him
—that Gilgamesh among
the hairy carnivora—that cat with the
wedge-shaped, slate-gray marks on its
forelegs and the resolute tail,
astringently remarking, 'They have
imposed on us with their pale
half-fledged protestations, trembling
about
in inarticulate frenzy, saying
it is not for us to understand art;
finding it
all so difficult, examining the thing

as if it were inconceivably arcanic, as
symmet-
rically frigid as if it had been carved out of
chrysoprase
or marble—strict with tension, malignant
in its power over us and deeper
than the sea when it proffers flattery
in exchange for hemp,
rye, flax, horses, platinum, timber, and
fur.'

1916 1921

A GRAVE [1]

MAN looking into the sea,
taking the view from those who have as
much right to it as you have to it
yourself,
it is human nature to stand in the middle of
a thing,
but you cannot stand in the middle of this;
the sea has nothing to give but a well
excavated grave.
The firs stand in a procession, each with an
emerald turkey-foot at the top,
reserved as their contours, saying nothing;
repression, however, is not the most
obvious characteristic of the sea;
the sea is a collector, quick to return a
rapacious look.
There are others besides you who have
worn that look—
whose expression is no longer a protest; the
fish no longer investigate them
for their bones have not lasted:
men lower nets, unconscious of the fact
that they are desecrating a grave,

1 Miss Moore writes: 'As for "A Grave," it has a significance strongly apart from the literal origin, which was a man who placed himself between my mother and me, and surf we were watching from a middle ledge of rocks on Monhegan Island after a storm. ("Don't be annoyed," my mother said. "It is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing.")' Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets* (N.Y., 1933),84–85.

and row quickly away—the blades of the oars
moving together like the feet of water-spiders as if there were no such thing as death.
The wrinkles progress upon themselves in a phalanx—beautiful under networks of foam,
and fade breathlessly while the sea rustles in and out of the seaweed;
the birds swim through the air at top speed, emitting cat-calls as heretofore—
the tortoise-shell scourges about the feet of the cliffs, in motion beneath them;
and the ocean, under the pulsation of lighthouses and noise of bell-buoys,
advances as usual, looking as if it were not that ocean in which dropped things are bound to sink—
in which if they turn and twist, it is neither with volition nor consciousness.

1924

IS YOUR TOWN NINEVEH?

WHY so desolate?
In phantasmagoria about fishes,
what disgusts you? Could
not all personal upheaval in
the name of freedom, be tabooed?

Is it Nineveh
and are you Jonah
in the sweltering east wind of your wishes?
I myself have stood
there by the Aquarium, looking
at the Statue of Liberty.

1921

TO A SNAIL [1]

IF 'compression is the first grace of style,'
you have it. Contractility is a virtue
as modesty is a virtue.
It is not the acquisition of any one thing
that is able to adorn,
or the incidental quality that occurs
as a concomitant of something well said,
that we value in style,
but the principle that is hid:
in the absence of feet, 'a method of conclusions';
'a knowledge of principles,'
in the curious phenomenon of your occipital horn.

1915 1924

THE PAST IS THE PRESENT [2]

IF external action is effete
and rhyme is outmoded,
I shall revert to you,
Habakkuk, as on a recent occasion I was goaded
into doing by XY, who was speaking of unrhymed verse.
This man said—I think that I repeat
his identical words:
'Hebrew poetry is
prose with a sort of heightened consciousness.' Ecstasy affords
the occasion and expediency
determines the form.

1924

SILENCE [3]

MY father used to say,
'Superior people never make long visits,
have to be shown Longfellow's grave
or the glass flowers at Harvard.
Self-reliant like the cat—
that takes its prey to privacy,
the mouse's limp tail hanging like a shoelace from its mouth—
they sometimes enjoy solitude,
and can be robbed of speech
by speech which has delighted them.
The deepest feeling always shows itself in silence;
not in silence, but restraint.'
Nor was he insincere in saying, 'Make my house your inn.'
Inns are not residences.

1924

1 'The author of the anonymous *De Elocutione* says, "The first grace of style is that which results from compression." ' Author's note.

2 ' "Hebrew poetry is prose with a sort of heightened consciousness." The Reverend E.H.Kellogg.' Author's note, *Collected Poems*(N.Y., 1935),123–24.

3 ' "My father used to say, 'Superior people never make long visits. When I am visiting, I like to go about by myself. I never had to be shown Longfellow's grave or the glass flowers at Harvard.' " ' Miss A.M.Homans.
'Edmund Burke, in *Burke's Life*, by Prior. " 'Throw yourself into a coach,' said he. 'Come down and make my house your inn.' " ' Author's note, ibid.,124.

WALLACE STEVENS

1879–

A NOTE ON POETRY

My intention in poetry is to write poetry: to reach and express that which, without any particular definition, everyone recognizes to be poetry, and to do this because I feel the need of doing it.

There is such a complete freedom now-a-days in respect to technique that I am rather inclined to disregard form so long as I am free and can express myself freely. I don't know of anything, respecting form, that makes much difference. The essential thing in form is to be free in whatever form is used. A free form does not assure freedom. As a form, it is just one more form. So that it comes to this, I suppose, that I believe in freedom regardless of form.

1937 1938

THE WORMS AT HEAVEN'S GATE

Out of the tomb, we bring Badroulbadour,
Within our bellies, we her chariot.
Here is an eye. And here are, one by one,
The lashes of that eye and its white lid.
Here is the cheek on which that lid declined,
And, finger after finger, here, the hand,
The genius of that cheek. Here are the lips,
The bundle of the body and the feet.

Out of the tomb we bring Badroulbadour.

1923

THE EMPEROR OF ICE-CREAM [1]

Call the roller of big cigars,
The muscular one, and bid him whip
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.
Let the wenches dawdle in such dress
As they are used to wear, and let the boys
Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.
Let be be finale of seem.
The only emperor is the emperor of
ice-cream.

Take from the dresser of deal,
Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet
On which she embroidered fantails once
And spread it so as to cover her face.
If her horny feet protrude, they come
To show how cold she is, and dumb.
Let the lamp affix its beam.
The only emperor is the emperor of
ice-cream.

1923

SUNDAY MORNING

1

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
And the green freedom of a cockatoo
Upon a rug mingle to dissipate
The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.
She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
As a calm darkens among water-lights.
The pungent oranges and bright, green
wings
Seem things in some procession of the dead,
Winding across wide water, without sound.
The day is like wide water, without sound,
Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
Dominion of the blood and sepulchre.

2

Why should she give her bounty to the
dead?
What is divinity if it can come
Only in silent shadows and in dreams?
Shall she not find in comforts of the sun,
In pungent fruit and bright, green wings,
or else
In any balm or beauty of the earth,
Things to be cherished like the thought of
heaven?
Divinity must live within herself:
Passions of rain, or moods in falling snow;
Grievings in loneliness, or unsubdued
Elations when the forest blooms; gusty
Emotions on wet roads on autumn nights;
All pleasures and all pains, remembering
The bough of summer and the winter
branch.
These are the measures destined for her
soul.

1 Stevens says of the poem: 'This wears a deliberately commonplace costume, and yet it seems to contain something of the essential gaudiness of poetry; that is the reason why I like it.' Benét, ed., *Fifty Poets*,(N.Y., 1933),46.

3

Jove in the clouds had his inhuman birth.
No mother suckled him, no sweet land gave
Large-mannered motions to his mythy mind.
He moved among us, as a muttering king,
Magnificent, would move among his hinds,
Until our blood, commingling, virginal,
With heaven, brought such requital to desire
The very hinds discerned it, in a star.
Shall our blood fail? Or shall it come to be
The blood of paradise? And shall the earth
Seem all of paradise that we shall know?
The sky will be much friendlier then than now,
A part of labor and a part of pain,
And next in glory to enduring love,
Not this dividing and indifferent blue.

4

She says, 'I am content when wakened birds,
Before they fly, test the reality
Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings;
But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
Return no more, where, then, is paradise?'
There is not any haunt of prophecy,
Nor any old chimera of the grave,
Neither the golden underground, nor isle
Melodious, where spirits gat them home,
Nor visionary south, nor cloudy palm
Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured
As April's green endures; or will endure
Like her remembrance of awakened birds,
Or her desire for June and evening, tipped
By the consummation of the swallow's wings.

5

She says, 'But in contentment I still feel
The need of some imperishable bliss.'
Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
Alone, shall come fulfilment to our dreams
And our desires. Although she strews the leaves
Of sure obliteration on our paths,
The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
Whispered a little out of tenderness,
She makes the willow shiver in the sun
For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet.
She causes boys to pile new plums and pears
On disregarded plate. The maidens taste
And stray impassioned in the littering leaves.

6

Is there no change of death in paradise?
Does ripe fruit never fall? Or do the boughs
Hang always heavy in that perfect sky,
Unchanging, yet so like our perishing earth,
With rivers like our own that seek for seas
They never find, the same receding shores
That never touch with inarticulate pang?
Why set the pear upon those river-banks
Or spice the shores with odors of the plum?
Alas, that they should wear our colors there,
The silken weavings of our afternoons,
And pick the strings of our insipid lutes!
Death is the mother of beauty, mystical,
Within whose burning bosom we devise
Our earthly mothers waiting, sleeplessly.

7

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
Their boisterous devotion to the sun,
Not as a god, but as a god might be,
Naked among them, like a savage source.
Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky;
And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
The windy lake wherein their lord delights,
The trees, like serafin, and echoing hills,
That choir among themselves long afterward.
They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
Of men that perish and of summer morn.
And whence they came and whither they shall go
The dew upon their feet shall manifest.

8

She hears, upon that water without sound,
A voice that cries, 'The tomb in Palestine
Is not the porch of spirits lingering.
It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay.'
We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency of day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,

Of that wide water, inescapable.
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

1923

THE BIRD WITH THE COPPERY, KEEN CLAWS

ABOVE the forest of the parakeets,
A parakeet of parakeets prevails,
A pip of life amid a mort of tails.

(The rudiments of tropics are around,
Aloe of ivory, pear of rusty rind.)
His lids are white because his eyes are blind.

He is not paradise of parakeets,
Of his gold ether, golden alguazil,
Except because he broods there and is still.

Panache upon panache, his tails deploy
Upward and outward, in green-vented forms,
His tip a drop of water full of storms.

But though the turbulent tinges undulate
As his pure intellect applies its laws,
He moves not on his coppery, keen claws.

He munches a dry shell while he exerts
His will, yet never ceases, perfect cock,
To flare, in the sun-pallor of his rock.

1923

TO THE ONE OF FICTIVE MUSIC

SISTER and mother and diviner love,
And of the sisterhood of the living dead
Most near, most clear, and of the clearest bloom,
And of the fragrant mothers the most dear
And queen, and of diviner love the day
And flame and summer and sweet fire, no thread
Of cloudy silver sprinkles in your gown
Its venom of renown, and on your head
No crown is simpler than the simple hair.

Now, of the music summoned by the birth
That separates us from the wind and sea,
Yet leaves us in them, until earth becomes,
By being so much of the things we are,
Gross effigy and simulacrum, none
Gives motion to perfection more serene
Than yours, out of our imperfections wrought,
Most rare, or ever of more kindred air
In the laborious weaving that you wear.

For so retentive of themselves are men
That music is intensest which proclaims
The near, the clear, and vaunts the clearest bloom,
And of all vigils musing the obscure,
That apprehends the most which sees and names,
As in your name, an image that is sure,
Among the arrant spices of the sun,
O bough and bush and scented vine, in whom
We give ourselves our likest issuance.

Yet not too like, yet not so like to be
Too near, too clear, saving a little to endow
Our feigning with the strange unlike, whence springs
The difference that heavenly pity brings.
For this, musician, in your girdle fixed
Bear other perfumes. On your pale head wear
A band entwining, set with fatal stones.
Unreal, give back to us what once you gave:
The imagination that we spurned and crave.

1923

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

I

JUST as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna.

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin
blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

2

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay.
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids,
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—
A cymbal clashed,
And roaring horns.

3

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then, the simpering Byzantines
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

4

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.
The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.
So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of winter, done repenting.
So maidens die to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy
strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of
praise.

1923

SEA SURFACE FULL OF CLOUDS

1

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night
And in the morning summer hued the deck

And made one think of rosy chocolate
And gilt umbrellas. Paradisal green
Gave suavity to the perplexed machine

Of ocean, which like limpid water lay.
Who, then, in that ambrosial latitude
Out of the light evolved the moving
blooms,

Who, then, evolved the sea-blooms from
the clouds
Diffusing balm in that Pacific calm?
C'était mon enfant, mon bijou, mon âme.[1]

The sea-clouds whitened far below the
calm
And moved, as blooms move, in the
swimming green
And in its watery radiance, while the hue

Of heaven in an antique reflection rolled
Round those flotillas. And sometimes the
sea
Poured brilliant iris on the glistening blue.

2

In that November off Tehuantepec
The slopping of the sea grew still one night.
At breakfast jelly yellow streaked the deck

1 'It was my child, my darling, and my soul.'

And made one think of chop-house
chocolate
And sham umbrellas. And a sham-like
green
Capped summer-seeming on the tense
machine

Of ocean, which in sinister flatness lay.
Who, then, beheld the rising of the clouds
That strode submerged in that malevolent
sheen,

Who saw the mortal massives of the blooms
Of water moving on the water-floor?
C'était mon frère du ciel, ma vie, mon or.[1]

The gongs rang loudly as the windy booms
Hoo-hooed it in the darkened
ocean-blooms.
The gongs grew still. And then blue heaven
spread

Its crystalline pendentives on the sea
And the macabre of the water-glooms
In an enormous undulation fled.

3

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night
And a pale silver patterned on the deck

And made one think of porcelain chocolate
And pied umbrellas. An uncertain green,
Piano-polished, held the tranced machine

Of ocean, as a prelude holds and holds.
Who, seeing silver petals of white blooms
Unfolding in the water, feeling sure

Of the milk within the saltiest spurge,
heard, then,
The sea unfolding in the sunken clouds?
Oh! C'était mon extase et mon amour.[2]

So deeply sunken were they that the
shrouds,
The shrouding shadows, made the petals
black
Until the rolling heaven made them blue,

A blue beyond the rainy hyacinth,
And smiting the crevasses of the leaves
Deluged the ocean with a sapphire blue.

4

In that November off Tehuantepec
The night-long slopping of the sea grew
still.
A mallow morning dozed upon the deck

And made one think of musky chocolate
And frail umbrellas. A too-fluent green
Suggested malice in the dry machine

Of ocean, pondering dank stratagem.
Who then beheld the figures of the
clouds
Like blooms secluded in the thick marine?

Like blooms? Like damasks that were
shaken off
From the loosed girdles in the spangling
must.
C'était ma foi, la nonchalance divine.[3]

The nakedness would rise and suddenly
turn
Salt masks of beard and mouths of
bellowing,
Would—But more suddenly the heaven
rolled

Its bluest sea-clouds in the thinking green,
And the nakedness became the broadest
blooms,
Mile-mallows that a mallow sun cajoled.

5

In that November off Tehuantepec
Night stilled the slopping of the sea. The
day
Came, bowing and voluble, upon the deck,

Good clown. . . . One thought of Chinese
chocolate
And large umbrellas. And a motley green
Followed the drift of the obese machine

Of ocean, perfected in indolence.
What pistache one, ingenious and droll,
Beheld the sovereign clouds as jugglery

And the sea as turquoise-turbaned Sambo,
neat
At tossing saucers—cloudy-conjuring sea?
C'était mon esprit bâtard, l'ignominie.[4]

1 'It was my heavenly brother, my life, my gold.'
2 'Oh! It was my ecstasy and my love.'
3 'It was my faith, divine nonchalance.'
4 'It was ignominy, my hybrid mind.'

The sovereign clouds came clustering. The conch
Of loyal conjuration trumped. The wind
Of green blooms turning crisped the motley hue

To clearing opalescence. Then the sea
And heaven rolled as one and from the two
Came fresh transfigurings of freshest blue.

1931

THE IDEA OF ORDER AT KEY WEST

SHE sang beyond the genius of the sea.
The water never formed to mind or voice,
Like a body wholly body, fluttering
Its empty sleeves; and yet its mimic motion
Made constant cry, caused constantly a cry,
That was not ours although we understood,
Inhuman, of the veritable ocean.

The sea was not a mask. No more was she.
The song and water were not medleyed sound
Even if what she sang was what she heard,
Since what she sang was uttered word by word.
It may be that in all her phrases stirred
The grinding water and the gasping wind;
But it was she and not the sea we heard.

For she was the maker of the song she sang.
The ever-hooded, tragic-gestured sea
Was merely a place by which she walked to sing.
Whose spirit is this? we said, because we knew
It was the spirit that we sought and knew
That we should ask this often as she sang.

If it was only the dark voice of the sea
That rose, or even colored by many waves;
If it was only that outer voice of sky
And cloud, of the sunken coral water-walled,
However clear, it would have been deep air,
The heaving speech of air, a summer sound
Repeated in a summer without end
And sound alone. But it was more than that,
More even than her voice, and ours, among
The meaningless plungings of water and the wind,
Theatrical distances, bronze shadows heaped
On high horizons, mountainous atmospheres
Of sky and sea.

It was her voice that made
The sky acutest at its vanishing.
She measured to the hour its solitude.
She was the single artificer of the world
In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
Whatever self it had, became the self
That was her song, for she was the maker.
Then we,
As we beheld her striding there alone,
Knew that there never was a world for her
Except the one she sang and, singing, made.

Ramon Fernandez, tell me, if you know,
Why, when the singing ended and we turned
Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,
The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
As the night descended, tilting in the air,
Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

Oh! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.

1935

A POSTCARD FROM THE VOLCANO

CHILDREN picking up our bones
Will never know that these were once
As quick as foxes on the hill;

And that in autumn, when the grapes
Made sharp air sharper by their smell
These had a being, breathing frost;

And least will guess that with our bones
We left much more, left what still is
The look of things, left what we felt

At what we saw. The spring clouds blow
Above the shuttered mansion-house,
Beyond our gate and the windy sky

Cries out a literate despair.
We knew for long the mansion's look
And what we said of it became

A part of what it is . . . Children,
Still weaving budded aureoles,
Will speak our speech and never know,

Will say of the mansion that it seems
As if he that lived there left behind
A spirit storming in blank walls,

A dirty house in a gutted world,
A tatter of shadows peaked to white,
Smeared with the gold of the opulent sun.

1935

FROM OWL'S CLOVER
V. SOMBRE FIGURATION

I

THERE is a man whom rhapsodies of change,
Of which he is the cause, have never
changed
And never will, a subman under all
The rest, to whom in the end the rest
return,
The man below the man below the man,
Steeped in night's opium, evading day.

2

We have grown weary of the man that
thinks.
He thinks and it is not true. The man
below
Imagines and it is true, as if he thought
By imagining, anti-logician, quick
With a logic of transforming certitudes.
It is not that he was born in another land,
Powdered with primitive lights, and lives
with us
In glimpses, on the edge or at the tip.
He was born within us as a second self,
A self of parents who have never died,
Whose lives return, simply, upon our lips,
Their word and ours; in what we see, their
hues
Without a season, unstinted in livery,
And ours, of rigid measure, a miser's paint;
And most in what we hear, sound brushed
away,
A mumbling at the elbow, turgid tunes,
As of insects or cloud-stricken birds,
away
And away, dialogues between incognitos.
He dwells below, the man below, in less
Than body and in less than mind, ogre,
Inhabitant, in less than shape, of shapes
That are dissembled in vague memory
Yet still retain resemblances, remain
Remembrances, a place of a field of lights,
As a church is a bell and people are an
eye,
A cry, the pallor of a dress, a touch.
He turns us into scholars, studying
The masks of music. We perceive each
mask
To be the musician's own and, thence,
become
An audience to mimics glistening
With meanings, doubled by the closest
sound,
Mimics that play on instruments discerned
In the beat of the blood.
Green is the path we take
Between chimeras and garlanded the way,
The down-descent into November's void.
The spontaneities of rain or snow
Surprise the sterile rationalist who sees
Maidens in bloom, bulls under sea, the lark
On urns and oak-leaves twisted into
rhyme.
The man, but not the man below, for whom
The pheasant in a field was pheasant,
field,
Until they changed to eagle in white air,
Lives in a fluid, not on solid rock.
The solid was an age, a period
With appropriate, largely English,
furniture,
Barbers with charts of the only possible
modes,
Cities that would not wash away in the
mist,
Each man in his asylum maundering,
Policed by the hope of Christmas. Summer
night,
Night gold, and winter night, night silver,
these
Were the fluid, the cat-eyed atmosphere, in
which
The man and the man below were
reconciled,
The east wind in the west, order
destroyed,
The cycle of the solid having turned.

3

High up in heaven a sprawling portent moves,
As if it bears all darkness in its bulk.
But this we cannot see. The shaggy top
Broods in tense meditation, constantly,
On the city, on which it leans, the people there,
Its shadow on their houses, on their walls,
Their beds, their faces drawn in distant sleep.
This is invisible. The supporting arms
Reach from the horizons, rim to rim,
While the shaggy top collects itself to do
And the shoulders turn, breathing immense intent.
All this is hidden from sight.
It is the form
Of a generation that does not know itself,
Still questioning if to crush the soaring stacks.
The man below beholds the portent poised,
An image of his making, beyond the eye.
The year's dim elongations stretch below
To tumbled rock, its bright projections lie
The shallowest iris on the emptiest eye.
The future must bear within it every past,
Not least the pasts destroyed, magniloquent
Syllables, pewter on ebony, yet still
A board for bishops' grapes, the happy form
That revolution takes for connoisseurs:
The portent may itself be memory;
And memory may itself be time to come
And must be, when the portent, changed, takes on
A mask up-gathered brilliantly from the dirt,
And memory's lord is the lord of prophesy
And steps forth, priestly in severity,
Yet lord, a mask of flame, the darkest form
A wandering orb upon a path grown clear.

4

High up in heaven the sprawling portent moves.
The statue in a crow's perspective of trees
Stands brimming white, chiaroscuro scaled
To space. To space? The statue scaled to space
Would be a ring of heads and haunches, torn
From size, backs larger than the eye, not flesh
In marble, but marble massive as the thrust
Of that which is not seen and cannot be.
The portent would become man-haggard to
A race of dwarfs, the meditative arms
And head a shadow trampled under hoofs,
Man-misty to a race star-humped, astride
In a clamor thudding up from central earth.
Not the space in camera of the man below,
Immeasurable, the space in which he knows
The locust's titter and the turtle's sob.
The statue stands in true perspective. Crows
Give only their color to the leaves. The trees
Are full of fanfares of farewell, as night
And the portent end in night, composed, before
Its wheel begins to turn.
The statue stands
In hum-drum space, farewell, farewell, by day
The green, white, blue of the ballad-eye, by night
The mirror of other nights combined in one.
The spring is hum-drum like an instrument,
That a man without passion plays in an aimless way.
Even imagination has an end,
When the statue is not a thing imagined, a stone,
The flight of emblemata through his mind,
Thoughts by descent. To flourish the great cloak we wear
At night, to turn away from the abominable
Farewells and, in the darkness, to feel again
The reconciliation, the rapture of a time
Without imagination, without past
And without future, a present time, is that
The passion, indifferent to the poets' hum,
That we conceal? A passion to fling the cloak,
Adorned for a multitude, in a gesture spent
In the gesture's whim, a passion merely to be
For the gaudium of being, Jocundus instead
Of the black-blooded scholar, the man of the cloud, to be

The medium man among other medium men,
The cloak to be clipped, the night to be re-designed,
Its land-breath to be stifled, its color changed,
Night and the imagination being one.
1936 1937

FROM A THOUGHT REVOLVED

III. ROMANESQUE AFFABULATION

HE sought an earthly leader who could stand
Without panache, without cockade,
Son only of man and sun of men,
The outer captain, the inner saint,

The pine, the pillar and the priest,
The voice, the book, the hidden well,
The faster's feast and heavy-fruited star,
The father, the beater of the rigid drums,

He that at midnight touches the guitar,
The solitude, the barrier, the Pole
In Paris, celui qui chante et pleure,[1]
Winter devising summer in its breast,

Summer assaulted, thundering, illumed,
Shelter yet thrower of the summer spear,
With all his attributes no god but man
Of men whose heaven is in themselves,

Or else whose hell, foamed with their blood
And the long echo of their dying cry,
A fate intoned, a death before they die,
The race that sings and weeps and knows not why.
1936 1937

CONRAD AIKEN

1889–

DISCORDANTS [2]

I

MUSIC I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread;
Now that I am without you, all is desolate;
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.
These things do not remember you, belovèd,—
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;
And in my heart they will remember always,—
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.
1914 1916

THE HOUSE OF DUST [3]

IV

iii

WELL, as you say, we live for small horizons:
We move in crowds, we flow and talk together,

1 'He who sings and weeps.'

2 '"Music I Heard with You," from "Discordants" (1914), the first of a group of five lyrics, is an early and experimental specimen of a form which has since attracted me: the presentation of poems in a series or sequence. Other similar series in my later work are "Variations" (1916), "Improvisations: Lights and Snow" (1917), "Priapus and the Pool" (1922), and the two recent volumes of preludes, "Preludes for Memnon" and "Time in the Rock." What interested me was the possibility of variation, whether by contrast of tone, theme, or form, within the frame of a unifying reference. As early as these rather rudimentary "Discordants" I had begun to harbor dangerous notions of dividing poetry, as one would divide music, into alternating and contrasting movements. The five symphonic poems which I was to do later—"The Charnel Rose," "The Jig of Forslin," "Senlin," "The House of Dust," and "The Pilgrimage of Festus"—were more elaborate developments of the same idea.' Author's note.

3 'The theme of "The House of Dust" might be described as an extended analogy between the multicellular activity and nature of a great city, and the multicellular activity and nature of the human consciousness. The approach to it—as in the other symphonies also—might be said to be *spiral*: by a series of contrasted narrative or lyric or analytic sections, moving slowly forward, but now and again looping back, the juxtaposition of the different modes being as care-

Seeing so many eyes and hands and faces,
So many mouths, and all the secret
meanings,—
Yet know so little of them; only seeing
The small bright circle of our
consciousness,
Beyond which lies the dark. Some few we
know—
Or think we know. . . . Once, on a sun-
bright morning,
I walked in a certain hallway, trying to find
A certain door: I found one, tried it,
opened,
And there in a spacious chamber, brightly
lighted,
A hundred men played music, loudly,
swiftly,
While one tall woman sent her voice above
them
In powerful sweetness. . . . Closing then
the door
I heard it die behind me, fade to whisper,—
And walked in a quiet hallway as before.
Just such a glimpse, as through that
opened door,
Is all we know of those we call our
friends. . . .
We hear a sudden music, see a playing
Of ordered thoughts—and all again is
silence.
The music, we suppose, (as in ourselves)
Goes on forever there, behind shut doors,—
As it continues after our departure,
So, we divine, it played before we
came . . .
What do you know of me, or I of you? . . .
Little enough. . . . We set these doors
ajar
Only for chosen movements of the music:
This passage, (so I think—yet this is
guesswork)
Will please him,—it is in a strain he
fancies,—
More brilliant, though, than his; and while
he likes it
He will be piqued. . . . He looks at me
bewildered
And thinks (to judge from self—this too is
guesswork)
The music strangely subtle, deep in
meaning,
Perplexed with implications; he suspects
me
Of hidden riches, unexpected wisdom. . . .
Or else I let him hear a lyric passage,—
Simple and clear; and all the while he
listens
I make pretence to think my doors are
closed.
This too bewilders him. He eyes me
sidelong
Wondering 'Is he such a fool as this?
Or only mocking?' —There I let it
end. . . .
Sometimes, of course, and when we least
suspect it—
When we pursue our thoughts with too
much passion,
Talking with too great zeal—our doors fly
open
Without intention; and the hungry watcher
Stares at the feast, carries away our secrets,
And laughs . . . but this, for many
counts, is seldom.
And for the most part we vouchsafe our
friends,
Our lovers too, only such few clear notes
As we shall deem them likely to admire:
'Praise me for this' we say, or 'laugh at
this,'
Or 'marvel at my candor' . . . all the
while
Withholding what's most precious to
ourselves,—
Some sinister depth of lust or fear or
hatred,
The sombre note that gives the chord its
power;
Or a white loveliness—if such we know—
Too much like fire to speak of without
shame.

. . . .

1916–1917 1920

fully calculated as possible to produce an effect as of contrapuntal richness in music. In the circumstances, many sections of the symphonies must suffer greatly if detached from their context, to which they are bound *affectively* rather than logically: their own tone is partly the overtone (the remembered emotion-mass) of the preceding section; and this too will change in retrospect when the *next* section has been read. That, at any rate, was my theory. The present selection from "The House of Dust" stands better by itself than most, simply because it is the climax and arcanum of the poem, in the attempt of consciousness to be, as it were, conscious of itself. But even here it may be interesting to notice that it is set, for better effect, between a rather hard little narrative movement and an elegiac section. The reflective blank verse, too, perhaps gains something in character from its contrast with the rhymed and stanzaed movements—the one rapid, the other slow—which precede and follow it.' Author's note.

FROM PRIAPUS AND THE POOL

III [1]

WHEN trout swim down Great Ormond Street,
And sea-gulls cry above them lightly,
And hawthorns heave cold flagstones up
To blossom whitely,

Against old walls of houses there,
Gustily shaking out in moonlight
Their country sweetness on sweet air;
And in the sunlight,

By the green margin of that water,
Children dip white feet and shout,
Casting nets in the braided water
To catch the trout:

Then I shall hold my breath and die,
Swearing I never loved you; no,
'You are not lovely!' I shall cry,
'I never loved you so.'

IV [2]

THIS is the shape of the leaf, and this of the flower,
And this the pale bole of the tree
Which watches its bough in a pool of unwavering water
In a land we never shall see.

The thrush on the bough is silent, the dew falls softly,
In the evening is hardly a sound.
And the three beautiful pilgrims who come here together
Touch lightly the dust of the ground,

Touch it with feet that trouble the dust but as wings do,
Come shyly together, are still,
Like dancers who wait, in a pause of the music, for music
The exquisite silence to fill.

This is the thought of the first, and this of the second,
And this the grave thought of the third:
'Linger we thus for a moment, palely expectant,
And silence will end, and the bird

'Sing the pure phrase, sweet phrase, clear phrase in the twilight
To fill the blue bell of the world;
And we, who on music so leaflike have drifted together,
Leaflike apart shall be whirled.'

XVI [3]

SEE, as the carver carves a rose,
A wing, a toad, a serpent's eye,
In cruel granite, to disclose
The soft things that in hardness lie,

So this one, taking up his heart,
Which time and change had made a stone,
Carved out of it with dolorous art,
Labouring yearlong and alone,

The thing there hidden—rose, toad, wing?
A frog's hand on a lily pad?
Bees in a cobweb—? No such thing!
A girl's head was the thing he had,

Small, shapely, richly crowned with hair,
Drowsy, with eyes half closed, as they
Looked through you and beyond you, clear
To something farther than Cathay:

Saw you, yet counted you not worth
The seeing, thinking all the while
How, flower-like, beauty comes to birth;
And thinking this, began to smile.

Medusa! For she could not see
The world she turned to stone and ash.
Only herself she saw, a tree
That flowered beneath a lightning-flash.

1 'This is perhaps interesting for the shift after the second stanza from masculine-feminine endings to feminine-masculine, and then in the final stanza, wholly masculine. An effect as of modulation from minor to major.' Author's note.

2 'This, originally called "Portrait of a Girl," when published out of series, may be compared with number IX of "Priapus and the Pool," of which it is the companion-piece. The latter was originally called "Portrait of a Man," and both are *whole-poem* analogies; the one envisaging the girl as a meeting of three pilgrims under a tree, the other envisaging the man as a desert over which blows a fragrant wind from another land.' Author's note.

3 'It may be worth noting in this how the theme of the "carver" is reënforced by the introduction of a series of small concrete objects, without qualifications, and all monosyllabic: rose, wing, toad, serpent's eye, and so on.' Author's note.

Thus dreamed her face—a lovely thing,
To worship, weep for, or to break.
Better to carve a claw, a wing,
Or, if the heart provide, a snake.
1920 1922

SEA HOLLY [1]

BEGOTTEN by the meeting of rock with rock,
The mating of rock and rock, rocks gnashing together;
Created so, and yet forgetful, walks
The seaward path, puts up her left hand, shades
Blue eyes, the eyes of rock, to see better
In slanting light the ancient sheep (which kneels
Biting the grass) the while her other hand,
Hooking the wicker handle, turns the basket
Of eggs. The sea is high to-day. The eggs
Are cheaper. The sea is blown from the southwest,
Confused, taking up sand and mud in waves,
The waves break, sluggish, in brown foam, the wind
Disperses (on the sheep and hawthorn) spray,—
And on her cheeks, the cheeks engendered of rock,
And eyes, the colour of rock. The left hand
Falls from the eyes, and undecided slides
Over the left breast on which muslin lightly
Rests, touching the nipple, and then down
The hollow side, virgin as rock, and bitterly
Caresses the blue hip.

It was for this,
This obtuse taking of the seaward path,
This stupid hearing of larks, this hooking
Of wicker, this absent observation of sheep
Kneeling in harsh sea-grass, the cool hand shading
The spray-stung eyes—it was for this the rock
Smote itself. The sea is higher to-day,
And eggs are cheaper. The eyes of rock take in
The seaward path that winds toward the sea,
The thistle-prodder, old woman under a bonnet,
Forking the thistles, her back against the sea,
Pausing, with hard hands on the handle, peering
With rock eyes from her bonnet.

It was for this,
This rock-lipped facing of brown waves, half sand
And half water, this tentative hand that slides
Over the breast of rock, and into the hollow
Soft side of muslin rock, and then fiercely
Almost as rock against the hip of rock—
It was for this in midnight the rocks met,
And dithered together, cracking and smoking.

It was for this
Barren beauty, barrenness of rock that aches
On the seaward path, seeing the fruitful sea,
Hearing the lark of rock that sings, smelling
The rock-flower of hawthorn, sweetness of rock—
It was for this, stone pain in the stony heart,
The rock loved and laboured; and all is lost.
1924 1925

[1] '"Sea Holly" is a curiosity in the technique of mere repetition. In forty-eight lines, the word "rock" is repeated twenty-two times. Not a method wholly to be recommended, but here perhaps excusable, in conjunction with the harshness and staccato qualities of the verse, for its obvious contribution of bleakness and monotony to the theme of barrenness. This poem, together with "The Room" and "Sound of Breaking" and ten others, constituted a series of experiments in blank verse. The great flexibility of the form attracted me, with its range all the way from lyric or narrative to contemplative or analytic; and in addition to seeking a medium somewhat hard on the surface, metallic and ironic, I was also interested in using a "parable" form, a thing that might be called a narrative symbol, or symbolic narrative. It was my idea to keep the *terms* as simple as possible, and merely to let the chosen theme *act itself*: a mere reporting of a thing done and seen. In "The Room," for example, the statement is of the barest, and in "Sound of Breaking" little more so.' Author's note

THE ROOM

THROUGH that window—all else being extinct
Except itself and me—I saw the struggle
Of darkness against darkness. Within the room
It turned and turned, dived downward. Then I saw

How order might—if chaos wished—
become:
And saw the darkness crush upon itself,
Contracting powerfully; it was as if
It killed itself: slowly: and with much pain.
Pain. The scene was pain, and nothing but
pain.
What else, when chaos draws all forces
inward
To shape a single leaf? . . .

For the leaf came,
Alone and shining in the empty room;
After a while the twig shot downward from
it;
And from the twig a bough; and then the
trunk,
Massive and coarse; and last the one black
root.
The black root cracked the walls. Boughs
burst the window:
The great tree took possession.

Tree of trees!
Remember (when time comes) how chaos
died
To shape the shining leaf. Then turn, have
courage,
Wrap arms and roots together, be
convulsed
With grief, and bring back chaos out of
shape.
I will be watching then as I watch now.
I will praise darkness now, but then the
leaf.

1924 1925

SOUND OF BREAKING

WHY do you cry out, why do I like to hear
you
Cry out, here in the dewless evening, sitting
Close, close together, so close that the
heart stops beating
And the brain its thought? Wordless,
worthless mortals
Stumbling, exhausted, in this wilderness
Of our conjoint destruction! Hear the
grass
Raging about us! Hear the worms applaud!
Hear how the ripples make a sound of
chaos!
Hear now, in these and the other sounds of
evening,
The first brute step of God!

About your elbow,
Making a ring of thumb and finger, I
Slide the walled blood against the less-
walled blood,
Move down your arm, surmount the wrist-
bone, shut
Your long slim hand in mine. Each
finger-tip
Is then saluted by a finger-tip;
The hands meet back to back, then face to
face;
Then lock together. And we, with eyes
averted,
Smile at the evening sky of alabaster,
See nothing, lose our souls in the
maelstrom, turning
Downward in rapid circles.

Bitter woman,
Bitter of heart and brain and blood, bitter
as I
Who drink your bitterness—can this be
beauty?
Do you cry out because the beauty is cruel?
Terror, because we downward sweep so
swiftly?
Terror of darkness?

It is a sound of breaking,
The world is breaking, the world is a sound
of breaking,
Many-harmonied, diverse, profound,
A shattering beauty. See, how together we
break,
Hear what a crashing of disordered chords
and discords
Fills the world with falling, when we thus
lean
Our two mad bodies together!

It is a sound
Of everlasting grief, the sound of weeping,
The sound of disaster and misery, the
sound
Of passionate heartbreak at the centre of
the world.

1924 1925

THE POMECITRON TREE [1]

HERE the skeleton leaf, between
Eglantine and celandine,
Harries an hour (that seems an age)

1 ' "The Pomecitron Tree" is an extension of the same notion in more lyric terms, and in the strict form of

The snail's deliberate pilgrimage.
And in that same stupendous hour,
While royally unfolds the flower
Magniloquent in the sunlight, She
Dreams by the pomecitron tree.

Not lust alone is in her mind,
Nor the sad shapes of humankind.
What ant is this, with horns, who comes
Exploring huge geraniums?
Up the green-jointed column stalks,
And into halls of scarlet walks;
Boldly intrudes, partakes, then goes
—Alas!—to eat her favorite rose.

Not lust alone; yet this was lust,
And lust was that deliberate gust
That warmly roused the leaves, caressed
The lawn, and on her open breast
Blew, from the pomecitron tree,
One ravished petal, and a bee . . .
Into her bosom flew, from this,
The fiery-winged wounding kiss.

Into her bosom. Deeper then,
It startles to that world of men,
Who, in the kingdom of her mind,
Awake, arise, begin to wind
Along the subterranean road
That leads from their abhorred abode. . . .
They move and murmur, while the ant
Climbs an enormous rhubarb plant.

And then it is her voice that cries,
While still beneath the tree she lies:
Maker of gardens, let me be
Turned to a pomecitron tree!
Within his veins no longings rise;
He turns no concupiscent eyes;
Nor hears, in the infernal mind,
The lustful army wake and wind.

He, though his roots are in the grave,
Is placid and unconscious, save
Of burning light, or rain, that slides
On dripping leaves and down his sides.
In his cool thought the sparrow nests;
A leaf, among more leaves she rests;
Or, if she sings, her watery voice
Is joined with countless that rejoice.

What bliss is his! what deep delight!
To face, with his own dark, the night!
With his own sunrise meet the sun!
Or whistle with the wind, and run!
Why, Lord, was it ordained that I
Must turn an inward-roving eye?
Why must I know, unlike this tree,
What lusts and murders nourish me?

To him, no doubt, most innocent
Seems, in this sunlight, my intent:
No primrose ever lightlier breathed
Than my tall body, flower-enwreathed.
Soft as lilies the sunlight rests
Upon my pollen-powdered breasts.
My two hands, of their own sweet will,
Can stir like leaves, or stand as still.

What stems can match this throat of gold
And ivory? What stalks uphold
So lightly, in this garden, such
Delirious flowers to taste and touch?
What pistilled mouth can rival here
My mouth, what leaves outvie my hair
In mindless beauty? . . . Yet, behind
This mindless beauty lurks a mind.

Ah, while the rhubarb leaf is spread
Broad as a salver by my head:
And the green aphis pastures on
This tall green tower of Solomon:
The mind, within my flower's bell,
Conceals its black concentric hell.
There at this minute swarms the host,
And lewd ghost speaks with furious
ghost.

There the sad shapes of humankind
Through brown defiles in sorrow wind;
And, if they speak, their arid speech
Is of that land they cannot reach.
There the defeated warrior lies,
And westward turns defrauded eyes.
Deformed and monstrous are those men:
They climb, and do not turn again.

It is to me each lifts his face!
It is to me, with footsore pace,

an eight-line stanza. The theme, as will be seen, is a metaphysical one, but is presented dramatically, is acted and spoken. To bring the abstractions alive there is a continuous emphasis on the sensory aspects of the situation, and all the more because as the theme is itself in part a questioning of the *nature* of the senses and of sensory experience. The light formality of the octasyllabic couplets is intended as a further aid in giving a note as of almost gaiety to a mood of tragic self-analysis. Both the form and the word "pomecitron" were suggested by George Sandys' verse translation of the "Song of Solomon" in the seventeenth century.' Author's note.

Summoned once more, they creep and come,
Pointing toward me as to home.
What love is in their eyes! Alas,
That love so soon to lust should pass!
The hands they lift are stumps; they stir
The rank leaves where their faces were.

Maker of gardens, let me be
Turned to a pomecitron tree;
Or let me be this rhubarb plant,
Whose lavish love is ignorant;
Or let me be this daffodil,
Which lusts and murders, yet is still
All-in-itself, a golden All
Concentred in one burning ball!

. . . She sighs; and it is in her thought
That grief so desperate may be fraught
With tears; and tears were sweet, displayed
Here, in the pomecitron shade;
And grief is pleasant, when beguiled
By mindless garden, or a child;
But the few tears are thought, not shed;
She claps her hands, and laughs, instead.
1925 1930

FROM PRELUDES FOR MEMNON [1]

XLV [2]

THE dead man spoke to me and begged a penny,
For god's sake, and for yours and mine, he said,
Slowly under the streetlamp turned his head,
I saw his eyes wide open and he stared
Through me as if my bones and flesh were nothing,
Through me and through the earth and through the void,
His eyes were dark and wide and cold and empty
As if his vision had become a grave
Larger than bones of any world could fill,
But crystal clear and deep and deeply still.

Poor devil—why, he wants to close his eyes,
He wants a charity to close his eyes,
And follows me with outstretched palm, from world to world
And from house to house and street to street,
Under the streetlamps and along dark alleys,
And sits beside me in my room, and sleeps
Upright with eyes wide open by my bed,
Circles the Pleiades with a glance, returns
From cold Orion with a slow turn of the head,
Looks north and south at once, and all the while
Holds, in that void of an unfocused stare,
My own poor footsteps, saying

I have read
Time in the rock and in the human heart,
Space in the bloodstream, and those lesser works
Written by rose and windflower on the summer, sung
By water and snow, deciphered by the eye,
Translated by the slaves of memory,
And all that you be you, and I be I,
Or all that by imagination, aping
God, the supreme poet of despair,
I may be you, you me, before our time
Knowing the rank intolerable taste of death,
And walking dead on the still living earth.

1 'The two selections from "Preludes for Memnon" and three from "Time in the Rock" are really, in effect, all parts of one poem, or one such "series" as mentioned earlier in these notes. Originally, I planned to entitle the two companion groups "Preludes to Attitude" ("Memnon") and "Preludes to Definition" ("Time in the Rock"), and I have always regarded them as belonging together and as constituting one unit. Together, they form the most extended use of "series" I have attempted, and the most complex. The range offered by the theme—with its paired questions of "what attitude shall we take towards the world, external and internal, which we see; and what definitions can we find for a world of experience so fluid"—was naturally much greater than that available in the earlier series, where usually a single tone prevailed throughout, though of course with variations. (*Viz.*, "autumn" in "Variations"; "winter" in "Improvisations: Lights and Snow.") Here, as in the symphonies, I was free to rove farther afield, but without so much check of symphonic form; such check as was necessary lay in the relative freedom of the theme and, of course, as in the earlier use of "series," in the play of one movement or idea against another, repetition in elaboration, repetition by inversion, cross-reference, and so on. The majority of the movements are in blank verse, but as in the symphonies there is occasional recourse to stanza or rhyme or other formal device. For the most part, the tone is kept down to what is almost a conversational level, and a quiet type of poetry is aimed at, such as will move readily from the barest of statement or directest of analysis to the more obviously "poetic." ' Author's note.

2 'No. XLV of "Memnon" is a companion-piece of No. LVIII in the same volume, which begins with the same line and is a variant of the same theme ' Author's note.

. . . I rose and dressed and descended the stair
Into the sunlight, and he came with me,
Staring the skeleton from the daffodil,
Freezing the snowflake in the blackbird's whistle,
And with that cold profound unhating eye
He moved the universe from east to west,
Slowly, disastrously,—but with such splendor
As god, the supreme poet of delight, might envy,—
To the magnificent sepulchre of sleep.

LVI [1]

RIMBAUD and Verlaine, precious pair of poets,
Genius in both (but what is genius?) playing
Chess on a marble table at an inn
With chestnut blossom falling in blond beer
And on their hair and between knight and bishop—
Sunlight squared between them on the chess-board
Cirrus in heaven, and a squeal of music
Blown from the leathern door of Sainte Sulpice—

Discussing, between moves, iamb and spondee
Anacoluthon and the open vowel
God the great peacock with his angel peacocks
And his dependent peacocks the bright stars:
Disputing too of fate as Plato loved it,
Or Sophocles, who hated and admired,
Or Socrates, who loved and was amused:

Verlaine puts down his pawn upon a leaf
And closes his long eyes, which are dishonest,
And says 'Rimbaud, there is one thing to do:
We must take rhetoric, and wring its neck! . . .'
Rimbaud considers gravely, moves his Queen;
And then removes himself to Timbuctoo.

And Verlaine dead,—with all his jades and mauves;
And Rimbaud dead in Marseilles with a vision,
His leg cut off, as once before his heart;
And all reported by a later lackey,
Whose virtue is his tardiness in time.

Let us describe the evening as it is:—
The stars disposed in heaven as they are:
Verlaine and Shakspere rotting, where they rot,
Rimbaud remembered, and too soon forgot;

Order in all things, logic in the dark;
Arrangement in the atom and the spark;
Time in the heart and sequence in the brain—

Such as destroyed Rimbaud and fooled Verlaine.
And let us then take godhead by the neck—

And strangle it, and with it, rhetoric.
1927–1931 1931

1 '"Rimbaud and Verlaine" is one of several sections in the two series which deal with the problem of communication itself, and may be compared with the section which follows it. It is something of an oddity of form, each stanza being a line shorter than that preceding it, and the end falling into couplets, by way of ironic comment on the accompanying dismissal of "rhetoric." ' Author's note.

FROM TIME IN THE ROCK [2]

XXII

IF man, that angel of bright consciousness,
that wingless mind and brief epitome
of god's forgetfulness, will be going forth
into the treacherous envelope of sunlight—
why, the poor fool, does he expect, does he expect
to return at evening? or to return the same?
Those who have put on, in the morning,
that cloak of light, that sheath of air,
wrapped themselves suddenly, on the exit,
in the wild wave of daybreak, which has come

2 'Two of the sections from "Time in the Rock"—"If man, that angel" and "What without speech"—again touch on the problem of communication, which indeed is one of the recurring themes of the two books of preludes.' Author's note.

from cruel Alpha,—what has become of
them?
They will return as the sons of darkness.

If woman, that demon of unconsciousness,
that wingèd body of delightful chaos,
that quick embodied treason and deceit,
will go forth sinuously from the opening
door
and take to herself the garment of
daylight—
who will vouch for her, go her surety,
who will her bondsman be, or swear by the
cloud
that she, who thus went forth, will thus
come back?
If she took darkness with her, will she
return
with luminous heart, and a soft light
within?
For that which goes forth comes back
changed or dead.

If the child, that frail mirror of the sky,
that little room of foolish laughter and
grief,
transient toucher and taster of the surface,
assembler and scatterer of light,—if he go
forth
into the simple street to count its stones,
its walls, its houses, its weeds and
grassblades,
so, in the numbered, to sum the infinite—
infant compendium of the terrible—:
will the changed man, and the changed
woman,
await him, with full knowledge, in the
evening—
salute him gravely, with a kiss or
handshake,
oblique embrace of the young wingless
shoulders—
will they, unknowing, unknown, know this
Unknown?

All three at evening, when they return
once more
from the black ocean of dark Omega,
by those wild waves washed up with stars
and hours,
brought home at last from nowhere to
nothing—
all three will pause in the simple light,
and speak to each other, slowly, with such
queer speech
as dead men use among the asphodels;
nor know each other; nor understand each
other;
but tread apart on the wind, like dancers
borne by unearthly music to unearthly
peace.

The house of evening, the house of clouds,
vast hall
of which the walls are walls of everywhere,
enfolds them, like a wind which blows out
lights.
And they are there, lying apart, lying
alone,
those three who went forth suddenly in the
morning
and now return, estranged and changed;
each is alone, with his extinguished lamp;
each one would weep, if he had time to
weep;
but, before tears can fall, they are
asleep.

XLVI

WHAT without speech we knew and could
not say
what without thought we did and could not
change
violence of the hand which the mind
thought strange
let us take these things into another world,
another dream

what without love we touched pronouncing
good
what without touch we loved and gave no
sign
violence of spirit which only spirit knew
divine
let us take these things into another world,
another sleep

walk with me heliotrope fly with me
sparrow
come beating of my heart and learn how
life is narrow
how little, and ill, will be remembered by
tomorrow
let us give our lives into another world
another hand

where like old rocks we shall be heaped
forgetful;
or waste away like stars in fiery
stillness;

no clock with mortal cry to speak our
illness;
let us take our deaths into another time
another god

come girl, come golden-breasted girl, and
walk
on the so silent and sun-sandalled path
between the foremath and the aftermath
let us hurl our joy into another chaos,
another wrath
and make it love

what without speech we know we then
shall say
and all our violence will there be gay
what without thought we do will be but
play
and our unspoken love as bright as day
and we shall live.

LXXXIV

WHAT face she put on it, we will not
discuss:
she went hence an hour since. Where she
went,
is another matter. To the north, to the
south,
as the man whistled, or the whim bade, she
went,
or even—who can say—following a star.
Her heart is like an hourglass, from which
the sand runs—
no sooner run than tilted to run again;
her mind, a mirror, which reflects always
the last moment;
her face, you would know it anywhere, it
gives you back
your own light, like the moon. Tell her a
lie,
threefold she reflects it; tell her the truth,
and its returned brilliance will strike you
dead.
She is of quicksilver. You might as well
pillow your head on a cloud, as on that
breast,
or strive to sleep with a meteor: when you
wake,
she is gone, your own hand is under your
cheek.

Yet she is of the material that earth is made
of:
will breed as quick as a fly: bloom like the
cherry,
fearless of frost: and has a nimble fancy
as tropic in pattern as a fernleaf. She walks
as naturally as a young tree might walk:
with no pretence: picks up her roots and
goes
out of your world, and into the secret
darkness,
as a lady with lifted train will leave a
ballroom,
and who knows why.

Wherefor do you love her, gentlemen?
Because, like the spring earth, she is
fruitfulness?
and you are seed? you need no other
reason?
and she no other than her perpetual season.
1931–1936 1936

E. E. CUMMINGS

1894–

FOURTEEN POEMS

I

All in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the merry deer ran before.

Fleeter be they than dappled dreams
the swift sweet deer
the red rare deer.

Four red roebuck at a white water
the cruel bugle sang before.

Horn at hip went my love riding
riding the echo down
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the level meadows ran before.

Softer be they than slippered sleep
the lean lithe deer
the fleet flown deer.

Four fleet does at a gold valley
the famished arrow sang before.

Bow at belt went my love riding
riding the mountain down
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the sheer peaks ran before.

Paler be they than daunting death
the sleek slim deer
the tall tense deer.

Four tall stags at a green mountain
the lucky hunter sang before.

All in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
my heart fell dead before.

1923

2

of evident invisibles
exquisite the hovering

at the dark portals

of hurt girl eyes

sincere with wonder

a poise a wounding
a beautiful suppression

the accurate boy mouth

now droops the faun head

now the intimate flower dreams

of parted lips
dim upon the syrinx

1923

3

Buffalo Bill's
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
Jesus

he was a handsome man
and what i want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death

1923

4

it is at moments after i have dreamed
of the rare entertainment of your eyes,
when (being fool to fancy) i have deemed

with your peculiar mouth my heart my heart made wise;
at moments when the glassy darkness holds

the genuine apparition of your smile
(it was through tears always) and silence moulds
such strangeness as was mine a little while;

moments when my once more illustrious arms
are filled with fascination, when my breast
wears the intolerant brightness of your charms:

one pierced moment whiter than the rest

—turning from the tremendous lie of sleep
i watch the roses of the day grow deep.

1923

5

Picasso
you give us Things
which
bulge:grunting lungs pumped full of sharp thick mind

you make us shrill
presents always
shut in the sumptuous screech of
simplicity

(out of the
black unbunged
Something gushes vaguely a squeak of planes
or

between squeals of
Nothing grabbed with circular shrieking tightness
solid screams whisper.)
Lumberman of The Distinct

your brain's
axe only chops hugest inherent
Trees of Ego,from
whose living and biggest

bodies lopped
of every
prettiness

you hew form truly

1925

6

Humanity i love you
because you would rather black the boots of
success than enquire whose soul dangles from his
watch-chain which would be embarassing for both

parties and because you
unflinchingly applaud all
songs containing the words country home and
mother when sung at the old howard

Humanity i love you because
when you're hard up you pawn your
intelligence to buy a drink and when
you're flush pride keeps

you from the pawn shop and
because you are continually committing
nuisances but more
especially in your own house

Humanity i love you because you
are perpetually putting the secret of
life in your pants and forgetting
it's there and sitting down

on it
and because you are
forever making poems in the lap
of death Humanity

i hate you

1925

7

O Thou to whom the musical white spring

offers her lily inextinguishable,
taught by thy tremulous grace bravely to fling

Implacable death's mysteriously sable
robe from her redolent shoulders,
Thou from whose
feet reincarnate song suddenly leaping
flameflung, mounts, inimitably to lose
herself where the wet stars softly are keeping

their exquisite dreams—O Love! upon thy dim
shrine of intangible commemoration,
(from whose faint close as some grave languorous hymn

pledged to illimitable dissipation
unhurried clouds of incense fleetly roll)

i spill my bright incalculable soul.

1925

8

this is the garden:colours come and go,
frail azures fluttering from night's outer wing
strong silent greens serenely lingering,
absolute lights like baths of golden snow.
This is the garden:pursed lips do blow
upon cool flutes within wide glooms,and sing
(of harps celestial to the quivering string)
invisible faces hauntingly and slow.

This is the garden. Time shall surely reap,
and on Death's blade lie many a flower curled,
in other lands where other songs be sung;
yet stand They here enraptured, as among
the slow deep trees perpetual of sleep
some silver-fingered fountain steals the world.

1925

9

gee i like to think of dead it means nearer because deeper
firmer since darker than little round water at one end of
the well it's too cool to be crooked and it's too firm
to be hard but it's sharp and thick and it loves, every
old thing falls in rosebugs and jackknives and kittens and
pennies they all sit there looking at each other having the
fastest time because they've
never met before

dead's more even than how many ways of sitting on
your head your unnatural hair has in the morning

dead's clever too like POF goes the alarm off and the
little striker having the best time tickling away every-
body's brain so everybody just puts out their finger
and they stuff the poor thing all full of fingers

dead has a smile like the nicest man you've never met
who maybe winks at you in a streetcar and you pretend
you don't but really you do see and you are My how
glad he winked and hope he'll do it again

or if it talks about you somewhere behind your back
it makes your neck feel pleasant and stoopid and if
dead says may i have this one and was never intro-
duced you say Yes because you know you want it to
dance with you and it wants to and it can dance and
Whocares

dead's fine like hands do you see that water flowerpots
in windows but they live higher in their house than
you so that's all you see but you don't want to

dead's happy like the way underclothes All so differ-
ently solemn and inti and sitting on one string

dead never says my dear,Time for your musiclesson
and you like music and to have somebody play who
can but you know you never can and why have to?

dead's nice like a dance where you danced simple hours
and you take all your prickley-clothes off and squeeze-
into-largeness without one word and you lie still as
anything in largeness and this largeness begins to
give you,the dance all over again and you,feel all again
all over the way men you liked made you feel when they
touched you(but that's not all)because largeness tells
you so you can feel what you made, men feel when,you
touched,them

dead's sorry like a thistlefluff-thing which goes land-
ing away all by himself on somebody's roof or some-
thing where who-ever-heard-of-growing and nobody
expects you to anyway

dead says come with me he says(andwhyevernot)into
the round well and see the kitten and the penny and
the jackknife and the rosebug
and you say Sure you
say (like that) sure i'll come with you you say for i
like kittens i do and jackknives i do and pennies i do
and rosebugs i do

1925

10

it really must
be Nice, never to

have no imagination)or never
never to wonder about guys you used to(and them
slim hot queens with dam next to nothing

on)tangoing
(while a feller tries
to hold down the fifty bucks per
job with one foot and rock a

cradle with the other)it Must be
nice never to have no doubts about why you
put the ring
on(and watching her
face grow old and tired to which

you're married and hands get red washing
things and dishes)and to never, never really wonder i
mean about the smell
of babies and how you

know the dam rent's going to and everything and never, never
Never to stand at no window
because i can't sleep(smoking sawdust

cigarettes in the
middle of the night

1926

II

here's a little mouse)and
what does he think about, i
wonder as over this
floor(quietly with

bright eyes)drifts(nobody
can tell because
Nobody knows, or why
jerks Here &, here,
gr(oo)ving the room's Silence)this like
a littlest
poem a
(with wee ears and see?

tail frisks)
(gonE)
'mouse',
We are not the same you and

i, since here's a little he
or is
it It
? (or was something we saw in the mirror)?

therefore we'll kiss;for maybe
what was Disappeared

into ourselves
who (look). ,startled

1926

12

along the brittle treacherous bright streets
of memory comes my heart, singing like
an idiot, whispering like a drunken man

who(at a certain corner, suddenly)meets
the tall policeman of my mind.
awake
being not asleep, elsewhere our dreams began
which now are folded:but the year completes
his life as a forgotten prisoner

—'Içi?'—'Ah non, mon cheri; il fait trop froid'—
they are gone: along these gardens moves a wind bringing
rain and leaves, filling the air with fear
and sweetness. . . . pauses. (Halfwhispering. . . . halfsinging

stirs the always smiling chevaux de bois)

when you were in Paris we met here

1926

13

since feeling is first
who pays any attention
to the syntax of things
will never wholly kiss you;

wholly to be a fool
while Spring is in the world

my blood approves,
and kisses are a better fate
than wisdom
lady i swear by all flowers. Don't cry
—the best gesture of my brain is less than
your eyelids' flutter which says

we are for each other: then
laugh, leaning back in my arms
for life's not a paragraph

And death i think is no parenthesis

1926

14

somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully,mysteriously)her first rose

or if your wish be to close me,i and
my life will shut very beautifully,suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility:whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens;only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody,not even the rain,has such small hands

1931

THORNTON WILDER

1897–

FROM THE WOMAN OF ANDROS

AEGEAN MOODS [1]

BRYNOS rose with the dawn, and it was not many hours later that the morning's work was over. . . . Pamphilus, having helped his father in the warehouse and being in no mood for exercising in the field, started out to walk to the highest point on the island. It was early Spring. A strong wind had blown every cloud from the sky and the sea lay covered with flying white-tipped waves. His garments leapt and billowed about him and his very hair tugged at his head. The gulls themselves, leaning upon the gusts, were caught unawares from time to time and blown with ruffled feathers and scandalized cries towards the violet-blue zenith. Pamphilus led his life with much worry and self-examination and all the exhilaration of wind and sun could not drive from his mind the anxious affection with which he now turned over his thoughts of Chrysis and Philumena and of the four members of his family. He was straying among the rocks and the lizards and the neglected dwarfed olive-trees, when his attention was suddenly caught by an incident on the hillside to his left. A group of boys from the town was engaged in tormenting a young girl. She was retreating backwards up the slope through a disused orchard, shouting haughtily back at her pursuers. The boys' malice had turned to anger; they were retorting hotly and letting fly about her a few harmless stones. Pamphilus strode over to the group and with a gesture ordered the boys down the hill. The girl, her face still flushed and distrustful, stood with her back against a tree and waited for him to come towards her. They looked at one another for a moment in silence. Finally Pamphilus said:

'What is the matter?'

'They're just country fools, that's all. They've never seen anyone before who didn't come from their wretched Brynos.' And then from rage and disappointment she began to cry uncontrollably and despairingly.

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *The Woman of Andros*(N.Y., 1930), 62–81. In a prefatory note, the author says: 'The first part of this novel is based upon the *Andria*, a comedy of Terence who in turn based his work upon two Greek plays, now lost to us, by Menander.' The section used above is one of Wilder's amplifications.

Pamphilus watched her for a time and then asked her where she had been going.

'Nowhere. I was just going for a walk and they followed me from the town. I can't do anything. I can't go anywhere. . . . I wasn't hurting them. I was just going for a walk alone and they called names after me. They followed me way up here; I called names at them and then they started throwing things at me. That's all.'

'I thought I knew everyone on the island,' said Pamphilus thoughtfully, 'but I have never seen you before. Have you been here long?'

'Yes, I've been here almost a year,' she replied, adding indistinctly, '. . . but I hardly ever go out or anything.'

'You hardly ever go out?'

'No,' and she fumbled with her dress and stared at the sea, frowning.

'You should try to know some of the other girls and go out for walks with them.'

This time she turned and looked into his face. 'I don't know any of the other girls. I . . . I live at home and they don't let me go out of the house, except when I go out for walks nights with . . . well, with Mysis.' She continued to be shaken with sobs, but she was adjusting her hair and the folds of her dress. 'I don't see why they have to throw stones at me,' she added.

Pamphilus looked at her in silence, gravely. Presently he collected himself and said: 'There's a big smooth stone over there. Will you go over there and sit down?'

She followed him to the stone, still busy with her hair and drawing her fingers across her eyes and cheeks.

'I have a sister just about your age,' said Pamphilus. 'You can begin by knowing her. You can go for walks with her and then you wouldn't be a stranger any more. Her name is Argo. You'd like one another, I know. My sister is weaving a large mantle for my mother and she'd like you to help her with it and she could help you with yours. Are you making a mantle?'

'Yes.'

'That would be fine,' said Pamphilus, and from that moment Glycerium loved him forever.

'I probably know your father, don't I?' he asked.

'I have no father,' she replied, looking up at him weakly, 'I am the sister of the woman from Andros.'

'Oh . . . oh . . . ,' said Pamphilus, more astonished than he had ever been in his life. 'I know your sister well.'

'Yes,' said Glycerium. Her bright wet eyes strayed over the streaked sea and the blown birds. 'She doesn't want anyone to know that I'm there. All day I stay up on the top of the house or work in the court. Only at night I'm allowed to go for a walk with Mysis. Even now I'm supposed to be in the house, but I broke my promise. She has gone to the market and so I broke my promise. I wanted to see what the island and the sea look like by day. And I wanted to look across to Andros where I come from. But the boys followed me here and threw stones at me and I can never come again.'

Here she fell to weeping even more despairingly than before and Pamphilus could do nothing but say 'Well' several times and 'Yes.' At last he asked her what her name was.

'Glycerium. Chrysis went away from home a long time ago and I was living with my brother and he died and I couldn't live with him any more. And I had nowhere to go or anything, and one day she came back and took me to live with her. That's all.'

'Have you any brothers or sisters?'

'Oh, no.'

'Who is Mysis?'

'Mysis isn't Greek. She is from Alexandria. Chrysis found her. All of them in the house,—she just found them somewhere. That's what she does. Mysis was a slave in the cloth mills. Sometimes she tells me about it.'

Pamphilus still gazed at her, and bringing back her wandering evasive glance from the sea she looked at him from her thin face and enormous hungry eyes. Even a long glance did not now embarrass them.

'Do you want me to ask Chrysis to let you go about the island by day?' he asked.

'If she doesn't want it, we mustn't change her. Chrysis knows best.' She turned away from him and said in a lower voice, dreamy and embittered: 'But what can become of me? Am I always to stay locked up? I am fifteen already. The world is full of wonderful things and people that I might never know about. I know it was

wrong of me to break my promise; but to live for years without ever knowing new people,—to hear them passing the door all day, and to see them a long ways off. Do you think I did very wrong?'

'No.'

'I don't know anyone. I don't know anyone.'

'Well . . . well, you'll come to know my sister. That will be a beginning,' he said, taking her fingertips thoughtfully and wonderingly in his.

'Yes,' she said.

'Everything is beginning over again. I'm your friend. Then my sister. Soon you will have a great many. You'll see.'

'But where will I be five years from now and ten years from now,' she cried, staring about her wildly. 'I don't know. I'm afraid. I'm unhappy. Everyone in the world is happy except me.'

The caress of the hands in first love, and never so simply again, seems to be a sharing of courage, an alliance of two courages against a confusing world. As his hand passed from her hair to her shoulder, she turned to him with parted lips and hesitant eyes, then suddenly bound both her arms about his neck. Into his ears her lips wildly and all but meaninglessly repeated: 'Yes. Yes. Yes. I can't stay there forever. I should never know anyone. I should never see anybody.'

'She will let you come to see me,' he said.

'No,' said Glycerium. 'But I'll come by myself. I mustn't ask her. She would not let me come. She always knows best. And the boys can throw their stones. I don't mind if you're here. What . . . what is your name?'

'My name is Pamphilus, Glycerium.'

'Can . . . can I call you by it?'

It was not at this meeting, nor at their next, but at the third, beneath the dwarfed olive-trees, that those caresses that seemed to be for courage, for pity and for admiration, were turned by Nature to her own uses.

These conversations took place in the early Spring. One afternoon in the late Summer Chrysis slipped out of her house and climbed the hill behind it. She was filled with a great desire to be alone and to think. She looked out over the glittering sea. The winds were moderate on that afternoon and before them the innumerable neat waves hurried towards the shore, running up the sands with a long whisper, or discreetly lifting against the rocks a scarf of foam. In the distance a school of dolphins engaged at their eternal games led the long procession of curving backs. The water was marbled at intervals with the strange fields and roadways of a lighter blue; and behind all she beheld with love the violet profile of Andros. For a time she strayed about upon the crest of the hill, making sure that no one was watching or following her, then descending the further side she sought out her favorite retreats, a point of rock that projected into the sea and a sheltered cove beside it. As she drew near the place, she stumbled forward, almost running, and as she went she murmured soothingly to herself: 'We are almost there. Look, we are almost there now.' At last, climbing over the boulders she let herself down into an amphitheatre of hot dry sand. She started unbinding her hair, but stopped herself abruptly: 'No, no. I must think. I should fall asleep here. I must think first. I shall come back soon,' she muttered to the amphitheatre, and continuing her journey she reached the furthermost heap of stones and sat down. She rested her chin upon her hand and fixing her eyes upon the horizon she waited for the thoughts to come.

The first thing to think about was her new illness. Several times she had been awakened by a wild fluttering in her left side that continued, deepening, until it seemed to her as though a great stake were being driven into her heart. And all the day the sensation would remain with her as of a heavy object burdening the place where this trouble lay. 'Probably . . . very likely,' she said to herself, 'the next time I shall die of it.' At the thought a wave of anticipation passed over her. 'I shall probably die of it,' she repeated cheerfully and became interested in some crayfish in the pool at her feet. She plucked some grasses behind her and started dragging them before the eyes of the indignant animals. 'Nothing in life could make me abandon my sheep, but if I die they will have to fall back on Circumstance as I did. Glycerium, what will become of you? Apraxine, Mysis . . .? There are times when we cannot see one step ahead of us, but five years later we

are eating and sleeping somewhere.' (It was humorous, pretending that one's heart was as hard as that.) 'Yes,' she said aloud, to the pain that trembled within her, 'only come quickly.' She leaned forward still dragging the stems before the shellfish: 'I have lived thirty-five years. I have lived enough. *Stranger, near this spot lies Chrysis, daughter of Arches of Andros: the ewe that has strayed from the flock lives many years in one day and dies at a great age when the sun sets.*' She laughed at the deceptive comforts of self-pity and taking off a sandal put her foot into the water. She drew herself up for a moment, asking herself what there was left in the house for the colony's supper; then recollecting some fish and some salad on the shelf, she returned to her thoughts. She repeated her epitaph, making it a song and emphasizing, for self-mockery, its false sentiment. 'O Andros, O Poseidon, how happy I am. I have no right to be happy like this. . . .'

And she knew as she gazed at the frieze of dolphins still playing in the distance that her mind was avoiding another problem that awaited her. 'I am happy because I love this Pamphilus,—Pamphilus the anxious, Pamphilus the stupid. Why cannot someone tell him that it is not necessary to suffer so about living.' And the low exasperated sigh escaped her, the protest we make at the preposterous, the incorrigible beloved. 'He thinks he is failing. He thinks he is inadequate to life at every turn. Let him rest some day, O ye Olympians, from pitying those who suffer. Let him learn to look the other way. This is something new in the world, this concern for the unfit and the broken. Once he begins that, there's no end to it, only madness. It leads nowhere. That is some god's business.' Whereupon she discovered that she was weeping; but when she had dried her eyes she was still thinking about him. 'Oh, such people are unconscious of their goodness. They strike their foreheads with their hands because of their failure, and yet the rest of us are made glad when we remember their faces. Pamphilus, you are another herald from the future. Some day men will be like you. Do not frown so. . . .'

But these thoughts were very fatiguing. She arose and, returning to the amphitheatre, laid herself down upon the sand. She murmured some fragments from the Euripidean choruses and fell asleep. She had always been an islander and this hot and impersonal sun playing upon a cold and impersonal sea was not unfriendly to her. And now for two hours the monotony of sun and sea played about her and wove itself into the mood of her sleeping mind. As once the gray-eyed Athena stood guarding Ulysses—she leaning upon her spear, her great heart full of concern and of those long divine thoughts that are her property —even so, now, the hour and the place all but gathered itself into a presence and shed its influence upon her. When her eyes finally opened she listened for a time to the calm in her heart. 'Some day,' she said, 'we shall understand why we suffer. I shall be among the shades underground and some wonderful hand, some Alcestis, will touch me and will show me the meaning of all these things; and I shall laugh softly for hours as I do now . . . as I do now.'

She arose and binding up her hair prepared to ascend the slope. But just as she turned to leave the place, there visited her the desire to do something ceremonial, to mark the hour. She stood up straightly and held out her arms to the setting sun: 'If you still hear prayers from the lips of mortals, if our longings touch you at all, hear me now. Give to this Pamphilus some assurance—even some assurance such as you have given to me, unstable though I am—that he is right. And oh! (but I do not say this from vanity or pride, O Apollo,—but perhaps this is weak, this is childish of me, perhaps this renders the whole prayer powerless!) if it is possible, let the thought of me or of something I have said be comforting to him some day. And . . . and . . .'

But her arms fell to her side. The world seemed empty. The sun went down. The sea and sky became suddenly remote and she was left with only the tears in her eyes and the longing in her heart. She closed her lips and turned her head aside. 'I suppose there is no god,' she whispered. 'We must do these things ourselves. We must drag ourselves through life as best we can.'

1930

ROBINSON JEFFERS

1887–

THE TOWER BEYOND TRAGEDY [1]

I

You'd never have thought the Queen was Helen's sister—Troy's burning-flower
from Sparta, the beautiful sea-flower
Cut in clear stone, crowned with the fragrant golden mane, she the ageless, the uncontaminable—
This Clytemnestra was her sister, low-statured, fierce-lipped, not dark nor blond, greenish-gray-eyed,
Sinewed with strength, you saw, under the purple folds of the queen-cloak, but craftier than queenly,
Standing between the gilded wooden porch-pillars, great steps of stone above the steep street,
Awaiting the King.
Most of his men were quartered on the town; he, clanking bronze, with fifty
And certain captives, came to the stair. The Queen's men were a hundred in the street and a hundred
Lining the ramp, eighty on the great flags of the porch; she raising her white arms the spear-butts
Thundered on the stone, and the shields clashed; eight shining clarions
Let fly from the wide window over the entrance the wild-birds of their metal throats, air-cleaving
Over the King come home. He raised his thick burnt-colored beard and smiled; then Clytemnestra,
Gathering the robe, setting the golden-sandaled feet carefully, stone by stone, descended
One half the stair. But one of the captives marred the comeliness of that embrace with a cry
Gull-shrill, blade-sharp, cutting between the purple cloak and the bronze plates, then Clytemnestra:
Who was it? The King answered: A piece of our goods out of the snatch of Asia, a daughter of the king,
So treat her kindly and she may come into her wits again.
Eh, you keep state here my queen.
You've not been the poorer for me.—
In heart, in the widowed chamber, dear, she pale replied, though the slaves
Toiled, the spearmen were faithful. What's her name, the slave-girl's?
AGAMEMNON Come up the stair. They tell me my kinsman's
Lodged himself on you.
CLYTEMNESTRA Your cousin Ægisthus? He

1 The poem is based on the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* of Aeschylus. In a letter to Alberts, 13 May 1929, Jeffers says: 'We turn to the classic stories, I suppose, as to Greek sculpture, for a more ideal and also more normal beauty, because the myths of our own race were never developed, and have been alienated from us.' Alberts, *A Bibliography of . . . Jeffers* (N.Y., 1933),24.

Of the symbolism, Jeffers wrote, n.d., to Louis Adamic: 'In "Tamar" a little and vaguely, in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" and "The Women at Point Sur" consciously and definitely, incest is symbolized racial introversion—man regarding man exclusively—founding his values, desires, his picture of the universe, all on his own humanity. With the thickening of civilization, science reforms the picture of the universe and makes it inhuman, but the values and desires are ever more fixed inward. People living in cities hardly look at or think of anything but each other and each other's amusements and works.' Adamic, *Robinson Jeffers* (Seattle, 1929),28.

Of his metrical intention, Jeffers wrote, n.d., in a letter to Klein: 'People talked about my "free verse" and I never protested, but now I am quite touched that someone has at last discovered the metrical intention in it. . . . Of course you have noticed that (chiefly in my narrative poems) many lines are of irregular length —"free" no doubt, as are many lines in Elizabethan dramatic verse—but it seems to me that there is a metrical pattern, if only, and most irregular, as a background from which to measure departures from the pattern. . . . It seems to me . . . that the counting of stresses is not enough, without some regard to the quantities of the unstressed syllables, to make well-sounding lines. But there I can't propose any rule; it is more a matter of ear and rhythmic sense. A line made up of syllables like "many" or "easy" couldn't balance rhythmically with a line made up of syllables like "storm-bent," "oak-trees," though the number of syllables were the same. . . . Several modern poets have caught Coleridge's and Bridge's thought, or found it out for themselves, but it seems to me that there remains an infinite field of rhythm as yet untouched or hardly touched. English as a language of very diverse and tolerably stable quantities, beside being a strongly accented language, great and new things might be done in it if we had time and ear.' Quoted, Alberts, *A Bibliography of . . . Jeffers*(N.Y., 1933),150–51.

was out of refuge, flits between here and Tiryns.
Dear: the girl's name?
AGAMEMNON Cassandra. We've a hundred or so other captives; besides two hundred
Rotted in the hulls,—they tell odd stories about you and your guest: eh? no matter: —the ships
Ooze pitch and the August road smokes dirt, I smell like an old shepherd's goat-skin, you'll have bath-water?
CLYTEMNESTRA
They're making it hot. Come, my lord. My hands will pour it.
(*They enter the palace.*)
CASSANDRA
In the holy city,
In Troy, when the stone was standing walls and the ash
Was painted and carved wood and pictured curtains,
And those lived that are dead, they had caged a den
Of wolves out of the mountain, and I a maiden
Was led to see them: it stank and snarled,
The smell was the smell here, the eyes were the eyes
Of steep Mycenæ: O God guardian of wanderers
Let me die easily.
So cried Cassandra the daughter of King Priam, treading the steps of the palace at Mycenæ,
Swaying like a drunken woman, drunk with the rolling of the ship, and with tears, and with prophecy.
The stair may yet be seen, among the old stones that are Mycenæ; tall dark Cassandra, the prophetess,
The beautiful girl with whom a God bargained for love, high-nurtured, captive, shamefully stained
With the ship's filth and the sea's, rolled her dark head upon her shoulders like a drunken woman
And trod the great stones of the stair. The captives, she among them, were ranked into a file
On the flagged porch, between the parapet and the spearmen. The people below shouted for the King,
King Agamemnon, returned conqueror, after the ten years of battle and death in Asia.
Then cried Cassandra:
Good spearmen you did not kill my father, not you
Violated my mother with the piercing
That makes no life in the womb, not you defiled
My tall blond brothers with the masculine lust
That strikes its loved one standing,
And leaves him what no man again nor a girl
Ever will gaze upon with the eyes of desire:
Therefore you'll tell me
Whether it's an old custom in the Greek country
The cow goring the bull, break the inner door back
And see in what red water how cloaked your King
Bathes, and my brothers are avenged a little.
One said: Captive be quiet. And she: What have I to be quiet for, you will not believe me.
Such wings my heart spreads when the red runs out of any Greek, I must let the bird fly. O soldiers
He that mishandled me dies! The first, one of your two brute Ajaxes, that threw me backward
On the temple flagstones, a hard bride-bed, I enduring him heard the roofs of my city breaking,
The roar of flames and spearmen: what came to Ajax? Out of a cloud the loud-winged falcon lightning
Came on him shipwrecked, clapped its wings about him, clung to him, the violent flesh burned and the bones
Broke from each other in that passion; and now this one, returned safe, the Queen is his lightning.
While she yet spoke a slave with haggard eyes darted from the door; there were hushed cries and motions
In the inner dark of the great hall. Then the Queen Clytemnestra issued, smiling. She drew
Her cloak up, for the brooch on the left shoulder was broken; the fillet of her hair had come unbound;
Yet now she was queenly at length; and standing at the stair-head spoke: Men of Mycenæ, I have made

Sacrifice for the joy this day has brought to us, the King come home, the enemy fallen, fallen,
In the ashes of Asia. I have made sacrifice. I made the prayer with my own lips, and struck the bullock
With my own hand. The people murmured together, She's not a priestess, the Queen is not a priestess,
What has she done there, what wild sayings
Make wing in the Queen's throat?
CLYTEMNESTRA I have something to tell you. Too much joy is a message-bearer of misery.
A little is good; but come too much and it devours us. Therefore we give of a great harvest
Sheaves to the smiling Gods; and therefore out of a full cup we pour the quarter. No man
Dare take all that God sends him, whom God favors, or destruction
Rides into the house in the last basket. I have been twelve years your shepherdess, I the Queen have ruled you
And I am accountable for you.
CASSANDRA
Why should a man kill his own mother?
The cub of the lion being grown
Will fight with the lion, but neither lion nor wolf
Nor the unclean jackal
Bares tooth against the womb that he dropped out of:
Yet I have seen—
CLYTEMNESTRA
Strike that captive woman with your hand, spearman; and then if the spirit
Of the she-wolf in her will not quiet, with the butt of the spear.
CASSANDRA —the blade in the child's hand
Enter the breast that the child sucked—that woman's—
The left breast that the robe has dropped from, for the brooch is broken,
That very hillock of whiteness, and she crying, she kneeling—
(*The spearman who is nearest* CASSANDRA *covers her mouth with his hand.*)
CLYTEMNESTRA
My sister's beauty entered Troy with too much gladness. They forgot to make sacrifice.
Therefore destruction entered; therefore the daughters of Troy cry out in strange dispersals, and this one
Grief has turned mad. I will not have that horror march under the lion-gate of Mycenæ
That split the citadel of Priam. Therefore I say I have made sacrifice; I have subtracted
A fraction from immoderate joy. For consider, my people,
How unaccountably God has favored the city and brought home the army. King Agamemnon,
My dear, my husband, my lord and yours,
Is yet not such a man as the Gods love; but insolent, fierce, overbearing, whose folly
Brought many times many great evils
On all the heads and fighting hopes of the Greek force. Why, even before the fleet made sail,
While yet it gathered on Bœotian Aulis, this man offended. He slew one of the deer
Of the sacred herd of Artemis, out of pure impudence, hunter's pride that froths in a young boy
Laying nock to string of his first bow: this man, grown, a grave king, leader of the Greeks.
The angry Goddess
Blew therefore from the horn of the Trojan shore storm without end, no slackening, no turn, no slumber
Of the eagle bound to break the oars of the fleet and split the hulls venturing: you know what answer
Calchas the priest gave: his flesh must pay whose hand did the evil—his flesh! mine also. His? My daughter.
They knew that of my three there was one that I loved.
Blameless white maid, my Iphigenia, whose throat the knife,
Whose delicate soft throat the thing that cuts sheep open was drawn across by a priest's hand
And the soft-colored lips drained bloodless
That had clung here—here—Oh!
(*Drawing the robe from her breasts.*)
These feel soft, townsmen; these are red at the tips, they have neither blackened nor turned marble.
King Agamemnon hoped to pillow his black-haired breast upon them, my husband, that mighty conqueror,

Come home with glory. He thought they were still a woman's, they appear a woman's. I'll tell you something.
Since fawn slaughtered for slaughtered fawn evened the debt these that feel soft and warm are wounding ice,
They ache with their hardness . . .
Shall I go on and count the other follies of the King? The insolences to God and man
That brought down plague, and brought Achilles' anger against the army? Yet God brought home a remnant
Against all hope: therefore rejoice.
But lest too much rejoicing slay us I have made sacrifice. A little girl's brought you over the sea.
What could be great enough for safe return? A sheep's death? A bull's? What thank-offering?
All these captives, battered from the ships, bruised with captivity, damaged flesh and forlorn minds?
God requires wholeness in the victim. You dare not think what he demands. I dared. I, I,
Dared.
Men of the Argolis, you that went over the sea and you that guarded the home coasts
And high stone war-belts of the cities: remember how many spearmen these twelve years have called me
Queen, and have loved me, and been faithful, and *remain* faithful. What I bring you is accomplished.

VOICES

King Agamemnon. The King. We will hear the King.

CLYTEMNESTRA What I bring you is accomplished.
Accept it, the cities are at peace, the ways are safe between them, the Gods favor us. Refuse it . . .
You will not refuse it . . .

VOICES The King. We will hear the King. Let us see the King.

CLYTEMNESTRA
You will not refuse it; I have my faithful. They would run, the red rivers,
From the gate and by the graves through every crooked street of the great city, they would run in the pasture
Outside the walls: and on this stair: stemmed at this entrance—

CASSANDRA
Ah, sister, do you also behold visions? I was watching red water—

CLYTEMNESTRA
Be wise, townsmen. As for the King: slaves will bring him to you when he has bathed; you will see him.
The slaves will carry him on a litter, he has learned Asian ways in Asia, too great a ruler
To walk, like common spearmen.

CASSANDRA Who is that, standing behind you, Clytemnestra? What God
Dark in the doorway?

CLYTEMNESTRA Deal *you* with your own demons. You know what I have done, captive. You know
I am holding lions with my two eyes: if I turn and loose them . . .

CASSANDRA It is . . . the King. There! There! Ah!

CLYTEMNESTRA
Or if I should make any move to increase confusion. If I should say for example, Spearman
Kill that woman. I cannot say it this moment; so little as from one spear wound in your body
A trickle would loose them on us.

CASSANDRA Yet he stands behind you. A-ah! I can bear it. I have seen much lately
Worse.

A CAPTAIN (*down the stair; standing forward from his men*) O Queen, there is no man in the world, but one (if that one lives), may ask you to speak
Otherwise than you will. You have spoken in riddles to the people . . .

CASSANDRA Not me! Why will you choose
Me! I submitted to you living, I was forced, you entered me . . .

THE CAPTAIN Also there was a slave here,
Whose eyes stood out from his chalk face, came buzzing from the palace postern gate, whimpering
A horrible thing. I killed him. But the men have heard it.

CASSANDRA You were the king, I was your slave.
Here you see, here, I took the black-haired

breast of the bull, I endured it, I opened my thighs, I suffered
The other thing besides death that you Greeks have to give us . . .
THE CAPTAIN Though this one raves and you are silent,
O Queen, terrible-eyed . . .
CASSANDRA That was the slave's part: but this time . . . dead King . . .
I . . . will . . . not submit. Ah! Ah! No!
If you will steal the body of someone living take your wife's, take that soldier's there—
THE CAPTAIN
I pray you Queen command the captive woman be quieted in a stone chamber; she increases confusion,
The soldiers cannot know some terrible thing may not have happened; your men and the King's grin
Like wolves over the kill, the whole city totters on a sword-edge over sudden—
CASSANDRA (*screaming*)
Drive him off me! Pity, pity!
I have no power; I thought when he was dead another man would use me, your Greek custom,
Not he, he, newly slain.
He is driving me out, he enters, he possesses, this is my last defilement. Ah . . . Greeks . . .
Pity Cassandra!
With the voice the spirit seemed to fly out. She upflung her shining
Arms with the dreadful and sweet gesture of a woman surrendering utterly to force and love,
She in the eyes of the people, like a shameless woman, and fell writhing, and the dead King's soul
Entered her body. In that respite the Queen:
Captain: and you, soldiers, that shift unsoldierly
The weapons that should be upright, at attention, like stiff grass-blades: and you, people of Mycenæ:
While this one maddened, and you muttered, echoing together, and you, soldier, with anxious questions
Increased confusion: who was it that stood firm, who was it that stood silent, who was it that held
With her two eyes the whole city from splitting wide asunder? Your Queen was it? I am your Queen,
And now I will answer what you asked. . . . It is true. . . . He has died. . . . I am the Queen.
My little son Orestes will grow up and govern you.
While she spoke the body of Cassandra
Arose among the shaken spears, taller than the spears, and stood among the waving spears
Stone-quiet, like a high war-tower in a windy pinewood, but deadly to look at, with blind and tyrannous
Eyes; and the Queen: All is accomplished; and if you are wise, people of Mycenæ: quietness is wisdom.
No tumult will call home a dead man out of judgment. The end is the end. Ah, soldiers! Down spears!
What, now Troy's fallen you think there's not a foreigner in the world bronze may quench thirst on? Lion-cubs,
If you will tear each other in the lair happy the wolves, happy the hook-nose vultures.
Call the eaters of carrion? I am your queen, I am speaking to you, you will hear me out before you whistle
The foul beaks from the mountain nest. I tell you I will forget mercy if one man moves now.
I rule you, I.
The Gods have satisfied themselves in this man's death; there shall not one drop of the blood of the city
Be shed further. I say the high Gods are content; as for the lower,
And the great ghost of the King: my slaves will bring out the King's body decently before you
And set it here, in the eyes of the city: spices the ships bring from the south will comfort his spirit;
Mycenæ and Tiryns and the shores will mourn him aloud; sheep will be slain for him; a hundred beeves
Spill their thick blood into the trenches; captives and slaves go down to serve him, yes all these captives
Burn in the ten-day fire with him, unmeasured wine quench it, urned in pure gold the gathered ashes

Rest forever in the sacred rock; honored; a conqueror. . . . Slaves, bring the King out of the house.
Alas my husband! she cried, clutching the brown strands of her hair in both her hands, you have left me
A woman among lions! Ah the King's power, ah the King's victories! Weep for me, Mycenæ!
Widowed of the King!
The people stood amazed, like sheep that snuff at their dead shepherd, some hunter's
Ill-handled arrow having struck him from the covert, all by mischance; he is fallen on the hillside
Between the oak-shadow and the stream; the sun burns his dead face, his staff lies by him, his dog
Licks his hand, whining. So, like sheep, the people
Regarded that dead majesty whom the slaves brought out of the house on a gold bed, and set it
Between the pillars of the porch. His royal robe covered his wounds, there was no stain
Nor discomposure.
Then that captain who had spoken before: O Queen, before the mourning
The punishment: tell us who has done this. She raised her head, and not a woman but a lioness
Blazed at him from her eyes: Dog, she answered, dog of the army,
Who said Speak dog, and you dared speak? Justice is mine. Then he was silent; but Cassandra's
Body standing tall among the spears, over the parapet, her body but not her spirit
Cried with a man's voice: Shall not even the stones of the stair, shall not the stones under the columns
Speak, and the towers of the great wall of my city come down against the murderess? O Mycenæ
I yearned to night and day under the tents by Troy, O Tiryns, O Mycenæ, the door
Of death, and the gate before the door!
CLYTEMNESTRA That woman lies, or the spirit of a lie cries from her. Spearman,
Kill that woman!
But Cassandra's body set its back against the parapet, its face
Terribly fronting the raised knife; and called the soldier by his name, in the King's voice, saying,
Sheathe it; and the knife lowered, and the soldier
Fell on his knees before the King in the woman's body; and the body of Cassandra cried from the parapet:
Horrible things, horrible things this house has witnessed: but here is the most vile, that hundreds
Of spears are idle while the murderess, Clytemnestra the murderess, the snake that came upon me
Naked and bathing, the death that lay with me in bed, the death that has borne children to me,
Stands there unslain.
CLYTEMNESTRA Cowards, if the bawling of that bewildered heifer from Troy fields has frightened you
How did you bear the horns of her brothers? Bring her to me.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA
Let no man doubt, men of Mycenæ,
She has yet the knife hid in her clothes, the very blade that stabbed her husband and the blood is on it.
Look, she handles it now. Look, fellows. The hand under the robe. Slay her not easily, that she-wolf.
Do her no honor with a spear! Ah! If I could find the word, if I could find it,
The name of her, to say husband-slayer and bed-defiler, bitch and wolf-bitch, king's assassin
And beast, beast, beast, all in one breath, in one word: spearmen
You would heap your shields over this woman and crush her slowly, slowly, while she choked and screamed,
No, you would peel her bare and on the pavement for a bride-bed with a spear-butt for husband
Dig the lewd womb until it burst: this for Agamemnon, this for Ægisthus—Agh, cowards of the city
Do you stand quiet?
CLYTEMNESTRA Truly, soldiers,
I think it is he verily. No one could invent the abominable voice, the unspeakable gesture,

The actual raging insolence of the tyrant. I am the hand ridded the Argolis of him.
I here, I killed him, I, justly.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA You have heard her, you have heard her, she has made confession.
Now if she'll show you the knife too—
CLYTEMNESTRA Here.
I kept it for safety.
And, as that beast said, his blood's yet on it.
Look at it, with so little a key I unlocked the kingdom of destruction. Stand firm, till a God
Lead home this ghost to the dark country
So many Greeks have peopled, through his crimes, his violence, his insolence, stand firm till that moment
And through the act of this hand and of this point no man shall suffer anything again forever
Of Agamemnon.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA
I say if you let this woman live, this crime go unpunished, what man among you
Will be safe in his bed? The woman ever envies the man, his strength, his freedom, his loves.
Her envy is like a snake beside him, all his life through, her envy and hatred: law tames that viper:
Law dies if the Queen die not: the viper is free then,
It will be poison in your meat or a knife to bleed you sleeping. They fawn and slaver over us
And then we are slain.
CLYTEMNESTRA (*to one of the slaves that carried the King's body*)
Is my lord Ægisthus
Slain on the way? How long? How long?
(*To the people*) He came, fat with his crimes.
Greek valor broke down Troy, your valor, soldiers, and the brain of Odysseus, the battle-fury of Achilles,
The stubborn strength of Menelaus, the excellence of you all: this dead man here, his pride
Ruined you a hundred times: he helped nowise, he brought bitter destruction: but he gathered your glory
For the cloak of his shoulders. I saw him come up the stair, I saw my child Iphigenia
Killed for his crime; I saw his harlot, the captive woman there, crying out behind him, I saw . . .
I saw . . . I saw . . . how can I speak what crowd of the dead faces of the faithful Greeks,
Your brothers, dead of his crimes; those that perished of plague and those that died in the lost battles
After he had soured the help of Achilles—for another harlot—those dead faces of your brothers,
Some black with the death-blood, many trampled under the hooves of horses, many spotted with pestilence,
Flew all about him, all lamenting, all crying out against him,—horrible—horrible—I gave them
Vengeance; and you freedom.
(*To the slave*) Go up and look, for God's sake, go up to the parapets,
Look toward the mountain. Bring me word quickly, my strength breaks,
How can I hold all the Argolis with my eyes forever? I alone? Hell cannot hold her dead men,
Keep watch there—send me word by others—go, go!
(*To the people*) He came triumphing.
Magnificent, abominable, all in bronze.
I brought him to the bath; my hands undid the armor;
My hands poured out the water;
Dead faces like flies buzzed all about us;
He stripped himself before me, loathsome, unclean, with laughter;
The labors of the Greeks had made him fat, the deaths of the faithful had swelled his belly;
I threw a cloak over him for a net and struck, struck, struck,
Blindly, in the steam of the bath; he bellowed, netted,
And bubbled in the water;
All the stone vault asweat with steam bellowed;
And I undid the net and the beast was dead, and the broad vessel
Stank with his blood.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA
The word! the word!
O burning mind of God,

If ever I gave you bulls teach me that word,
the name for her, the name for her!
A SLAVE (*running from the door; to* CLYTEMNESTRA)
My lord Ægisthus has come down the
mountain, Queen, he approaches the
Lion-gate.
CLYTEMNESTRA It is time. I am tired now.
Meet him and tell him to come in the postern doorway.
THE CAPTAIN (*on the stair: addressing the soldiers and the people below*)
Companions: before God, hating the smell
of crimes, crushes the city into gray ashes
We must make haste. Judge now and act.
For the husband-slayer
I say she must die, let her pay forfeit. And
for the great ghost of the King, let all
these captives,
But chiefly the woman Cassandra, the crier
in a man's voice there, be slain upon his
pyre to quiet him.
He will go down to his dark place and God
will spare the city.
(*To the soldiers above, on the ramp and the porch*)
Comrades: Mycenæ is
greater
Than the Queen of Mycenæ. The King is
dead: let the Queen die: let the city live.
Comrades,
We suffered something in Asia, on the
stranger's coast, laboring for you. We
dreamed of home there
In the bleak wind and drift of battle; we
continued ten years, laboring and dying;
we accomplished
The task set us; we gathered what will make
all the Greek cities glorious, a name
forever;
We shared the spoil, taking our share to enrich Mycenæ. O but our hearts burned
then, O comrades
But our hearts melted when the great oars
moved the ships, the water carried us,
the blue sea-waves
Slid under the black keel; I could not see
them, I was blind with tears, thinking of
Mycenæ.
We have come home. Behold the dear
streets of our longing,
The stones that we desired, the steep ways
of the city and the sacred doorsteps
Reek and steam with pollution, the accursed vessel
Spills a red flood over the floors.
The fountain of it stands there and calls herself the Queen. No queen, no queen, that
husband-slayer,
A common murderess. Comrades join us
We will make clean the city and sweeten it
before God. We will mourn together at
the King's burying,
And a good year will come, we will rejoice
together.
CLYTEMNESTRA Dog, you dare something.
Fling no spear, soldiers,
He has a few fools back of him would attempt the stair if the dog were slain: I
will have no one
Killed out of need.
ONE OF HER MEN ON THE PORCH (*flinging his spear*)
Not at him: at you
Murderess!
But some God, no lover of justice, turned it; the great bronze tip grazing her shoulder
Clanged on the stone behind: the gong of a
change in the dance: now Clytemnestra,
none to help her,
One against all, swayed raging by the
King's corpse, over the golden bed: it is
said that a fire
Stood visibly over her head, mixed in the
hair, pale flames and radiance.
CLYTEMNESTRA Here am I,
thieves, thieves,
Drunkards, here is my breast, a deep white
mark for cowards to aim at: kings have
lain on it.
No spear yet, heroes, heroes?
See, I have no blemish, the arms are white,
the breasts are deep and white, the whole
body is blemishless:
You are tired of your brown wives, draw
lots for me, rabble, thieves, there is loot
here, shake the dice, thieves, a game yet!
One of you will take the bronze and one the
silver,
One the gold, and one me,
Me Clytemnestra a spoil worth having:
Kings have kissed me, this dead dog was a
king, there is another
King at the gate: thieves, thieves, would not
this shining
Breast brighten a sad thief's hut, roll in his
bed's filth
Shiningly? You could teach me to draw
water at the fountain,

A dirty child on the other hip: where are the dice? Let me throw first, if I throw sixes
I choose my masters: closer you rabble, let me smell you.
Don't fear the knife, it has king's blood on it, I keep it for an ornament,
It has shot its sting.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA Fools, fools, strike!
Are your hands dead?
CLYTEMNESTRA You would see all of me
Before you choose whether to kill or dirtily cherish? If what the King's used needs commending
To the eyes of thieves for thieves' use: give me room, give me room, fellows, you'll see it is faultless.
The dress . . . there . . .
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA Fools this wide whore played wife
When she was going about to murder me the King; you, will you let her trip you
With the harlot's trick? Strike! Make an end!
CLYTEMNESTRA I have not my sister's, Troy's flame's beauty, but I have something.
This arm, round, firm, skin without hair, polished like marble: the supple-jointed shoulders:
Men have praised the smooth neck, too,
The strong clear throat over the deep wide breasts . . .
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA She is buying an hour: sheep: it may be Ægisthus
Is at the Lion-gate.
CLYTEMNESTRA If he were here, Ægisthus,
I'd not be the peddler of what trifling charms I have for an hour of life yet. You have wolves' eyes:
Yet there is something kindly about the blue ones there—yours, young soldier, young soldier. . . . The last,
The under-garment? You won't buy me yet? This dead dog,
The King here, never saw me naked: I had the night for nurse: turn his head sideways, the eyes
Are only half shut. If I should touch him, and the blood came, you'd say I had killed him. Nobody, nobody,
Killed him: his pride burst.
Ah, no one has pity!
I can serve well, I have always envied your women, the public ones.
Who takes me first? Tip that burnt log onto the flagstones,
This will be in a king's bed then. Your eyes are wolves' eyes:
So many, so many, so famishing—
I will undo it, handle me not yet, I can undo it . . .
Or I will tear it.
And when it is off me then I will be delivered to you beasts . . .
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA
Then strip her and use her to the bones, wear her through, kill her with it.
CLYTEMNESTRA
When it is torn
You'll say I am lovely: no one has seen before . . .
It won't tear: I'll slit it with this knife—
(ÆGISTHUS, *with many spearmen, issues from the great door.* CLYTEMNESTRA *stabs right and left with the knife; the men are too close to strike her with their long spears.*)
CLYTEMNESTRA
It's time. Cowards, goats, goats. Here! Ægisthus!
ÆGISTHUS
I am here. What have they done?
CLYTEMNESTRA
Nothing: clear the porch: *I* have done something. Drive them on the stair!
Three of them I've scarred for life: a rough bridegroom, the rabble, met a fierce bride. (*She catches up her robe.*)
I held them with my eyes, hours, hours. I am not tired. . . . My lord, my lover:
I have killed a twelve-point stag for a present for you: with my own hands: look, on the golden litter.
You arrive timely.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA Tricked, stabbed, shamed, mocked at, the spoil of a lewd woman, despised
I lie there ready for her back-stairs darling to spit on. Tricked, stabbed, sunk in the drain
And gutter of time. I that thundered the assault, I that mustered the Achæans. Cast out of my kingdom,
Cast out of time, out of the light.
CLYTEMNESTRA One of the captives, dear. It left its poor wits

Over the sea. If it annoys you I'll quiet it.
But post your sentinels.
All's not safe yet, though I am burning with joy now.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA O single-eyed glare of the sky
Flying southwest to the mountain: sun, through a slave's eyes,
My own broken, I see you this last day; my own darkened, no dawn forever; the adulterers
Will swim in your warm gold, day after day; the eyes of the murderess will possess you;
And I have gone away down: knowing that no God in the earth nor sky loves justice; and having tasted
The toad that serves women for heart. From now on may all bridegrooms
Marry them with swords. Those that have borne children
Their sons rape them with spears.
CLYTEMNESTRA More yet, more, more, more, while my hand's in? It's not a little
You easily living lords of the sky require of who'd be like you, who'd take time in the triumph,
Build joy solid. Do we have to do everything? I have killed what I hated:
Kill what I love? The prophetess said it, this dead man says it: my little son, the small soft image
That squirmed in my arms be an avenger? —Love, from your loins
Seed: I begin new, I will be childless for you. The child my son, the child my daughter!
Though I cry I feel nothing.
ÆGISTHUS O strongest spirit in the world. We have dared enough, there is an end to it.
We may pass nature a little, an arrow-flight,
But two shots over the wall you come in a cloud upon the feasting Gods, lightning and madness.
CLYTEMNESTRA
Dear: make them safe. They may try to run away, the children. Set spears to watch them: no harm, no harm,
But stab the nurse if they go near a door. Watch them, keep the gates, order the sentinels,
While *I* make myself queen over this people again. I can do it.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA The sun's gone; that glimmer's
The moon of the dead. The dark God calls me. Yes, God,
I'll come in a moment.
CLYTEMNESTRA (*at the head of the great stairs*)
Soldiers: townsmen: it seems
I am not at the end delivered to you: dogs, for the lion came: the poor brown and spotted women
Will have to suffice you. But is it nothing to have come within handling distance of the clear heaven
This dead man knew when he was young and God endured him? Is it nothing to you?
It is something to me to have felt the fury
And concentration of you: I will not say I am grateful: I am not angry: to be desired
Is wine even to a queen. You bathed me in it, from brow to foot-sole, I had nearly enough.
But now remember that the dream is over. I am the Queen: Mycenæ is my city. If you grin at me
I have spears: also Tiryns and all the country people of the Argolis will come against you and swallow you,
Empty out these ways and walls, stock them with better subjects. A rock nest for new birds here, townsfolk:
You are not essential.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA I hear him calling through the she-wolf's noise, Agamemnon, Agamemnon,
The dark God calls. Some old king in a fable is it?
CLYTEMNESTRA So choose. What choices? To reënter my service
Unpunished, no thought of things past, free of conditions. . .
Or—dine at this man's table, have new mouths made in you to eat bronze with.
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA Who is Agamemnon?
CLYTEMNESTRA
You letting go of the sun: is it dark the land you are running away to?
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA It is dark.
CLYTEMNESTRA Is it sorrowful?
THE BODY OF CASSANDRA
There is nothing but misery.
CLYTEMNESTRA Has any man

ever come back thence? Hear *me*, not the dark God.

THE BODY OF CASSANDRA No man has ever.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Go then, go, go down. You will not choose to follow him, people of the rock-city? No one

Will choose to follow him. I have killed: it is easy: it may be I shall kill nearer than this yet:

But not you, townsfolk, you will give me no cause; I want security; I want service, not blood.

I have been desired of the whole city, publicly; I want service, not lust. You will make no sign

Of your submission; you will not give up your weapons; neither shall your leaders be slain;

And he that flung the spear, I have forgotten his face.

ÆGISTHUS (*entering*) Dearest, they have gone, the nurse and the children,

No one knows where.

CLYTEMNESTRA I am taming this people: send men after them. If any harm comes to the children

Bring me tokens. I will not be in doubt, I will not have the arch fall on us. I dare

What no one dares. I envy a little the dirty mothers of the city. O, O!

Nothing in me hurts. I have animal waters in my eyes, but the spirit is not wounded. Electra and Orestes

Are not to live when they are caught. Bring me sure tokens.

CASSANDRA Who is this woman like a beacon

Lit on the stair, who are these men with dogs' heads?

I have ranged time and seen no sight like this one.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Have you returned, Cassandra? . . . The dead king has gone down to his place, we may bury his leavings.

CASSANDRA

I have witnessed all the wars to be; I am not sorrowful

For one drop from the pail of desolation

Spilt on my father's city; they were carrying it forward

To water the world under the latter starlight.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*to her slaves*)

Take up the poles of the bed; reverently; careful on the stair; give him to the people. (*To the people.*) O soldiers

This was your leader; lay him with honor in the burial-chapel; guard him with the spears of victory;

Mourn him until to-morrow, when the pyre shall be built.

Ah, King of men, sleep, sleep, sleep!

. . . But when shall I? . . . They are after their corpse, like dogs after the butcher's cart. Cleomenes, that captain

With the big voice: Neobulus was the boy who flung the spear and missed. *I* shall not miss

When spear-flinging-time comes. . . . Captive woman, you have seen the future, tell me my fortune.

(ÆGISTHUS *comes from the doorway.*) Ægisthus,

Have your hounds got them?

ÆGISTHUS I've covered every escape with men, they'll not slip through me. But commanded

To bring them here living.

CLYTEMNESTRA That's hard: tigresses don't do it: I have some strength yet: don't speak of it

And I shall do it.

ÆGISTHUS It is a thing not to be done: we'll guard them closely: but mere madness

Lies over the wall of too-much.

CLYTEMNESTRA King of Mycenæ, new-crowned king, who was your mother?

ÆGISTHUS Pelopia.

What mark do you aim at?

CLYTEMNESTRA And your father?

ÆGISTHUS Thyestes.

CLYTEMNESTRA And her father?

ÆGISTHUS The same man, Thyestes.

CLYTEMNESTRA

See, dearest, dearest? They love what men call crime, they have taken her crime to be the king of Mycenæ.

Here is the stone garden of the plants that pass nature: there is no too-much here: the monstrous

Old rocks want monstrous roots to serpent among them. I will have security. I'd burn the standing world

Up to this hour and begin new. You think

I am too much used for a new brood? Ah, lover,
I have fountains in me. I had a fondness for the brown cheek of that boy, the curl of his lip,
The widening blue of the doomed eyes . . . I will be spared nothing. Come in, come in, they'll have news for us.

CASSANDRA

If anywhere in the world
Were a tower with foundations, or a treasure-chamber
With a firm vault, or a walled fortress
That stood on the years, not staggering, not moving
As the mortar were mixed with wine for water
And poppy for lime: they reel, they are all drunkards,
The piled strengths of the world: no pyramid
In bitter Egypt in the desert
But skips at moonrise; no mountain
Over the Black Sea in awful Caucasus
But whirls like a young kid, like a bud of the herd,
Under the hundredth star: I am sick after steadfastness
Watching the world cataractlike
Pour screaming onto steep ruins: for the wings of prophecy
God once my lover give me stone sandals
Planted on stone: he hates me, the God, he will never
Take home the gift of the bridleless horse
The stallion, the unbitted stallion: the bed
Naked to the sky on Mount Ida,
The soft clear grass there,
Be blackened forever, may vipers and Greeks
In that glen breed
Twisting together, where the God
Come golden from the sun
Gave me for a bride-gift prophecy and I took it for a treasure:
I a fool, I a maiden,
I would not let him touch me though love of him maddened me
Till he fed me that poison, till he planted that fire in me,
The girdle flew loose then.

The Queen considered this rock, she gazed on the great stone blocks of Mycenæ's acropolis;
Monstrous they seemed to her, solid they appeared to her, safe rootage for monstrous deeds: Ah fierce one
Who knows who laid them for a snare? What people in the world's dawn breathed on chill air and the vapor
Of their breath seemed stone and has stood and you dream it is established? These also are a foam on the stream
Of the falling of the world: there is nothing to lay hold on:
No crime is a crime, the slaying of the King was a meeting of two bubbles on the lip of the cataract,
One winked . . . and the killing of your children would be nothing: I tell you for a marvel that the earth is a dancer,
The grave dark earth is less quiet than a fool's fingers,
That old one, spinning in the emptiness, blown by no wind in vain circles, light-witted and a dancer.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*entering*)

You are prophesying: prophesy to a purpose, captive woman. My children, the boy and the girl,
Have wandered astray, no one can find them.

CASSANDRA Shall I tell the lioness
Where meat is, or the she-wolf where the lambs wander astray?

CLYTEMNESTRA But look into the darkness
And foam of the world: the boy has great tender blue eyes, brown hair, disdainful lips, you'll know him
By the gold stripe bordering his garments; the girl's eyes are my color, white her clothing—

CASSANDRA Millions
Of shining bubbles burst and wander
On the stream of the world falling . . .

CLYTEMNESTRA These are my children!

CASSANDRA I see mountains, I see no faces.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Tell me and I make you free; conceal it from me and a soldier's spear finishes the matter.

CASSANDRA

I am the spear's bride, I have been waiting, waiting for that ecstasy—

CLYTEMNESTRA (*striking her*) Live then. It will not be unpainful.

(CLYTEMNESTRA *goes in.*)

CASSANDRA

O fair roads north where the land narrows
Over the mountains between the great gulfs,
O that I too with the King's children
Might wander northward hand in hand.
Mine are worse wanderings:
They will shelter on Mount Parnassus,
For me there is no mountain firm enough,
The storms of light beating on the headlands,
The storms of music undermine the mountains, they stumble and fall inward,
Such music the stars
Make in their courses, the vast vibration
Plucks the iron heart of the earth like a harp-string.
Iron and stone core, O stubborn axle of the earth, you also
Dissolving in a little time like salt in water,
What does it matter that I have seen Macedon
Roll all the Greek cities into one billow and strand in Asia
The anthers and bracts of the flower of the world?
That I have seen Egypt and Nineveh
Crumble, and a Latian village
Plant the earth with javelins? It made laws for all men, it dissolved like a cloud.
I have also stood watching a storm of wild swans
Rise from one river-mouth . . . O force of the earth rising,
O fallings of the earth: forever no rest, not forever
From the wave and the trough, from the stream and the slack, from growth and decay: O vulture-
Pinioned, my spirit, one flight yet, last, longest, unguided,
Try into the gulf,
Over Greece, over Rome, you have space O my spirit for the years

II

Are not few of captivity: how many have I stood here
Among the great stones, while the Queen's people
Go in and out of the gate, wearing light linen
For summer and the wet spoils of wild beasts
In the season of storms: and the stars have changed, I have watched
The grievous and unprayed-to constellations
Pile steaming spring and patient autumn
Over the enduring walls: but you over the walls of the world,
Over the unquieted centuries, over the darkness-hearted
Millenniums wailing thinly to be born, O vulture-pinioned
Try into the dark,
Watch the north spawn white bodies and red-gold hair,
Race after race of beastlike warriors; and the cities
Burn, and the cities build, and new lands be uncovered
In the way of the sun to his setting . . . go on farther, what profit
In the wars and the toils? but I say
Where are prosperous people my enemies are, as you pass them O my spirit
Curse Athens for the joy and the marble, curse Corinth
For the wine and the purple, and Syracuse
For the gold and the ships; but Rome, Rome,
With many destructions for the corn and the laws and the javelins, the insolence, the threefold
Abominable power: pass the humble
And the lordships of darkness, but far down
Smite Spain for the blood on the sunset gold, curse France
For the fields abounding and the running rivers, the lights in the cities, the laughter, curse England
For the meat on the tables and the terrible gray ships, for old laws, far dominions, there remains
A mightier to be cursed and a higher for malediction
When America has eaten Europe and takes tribute of Asia, when the ends of the world grow aware of each other
And are dogs in one kennel, they will tear
The master of the hunt with the mouths of the pack: new fallings, new risings, O winged one
No end of the fallings and risings? An end shall be surely,
Though unnatural things are accomplished, they breathe in the sea's depth,
They swim in the air, they bridle the cloud-leaper lightning to carry their messages:

Though the eagles of the east and the west
and the falcons of the north were not quieted, you have seen a white cloth
Cover the lands from the north and the eyes of the lands and the claws of the hunters,
The mouths of the hungry with snow
Were filled, and their claws
Took hold upon ice in the pasture, a morsel of ice was their catch in the rivers,
That pure white quietness
Waits on the heads of the mountains, not sleep but death, will the fire
Of burnt cities and ships in that year warm you my enemies? The frost, the old frost,
Like a cat with a broken-winged bird it will play with you,
It will nip and let go; you will say it is gone, but the next
Season it increases: O clean, clean,
White and most clean, colorless quietness,
Without trace, without trail, without stain in the garment, drawn down
From the poles to the girdle. . . . I have known one Godhead
To my sore hurt: I am growing to come to another: O grave and kindly
Last of the lords of the earth, I pray you lead my substance
Speedily into another shape, make me grass, Death, make me stone,
Make me air to wander free between the stars and the peaks; but cut humanity
Out of my being, that is the wound that festers in me,
Not captivity, not my enemies: you will heal the earth also,
Death, in your time; but speedily Cassandra.
You rock-fleas hopping in the clefts of Mycenæ,
Suckers of blood, you carrying the scepter farther, Persian, Emathian,
Roman and Mongol and American, and you half-gods
Indian and Syrian and the third, emperors of peace, I have seen on what stage
You sing the little tragedy; the column of the ice that was before on one side flanks it,
The column of the ice to come closes it up on the other: audience nor author
I have never seen yet: I have heard the silence: it is I Cassandra,
Eight years the bitter watch-dog of these doors,
Have watched a vision
And now approach to my end. Eight years have I seen the phantoms
Walk up and down this stair; and the rocks groan in the night, the great stones move when no man sees them.
And I have forgotten the fine ashlar masonry of the courts of my father. I am not Cassandra
But a counter of sunrises, permitted to live because I am crying to die; three thousand,
Pale and red, have flowed over the towers in the wall since I was here watching; the deep east widens,
The cold wind blows, the deep earth sighs, the dim gray finger of light crooks at the morning star.
The palace feasted late and sleeps with its locked doors; the last drunkard from the alleys of the city
Long has reeled home. Whose foot is this then, what phantom
Toils on the stair?

A VOICE BELOW Is someone watching above? Good sentinel I am only a girl beggar.
I would sit on the stair and hold my bowl.

CASSANDRA I here eight years have begged for a thing and not received it.

THE VOICE
You are not a sentinel? You have been asking some great boon, out of all reason.

CASSANDRA No: what the meanest Beggar disdains to take.

THE GIRL BEGGAR Beggars disdain nothing: what is it that they refuse you?

CASSANDRA What's given Even to the sheep and to the bullock.

THE GIRL Men give them salt, grass they find out for themselves.

CASSANDRA Men give them
The gift that you though a beggar have brought down from the north to give my mistress.

THE GIRL You speak riddles.
I am starving, a crust is my desire.

CASSANDRA Your voice is young though winds have hoarsened it, your body appears
Flexible under the rags: have you some hidden sickness, the young men will not give you silver?

THE GIRL
I have a sickness: I will hide it until I am cured. You are not a Greek woman?
CASSANDRA But you
Born in Mycenæ return home. And you bring gifts from Phocis: for my once master who's dead
Vengeance; and for my mistress peace, for my master the King peace, and, by-shot of the doom's day,
Peace for me also. But I have prayed for it.
THE GIRL I know you, I knew you before you spoke to me, captive woman,
And I unarmed will kill you with my hands if you babble prophecies.
That peace you have prayed for, I will bring it to you
If you utter warnings.
CASSANDRA To-day I shall have peace, you cannot tempt me, daughter of the Queen, Electra.
Eight years ago I watched you and your brother going north to Phocis: the Queen saw knowledge of you
Move in my eyes. I would not tell her where you were when she commanded me: I will not betray you
To-day either: it is not doleful to me
To see before I die generations of destruction enter the doors of Agamemnon.
Where is your brother?
ELECTRA Prophetess: you see all: I will tell you nothing.
CASSANDRA He has well chosen his ambush,
It is true Ægisthus passes under that house to-day, to hunt in the mountain.
ELECTRA Now I remember
Your name, Cassandra.
CASSANDRA Hush: the gray has turned yellow, the standing beacons
Stream up from the east; they stir there in the palace; strange, is it not, the dawn of one's last day's
Like all the others? Your brother would be fortunate if to-day were also
The last of his.
ELECTRA He will endure his destinies; and Cassandra hers; and Electra mine.
He has been for years like one tortured with fire: this day will quench it.
CASSANDRA They are opening the gates: beg now.
To your trade, beggar-woman.
THE PORTER (*coming out*) Eh, pillar of miseries,
You still on guard there? Like a mare in a tight stall, never lying down. What's this then?
A second ragged one? This at least can bend in the middle and sit on a stone.
ELECTRA Dear gentleman
I am not used to it, my father is dead and hunger forces me to beg, a crust or a penny.
THE PORTER
This tall one's licensed in a manner. I think they'll not let two bundles of rag
Camp on the stair: but if you'd come to the back door and please me nicely: with a little washing
It'd do for a pastime.
ELECTRA I was reared gently: I will sit here, the King will see me,
And none mishandle me.
THE PORTER I bear no blame for you.
I have not seen you: you came after the gates were opened. (*He goes in.*)
CASSANDRA
O blossom of fire, bitter to men,
Watchdog of the woeful days,
How many sleepers
Bathing in peace, dreaming themselves delight,
All over the city, all over the Argolid plain, all over the dark earth,
(Not me, a deeper draught of peace
And darker waters alone may wash me)
Do you, terrible star, star without pity,
Wolf of the east, waken to misery.
To the wants unaccomplished, to the eating desires,
To unanswered love, to hunger, to the hard edges
And mold of reality, to the whips of their masters.
They had flown away home to the happy darkness,
They were safe until sunrise.
(KING ÆGISTHUS, *with his retinue, comes from the great door.*)
ÆGISTHUS
Even here, in the midst of the city, the early day
Has a clear savor. (*To* ELECTRA) What, are you miserable, holding the bowl out?
We'll hear the lark to-day in the wide hills

and smell the mountain. I'd share happiness with you.
What's your best wish, girl beggar?
ELECTRA It is covered, my lord, how should a beggar
Know what to wish for beyond a crust and a dark corner and a little kindness?
ÆGISTHUS Why do you tremble?
ELECTRA
I was reared gently; my father is dead.
ÆGISTHUS Stand up: will you take service here in the house? What country
Bred you gently and proved ungentle to you?
ELECTRA I have wandered north from the Eurotas, my lord,
Begging at farmsteads.
ÆGISTHUS The Queen's countrywoman then, she'll use you kindly. She'll be coming
In a moment, then I'll speak for you.—Did you bid them yoke the roans into my chariot, Menalcas,
The two from Orchomenus?
ONE OF THE RETINUE Yesterday evening, my lord,
I sent to the stable.
ÆGISTHUS They cost a pretty penny, we'll see how they carry it.—She's coming: hold up your head, girl.
(CLYTEMNESTRA, *with two serving-women, comes from the door.*)
CLYTEMNESTRA
Good hunt, dearest. Here's a long idle day for me to look to. Kill early, come home early.
ÆGISTHUS
There's a poor creature on the step who's been reared nicely and slipped into misery. I said you'd feed her,
And maybe find her a service. Farewell, sweet one.
CLYTEMNESTRA Where did she come from? How long have you been here?
ÆGISTHUS She says she has begged her way up from Sparta. The horses are stamping on the cobbles, good-by, good-by.
(*He goes down the stair with his huntsmen.*)
CLYTEMNESTRA Good-by, dearest. Well. Let me see your face.
ELECTRA It is filthy to look at. I am ashamed.
CLYTEMNESTRA (*to one of her serving-women*) Leucippe do you think this is a gayety of my lord's, he's not used to be so kindly to beggars?
—Let me see your face.
LEUCIPPE She is very dirty, my lady. It is possible one of the house-boys . . .
CLYTEMNESTRA I say draw that rag back, let me see your face. I'd have him whipped then.
ELECTRA It was only in hope that someone would put a crust in the bowl, your majesty, for I am starving. I didn't think your majesty would see me.
CLYTEMNESTRA Draw back the rag.
ELECTRA I am very faint and starving but I will go down; I am ashamed.
CLYTEMNESTRA Stop her, Corinna. Fetch the porter, Leucippe. You will not go so easily. (ELECTRA *sinks down on the steps and lies prone, her head covered.*) I am aging out of queenship indeed, when even the beggars refuse my bidding. (LEUCIPPE *comes in with the porter.*) You have a dirty stair, porter. How long has this been here?
THE PORTER O my lady it has crept up since I opened the doors, it was not here when I opened the doors.
CLYTEMNESTRA Lift it up and uncover its face. What is that cry in the city? Stop: silent: I heard a cry . . .
Prophetess, your nostrils move like a dog's, what is that shouting? . . .
I have grown weak, I am exhausted, things frighten me . . .
Tell her to be gone, Leucippe, I don't wish to see her, I don't wish to see her.
(ELECTRA *rises.*)
ELECTRA Ah, Queen, I will show you my face.
CLYTEMNESTRA No . . . no . . . be gone.
ELECTRA (*uncovering her face*)
Mother: I have come home: I am humbled. This house keeps a dark welcome
For those coming home out of far countries.
CLYTEMNESTRA I won't look: how could I know anyone? I am old and shaking.
He said, Over the wall beyond nature
Lightning, and the laughter of the Gods. I did not cross it, I will not kill what I gave life to.
Whoever you are, go, go, let me grow downward to the grave quietly now.
ELECTRA I cannot

Go: I have no other refuge. Mother! Will you not kiss me, will you not take me into the house,
Your child once, long a wanderer? Electra my name. I have begged my way from Phocis, my brother is dead there,
Who used to care for me.
CLYTEMNESTRA Who is dead, who?
ELECTRA My brother Orestes,
Killed in a court quarrel.
CLYTEMNESTRA (*weeping*) Oh, you lie! The widening blue blue eyes,
The little voice of the child . . . Liar.
ELECTRA It is true. I have wept long, on every mountain. You, mother,
Have only begun weeping. Far off, in a far country, no fit burial . . .
CLYTEMNESTRA And do you bringing
Bitterness . . . or lies . . . look for a welcome? I have only loved two:
The priest killed my daughter for a lamb on a stone and now you say the boy too . . . dead, dead?
The world's full of it, a shoreless lake of lies and floating rumors . . . pack up your wares, peddler,
Too false for a queen. Why, no, if I believed you . . . Beast, treacherous beast, that shouting comes nearer,
What's in the City?
ELECTRA I am a stranger, I know nothing of the city, I know only
My mother hates me, and Orestes my brother
Died pitifully, far off.
CLYTEMNESTRA Too many things, too many things call me, what shall I do? Electra,
Electra help me. This comes of living softly, I had a lion's strength
Once.
ELECTRA Me for help? I am utterly helpless, I had help in my brother and he is dead in Phocis.
Give me refuge: but each of us two must weep for herself, one sorrow. An end of the world were on us
What would it matter to us weeping? Do you remember him,
Mother, mother?
CLYTEMNESTRA I have dared too much: never dare anything, Electra, the ache is afterward,
At the hour it hurts nothing. Prophetess, you lied.
You said he would come with vengeance on me: but now he is dead, this girl says: and because he was lovely, blue-eyed,
And born in a most unhappy house I will believe it. But the world's fogged with the breath of liars,
And if she has laid a net for me . . .
I'll call up the old lioness lives yet in my body, I have dared, I have dared, and tooth and talon
Carve a way through. Lie to me?
ELECTRA Have I endured for months, with feet bleeding, among the mountains,
Between the great gulfs alone and starving, to bring you a lie now? I know the worst of you, I looked for the worst,
Mother, mother, and have expected nothing but to die of this home-coming: but Orestes
Has entered the cave before; he is gathered up in a lonely mountain quietness, he is guarded from angers
In the tough cloud that spears fall back from.
CLYTEMNESTRA Was he still beautiful? The brown mothers down in the city
Keep their brats about them; what it is to live high! Oh!
Tell them down there, tell them in Tiryns,
Tell them in Sparta,
That water drips through the Queen's fingers and trickles down her wrists, for the boy, for the boy
Born of her body, whom she, fool, fool, fool,
Drove out of the world. Electra,
Make peace with me.
Oh, Oh, Oh!
I have labored violently all the days of my life for nothing—nothing—worse than anything—this death
Was a thing I wished. See how they make fools of us.
Amusement for them, to watch us labor after the thing that will tear us in pieces. . . . Well, strength's good.
I am the Queen; I will gather up my fragments
And not go mad now.
ELECTRA Mother, what are the men

With spears gathering at the stair's foot? Not of Mycenæ by their armor, have you mercenaries
Wanting pay? Do they serve . . . Ægisthus?
CLYTEMNESTRA What men? I seem not to know . . .
Who has laid a net for me, what fool
For me, me? Porter, by me.
Leucippe, my guards; into the house, rouse them. I am sorry for him,
I am best in storm. You, Electra?
The death you'll die, my daughter. Guards, out! Was it a lie? No matter, no matter, no matter,
Here's peace. Spears, out, out! They bungled the job making me a woman. Here's youth come back to me,
And all the days of gladness.
LEUCIPPE (*running back from the door*) O, Queen, strangers . . .
ORESTES (*a sword in his hand, with spearmen following, comes from the door*) Where is that woman
The Gods utterly hate?
ELECTRA Brother: let her not speak, kill quickly. Is the other one safe now?
ORESTES That dog
Fell under his chariot, we made sure of him between the wheels and the hooves, squealing. Now for this one.
CLYTEMNESTRA
Wait. I was weeping, Electra will tell you, my hands are wet still,
For your blue eyes that death had closed she said away up in Phocis. I die now, justly or not
Is out of the story, before I die I'd tell you —wait, child, wait. Did I quiver
Or pale at the blade? I say, caught in a net, netted in by my enemies, my husband murdered,
Myself to die, I am joyful knowing she lied, you live, the only creature
Under all the spread and arch of daylight
That I love, lives.
ELECTRA The great fangs drawn fear craftiness now, kill quickly.
CLYTEMNESTRA As for her, the wife of the shepherd
Suckled her, but you
These very breasts nourished: rather one of your northern spearmen do what's needful; not you
Draw blood where you drew milk. The Gods endure much, but beware them.
ORESTES This, a God in his temple
Openly commanded.
CLYTEMNESTRA Ah, child, child, who has mistaught you and who has betrayed you? What voice had the God?
How was it different from a man's and did you see him? Who sent the priest presents? They fool us,
And the Gods let them. No doubt also the envious King of Phocis has lent you counsel as he lent you
Men: let one of them do it. Life's not jewel enough
That I should plead for it: this much I pray, for your sake, not with your hand, not with your hand, or the memory
Will so mother you, so glue to you, so embracing you,
Not the deep sea's green day, no cleft of a rock in the bed of the deep sea, no ocean of darkness
Outside the stars, will hide nor wash you. What is it to me that I have rejoiced knowing you alive,
O child, O precious to me, O alone loved, if now dying by my manner of death
I make nightmare the heir, nightmare, horror, in all I have of you;
And you haunted forever, never to sleep dreamless again, never to see blue cloth
But the red runs over it; fugitive of dreams, madman at length, the memory of a scream following you houndlike,
Inherit Mycenæ? Child, for this has not been done before, there is no old fable, no whisper
Out of the foundation, among the people that were before our people, no echo has ever
Moved among these most ancient stones, the monsters here, nor stirred under any mountain, nor fluttered
Under any sky, of a man slaying his mother. Sons have killed fathers—
ORESTES And a woman her son's father—
CLYTEMNESTRA
O many times: and these old stones have seen horrors: a house of madness and blood
I married into: and worse was done on this rock among the older people before: but not this,

Not the son his mother; this the silent ones,
The old hard ones, the great bearers of burden have not seen yet,
Nor shall, to-day nor yet to-morrow, nor ever in the world. Let her do it, it is not unnatural,
The daughter the mother; the little liar there,
Electra do it. Lend her the blade.

ELECTRA Brother though the great house is silent hark the city,
That buzzes like the hive one has dipped a wand in. End this. Then look to our safety.

ORESTES Dip in my sword
Into my fountain? Did I truly, little and helpless,
Lie in the arms, feed on the breast there?

ELECTRA Another, a greater, lay in them, another kissed the breast there,
You forget easily, the breaker of Asia, the over-shadower, the great memory, under whose greatness
We have hung like hawks under a storm, from the beginning,—and he when this poison destroyed him
Was given no room to plead in.

ORESTES Dip my wand into my fountain?

CLYTEMNESTRA Men do not kill the meanest
Without defence heard—

ELECTRA Him—Agamemnon?

CLYTEMNESTRA But you, O my son, my son,
Molded in me, made of me, made of my flesh, built with my blood, fed with my milk, my child
I here, I and no other, labored to bear, groaning—

ELECTRA This that makes beastlike lamentation
Hunted us to slay us, we starving in the thicket above the stream three days and nights watched always
Her hunters with spears beating the field: prophetess was it for love that she looked after us?

CASSANDRA That love
The King had tasted; that was her love.

ELECTRA And mourning for our father on the mountain we judged her;
And the Gods condemned her, what more, what more? Strike.

ORESTES If they'd give me time, the pack there—how can I think,
And all the whelps of Mycenæ yelling at the stair-foot? Decision: a thing to be decided:
The arm's lame, dip in, dip in? Shut your mouths, rabble.

CLYTEMNESTRA There is one thing no man can do.

ORESTES What, enter his fountain?

ELECTRA
O coward!

ORESTES I will be passive, I'm blunted. She's not this fellow's mother.

ELECTRA O spearman, spearman, do it!
One stroke: it is just.

THE SPEARMAN As for me, my lord . . .

CLYTEMNESTRA (*calling loudly*) Help, help, men of Mycenæ, to your Queen. Break them.
Rush the stair, there are only ten hold it. Up, up, kill.

ORESTES I will kill.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*falling on her knees*) Child,
Spare me, let me live! Child! Ai! . . .

ELECTRA You have done well.

ORESTES I have done . . . I have done . . .
Who ever saw such a flow . . . was I made out of this, I'm not red, am I?
See, father?
It was someone else did it but I told him to. Drink, drink, dog. Drink dog.
He reaches up a tongue between the stones, lapping it. So thirsty old dog, uh?
Rich and sticky.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*raising herself a little*) Sleep . . . for me . . . yes.
Not you . . . any more . . . Orestes . . . I shall be there. You will beg death . . . vainly as I have begged . . . life. Ah . . . beast that I unkennelled! (*She dies.*)

ORESTES (*crouching by her*) Ooh . . . ooh . . .

ELECTRA
The face is lean and terrible. Orestes!
They are fighting on the stair. Man yourself. Come. Pick up the sword.
Let her be, two of ours are down, they yield on the stair. Stand up, speak or fight, speak to the people

Or we go where she is.
ORESTES There's a red and sticky sky that you can touch here.
And though it's unpleasant we are at peace.
ELECTRA (*catching up the sword*) Agamemnon failed here. Not in me. Hear, Mycenæans.
I am Agamemnon's daughter, we have avenged him, the crime's paid utterly.
You have not forgotten the great King—what, in eight years? I am Electra, I am his daughter.
My brother is Orestes. My brother is your king and has killed his murderers. The dog Ægisthus is dead,
And the Queen is dead: the city is at peace.
ORESTES (*standing up*) Must I dip my wand into my fountain, give it to me.
The male plaything.
(*He catches* ELECTRA'S *arm, snatching at the sword.*)
ELECTRA For what? Be quiet, they have heard me.
ORESTES You said I must do it, I will do it.
ELECTRA It is done!
Brother, brother? (ORESTES *takes the sword from her by force.*) O Mycenæ
With this sword he did justice, he let it fall, he has retaken it,
He is your King.
ORESTES Whom must I pierce, the girl that plotted with me in the mountain? There was someone to kill . . .
Sweet Electra?
ELECTRA It is done, it is finished!
CASSANDRA The nearest, the most loved, her, truly. Strike!—Electra,
My father has wanted vengeance longer.
THE PEOPLE BELOW Orestes, Orestes!
ELECTRA (*pointing to* CASSANDRA) Her —your mother—she killed him.
ORESTES (*turning and striking*) How tall you have grown, mother.
CASSANDRA (*falling*) I . . . waited long for it . . .
ORESTES
I have killed my mother and my mother—two mothers—see, there they lie—I have gone home twice. You put it in
And the flesh yields to it . . . (*He goes down the stair.*) Now, to find her again
All through the forest . . .
ELECTRA Let him pass, Mycenæans. Avoid his sword. Let him pass, pass. The madness of the house
Perches on him.
A LEADER OF THE MYCENÆANS Daughter of Agamemnon,
You with constancy and force
In the issueless thing have found an issue. Now it is for us the kingless city
To find a ruler. Rest in the house. As for the young man,
Though he has done justice, and no hand in Mycenæ is raised against him, for him there is no issue.
We let him go on; and if he does not slay himself with the red sword he will die in the mountain.
With us be peace. Rest in the house, daughter of Agamemnon. The old madness, with your brother,
Go out of our gates.
ELECTRA A house to rest in! . . . Gather up the dead: I will go in; I have learned strength.

III

They carried the dead down the great stair; the slaves with pails of water and sand scoured the dark stains.
The people meeting in another place to settle the troubled city the stair was left vacant,
The porch untrampled, and about twilight one of the great stones: The world is younger than we are,
Yet now drawing to an end, now that the seasons falter. Then another, that had been spared the blood-bath:
What way do they falter?—There fell warm rain, the first answered, in the midst of summer. A little afterward
Cold rain came down; and sand was rubbed over me as when the winds blow. This in the midst of summer.
—I did not feel it, said the second sleepily. And a third: The noisy and very mobile creatures
Will be quieted long before the world's end.—What creatures?—The active ones, that have two ends let downward,
A mongrel race, mixed of soft stone with fugitive water. The night deepened, the dull old stones
Droned at each other, the summer stars wheeled over above them. Before dawn the son of Agamemnon

Came to the stair-foot in the darkness.
ORESTES O stones of the house:
I entreat hardness: I did not live with you
Long enough in my youth. . . . I will go up to where I killed her. . . . We must face things down, mother,
Or they'd devour us. . . . Nobody? . . . Even the stones have been scrubbed. A keen housekeeper, sweet Electra.
. . . It would be childish to forget it; the woman has certainly been killed, and I think it was I
Her son did it. Something not done before in the world. Here is the penalty:
You gather up all your forces to the act, and afterward
Silence, no voice, no ghost, vacancy, but all's not expended. Those powers want bitter action. No object.
Deeds are too easy. Our victims are too fragile, they ought to have thousands of lives, you strike out once only
The sky breaks like a bubble. . . . No, wife of Ægisthus,—Why should I mask it?—mother, my mother,
The one soft fiber that went mad yesterday's
Burnt out of me now, there is nothing you could touch if you should come; but you have no power, you dead
Are a weak people. This is the very spot: I was here, she here: and I walk over it not trembling,
Over the scrubbed stones to the door. (*He knocks with the sword-hilt.*) They sleep well. But my sister having all her desire
Better than any. (*He knocks again.*)
THE PORTER (*through the door*) Who is there?
ORESTES The owner of the house. Orestes.
THE PORTER Go away, drunkard.
ORESTES Shall I tell my servants to break in the door and whip the porter?
THE PORTER Oh, Oh! You men from Phocis, stand by me while I speak to the door. (*Having opened the door, holding a torch.*) Is it you truly, my lord? We thought, we thought . . . we pray you to enter the house, my lord Orestes.
ORESTES You are to waken my sister.
I'll speak with her here.
ELECTRA (*at the door*) Oh! You are safe, you are well! Did you think I could be sleeping? But it is true,
I have slept soundly. Come, come.
ORESTES A fellow in the forest
Told me you'd had the stone scrubbed . . . I mean, that you'd entered the house, received as Agamemnon's daughter
In the honor of the city. So I free to go traveling have come with—what's the word, Electra?—farewell.
Have come to bid you farewell.
ELECTRA It means —you are going somewhere? Come into the house, Orestes, tell me . . .
ORESTES
The cape's rounded. I have not shipwrecked.
ELECTRA Around the rock we have passed safely is the hall of this house,
The throne in the hall, the shining lordship of Mycenæ.
ORESTES No: the open world, the sea and its wonders.
You thought the oars raked the headland in the great storm—what, for Mycenæ?
ELECTRA Not meanest of the Greek cities:
Whose king captained the world into Asia. Have you suddenly become . . . a God, brother, to over-vault
Agamemnon's royalty? O come in, come in. I am cold, cold. I pray you.
ORESTES Fetch a cloak, porter.
If I have outgrown the city a little—I have earned it. Did you notice, Electra, she caught at the sword
As the point entered: the palm of her right hand was slashed to the bone before the mercy of the point
Slept in her breast: the laid-open palm it was that undermined me . . . Oh, the cloak. It's a blond night,
We'll walk on the stones: no chill, the stars are mellow. If I dare remember
Yesterday . . . because I have conquered, the soft fiber's burnt out.
ELECTRA You have conquered: possess: enter the house,
Take up the royalty.
ORESTES You were in my vision to-night in the forest, Electra, I thought I embraced you
More than brotherwise . . . possessed, you call it . . . entered the fountain—
ELECTRA Oh, hush.
Therefore you would not kill her!

ORESTES
I killed. It is foolish to darken things with words. I was here, she there, screaming. Who if not I?
ELECTRA
The hidden reason: the bitter kernel of your mind that has made you mad: I that learned strength
Yesterday, I have no fear.
ORESTES Fear? The city is friendly and took you home with honor, they'll pay
Phocis his wage, you will be quiet.
ELECTRA Are you resolved to understand nothing, Orestes?
I am not Agamemnon, only his daughter. You are Agamemnon. Beggars and the sons of beggars
May wander at will over the world, but Agamemnon has his honor and high Mycenæ
Is not to be cast.
ORESTES Mycenæ for a ship: who will buy kingdom
And sell me a ship with oars?
ELECTRA Dear: listen. Come to the parapet where it hangs over the night:
The ears at the door hinder me. Now, let the arrow-eyed stars hear, the night, not men, as for the Gods
No one can know them, whether they be angry or pleased, tall and terrible, standing apart,
When they make signs out of the darkness. . . . I cannot tell you. . . . You will stay here, brother?
ORESTES I'll go
To the edge and over it. Sweet sister, if you've got a message for them, the dark ones?
ELECTRA You do not mean
Death; but a wandering; what does it matter what you mean? I know two ways and one will quiet you.
You shall choose either.
ORESTES But I am quiet. It is more regular than a sleeping child's: be untroubled,
Yours burns, it is you trembling.
ELECTRA Should I not tremble? It is only a little to offer,
But all that I have.
ORESTES Offer?
ELECTRA It is accomplished: my father is avenged: the fates and the body of Electra
Are nothing. But for Agamemnon to rule in Mycenæ: that is not nothing. O my brother
You are Agamemnon: rule: take all you will: nothing is denied you. The Gods have redressed evil
And clamped the balance.
ORESTES No doubt they have done what they desired.
ELECTRA And yours, yours? I will not suffer her
Justly punished to dog you over the end of the world. Your desire? Speak it openly, Orestes.
She is to be conquered: if her ghost were present on the stones—let it hear you. I will make war on her
With my life, or with my body.
ORESTES What strange martyrdom, Electra, what madness for sacrifice
Makes your eyes burn like two fires on a watch-tower, though the night darkens?
ELECTRA What you want you shall have:
And rule in Mycenæ. Nothing, nothing is denied you. If I knew which of the two choices
Would quiet you, I would do and not speak, not ask you. Tell me, tell me. Must I bear all the burden,
I weaker, and a woman? You and I were two hawks quartering the field for living flesh, Orestes,
Under the storm of the memory
Of Agamemnon: we struck: we tore the prey, that dog and that woman. Suddenly since yesterday
You have shot up over me and left me,
You are Agamemnon, you are the storm of the living presence, the very King, and I, lost wings
Under the storm, would die for you. . . . You do not speak yet? . . . Mine to say it all? . . . You know me a maiden, Orestes,
You have always been with me, no man has even touched my cheek. It is not easy for one unmarried
And chaste, to name both choices. The first is easy. That terrible dream in the forest: if fear of desire
Drives you away: it is easy for me not to be. I never have known

Sweetness in life: all my young days were given—
ORESTES I thought to be silent was better,
And understand you: afterwards I'll speak.
ELECTRA —to the noise of blood crying for blood, a crime to be punished,
A house to be emptied: these things are done: and now I am lonely, and what becomes of me is not important.
There's water, and there are points and edges, pain's only a moment: I'd do it and not speak, but nobody knows
Whether it would give you peace or madden you again, I'd not be leagued with that bad woman against you,
And these great walls sit by the crater, terrible desires blow through them. O brother, I'll never blame you,
I share the motherhood and the fatherhood, I can conceive the madness, if you desire too near
The fountain: tell me: I also love *you*: not that way, but enough to suffer. What needs to be done
To make peace for you, tell me. I shall so gladly die to make it for you: or so gladly yield you
What you know is maiden. You are the King; have all your will: only remain in steep Mycenæ,
In the honor of our father. Not yet: do not speak yet. You have said it is not
Remorse drives you away: monsters require monsters, to have let her live a moment longer
Would have been the crime: therefore it cannot be but desire drives you: or the fear of desire: dearest,
It is known horror unlocks the heart, a shower of things hidden: if that which happened yesterday unmasked
A beautiful brother's love and showed more awful eyes in it: all that our Gods require is courage.
Let me see the face, let the eyes pierce me. What, dearest? Here in the stiff cloth of the sacred darkness
Fold over fold hidden, above the sleeping city,
By the great stones of the door, under the little golden falcons that swarm before dawn up yonder,
In the silence . . . must I dare to woo you,
I whom man never wooed? to let my hand glide under the cloak. . . . O you will stay! these arms
Making so soft and white a bond around you . . . I also begin to love—that way. Orestes,
Feeling the hot hard flesh move under the loose cloth, shudder against me. . . . Ah, your mouth, Ah,
The burning—kiss me—
ORESTES We shall never ascend this mountain. So it might come true: we have to be tough against them,
Our dreams and visions, or they true themselves into flesh. It is sweet: I faint for it: the old stones here
Have seen more and not moved. A custom of the house. To accept you, little Electra, and go my journey
To-morrow: you'd call cheating. Therefore: we shall not go up this mountain dearest, dearest,
To-night nor ever. It's Clytemnestra in you. But the dead are a weak tribe. If I had Agamemnon's
We'd live happily sister and lord it in Mycenæ—be a king like the others—royalty and incest
Run both in the stream of the blood. Who scrubbed the stones there?
ELECTRA Slaves. O fire burn me! Enter and lay waste,
Deflower, trample, break down, pillage the little city,
Make what breach you will, with flesh or a spear, give it to the spoiler. See, as I tear the garment.
What if I called it cheating? Be cruel and treacherous: I'll run my chances
On the bitter mercies of to-morrow.
ORESTES Bitter they would be. No.
ELECTRA It's clear that for this reason
You'd sneak out of Mycenæ and be lost outward. Taste first, bite the apple, once dared and tried
Desire will be not terrible. It's doglike to run off whining. Remember it was I that urged
Yesterday's triumph. You: life was enough: let them live. I drove on, burning; your mind, reluctant metal,
I dipped it in fire and forged it sharp, day after day I beat and burned against you, and forged

A sword: I the arm. Are you sorry it's done? Now again with hammer and burning heat I beat against you,
You will not be sorry. We two of all the world, we alone,
Are fit for each other, we have so wrought . . . O eyes scorning the world, storm-feathered hawk my hands
Caught out of the air and made you a king over this rock, O axe with the gold helve, O star
Alone over the storm, beacon to men over blown seas, you will not flee fate, you will take
What the Gods give. What is a man not ruling? An ant in the hill: ruler or slave the choice is,
—Or a runaway slave, your pilgrim portion, buffeted over the borders of the lands, publicly
Whipped in the cities. But you, you will bind the north-star on your forehead, you will stand up in Mycenæ
Stone, and a king.
ORESTES I am stone enough not to be changed by words, nor by the sweet and burning flame of you,
Beautiful Electra.
ELECTRA Well then: we've wasted our night. See, there's the morning star
I might have draggled into a metaphor of you. A fool: a boy: no king.
ORESTES It would have been better
To have parted kindlier, for it is likely
We shall have no future meeting.
ELECTRA You will let this crime (the God commanded) that dirtied the old stones here
Make division forever?
ORESTES Not the crime, the wakening. That deed is past, it is finished, things past
Make no division afterward, they have no power, they have become nothing at all: this much
I have learned at a crime's knees.
ELECTRA Yet we are divided.
ORESTES Because I have suddenly awakened, I will not waste inward
Upon humanity, having found a fairer object.
ELECTRA Some nymph of the field? I knew this coldness
Had a sick root: a girl in the north told me about the hill-shepherds who living in solitude
Turn beast with the ewes, their oreads baa to them through the matted fleece and they run mad, what madness
Met you in the night and sticks to you?
ORESTES I left the madness of the house, to-night in the dark, with you it walks yet.
How shall I tell you what I have learned? Your mind is like a hawk's or like a lion's, this knowledge
Is out of the order of your mind, a stranger language. To wild beasts and the blood of kings
A verse blind in the book.
ELECTRA At least my eyes can see dawn graying: tell and not mock me, our moment
Dies in a moment.
ORESTES Here is the last labor
To spend on humanity. I saw a vision of us move in the dark: all that we did or dreamed of
Regarded each other, the man pursued the woman, the woman clung to the man, warriors and kings
Strained at each other in the darkness, all loved or fought inward, each one of the lost people
Sought the eyes of another that another should praise him; sought never his own but another's; the net of desire
Had every nerve drawn to the center, so that they writhed like a full draught of fishes, all matted
In the one mesh; when they look backward they see only a man standing at the beginning,
Or forward, a man at the end, or if upward, men in the shining bitter sky striding and feasting,
Whom you call Gods . . .
It is all turned inward, all your desires incestuous, the woman the serpent, the man the rose-red cavern,
Both human, worship forever . . .
ELECTRA You have dreamed wretchedly.
ORESTES I have seen the dreams of the people and not dreamed them.
As for me, I have slain my mother.
ELECTRA No more?

ORESTES And the gate's open, the gray boils over the mountain, I have greater
Kindred than dwell under a roof. Didn't I say this would be dark to you? I have cut the meshes
And fly like a freed falcon. To-night, lying on the hillside, sick with those visions, I remembered
The knife in the stalk of my humanity; I drew and it broke; I entered the life of the brown forest
And the great life of the ancient peaks, the patience of stone, I felt the changes in the veins
In the throat of the mountain, a grain in many centuries, we have our own time, not yours; and I was the stream
Draining the mountain wood; and I the stag drinking; and I was the stars,
Boiling with light, wandering alone, each one the lord of his own summit; and I was the darkness
Outside the stars, I included them, they were a part of me. I was mankind also, a moving lichen
On the cheek of the round stone . . . they have not made words for it, to go behind things, beyond hours and ages,
And be all things in all time, in their returns and passages, in the motionless and timeless center,
In the white of the fire . . . how can I express the excellence I have found, that has no color but clearness;
No honey but ecstasy; nothing wrought nor remembered; no undertone nor silver second murmur
That rings in love's voice, I and my loved are one; no desire but fulfilled; no passion but peace,
The pure flame and the white, fierier than any passion; no time but spheral eternity: Electra,
Was that your name before this life dawned—

ELECTRA Here is mere death. Death like a triumph I'd have paid to keep you
A king in high Mycenæ: but here is shameful death, to die because I have lost you. They'll say
Having done justice Agamemnon's son ran mad and was lost in the mountain; but Agamemnon's daughter
Hanged herself from a beam of the house: O bountiful hands of justice! This horror draws upon me
Like stone walking.

ORESTES What fills men's mouths is nothing; and your threat is nothing; I have fallen in love outward.
If I believed you—it is I that am like stone walking.

ELECTRA I can endure even to hate you,
But that's no matter. Strength's good. You are lost. I here remember the honor of the house, and Agamemnon's.

She turned and entered the ancient house. Orestes walked in the clear dawn; men say that a serpent
Killed him in high Arcadia. But young or old, few years or many, signified less than nothing
To him who had climbed the tower beyond time, consciously, and cast humanity, entered the earlier fountain.

1924–1925 1925

NOON

THE pure air trembles, O pitiless God,
The air aches with flame on these gaunt rocks
Over the flat sea's face, the forest
Shakes in gales of piercing light.

But the altars are behind and higher
Where the great hills raise naked heads,
Pale agonists in the reverberance
Of the pure air and the pitiless God.

On the domed skull of every hill
Who stand blazing with spread vans,
The arms uplifted, the eyes in ecstasy?

What wine has the God drunk, to sing
Violently in heaven, what wine his worshipers
Whose silence blazes? The light that is over
Light, the terror of noon, the eyes
That the eagles die at, have thrown down
Me and my pride, here I lie naked
In a hollow of the shadowless rocks,
Full of the God, having drunk fire.

c.1920 1930

NIGHT

THE ebb slips from the rock, the sunken
Tide-rocks lift streaming shoulders
Out of the slack, the slow west
Sombering its torch; a ship's light
Shows faintly, far out,
Over the weight of the prone ocean
On the low cloud.

Over the dark mountain, over the dark
pinewood,
Down the long dark valley along the
shrunken river,
Returns the splendor without rays, the
shining of shadow,
Peace-bringer, the matrix of all shining and
quieter of shining.
Where the shore widens on the bay she
opens dark wings
And the ocean accepts her glory. O soul
worshipful of her
You like the ocean have grave depths
where she dwells always,
And the film of waves above that takes the
sun takes also
Her, with more love. The sun-lovers have
a blond favorite,
A father of lights and noises, wars, weeping
and laughter,
Hot labor, lust and delight and the other
blemishes. Quietness
Flows from her deeper fountain; and he
will die; and she is immortal.

Far off from here the slender
Flocks of the mountain forest
Move among stems like towers
Of the old redwoods to the stream,
No twig crackling; dip shy
Wild muzzles into the mountain water
Among the dark ferns.

O passionately at peace you being secure
will pardon
The blasphemies of glowworms, the lamp
in my tower, the fretfulness
Of cities, the crescents of the planets, the
pride of the stars.
This August night in a rift of cloud Antares
reddens,
The great one, the ancient torch, a lord
among lost children,
The earth's orbit doubled would not girdle
his greatness, one fire
Globed, out of grasp of the mind enormous;
but to you O Night
What? Not a spark? What flicker of a spark
in the faint far glimmer
Of a lost fire dying in the desert, dim coals
of a sand-pit the Bedouins
Wandered from at dawn . . . Ah singing
prayer to what gulfs tempted
Suddenly are you more lost? To us the
near-hand mountain
Be a measure of height, the tide-worn cliff
at the sea-gate a measure of
continuance.

The tide, moving the night's
Vastness with lonely voices,
Turns, the deep dark-shining
Pacific leans on the land,
Feeling his cold strength
To the outmost margins: you Night will
resume
The stars in your time.

O passionately at peace when will that tide
draw shoreward?
Truly the spouting fountains of light,
Antares, Arcturus,
Tire of their flow, they sing one song but
they think silence.
The striding winter giant Orion shines, and
dreams darkness.
And life, the flicker of men and moths and
the wolf on the hill,
Though furious for continuance,
passionately feeding, passionately
Remaking itself upon its mates, remembers
deep inward
The calm mother, the quietness of the
womb and the egg,
The primal and the latter silences: dear
Night it is memory
Prophesies, prophecy that remembers, the
charm of the dark.
And I and my people, we are willing to love
the four-score years
Heartily; but as a sailor loves the sea, when
the helm is for harbor.

Have men's minds changed,
Or the rock hidden in the deep of the
waters of the soul
Broken the surface? A few centuries
Gone by, was none dared not to people
The darkness beyond the stars with harps
and habitations.

But now, dear is the truth. Life is grown
sweeter and lonelier,
And death is no evil.
1924 1925

FROM TAMAR

INVOCATION [1]

V

O SWIFTNESS of the swallow and strength
Of the stone shore, brave beauty of falcons,
Beauty of the blue heron that flies
Opposite the color of evening
From the Carmel River's reed-grown
mouth
To her nest in the deep wood of the deer
Cliffs of peninsular granite engirdle,
O beauty of the fountains of the sun
I pray you enter a little chamber,
I have given you bodies, I have made you
puppets,
I have made idols for God to enter
And tiny cells to hold your honey.
I have given you a dotard and an idiot,
An old woman puffed with vanity, youth
but botched with incest,
O blower of music through the crooked
bugles,
You that make signs of sins and choose the
lame for angels,
Enter and possess. Being light you have
chosen the dark lamps,
A hawk the sluggish bodies: therefore God
you chose
Me; and therefore I have made you idols
like these idols
To enter and possess.
. . . .
1923 1925

ANTE MORTEM

IT is likely enough that lions and scorpions
Guard the end; life never was bonded to be
endurable nor the act of dying
Unpainful; the brain burning too often
Earns, though it held itself detached from
the object, often a burnt age.
No matter, I shall not shorten it by hand.
Incapable of body or unmoved of brain is
no evil, one always went envying
The quietness of stones. But if the striped
blossom
Insanity spread lewd splendors and
lightning terrors at the end of the
forest;
Or intolerable pain work is known
miracle,
Exile the monarch soul, set a sick monkey
in the office . . . remember me
Entire and balanced when I was
younger,
And could lift stones, and comprehend in
the praises the cruelties of life.
c.1925 1930

TOR HOUSE

IF you should look for this place after a
handful of lifetimes:
Perhaps of my planted forest a few
May stand yet, dark-leaved Australians or
the coast cypress, haggard
With storm-drift; but fire and the axe are
devils.
Look for foundations of sea-worn granite,
my fingers had the art
To make stone love stone, you will find
some remnant.
But if you should look in your idleness after
ten thousand years:
It is the granite knoll on the granite
And lava tongue in the midst of the bay, by
the mouth of the Carmel
River-valley, these four will remain
In the change of names. You will know it
by the wild sea-fragrance of wind
Though the ocean may have climbed or
retired a little;
You will know it by the valley inland that
our sun and our moon were born
from
Before the poles changed; and Orion in
December
Evenings was strung in the throat of the
valley like a lamp-lighted bridge.
Come in the morning you will see white gulls
Weaving a dance over blue water, the wane
of the moon
Their dance-companion, a ghost walking
By daylight, but wider and whiter than any
bird in the world.
My ghost you needn't look for; it is
probably
Here, but a dark one, deep in the granite,
not dancing on wind
With the mad wings and the day moon.
c.1927 1928

[1] The title is given by the editors.

FROM CAWDOR

THE DEATH OF THE EAGLE [1]

XV

WHILE George went to the house
For his revolver, Michal climbed up the hill
Weeping; but when he came with death in his hand
She'd not go away, but watched. At the one shot
The great dark bird leaped at the roof of the cage
In silence and struck the wood; it fell, then suddenly
Looked small and soft, muffled in its folded wings.

The nerves of men after they die dream dimly
And dwindle into their peace; they are not very passionate,
And what they had was mostly spent while they lived.
They are sieves for leaking desire; they have many pleasures
And conversations; their dreams too are like that.
The unsocial birds are a greater race;
Cold-eyed, and their blood burns. What leaped up to death,
The extension of one storm-dark wing filling its world,
Was more than the soft garment that fell. Something had flown away. Oh cage-hoarded desire,
Like the blade of a breaking wave reaped by the wind, or flame rising from fire, or cloud-coiled lightning
Suddenly unfurled in the cave of heaven: I that am stationed, and cold at heart, incapable of burning,
My blood like standing sea-water lapped in a stone pool, my desire to the rock, how can I speak of you?
Mine will go down to the deep rock.

This rose,
Possessing the air over its emptied prison,
The eager powers at its shoulders waving shadowless
Unwound the ever-widened spirals of flight
As a star light, it spins the night-stabbing threads
From its own strength and substance: so the aquiline desire
Burned itself into meteor freedom and spired
Higher still, and saw the mountain-dividing
Canyon of its captivity (that was to Cawdor
Almost his world) like an old crack in a wall,
Violet-shadowed and gold-lighted; the little stain
Spilt on the floor of the crack was the strong forest;
The grain of sand was the Rock. A speck, an atomic
Center of power clouded in its own smoke
Ran and cried in the crack; it was Cawdor; the other
Points of humanity had neither weight nor shining
To prick the eyes of even an eagle's passion.

This burned and soared. The shining ocean below lay on the shore
Like the great shield of the moon come down, rolling bright rim to rim with the earth. Against it the multiform
And many-canyoned coast-range hills were gathered into one carven mountain, one modulated
Eagle's cry made stone, stopping the strength of the sea. The beaked and winged effluence
Felt the air foam under its throat and saw
The mountain sun-cup Tassajara, where fawns
Dance in the steam of the hot fountains at dawn,
Smoothed out, and the high strained ridges beyond Cachagua,
Where the rivers are born and the last condor is dead,
Flatten, and a hundred miles toward morning the Sierras
Dawn with their peaks of snow, and dwindle and smooth down
On the globed earth.

It saw from the height and desert space of unbreathable air
Where meteors make green fire and die, the ocean dropping westward to the girdle of the pearls of dawn
And the hinder edge of the night sliding

1 The title is given by the editors.

toward Asia; it saw far under
eastward the April-delighted
Continent; and time relaxing about it now,
abstracted from being, it saw the
eagles destroyed,
Mean generations of gulls and crows taking
their world: turn for turn in the air,
as on earth
The white faces drove out the brown. It
saw the white decayed and the
brown from Asia returning;
It saw men learn to outfly the hawk's brood
and forget it again; it saw men cover
the earth and again
Devour each other and hide in caverns, be
scarce as wolves. It neither
wondered nor cared, and it saw
Growth and decay alternate forever, and
the tides returning.

It saw, according to the sight of its kind, the
archetype
Body of life a beaked carnivorous desire
Self-upheld on storm-broad wings: but the
eyes
Were spouts of blood; the eyes were gashed
out; dark blood
Ran from the ruinous eye-pits to the hook
of the beak
And rained on the waste spaces of empty
heaven.
Yet the great Life continued; yet the great
Life
Was beautiful, and she drank her defeat,
and devoured
Her famine for food.

There the eagle's phantom
perceived
Its prison and its wound were not its
peculiar wretchedness,
All that lives was maimed and bleeding,
caged or in blindness,
Lopped at the ends with death and
conception, and shrewd
Cautery of pain on the stumps to stifle the
blood, but not
Refrains for all that; life was more than its
functions
And accidents, more important than its
pains and pleasures,
A torch to burn in with pride, a necessary
Ecstasy in the run of the cold substance,
And scape-goat of the greater world. (But
as for me,
I have heard the summer dust crying to be
born
As much as ever flesh cried to be quiet.)
Pouring itself on fulfilment the eagle's
passion
Left life behind and flew at the sun, its
father.
The great unreal talons took peace for prey
Exultantly, their death beyond death;
stooped upward, and struck
Peace like a white fawn in a dell of fire.

1927 1928

LOVE THE WILD SWAN

'I HATE my verses, every line, every word.
Oh pale and brittle pencils ever to try
One grass-blade's curve, or the throat of
one bird
That clings to twig, ruffled against white sky.
Oh cracked and twilight mirrors ever to
catch
One color, one glinting flash, of the
splendor of things.
Unlucky hunter, Oh bullets of wax,
The lion beauty, the wild-swan wings, the
storm of the wings.'
—This wild swan of a world is no hunter's
game.
Better bullets than yours would miss the
white breast,
Better mirrors than yours would crack in
the flame.
Does it matter whether you hate your . . .
self? At least
Love your eyes that can see, your mind that
can
Hear the music, the thunder of the wings.
Love the wild swan.

1934 1935

SELF CRITICISM IN FEBRUARY

THE bay is not blue but somber yellow
With wrack from the battered valley, it is
speckled with violent foam-heads
And tiger-striped with long lovely
storm-shadows.
You love this better than the other mask;
better eyes than yours
Would feel the equal beauty in the blue.
It is certain you have loved the beauty of
storm disproportionately.
But the present time is not pastoral, but
founded

On violence, pointed for more massive
violence: perhaps it is not
Perversity but need that perceives the
storm-beauty.
Well, bite on this: your poems are too full of
ghosts and demons,
And people like phantoms—how often life's
are—
And passion so strained that the clay mouths
go praying for destruction—
Alas, it is not unusual in life;
To every soul at some time. *But why insist*
on it? And now
For the worst fault: you have never
mistaken
Demon nor passion nor idealism for the real
God.
Then what is most disliked in those verses
Remains most true. *Unfortunately. If only*
you could sing
That God is love, or perhaps that social
Justice will soon prevail. I can tell lies in
prose.

1937 1937

EUGENE O'NEILL

1888–

LAZARUS LAUGHED [1]

A PLAY FOR AN IMAGINATIVE THEATRE

ACT ONE:

Scene One: Lazarus' home in Bethany—a short time after the miracle.
Scene Two: Months later. Outside the House of Laughter in Bethany. Late evening.

ACT TWO:

Scene One: A street in Athens. A night months later.
Scene Two: A temple immediately inside the walls of Rome. Midnight. Months later.

ACT THREE:

Scene One: Garden of Tiberius' palace. A night a few days later.
Scene Two: Inside the palace. Immediately after.

ACT FOUR:

Scene One: The same. A while after.
Scene Two: Interior of a Roman theatre. Dawn of the same night.

CHARACTERS

LAZARUS OF BETHANY
HIS FATHER
HIS MOTHER
MARTHA, MARY } his sisters
MIRIAM, his wife
SEVEN GUESTS, neighbors of Lazarus
CHORUS OF OLD MEN
AN ORTHODOX PRIEST
CHORUS OF LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS
A CENTURION
GAIUS CALIGULA
CRASSUS, a Roman General
CHORUS OF GREEKS
SEVEN CITIZENS OF ATHENS
CHORUS OF ROMAN SENATORS
SEVEN SENATORS
CHORUS OF LEGIONARIES
FLAVIUS, a centurion
MARCELLUS, a patrician
CHORUS OF THE GUARD
TIBERIUS CÆSAR
POMPEIA
CHORUS OF YOUTHS AND GIRLS
CHORUS OF THE ROMAN POPULACE
CROWDS

1 To Arthur Quinn, O'Neill wrote, May 1927, concerning the theme of *Lazarus Laughed*: 'The fear of death is the root of all evil, the cause of all man's blundering unhappiness. Lazarus knows there is no death, there is only change. He is reborn without that fear. Therefore he is the first and only man who is able to laugh affirmatively. His laughter is a triumphant Yes to life in its entirety and its eternity. His laughter affirms God, it is too noble to desire personal immortality, it wills its own extinction, it gives its life for the sake of Eternal Life (patriotism carried to its logical ultimate). His laughter is the direct expression of joy in the Dionysian sense, the joy of a celebrant who is at the same time a sacrifice in the eternal process of change and growth and transmutation which is life, of which his life is an insignificant manifestation, soon to be reabsorbed. And life itself is the self-affirmative joyous laughter of God.' Quinn, *A History of the American Drama* (N.Y., 1936), 252–53.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

SCENE: *Exterior and interior of* LAZARUS' *home at Bethany. The main room at the front end of the house is shown—a long, low-ceilinged, sparely furnished chamber, with white walls gray in the fading daylight that enters from three small windows at the left. To the left of center several long tables placed lengthwise to the width of the room, around which many chairs for guests have been placed. In the rear wall, right, a door leading into the rest of the house. On the left, a doorway opening on a road where a crowd of men has gathered. On the right, another doorway leading to the yard where there is a crowd of women.*

Inside the house, on the men's side, seven male Guests are grouped by the door, watching LAZARUS *with frightened awe, talking hesitantly in low whispers. The Chorus of Old Men, seven in number, is drawn up in a crescent, in the far corner, right, facing* LAZARUS.

[*All of these people are masked in accordance with the following scheme: There are seven periods of life shown: Boyhood (or Girlhood), Youth, Young Manhood (or Womanhood), Manhood (or Womanhood), Middle Age, Maturity and Old Age; and each of these periods is represented by seven different masks of general types of character as follows: The Simple, Ignorant; the Happy, Eager; the Self-Tortured, Introspective; the Proud, Self-Reliant; the Servile, Hypocritical; the Revengeful, Cruel; the Sorrowful, Resigned. Thus in each crowd (this includes among the men the Seven Guests who are composed of one male of each period-type as period one—type one, period two—type two, and so on up to period seven—type seven) there are forty-nine different combinations of period and type. Each type has a distinct predominant color for its costumes which varies in kind according to its period. The masks of the Chorus of Old Men are double the size of the others. They are all seven in the Sorrowful, Resigned type of Old Age.*]

On a raised platform at the middle of the one table placed lengthwise at center sits LAZARUS, *his head haloed and his body illumined by a soft radiance as of tiny phosphorescent flames.*

LAZARUS, *freed now from the fear of death, wears no mask.*

In appearance LAZARUS *is tall and powerful, about fifty years of age, with a mass of gray-black hair and a heavy beard. His face recalls that of a statue of a divinity of Ancient Greece in its general structure and particularly in its quality of detached serenity. It is dark-complected, ruddy and brown, the color of rich earth upturned by the plow, calm but furrowed deep with the marks of former suffering endured with a grim fortitude that had never softened into resignation. His forehead is broad and noble, his eyes black and deep-set. Just now he is staring straight before him as if his vision were still fixed beyond life.*

Kneeling beside him with bowed heads are his wife, MIRIAM, *his sisters,* MARTHA *and* MARY, *and his* FATHER *and* MOTHER.

MIRIAM *is a slender, delicate woman of thirty-five, dressed in deep black, who holds one of his hands in both of hers, and keeps her lips pressed to it. The upper part of her face is covered by a mask which conceals her forehead, eyes and nose, but leaves her mouth revealed. The mask is the pure pallor of marble, the expression that of a statue of Woman, of her eternal acceptance of the compulsion of motherhood, the inevitable cycle of love into pain into joy and new love into separation and pain again and the loneliness of age. The eyes of the mask are almost closed. Their gaze turns within, oblivious to the life outside, as they dream down on the child forever in memory at her breast. The mouth of* MIRIAM *is sensitive and sad, tender with an eager, understanding smile of self-forgetful love, the lips still fresh and young. Her skin, in contrast to the mask, is sunburned and earth-colored like that of* LAZARUS. MARTHA, MARY *and the two parents all wear full masks which broadly reproduce their own characters.* MARTHA *is a buxom middle-aged housewife, plain and pleasant.* MARY *is young and pretty, nervous and high-strung. The* FATHER *is a small, thin, feeble old man of over eighty, meek and pious. The* MOTHER *is tall and stout, over sixty-five, a gentle, simple woman.*

All the masks of these Jews of the first two scenes of the play are pronouncedly Semitic. A background of twilight sky. A dissolving touch of sunset still lingers on the horizon.

It is some time after the miracle and Jesus has gone away.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*In a quavering rising and falling chant —their arms outstretched toward* LAZARUS]

Jesus wept!
Behold how he loved him!
He that liveth,
He that believeth,
Shall never die!

CROWD

[*On either side of house, echo the chant*]

He that believeth
Shall never die!
Lazarus, come forth!

FIRST GUEST

[*A Simple Boy—in a frightened whisper after a pause of dead silence*]

That strange light seems to come from within him!

[*With awe*]

Think of it! For four days he lay in the tomb!

[*Turns away with a shudder*]

SECOND GUEST

[*A Happy Youth—with reassuring conviction*]

It is a holy light. It came from Jesus.

FIFTH GUEST

[*An Envious, Middle-Aged Man*]

Maybe if the truth were known, our friend there never really died at all!

FOURTH GUEST

[*A Defiant Man, indignantly*]

Do you doubt the miracle? I tell you I was here in this house when Lazarus died!

SEVENTH GUEST

[*An Aged, Sorrowful Man*]

And I used to visit him every day. He knew himself his hour was near.

FOURTH GUEST

He wished for death! He said to me one day: 'I have known my fill of life and the sorrow of living. Soon I shall know peace.' And he smiled. It was the first time I had seen him smile in years.

THIRD GUEST

[*A Self-Tortured Man—gloomily*]

Yes, of late years his life had been one long misfortune. One after another his children died—

SIXTH GUEST

[*A Mature Man with a cruel face—with a harsh laugh*]

They were all girls. Lazarus had no luck.

SEVENTH GUEST

The last was a boy, the one that died at birth. You are forgetting him.

THIRD GUEST

Lazarus could never forget. Not only did his son die but Miriam could never bear him more children.

FIFTH GUEST

[*Practically*]

But he could not blame bad luck for everything. Take the loss of his father's wealth since he took over the management. That was his own doing. He was a bad farmer, a poor breeder of sheep, and a bargainer so easy to cheat it hurt one's conscience to trade with him!

SIXTH GUEST

[*With a sneer—maliciously*]

You should know best about that!

[*A suppressed laugh from those around him*]

FIRST GUEST

[*Who has been gazing at* LAZARUS—*softly*]

Ssssh! Look at his face!

[*They all stare. A pause*]

SECOND GUEST

[*With wondering awe*]

Do you remember him, neighbors, before he died? He used to be pale even when he worked in the fields. Now he seems as brown as one who has labored in the earth all day in a vineyard beneath the hot sun!

[*A pause*]

FOURTH GUEST

The whole look of his face has changed. He is like a stranger from a far land. There is no longer any sorrow in his eyes. They must have forgotten sorrow in the grave.

FIFTH GUEST

[*Grumblingly*]

I thought we were invited here to eat—and all we do is stand and gape at him!

FOURTH GUEST

[*Sternly*]

Be silent! We are waiting for him to speak.

THIRD GUEST

[*Impressively*]

He did speak once. And he laughed!

ALL THE GUESTS

[*Amazed and incredulous*]

Laughed?

THIRD GUEST

[*Importantly*]

Laughed! I heard him! It was a moment after the miracle—

MIRIAM

[*Her voice, rich with sorrow, exultant now*]

Jesus cried, 'Lazarus, come forth!'

[*She kisses his hand. He makes a slight movement, a stirring in his vision. The* GUESTS *stare. A frightened pause*]

FIFTH GUEST

[*Nudging the* SECOND—*uneasily*]

Go on with your story!

THIRD GUEST

Just as he appeared in the opening of the tomb, wrapped in his shroud—

SECOND GUEST

[*Excitedly—interrupting*]

My heart stopped! I fell on my face! And all the women screamed!

[*Sceptically*]

You must have sharp ears to have heard him laugh in that uproar!

THIRD GUEST

I helped to pry away the stone so I was right beside him. I found myself kneeling, but between my fingers I watched Jesus and Lazarus. Jesus looked into his face for what seemed a long time and suddenly Lazarus said 'Yes' as if he were answering a question in Jesus' eyes.

ALL THE GUESTS

[*Mystified*]

Yes? What could he mean by yes?

THIRD GUEST

Then Jesus smiled sadly but with tenderness, as one who from a distance of years of sorrow remembers happiness. And then Lazarus knelt and kissed Jesus' feet and both of them smiled and Jesus blessed him and called him 'My Brother' and went away; and Lazarus, looking after Him, began to laugh softly like a man in love with God! Such a laugh I never heard! It made my ears drunk! It was like wine! And though I was half-dead with fright I found myself laughing, too!

MIRIAM

[*With a beseeching summons*]

Lazarus, come forth!

CHORUS

[*Chanting*]

Lazarus! Come forth!

CROWD

[*On either side of the house—echoing the chant*]

Come forth! Come forth!

LAZARUS

[*Suddenly in a deep voice—with a wonderful exultant acceptance in it*]

Yes!

[*The* GUESTS *in the room, the* CROWDS *outside all cry out in fear and joy and fall on their knees*]

CHORUS

[*Chanting exultantly*]

The stone is taken away!
The spirit is loosed!
The soul let go!

LAZARUS

[*Rising and looking around him at everyone and everything—with an all-embracing love—gently*]

Yes!

[*His family and the* GUESTS *in the room now throng about* LAZARUS *to embrace him. The* CROWDS *of men and women on each side push into the room to stare at him. He is in the arms of his* MOTHER *and* MIRIAM *while his* SISTERS *and* FATHER *kiss and press his hands. The five are half hysterical with relief and joy, sobbing and laughing*]

FATHER

My son is reborn to me!

CHORUS

Hosannah!

ALL

[*With a great shout*]

Hosannah!

FATHER

Let us rejoice! Eat and drink! Draw up your chairs, friends! Music! Bring wine!

[*Music begins in the room off right, rear —a festive dance tune. The company sit down in their places, the* FATHER *and* MOTHER *at* LAZARUS' *right and left,* MIRIAM *next to the* MOTHER, MARTHA *and* MARY *beside the* FATHER. *But* LAZARUS *remains standing. And the* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *remain in their formation at the rear. Wine is poured and all raise their goblets toward* LAZARUS—*then suddenly they stop, the music dies out, and an awed and frightened stillness prevails, for* LAZARUS *is a strange, majestic figure whose understanding smile seems terrible and enigmatic to them*]

FATHER

[*Pathetically uneasy*]

You frighten us, my son. You are strange—standing there—

[*In the midst of a silence more awkward than before he rises to his feet, goblet in hand—forcing his voice, falteringly*]

A toast, neighbors!

CHORUS

[*In a forced echo*]

A toast!

ALL

[*Echoing them*]

A toast!

FATHER

To my son, Lazarus, whom a blessed miracle has brought back from death!

LAZARUS

[*Suddenly laughing softly out of his vision, as if to himself, and speaking with a strange unearthly calm in a voice that is like a loving whisper of hope and confidence*]

No! There is no death!

[*A moment's pause. The people remain with goblets uplifted, staring at him. Then all repeat after him questioningly and frightenedly*]

ALL

There—is—no—death?

SIXTH GUEST

[*Suddenly blurts out the question which is in the minds of all*]

What did you find beyond there, Lazarus?

[*A pause of silence*]

LAZARUS

[*Smiles gently and speaks as if to a group of inquisitive children*]

O Curious Greedy Ones, is not one world in which you know not how to live enough for you?

SIXTH GUEST

[*Emboldened*]

Why did you say yes, Lazarus?

FOURTH GUEST

Why did you laugh?

ALL THE GUESTS

[*With insistent curiosity but in low awed tones*]

What is beyond there, Lazarus?

CHORUS

[*In a low murmur*]

What is beyond there? What is beyond?

CROWD

[*Carrying the question falteringly back into silence*]

What is beyond?

LAZARUS

[*Suddenly again—now in a voice of loving exaltation*]

There is only life! I heard the heart of Jesus laughing in my heart; 'There is Eternal Life in No,' it said, 'and there is the same Eternal Life in Yes! Death is the fear between!' And my heart reborn to love of life cried 'Yes!' and I laughed in the laughter of God!

[HE *begins to laugh, softly at first—a laugh so full of a complete acceptance of life, a profound assertion of joy in living, so devoid of all self-consciousness or fear, that it is like a great bird song triumphant in depths of sky, proud and powerful, infectious with love, casting on the listener an enthralling spell. The crowd in the room are caught by it. Glancing sideways at one another, smiling foolishly and self-consciously, at first they hesitate, plainly holding themselves in for fear of what the next one will think*]

CHORUS

[*In a chanting murmur*]

Lazarus laughs!
Our hearts grow happy!
Laughter like music!
The wind laughs!
The sea laughs!
Spring laughs from the earth!
Summer laughs in the air!
Lazarus laughs!

LAZARUS

[*On a final note of compelling exultation*]

Laugh! Laugh with me! Death is dead! Fear is no more! There is only life! There is only laughter!

CHORUS

[*Chanting exultingly now*]

Laugh! Laugh!
Laugh with Lazarus!
Fear is no more!
There is no death!

[*They laugh in a rhythmic cadence dominated by the laughter of* LAZARUS]

CROWD

[*Who, gradually, joining in by groups or one by one—including* LAZARUS' *fam-*

ily with the exception of MIRIAM, *who does not laugh but watches and listens to his laughter with a tender smile of being happy in his happiness—have now all begun to laugh in rhythm with the* CHORUS—*in a great, full-throated pæan as the laughter of* LAZARUS *rises higher and higher*]

Laugh! Laugh!
Fear is no more!
There is no death!

CHORUS

Laugh! Laugh!
There is only life!
There is only laughter!
Fear is no more!
Death is dead!

CROWD

[*In a rhythmic echo*]

Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!
There is only laughter!

[*The room rocks, the air outside throbs with the rhythmic beat of their liberated laughter—still a bit uncertain of its freedom, harsh, discordant, frenzied, desperate and drunken, but dominated and inspired by the high, free, aspiring, exulting laughter of* LAZARUS]

CURTAIN

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *Some months later. Exterior of* LAZARUS' *home in Bethany, now known as the House of Laughter. It is a clear bright night, the sky sparkling with stars. At the extreme front is a road. Between this and the house is a small raised terrace. The house is low, of one story only, its walls white. Four windows are visible with a closed door in the middle of the wall. Steps lead up to this door, and to the left of door a flight of stairs goes up to the balustraded roof. The windows shine brilliantly with the flickering light of many candles which gives them a throbbing star-like effect. From within comes the sound of flutes and dance music. The dancers can be seen whirling swiftly by the windows. There is continually an overtone of singing laughter emphasizing the pulsing rhythm of the dance.*

On the road in the foreground, at left and right, two separate groups of Jews are gathered. They are not divided according to sex as in the previous scene. Each is composed about equally of men and women, forty-nine in each, masked and costumed as before. It is religious belief that now divides them. The adherents of Jesus, the Nazarenes, among whom may be noted MARTHA *and* MARY, *are on the left; the Orthodox, among whom are* LAZARUS' FATHER *and* MOTHER *and a* PRIEST, *are at right. Between the two hostile groups is the same* CHORUS OF OLD MEN, *in a formation like a spearhead, whose point is placed at the foot of the steps leading to the terrace. All these people are staring fascinatedly at the house, listening entranced, their feet moving, their bodies swaying to the music's beat, stiffly, constrainedly, compelled against their wills. Then the music suddenly stops and the chant of youthful voices is heard:*

FOLLOWERS OF LAZARUS

[*From within the house*]

Laugh! Laugh!
There is only life!
There is only laughter!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*As if they were subjects moved by hypnotic suggestion—miserably and discordantly*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!
There is only laughter!
Ha-ha—

CROWD

[*In the same manner*]

Ha-ha—

MARY

Ha—

[*Then frantically—half-weeping with indignant rage—to the Nazarenes*]

Stop! Oh, how can we laugh! We are betraying Jesus! My brother Lazarus has become a devil!

THE ORTHODOX PRIEST

[*His mask is that of a religious fanatic. He is sixty or so*]

Ha—ha—

[*Tearing his beard and stamping with rage*]

Stop it, you fools! It is a foul sin in the sight of Jehovah! Why do you come here every night to listen and watch their abominations? The Lord God will punish you!

MARY

[*Echoing him—to her people*]

Jesus will never forgive you!

THE PRIEST

[*Angrily*]

Jesus?

[*He turns to look at the Nazarenes disdainfully and spits on the ground insultingly*]

[*The members of the two groups begin to glare at each other. The* CHORUS *falls back, three on each side, leaving one neutral figure before the steps. The* PRIEST *goes on tauntingly*]

Did you hear her, friends? These renegade Nazarenes will soon deny they are Jews at all! They will begin to worship in filthy idolatry the sun and stars and man's body—as Lazarus in there,

[*Points to the house*]

the disciple of their Jesus, has so well set them the example!

[*This is followed by an outburst of insulting shouts of accusation and denial from both sides*]

A NAZARENE

[*The* FOURTH GUEST *of Scene One*]

You lie! Lazarus is no disciple! He is a traitor to Jesus! We scorn him!

PRIEST

[*Sneeringly*]

But your pretended Messiah did not scorn him. According to your stupid lies, he raised him from the dead! And answer me, has your Jesus ever denied Lazarus, or denounced his laughter? No! No doubt he is laughing, too, at all you credulous fools—for if Lazarus is not his disciple, in the matter of the false miracle he was his accomplice!

[*This provokes a furious protest from the Nazarenes and insulting hoots and jeers from the Orthodox, penetrated by a piercing scream from* LAZARUS' MOTHER, *who, crushed in the crowd, sinks fainting to the ground. The* FATHER *bends over her. The group of the Orthodox falls back from them. With frightened cries* MARTHA *and* MARY *run from the group of Nazarenes and kneel beside her*]

FATHER

[*Pitifully*]

Rachel! Darling! Speak to me!

MARTHA

[*Practically*]

She has only fainted.

MARY

She is opening her eyes! Mother, dear!

MOTHER

[*Weakly*]

Did I fall?

[*Recognizing* MARTHA *and* MARY]

Martha—and Mary—my dear ones!

[*They embrace her, weeping*]

I have not kissed you since you left home to follow that Jesus—Oh, if we were only at home again—and if, also, my poor boy, Lazarus—

[*She sobs*]

FATHER

[*Gruffly*]

You must not speak of him!

MARTHA

Do not worry your head about Lazarus. He is not worth it!

MARY

[*With surprising vindictiveness*]

He is accursed! He has betrayed our Lord!

PRIEST

[*To those around him—mockingly*]

Do you hear? They already call the Nazarene 'Lord!' A Lord who is in the common prison at Jerusalem, I heard today! A fine Lord whom our High Priests have had arrested like a thief!

MARY

[*With fanatic fervor*]

He is a king! Whenever He chooses He will gather a great army and He will seize His kingdom and all who deny Him shall be crucified!

PRIEST

[*Tauntingly*]

Now their jail-bird is a king, no less! Soon they will make him a god, as the Romans do their Cæsars!

MARY

[*Her eyes flashing*]

He is the Messiah!

PRIEST

[*Furiously*]

The Messiah! May Jehovah smite you in your lies! Step back among your kind! You defile us!

[*As she stands defiantly he appeals to the* FATHER]

Have you no authority? She called him the Messiah—that common beggar, that tramp! Curse her!

FATHER

[*Confused, pitifully harried, collecting his forces*]

Wait! Go back, Mary! You chose to follow that impostor—

MARY

[*Defiantly*]

The Messiah!

MARTHA

[*Trying to calm her*]

Ssssh! Remember he is our father!

MARY

[*Fanatically*]

I deny him! I deny all who deny Jesus!

MOTHER

[*Tearfully*]

And me, darling?

MARY

You must come to us, Mother! You must believe in Jesus and leave all to follow Him!

FATHER

[*Enraged*]

So! You want to steal your mother away, to leave me lonely in my old age! You are an unnatural daughter! I disown you! Go, before I curse—

MOTHER

[*Beseechingly*]

Father!

MARTHA

[*Pulling* MARY *away*]

Mary! Jesus teaches to be kind.

MARY

[*Hysterically*]

He teaches to give up all and follow Him! I want to give Him everything! I want my father to curse me!

FATHER

[*Frenziedly*]

Then I do curse you! No—not you—but the devil in you! And the devil in Martha! And the great mocking devil that dwells in Lazarus and laughs from his mouth! I curse these devils and that Prince of Devils, that false prophet, Jesus! It is he who has brought division to my home and many

homes that were happy before. I curse him! I curse the day he called my good son, Lazarus, from the grave to walk again with a devil inside him! It was not my son who came back but a devil! My son is dead! And you, my daughters, are dead! I am the father only of devils!

[*His voice has risen to a wailing lament*] My children are dead!

LAZARUS

[*His voice rings from within the house in exultant denial*]

Death is dead! There is only laughter!

[*He laughs*]

[*The voices of all his* FOLLOWERS *echo his laughter. They pour in a laughing rout from the doorway onto the terrace. At the same moment the* CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS *appears on the roof and forms along the balustrade, facing front*]

[*These* FOLLOWERS OF LAZARUS, *forty-nine in number, composed about equally of both sexes, wear a mask that, while recognizably Jewish, is a* LAZARUS *mask, resembling him in its expression of fearless faith in life, the mouth shaped by laughter. The* CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS, *seven in number, all men, have identical masks of double size, as before. The Period of all these masks is anywhere between Youth and Manhood (or Womanhood)*]

[*The music continues to come from within. Laughing, the* FOLLOWERS *dance to it in weaving patterns on the terrace. They are dressed in bright-colored diaphanous robes. Their chorused laughter, now high and clear, now dying to a humming murmur, stresses the rhythmic flow of the dance*]

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

Laugh! Laugh!
There is no death!
There is only laughter!

FOLLOWERS

There is only laughter!
Death is dead!
Laugh! Laugh!

CROWD

[*The two groups of Nazarenes and Orthodox, on the appearance of the* FOLLOWERS, *immediately forget their differences and form into one mob, led by their* CHORUS OF OLD MEN, *whose jeering howls they echo as one voice*]

Yaah! Yaah! Yaah!

[*But they cannot keep it up. The music and laughter rise above their hooting. They fall into silence. Then they again begin to feel impelled by the rhythm and laughter, their feet move, their bodies sway. Their lips quiver, their mouths open as if to laugh. Their* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *are the first to be affected. It is as if this reaction were transmitted through the* CHORUS *to the* CROWD]

PRIEST

[*His mouth twitching—fighting against the compulsion in him—stammers*]

Brothers—listen—we must unite—in one cause—to—stamp out—this abomination!

[*It is as if he can no longer control his speech. He presses his hand over his mouth convulsively*]

AN AGED ORTHODOX JEW

[*The* SEVENTH GUEST *of Scene One—starts to harangue the crowd. He fights the spell but cannot control his jerking body nor his ghastly, spasmodic laughter*]

Neighbors! Our young people are corrupted! They are leaving our farms—to dance and sing! To laugh! Ha—! Laugh at everything! Ha-ha—!

[*He struggles desperately to control himself*]

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*A barking laugh forced from them*]

Ha-ha—!

CROWD

[*Echoing this*]

Ha-ha—!

THE AGED JEW

They have no respect for life! When I said in kindness, 'You must go back to work,' they laughed at me! Ha—! 'We desire joy. We go to Lazarus,' they said—and left my fields! I begged them to stay—with tears in my eyes! I even offered them more money! They laughed! 'What is money? Can the heart eat gold?' They laughed at money! Ha-ha—!

[*He chokes with exasperated rage*]

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*Echoing him*]

Ha-ha—!

CROWD

[*Echoing the* CHORUS]

Ha-ha—!

AGED JEW

[*Shaking his fist at* LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS]

That loafer taught them that! They come to him and work for nothing! For nothing! And they are glad, these undutiful ones! While they sow, they dance! They sing to the earth when they are plowing! They tend his flocks and laugh toward the sun! Ha-ha-ha—!

[*He struggles again*]

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*As before*]

Ha-ha-ha—

CROWD

[*As before*]

Ha-ha-ha—

AGED JEW

How can we compete with labor for laughter! We will have no harvest. There will be no food! Our children will starve! Our race will perish! And he will laugh! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*He howls with furious, uncontained laughter*]

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*Echoing his tone*]

Our children will starve!
Our race will perish!
Lazarus laughs!
Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

CROWD

[*As before*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*Their former distinctions of Nazarenes and Orthodox are now entirely forgotten. The members of* LAZARUS' *family are grouped in the center as if nothing had ever happened to separate them. The* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *is again joined in its spearhead formation at the stairs. Apparent first in this* CHORUS, *a queer excitement begins to pervade this mob. They begin to weave in and out, clasping each other's hands now and then, moving mechanically in jerky steps to the music in a grotesque sort of marionettes' country dance. At first this is slow but it momentarily becomes more hectic and peculiar. They raise clenched fists or hands distended into threatening talons. Their voices sound thick and harsh and animal-like with anger as they mutter and growl, each one aloud to himself or herself*]

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*Threateningly, gradually rising to hatred*]

Hear them laugh!
See them dance!
Shameless! Wanton!
Dirty! Evil!
Infamous! Bestial!
Madness! Blood!
Adultery! Murder!
We burn!
We kill!
We crucify!
Death! Death!
Beware, Lazarus!

[*This last in a wild frenzy*]

CROWD

[*Frenziedly*]

Beware, Lazarus!
We burn! We kill!
We crucify!
Death! Death!

[*They crowd toward the gateway, their arms stretched out as if demanding* LAZARUS *for a sacrificial victim. Meanwhile they never cease to hop up and down, to mill around, to twist their bodies toward and away from each other in bestial parody of the dance of the* FOLLOWERS]

[*The tall figure of* LAZARUS, *dressed in a white robe, suddenly appears on the roof of the house. He stands at the balustrade in the middle of the* CHORUS. *Beside him, a little behind,* MIRIAM *appears dressed in black, her face upturned, her lips praying. She appears to have grown older, to be forty now.* LAZARUS' *body is softly illumined by its inner light. The change in him is marked. He seems ten years younger, at the prime of forty. His body has become less angular and stiff. His movements are graceful and pliant. The change is even more noticeable in his face, which has filled out, become purer in outline, more distinctly Grecian. His complexion is the red-brown of rich earth, the gray in his black, curly beard has almost disappeared*]

[*He makes a sign and the music ceases. His* FOLLOWERS *remain fixed in their dancing attitudes like figures in a frieze. Each member of the mob remains frozen in a distorted posture. He stares down at the mob pityingly, his face calm*]

LAZARUS

[*Speaks amid a profound silence. His voice releases his own dancers and the mob from their fixed attitudes. The music begins to play again within the house, very soft and barely audible, swelling up and down like the sound of an organ from a distant church*]

You laugh, but your laughter is guilty! It laughs a hyena laughter, spotted, howling its hungry fear of life! That day I returned did I not tell you your fear was no more, that there is no death? You believed then—for a moment! You laughed—discordantly, hoarsely, but with a groping toward joy. What! Have you so soon forgotten, that now your laughter curses life again as of old?

[*He pauses—then sadly*]

That is your tragedy! You forget! You forget the God in you! You wish to forget! Remembrance would imply the high duty to live as a son of God—generously!—with love!—with pride!—with laughter! This is too glorious a victory for you, too terrible a loneliness! Easier to forget, to become only a man, the son of a woman, to hide from life against her breast, to whimper your fear to her resigned heart and be comforted by her resignation! To live by denying life!

[*Then exhortingly*]

Why are your eyes always either fixed on the ground in weariness of thought, or watching one another with suspicion? Throw your gaze upward! To Eternal Life! To the fearless and deathless! The everlasting! To the stars!

[*He stretches out his arms to the sky—then suddenly points*]

See! A new star has appeared! It is the one that shone over Bethlehem!

[*His voice becomes a little bitter and mocking*]

The Master of Peace and Love has departed this earth. Let all stars be for you henceforth symbols of Saviors—Sons of God who appeared on worlds like ours to tell the saving truth to ears like yours, inexorably deaf!

[*Then exaltedly*]

But the greatness of Saviors is that they may not save! The greatness of Man is that no god can save him—until he becomes a god!

[*He stares up at the stars, rapt in contemplation, oblivious to all around him now*]

[*Rapidly approaching from the left a man's voice jarring in high-pitched cruel laughter is heard. They all listen, huddled together like sheep*]

MESSENGER

[*The* THIRD GUEST *of Scene One rushes in breathlessly, shouting*]

The Nazarene has been crucified!

PRIEST

[*With fierce triumph*]

Jehovah is avenged! Hosannah!

ORTHODOX

Hosannah! The false prophet is dead! The pretended Messiah is dead!

[*They jump and dance, embracing one another. The* NAZARENES *stand paralyzed and stunned. The two groups mechanically separate to right and left again, the* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *dividing itself as before*]

MARY

[*In a frenzy of grief*]

Do not believe him! Jesus could not die!

[*But at this moment a Nazarene youth, exhausted by grief and tears, staggers in from the left*]

MESSENGER

[SECOND GUEST *of Scene One*]

Jesus is dead! Our Lord is murdered!

[*He sinks on his knees sobbing. All the* NAZARENES *do likewise, wailing, rending their garments, tearing their hair, some even beating their heads on the ground in the agony of their despair*]

MARY

[*Insane with rage now*]

They have murdered Him!

[*To her followers—savagely*]

An eye for an eye! Avenge the Master!

[*Their frenzy of grief turned into rage, the* NAZARENES *leap to their feet threateningly. Concealed swords and knives are brought out by both sides*]

MIRIAM

[*Leaning over the balustrade—in a voice of entreaty*]

Mary! Brothers!

[*But none heed her or seem to see her.* LAZARUS *and his* FOLLOWERS *remain oblivious to men, arms upstretched toward the stars, their heads thrown back*]

MARY

[*Wildly*]

Vengeance! Death to His murderers!

PRIEST

[*Fiercely to his followers*]

Death to the Nazarenes!

[*With cries of rage the two groups rush on one another. There is a confused tumult of yells, groans, curses, the shrieks of women, the sounds of blows as they meet in a pushing, whirling, struggling mass in which individual figures are indistinguishable. Knives and swords flash above the heads of the mass, hands in every tense attitude of striking, clutching, tearing are seen upraised. As the fight is at its height a* ROMAN CENTURION *and a squad of eight* SOLDIERS *come tramping up at the double-quick. They all are masked. These Roman masks now and henceforth in the play are carried out according to the same formula of Seven Periods, Seven Types, as those of the Jews seen previously, except that the basis of each face is Roman—heavy, domineering, self-complacent, the face of a confident dominant race. The* CENTURION *differs from his soldiers only in being more individualized. He is middle-aged, his soldiers belong to the Period of Manhood. All are of the Simple, Ignorant Type*]

CENTURION

[*Shouts commandingly*]

Disperse!

[*But no one hears him—with angry disgust to his* SOLDIERS]

Charge! Cut them down!

[*The* SOLDIERS *form a wedge and charge with a shout. They soon find it necessary to use their swords, and strike down everyone in their way*]

MIRIAM

Mercy, Romans!

[*As they pay no attention to her, in desperation she embraces* LAZARUS *beseechingly, forcing his attention back to earth*]

Lazarus! Mercy!

LAZARUS

[*Looks down upon the struggling mass and cries in a ringing voice*]

Hold!

[*Each person stands transfixed, frozen in the last movement, even the Roman soldiers and the* CENTURION *himself. Ten dead and mortally wounded lie on the ground, trampled by the feet of friend and foe alike.* LAZARUS *looks at the* CROWD. *To each he seems to look at him or her alone. His eyes are accusing and stern. As one head, the heads of all are averted. Even the* CENTURION *stares at the ground humbly, in spite of himself. Finally* LAZARUS *speaks in a voice of infinite disdain*]

Sometimes it is hard to laugh—even *at* men!

[*He turns his eyes from them, staring straight before him. This seems to release them from their fixed positions. The* NAZARENES *and the* ORTHODOX *separate and slink guiltily apart. The* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *forms again, the apex at the center of the steps as before. A low wail of lamentation arises from them. The two crowds of Nazarenes and Orthodox echo this*]

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*In a wailing chant*]

Woe unto Israel!
Woe unto thee, Jerusalem!
O divided house,
Thou shalt crumble to dust,
And swine shall root
Where thy Temple stood!
Woe unto us!

CROWD

[*In a great echoing cry*]

Woe unto us!

CENTURION

[*Gruffly to hide his embarrassment at being awed by* LAZARUS]

Here, you! Drag your carcasses away!

[*From each side men and women come forward to identify and mourn their dead. The wail of lamentation rises and falls. The* CENTURION *looks up at* LAZARUS—*harshly*]

You, there! Are you he whom they call the Laugher?

LAZARUS

[*Without looking at him—his voice seeming to come from some dream within him*]

I am Lazarus.

CENTURION

Who was brought back from death by enchantment?

LAZARUS

[*Looking down at him now—with a smile, simply*]

No. There is no death!

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

[*Chanting joyously*]

There is no death!

FOLLOWERS

[*Echoing*]

There is no death!

AN ORTHODOX MAN

[*Bending beside the body of* LAZARUS' FATHER]

Here is your father, Lazarus. He is dead.

AN ORTHODOX WOMAN

This is your mother, Lazarus. She is dead.

A NAZARENE

Here is your sister, Martha, Lazarus. She is dead.

A NAZARENE WOMAN

And this is Mary, Lazarus. She is dead.

MIRIAM

[*Suddenly—with deep grief*]

And Jesus who was the Son of Man, who

loved you and gave you life again has died, Lazarus—has died!

LAZARUS

[*In a great triumphant voice*]

Yes! Yes!! Yes!!! Men die! Even a Son of Man must die to show men that Man may live! But there is no death!

CENTURION

[*At first in a tone of great awe—to his* SOLDIERS]

Is he a god?

[*Then gruffly, ashamed of his question*]

Come down, Jew! I have orders to bring you to Rome to Cæsar!

LAZARUS

[*As if he were answering not the* CENTURION *but the command of his fate from the sky*]

Yes!

[*He walks down the narrow stairs and,* MIRIAM *following him, comes down the path to the road. He goes and kneels for a moment each beside the bodies of his* FATHER, MOTHER, *and* SISTERS *and kisses each in turn on the forehead. For a moment the struggle with his grief can be seen in his face. Then he looks up to the stars and, as if answering a question, again says simply and acceptingly*]

Yes!

[*Then exultantly*]

Yes!!

[*And begins to laugh from the depths of his exalted spirit. The laughter of his* CHORUS *and then of his* FOLLOWERS *echoes his. The music and dancing begin again*]

[*The* CENTURION *grins sheepishly. The* SOLDIERS *chuckle. The* CENTURION *laughs awkwardly. The* SOLDIERS *laugh. The music from the house and the laughter of the* FOLLOWERS *grow louder. The infection spreads to the* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *whose swaying grief falls into the rhythm of the laughter and music as does that of the mourners*]

LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS

[*Led by their* CHORUS]

Laugh! Laugh!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*Torn by the conflict—torturedly*]

Ha-ha-ha—
Woe to us, woe!

CROWD

[*Beside the bodies*]

Woe to us, woe!
Ha-ha—!

CENTURION

[*Laughingly*]

You are brave, you Laugher! Remember Tiberius never laughs! And boast not to Cæsar there is no death, or he will invent a new one for you!

LAZARUS

[*With a smile*]

But all death is men's invention! So laugh!

[*He laughs and the* CENTURION *and* SOLDIERS *laugh with him, half dancing clumsily now to the beat of the music*]

CHORUS OF LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS

Laugh! Laugh!
Fear is no more!
There is no death!
There is only life!
There is only laughter!

FOLLOWERS

[*Dancing*]

Laugh! Laugh!
Fear is no more!
Death is dead!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

[*Forgetting their grief—their eyes on* LAZARUS *now, their arms outstretched to him as are those of the crowd*

grouped around the bodies but forgetting them]

Death is no more!
Death is dead!
Laugh!

CROWD

Laugh! Laugh!
Death is no more!

CENTURION

[*Laughing, to his laughing* SOLDIERS]

Forward!

[*They tramp, dancing, off*]

[LAZARUS *and* MIRIAM *start to follow*]

MIRIAM

[*Suddenly pointing to his* FOLLOWERS *who are dancing and laughing obliviously—pityingly*]

But your faithful ones who love you, Lazarus?

LAZARUS

[*Simply, with a trace of a sad sternness*]

This is their test. Their love must remember—or it must forget. Come!

[*With a last gesture back like a blessing on all he is leaving, he goes. The laughter of the* SOLDIERS *recedes. That of the* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *and of the* CROWD *falters and breaks into lamenting grief again, guilt-stricken because of its laughter*]

CHORUS OF OLD MEN

Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!
Laugh!—But woe!
There lie our dead!
Oh shame and guilt!
We forget our dead!

CROWD

[*With fierce remorseful grief*]

Woe to us, woe!
There lie our dead!

CHORUS OF LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS

[*Their voices and the music growing more and more hesitating and faint*]

Laugh! Laugh!
There is only life!
There is only—
Laugh—

[*Their dance is faltering and slow now*]

Fear is no—
Death is—
Laugh—

[*The music and dancing and voices cease. The lights in the windows, which have been growing dim, go out. There is a second of complete, death-like silence. The mourning folk in the foreground are frozen figures of grief. Then a sudden swelling chorus of forlorn bewilderment, a cry of lost children comes from the* CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS *and the* FOLLOWERS *themselves. They huddle into groups on the roof and on the terrace. They stretch their arms out in every direction supplicatingly*]

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

Oh, Lazarus, laugh!
Do not forsake us!
We forget!
Where is thy love fled?
Give back thy laughter,
Thy fearless laughter!
We forget!

FOLLOWERS

Give back thy laughter!
We forget!

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

[*With dull, resigned terror now*]

Death slinks out
Of his grave in the heart!
Ghosts of fear
Creep back in the brain!
We remember fear!
We remember death!

FOLLOWERS

Death in the heart!
Fear in the brain!

We remember fear!
We remember death!

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

[*Wailing hopelessly now*]

Forgotten is laughter!
We remember
Only death!
Fear is God!
Forgotten is laughter!
Life is death!

FOLLOWERS

Forgotten is laughter!
Life is death!

ALL

[*The* CHORUS OF OLD MEN *and the* CROWD *joining in*]

Life is a fearing,
A long dying,
From birth to death!
God is a slayer!
Life is death!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

SCENE: *Some months later. A square in Athens about ten o'clock at night. In the rear, pure and beautiful in the light of a full moon, is the façade of a temple. An excited crowd of Greeks of both sexes is gathered in the square as if for some public festival. They are masked according to the scheme of Seven Periods in Seven Types of Character for each sex. Here, of course, the foundation of the mask is the Grecian type of face.*

On the left, the CHORUS OF GREEKS *is grouped, seven in number, facing front, in the spearhead formation. As before the* CHORUS *wears masks double the life size of the* CROWD *masks. They are all of the Proud Self-Reliant type, in the period of Young Manhood.*

These seven are clad in goat skins, their tanned bodies and masks daubed and stained with wine lees, in imitation of the old followers of DIONYSUS. *Rumor has led them to hope and believe that* LAZARUS *may be the reincarnation of this deity.*

The people in the crowd are holding themselves in restraint with difficulty; they stir and push about restlessly with an eager curiosity and impatience. All eyes are fixed off left. A buzz of voices hums in the air.

Acting as police, a number of Roman legionaries (masked like the soldiers of Scene Two) armed with staves, keep back the crowd from the line of the street that runs from left to right, front. They resent this duty, which has already kept them there a long time, and are surly and quick-tempered with the Greeks.

At front, pacing impatiently up and down, is a young Roman noble of twenty-one, clad richly, wearing beautifully wrought armor and helmet. This is GAIUS, *the heir of Tiberius Cæsar, nicknamed* CALIGULA *by the soldiers in whose encampments he was born and where he spent his childhood. His body is bony and angular, almost malformed, with wide, powerful shoulders and long arms and hands, and short, skinny, hairy legs like an ape's. He wears a half-mask of crimson, dark with a purplish tinge, that covers the upper part of his face to below the nose. This mask accentuates his bulging, prematurely wrinkled forehead, his hollow temples and his bulbous, sensual nose. His large troubled eyes, of a glazed greenish-blue, glare out with a shifty feverish suspicion at everyone. Below his mask his own skin is of an œnemic transparent pallor. Above it, his hair is the curly blond hair of a child of six or seven. His mouth also is childish, the red lips soft and feminine in outline. Their expression is spoiled, petulant and self-obsessed, weak but domineering. In combination with the rest of the face there is an appalling morbid significance to his mouth. One feels that its boyish cruelty, encouraged as a manly attribute in the coarse brutality of camps, has long ago become naïvely insensitive to any human suffering but its own.*

Walking with CALIGULA *is* CNEIUS CRASSUS, *a Roman general—a squat, muscular man of sixty, his mask that of a heavy battered face full of coarse humor.*

CHORUS OF GREEKS

[*Intoning solemnly*]

Soon the God comes!
Redeemer and Savior!
Dionysus, Son of Man and a God!

GREEK CROWD

[*Echoing*]

Soon the God comes
Redeemer and Savior!
Dionysus!

FIRST GREEK

They say an unearthly flame burns in this Lazarus!

SECOND GREEK

The sacred fire! He must be the Fire-born, the son of Zeus!

THIRD GREEK

Many who have seen him swear he is Dionysus, rearisen from Hades!

FOURTH GREEK

[*Importantly*]

I saw Lazarus at Antioch where the galley on which they were taking him to Rome had been thrice blown back by a storm. Fear of this warning omen is why they now march with him by land.

FIRST GREEK

Does he truly resemble a god?

FOURTH GREEK

[*Impressively*]

One look in his eyes while his laughter sings in your ears and you forget sorrow! You dance! You laugh! It is as if a heavy weight you had been carrying all your life without knowing it suddenly were lifted. You are like a cloud, you can fly, your mind reels with laughter, you are drunk with joy!

[*Solemnly*]

Take my word for it, he is indeed a god. Everywhere the people have acclaimed him. He heals the sick, he raises the dead, by laughter.

SEVENTH GREEK

But I have heard that when he has gone people cannot remember his laughter, that the dead are dead again and the sick die, and the sad grow more sorrowful.

FIFTH GREEK

Well, we shall soon see with our own eyes. But why should the God return in the body of a Jew?

SIXTH GREEK

What better disguise if he wishes to remain unknown? The fools of Romans will never suspect him!

THIRD GREEK

[*Laughing*]

Never! They are beginning to claim he is a Roman!

FIFTH GREEK

So much the better! He will be in their confidence!

FOURTH GREEK

He will lead us against Rome! He will laugh our tyrants into the sea! Ha!

[*He turns toward the Romans and laughs sneeringly. This is taken up by the* CROWD—*unpleasant, resentful laughter. They push forward aggressively and almost sweep the soldiers from their feet*]

CRASSUS

[*Angrily*]

Drive them back!

CALIGULA

[*Suddenly with a distorted warped smile*]

Order them to use their swords, Cneius. Let the scum look at their dead and learn respect for us!

SOLDIERS

[*Shoving and whacking*]

Back! Step back! Back there!

[*The crowd push back to their former line. There are muttered curses, groans, protests, which subside into the former hum of expectancy*]

CALIGULA

[*With the same smile*]

The sword, my old hyena! Corpses are so educational!

CRASSUS

[*Surlily*]

I would like to, I promise you! When I see how they hate us—!

CALIGULA

[*Carelessly*]

Let them hate—so long as they fear us! We must keep death dangling

[*He makes the gesture of doing so*]

before their eyes!

[*He gives a soft, cruel laugh*]

Will you not sacrifice in my honor? What are a few Greeks?

[*Queerly*]

I like to watch men die.

CRASSUS

I dare not, Caligula. Cæsar has forbidden bloodshed.

CALIGULA

Tiberius is a miser. He wants to hoard all of death for his own pleasure!

[*He laughs again*]

CRASSUS

[*With rough familiarity*]

I wager no one will make that complaint against you when you are Cæsar!

[*He chuckles*]

CALIGULA

[*With the sudden grandiose posturing of a bad actor unintentionally burlesquing grandeur*]

When I, Gaius Caligula, am Cæsar, I—

[*Then superstitiously looking up at the sky with cringing foreboding*]

But it brings bad luck to anticipate fate.

[*He takes off his helmet and spits in it—then with a grim smile*]

The heirs of a Cæsar take sick so mysteriously! Even with you who used to ride me on your knee, I do not eat nor drink until you have tasted first.

CRASSUS

[*Nodding approvingly*]

You are sensible. I suppose I, too, have my price—if they were only clever enough to discover it!

[*He laughs hoarsely*]

CALIGULA

[*Steps back from him with an uneasy shudder*]

You are honest, at least—too honest, Cneius!

[*Grimly*]

If my father Germanicus had had you for his counselor, he might have escaped their poison.

[*Then gloomily*]

I must fear everyone. The world is my enemy.

CRASSUS

Kill it then!

[*He laughs again*]

CHORUS

[*Stretching out their arms in the direction from which* LAZARUS *is expected—supplicatingly*]

Son of the Lightning!
Deadly thy vengeance!
Swift thy deliverance!
Beholding thy Mother,
Greece, our Mother,
Her beauty in bondage,
Her pride in chains!
Hasten, Redeemer!

CROWD

[*As before—echoing the chant*]

Hasten, Redeemer!
Son of the Lightning!
Deadly thy vengeance!
Swift thy deliverance!

CALIGULA

[*Disdainfully*]

What clods! Mob is the same everywhere, eager to worship any new charlatan! They have already convinced themselves this Lazarus is a reincarnation of Dionysus! A Jew become a god! By the breasts of Venus that *is* a miracle!

[*He laughs*]

CRASSUS

[*Seriously*]

But he must be expert in magic. He was buried four days and came out unharmed. Maybe he is not a Jew. Some say his father was really a legionary of our garrison in Judea. And he teaches people to laugh at death. That smacks of Roman blood!

CALIGULA

[*Ironically*]

Better still! He tells them there is no death at all! Hence the multitude of fools who have acclaimed him everywhere since he left his own country—and why Tiberius has begun to fear his influence.

CRASSUS

[*Sententiously*]

Whom Cæsar fears—disappears!

CALIGULA

Yes, the dupes who follow Lazarus will be killed. But Tiberius believes this Lazarus may know a cure for death or for renewing youth, and the old lecher hopes he can worm the secret out of him—before he kills him.

[*He laughs ironically, then disgustedly*]

That is why I must escort this Jew to Rome—as a special honor!

[*With fierce, haughty resentment*]

I, the heir of Cæsar!

[*Savagely*]

Oh, if I were Cæsar—!

CRASSUS

[*With a coarse, meaning smirk*]

Patience. Tiberius is old.

CALIGULA

[*Suddenly becoming terribly uneasy at some thought*]

Cneius! What if this Lazarus has really discovered a cure for old age and should reveal it to Tiberius!

[*His lips tremble, his eyes are terrified, he shrinks against* CRASSUS *for protection—with boyish pleading*]

Oh, Cneius, what could I do then?

CRASSUS

[*Matter-of-factly*]

Kill him before Cæsar can talk to him.

CALIGULA

[*Almost in tears*]

But if he knows a charm against death how could he be slain, old fool?

CRASSUS

[*Gruffly*]

Bah!

[*Then with grim humor*]

Death in bed I suspect, but when men are killed I know they stay dead!

[*Disgustedly*]

A moment ago you were laughing at him!

[*Scornfully*]

Do you fear him now?

CALIGULA

[*Rather shamefacedly pulls himself together—then broodingly*]

I fear everyone who lives. Even you. As you advised me.

[*He turns away*]

CRASSUS

[*Contemptuously*]

Well, maybe he can teach you to laugh at

fear. You would welcome him then, eh, cry baby?

CALIGULA

[*With sudden passionate intensity but only half aloud as if to himself*]

I would love him, Cneius! As a father! As a god!

[*He stands staring before him strangely. There is a new stir from the crowd who again push forward*]

CRASSUS

[*Pointing off right*]

Look! I see a great crowd! Your Lazarus must be coming at last!

CHORUS

[*Chanting in a deep, rhythmic monotone like the rising and falling cadences of waves on a beach*]

He comes, the Redeemer and Savior!
Laughing along the mountains!
To give back our lost laughter
To raise from the dead our freedom
To free us from Rome!

CROWD

[*Echoing this chant*]

Fire-born! Redeemer! Savior!
Raise from the dead our freedom!
Give back our lost laughter!
Free us from Rome!

[*They have been pushing forward, more and more fiercely and defiantly. The* ROMAN SOLDIERS *in spite of their efforts are pushed backward step by step*]

SOLDIERS

[*Angrily*]

Back! Back!

[*The* SOLDIERS *work with a will, dealing out blows with their staves at everyone in reach. But now these blows seem only to infuriate the* CROWD *which steadily pushes them back into the street. At the same time the distant sound of exultant music, singing and laughter becomes steadily louder. Both* SOLDIERS *and* CROWD *are inspired to battle by these strains without their knowing it.* CALIGULA *is listening spell-bound, his mouth open, his body swaying and twitching. Even* CRASSUS *stares off at the oncomers, forgetful of the growing plight of his* SOLDIERS]

CROWD

[*Led by their* CHORUS—*angrily*]

Cowards! Pigs!
Strike! Hit!
Stones! Knives!
Stab! Kill!
Death to the Romans!
Death!

A SOLDIER

[*Alarmed, calls to* CRASSUS]

General! Let us use our swords!

SOLDIERS

[*Enraged—eagerly*]

Yes! Swords!

CROWD

Death!

CRASSUS

[*Turning—uneasy but afraid to give any drastic order*]

Bah! Staves are enough. Crack their skulls!

CROWD

[*Led by the* CHORUS—*defiantly*]

Death to Crassus!
Drunkard! Coward!
Death to him!

[*They continue to push forward, hooting and jeering*]

CRASSUS

[*Exploding for a second*]

By the gods—!

[*To the* SOLDIERS]

Draw your swords!

[*The troops do so eagerly. The* CROWD

sag back momentarily with exclamations of fear]

CALIGULA

[*Listening as in a trance to the music and what is going on behind him—in a queer whisper*]

Kill, Cneius! Let me dance! Let me sing!

[*The music and crashing of cymbals and the ferment of passions around him cause him to lose all control over himself. He gives a crazy leap in the air and begins to dance grotesquely and chant in a thick voice*]

He is coming! Death, the Deliverer! Kill, soldiers! I command you! I, Caligula! I will be Cæsar! Death!

CROWD

[*Led by the* CHORUS—*savage now*]

Beast! Cur!
Death to Caligula!

[*They crowd forward*]

CALIGULA

[*Drawing his sword and flourishing it drunkenly—his eyes glazed*]

Death!

CRASSUS

[*Drawing his own sword in a frenzy*]

Strike! Death!

[*His* SOLDIERS *raise their swords. The* CROWD *have raised whatever weapons they have found—knives, clubs, daggers, stones, bare fists*]

CHORUS

[*Chanting fiercely*]

Death!

ALL

[ROMANS *and* GREEKS *alike as one great voice*]

Death!

[*The chorused word beats down all sound into a stricken silence. The wild joyous music ceases. The Romans and Greeks seem to lean back from one another and collect strength to leap forward. At this moment the voice of* LAZARUS *comes ringing through the air like a command from the sky*]

LAZARUS

There is no death!

[*The* SOLDIERS *and* GREEKS *remain frozen in their attitudes of murderous hate. Following his words the laughter of* LAZARUS *is heard, exultant and gaily mocking, filling them with the sheepish shame of children caught in mischief. Their hands hang, their arms sink to their sides. The music starts once more with a triumphant clash of cymbals,* LAZARUS' *laughter is echoed from the throats of the multitude of his* FOLLOWERS *who now come dancing into the square, preceded by a band of masked musicians and by their* CHORUS.

[*This* CHORUS *wears, in double size, the laughing mask of* LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS *in the same Period and Type as in the preceding scene, except that here the mask of each member of the* CHORUS *has a different racial basis—Egyptian, Syrian, Cappadocian, Lydian, Phrygian, Cilician, Parthian. The* FOLLOWERS *are costumed and masked as in the preceding scene, seven Types in seven Periods, except that, as in the* CHORUS, *racially there are many nations represented. All have wreathes of ivy in their hair and flowers in their hands which they scatter about. They whirl in between the* SOLDIERS *and* CROWD, *forcing them back from each other, teasing them, sifting into the* CROWD, *their* CHORUS *in a half circle, confronting the* CHORUS OF GREEKS]

10

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

Laugh! Laugh!
There is no death!
There is only life!
There is only laughter!

FOLLOWERS

[*Echoing*]

Laugh! Laugh!

There is no death!

[CALIGULA *and* CRASSUS *are swept to one side, left. Then the cries and laughter of all become mingled into one exclamation:*

ALL

Lazarus! Lazarus!

[*The squad of* ROMAN SOLDIERS *led by the* CENTURION, *who had taken* LAZARUS *prisoner, march in with dancers' steps, like a proud guard of honor now, laughing, pulling a chariot in which* LAZARUS *stands dressed in a tunic of white and gold, his bronzed face and limbs radiant in the halo of his own glowing light*]

[LAZARUS *now looks less than thirty-five. His countenance now might well be that of the positive masculine Dionysus, closest to the soil of the Grecian Gods, a Son of Man, born of a mortal. Not the coarse, drunken Dionysus, nor the effeminate God, but Dionysus in his middle period, more comprehensive in his symbolism, the soul of the recurring seasons, of living and dying as processes in eternal growth, of the wine of life stirring forever in the sap and blood and loam of things.* MIRIAM *is beside him, dressed in black, smiling the same sad tender smile, holding* LAZARUS' *arm as if for protection and in protection. She appears older, a woman over forty-five*]

CHORUS OF GREEKS

[*Rushing to* LAZARUS' *car*]

Hail, Dionysus!
Iacchus!
Lazarus!
Hail!

[*They surround him, throw over his shoulders and head the finely dressed hide of a bull with great gilded horns, force into his right hand the mystic rod of Dionysus with a pine cone on top, then prostrate themselves*]

Hail, Savior!
Redeemer!
Conqueror of Death!

ALL

[*In a repeated chorus which finally includes even the* ROMAN SOLDIERS, *raising their arms to him*]

Hail, Lazarus!
Redeemer!
Hail!

[*They are silent.* LAZARUS *looks at them, seeming to see each and all at the same time, and his laughter, as if in answer to their greetings, is heard rising from his lips like a song*]

CRASSUS

[*Awed*]

Look! He is more than man!

CALIGULA

[*Trembling, in a queer agitation*]

I dare not look!

CRASSUS

Do you hear his laughter?

CALIGULA

[*Chokingly—puts his hands over his ears*]

I will not hear!

CRASSUS

But you must welcome him in Cæsar's name!

CALIGULA

[*His teeth chattering*]

I must kill him!

LAZARUS

[*Looking directly at him—gaily mocking*]

Death is dead, Caligula!

[*He begins to laugh again softly*]

CALIGULA

[*With an hysterical cry of defiant terror*]

You lie!

[*Sword in hand he whirls to confront* LAZARUS, *but at the first sight of his face he stops in his tracks, trembling,*

held fascinated by LAZARUS' *eyes, mumbling with a last pitiful remainder of defiance*]

But—you lie—whatever you are! I say there *must* be death!

[*The sword has fallen to his side. He stares open-mouthed at* LAZARUS. *There is something of a shy, wondering child about his attitude now.* LAZARUS *looks at him, laughing with gentle understanding.* CALIGULA *suddenly drops his sword and covering his face with his hands weeps like a boy who has been hurt*]

You have murdered my only friend, Lazarus! Death would have been my slave when I am Cæsar. He would have been my jester and made me laugh at fear!

[*He weeps bitterly*]

LAZARUS

[*Gaily*]

Be your own jester instead, O Caligula! Laugh at yourself, O Cæsar-to-be!

[*He laughs. The* CROWD *now all join in with him*]

[CALIGULA *suddenly uncovers his face, grins his warped grin, gives a harsh cackle which cracks through the other laughter with a splitting discord, cuts a hopping caper like some grotesque cripple which takes him to the side of* LAZARUS' *chariot where he squats on his hams and, stretching out his hand, fingers* LAZARUS' *robe inquisitively and stares up into his face in the attitude of a chained monkey*]

CALIGULA

[*With a childish, mischievous curiosity*]

Then if there is no death, O Teacher, tell me why I love to kill?

LAZARUS

Because you fear to die!

[*Then gaily mocking*]

But what do you matter, O Deathly-Important One? Put yourself that question—as a jester!

[*Exultantly*]

Are you a speck of dust danced in the wind? Then laugh, dancing! Laugh yes to your insignificance! Thereby will be born your new greatness! As Man, Petty Tyrant of Earth, you are a bubble pricked by death into a void and a mocking silence! But as dust, you are eternal change, and everlasting growth, and a high note of laughter soaring through chaos from the deep heart of God! Be proud, O Dust! Then you may love the stars as equals!

[*Then mockingly again*]

And then perhaps you may be brave enough to love even your fellow men without fear of their vengeance!

CALIGULA

[*Dully*]

I cannot understand. I hate men. I am afraid of their poison and their swords and the cringing envy in their eyes that only yields to fear!

LAZARUS

[*Gaily mocking*]

Tragic is the plight of the tragedian whose only audience is himself! Life is for each man a solitary cell whose walls are mirrors. Terrified is Caligula by the faces he makes! But I tell you to laugh in the mirror, that seeing your life gay, you may begin to live as a guest, and not as a condemned one!

[*Raising his hands for silence—with a playful smile*]

Listen! In the dark peace of the grave the man called Lazarus rested. He was still weak, as one who recovers from a long illness—for, living, he had believed his life a sad one!

[*He laughs softly, and softly they all echo his laughter*]

He lay dreaming to the croon of silence, feeling as the flow of blood in his own veins the past reënter the heart of God to be renewed by faith into the future. He thought: 'Men call this death'—for he had been dead only a little while and he still remembered. Then, of a sudden, a strange gay laughter trembled from his heart as though his life, so long repressed in him by fear, had found at last its voice and a song for singing. 'Men call this death,' it sang. 'Men call life death and fear it. They hide from it in horror. Their lives are spent in hiding. Their fear becomes their living. They worship life as death!'

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

[*In a chanting echo*]

Men call life death and fear it.
They hide from it in horror.
Their lives are spent in hiding.
Their fear becomes their living.
They worship life as death!

LAZARUS

And here the song of Lazarus' life grew pitiful. 'Men must learn to live,' it mourned. 'Before their fear invented death they knew, but now they have forgotten. They must be taught to laugh again!' And Lazarus answered 'Yes!'

[*He now addresses the crowd—especially* CALIGULA, *directly, laughingly*]

Thus sang his life to Lazarus while he lay dead! Man must learn to live by laughter!

[*He laughs*]

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS

Laugh! Laugh!
There is only life!
There is only laughter!
Fear is no more!
Death is dead!

CHORUS OF GREEKS

Laugh! Laugh!
Hail, Dionysus!
Fear is no more!
Thou hast conquered death!

ALL

[*Laughing—in a great laughing chorus*]

Laugh! Laugh!
Fear is no more!
Death is dead!

LAZARUS

[*As to a crowd of children—laughingly*]

Out with you! Out into the woods! Upon the hills! Cities are prisons wherein man locks himself from life. Out with you under the sky! Are the stars too pure for your sick passions? Is the warm earth smelling of night too desirous of love for your pale introspective lusts? Out! Let laughter be your new clean lust and sanity! So far man has only learned to snicker meanly at his neighbor! Let a laughing away of self be your new right to live forever! Cry in your pride, 'I am Laughter, which is Life, which is the Child of God!'

[*He laughs and again his voice leads and dominates the rhythmic chorus of theirs. The music and dancing begin again*]

THE TWO CHORUSES

[*Chanting in unison*]

Laugh! Laugh!
There is only God!
We are His Laughter!

ALL

[*Echoing*]

There is only God!
We are His Laughter!
Laugh! Laugh!

[*They take hold of his chariot traces, and as he had come, in the midst of a happy multitude, now augmented by all the* GREEKS, *and the* ROMAN SOLDIERS *who had awaited him, dancing, playing, singing, laughing, he is escorted off. The noise of their passing recedes.* CALIGULA *and* CRASSUS *are left in the empty square, the former squatting on his hams, monkey-wise, and brooding somberly*]

CRASSUS

[*Is swaying and staggering, like a man in a drunken stupor, in a bewildered, stubborn struggle to control himself. He stammers after the* SOLDIERS]

Ha-ha-ha—Halt! Halt, I say! No use—they are gone—mutiny—Halt!

[*He continues to stumble toward left*]

Ha-ha—Stop it, curse you! Am I laughing? Where am I going? After Lazarus? Thirty years of discipline and I—Halt, traitor! Remember Cæsar! Remember Rome! Halt, traitor!

[*He faints with the violence of his struggle and falls in a limp heap*]

CALIGULA

[*Startled by his fall, terrified, hops to his*

feet and snatches up his sword defensively, glancing over his shoulder and whirling around as if he expected someone to stab him in the back. Then, forcing a twisted grin of self-contempt —harshly]

Coward! What do I fear—if there is no death?

[As if he had to cut something, he snatches up a handful of flowers—desperately]

You must laugh, Caligula!

[He starts to lop off the flowers from their stems with a savage intentness]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!

[Finally, impatiently, he cuts off all the remaining with one stroke]

Laugh!

[He grinds the petals under his feet and breaks out into a terrible hysterical giggle]

Ha-ha—

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *A midnight, months later. Immediately inside the walls of Rome. In the foreground is the portico of a temple between whose massive columns one looks across a street on a lower level to the high wall of Rome at the extreme rear. In the center of the wall is a great metal gate. The night is thick and oppressive. In the sky overhead lightning flashes and thunder rumbles and crashes but there is no rain. Within the portico on rows of chairs placed on a series of wide steps which are on each side, members of the Senate are seated in their white robes. High hanging lamps cast a wan light over their faces. They are all masked in the Roman mask, refined in them by nobility of blood but at the same time with strength degenerated, corrupted by tyranny and debauchery to an exhausted cynicism. The three periods of Middle Age, Maturity and Old Age are represented in the types of the Self-Tortured, Introspective; Proud, Self-Reliant; the Servile, Hypocritical; the Cruel, Revengeful; and the Resigned, Sorrowful. The* SENATORS *are divided into two groups on each side, thirty in each. Seated in the middle of the lower of the three high broad stairs that lead to the level from which the columns rise is the* CHORUS OF SENATORS, *seven in number, facing front, in double-sized masks of the Servile, Hypocritical type of Old Age.*

LAZARUS, in his robe of white and gold, the aura of light surrounding his body seeming to glow more brightly than ever, stands in the rear at the edge of the portico, center, gazing upward into the pall of sky beyond the wall. His figure appears in its immobility to be the statue of the god of the temple. Near him, but to the rear and to the left of him, facing right, MIRIAM *is kneeling in her black robes, swaying backward and forward, praying silently with moving lips like a nun who asks mercy for the sins of the world. She has grown much older, her hair is gray, her shoulders are bowed.*

On the other side, placed similarly in relation to LAZARUS *and facing* MIRIAM, CALIGULA *is squatting on his hams on a sort of throne-chair of ivory and gold. He is dressed with foppish richness in extreme bright colors, a victory wreath around his head. He stares blinkingly and inquisitively at* LAZARUS, *then at* MIRIAM. *He is half-drunk. A large figured goblet of gold is in his hand. A slave with an amphora of wine crouches on the steps by his chair. The slave wears a black negroid mask.*

At the opening of the scene there is heard the steady tramp of departing troops, whose masks, helmets and armored shoulders can be seen as they pass through the street before LAZARUS *to the gate beyond. Finally with a metallic clash the gate is shut behind them and there is a heavy and oppressive silence in which only the murmured prayers of* MIRIAM *are heard.*

CHORUS OF THE SENATE

[Intones wearily, as if under a boring compulsion]

The Roman Senate
Is the Roman Senate
The Mighty Voice
Of the Roman People
As long as Rome is Rome.

CALIGULA

[As if he hadn't heard—sings hoarsely

an old camp song of the Punic Wars, pounding with his goblet]

A bold legionary am I!
March, oh march on!
A Roman eagle was my daddy,
My mother was a drunken drabby
Oh, march on to the wars!

Since lived that Lady Leda
March, oh march on!
Women have loved high-fliers
And we are eagles of Rome!
Oh march on to the wars!

Comrades, march to the wars!
There's pretty girls in Carthage
And wine to swill in Carthage,
So we must capture Carthage
And fight for Mother Rome!

[*Holds out his goblet to be refilled. There is silence again. He stares at* LAZARUS *with a somber intentness. He says thickly*]

The legions have gone, Lazarus.

[LAZARUS *gives no evidence of having heard him.* CALIGULA *gulps at his wine. The* SENATORS *begin to talk to each other in low voices*]

FIRST SENATOR

How does that Jew make that light come from him, I wonder? It is a well-contrived bit of magic.

SECOND SENATOR

What are we waiting for? A messenger came to me with Cæsar's command that the Senate meet here at midnight.

THIRD SENATOR

[*Bored*]

Some new whim of Tiberius, naturally—

[*With a meaning titter*]

—or rather I should say, unnaturally!

FOURTH SENATOR

Perhaps Cæsar has decided to abolish our august body by a massacre in mass!

THIRD SENATOR

[*Yawning*]

There was a feast at Cinna's last night that lasted until this evening. I could welcome my own murder as an excuse for sleeping!

FIFTH SENATOR

[*Pompously*]

Tiberius would not dare harm the Senate. He may mistreat individual Senators, but the Roman Senate is the Roman Senate!

CHORUS OF THE SENATE

[*As before—wearily as if under a boring compulsion—intones*]

While Rome is Rome
The Senate is the Senate
The Mighty Voice of the Roman People.

FIRST SENATOR

[*With the ghost of a laugh—wearily*]

The Senate is an empty name—a pack of degenerate cowards with no trace of their ancient nobility or courage remaining—that and no more!

THIRD SENATOR

[*Flippantly*]

You are too severe with yourself, Lucius!

[*A titter of laughter*]

FIRST SENATOR

[*Wearily*]

A degenerate coward. I am, I confess it. So are you too, Sulpicius—a hundred fold! —whether you admit it or not.

[SULPICIUS *laughs weakly without taking offense*]

SIXTH SENATOR

[*After a pause—sighing*]

In truth, the Senate is not what it used to be. I can remember—

FIRST SENATOR

Let us forget, if we can!

[*Then impatiently*]

What are we doing here?

SECOND SENATOR

I imagine it has something to do with the

followers of this Lazarus encamped outside the wall. Probably the legions are to butcher them in their sleep.

SEVENTH SENATOR

And what part do we play—official witnesses? But how can we witness at night and through a wall?

[*With bored resignation*]

Ah well, the moods of Tiberius are strange, to say the least. But Cæsar is Cæsar.

CHORUS

[*Again with bored weariness as before*]

Hail!
Cæsar is Cæsar
The August One
Prince of the Senate
Tribune over Tribunes
Consul of Consuls
Supreme Pontiff
Emperor of Rome
God among Gods
Hail!

FIRST SENATOR

[*After a pause of silence—dryly*]

Cæsar is a beast—and a madman!

FIFTH SENATOR

[*Pompously*]

Respect, sir! More respect for Cæsar!

THIRD SENATOR

[*Mockingly*]

Or caution, Lucius. One of us might repeat your opinion to him.

FIRST SENATOR

You would if it would pay you. But all my money is squandered. My death is worthless to Tiberius. He would not reward you. Moreover, you would not be revenged on me, for I long for death.

THIRD SENATOR

[*Dryly*]

Your stomach must be out of order.

FIRST SENATOR

The times are out of order. But let us change the subject. Is it true Tiberius has fled to Capri?

FOURTH SENATOR

Yes. He was terrified by the multitude of laughing idiots who appeared today with that charlatan.

[*He points to* LAZARUS]

SECOND SENATOR

There are thousands of them outside the wall. Cæsar refused to let them enter the city. The story is, this Lazarus was dead four days and then restored himself to life by magic.

FIRST SENATOR

I have a mind to question him.

[*Calls as to a slave*]

You, there! Jew, turn round! In the name of the Senate!

[LAZARUS *seems not to hear him.* LUCIUS *remarks with a weary smile*]

So much for our authority!

SIXTH SENATOR

[*With injured dignity*]

What insolence!

[*In a rage*]

Ho, barbarian cur, turn round! The Senate commands you!

[LAZARUS *does not seem to hear, but* CALIGULA *turns on them fiercely*]

CALIGULA

Silence! Leave him alone!

[*With insulting scorn*]

I, Caligula, command *you*!

[*The* SENATORS *seem to shrink back from him in fear, all but* LUCIUS, *who answers with a mocking servility*]

FIRST SENATOR

At least, grant us the boon to see this corpse's face, O Gracious Gaius!

CALIGULA

[*Fixing his cruel, burning eyes on him—softly*]

I heard you wish for death, Lucius. When I am Cæsar you shall scream and pray for it!

FIRST SENATOR

[*Dryly and haughtily*]

You were bred in camp, Gaius. You should have learned more courage there along with your coarseness. But accept my gratitude for your warning. I shall take care to die before you become Cæsar—and life becomes too idiotic!

CALIGULA

[*His grin becoming ferocious with cruelty*]

No. You are too weak to kill yourself. Look at me, Lucius! I am imagining what I shall have done to you!

[*The* SENATORS *are now trembling. Even* LUCIUS *cannot repress a shudder of horror at the face glaring at him. Suddenly* CALIGULA *throws the cup from him and springs to his feet*]

What good is wine if it cannot kill thought? Lazarus! It is time. I must give the signal! The legions are waiting. It is Cæsar's command that they spare none of your followers.

[*He has walked toward* LAZARUS]

MIRIAM

[*Stretches out her hands to* CALIGULA *imploringly*]

Mercy! Spare them who are so full of life and joy!

CALIGULA

[*Harshly*]

For their joy I will revenge myself upon them! Mercy? If there is no death, then death is a mercy! Ask that man!

[*He points accusingly to* LAZARUS]

And why should you plead for them, Jewess? There are few Jews among them. They are mostly those whom your people call idolaters and would gladly see murdered.

MIRIAM

[*With deep grief*]

I am a mother of dead children. I plead for the mothers of those about to die.

CALIGULA

[*Contemptuously*]

Pah!

[*He turns from her and puts his hand on* LAZARUS' *shoulder*]

Lazarus! Do you hear? I must signal to the legions!

LAZARUS

[*Turns. He has grown more youthful. He seems no more than thirty. His face is exalted and calm and beautiful. His eyes shine with an unearthly glory. The* SENATORS *lean forward in their seats, fascinated by his face. A low murmur of admiration comes from them.* LAZARUS *speaks commandingly*]

Wait! I will awaken my beloved ones that their passing may be a symbol to the world that there is no death!

[*He turns, throwing back his head and stretching up his arms, and begins to laugh low and tenderly, like caressing music at first but gradually gaining in volume, becoming more and more intense and insistent, finally ending up on a triumphant, blood-stirring call to that ultimate attainment in which all prepossession with self is lost in an ecstatic affirmation of Life. The voices of his* FOLLOWERS *from beyond the wall, at first one by one, then several at a time, then multitudes, join in his laughter. Even the* SENATORS *are drawn into it. Now every one of these is standing up, stretching out his arms toward* LAZARUS, *laughing harshly and discordantly and awkwardly in his attempt to laugh. Terrific flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder seem a responsive accompaniment from the heavens to this laughter of thousands which throbs in beating waves of sound in the air. Mingled with the laughing from beyond the wall comes the sound of*

singing and the music of flutes and cymbals. MIRIAM *has crawled on her knees to the edge of the portico where her black figure of grief is outlined below and to the left of* LAZARUS, *her arms raised outward like the arms of a cross*]

FOLLOWERS OF LAZARUS

[*In a great chanting singing chorus*]

Laugh! Laugh!
There is only God!
Life is His Laughter!
We are His Laughter!
Fear is no more!
Death is dead!

CHORUS OF SENATORS

[*Taking it up in a tone between chanting and their old solemn intoning*]

Laugh! Laugh!
Fear is no more!
Death is dead!

ALL

[*The multitude beyond the wall, all the* SENATORS, *everyone except the never-laughing* MIRIAM *and* CALIGULA *and the* MEN OF THE LEGIONS]

Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!

CALIGULA

[*In a queer state of mingled exaltation and fear—hopping restlessly about from foot to foot—shouting*]

The signal! Shall I give the signal to kill, Lazarus?

MEN OF THE LEGIONS

[*Following a brazen trumpet call, are suddenly heard from beyond the wall beginning to laugh their hoarse, bass laughter, a deeper note than all the others*]

Laugh! Laugh!

CALIGULA

[*Listening—with dismay*]

I hear the legions, Lazarus! They are laughing with them!

[*He cries with a strange pitifulness and beseeching*]

You are playing me false, Lazarus! You are trying to evade death! You are trying to spare your people! You are small and weak like other men when the test comes! You give way to pity! Your great laughter becomes pitiful!

[*Working himself into a rage*]

You are a traitor, Lazarus! You betray Cæsar! Have you forgotten I will be Cæsar? You betray me, Lazarus!

[*He rushes to the edge and, making a megaphone of his hands, bellows*]

You on the wall! Sentry! It is I, Caligula! Kill!

[*The brazen trumpets of the* LEGIONS *sound from beyond the wall. He springs near* LAZARUS *again, in a fiendish ecstasy, dancing a hopping grotesque sword dance behind him, chanting as he does so*]

Kill! Kill laughter! Kill those who deny Cæsar! I will be Cæsar! Kill those who deny Death! I will be Death! My face will be bright with blood! My laughing face, Lazarus! Laughing because men fear me! My face of victorious Fear! Look at me! I am laughing, Lazarus! *My* laughter! Laughter of Gods and Cæsars! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*He laughs, his laughter fanatically cruel and savage, forced from his lips with a desperate, destroying abandon. For a moment, above all the chorus of other sounds, his voice fights to overcome that of* LAZARUS, *whose laughter seems now to have attained the most exultant heights of spiritual affirmation. Then* CALIGULA'S *breaks into a cry of fear and a sob, and, casting his sword aside, he hides his face in his hands and cries beseechingly*]

Forgive me! I love you, Lazarus! Forgive me!

[*At this second the blaring trumpets of the* LEGIONS *are heard approaching and their great bass chorus of marching tramping laughter*]

MEN OF THE LEGIONS

[*Chanting*]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Fear, no more!
Death, no more!
Death is dead!

[*There is now no sound of the singing or the laughter or music of* LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS. MIRIAM *rocks to and fro and raises a low wail of lamentation. The* SENATORS *cheer and shout as at a triumph*]

CHORUS OF SENATORS

[*Saluting* LAZARUS]

Hail, Victor!
Hail, Divine One!
Thou hast slain fear!
Thou hast slain death!
Hail! Triumph!

SENATORS

Hail! Hail!
Slayer of Fear!
Slayer of Death!

[*The gate in the wall is clanged open. The returning* LEGIONS *burst through and gather in a dense mob in the street below* LAZARUS, *who looks down upon them, silent but smiling gently now. They stare at him with admiration. Only a sea of their masks can be seen, their eyes shining exultantly.* CRASSUS, *their general, ascends the steps until he stands a little below* LAZARUS. *Their* CHORUS OF LEGIONARIES *in double-sized masks climb to the step below* CRASSUS, *forming behind him. They are in the Period of Manhood, of the Simple, Ignorant Type. No weapons can be seen—only their masks and helmets and armor gleaming in the lightning flashes and in the flickering light of torches. Their laughter seems to shake the walls and make the pillars of the temple dance*]

CHORUS OF THE LEGIONS

Fear, no more!
Death, no more!
Death is dead!

LEGIONARIES

[*Echoing*]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!

CRASSUS

[*Raising his hand*]

Silence!

[*They obey. He turns to* LAZARUS *and bows his head, falling on one knee, raising his right arm*]

Hail!

LEGIONARIES

[*As one man—raising their arms*]

Hail!

CALIGULA

[*Suddenly pushes forward impudently and strikes a grandiose attitude*]

I am here, my brave ones!

[*There is a roar of mocking laughter from the* LEGIONARIES]

CRASSUS

[*Not unkindly*]

Not you, Little Killer! We hail the Great Laugher!

CALIGULA

[*Harshly*]

Have you killed all his followers?

CRASSUS

No. They died. They did not wait for our attack. They charged upon us, laughing! They tore our swords away from us, laughing, and we laughed with them! They stabbed themselves, dancing as though it were a festival! They died, laughing, in one another's arms! We laughed, too, with joy because it seemed it was not they who died but death itself they killed!

[*He stops uncertainly, bowing to* LAZARUS, *awkwardly*]

I do not understand this. I am a soldier. But there is a god in it somewhere! For I know they were drunk, and so were we,

with a happiness no mortal ever felt on earth before! And death was dead!

[*In a sudden outburst as if he were drunk with excitement, he takes off his helmet and waves it*]

Hail, Deliverer! Death is dead! We left our swords with them! What virtue in killing when there is no death? Your foe laughs. The joke is on you. What a fool's game, eh? One can only laugh! Now we want peace to laugh in—to laugh at war! Let Cæsars fight—that is all they are good for—and not much good for that!

CALIGULA

[*Frenziedly*]

Silence, impious traitor!

CRASSUS

[*Smiling drunkenly*]

Shut up, yourself, camp-brat! Though you were Cæsar this minute I would laugh at you! Your death is dead! We will make Lazarus Cæsar! What say you?

[*He appeals to the* SOLDIERS]

CALIGULA

No!

CHORUS OF THE LEGIONS

[*With laughing intoxication*]

Hail, Lazarus Cæsar! Hail!

LEGIONARIES

Lazarus Cæsar, hail!

CRASSUS

[*Appealing to* SENATE]

And you, Senators!

CHORUS OF SENATORS

[*With the same joyous intoxication as the* SOLDIERS]

Hail, Lazarus Cæsar! Hail!

SENATORS

Lazarus Cæsar, hail!

CALIGULA

[*Piteously*]

No, Lazarus! Say no for my sake!

LAZARUS

[*With gay mockery*]

What is—Cæsar?

[*He begins to laugh with mockery. All except* CALIGULA *and* MIRIAM *join in this laughter*]

CRASSUS

Ha-ha! What is Cæsar? You are right! You deserve better from us. A god? How is that? We will build you a temple, Lazarus, and make you a god!

LAZARUS

[*Laughingly*]

When men make gods, there is no God!

[*He laughs. They all laugh*]

CRASSUS

[*With puzzled good-nature*]

I do not understand. But there is a god in it somewhere—a god of peace—a god of happiness! Perhaps you are already he, eh? Are you? Well, never mind now, remember our offer. Give us your answer tomorrow. Good night to you!

LAZARUS

[*As the* SOLDIERS *start to march away behind* CRASSUS, *and the* SENATORS *turn to retire, he stops them all for a moment with a gesture—with a deep earnestness*]

Wait! When you awake tomorrow, try to remember! Remember that death is dead! Remember to laugh!

ALL

[*As if taking an oath with one voice*]

We will remember, Lazarus!

CRASSUS

[*Making a sign to the regimental musicians jovially*]

And we will laugh! Play there!

[*The bands crash out. The* LEGIONS *tramp away*]

CHORUS OF THE LEGIONS

[*Chanting to the music*]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Cæsar, no more!
War, no more!
Wounds, no more!
Death is dead!
Dead! Dead! Dead!

LEGIONARIES

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!
Dead! Dead! Dead!

CHORUS OF SENATORS

[*Following them*]

Cæsar, no more!
Fear, no more!
Death, no more!
Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!

SENATE

[*Elated, excited as a crowd of schoolboys going on a vacation. Marching after them*]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!

[LAZARUS, MIRIAM *and* CALIGULA *remain*]

LAZARUS

[*With a great yearning*]

If men would remember! If they could!

[*He stares after them compassionately*]

CALIGULA

[*Crouching beside* LAZARUS. *Plucks at his robe humbly*]

You will not laugh at Cæsar, Lazarus, will you—when I am Cæsar? You will not laugh at gods when they make me a god?

[LAZARUS *does not answer.* CALIGULA *forces a cruel vindictive smile*]

I swear you shall not laugh at death when I am Death! Ha-ha—

[*He starts to laugh harshly—then suddenly, terrified, slinks away and sidles off at right*]

MIRIAM

[*From where she kneels bowed with grief—brokenly*]

Those who have just died were like your children, Lazarus. They believed in you and loved you.

LAZARUS

And I loved them!

MIRIAM

Then how could you laugh when they were dying?

LAZARUS

[*Exultingly*]

Did they not laugh? That was their victory and glory!

[*With more and more of a passionate, proud exultation*]

Eye to eye with the Fear of Death, did they not laugh with scorn? 'Death to old Death,' they laughed! 'Once as squirming specks we crept from the tides of the sea. Now we return to the sea! Once as quivering flecks of rhythm we beat down from the sun. Now we reënter the sun! Cast aside is our pitiable pretense, our immortal egohood, the holy lantern behind which cringed our Fear of the Dark! Flung off is that impudent insult to life's nobility which gibbers: "I, this Jew, this Roman, this noble or this slave, must survive in my pettiness forever!" Away with such cowardice of spirit! We will to die! We will to change! Laughing we lived with our gift, now with laughter give we back that gift to become again the Essence of the Giver! Dying we laugh with the Infinite. We are the Giver and the Gift! Laughing, we will our own annihilation! Laughing, we give our lives for Life's sake!'

[*He laughs up to heaven ecstatically*]

This must Man will as his end and his new beginning! He must conceive and desire his own passing as a mood of eternal laughter and cry with pride, 'Take back, O God, and accept in turn a gift from me, my grateful blessing for Your gift—and see, O God, now I am laughing with You! I am Your laughter—and You are mine!'

[*He laughs again, his laughter dying lingeringly and tenderly on his lips like a strain of music receding into the silence over still waters*]

MIRIAM

[*With a sigh—meekly*]

I cannot understand, Lazarus.

[*Sadly*]

They were like your children—and they have died. Must you not mourn for them?

LAZARUS

[*Gently*]

Mourn? When they laughed?

MIRIAM

[*Sadly*]

They are gone from us. And their mothers weep.

LAZARUS

[*Puts his arm around her and raises her to her feet—tenderly*]

But God, their Father, laughs!

[*He kisses her on the forehead*]

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

SCENE: *Some days later—exterior of* TIBERIUS' *villa-palace at Capri. It is about two in the morning of a clear black night. In the rear, the walls of the villa, which is built entirely of marble on the brow of a cliff, loom up with a startling clarity against the sky. The rear foreground is a marble terrace at the middle of which is a triumphal arch. On each side, leading up to it, are massive marble columns standing like the mummies of legionaries at attention. In the exact centre of the arch itself a cross is set up on which a full grown male lion has been crucified. A lamp reflecting downward has been fixed at the top of the cross to light up an inscription placed over the lion's head. Below the steps to the terrace, in a line facing front, on each side of the cross, is the* CHORUS OF THE GUARD *in their double masks and gorgeous uniforms and armor. Their masks are the same as the* LEGIONARY CHORUS *of the previous scene.*

The windows of the palace glow crimson-purple with the reflection of many shaded lamps. The sound of music in a strained theme of that joyless abandon which is vice is heard above a confused drunken clamor of voices, punctuated by the high, staccato laughter of women and youths. A squad of the GUARD *in the same uniforms as the* CHORUS, *masked as all the* ROMAN SOLDIERS *previously, enter from the left, front, climbing up from the beach below. They are commanded by a Centurion,* FLAVIUS. *His mask is that of a typical young patrician officer. They are followed by* LAZARUS *and* MIRIAM. CALIGULA *walks behind, his drawn sword in his hand. He is in a state of queer conflicting emotion, seeming to be filled with a nervous dread and terror of everything about him, while at the same time perversely excited and elated by his own morbid tension.* LAZARUS, *looking no more than twenty-five, haloed in his own mystic light, walks in a deep, detached serenity.* MIRIAM, *in black, her hair almost white now, her figure bowed and feeble, seems more than ever a figure of a sad, resigned mother of the dead. The soldiers form in line with the columns.*

FLAVIUS

[*Saluting* CALIGULA—*with an awed glance at* LAZARUS]

I will announce your coming—

[*As if in spite of himself he bows awkwardly to* LAZARUS]

—and that of this man. Cæsar was not expecting you so soon, I think.

CALIGULA

[*Forcing a light tone*]

Lazarus laughed and the galley slaves forgot

their fetters and made their oars fly as if they were bound for the Blessed Isles of Liberty!

[*Then with an ironic smile*]

But you need not tell Tiberius that, good Flavius. Say it was due to my extreme zeal.

FLAVIUS

[*Smiles with respectful understanding.* CALIGULA *nods in dismissal.* FLAVIUS *turns to go—apologetically*]

You may have to wait. I dare not speak before he questions me.

[FLAVIUS *salutes and hastens to the villa, walking under an arm of the cross unconcernedly without an upward glance. As they follow him with their eyes* CALIGULA *and* MIRIAM *see the lion for the first time. He steps back with a startled exclamation. She gives a cry of horror and covers her eyes with her hands to shut out the sight*]

LAZARUS

[*Immediately puts his arms around her protectingly*]

What is it, Beloved?

[*She hides her face on his breast, pointing toward the lion with a trembling hand*]

CALIGULA

[*Pointing—curiously now, but with entire callousness*]

This lion they have crucified. Are you frightened, Jewess?

[*With a cruel laugh*]

My grandfather frequently plants whole orchards of such trees, but usually they bear human fruit!

MIRIAM

[*With a shudder*]

Monster!

CALIGULA

[*With genuine surprise—turning to her*]

Who? Why?

[*He approaches the cross and stares at it moodily*]

But why did he have it placed here where he knew you must pass? Tiberius does not go to such pains to frighten women.

[*His eyes fasten on the inscription above the lion's head*]

Aha! I see!

[*He reads*]

'From the East, land of false gods and superstition, this lion was brought to Rome to amuse Cæsar.'

[*A silence.* CALIGULA *shrugs his shoulders, turning away—lightly*]

A lesson for you, Lazarus. An example for other lions—not to roar—or laugh—at Cæsar!

[*He gives a harsh laugh*]

Tiberius must be terribly afraid of you.

[*Then sombrely*]

You should never have come here. I would have advised you not to—but what are you to me? My duty, if I wish to become Cæsar, is to Cæsar. Besides, you are no fool. Evidently you must desire your own death. Last night *you* might have been Cæsar. The legions were yours.

LAZARUS

[*Smiling without bitterness—with a sad comprehension*]

But this morning the legions had forgotten. They only remembered—to go out and pick up their swords. They also pillaged the bodies a little, as their right, believing now that they had slain them!

[*This last a bit bitterly*]

CALIGULA

[*Tauntingly*]

The legions did slay them! It was only by some magician's trick you made them think your followers killed themselves.

LAZARUS

[*Not answering him—ironically to himself*]

It is too soon. Men still need their swords to slash at ghosts in the dark. Men, those haunted heroes!

[*He laughs softly*]

CALIGULA

[*Irritably*]

What are you laughing at?

LAZARUS

At Lazarus when I find him feeling wronged because men are men!

[*He laughs again, softly and musically*]

CALIGULA

[*Again taunting brutally*]

You may be in his place soon!

[*He points to the lion*]

Will you laugh then?

[MIRIAM *gives a cry of terror*]

LAZARUS

[*Calmly*]

Yes.

[*Then humbly, bowing his head*]

I will laugh with the pride of a beggar set upon the throne of Man!

CALIGULA

[*Sneeringly*]

You boast.

[*Then as* LAZARUS *does not answer, touching the lion with intentional provoking brutality*]

This one from Africa seems almost gone. They do not last as long as men.

LAZARUS

[*Walks up the steps to the cross and, stretching to his full height, gently pushes the lion's hair out of its eyes—tenderly*]

Poor brother! Cæsar avenges himself on you because of me. Forgive me your suffering!

CALIGULA

[*With a start backward—with frightened awe*]

Gods! He licks your hand! I could swear he smiles—with his last breath!

[*Then with relief*]

Now he is dead!

LAZARUS

[*Gently*]

There is no death.

CALIGULA

[*Pointing to the lion*]

What is that then?

LAZARUS

Your fear of life.

CALIGULA

[*Impatiently*]

Bah!

[*Then sombrely*]

A little fear is useful even for lions—or teachers of laughter if they wish to laugh long!

[*Then with a sudden exasperation*]

Escape now, you fool, while there is still time!

LAZARUS

[*Laughing softly*]

Escape—what?

CALIGULA

[*In a frenzy*]

You know, you ass, you lunatic! Escape death! Death! Death!

[*To* MIRIAM]

You, woman! Talk to him! Do you want him nailed up like that?

MIRIAM

[*With a pitiful cry*]

Lazarus! Come! Caligula will help us!

CALIGULA

[*Harshly*]

You presume, Jewess! I have no wish to die!

[*Then with his wry smile*]

But I will turn my back—and shut my eyes—

[*He walks away to left*]

MIRIAM

[*Beseechingly*]

Lazarus! I could not bear that aching hunger of my empty heart if you should die again!

LAZARUS

[*Coming to her—tenderly*]

I will not leave you! Believe in me!

[*He kisses her forehead tenderly*]

MIRIAM

[*After a pause—slowly and lamentingly*]

I wish we were home, Lazarus. This Roman world is full of evil. These skies threaten. These hearts are heavy with hatred. There is a taint of blood in the air that poisons the breath of the sea. These columns and arches and thick walls seem waiting to fall, to crush these rotten men and then to crumble over the bones that raised them until both are dust. It is a world deadly to your joy, Lazarus. Its pleasure is a gorging of dirt, its fulfilled desire a snoring in a sty in the mud among swine. Its will is so sick that it must kill in order to be aware of life at all. I wish we were home, Lazarus. I begin to feel horror gnawing at my breast. I begin to know the torture of the fear of death, Lazarus—not of my death but of yours—not of the passing of your man's body but of the going away from me of your laughter which is to me as my son, my little boy!

LAZARUS

[*Soothing her*]

Be comforted, Beloved. Your fear shall never be!

MIRIAM

On the hills near Bethany you might pray at noon and laugh your boy's laughter in the sun and there would be echoing laughter from the sky and up from the grass and distantly from the shining sea. We would adopt children whose parents the Romans had butchered, and their laughter would be around me in my home where I cooked and weaved and sang. And in the dawn at your going out, and in the evening on your return, I would hear in the hushed air the bleating of sheep and the tinkling of many little bells and your voice. And my heart would know peace.

LAZARUS

[*Tenderly*]

Only a little longer! There is God's laughter on the hills of space, and the happiness of children, and the soft healing of innumerable dawns and evenings, and the blessing of peace!

CALIGULA

[*Looks around at* LAZARUS *impatiently. Then he makes a beckoning gesture to* MIRIAM]

Ssstt!

[*Wonderingly she leaves* LAZARUS' *side and follows him.* LAZARUS *remains, his eyes fixed on the cross, directly in front of it.* CALIGULA *speaks gruffly to* MIRIAM *with a sneer*]

Jewess, your Lazarus is mad, I begin to think.

[*Then confusedly but helplessly inquisitive and confiding—bursting out*]

What is it troubles me about him? What makes me dream of him? Why should I—love him, Jewess? Tell me! You love him, too. I do not understand this. Why, wherever he goes, is there joy? You heard even the galley slaves laugh and clank time with their chains!

[*Then with exasperation*]

And yet why can I not laugh, Jewess?

MIRIAM

[*In a tone of hushed grief*]

I may not laugh either. My heart remains a little dead with Lazarus in Bethany. The miracle could not revive all his old husband's life in my wife's heart.

CALIGULA

[*Disgustedly*]

What answer is that to me?

[*Then brusquely*]

But I called you to put you on your guard.

[*He points*]

There is death in there—Tiberius' death, a kind from which no miracles can recall one!

[*He smiles his twisted smile*]

Since Lazarus will not help himself, you must protect him. I will not, for once in there I am

[*Mockingly*]

the heir of Cæsar, and you are scum whom I will kill at his order as I would two beetles! So keep watch! Taste first of what he eats—even were I the one to give it to him!

LAZARUS

[*Suddenly laughs softly*]

Why do you delight in believing evil of yourself, Caligula?

CALIGULA

[*Flying into a queer rage*]

You lie! I am what I am!

[*With grandiose pride*]

What could you know of a Cæsar?

LAZARUS

[*Still laughing with an affectionate understanding*]

What—I know!

[*As he finishes speaking all the sound of music and voices from the house ceases abruptly and there is a heavy silence*]

MIRIAM

[*Shaking her head and turning away sadly*]

That is too far, Lazarus. Let us go home.

CALIGULA

[*Harshly*]

Sst! Do you hear? Flavius has told Cæsar.

[*Grimly forcing a harsh snicker*]

Now we will soon know—

[*There is the sudden blaring of a trumpet from within the palace. A wide door is flung open and a stream of reddish light comes out against which the black figures of several men are outlined. The door is shut again quickly. Several* SLAVES *bearing lamps on poles escort the patrician,* MARCELLUS, *forward to the arch. He passes under the crucified lion without a glance—then stands, cool and disdainful, to look about him. He is a man of about thirty-five, wearing the type mask of a Roman patrician to which are added the dissipated courtier's characteristics of one who leans to evil more through weakness than any instinctive urge. He is dressed richly. His smile is hypocritical and his eyes are hard and cold but when they come to rest on* LAZARUS *he gives a start of genuine astonishment*]

CALIGULA

[*Who has moved to* LAZARUS' *side defensively—in a quick whisper*]

Beware of this man, Lazarus!

[*Then advancing—with a condescending hauteur*]

Greeting, Marcellus!

MARCELLUS

[*In an ingratiating tone*]

Greeting, Gaius. I have a message from Cæsar for the man called Lazarus.

LAZARUS

[*Calmly*]

I am Lazarus.

MARCELLUS

[*Makes a deep bow—flatteringly*]

I had surmised it, sir. Although I cannot pretend to virtue in myself at least I may claim the merit of recognizing it in others.

[*He advances toward* LAZARUS, *smiling, with one hand kept hidden beneath his cloak*]

CALIGULA

[*Stepping between them—sharply*]

What is your message?

MARCELLUS

[*Surprised—placatingly*]

I am sorry, Gaius, but it was Cæsar's command I speak to Lazarus alone.

CALIGULA

[*Fiercely*]

And then, Marcellus?

[MARCELLUS *shrugs his shoulders and smiles deprecatingly*]

LAZARUS

[*With a compelling dignity*]

Let him speak.

[*Inclining his head to* MARCELLUS—*strangely*]

Over here where it is dark you will not be seen—nor see yourself.

[*He walks to the darkness at right*]

CALIGULA

[*Turning his back on them, with angry boyish resentfulness that is close to tears*]

Idiot! Go and die, then!

MIRIAM

[*With a terrified cry*]

Lazarus!

[*She starts to go to him*]

LAZARUS

[*Motioning her to remain where she is—gently*]

Believe, Beloved!

[*He turns his back on them all and stands waiting*]

MARCELLUS

[*Stares at* LAZARUS—*then over his shoulder at* CALIGULA—*uncertainly*]

What does he mean, Gaius?

[*Then suddenly putting on a brave front, he strides up behind* LAZARUS]

Cæsar wished me to bid you welcome, to tell you how much regard he has for you, but he desired me to ask whether you propose to laugh here—in Cæsar's palace? He has heard that you laugh at death—that you have caused others to laugh—even his legionaries.

[*A pause,* MARCELLUS *remains behind* LAZARUS' *back, the latter standing like a victim*]

Briefly, Cæsar requires your pledge that you will not laugh. Will you give it?

[*He frees his dagger from under his robe. A pause. Arrogantly*]

I am waiting! Answer when Cæsar commands!

[*Then angrily, baffled*]

I will give you while I count three—or take your silence as a refusal! One! Two! Three!

[*He raises his hand to stab* LAZARUS *in the back.* MIRIAM *stifles a scream. At the same instant,* LAZARUS *begins to laugh, softly and affectionately.* MARCELLUS *stops, frozen in mid-action, the dagger upraised.* CALIGULA *has whirled around and stands staring, a smile gradually coming to his face.* LAZARUS *turns, his laughter grown a trifle louder, and faces* MARCELLUS. *The latter steps back from him, staring open-mouthed, fascinated. His arm sinks to his side. The dagger falls from his fingers. He smiles back at* LAZARUS—*the curious, sheepish, bashful smile of one who has fallen in love and been discovered*]

LAZARUS

[*Going to him, puts both hands on his shoulders and looks in his eyes, laughing affectionately—then quizzically*]

Here is another one who believes in death! But soon you will laugh with life! I see it in your eyes. Farewell, Marcellus!

[*He turns away from him and walks, laughing, toward the arch in rear. With bowed head the black-robed figure of* MIRIAM *follows him.* MARCELLUS *hides his face in his hands, half-sobbing, and half-laughing hysterically.* LAZARUS *pauses before the cross for a moment—raises his hand as if blessing the dead lion, then passes below it, moving slowly on toward the palace in the rear. His laughter rises with more and more summoning power. The files of the* GUARD, *as he passes them, two by two join in his laughter, saluting him as if in spite of themselves*]

CALIGULA

[*Sidling up to* MARCELLUS, *cruel and mocking*]

Are you weeping, Marcellus? Laugh at that blundering fool, yourself! What will Cæsar say? Will he laugh when he has your body broken one bone at a time with hammers? Why did you not kill? For shame! A patrician exposed to laughter by a Jew! Poor craven! Why could you not strike? There *must* be death! Coward! Why did you not stab?

[*Then in a queer awed whisper*]

I know! Was it not because of a sudden you loved him and could not?

MARCELLUS

[*Suddenly—eagerly*]

Yes! That was it! I loved him!

CALIGULA

[*Craftily and cruelly*]

You were about to murder him!

MARCELLUS

[*Tortured with remorse*]

No! No! How could I? What infamy!

[*Cries tearfully*]

Forgive me, Lazarus!

CALIGULA

[*With vindictive insistence*]

Judge yourself!

[*He takes up the dagger*]

Here is your dagger! Avenge him on yourself!

MARCELLUS

[*Trying to laugh*]

Ha-ha—Yes!

[*He stabs himself and falls. Suddenly his laughter is released*]

I laugh! You are a fool, Caligula! There is no death!

[*He dies, laughing up at the sky*]

CALIGULA

[*Kicks his body with savage cruelty*]

You lie!

[*Then suddenly kneels and bends over it imploringly*]

Tell me you lie, Marcellus! Do me that mercy!—and when I am Cæsar, I—

[*He begins to weep like a frightened boy, his head in his hands. Meanwhile* LAZARUS *has arrived with* MIRIAM *at the steps before the door of the palace. As he starts to ascend these, the crimson-purple lights of the many windows of the palace go out one by one as if fleeing in terror from the laughter which now beats at the walls*]

CHORUS OF THE GUARD

Fear, no more!
Death, no more!
Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!

ALL THE GUARDS

[*Now all in a great chorus, raising their spears aloft and saluting* LAZARUS *as if they were his own triumphal body guard*]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!

[LAZARUS *has ascended the steps. He walks into the black archway of the darkened palace, his figure radiant and unearthly in his own light.* MIRIAM *follows him. They disappear in the darkness. There is a pause of dead silence*]

CALIGULA

[*Raises his head uneasily, looks back toward the palace, jumps to his feet in a panic of terror, and runs toward the palace door, calling*]

Lazarus! Wait! I will defend you! There is death inside there—death! Beware, Lazarus!

CHORUS OF THE GUARD

[*As the laughter of* LAZARUS *is heard again from the dark palace*]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!

ALL THE GUARDS

Dead! Dead! Dead!
Death is dead!

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *The banquet hall in the palace of* TIBERIUS—*an immense high-ceilinged room. In the rear, center, is a great arched doorway. Smaller arches in the middle of the side walls lead into other rooms. Long couches are placed along the walls at right and left, and along the rear wall on either side of the arch. Before these couches, a series of narrow tables is set. In the center of the room on a high dais is the ivory and gold chair of* CÆSAR, *a table in front of it, couches for him to recline on at either side. On this table, and on all the tables for his guests, gold lamps with shades of crimson-purple are placed.*

Reclining on the couches on the right are young women and girls, on the left, youths of an equal number.

[*The masks are based on the Roman masks of the periods of Boyhood (or Girlhood), Youth, and Young Manhood (or Womanhood) and there are seven individuals of each period and sex in each of the three types of the Introspective, Self-Tortured; the Servile, Hypocritical; and the Cruel, Revengeful—a crowd of forty-two in all. There is a distinctive character to the masks of each sex, the stamp of an effeminate corruption on all the male, while the female have a bold, masculine expression. The male masks are a blotched heliotrope in shade. These youths wear female wigs of curled wire like frizzed hair of a yellow gold. They are dressed in women's robes of pale heliotrope, they wear anklets and bracelets and necklaces. The women are dressed as males in crimson or deep purple. They also wear wire wigs but of straight hair cut in short boyish mode, dyed either deep purple or crimson. Those with crimson hair are dressed in purple, and vice versa. The female voices are harsh, strident, mannish—those of the youths affected, lisping, effeminate. The whole effect of these two groups is of sex corrupted and warped, of invented lusts and artificial vices.*

The CHORUS *in this scene and the next is composed of three males and four females —the males in the period of Youth, one in each of the types represented, and three of the females in similar type-period masks. The fourth female is masked in the period of Womanhood in the Proud, Self-Reliant type. They sit, facing front in their double-sized masks, on the side steps of the dais, four on right, three on left.*]

POMPEIA, *a Roman noblewoman, the favorite mistress of* CÆSAR, *sits at front, right.*

She wears a half-mask on the upper part of her face, olive-colored with the red of blood smoldering through, with great, dark, cruel eyes—a dissipated mask of intense evil beauty, of lust and perverted passion. Beneath the mask, her own complexion is pale, her gentle, girlish mouth is set in an expression of agonized self-loathing and weariness of spirit. Her body is strong and beautiful. Her wig and dress are purple.

TIBERIUS CÆSAR *stands on the dais, dressed in deep purple, fringed and ornamented with crimson and gold. An old man of seventy-six, tall, broad and corpulent but of great muscular strength still despite his age, his shiny white cranium rises like a polished shell above his half-masked face. This mask is a pallid purple blotched with darker color, as if the imperial blood in his veins had been sickened by age and debauchery. The eyes are protuberant, leering, cynical slits, the long nose, once finely modeled, now gross and thickened, the forehead lowering and grim. Beneath the mask, his own mouth looks as incongruous as* CALIGULA'S. *The lips are thin and stern and self-contained—the lips of an able soldier-statesman of rigid probity. His chin is forceful and severe. The complexion of his own skin is that of a healthy old campaigner.*

As the curtain rises, slaves are hurriedly putting out the many lamps. From outside, the laughter of LAZARUS *rises on the deep ground swell of the* GUARD'S *laughter. The walls and massive columns seem to reverberate with the sound. In the banquet room all are listening fascinatedly. Every reaction, from the extreme of panic fear or hypnotized ecstasy to a feigned cynical amusement or a pretended supercilious indifference, is represented in their frozen attitudes.* TIBERIUS *stands, shrinking back, staring at the doorway in the rear with superstitious dread. A squad of the* GUARD *surround the dais, commanded by* FLAVIUS.

TIBERIUS

[*In a strained voice shaken by apprehension and awe*]

Marcellus! Strike him down! Stab him!

SOLDIERS OF THE GUARD

[*From without*]

Laugh! Laugh! Laugh!
Death is dead!

TIBERIUS

[*As he suddenly sees the shining figure of* LAZARUS *appear at the end of the dark hall beyond the archway*]

Gods! Flavius, look!

[*He points with a shaking finger.* FLAVIUS *has leaped up to his side*]

FLAVIUS

[*Not without dread himself*]

That is the man, Cæsar.

TIBERIUS

Man? Say a dæmon!

[*To the slaves who are turning out the few remaining lamps*]

Quick! Darkness!

[*He puts out the lamp on his table himself. Then as nothing is seen but the light from the approaching* LAZARUS]

Flavius! Stand here in my place! It will think you are Cæsar!

[*He clumps heavily down the steps of the dais*]

Guards! Here! Cover me with your shields!

[*He goes to the extreme right corner, front, and crouches there. His* GUARDS *follow him. They hold their shields so that they form a wall around him and half over him. Then* CALIGULA'S *voice is heard screaming above the chorus of laughter as he enters the hall behind* LAZARUS]

CALIGULA

Beware of death! I will defend you, Lazarus!

[*He is seen to rush past* LAZARUS, *flourishing his sword and comes running into the room, shouting*]

Cæsar! Dare not to murder Lazarus!

[*He leaps to the dais and up its steps in a frenzy*]

Dare not, I say!

[*He stabs* FLAVIUS *with a savage cry*]

Ah!

[*Then, as the body of* FLAVIUS *falls heavily and rolls down the steps at right, he begins to laugh, at first a clear laughter of selfless joy, sounding startlingly incongruous from him*]

I have saved you, Lazarus—at the risk of my own life—and now, hear me, I can laugh!

[LAZARUS *appears in the archway,* MIRIAM *behind him. He stops laughing and immediately there is silence, except for* CALIGULA. LAZARUS *casts a luminous glow over the whole room in which the masked faces appear distorted and livid.* CALIGULA *stands with upraised sword by the chair of* CÆSAR. *Suddenly his laughter cracks, changes, becomes full of his old fear and blood-lust*]

CALIGULA

Ha-ha-ha! See, Lazarus!

[*He points to the body of* FLAVIUS *with his sword*]

Welcome in the name of Cæsar, now Cæsar is slain and I am Cæsar!

[*He assumes the absurd grandiose posture of his imperial posing. No one looks at him or hears him. Their eyes are on* LAZARUS *as he moves directly to where* TIBERIUS *crouches behind the shields of the* GUARDS. MIRIAM *follows him.* CALIGULA *turns and stares toward him, and then down at the body of* FLAVIUS *and back, in a petrified, bewildered stupor.* LAZARUS *steps up beside* TIBERIUS. *The* GUARDS *make way for him fearfully*]

TIBERIUS

[*Feeling his nearness—straightening himself with a certain dignity*]

Strike! I have been a soldier. Thou canst not make me fear death, Dæmon!

[*He draws his toga over his face*]

LAZARUS

[*Smiling gently*]

Then fear not fear, Tiberius!

[*He reaches out and pulls back the toga from his face.* TIBERIUS *looks into his eyes, at first shrinkingly, then with growing reassurance, his own masked face clearly revealed now in the light from* LAZARUS]

TIBERIUS

[*At first falteringly*]

So—thou art not evil? Thou art not come to contrive my murder?

[*As* LAZARUS *smilingly shakes his head,* TIBERIUS *frowns*]

Then why dost thou laugh against Cæsar?

[*Then bitterly—with a twisted attempt at a smile*]

Yet I like thy laughter. It is young. Once I laughed somewhat like that—so I pardon thee. I will even laugh at thee in return. Ha-ha!

[*His laughter is cold, cruel and merciless as the grin of a skeleton*]

CALIGULA

[*Who has been staring in a bewildered stupor from* TIBERIUS, *whom he thought he had killed, to the body of* FLAVIUS—*quaking with terror now as if this laugh was meant for him, drops to his knees, his sword clattering down the steps to the floor*]

Mercy, Tiberius! I implore you forgive your Caligula!

TIBERIUS

[*Not understanding. Fixing his eyes on* CALIGULA *with a malevolent irony*]

Come down from my throne, Caligula.

[CALIGULA *slinks down warily*]

You are too impatient. But I must pardon you, too—for where could I find another heir so perfect for serving my spite upon mankind?

[*He has walked toward the throne while he is speaking,* CALIGULA *backing away from him.* LAZARUS *remains where he is,* MIRIAM *beside and to the rear of him.* TIBERIUS, *his eyes fixed on* CALIGULA, *stumbles against the body of* FLAVIUS. *He gives a startled gasp and shrinks back, calling*]

Lights! A light here!

[*A crowd of masked slaves obey his orders. One runs to him with a lantern. He looks down at* FLAVIUS' *corpse—half to himself*]

I did wisely to stand him in my place.

[*To* CALIGULA—*with sinister emphasis*]

Too impatient, my loving grandchild! Take care lest I become impatient also—with your impatience!

[CALIGULA *shudders and backs away to the extreme left corner, front, where he crouches on his haunches as inconspicuously as possible.* TIBERIUS *suddenly whirls around as if he felt a dagger at his back*]

TIBERIUS

Where—?

[*Seeing* LAZARUS *where he had been—with relief—staring at his face now that the room is flooded with the purplish-crimson glow from all the lamps*]

Ah, you are there. More lights! Darkness leads men into error. My heir mistakes a man for Cæsar and Cæsar, it appears, has mistaken a man for a dæmon!

[*Scrutinizing him—with sinister finality*]

I can deal with men. I know them well. Too well!

[*He laughs grimly*]

Therefore I hate them.

[*He mounts the steps of the dais and sits on the couch at left of table—staring at* LAZARUS, *wonderingly*]

But you seem—something other than man! That light!

[*Then he forces a harsh laugh*]

A trick! I had forgotten you are a magician.

[*Arrogantly*]

Stand there, Jew. I would question you about your magic.

[*Smilingly* LAZARUS *ascends to where* TIBERIUS *points at the top of the dais.* MIRIAM *remains standing at the foot.* TIBERIUS *stares for a while with somber intensity at* LAZARUS]

They say you died and have returned from death?

LAZARUS

[*Smiling—as if he were correcting a child*]

There is no death, Cæsar.

TIBERIUS

[*With a sneer of scepticism but with an underlying eagerness*]

I have heard you teach that folly.

[*Then threateningly*]

You shall be given full opportunity to prove it!

[*A pause—then in a low voice, bending down toward* LAZARUS]

Do you foretell the future?

[*Trembling but with a pretense of carelessness*]

Must I die soon?

LAZARUS

[*Simply*]

Yes, Cæsar.

TIBERIUS

[*Jumping up with a shuddering start*]

Soon? Soon?

[*Then his fear turning to rage*]

What do you say? Vile Jew, do you dare threaten me with death!

[LAZARUS, *looking into his eyes, begins to laugh softly.* TIBERIUS *sinks back on his couch, fighting to control himself—confusedly*]

Laugh not, I ask you. I am old. It is not seemly.

[LAZARUS *ceases his low laughter. A pause.* TIBERIUS *broods—then suddenly*]

And you were really dead?

[*He shudders*]

Come nearer. I need to watch your face. I have learned to read the lies in faces. A Cæsar gets much practice—from childhood on—too much!

[*With awe*]

Your eyes are dark with death. While I watch them, answer me, what cured thee of death?

LAZARUS

[*Gently*]

There is only life, Cæsar.

[*Then gaily mocking but compellingly*]

And laughter! Look! Look well into my eyes, old Reader of Lies, and see if you can find aught in them that is not life—and laughter!

[*He laughs softly. A ripple of soft laughter from the motionless figures about the room echoes his.* TIBERIUS *stares into his eyes. In the silence that ensues* POMPEIA *gets up and walks over to the dais. She stops to stare for a moment with cruel contempt at* MIRIAM, *then stands and looks up at* LAZARUS, *trying in vain to attract his or* CÆSAR'S *attention. Failing in this, she passes over and sits beside* CALIGULA, *whose attention is concentrated on* LAZARUS]

POMPEIA

I admire your strange magician, Caligula.

CALIGULA

[*Without looking at her*]

He is no magician. He is something like a god.

POMPEIA

[*Longingly*]

His laughter is like a god's. He is strong. I love him.

CALIGULA

[*Turning to her—coarsely*]

Do not waste your lust. He is faithful to his wife, I warn you.

POMPEIA

[*She points to* MIRIAM]

Not that ugly slave?

CALIGULA

Yes. And yet, on our journey, whole herds of women—and many as beautiful as you, Pompeia—threw themselves on him and begged for his love.

POMPEIA

[*Her voice hardening*]

And he?

CALIGULA

He laughed—and passed on.

[*She starts.* CALIGULA *goes on wonderingly*]

But they seemed as happy as if his laughter had possessed them! You are a woman. Tell me, how could that be?

POMPEIA

[*Her voice cruel*]

He shall not laugh at me!

CALIGULA

[*Tauntingly*]

I will bet a string of pearls against your body for a night that he does.

POMPEIA

[*Defiantly*]

Done!

[*Then she laughs—a low, cruel laugh—staring at* MIRIAM]

So he loves that woman?

CALIGULA

[*Curiously*]

What are you planning?

POMPEIA

I shall offer her the fruit Cæsar preserves for those he fears.

CALIGULA

[*With a careless shrug*]

You will not win his love by killing her.

POMPEIA

I no longer want his love. I want to see him suffer, to hear his laughter choke in his throat with pain!

[*She speaks with more and more voluptuous satisfaction*]

Then *I* shall laugh!

[*She laughs softly and steps forward*]

CALIGULA

[*Concernedly*]

Stop. I am his protector.

[*Then suddenly*]

But what is the Jewess to me?

[*With more and more of a spirit of perverse cruelty*]

Do it, Pompeia! His laughter is too cruel to us! We must save death from him!

POMPEIA

[*Walks to the dais which she ascends slowly until she stands by* CÆSAR'S *couch behind him, confronting* LAZARUS. *But the two men remain unmindful of her presence.* TIBERIUS *continues to stare into* LAZARUS' *eyes. His whole body is now relaxed, at rest, a dreamy smile softens his thin, compressed mouth.* POMPEIA *leans over and takes a peach from the bowl of fruit on* CÆSAR'S *table and, taking* TIBERIUS' *hand in her other, she kisses it and calls insistently*]

Cæsar. It is I, Pompeia.

[LAZARUS *does not look at her. She stares at him defiantly.* TIBERIUS *blinks his eyes in a daze*]

TIBERIUS

[*Dreamily*]

Yes! A cloud came from a depth of sky—around me, softly, warmly, and the cloud dissolved into the sky, and the sky into peace!

[*Suddenly springing to his feet and staring about him in a confused rage—clutching* POMPEIA *by the shoulder and forcing her to her knees*]

What are you doing here?

POMPEIA

Forgive your loving slave! I grew afraid this magician had put you under a spell.

[*She stares at* LAZARUS, *her words challenging him*]

TIBERIUS

[*Confusedly, sinking back on his couch and releasing her*]

A spell? Could it be he laid a dream of death upon me, leading me to death?

[*He trembles timorously—appealing to* LAZARUS]

Whatever magic thou didst to me, Dæmon, I beseech thee undo it!

LAZARUS

[*Smiling*]

Do you fear peace?

POMPEIA

[*Harshly and insolently*]

Mock not at Cæsar, dog!

[LAZARUS *continues to smile. His eyes remain on* CÆSAR. *He seems absolutely unaware of* POMPEIA. *This enrages her the more against him. She speaks tauntingly to* TIBERIUS]

Surely, Cæsar, this magician must have powerful charms since he dares to mock Tiberius to his face!

TIBERIUS

[*Stung*]

Be still!

[*Then in a low tone to her*]

Do you not know this Lazarus died and then by his magic rose from his tomb?

POMPEIA

[*Scornfully*]

To believe that, I must have seen it, Cæsar!

TIBERIUS

[*Impatiently*]

Do you think I would believe without good evidence? I have had them take the statements of many witnesses. The miracle was done in conjunction with another Jew acting as this man's tool. This other Jew, the report states, could not possibly have possessed any magic power Himself, for Pilate crucified Him a short time after and He died in pain and weakness within a few hours. But this Lazarus laughs at death!

LAZARUS

[*Looks up, smiling with ironical bitterness*]

Couldst Thou but hear, Jesus! And men shall keep on in panic nailing Man's soul to the cross of their fear until in the end they do it to avenge Thee, for Thine Honor and Glory!

[*He sighs sadly—then after a struggle overcoming himself—with exultance*]

Yes!

[*His eyes fall again to* TIBERIUS *and he smiles*]

Yes! Yes to the stupid as to the wise! To what is understood and to what cannot be understood! Known and unknown! Over and over! Forever and ever! Yes!

[*He laughs softly to himself*]

TIBERIUS

[*With superstitious dread*]

What dost thou mean, Dæmon?

POMPEIA

[*With indignant scorn*]

Let him prove there is no death, Cæsar!

[*She appeals to the company who straighten up on their couches with interest*]

CHORUS

[*Chant demandingly*]

Let him prove there is no death!
We are bored!

CROWD

[*Echoing*]

Prove there is no death!
We are bored, Cæsar!

TIBERIUS

[*Waits to see what* LAZARUS *will say—then as he says nothing, plucking up his courage—his cruelty aroused*]

Do you hear, Lazarus?

POMPEIA

Make him perform his miracle again!

CHORUS

[*As before*]

Let him perform a miracle!
We are bored, Cæsar!

CROWD

[*They now stand up and coming from behind their tables, move forward toward the dais*]

A miracle!
We are bored!

POMPEIA

Let him raise someone from the dead!

CHORUS

[*Chanting with a pettish insistence*]

Raise the dead!
We are bored!

CROWD

[*Echoing—grouping in a big semicircle as of spectators in a theatre, around and to the sides of the dais, one sex on each side.* CALIGULA *moves in from the left in front of them. They form in three ranks, the first squatting on their hams like savages (as* CALIGULA *does), the second rank crouching over them, the third leaning over the second, all with a hectic, morbid interest*]

We are bored!
Raise the dead!

POMPEIA

[*With a cruel smile*]

I have thought of a special test for him, Cæsar.

[*She whispers in* CÆSAR'S *ear and points to* MIRIAM *and the fruit in her hand*]

And he must laugh!

TIBERIUS

[*With a harsh, cruel chuckle*]

Yes, I shall command him to laugh!

[*Then disgustedly*]

But she is sad and old. I will be only doing him a favor.

CALIGULA

[*Rocking back and forth on his haunches —looking at* LAZARUS *with taunting cruelty*]

No, Cæsar! I know he loves her!

LAZARUS

Yes!

[*He steps down from the dais to* MIRIAM'S *side and taking her head in both his hands, he kisses her on the lips*]

TIBERIUS

[*With a malignant grin*]

Give her the fruit!

POMPEIA

[*Advances and offers the peach to* MIRIAM—*with a hard, cruel little laugh*]

Cæsar invites you to eat!

MIRIAM

[*To* LAZARUS—*requesting meekly but longingly*]

May I accept, Lazarus? Is it time at last? My love has followed you over long roads among strangers and each league we came from home my heart has grown older. Now it is too old for you, a heart too weary for your loving laughter. Ever your laughter has grown younger, Lazarus! Upward it springs like a lark from a field, and sings! Once I knew your laughter was my child, my son of Lazarus; but then it grew younger and I felt at last it had returned to my womb—and ever younger and younger —until, tonight, when I spoke to you of home, I felt new birth-pains as your laughter, grown too young for me, flew back to the unborn—a birth so like a death!

[*She sobs and wipes her eyes with her sleeve—then humbly, reaching out for the fruit*]

May I accept it, Lazarus? You should have newborn laughing hearts to love you. My old one labors with memories and its blood is sluggish with the past. Your home on the hills of space is too far away. My heart longs for the warmth of close walls of earth baked in the sun. Our home in Bethany, Lazarus, where you and my children lived and died. Our tomb near our home, Lazarus, in which you and my children wait for me. Is it time at last?

LAZARUS

[*Deeply moved*]

Poor lonely heart! It has been crueler for you than I remembered. Go in peace—to peace!

[*His voice trembles in spite of himself*]

I shall be lonely, dear one.

[*With a note of pleading*]

You have never laughed with my laughter. Will you call back—Yes!—when you know—to tell me you understand and laugh with me at last?

MIRIAM

[*Not answering him, to* POMPEIA, *taking the peach and making a humble courtesy before her*]

I thank you, pretty lady.

[*She raises the peach toward her mouth. Involuntarily one of* LAZARUS' *hands half-reaches out as if to stop her*]

POMPEIA

[*With savage triumph, pointing*]

See! He would stop her! He is afraid of death!

CHORUS

[*Pointing—jeeringly*]

He is afraid of death! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

CROWD

[*Jeeringly*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!

MIRIAM

[*Bites into the peach and, chewing, begins, as if immediately affected, to talk like a garrulous old woman, her words coming quicker and quicker as her voice becomes fainter and fainter*]

Say what you like, it is much better I should go home first, Lazarus. We have been away so long, there will be so much to attend to about the house. And all the children will be waiting. You would be as helpless as a child, Lazarus. Between you and the children, things would soon be in a fine state!

[*More and more confused*]

No, no! You cannot help me, dearest one. You are only in my way. No, I will make the fire. When you laid it the last time, we all had to run for our lives, choking, the smoke poured from the windows, the neighbors thought the house was burning!

[*She laughs—a queer, vague little inward laugh*]

You are so impractical. The neighbors all get the best of you. Money slips through your fingers. If it was not for me—

[*She sighs—then brightly and lovingly*]

But, dearest husband, why do you take it so to heart? Why do you feel guilty because you are not like other men? That is why I love you so much. Is it a sin to be born a dreamer? But God, He must be a dreamer, too, or how would we be on earth? Do not keep saying to yourself so bitterly, you are a failure in life! Do not sit brooding on the hilltop in the evening like a black figure of Job against the sky!

[*Her voice trembling*]

Even if God has taken our little ones—yes, in spite of sorrow—have you not a good home I make for you, and a wife who loves you?

[*She forces a chuckle*]

Be grateful, then—for me! Smile, my sad one! Laugh a little once in a while! Come home, bringing me laughter of the wind from the hills!

[*Swaying, looking at the peach in her hand*]

What a mellow, sweet fruit! Did you bring it home for me?

[*She falls back into his arms. Gently he lets her body sink until it rests against the steps of the dais.* TIBERIUS *rises from his couch to bend over with cruel gloating.* POMPEIA *steps nearer to* LAZARUS, *staring at him mockingly.* CALIGULA *hops to her side, looking from* LAZARUS *to* MIRIAM. *The half-circle of masked figures moves closer, straining forward and downward as if to overwhelm the two figures at the foot of the dais with their concentrated death wish*]

TIBERIUS

[*Thickly*]

She is dead, and I do not hear you laugh!

LAZARUS

[*Bending down—supplicatingly*]

Miriam! Call back to me! Laugh!

[*He pauses. A second of dead silence. Then, with a sound that is very like a sob, he kisses her on the lips*]

I am lonely!

POMPEIA

[*With savage malice—jeeringly*]

See! He weeps, Cæsar!

[*She bursts into strident laughter*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!

CHORUS

[*Echoing her laughter*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!
There is fear!
There is death!

CROWD

There is death!
Ha-ha-ha-ha!

CALIGULA

[*In a frenzy of despairing rage, hopping up and down*]

Liar! Charlatan! Weakling! How you have cheated Caligula!

[*He suddenly slaps* LAZARUS *viciously across the face*]

There is death! Laugh, if you dare!

TIBERIUS

[*Standing—in a sinister cold rage, the crueler because his dream of a cure for death is baffled, yet feeling his power as* CÆSAR *triumphant nevertheless*]

And I thought you might be a dæmon. I thought you might have a magic cure—

[*With revengeful fury*]

But death is, and death is mine! I shall make you pray for death! And I shall make Death laugh at you! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*In a frenzy as* LAZARUS *neither makes a sound nor looks up*]

Laugh, Lazarus! Laugh at yourself! Laugh with me!

[*Then to his soldiers*]

Scourge him! Make him laugh!

CALIGULA

[*Running to soldiers—fiercely*]

Give me a scourge!

POMPEIA

[*Running to the soldiers—hysterically*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha! Let me beat him, Cæsar!

[*They group behind him. The rods and scourges are uplifted over his back to strike, when in the dead expectant silence,* MIRIAM'S *body is seen to rise in a writhing tortured last effort*]

MIRIAM

[*In a voice of unearthly sweetness*]

Yes! There is only life! Lazarus, be not lonely!

[*She laughs and sinks back and is still*]

[*A shuddering murmur of superstitious fear comes from them as they shrink back swiftly from* LAZARUS, *remaining huddled one against the other.* POMPEIA *runs to the feet of* TIBERIUS *and crouches down on the steps below him, as if for protection, her terrified eyes on* MIRIAM. CALIGULA *runs to her and crouches beside and beneath her*]

LAZARUS

[*Kisses* MIRIAM *again and raises his head. His face is radiant with new faith and joy. He smiles with happiness and speaks to himself with a mocking affection as if to an amusing child*]

That much remained hidden in me of the sad old Lazarus who died of self-pity—his loneliness! Lonely no more! Man's loneliness is but his fear of life! Lonely no more! Millions of laughing stars there are around me! And laughing dust, born once of woman on this earth, now freed to dance! New stars are born of dust eternally! The old, grown mellow with God, burst into flaming seed! The fields of infinite space are sown—and grass for sheep springs up on the hills of earth! But there is no death, nor fear, nor loneliness! There is only God's Eternal Laughter! His Laughter flows into the lonely heart!

[*He begins to laugh, his laughter clear and ringing—the laughter of a conqueror arrogant with happiness and the pride of a new triumph. He bends and picks up the body of* MIRIAM *in his arms and, his head thrown back, laughing, he ascends the dais and places her on the table as on a bier. He touches one hand on her breast, as*

if he were taking an oath to life on her heart, looks upward and laughs, his voice ringing more and more with a terrible unbearable power and beauty that beats those in the room into an abject submissive panic]

[TIBERIUS *grovels half under the table, his hands covering his ears, his face on the floor; he is laughing with the agony and terror of death.* POMPEIA *lies face down on the first step and beats it with her fists; she is laughing with horror and self-loathing.* CALIGULA, *his hands clutching his head, pounds it against the edge of the steps; he is laughing with grief and remorse. The rest, soldiers, slaves and the prostitutes of both sexes, writhe and twist distractedly, seeking to hide their heads against each other, beating each other and the floor with clenched hands. An agonized moan of supplicating laughter comes from them all*]

ALL

Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha!
Let us die, Lazarus!
Mercy, Laughing One!
Mercy of death!
Ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*But the laughter of* LAZARUS *is as remote now as the laughter of a god*]

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE

SCENE: *The same as previous Scene—the same night a short while later. All the lamps are out except the one on the table on the dais which, placed beside the head of* MIRIAM, *shines down upon the white mask of her face. In the half-darkness, the walls are lost in shadow, the room seems immense, the dais nearer.*

LAZARUS *sits on the couch at the right on the dais. His face is strong and proud although his eyes are fixed down on the face of* MIRIAM. *He seems more youthful still now, like a young son who keeps watch by the body of his mother, but at the same time retaining the aloof serenity of the statue of a god. His face expresses sorrow and a happiness that transcends sorrow.*

On the other side of the table, at the end of the couch, TIBERIUS *sits facing front, his elbows on his knees, his large hands with bloated veins hanging loosely. He keeps his gaze averted from the corpse. He talks to* LAZARUS *half over his shoulder.*

On the top step, POMPEIA *sits, facing right, her hands clasped about one knee, the other leg stretched down to the lower step. Her head is thrown back and she is gazing up into* LAZARUS' *face.*

On the step below her, CALIGULA *squats on his haunches, his arms on his knees, his fists pressed to his temples. He is staring straight before him.*

Only these four people are in the room now.

TIBERIUS

[*Gloomily*]

Was she dead, Dæmon, and was it thy power that recalled life to her body for that moment? Or was she still living and her words only the last desire of her love to comfort you, Lazarus?

[LAZARUS *does not reply*]

If thou dost not tell me, I must always doubt thee, Dæmon.

POMPEIA

[*With a sigh of bewildered happiness, turns to* CALIGULA]

I am glad he laughed, Caligula! Did I say I loved him before? Then it was only my body that wanted a slave. Now it is my heart that desires a master! Now I know love for the first time in my life!

CALIGULA

[*Bitterly*]

Fool! What does he care for love?

[*Somberly*]

He loves everyone—but no one—not even me!

[*He broods frowningly*]

POMPEIA

[*Following her own thoughts*]

And now that hag is dead he will need a woman, young and beautiful, to protect

and comfort him, to make him a home and bear his children!

[*She dreams, her eyes again fixed on* LAZARUS—*then suddenly turning to* CALIGULA]

I am glad I lost our bet. But you must accept some other payment. Now I know love, I may not give myself to any man save him!

CALIGULA

I do not want you! What are you but another animal! Faugh!

[*With a grimace of disgust*]

Pleasure is dirty and joyless! Or we who seek it are, which comes to the same thing.

[*Then grimly*]

But our bet can rest. This is not the end. There may still be a chance for you to laugh at him!

POMPEIA

No! Now I could not! I should weep for his defeat!

TIBERIUS

[*Gloomily arguing, half to himself*]

His laughter triumphed over me, but he has not brought her back to life. I think he knows no cure for another's death, as I had hoped. And I must always doubt that it was not some trick—

[*Harshly*]

until I have tested him with his own life! He cannot cheat me then!

[*A pause—arguing to himself*]

But he was dead—that much has been proved—and before he died he was old and sad. What did he find beyond there?

[*Suddenly—turning to* LAZARUS *now*]

What did you find beyond death, Lazarus?

LAZARUS

[*Exaltedly*]

Life! God's Eternal Laughter!

TIBERIUS

[*Shaking his head*]

I want hope—for me, Tiberius Cæsar.

LAZARUS

What is—you? But there is hope for Man! Love is Man's hope—love for his life on earth, a noble love above suspicion and distrust! Hitherto Man has always suspected his life, and in revenge and self-torture his love has been faithless! He has even betrayed Eternity, his mother, with his slave he calls Immortal Soul!

[*He laughs softly, gaily, mockingly—then to* TIBERIUS *directly*]

Hope for you, Tiberius Cæsar? Then dare to love Eternity without your fear desiring to possess her! Be brave enough to be possessed!

TIBERIUS

[*Strangely*]

My mother was the wife of Cæsar.

[*Then dully*]

I do not understand.

LAZARUS

Men are too cowardly to understand! And so the worms of their little fears eat them and grow fat and terrible and become their jealous gods they must appease with lies!

TIBERIUS

[*Wearily*]

Your words are meaningless, Lazarus. You are a fool. All laughter is malice, all gods are dead, and life is a sickness.

LAZARUS

[*Laughs pityingly*]

So say the race of men, whose lives are long dyings! They evade their fear of death by becoming so sick of life that by the time death comes they are too lifeless to fear it! Their disease triumphs over death—a noble victory called resignation! 'We are sick,' they say, 'therefore there is no God in us, therefore there is no God!' Oh, if men would but interpret that first cry of man fresh from the womb as the laughter of one who even then says to his heart, 'It is my pride as God to become Man. Then let it be my pride as Man to recreate the God in me!'

[*He laughs softly but with exultant pride*]

POMPEIA

[*Laughing with him—proudly*]

He will create a god in me! I shall be proud!

CALIGULA

[*Pounding his temples with his fists—tortured*]

I am Caligula. I was born in a camp among soldiers. My father was Germanicus, a hero, as all men know. But I do not understand this—and though I burst with pride, I cannot laugh with joy!

TIBERIUS

[*Gloomily*]

Obscurities! I have found nothing in life that merits pride. I am not proud of being Cæsar—and what is a god but a Cæsar over Cæsars? If fools kneel and worship me because they fear me, should I be proud? But Cæsar is a fact, and Tiberius, a man, is one, and I cling to these certainties—and I do not wish to die! If I were sure of eternal sleep beyond there, deep rest and forgetfulness of all I have ever seen or heard or hated or loved on earth, I would gladly die! But surely, Lazarus, nothing is sure—peace the least sure of all—and I fear there is no rest beyond there, that one remembers there as here and cannot sleep, that the mind goes on eternally the same—a long insomnia of memories and regrets and the ghosts of dreams one has poisoned to death passing with white bodies spotted by the leprous fingers of one's lusts.

[*Bitterly*]

I fear the long nights now in which I lie awake and listen to Death dancing round me in the darkness, prancing to the drum beat of my heart!

[*He shudders*]

And I am afraid, Lazarus—afraid that there is no sleep beyond there, either!

LAZARUS

There is peace!

[*His words are like a benediction he pronounces upon them. Soothed in a mysterious, childlike way, they repeat the word after him, wonderingly*]

POMPEIA

Peace?

CALIGULA

Peace?

TIBERIUS

Peace?

[*For a long moment there is complete silence. Then* TIBERIUS *sighs heavily, shaking his head*]

Peace! Another word blurred into a senseless sigh by men's longing! A bubble of froth blown from the lips of the dying toward the stars! No!

[*He grins bitterly—then looks at* LAZARUS—*somberly contemptuous and threatening*]

You are pleased to act the mysterious, Jew, but I shall solve you!

[*Then with a lawyer-like incisiveness*]

There is one certainty about you and I must know the cause—for there must be a cause and a rational explanation! You were fifty when you died—

LAZARUS

[*Smiling mockingly*]

Yes. When I died.

TIBERIUS

[*Unheeding*]

And now your appearance is of one younger by a score. Not alone your appearance! You *are* young. I see the fact, the effect. And I demand an explanation of the cause without mystic nonsense or evasion.

[*Threateningly*]

And I warn you to answer directly in plain words—and not to laugh, you understand! —not to dare!—or I shall lose patience with you and—

[*With a grim smile*]

I can be terrible!

[LAZARUS *smiles gently at him. He turns away with confused annoyance, then back to* LAZARUS, *resuming his lawyer-like manner*]

What was it restored your youth? How did you contrive that your body reversed the natural process and grows younger? Is it a charm by which you invoke a supernatural force? Or is it a powder you dissolve in wine? Or a liquid? Or an unguent you rub into the skin to revitalize the old bones and tissues? Or—what is it, Lazarus?

LAZARUS

[*Gently*]

I know that age and time are but timidities of thought.

TIBERIUS

[*Broodingly—as if he had not heard—persuasively*]

Perhaps you ask yourself, what would Tiberius do with youth? Then, because you must have heard rumors of my depravity, you will conclude the old lecher desires youth for his lusts!

[*He laughs harshly*]

Ha! Why, do not my faithful subjects draw pictures of an old buck goat upon the walls and write above them, Cæsar? And they are just. In self-contempt of Man I have made this man, myself, the most swinish and contemptible of men! Yes! In all this empire there is no man so base a hog as I!

[*He grins bitterly and ironically*]

My claim to this excellence, at least, is not contested! Everyone admits therein Tiberius is by right their Cæsar!

[*He laughs bitterly*]

Ha! So who would believe Tiberius if he said, I want youth again because I loathe lust and long for purity!

LAZARUS

[*Gently*]

I believe you, Cæsar.

TIBERIUS

[*Stares at him—deeply moved*]

You—believe—?

[*Then gruffly*]

You lie! You are not mad—and only a madman would believe another man!

[*Then confidingly, leaning over toward* LAZARUS]

I know it is folly to speak—but—one gets old, one becomes talkative, one wishes to confess, to say the thing one has always kept hidden, to reveal one's unique truth—and there is so little time left—and one is alone! Therefore the old—like children—talk to themselves, for they have reached that hopeless wisdom of experience which knows that though one were to cry it in the streets to multitudes, or whisper it in the kiss to one's beloved, the only ears that can ever hear one's secret are one's own!

[*He laughs bitterly*]

And so I talk aloud, Lazarus! I talk to my loneliness!

LAZARUS

[*Simply*]

I hear, Tiberius.

TIBERIUS

[*Again moved and confused—forcing a mocking smile*]

Liar! Eavesdropper! You merely—listen!

[*Then he turns away*]

My mother, Livia, that strong woman, giving birth to me, desired not a child, but a Cæsar—just as, married to Augustus, she loved him not but loved herself as Cæsar's wife. She made me feel, in the proud questioning of her scornful eyes, that to win her mother love I must become Cæsar. She poisoned Prince Marcellus and young Gaius and Lucius that the way might be clear for me. I used to see their blood dance in red specks before my eyes when I looked at the sky. Now—

[*He brushes his hand before his eyes*]

it is all a red blot! I cannot distinguish. There have been too many. My mother—her blood is in that blot, for I revenged myself on her. I did not kill her, it is true, but I deprived her of her power and she died, as I knew she must, that powerful woman who bore me as a weapon! The murder was subtle and cruel—how cruel only that passionate, deep-breasted woman unslaked by eighty years of devoured desires could know! Too cruel! I did not go to her funeral. I was afraid her closed eyes might open and look at me!

[*Then with almost a cry*]

I want youth, Lazarus, that I may play again about her feet with the love I felt for her before I learned to read her eyes!

[*He half sobs, bowing his head. A pause*]

CALIGULA

[*Nudging* POMPEIA—*with a crafty whisper*]

Do you hear? The old lecher talks to himself. He is becoming senile. He will soon die. And I shall be Cæsar. Then I shall laugh!

POMPEIA

[*Staring up at* LAZARUS' *face, hearing*

only CALIGULA'S *words without their meaning*]

No. My Lazarus does not laugh now. See. His mouth is silent—and a little sad, I think.

LAZARUS

[*Gently and comfortingly*]

I hear, Tiberius.

TIBERIUS

[*Harshly*]

I hated that woman, my mother, and I still hate her! Have you ever loved, Lazarus?

[*Then with a glance at* MIRIAM'S *body and a shuddering away from it—vaguely*]

I was forgetting her. I killed your love, too, did I not? Well, I must! I envy those who are loved. Where I can, I kill love—for retribution's sake—but much of it escapes me.

[*Then harshly again*]

I loved Agrippina. We were married. A son was born to us. We were happy. Then that proud woman, my mother, saw my happiness. Was she jealous of my love? Or did she know no happy man would wish to be Cæsar? Well, she condemned my happiness to death. She whispered to Augustus and he ordered me to divorce Agrippina. I should have opened her veins and mine, and died with her. But my mother stayed by me, Agrippina was kept away, my mother spoke to me and spoke to me and even wept, that tall woman, strong as a great man, and I consented that my love be murdered. Then my mother married me to a whore. Why? The whore was Cæsar's daughter, true—but I feel that was not all of it, that my mother wished to keep me tortured that I might love her alone and long to be Cæsar!

[*He laughs harshly*]

Ha! In brief, I married the whore, she tortured me, my mother's scheming prospered—that subtle and crafty woman!—and many years passed in being here and there, in doing this and that, in growing full of hate and revengeful ambition to be Cæsar. At last, Augustus died. I was Cæsar. Then I killed that whore, my wife, and I starved my mother's strength to death until she died, and I began to take pleasure in vengeance upon men, and pleasure in taking vengeance on myself.

[*He grins horribly*]

It is all very simple, as you see!

[*He suddenly starts to his feet—with harsh arrogance and pride, threateningly*]

Enough! Why do I tell you these old tales? Must I explain to you why I want youth? It is my whim! I am Cæsar! And now I must lie down and try to sleep! And it is my command that you reveal the secret of your youth to me when I awake, or else—

[*With malignant cruelty*]

I will have to revenge the death of a hope on you—and a hope at my age demands a terrible expiation on its slayer!

[*He walks down and starts to go off, right—then turns and addresses* LAZARUS *with grim irony*]

Good night to you, Lazarus. And remember there shall be death while I am Cæsar!

[*He turns to go*]

LAZARUS

[*Smiling affectionately at him, shakes his head*]

Cæsar must believe in death. But does the husband of Agrippina?

TIBERIUS

[*Stops short and stares at* LAZARUS, *confused and stuttering*]

What—what—do you mean, Lazarus?

LAZARUS

I have heard your loneliness.

TIBERIUS

[*Cruelly and grimly again*]

So much the more reason why my pride should kill you! Remember that!

[*He turns and strides off into the darkness at right*]

CALIGULA

[*Peers after him until sure he is gone—then gets up and begins a grotesque,*

hopping dance, singing a verse of the legionary's song]

A bold legionary am I
March, oh march on!
A Roman eagle was my daddy
My mother was a drunken drabby
Oh march on to the wars!

[*He laughs gratingly, posturing and gesticulating up at* LAZARUS]

Ha-ha-ha! He is gone! I can breathe! His breath in the same air suffocates me! The gods grant mine do the same for him! But he is failing! He talks to himself like a man in second childhood. His words are a thick babble I could not hear. They well from his lips like clots of blood from a reopened wound. I kept listening to the beating of his heart. It sounded slow, slower than when I last heard it. Did you detect that, Lazarus? Once or twice I thought it faltered—

[*He draws in his breath with an avid gasp—then laughs gratingly*]

Ha-ha-ha—

[*Grandiloquently*]

Tiberius, the old buck goat, will soon be gone, my friends, and in his place you will be blessed with the beautiful young god, Caligula! Hail to Caligula! Hail! Ha-ha-ha—

[*His laughter suddenly breaks off into a whimper and he stands staring around him in a panic of fear that he has been overheard. He slinks noiselessly up the steps of the dais and squats cowering-ingly at* LAZARUS' *feet, blinking up at his face in monkey-wise, clutching* LAZARUS' *hand in both of his. His teeth can be heard chattering together in nervous fear*]

[POMPEIA, *whose gaze has remained fixed on* LAZARUS' *throughout, has gradually moved closer to him until she, too, is at his feet, half-kneeling beneath the table on which* MIRIAM *lies, side by side with* CALIGULA *but as oblivious of him as he is of her*]

[*Having grown calmer now,* CALIGULA *speaks again—mournful and bewildered*]

CALIGULA

Why should I love you, Lazarus? Your laughter taunts me! It insults Cæsar! It denies Rome! But I will warn you again. Escape! Tonight Tiberius' mood is to play sentimental, but tomorrow he will jeer while hyenas gnaw at your skull and lick your brain. And then—there is pain, Lazarus! There is pain!

POMPEIA

[*Pressing her hand to her own heart—with a shudder*]

Yes, there is pain!

LAZARUS

[*Smiling down on them—gently*]

If you can answer Yes to pain, there is no pain!

POMPEIA

[*Passionately*]

Yes! Yes! I love Lazarus!

CALIGULA

[*With a bitter grin*]

Do not take pain away from us! It is our one truth. Without pain there is nothing—a nothingness in which even your laughter, Lazarus, is swallowed at one gulp like a whining gnat by the cretin's silence of immensity! Ha-ha! No, we must keep pain! Especially Cæsar must! Pain must twinkle with a mad mirth in a Cæsar's eyes—men's pain—or they would become dissatisfied and disrespectful! Ha-ha!

[*He stops his grating laughter abruptly and continues mournfully*]

I am sick, Lazarus, sick of cruelty and lust and human flesh and all the imbecilities of pleasure—the unclean antics of half-witted children!

[*With a mounting agony of longing*]

I would be clean! If I could only laugh your laughter, Lazarus! That would purify my heart. For I could wish to love all men, as you love them—as I love you! If only I did not fear them and despise them! If I could only believe—believe in them—in life—in myself!—believe that one man or woman in the world knew and loved the real Caligula—then I might have faith in Caligula myself—then I might laugh your laughter!

LAZARUS

[*Suddenly, in a quiet but compelling voice*]

I, who know you, love you, Caligula.

[*Gently patting his head*]

I love Caligula.

CALIGULA

[*Staring up at him in pathetic confusion*]

You? You? You, Lazarus?

[*He begins to tremble all over as if in a seizure—chokingly*]

Beware! It is not good—not just—to make fun of me—to laugh at my misery—saying you love—

[*In a frenzy, he jumps to his feet threatening* LAZARUS]

Are you trying to fool me, hypocrite? Do you think I have become so abject that you dare—? Because I love you, do you presume—? Do you think I am your slave, dog of a Jew, that you can—insult—to my face—the heir of Cæsar—

[*He stutters and stammers with rage, hopping up and down grotesquely, shaking his fist at* LAZARUS, *who smiles at him affectionately as at a child in a tantrum*]

LAZARUS

[*Catching his eyes and holding them with his glance—calmly*]

Believe, Caligula!

CALIGULA

[*Again overcome—stuttering with strange terror*]

Believe? But I cannot! I must not! You cannot know me, if—You are a holy man! You are a god in a mortal body—you can laugh with joy to be alive—while I—Oh, no, you cannot love me! There is nothing in me at bottom but a despising and an evil eye! You cannot! You are only being kind!

[*Hysterically*]

I do not want your kindness! I hate your pity! I am too proud! I am too strong!

[*He collapses weepingly, kneeling and clutching* LAZARUS' *hand in both of his*]

LAZARUS

[*Smiling*]

You are so proud of being evil! What if there is no evil? What if there are only health and sickness? Believe in the healthy god called Man in you! Laugh at Caligula, the funny clown who beats the backside of his shadow with a bladder and thinks thereby he is Evil, the Enemy of God!

[*He suddenly lifts the face of* CALIGULA *and stares into his eyes*]

Believe! What if you are a man and men are despicable? Men are also unimportant! Men pass! Like rain into the sea! The sea remains! Man remains! Man slowly arises from the past of the race of men that was his tomb of death! For Man death is not! Man, Son of God's Laughter, *is*!

He begins to laugh triumphantly, staring deep into CALIGULA'S *eyes*]

Is, Caligula! Believe in the laughing god within you!

CALIGULA

[*Bursting suddenly into choking, joyful laughter—like a visionary*]

I believe! I believe there is love even for Caligula! I can laugh—now—Lazarus! Free laughter! Clean! No sickness! No lust for death! My corpse no longer rots in my heart! The tomb is full of sunlight! I am alive! I who love Man, I who can love and laugh! Listen, Lazarus! I dream! When I am Cæsar, I will devote my power to your truth. I will decree that there must be kindness and love! I will make the Empire one great Blessed Isle! Rome shall know happiness, it shall believe in life, it shall learn to laugh your laughter, Lazarus, or I—

[*He raises his hand in an imperial autocratic gesture*]

LAZARUS

[*Gaily mocking*]

Or you will cut off its head?

CALIGULA

[*Fiercely*]

Yes! I will—!

[*Then meeting* LAZARUS' *eyes, he beats his head with his fists crazily*]

Forgive me! I forget! I forget!

LAZARUS

Go out under the sky! Let your heart climb on laughter to a star! Then make it look down at earth, and watch Caligula commanding Life under pain of death to do his will!

[*He laughs*]

CALIGULA

[*Laughing*]

I will! I do! I laugh at him! Caligula is a trained ape, a humped cripple! Now I take him out under the sky, where I can watch his monkey tricks, where there is space for laughter and where this new joy, your love of me, may dance!

[*Laughing clearly and exultantly, he runs out through the arched doorway at rear*]

LAZARUS

[*Stops laughing—shaking his head, almost sadly*]

They forget! It is too soon for laughter!

[*Then grinning at himself*]

What, Lazarus? Are you too, thinking in terms of time, old fool so soon to reënter infinity?

[*He laughs with joyous self-mockery*]

POMPEIA

[*Who has crept to his feet, kisses his hand passionately*]

I love you, Lazarus!

LAZARUS

[*Stops laughing, and looks down at her gently*]

And I love you, woman.

POMPEIA

[*With a gasp of delight*]

You?

[*She stares up into his eyes doubtingly, raising her face toward his*]

Then—put your arms around me.

[*He does so, smiling gently*]

And hold me to you.

[*He presses her closer to him*]

And kiss me.

[*He kisses her on the forehead*]

No, on the lips!

[*He kisses her. She flings her arms about his neck passionately and kisses him again and again—then slowly draws away—remains looking into his eyes a long time, shrinking back from him with bewildered pain which speedily turns to rage and revengeful hatred*]

No! No! It is *my* love, not Love! I want you to know *my* love, to give me back love —for me—only for me—Pompeia—my body, my heart—me, a woman—not Woman, women! Do I love Man, men? I hate men! I love you, Lazarus—a man—a lover—a father to children! I want love—as you loved that woman there

[*She points to* MIRIAM]

that I poisoned for love of you! But did you love her—or just Woman, wife and mother of men?

[*She stares—then as if reading admission in his eyes, she springs to her feet*]

Liar! Cheat! Hypocrite! Thief!

[*Half hysterical with rage, pain and grief, she bends over* MIRIAM *and smoothes the hair back from her forehead*]

Poor wife! Poor woman! How he must have tortured you! Now I remember the pity in your eyes when you looked at me! Oh, how his soothing gray words must have pecked at the wound in your heart like doves with bloody beaks!

[*Then with sudden harshness*]

But perhaps you were too dull to understand, too poor and tired and ugly and old to care, too slavish—! Pah!

[*She turns away with contempt and faces* LAZARUS *with revengeful hatred*]

Did you think I would take her place—become your slave, wait upon you, give you love and passion and beauty in exchange for phrases about man and gods—you who are neither a man nor a god but a dead thing without desire! You dared to hope I would give my body, my love, to you!

[*She spits in his face and laughs harshly*]

You insolent fool! I shall punish you! You shall be tortured as you have tortured!

[*She laughs wildly—then steps down from the dais and goes off right, crying distractedly*]

Cæsar! This man has made you a fool before all the world! Torture him, Cæsar! Now! Let the people witness! Send heralds to wake them! Torture him, Cæsar, the man who laughs at you! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*Her laughter is caught up by all the* GIRLS *and* YOUTHS *of the palace, who, as she disappears, led by their* CHORUS, *pour in from each side of the room and dance forward to group themselves around the dais as in the previous scene, staring at* LAZARUS, *laughing cruelly, falsely, stridently*]

CHORUS

[*Tauntingly*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!
Laugh now, Lazarus!
Let us see you laugh!
Ha-ha-ha-ha!

CROWD

[*Echoing*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!
Ha-ha-ha-ha!

LAZARUS

[*Moves, and immediately there is silence. He bends down and kisses* MIRIAM *and picks her up in his arms. Talking down to her face—with a tender smile*]

Farewell! You are home! And now I will take your body home to earth! Space is too far away, you said! Home in the earth! There will be so much for you to do there! Home! Earth!

[*His voice trembling a bit*]

Farewell, body of Miriam. My grief is a lonely cry wailing in the home in my heart that you have left forever!

[*Then exultantly*]

But what am I? Now your love has become Eternal Love! Now, since your life passed, I feel Eternal Life made nobler by your selflessness! Love has grown purer! The laughter of God is more profoundly tender!

[*He looks up in an ecstasy and descends the dais, carrying her*]

Yes, that is it! That is it, my Miriam!

[*Laughing softly and tenderly, he walks around the dais and carries the body out through the doorway in rear*]

[*The* CHORUS *and* YOUTHS *and* GIRLS *make way for him in awed silence—then scurry around to right and left, forming an aisle through which he passes—then after he has gone out through the arch, they close into a semicircular group again, staring after him, and a whisper of strange, bewildered, tender laughter comes from them*]

CHORUS

[*In this whisper*]

That is it!
Love is pure!
Laughter is tender!
Laugh!

CROWD

[*Echoing*]

Laugh! Laugh!

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *The arena of an amphitheatre. It is just before dawn of the same night. Cæsar's throne is on the left at the extreme front, facing right, turned a little toward front. It is lighted by four immense lamps. In front of the throne is a marble railing that tops the wall that encloses the arena. In the rear the towering pile of the circular amphitheatre is faintly outlined in deeper black against the dark sky.*

TIBERIUS *sits on the throne, his eyes fixed on the middle of the arena off right, where, bound to a high stake after he had been tortured,* LAZARUS *is now being burnt alive over a huge pile of faggots. The crackling of the flames is heard. Their billowing rise and fall is reflected on the masked faces of the multitude who sit on the banked tiers of marble behind and to the rear of the throne, with their* CHORUS, *seven men masked in Middle Age in the Servile, Hypocritical type, grouped on each side of the throne of Cæsar on a lower tier. Half-kneeling before* TIBERIUS, *her chin resting on her hands on top of the marble rail,* POMPEIA *also stares at* LAZARUS.

Before the curtain, the crackle of the flames and an uproar of human voices from the multitude, jeering, hooting, laughing at LAZARUS *in cruel mockery of his laughter. This sound has risen to its greatest volume as the curtain rises.*

CHORUS

[*Chanting mockingly*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!
Burn and laugh!
Laugh now, Lazarus!
Ha-ha-ha-ha!

CROWD

[*Chanting with revengeful mockery*]

Ha-ha-ha-ha!

TIBERIUS

Who laughs now, Lazarus—thou or Cæsar? Ha-ha—!

[*With awe*]

His flesh melts in the fire but his eyes shine with peace!

POMPEIA

How he looks at me!

[*Averting her eyes with a shudder*]

Command them to put out his eyes, Cæsar!

TIBERIUS

[*Harshly*]

No. I want to read his eyes when they see death!

[*Then averting his face—guiltily*]

He is looking at me, not you. I should not have listened to your cries for his death.

POMPEIA

[*Turning to him again with a shudder of agony—beseechingly*]

Have them put out his eyes, Cæsar! They call to me!

TIBERIUS

[*As if not hearing her—to himself*]

Why do I feel remorse? His laughter dies and is forgotten, and the hope it raised dies—

[*With sudden excitement*]

And yet—he must know something—and if he would—even now he could tell—

[*Suddenly rising to his feet he calls imploringly*]

Lazarus!

CHORUS

[*Chanting in a great imploring chorus now*]

Lazarus!

CROWD

[*Echoing*]

Lazarus!

SOLDIER'S VOICE

[*Calling from off beside the stake*]

You had us gag him, Cæsar, so he might not laugh. Shall we cut away the gag?

POMPEIA

[*In terror*]

No, Cæsar! He will laugh! And I will go to him!

[*Desperately*]

He will laugh at you, Cæsar—and the mob will laugh with him!

TIBERIUS

[*Struggles with himself—then calls*]

Lazarus! If you hear let your eyes answer, and I will grant the mercy of death to end your agony! Is there hope of love somewhere for men on earth?

CHORUS

[*Intoning as before*]

Is there hope of love
For us on earth?

CROWD

Hope of love
For us on earth!

SOLDIER'S VOICE

His eyes laugh, Cæsar!

TIBERIUS

[*In a strange frenzy now*]

Hear me, thou Dæmon of Laughter! Hear

and answer, I beseech thee, who alone hath known joy!

[*More and more wildly*]

How must we live? Wherein lies happiness?

CHORUS

Wherein lies happiness?

CROWD

Wherein, happiness?

TIBERIUS

Why are we born? To what end must we die?

CHORUS

Why are we born to die?

CROWD

Why are we born?

SOLDIER'S VOICE

His eyes laugh, Cæsar! He is dying! He would speak!

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*In one great cry*]

Cæsar! Let Lazarus speak!

POMPEIA

[*Terrified*]

No, Cæsar! He will laugh—and you will die—and I will go to him!

TIBERIUS

[*Torn—arguing with his fear*]

But—he may know some hope—

[*Then making his decision, with grim fatalism*]

Hope—or nothing!

[*Calls to the* SOLDIERS]

Let him speak!

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*Cheering*]

Hail, Cæsar!

LAZARUS

[*His voice comes, recognizably the voice of* LAZARUS, *yet with a strange, fresh, clear quality of boyhood, gaily mocking with life*]

Hail, Cæsar!

CROWD

[*Frantic with hope*]

Hail, Lazarus!

TIBERIUS

Pull away the fire from him! I see death in his eyes!

[*The flaming reflections in the banked, masked faces dance madly as the* SOLDIERS *rake back the fire from the stake. With a forced, taunting mockery*]

What do you say now, Lazarus? You are dying!

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*Taking his tone—mockingly*]

You are dying, Lazarus!

LAZARUS

[*His voice a triumphant assertion of the victory of life over pain and death*]

Yes!

TIBERIUS

[*Triumphant yet disappointed—with scorn and rage*]

Ha! You admit it, do you, coward! Craven! Knave! Duper of fools! Clown! Liar! Die! I laugh at you! Ha-ha-ha-ha—

[*His voice breaks chokingly*]

CROWD

[*Led by their* CHORUS—*in the same frenzy of disappointment, with all sorts of grotesque and obscene gestures and noises, thumbing their fingers to their noses, wagging them at their ears, sticking our their tongues, slapping their behinds, barking, crowing like roosters, howling, and hooting in every conceivable manner*]

Yah! Yah! Yellow Gut! Bungkisser! Muck-

heel! Scumwiper! Liar! Pig! Jackal! Die! We laugh at you! Ha-ha-ha—

[*Their voices, too, break*]

POMPEIA

[*Rising to her feet like one in a trance, staring toward* LAZARUS]

They are tormenting him. I hear him crying to me!

[*She moves to the top of the steps leading to the arena*]

LAZARUS

[*His voice thrilling with exultance*]

O men, fear not life! You die—but there is no death for Man!

[*He begins to laugh, and at the sound of his laughter, a great spell of silence settles upon all his hearers—then as his laughter rises, they begin to laugh with him*]

POMPEIA

[*Descending the steps like a sleep-walker*]

I hear his laughter calling. I must go to him.

TIBERIUS

[*As if he realized something was happening that was against his will—trying feebly to be imperial*]

I command you not to laugh! Cæsar commands—

[*Calling feebly to the* SOLDIERS]

Put back—the gag! Stop his laughter!

[*The laughter of* LAZARUS *gaily and lovingly mocks back at him*]

SOLDIER'S VOICE

[*His voice gently remonstrating*]

We may not, Cæsar. We love his laughter!

[*They laugh with him*]

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*In a soft, dreamy murmur*]

We love his laughter!
We laugh!

TIBERIUS

[*Dreamily*]

Then—pile the fire back around him. High and higher! Let him blaze to the stars! I laugh with him!

SOLDIER'S VOICE

[*Gently and gravely*]

That is just, Cæsar. We love men flaming toward the stars! We laugh with him!

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*As the flames, piled back and fed anew by the* SOLDIERS, *flare upward and are reflected on their masks in dancing waves of light*]

We love men flaming toward the stars!
We laugh!

POMPEIA

[*In the arena*]

The fire calls me. My burning heart calls for the fire!

[*She laughs softly and passes swiftly across the arena toward* LAZARUS]

TIBERIUS

[*In a sort of childish complaint*]

You must pardon me, Lazarus. This is my Cæsar's duty—to kill you! You have no right to laugh—before all these people—at Cæsar. It is not kind.

[*He sobs snuffingly—then begins to laugh at himself*]

[*Suddenly the flames waver, die down, then shoot up again and* POMPEIA'S *laughter is heard for a moment, rising clear and passionately with that of* LAZARUS, *then dying quickly out*]

SOLDIER'S VOICE

A woman has thrown herself in the flames, Cæsar! She laughs with Lazarus!

TIBERIUS

[*In a sudden panicky flurry—feverishly*]

Quick, Lazarus! You will soon be silent! Speak!—in the name of man's solitude—his agony of farewell—what is beyond there, Lazarus?

[*His voice has risen to a passionate entreaty*]

CHORUS

[*In a great pleading echo*]

What is beyond there, Lazarus?

CROWD

What is beyond?

LAZARUS

[*His voice speaking lovingly, with a surpassing clearness and exaltation*]

Life! Eternity! Stars and dust! God's Eternal Laughter!

[*His laughter bursts forth now in its highest pitch of ecstatic summons to the feast and sacrifice of Life, the Eternal*]

[*The crowds laugh with him in a frenzied rhythmic chorus. Led by the* CHORUS, *they pour down from the banked walls of the amphitheatre and dance in the flaring reflection of the flames strange wild measures of liberated joy.* TIBERIUS *stands on the raised dais laughing great shouts of clear, fearless laughter*]

CHORUS

[*Chanting as they dance*]

Laugh! Laugh!
We are stars!
We are dust!
We are gods!
We are laughter!

CROWD

We are dust!
We are gods!
Laugh! Laugh!

CALIGULA

[*Enters from behind* TIBERIUS. *His aspect is wild, his hair disheveled, his clothes torn, he is panting as if exhausted by running. He stares toward the flames stupidly—then screams despairingly above the chant*]

Lazarus! I come to save you! Do you still live, Lazarus?

TIBERIUS

[*Has been speaking. His words are now heard as the tumult momentarily dies down*]

I have lived long enough! I will die with Lazarus! I no longer fear death! I laugh! I laugh at Cæsar! I advise you, my brothers, fear not Cæsars! Seek Man in the brotherhood of the dust! Cæsar is your fear of Man! I counsel you, laugh away your Cæsars!

CALIGULA

[*With resentful jealousy and rage—in a voice rising to a scream*]

What do I hear, Lazarus? You laugh with your murderer? You give him your laughter? You have forgotten me—my love—you make him love you—you make him laugh at Cæsars—at me!

[*Suddenly springs on* TIBERIUS *in a fury and grabbing him by the throat chokes him, forcing him back on the throne—screaming*]

Die, traitor! Die!

[TIBERIUS' *body relaxes in his hands, dead, and slips from the chair.* CALIGULA *rushes madly down the stairs into the midst of the oblivious, laughing, dancing crowd, screaming*]

You have betrayed me, dog of a Jew! You have betrayed Cæsar!

[*Beginning to be caught by the contagion of the laughter*]

Ha-ah—No! I will not laugh! I will kill you! Give me a spear!

[*He snatches a spear from a soldier and fights his way drunkenly toward the flames, like a man half overcome by a poisonous gas, shouting, half-laughing in spite of himself, half-weeping with rage*]

Ha-ah—The gods be with Cæsar Caligula! O Immortal Gods, give thy brother strength! You shall die, Lazarus—die—Ha-ah—!

[*He disappears toward the flames, his spear held ready to stab*]

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*Who have been entirely oblivious of him—chanting*]

Laugh! Laugh!
We are gods!
We are dust!

LAZARUS

[*At his first word there is a profound silence in which each dancer remains frozen in the last movement*]

Hail, Caligula Cæsar! Men forget!

[*He laughs with gay mockery as at a child*]

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*Starting to laugh*]

Laugh! Laugh!

[*Then there is a fierce cry of rage from* CALIGULA *and* LAZARUS' *laughter ceases, and with it the laughter of the crowd turns to a wail of fear and lamentation*]

CALIGULA

[*Dashes back among them waving his bloody spear and rushing up to the throne stands on it and strikes a grandiose pose*]

I have killed God! I am Death! Death is Cæsar!

CHORUS AND CROWD

[*Turning and scurrying away—huddled in fleeing groups, crouching close to the ground like a multitude of terrified rats, their voices squeaky now with fright*]

Hail, Cæsar! Hail to Death!

[*They are gone*]

CALIGULA

[*Keeping his absurd majestic pose, turns and addresses with rhetorical intoning, and flowing gestures, the body of* LAZARUS, *high upon its stake, the flames below it now flickering fitfully*]

Hail, Caligula! Hero of heroes, conqueror of the Dæmon, Lazarus, who taught the treason that fear and death were dead! But I am Lord of Fear! I am Cæsar of Death! And you, Lazarus, are carrion!

[*Then in a more conversational tone, putting aside his grandiose airs, confidentially*]

I had to kill you, Lazarus! Surely your good sense tells you—You heard what the old fool, Tiberius, told the mob. A moment more and there would have been a revolution—no more Cæsars—and my dream—!

[*He stops—bewilderedly*]

My dream? Did I kill laughter? I had just learned to laugh—with love!

[*More confusedly*]

I must be a little mad, Lazarus. It was one terror too many, to have been laughing your laughter in the night, to have been dreaming great yearning dreams of all the good my love might do for men when I was Cæsar—and then, to hear the old howling of mob lust, and to run here—and there a high white flame amidst the fire—you, Lazarus!—dying!—laughing with him—Tiberius—betraying me—who loved you, Lazarus! Yes, I became mad! I am mad! And I can laugh my own mad laughter, Lazarus—my own! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

[*He laughs with a wild triumphant madness and again rhetorically, with sweeping gestures and ferocious capers*]

And all of men are vile and mad, and I shall be their madmen's Cæsar!

[*He turns as if addressing an amphitheatre full of his subjects*]

O my good people, my faithful scum, my brother swine, Lazarus is dead and we have murdered great laughter, and it befits our madness to have done so, and it is befitting above all to have Caligula for Cæsar!

[*Then savagely*]

Kneel down! Abase yourselves! I am your Cæsar and your God! Hail!

[*He stands saluting himself with a crazy intensity that is not without grandeur. A pause. Suddenly the silence seems to crush down upon him; he is aware that he is alone in the vast arena; he whirls about, looking around him as if he felt an assassin at his back; he lunges with his spear at imaginary foes, jumping, dodging from side to side, yelping*]

Ho, there! Help! Help! Your Cæsar calls you! Help, my people! To the rescue!

[*Suddenly throwing his spear away and sinking on his knees, his face toward* LAZARUS, *supplicatingly*]

Lazarus! Forgive me! Help me! Fear kills me! Save me from death!

[*He is groveling in a paroxysm of terror, grinding his face in his fists as if to hide it*]

LAZARUS

[*His voice is heard in a gentle, expiring sigh of compassion, followed by a faint dying note of laughter that rises and is lost in the sky like the flight of his soul back into the womb of Infinity*]

Fear not, Caligula! There is no death!

CALIGULA

[*Lifts his head at the first sound and rises with the laughter to his feet, until, as it is finally lost, he is on tip-toes, his arms straining upward to the sky, a tender, childish laughter of love on his lips*]

I laugh, Lazarus! I laugh with you!

[*Then grief-stricken*]

Lazarus!

[*He hides his face in his hands, weeping*]

No more!

[*Then beats his head with his fists*]

I will remember! I will!

[*Then suddenly, with a return to grotesqueness—harshly*]

All the same, I killed him and I proved there is death!

[*Immediately overcome by remorse, groveling and beating himself*]

Fool! Madman! Forgive me, Lazarus! Men forget!

CURTAIN

1925–1926 1927

GERTRUDE STEIN

1874–

HOW WRITING IS WRITTEN [1]

WHAT I want to talk about to you is just the general subject of how writing is written. The beginning of it is what everybody has to know: everybody is contemporary with his period. A very bad painter once said to a very great painter, 'Do what you like, you cannot get rid of the fact that we are contemporaries.' That is what goes on in writing. The whole crowd of you are contemporary to each other, and the whole business of writing is the question of living in that contemporariness. Each generation has to live in that. The thing that is important is that nobody knows what the contemporariness is. In other words, they don't know where they are going, but they are on their way.

Each generation has to do with what you would call the daily life: and a writer, painter, or any sort of creative artist, is not at all ahead of his time. He is contemporary. He can't live in the past, because it is gone. He can't live in the future, because no one knows what it is. He can live only in the present of his daily life. He is expressing the thing that is being expressed by everybody else in their daily lives. The thing you have to remember is that everybody lives a contemporary daily life. The writer lives it, too, and expresses it imperceptibly. The fact remains that in the act of living, everybody has to live contemporarily. But in the things concerning art and literature they don't have to live contemporarily, because it doesn't make any difference; and they live about forty years behind their time. And that is the real explanation of why the artist or painter is not recognized by his contemporaries. He is expressing the time-sense of his contemporaries, but nobody is really interested. After the new generation has come, after the grandchildren, so to speak, then the opposition dies out: because after all there is then a new contemporary expression to oppose.

That is really the fact about contemporariness. As I see the whole crowd of you, if there are any of you who are going to express yourselves contemporarily, you will do something which most people won't want to look at. Most of you will be so busy living the contemporary life that it will be like the tired business man: in the things of the mind you will want the things you know. And too, if you don't live contemporarily, you are a nuisance. That

1 The text is a transcript of a talk by Miss Stein in 1935 before the students at The Choate School, Wallingford, Conn. In a slightly different version it appeared in *The Choate Literary Magazine*, XXI,ii,5–14.

is why we live contemporarily. If a man goes along the street with horse and carriage in New York in the snow, that man is a nuisance; and he knows it, so now he doesn't do it. He would not be living, or acting, contemporarily: he would only be in the way, a drag.

The world can accept me now because there is coming out of *your* generation somebody they won't like, and therefore they accept me because I am sufficiently past in having been contemporary so they don't have to dislike me. So thirty years from now I shall be accepted. And the same thing will happen again: that is the reason why every generation has the same thing happen. It will always be the same story, because there is always the same situation presented. The contemporary thing in art and literature is the thing which doesn't make enough difference to the people of that generation so that they can accept it or reject it.

Most of you know that in a funny kind of way you are nearer your grandparents than your parents. Since this contemporariness is always there, nobody realizes that you cannot follow it up. That is the reason people discover—those interested in the activities of other people—that they cannot understand their contemporaries. If you kids started in to write, I wouldn't be a good judge of you, because I am of the third generation. What you are going to do I don't know any more than anyone else. But I created a movement of which you are the grandchildren. The contemporary thing is the thing you can't get away from. That is the fundamental thing in all writing.

Another thing you have to remember is that each period of time not only has its contemporary quality, but it has a time-sense. Things move more quickly, slowly, or differently, from one generation to another. Take the Nineteenth Century. The Nineteenth Century was roughly the Englishman's Century. And their method, as they themselves, in their worst moments, speak of it, is that of 'muddling through.' They begin at one end and hope to come out at the other: their grammar, parts of speech, methods of talk, go with this fashion. The United States began a different phase when, after the Civil War, they discovered and created out of their inner need a different way of life. They created the Twentieth Century. The United States, instead of having the feeling of beginning at one end and ending at another, had the conception of assembling the whole thing out of its parts, the whole thing which made the Twentieth Century productive. The Twentieth Century conceived an automobile as a whole, so to speak, and then created it, built it up out of its parts. It was an entirely different point of view from the Nineteenth Century's. The Nineteenth Century would have seen the parts, and worked towards the automobile through them.

Now in a funny sort of way this expresses, in different terms, the difference between the literature of the Nineteenth Century and the literature of the Twentieth. Think of your reading. If you look at it from the days of Chaucer, you will see that what you might call the 'internal history' of a country always affects its use of writing. It makes a difference in the expression, in the vocabulary, even in the handling of grammar. In an amusing story in your *Literary Magazine*, when the author speaks of the fact that he is tired of using quotation marks and isn't going to use them any more, with him that is a joke; but when I began writing, the whole question of punctuation was a vital question. You see, I had this new conception: I had this conception of the whole paragraph, and in *The Making of Americans* I had this idea of a whole thing. But if you think of contemporary English writers, it doesn't work like that at all. They conceive of it as pieces put together to make a whole, and I conceived it as a whole made up of its parts. I didn't know what I was doing any more than you know, but in response to the need of my period I was doing this thing. That is why I came in contact with people who were unconsciously doing the same thing. They had the Twentieth Century conception of a whole. So the element of punctuation was very vital. The comma was just a nuisance. If you got the thing as a whole, the comma kept irritating you all along the line. If you think of a thing as a whole, and the comma keeps sticking out, it gets on your nerves; because, after all, it destroys the reality of the whole. So

I got rid more and more of commas. Not because I had any prejudice against commas; but the comma was a stumbling-block. When you were conceiving a sentence, the comma stopped you. That is the illustration of the question of grammar and parts of speech, as part of the daily life as we live it.

The other thing which I accomplished was the getting rid of nouns. In the Twentieth Century you feel like movement. The Nineteenth Century didn't feel that way. The element of movement was not the predominating thing that they felt. You know that in your lives movement is the thing that occupies you most—you feel movement all the time. And the United States had the first instance of what I call Twentieth Century writing. You see it first in Walt Whitman. He was the beginning of movement. He didn't see it very clearly, but there was a sense of movement that the European was much influenced by, because the Twentieth Century has become the American Century. That is what I mean when I say that each generation has its own literature.

There is a third element. You see, everybody in his generation has his sense of time which belongs to his crowd. But then, you always have the memory of what you were brought up with. In most people that makes a double time, which makes confusion. When one is beginning to write he is always under the shadow of the thing that is just past. And that is the reason why the creative person always has the appearance of ugliness. There is this persistent drag of the habits that belong to you. And in struggling away from this thing there is always an ugliness. That is the other reason why the contemporary writer is always refused. It is the effort of escaping from the thing which is a drag upon you that is so strong that the result is an apparent ugliness; and the world always says of the new writer, 'It is so ugly!' And they are right, because it *is* ugly. If you disagree with your parents, there is an ugliness in the relation. There is a double resistance that makes the essence of this thing ugly.

You always have in your writing the resistance outside of you and inside of you, a shadow upon you, and the thing which you must express. In the beginning of your writing, this struggle is so tremendous that that result is ugly; and that is the reason why the followers are always accepted before the person who made the revolution. The person who has made the fight probably makes it seem ugly, although the struggle has the much greater beauty. But the followers die out; and the man who made the struggle and the quality of beauty remains in the intensity of the fight. Eventually it comes out all right, and so you have this very queer situation which always happens with the followers: the original person has to have in him a certain element of ugliness. You know that is what happens over and over again: the statement made that it is ugly—the statement made against me for the last twenty years. And they are quite right, because it *is* ugly. But the essence of that ugliness is the thing which will always make it beautiful. I myself think it is much more interesting when it seems ugly, because in it you see the element of the fight. The literature of one hundred years ago is perfectly easy to see, because the sediment of ugliness has settled down and you got the solemnity of its beauty. But to a person of my temperament, it is much more amusing when it has the vitality of the struggle.

In my own case, the Twentieth Century, which America created after the Civil War, and which had certain elements, had a definite influence on me. And in *The Making of Americans*, which is a book I would like to talk about, I gradually and slowly found out that there were two things I had to think about; the fact that knowledge is acquired, so to speak, by memory; but that when you know anything, memory doesn't come in. At any moment that you are conscious of knowing anything, memory plays no part. When any of you feels anybody else, memory doesn't come into it. You have the sense of the immediate. Remember that my immediate forebears were people like Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and so forth, and you will see what a struggle it was to do this thing. This was one of my first efforts to give the appearance of one time-knowledge, and not to make it a narrative story. This is what I mean by immediacy of description: you will find it in *The Mak-*

ing of Americans: 'It happens very often that a man has it in him, that a man does something, that he does it very often that he does many things, when he is a young man when he is an old man, when he is an older man.' Do you see what I mean? And here is a description of a thing that is very interesting: 'One of such of these kind of them had a little boy and this one, the little son wanted to make a collection of butterflies and beetles and it was all exciting to him and it was all arranged then and then the father said to the son you are certain this is not a cruel thing that you are wanting to be doing, killing things to make collections of them, and the son was very disturbed then and they talked about it together the two of them and more and more they talked about it then and then at last the boy was convinced it was a cruel thing and he said he would not do it and the father said the little boy was a noble boy to give up pleasure when it was a cruel one. The boy went to bed then and then the father when he got up in the early morning saw a wonderfully beautiful moth in the room and he caught him and he killed him and he pinned him and he woke up his son then and showed it to him and he said to him "see what a good father I am to have caught and killed this one," the boy was all mixed up inside him and then he said he would go on with his collecting and that was all there was then of discussing and this is a little description of something that happened once and it is very interesting.'

I was trying to get this present immediacy without trying to drag in anything else. I had to use present participles, new constructions of grammar. The grammar-constructions are correct, but they are changed, in order to get this immediacy. In short, from that time I have been trying in every possible way to get the sense of immediacy, and practically all the work I have done has been in that direction.

In *The Making of Americans* I had an idea that I could get a sense of immediacy if I made a description of every kind of human being that existed, the rules for resemblances and all the other things, until really I had made a description of every human being—I found this out when I was at Harvard working under William James.

Did you ever see that article that came out in *The Atlantic Monthly* a year or two ago, about my experiments with automatic writing? It was very amusing. The experiment that I did was to take a lot of people in moments of fatigue and rest and activity of various kinds, and see if they could do anything with automatic writing. I found they could not do anything with automatic writing, but I found out a great deal about how people act. I found there a certain kind of human being who acted in a certain way, and another kind who acted in another kind of way, and their resemblances and their differences. And then I wanted to find out if you could make a history of the whole world, if you could know the whole life history of everyone in the world, their slight resemblances and lack of resemblances. I made enormous charts, and I tried to carry these charts out. You start in and you take everyone that you know, and then when you see anybody who has a certain expression or turn of the face that reminds you of some one, you find out where he agrees or disagrees with the character, until you build up the whole scheme. I got to the place where I didn't know whether I knew people or not. I made so many charts that when I used to go down the streets of Paris I wondered whether they were people I knew or ones I didn't. That is what *The Making of Americans* was intended to be. I was to make a description of every kind of human being until I could know by these variations how everybody was to be known. Then I got very much interested in this thing, and I wrote about nine hundred pages, and I came to a logical conclusion that this thing could be done. Anybody who has patience enough could literally and entirely make of the whole world a history of human nature. When I found it could be done, I lost interest in it. As soon as I found definitely and clearly and completely that I could do it, I stopped writing the long book. It didn't interest me any longer. In doing the thing, I found out this question of resemblances, and I found in making these analyses that the resemblances were not of memory. I had to remember what person looked like the other person. Then I found this contradiction: that the resemblances were a matter of memory.

There were two prime elements involved, the element of memory and the other of immediacy.

The element of memory was a perfectly feasible thing, so then I gave it up. I then started a book which I called *A Long Gay Book* to see if I could work the thing up to a faster tempo. I wanted to see if I could make that a more complete vision. I wanted to see if I could hold it in the frame. Ordinarily the novels of the Nineteenth Century live by association; they are wont to call up other pictures than the one they present to you. I didn't want, when I said 'water,' to have you think of running water. Therefore I began limiting my vocabulary, because I wanted to get rid of anything except the picture within the frame. While I was writing I didn't want, when I used one word, to make it carry with it too many associations. I wanted as far as possible to make it exact, as exact as mathematics; that is to say, for example, if one and one make two, I wanted to get words to have as much exactness as that. When I put them down they were to have this quality. The whole history of my work, from *The Making of Americans*, has been a history of that. I made a great many discoveries, but the thing that I was always trying to do was this thing.

One thing which came to me is that the Twentieth Century gives of itself a feeling of movement, and has in its way no feeling for events. To the Twentieth Century events are not important. You must know that. Events are not exciting. Events have lost their interest for people. You read them more like a soothing syrup, and if you listen over the radio you don't get very excited. The thing has got to this place, that events are so wonderful that they are not exciting. Now you have to remember that the business of an artist is to be exciting. If the thing has its proper vitality, the result must be exciting. I was struck with it during the War: the average dough-boy standing on a street corner doing nothing—(they say, at the end of their doing nothing, 'I guess I'll go home')—was much more exciting to people than when the soldiers went over the top. The populace were passionately interested in their standing on the street corners, more so than in the St. Mihiel drive. And it is a perfectly natural thing. Events had got so continuous that the fact that events were taking place no longer stimulated anybody. To see three men, strangers, standing, expressed their personality to the European man so much more than anything else they could do. That thing impressed me very much. But the novel which tells about what happens is of no interest to anybody. It is quite characteristic that in *The Making of Americans*, Proust, *Ulysses*, nothing much happens. People are interested in existence. Newspapers excite people very little. Sometimes a personality breaks through the newspapers—Lindbergh, Dillinger—when the personality has vitality. It wasn't what Dillinger *did* that excited anybody. The feeling is perfectly simple. You can see it in my *Four Saints*. Saints shouldn't do anything. The fact that a saint is there is enough for anybody. The *Four Saints* was written about as static as I could make it. The saints conversed a little, and it all did something. It did something more than the theatre which has tried to make events has done. For our purposes, for our contemporary purposes, events have no importance. I merely say that for the last thirty years events are of no importance. They may make a great many people unhappy, they may cause convulsions in history, but from the standpoint of excitement, the kind of excitement the Nineteenth Century got out of events doesn't exist.

And so what I am trying to make you understand is that every contemporary writer has to find out what is the inner time-sense of his contemporariness. The writer or painter, or what not, feels this thing more vibrantly, and he has a passionate need of putting it down; and that is what creativeness does. He spends his life in putting down this thing which he doesn't know is a contemporary thing. If he doesn't put down the contemporary thing, he isn't a great writer, for he has to live in the past. That is what I mean by 'everything is contemporary.' The minor poets of the period, or the precious poets of the period, are all people who are under the shadow of the past. A man who is making a revolution has to be contemporary. A minor person can live in the imagination. That tells the story pretty completely.

The question of repetition is very important. It is important because there is no such thing as repetition. Everybody tells every story in about the same way. You know perfectly well that when you and your roommates tell something, you are telling the same story in about the same way. But the point about it is this. Everybody is telling the story in the same way. But if you listen carefully, you will see that not all the story is the same. There is always a slight variation. Somebody comes in, and you tell the story over again. Every time you tell that story it is told slightly differently. All my early work was a careful listening to all the people telling their story, and I conceived the idea which is, funnily enough, the same as the idea of the cinema. The cinema goes on the same principle: each picture is just infinitesimally different from the one before. If you listen carefully, you say something, the other person says something; but each time it changes just a little, until finally you come to the point where you convince him or you don't convince him. I used to listen very carefully to people talking. I had a passion for knowing just what I call their 'insides.' And in *The Making of Americans* I did this thing; but of course to my mind there is no repetition. For instance, in these early 'Portraits,' and in a whole lot of them in this book (*Portraits and Prayers*) you will see that every time a statement is made about someone being somewhere, that statement is different. If I had repeated, nobody would listen. Nobody could be in the room with a person who said the same thing over and over and over. He would drive everybody mad. There has to be a very slight change. Really listen to the way you talk, and every time you change it a little bit. That change, to me, was a very important thing to find out. You will see that when I kept on saying something was something or somebody was somebody, I changed it just a little bit until I got a whole portrait. I conceived the idea of building this thing up. It was all based upon this thing of everybody's slightly building this thing up. What I was after was this immediacy. A single photograph doesn't give it. I was trying for this thing, and so to my mind there is no repetition. The only thing that is repetition is when somebody tells you what he has learned. No matter how you say it, you say it differently. It was this that led me in all that early work.

You see, finally, after I got this thing as completely as I could, then, of course, it being my nature, I wanted to tear it down. I attacked the problem from another way. I listened to people. I condensed it in about three words. There again, if you read those later 'Portraits,' you will see that I used three or four words instead of making a cinema of it. I wanted to condense it as much as possible and change it around, until you could get the movement of a human being. If I wanted to make a picture of you as you sit there, I would wait until I got a picture of you as individuals and then I'd change them until I got a picture of you as a whole.

I did these 'Portraits,' and then I got the idea of doing plays. I had the 'Portraits' so much in my head that I would almost know how you differ one from the other. I got this idea of the play, and put it down in a few words. I wanted to put them down in that way, and I began writing plays and I wrote a great many of them. The Nineteenth Century wrote a great many plays, and none of them are now read, because the Nineteenth Century wanted to put their novels on the stage. The better the play the more static. The minute you try to make a play a novel, it doesn't work. That is the reason I got interested in doing these plays.

When you get to that point there is no essential difference between prose and poetry. This is essentially the problem with which your generation will have to wrestle. The thing has got to the point where poetry and prose have to concern themselves with the static thing. That is up to you.

1935 1935

THE LIFE OF JUAN GRIS [1]

The Life and Death of Juan Gris

Juan Gris was one of the younger children of a well-to-do merchant of Madrid. The

1 Juan Gris(1887–1927) was, with Braque and Picasso, one of the front-guard of cubism. Like his contemporaries, he passed through a number of phases: from pure representation to a concentration on composition,

earliest picture he has of himself is at about five years of age dressed in a little lace dress standing beside his mother who was very sweet and pleasantly maternal-looking. When he was about seven years old his father failed in business honorably and the family fell upon very hard times but in one way and another two sons and a daughter lived to grow up well educated and on the whole prosperous. Juan went to the school of engineering at Madrid and when about seventeen came to Paris to study. He tells delightful stories of his father and Spanish ways which strangely enough he never liked. He had very early a very great attraction and love for French culture. French culture has always seduced me he was fond of saying. It seduces me and then I am seduced over again. He used to tell how Spaniards love not to resist temptation. In order to please them the better class merchants such as his father would always have to leave many little things about everything else being packages carefully tied up and in the back on shelves. He used to dwell upon the lack of trust and comradeship in Spanish life. Each one is a general or does not fight and if he does not fight each one is a general. No one that is no Spaniard can help any one because no one no Spaniard can help any one. And this being so and it is so Juan Gris was a brother and comrade to every one being one as no one ever had been one. That is the proportion. One to any one number of millions. That is any proportion. Juan Gris was that one. French culture was always a seduction. Bracque who was such a one was always a seduction seducing French culture seducing again and again. Josette equable intelligent faithful spontaneous delicate courageous delightful forethoughtful the school of Fointainebleau delicate deliberate measured and free all these things seduced. I am seduced and then I am seduced over again he was fond of saying. He had his own Spanish gift of intimacy. We were intimate. Juan knew what he did. In the beginning he did all sorts of things he used to draw for humorous illustrated papers he had a child a boy named George he lived about he was not young and enthusiastic. The first serious exhibition of his pictures was at the Galerie Kahnweiler rue Vignon in 1914. As a Spaniard he knew cubism and had stepped through into it. He had stepped through it. There was beside this perfection. To have it shown you. Then came the war and desertion. There was little aid. Four years partly illness much perfection and rejoining beauty and perfection and then at the end there came a definite creation of something. This is what is to be measured. He made something that is to be measured. And that is that something.

Therein Juan Gris is not everything but more than anything. He made that thing. He made the thing. He made a thing to be measured.

Later having done it he could be sorry it was not why they like it. And so he made it very well loving and he made it very plainly playing. And he liked a knife and all but reasonably. This is what is made to be and he then did some stage setting. We liked it but nobody else could see that something is everything. It is everything if it is what is it. Nobody can ask about measuring. Unfortunately. Juan could go on living. No one can say that Henry Kahnweiler can be left out of him. I remember he said Kahnweiler goes on but no one buys anything and I said it to him and he smiled so gently and said I was everything. This is the history of Juan Gris.

1927 1934

to an intensive use of decorative color, and to analytical abstraction. In addition to his work on smaller canvases he designed sets for the ballet, to which Miss Stein refers. Her portrait was written at the time of his death, and appeared soon after in *Transition*, no. 4, 100–02.

FROM A LONG GAY BOOK

WHEN THEY ARE A LITTLE OLDER [1]

WHEN they are very little just a baby they cannot know that thing. When they are a little bigger they can know that other ones are older and younger. When they are a little bigger they can remember that they were littler. When they are a little older they can know that they are then not what any one is describing, they are knowing then that they are older than the description, than every description of the age they

1 The selection, to which the title has been given by the editors, is from *A Long Gay Book*, printed in *Matisse, Picasso & G. S.* (Paris, 1933), 25–26.

are then. When they are older they are beginning to remember their reading, they are beginning to believe a description of them. When they are a little older they are knowing then that they just have been younger. When they are a little older they are beginning to know they will be older. When they are a little older they know they are old enough to know that age is a different thing than it has been. When they are a little older they are knowing they are beginning then to be young to some who are much older and they are beginning to be old to some who are much younger. When they are a little older they know they are beginning to be afraid of changing thinking about ageing, they are beginning then to know something of being uncertain about what is being young and what is being old, they are beginning then to be afraid of everything. When they are a little older they are coming to be certain that they have been younger. When they are a little older they are beginning to be certain that age has no meaning. When they are coming to be a little older they are coming to be saying that they are beginning to be wondering if age has not some meaning. When they are a little older they are certainly beginning to be believing what they remembered reading about being young and older and middle aged and older and almost old and old. When they are a little older they are commencing to be certain that ageing has meaning. When they are a little older they are certain that they can be older and that being older will sometime be coming. When they are a little older they are commencing mentioning ageing to prepare any one for some such thing being something that will be showing in them. When they are a little older they are commencing mentioning that they are expecting anything. When they are a little older they are commencing mentioning any such thing quite often. When they are a little older they are not mentioning being an older one, they are then mentioning that many are existing who are being young ones. When they are a little older they are mentioning anything and mentioning it quite often. When they are a little older any one is mentioning that thing and not mentioning everything and they are mentioning being a little older and they are mentioning everything. When they are a little older it depends then on how much longer they will be being living just how long they will be mentioning anything again and again. They are then completely old ones and not any one is knowing everything of that thing.

1909–1912 1933

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

1876–1941

DEATH IN THE WOODS [1]

I

SHE was an old woman and lived on a farm near the town in which I lived. All country and small-town people have seen such old women, but no one knows much about them. Such an old woman comes into town driving an old worn-out horse or she comes afoot carrying a basket. She may own a few hens and have eggs to sell. She brings

1 'It seems to me that the theme of this story is the persistent animal hunger of man. There are these women who spend their whole lives, rather dumbly feeding this hunger. For years I wanted to write this story.

'As for the technique, it was quite definitely thought out. Over a period of several years I made several attempts that had to be thrown aside. For example I thought it necessary to definitely lift the animal hunger, I wanted to get at, out of the realm of sex. Therefore my tired-out, sexless old woman, the dogs feeding from the food attached to her body after her own death. And there is always the desire to get your story imbedded in the whole life of a community.

'The story has its particular form, attempts at flashes out of a community life, the young man and the German fighting over the girl in the road, the son bringing his mistress to his mother's house, the butcher, half-grudgingly and yet out of pity, giving her the meat bones, the dogs circling in the mysterious moonlit night in the forest, the men and boys of the town hurrying out of town to find the body . . . all of this to get a certain effect. It is a little hard to define. What is wanted is something beyond the horizon, to retain the sense of mystery in life while showing, at the same time, at what cost our ordinary animal hungers are sometimes fed.' Author's note.

Anderson mentions the theme of this tale in *A Story Teller's Story*(N.Y., 1924). Its first complete version, differing slightly from that printed above, is in *Tar: A Midwest Childhood*(N.Y., 1926).

them in a basket and takes them to a grocer. There she trades them in. She gets some salt pork and some beans. Then she gets a pound or two of sugar and some flour.

Afterwards she goes to the butcher's and asks for some dog-meat. She may spend ten or fifteen cents, but when she does she asks for something. Formerly the butchers gave liver to any one who wanted to carry it away. In our family we were always having it. Once one of my brothers got a whole cow's liver at the slaughter-house near the fair grounds in our town. We had it until we were sick of it. It never cost a cent. I have hated the thought of it ever since.

The old farm woman got some liver and a soup bone. She never visited with any one, and as soon as she got what she wanted she lit out for home. It made quite a load for such an old body. No one gave her a lift. People drive right down a road and never notice an old woman like that.

There was such an old woman who used to come into town past our house one Summer and Fall when I was a young boy and was sick with what was called inflammatory rheumatism. She went home later carrying a heavy pack on her back. Two or three large gaunt-looking dogs followed at her heels.

The old woman was nothing special. She was one of the nameless ones that hardly any one knows, but she got into my thoughts. I have just suddenly now, after all these years, remembered her and what happened. It is a story. Her name was Grimes, and she lived with her husband and son in a small unpainted house on the bank of a small creek four miles from town.

The husband and son were a tough lot. Although the son was but twenty-one, he had already served a term in jail. It was whispered about that the woman's husband stole horses and ran them off to some other county. Now and then, when a horse turned up missing, the man had also disappeared. No one ever caught him. Once, when I was loafing at Tom Whitehead's livery-barn, the man came there and sat on the bench in front. Two or three other men were there, but no one spoke to him. He sat for a few minutes and then got up and went away. When he was leaving he turned around and stared at the men. There was a look of defiance in his eyes. 'Well, I have tried to be friendly. You don't want to talk to me. It has been so wherever I have gone in this town. If, some day, one of your fine horses turns up missing, well, then what?' He did not say anything actually. 'I'd like to bust one of you on the jaw,' was about what his eyes said. I remember how the look in his eyes made me shiver.

The old man belonged to a family that had had money once. His name was Jake Grimes. It all comes back clearly now. His father, John Grimes, had owned a sawmill when the country was new, and had made money. Then he got to drinking and running after women. When he died there wasn't much left.

Jake blew in the rest. Pretty soon there wasn't any more lumber to cut and his land was nearly all gone.

He got his wife off a German farmer, for whom he went to work one June day in the wheat harvest. She was a young thing then and scared to death. You see, the farmer was up to something with the girl—she was, I think, a bound girl and his wife had her suspicions. She took it out on the girl when the man wasn't around. Then, when the wife had to go off to town for supplies, the farmer got after her. She told young Jake that nothing really ever happened, but he didn't know whether to believe it or not.

He got her pretty easy himself, the first time he was out with her. He wouldn't have married her if the German farmer hadn't tried to tell him where to get off. He got her to go riding with him in his buggy one night when he was threshing on the place, and then he came for her the next Sunday night.

She managed to get out of the house without her employer's seeing, but when she was getting into the buggy he showed up. It was almost dark, and he just popped up suddenly at the horse's head. He grabbed the horse by the bridle and Jake got out his buggy-whip.

They had it out all right! The German was a tough one. Maybe he didn't care whether his wife knew or not. Jake hit him over the face and shoulders with the buggy-whip, but the horse got to acting up and he had to get out.

Then the two men went for it. The girl didn't see it. The horse started to run away

and went nearly a mile down the road before the girl got him stopped. Then she managed to tie him to a tree beside the road. (I wonder how I know all this. It must have stuck in my mind from small-town tales when I was a boy.) Jake found her there after he got through with the German. She was huddled up in the buggy seat, crying, scared to death. She told Jake a lot of stuff, how the German had tried to get her, how he chased her once into the barn, how another time, when they happened to be alone in the house together, he tore her dress open clear down the front. The German, she said, might have got her that time if he hadn't heard his old woman drive in at the gate. She had been off to town for supplies. Well, she would be putting the horse in the barn. The German managed to sneak off to the fields without his wife seeing. He told the girl he would kill her if she told. What could she do? She told a lie about ripping her dress in the barn when she was feeding the stock. I remember now that she was a bound girl and did not know where her father and mother were. Maybe she did not have any father. You know what I mean.

Such bound children were often enough cruelly treated. They were children who had no parents, slaves really. There were very few orphan homes then. They were legally bound into some home. It was a matter of pure luck how it came out.

II

She married Jake and had a son and daughter, but the daughter died.

Then she settled down to feed stock. That was her job. At the German's place she had cooked the food for the German and his wife. The wife was a strong woman with big hips and worked most of the time in the fields with her husband. She fed them and fed the cows in the barn, fed the pigs, the horses and the chickens. Every moment of every day, as a young girl, was spent feeding something.

Then she married Jake Grimes and he had to be fed. She was a slight thing, and when she had been married for three or four years, and after the two children were born, her slender shoulders became stooped.

Jake always had a lot of big dogs around the house, that stood near the unused sawmill near the creek. He was always trading horses when he wasn't stealing something and had a lot of poor bony ones about. Also he kept three or four pigs and a cow. They were all pastured in the few acres left of the Grimes place and Jake did little enough work.

He went into debt for a threshing outfit and ran it for several years, but it did not pay. People did not trust him. They were afraid he would steal the grain at night. He had to go a long way off to get work and it cost too much to get there. In the Winter he hunted and cut a little firewood, to be sold in some nearby town. When the son grew up he was just like the father. They got drunk together. If there wasn't anything to eat in the house when they came home the old man gave his old woman a cut over the head. She had a few chickens of her own and had to kill one of them in a hurry. When they were all killed she wouldn't have any eggs to sell when she went to town, and then what would she do?

She had to scheme all her life about getting things fed, getting the pigs fed so they would grow fat and could be butchered in the Fall. When they were butchered her husband took most of the meat off to town and sold it. If he did not do it first the boy did. They fought sometimes and when they fought the old woman stood aside trembling.

She had got the habit of silence anyway —that was fixed. Sometimes, when she began to look old—she wasn't forty yet—and when the husband and son were both off, trading horses or drinking or hunting or stealing, she went around the house and the barnyard muttering to herself.

How was she going to get everything fed?—that was her problem. The dogs had to be fed. There wasn't enough hay in the barn for the horses and the cow. If she didn't feed the chickens how could they lay eggs? Without eggs to sell how could she get things in town, things she had to have to keep the life of the farm going? Thank heaven, she did not have to feed her husband—in a certain way. That hadn't lasted long after their marriage and after the babies came. Where he went on his long trips she did not know. Sometimes he was gone from home for weeks, and after the boy grew up they went off together.

They left everything at home for her to

manage and she had no money. She knew no one. No one ever talked to her in town. When it was Winter she had to gather sticks of wood for her fire, had to try to keep the stock fed with very little grain.

The stock in the barn cried to her hungrily, the dogs followed her about. In the Winter the hens laid few enough eggs. They huddled in the corners of the barn and she kept watching them. If a hen lays an egg in the barn in the Winter and you do not find it, it freezes and breaks.

One day in Winter the old woman went off to town with a few eggs and the dogs followed her. She did not get started until nearly three o'clock and the snow was heavy. She hadn't been feeling very well for several days and so she went muttering along, scantily clad, her shoulders stooped. She had an old grain bag in which she carried her eggs, tucked away down in the bottom. There weren't many of them, but in Winter the price of eggs is up. She would get a little meat in exchange for the eggs, some salt pork, a little sugar, and some coffee perhaps. It might be the butcher would give her a piece of liver.

When she had got to town and was trading in her eggs the dogs lay by the door outside. She did pretty well, got the things she needed, more than she had hoped. Then she went to the butcher and he gave her some liver and some dog-meat.

It was the first time any one had spoken to her in a friendly way for a long time. The butcher was alone in his shop when she came in and was annoyed by the thought of such a sick-looking old woman out on such a day. It was bitter cold and the snow, that had let up during the afternoon, was falling again. The butcher said something about her husband and her son, swore at them, and the old woman stared at him, a look of mild surprise in her eyes as he talked. He said that if either the husband or the son were going to get any of the liver or the heavy bones with scraps of meat hanging to them that he had put into the grain bag, he'd see him starve first.

Starve, eh? Well, things had to be fed. Men had to be fed, and the horses that weren't any good but maybe could be traded off, and the poor thin cow that hadn't given any milk for three months.

Horses, cows, pigs, dogs, men.

III

The old woman had to get back before darkness came if she could. The dogs followed at her heels, sniffing at the heavy grain bag she had fastened on her back. When she got to the edge of town she stopped by a fence and tied the bag on her back with a piece of rope she had carried in her dress-pocket for just that purpose. That was an easier way to carry it. Her arms ached. It was hard when she had to crawl over fences and once she fell over and landed in the snow. The dogs went frisking about. She had to struggle to get to her feet again, but she made it. The point of climbing over the fences was that there was a short cut over a hill and through a woods. She might have gone around by the road, but it was a mile farther that way. She was afraid she couldn't make it. And then, besides, the stock had to be fed. There was a little hay left and a little corn. Perhaps her husband and son would bring some home when they came. They had driven off in the only buggy the Grimes family had, a rickety thing, a rickety horse hitched to the buggy, two other rickety horses led by halters. They were going to trade horses, get a little money if they could. They might come home drunk. It would be well to have something in the house when they came back.

The son had an affair on with a woman at the county seat, fifteen miles away. She was a rough enough woman, a tough one. Once, in the Summer, the son had brought her to the house. Both she and the son had been drinking. Jake Grimes was away and the son and his woman ordered the old woman about like a servant. She didn't mind much; she was used to it. Whatever happened she never said anything. That was her way of getting along. She had managed that way when she was a young girl at the German's and ever since she had married Jake. That time her son brought his woman to the house they stayed all night, sleeping together just as though they were married. It hadn't shocked the old woman, not much. She had got past being shocked early in life.

With the pack on her back she went painfully along across an open field, wading in the deep snow, and got into the woods.

There was a path, but it was hard to follow. Just beyond the top of the hill, where the woods was thickest, there was a small clearing. Had some one once thought of building a house there? The clearing was as large as a building lot in town, large enough for a house and a garden. The path ran along the side of the clearing, and when she got there the old woman sat down to rest at the foot of a tree.

It was a foolish thing to do. When she got herself placed, the pack against the tree's trunk, it was nice, but what about getting up again? She worried about that for a moment and then quietly closed her eyes.

She must have slept for a time. When you are about so cold you can't get any colder. The afternoon grew a little warmer and the snow came thicker than ever. Then after a time the weather cleared. The moon even came out.

There were four Grimes dogs that had followed Mrs. Grimes into town, all tall gaunt fellows. Such men as Jake Grimes and his son always keep just such dogs. They kick and abuse them, but they stay. The Grimes dogs, in order to keep from starving, had to do a lot of foraging for themselves, and they had been at it while the old woman slept with her back to the tree at the side of the clearing. They had been chasing rabbits in the woods and in adjoining fields and in their ranging had picked up three other farm dogs.

After a time all the dogs came back to the clearing. They were excited about something. Such nights, cold and clear and with a moon, do things to dogs. It may be that some old instinct, come down from the time when they were wolves and ranged the woods in packs on Winter nights, comes back into them.

The dogs in the clearing, before the old woman, had caught two or three rabbits and their immediate hunger had been satisfied. They began to play, running in circles in the clearing. Round and round they ran, each dog's nose at the tail of the next dog. In the clearing, under the snow-laden trees and under the wintry moon they made a strange picture, running thus silently, in a circle their running had beaten in the soft snow. The dogs made no sound. They ran around and around in the circle.

It may have been that the old woman saw them doing that before she died. She may have awakened once or twice and looked at the strange sight with dim old eyes.

She wouldn't be very cold now, just drowsy. Life hangs on a long time. Perhaps the old woman was out of her head. She may have dreamed of her girlhood, at the German's, and before that, when she was a child and before her mother lit out and left her.

Her dreams couldn't have been very pleasant. Not many pleasant things had happened to her. Now and then one of the Grimes dogs left the running circle and came to stand before her. The dog thrust his face close to her face. His red tongue was hanging out.

The running of the dogs may have been a kind of death ceremony. It may have been that the primitive instinct of the wolf, having been aroused in the dogs by the night and the running, made them somehow afraid.

'Now we are no longer wolves. We are dogs, the servants of men. Keep alive, man! When man dies we become wolves again.'

When one of the dogs came to where the old woman sat with her back against the tree and thrust his nose close to her face he seemed satisfied and went back to run with the pack. All the Grimes dogs did it at some time during the evening, before she died. I knew all about it afterward, when I grew to be a man, because once in a woods in Illinois, on another Winter night, I saw a pack of dogs act just like that. The dogs were waiting for me to die as they had waited for the old woman that night when I was a child, but when it happened to me I was a young man and had no intention whatever of dying.

The old woman died softly and quietly. When she was dead and when one of the Grimes dogs had come to her and had found her dead all the dogs stopped running.

They gathered about her.

Well, she was dead now. She had fed the Grimes dogs when she was alive, what about now?

There was the pack on her back, the grain bag containing the piece of salt pork,

the liver the butcher had given her, the dog-meat, the soup bones. The butcher in town, having been suddenly overcome with a feeling of pity, had loaded her grain bag heavily. It had been a big haul for the old woman.

It was a big haul for the dogs now.

IV

One of the Grimes dogs sprang suddenly out from among the others and began worrying the pack on the old woman's back. Had the dogs really been wolves that one would have been the leader of the pack. What he did, all the others did.

All of them sank their teeth into the grain bag the old woman had fastened with ropes to her back.

They dragged the old woman's body out into the open clearing. The worn-out dress was quickly torn from her shoulders. When she was found, a day or two later, the dress had been torn from her body clear to the hips, but the dogs had not touched her body. They had got the meat out of the grain bag, that was all. Her body was frozen stiff when it was found, and the shoulders were so narrow and the body so slight that in death it looked like the body of some charming young girl.

Such things happened in towns of the Middle West, on farms near town, when I was a boy. A hunter out after rabbits found the old woman's body and did not touch it. Something, the beaten round path in the little snow-covered clearing, the silence of the place, the place where the dogs had worried the body trying to pull the grain bag away or tear it open—something startled the man and he hurried off to town.

I was in Main street with one of my brothers who was town newsboy and who was taking the afternoon papers to the stores. It was almost night.

The hunter came into a grocery and told his story. Then he went to a hardware-shop and into a drugstore. Men began to gather on the sidewalks. Then they started out along the road to the place in the woods.

My brother should have gone on about his business of distributing papers but he didn't. Every one was going to the woods. The undertaker went and the town marshal. Several men got on a dray and rode out to where the path left the road and went into the woods, but the horses weren't very sharply shod and slid about on the slippery roads. They made no better time than those of us who walked.

The town marshal was a large man whose leg had been injured in the Civil War. He carried a heavy cane and limped rapidly along the road. My brother and I followed at his heels, and as we went other men and boys joined the crowd.

It had grown dark by the time we got to where the old woman had left the road but the moon had come out. The marshal was thinking there might have been a murder. He kept asking the hunter questions. The hunter went along with his gun across his shoulders, a dog following at his heels. It isn't often a rabbit hunter has a chance to be so conspicuous. He was taking full advantage of it, leading the procession with the town marshal. 'I didn't see any wounds. She was a beautiful young girl. Her face was buried in the snow. No, I didn't know her.' As a matter of fact, the hunter had not looked closely at the body. He had been frightened. She might have been murdered and some one might spring out from behind a tree and murder him. In a woods, in the late afternoon, when the trees are all bare and there is white snow on the ground, when all is silent, something creepy steals over the mind and body. If something strange or uncanny has happened in the neighborhood all you think about is getting away from there as fast as you can.

The crowd of men and boys had got to where the old woman had crossed the field and went, following the marshal and the hunter, up the slight incline and into the woods.

My brother and I were silent. He had his bundle of papers in a bag slung across his shoulder. When he got back to town he would have to go on distributing his papers before he went home to supper. If I went along, as he had no doubt already determined I should, we would both be late. Either mother or our older sister would have to warm our supper.

Well, we would have something to tell. A boy did not get such a chance very often. It was lucky we just happened to go into the grocery when the hunter came in. The hunter was a country fellow. Neither of us had ever seen him before.

Now the crowd of men and boys had got to the clearing. Darkness comes quickly on such Winter nights, but the full moon made everything clear. My brother and I stood near the tree, beneath which the old woman had died.

She did not look old, lying there in that light, frozen and still. One of the men turned her over in the snow and I saw everything. My body trembled with some strange mystical feeling and so did my brother's. It might have been the cold.

Neither of us had ever seen a woman's body before. It may have been the snow, clinging to the frozen flesh, that made it look so white and lovely, so like marble. No woman had come with the party from town; but one of the men, he was the town blacksmith, took off his overcoat and spread it over her. Then he gathered her into his arms and started off to town, all the others following silently. At that time no one knew who she was.

V

I had seen everything, had seen the oval in the snow, like a miniature race-track, where the dogs had run, had seen how the men were mystified, had seen the white bare young-looking shoulders, had heard the whispered comments of the men.

The men were simply mystified. They took the body to the undertaker's, and when the blacksmith, the hunter, the marshal and several others had got inside they closed the door. If father had been there perhaps he could have got in, but we boys couldn't.

I went with my brother to distribute the rest of his papers and when we got home it was my brother who told the story.

I kept silent and went to bed early. It may have been I was not satisfied with the way he told it.

Later, in the town, I must have heard other fragments of the old woman's story. She was recognized the next day and there was an investigation.

The husband and son were found somewhere and brought to town and there was an attempt to connect them with the woman's death, but it did not work. They had perfect enough alibis.

However, the town was against them. They had to get out. Where they went I never heard.

I remember only the picture there in the forest, the men standing about, the naked girlish-looking figure, face down in the snow, the tracks made by the running dogs and the clear cold Winter sky above. White fragments of clouds were drifting across the sky. They went racing across the little open space among the trees.

The scene in the forest had become for me, without my knowing it, the foundation for the real story I am now trying to tell. The fragments, you see, had to be picked up slowly, long afterwards.

Things happened. When I was a young man I worked on the farm of a German. The hired-girl was afraid of her employer. The farmer's wife hated her.

I saw things at that place. Once later, I had a half-uncanny, mystical adventure with dogs in an Illinois forest on a clear, moon-lit Winter night. When I was a schoolboy, and on a Summer day, I went with a boy friend out along a creek some miles from town and came to the house where the old woman had lived. No one had lived in the house since her death. The doors were broken from the hinges; the window lights were all broken. As the boy and I stood in the road outside, two dogs, just roving farm dogs no doubt, came running around the corner of the house. The dogs were tall, gaunt fellows and came down to the fence and glared through at us, standing in the road.

The whole thing, the story of the old woman's death, was to me as I grew older like music heard from far off. The notes had to be picked up slowly one at a time. Something had to be understood.

The woman who died was one destined to feed animal life. Anyway, that is all she ever did. She was feeding animal life before she was born, as a child, as a young woman working on the farm of the German, after she married, when she grew old and when she died. She fed animal life in cows, in chickens, in pigs, in horses, in dogs, in men. Her daughter had died in childhood and with her one son she had no articulate relations. On the night when she died she was hurrying homeward, bearing on her body food for animal life.

She died in the clearing in the woods and even after her death continued feeding animal life.

You see it is likely that, when my brother told the story, that night when we got home and my mother and sister sat listening, I did not think he got the point. He was too young and so was I. A thing so complete has its own beauty.

I shall not try to emphasize the point. I am only explaining why I was dissatisfied then and have been ever since. I speak of that only that you may understand why I have been impelled to try to tell the simple story over again.

1933

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

1898–

THE UNDEFEATED

MANUEL GARCIA climbed the stairs to Don Miguel Retana's office. He set down his suitcase and knocked on the door. There was no answer. Manuel, standing in the hallway, felt there was someone in the room. He felt it through the door.

'Retana,' he said, listening.

There was no answer.

He's there, all right, Manuel thought.

'Retana,' he said and banged the door.

'Who's there?' said someone in the office.

'Me, Manolo,' Manuel said.

'What do you want?' asked the voice.

'I want to work,' Manuel said.

Something in the door clicked several times and it swung open. Manuel went in, carrying his suitcase.

A little man sat behind a desk at the far side of the room. Over his head was a bull's head, stuffed by a Madrid taxidermist; on the walls were framed photographs and bull-fight posters.

The little man sat looking at Manuel.

'I thought they'd killed you,' he said.

Manuel knocked with his knuckles on the desk. The little man sat looking at him across the desk.

'How many corridas you had this year?' Retana asked.

'One,' he answered.

'Just that one?' the little man asked.

'That's all.'

'I read about it in the papers,' Retana said. He leaned back in the chair and looked at Manuel.

Manuel looked up at the stuffed bull. He had seen it often before. He felt a certain family interest in it. It had killed his brother, the promising one, about nine years ago. Manuel remembered the day. There was a brass plate on the oak shield the bull's head was mounted on. Manuel could not read it, but he imagined it was in memory of his brother. Well, he had been a good kid.

The plate said: 'The Bull "Mariposa" of the Duke of Veragua, which accepted 9 varas for 7 caballos, and caused the death of Antonio Garcia, Novillero, April 27, 1909.'

Retana saw him looking at the stuffed bull's head.

'The lot the Duke sent me for Sunday will make a scandal,' he said. 'They're all bad in the legs. What do they say about them at the Café?'

'I don't know,' Manuel said. 'I just got in.'

'Yes,' Retana said. 'You still have your bag.'

He looked at Manuel, leaning back behind the big desk.

'Sit down,' he said. 'Take off your cap.'

Manuel sat down; his cap off, his face was changed. He looked pale, and his coleta pinned forward on his head, so that it would not show under the cap, gave him a strange look.

'You don't look well,' Retana said.

'I just got out of the hospital,' Manuel said.

'I heard they'd cut your leg off,' Retana said.

'No,' said Manuel. 'It got all right.'

Retana leaned forward across the desk and pushed a wooden box of cigarettes toward Manuel.

'Have a cigarette,' he said.

'Thanks.'

Manuel lit it.

'Smoke?' he said, offering the match to Retana.

'No,' Retana waved his hand, 'I never smoke.'

Retana watched him smoking.

'Why don't you get a job and go to work?' he said.

'I don't want to work,' Manuel said. 'I am a bull-fighter.'

'There aren't any bull-fighters any more,' Retana said.

'I'm a bull-fighter,' Manuel said.

'Yes, while you're in there,' Retana said.

Manuel laughed.

Retana sat, saying nothing and looking at Manuel.

'I'll put you in a nocturnal if you want,' Retana offered.

'When?' Manuel asked.

'To-morrow night.'

'I don't like to substitute for anybody,' Manuel said. That was the way they all got killed. That was the way Salvador got killed. He tapped with his knuckles on the table.

'It's all I've got,' Retana said.

'Why don't you put me on next week?' Manuel suggested.

'You wouldn't draw,' Retana said. 'All they want is Litri and Rubito and La Torre. Those kids are good.'

'They'd come to see me get it,' Manuel said, hopefully.

'No, they wouldn't. They don't know who you are any more.'

'I've got a lot of stuff,' Manuel said.

'I'm offering to put you on to-morrow night,' Retana said. 'You can work with young Hernandez and kill two novillos after the Charlots.

'Whose novillos?' Manuel asked.

'I don't know. Whatever stuff they've got in the corrals. What the veterinaries won't pass in the daytime.'

'I don't like to substitute,' Manuel said.

'You can take it or leave it,' Retana said. He leaned forward over the papers. He was no longer interested. The appeal that Manuel had made to him for a moment when he thought of the old days was gone. He would like to get him to substitute for Larita because he could get him cheaply. He could get others cheaply too. He would like to help him though. Still he had given him the chance. It was up to him.

'How much do I get?' Manuel asked. He was still playing with the idea of refusing. But he knew he could not refuse.

'Two hundred and fifty pesetas,' Retana said. He had thought of five hundred, but when he opened his mouth it said two hundred and fifty.

'You pay Villalta seven thousand,' Manuel said.

'You're not Villalta,' Retana said.

'I know it,' Manuel said.

'He draws it, Manolo,' Retana said in explanation.

'Sure,' said Manuel. He stood up. 'Give me three hundred, Retana.'

'All right,' Retana agreed. He reached in the drawer for a paper.

'Can I have fifty now?' Manuel asked.

'Sure,' said Retana. He took a fifty peseta note out of his pocket-book and laid it, spread out flat, on the table.

Manuel picked it up and put it in his pocket.

'What about a cuadrilla?' he asked.

'There's the boys that always work for me nights,' Retana said. 'They're all right.'

'How about picadors?' Manuel asked.

'They're not much,' Retana admitted.

'I've got to have one good pic,' Manuel said.

'Get him then,' Retana said. 'Go and get him.'

'Not out of this,' Manuel said. 'I'm not paying for any cuadrilla out of sixty duros.'

Retana said nothing but looked at Manuel across the big desk.

'You know I've got to have one good pic,' Manuel said.

Retana said nothing but looked at Manuel from a long way off.

'It isn't right,' Manuel said.

Retana was still considering him, leaning back in his chair, considering him from a long way away.

'There're the regular pics,' he offered.

'I know,' Manuel said. 'I know your regular pics.'

Retana did not smile. Manuel knew it was over.

'All I want is an even break,' Manuel said reasoningly. 'When I go out there I want to be able to call my shots on the bull. It only takes one good picador.'

He was talking to a man who was no longer listening.

'If you want something extra,' Retana

said, 'go and get it. There will be a regular cuadrilla out there. Bring as many of your own pics as you want. The charlotada is over by 10.30.'

'All right,' Manuel said. 'If that's the way you feel about it.'

'That's the way,' Retana said.

'I'll see you to-morrow night,' Manuel said.

'I'll be out there,' Retana said.

Manuel picked up his suitcase and went out.

'Shut the door,' Retana called.

Manuel looked back. Retana was sitting forward looking at some papers. Manuel pulled the door tight until it clicked.

He went down the stairs and out of the door into the hot brightness of the street. It was very hot in the street and the light on the white buildings was sudden and hard on his eyes. He walked down the shady side of the steep street toward the Puerta del Sol. The shade felt solid and cool as running water. The heat came suddenly as he crossed the intersecting streets. Manuel saw no one he knew in all the people he passed.

Just before the Puerto del Sol he turned into a café.

It was quiet in the café. There were a few men sitting at tables against the wall. At one table four men played cards. Most of the men sat against the wall smoking, empty coffee-cups and liqueur-glasses before them on the tables. Manuel went through the long room to a small room in back. A man sat at a table in the corner asleep. Manuel sat down at one of the tables.

A waiter came in and stood beside Manuel's table.

'Have you seen Zurito?' Manuel asked him.

'He was in before lunch,' the waiter answered. 'He won't be back before five o'clock.'

'Bring me some coffee and milk and a shot of the ordinary,' Manuel said.

The waiter came back into the room carrying a tray with a big coffee-glass and a liqueur-glass on it. In his left hand he held a bottle of brandy. He swung these down to the table and a boy who had followed him poured coffee and milk into the glass from two shiny, spouted pots with long handles.

Manuel took off his cap and the waiter noticed his pigtail pinned forward on his head. He winked at the coffee-boy as he poured out the brandy into the little glass beside Manuel's coffee. The coffee-boy looked at Manuel's pale face curiously.

'You fighting here?' asked the waiter, corking up the bottle.

'Yes,' Manuel said. 'To-morrow.'

The waiter stood there, holding the bottle on one hip.

'You in the Charlie Chaplin's?' he asked.

The coffee-boy looked away, embarrassed.

'No. In the ordinary.'

'I thought they were going to have Chaves and Hernandez,' the waiter said.

'No. Me and another.'

'Who? Chaves or Hernandez?'

'Hernandez, I think.'

'What's the matter with Chaves?'

'He got hurt.'

'Where did you hear that?'

'Retana.'

'Hey, Looie,' the waiter called to the next room, 'Chaves got cogida.'

Manuel had taken the wrapper off the lumps of sugar and dropped them into his coffee. He stirred it and drank it down, sweet, hot, and warming in his empty stomach. He drank off the brandy.

'Give me another shot of that,' he said to the waiter.

The waiter uncorked the bottle and poured the glass full, slopping another drink into the saucer. Another waiter had come up in front of the table. The coffee-boy was gone.

'Is Chaves hurt bad?' the second waiter asked Manuel.

'I don't know,' Manuel said, 'Retana didn't say.'

'A hell of a lot he cares,' the tall waiter said. Manuel had not seen him before. He must have just come up.

'If you stand in with Retana in this town, you're a made man,' the tall waiter said. 'If you aren't in with him, you might just as well go out and shoot yourself.'

'You said it,' the other waiter who had come in said. 'You said it then.'

'You're right I said it,' said the tall waiter. 'I know what I'm talking about when I talk about that bird.'

'Look what he's done for Villalta,' the first waiter said.

'And that ain't all,' the tall waiter said. 'Look what he's done for Marcial Lalanda. Look what he's done for Nacional.'

'You said it, kid,' agreed the short waiter.

Manuel looked at them, standing talking in front of his table. He had drunk his second brandy. They had forgotten about him. They were not interested in him.

'Look at that bunch of camels,' the tall waiter went on. 'Did you ever see this Nacional II?'

'I seen him last Sunday didn't I?' the original waiter said.

'He's a giraffe,' the short waiter said.

'What did I tell you?' the tall waiter said. 'Those are Retana's boys.'

'Say, give me another shot of that,' Manuel said. He had poured the brandy the waiter had slopped over in the saucer into his glass and drank it while they were talking.

The original waiter poured his glass full mechanically, and the three of them went out of the room talking.

In the far corner the man was still asleep, snoring slightly on the intaking breath, his head back against the wall.

Manuel drank his brandy. He felt sleepy himself. It was too hot to go out into the town. Besides there was nothing to do. He wanted to see Zurito. He would go to sleep while he waited. He kicked his suitcase under the table to be sure it was there. Perhaps it would be better to put it back under the seat, against the wall. He leaned down and shoved it under. Then he leaned forward on the table and went to sleep.

When he woke there was someone sitting across the table from him. It was a big man with a heavy brown face like an Indian. He had been sitting there some time. He had waved the waiter away and sat reading the paper and occasionally looking down at Manuel, asleep, his head on the table. He read the paper laboriously forming the words with his lips as he read. When it tired him he looked at Manuel. He sat heavily in the chair, his black Cordoba hat tipped forward.

Manuel sat up and looked at him.

'Hello, Zurito,' he said.

'Hello, kid,' the big man said.

'I've been asleep.' Manuel rubbed his forehead with the back of his fist.

'I thought maybe you were.'

'How's everything?'

'Good. How is everything with you?'

'Not so good.'

They were both silent. Zurito, the picador, looked at Manuel's white face. Manuel looked down at the picador's enormous hands folding the paper to put away in his pocket.

'I got a favor to ask you, Manos,' Manuel said.

Manosduros was Zurito's nickname. He never heard it without thinking of his huge hands. He put them forward on the table self-consciously.

'Let's have a drink,' he said.

'Sure,' said Manuel.

The waiter came and went and came again. He went out of the room looking back at the two men at the table.

'What's the matter, Manolo?' Zurito set down his glass.

'Would you pic two bulls for me tomorrow night?' Manuel asked, looking up at Zurito across the table.

'No,' said Zurito. 'I'm not pic-ing.'

Manuel looked down at his glass. He had expected that answer; now he had it. Well, he had it.

'I'm sorry, Manolo, but I'm not pic-ing.' Zurito looked at his hands.

'That's all right,' Manuel said.

'I'm too old,' Zurito said.

'I just asked you,' Manuel said.

'Is it the nocturnal to-morrow?'

'That's it. I figured if I had just one good pic, I could get away with it.'

'How much are you getting?'

'Three hundred pesetas.'

'I get more than that for pic-ing.'

'I know,' said Manuel. 'I didn't have any right to ask you.'

'What do you keep on doing it for?' Zurito asked. 'Why don't you cut off your coleta, Manolo?'

'I don't know,' Manuel said.

'You're pretty near as old as I am,' Zurito said.

'I don't know,' Manuel said. 'I got to do it. If I can fix it so that I get an even break, that's all I want. I got to stick with it, Manos.'

'No, you don't.'

'Yes, I do. I've tried keeping away from it.'

'I know how you feel. But it isn't right. You ought to get out and stay out.'

'I can't do it. Besides, I've been going good lately.'

Zurito looked at his face.

'You've been in the hospital.'

'But I was going great when I got hurt.'

Zurito said nothing. He tipped the cognac out of his saucer into his glass.

'The papers said they never saw a better faena,' Manuel said.

Zurito looked at him.

'You know when I get going I'm good,' Manuel said.

'You're too old,' the picador said.

'No,' said Manuel. 'You're ten years older than I am.'

'With me it's different.'

'I'm not too old,' Manuel said.

They sat silent, Manuel watching the picador's face.

'I was going great till I got hurt,' Manuel offered.

'You ought to have seen me, Manos,' Manuel said, reproachfully.

'I don't want to see you,' Zurito said. 'It makes me nervous.'

'You haven't seen me lately.'

'I've seen you plenty.'

Zurito looked at Manuel, avoiding his eyes.

'You ought to quit it, Manolo.'

'I can't,' Manuel said. 'I'm going good now, I tell you.'

Zurito leaned forward, his hands on the table.

'Listen. I'll pic for you and if you don't go big to-morrow night, you'll quit. See? Will you do that?'

'Sure.'

Zurito leaned back, relieved.

'You got to quit,' he said. 'No monkey business. You got to cut the coleta.'

'I won't have to quit,' Manuel said. 'You watch me. I've got the stuff.'

Zurito stood up. He felt tired from arguing.

'You got to quit,' he said. 'I'll cut your coleta myself.'

'No, you won't,' Manuel said. 'You won't have a chance.'

Zurito called the waiter.

'Come on,' said Zurito. 'Come on up to the house.'

Manuel reached under the seat for his suitcase. He was happy. He knew Zurito would pic for him. He was the best picador living. It was all simple now.

'Come on up to the house and we'll eat,' Zurito said.

Manuel stood in the patio de caballos waiting for the Charlie Chaplins to be over. Zurito stood beside him. Where they stood it was dark. The high door that led into the bull-ring was shut. Above them they heard a shout, then another shout of laughter. Then there was silence. Manuel liked the smell of the stables about the patio de caballos. It smelt good in the dark. There was another roar from the arena and then applause, prolonged applause, going on and on.

'You ever seen these fellows?' Zurito asked, big and looming beside Manuel in the dark.

'No,' Manuel said.

'They're pretty funny.' Zurito said. He smiled to himself in the dark.

The high, double, tight-fitting door into the bull-ring swung open and Manuel saw the ring in the hard light of the arc-lights, the plaza, dark all the way around, rising high; around the edge of the ring were running and bowing two men dressed like tramps, followed by a third in the uniform of a hotel bell-boy who stooped and picked up the hats and canes thrown down onto the sand and tossed them back up into the darkness.

The electric light went on in the patio.

'I'll climb onto one of those ponies while you collect the kids,' Zurito said.

Behind them came the jingle of the mules, coming out to go into the arena and be hitched onto the dead bull.

The members of the cuadrilla, who had been watching the burlesque from the runway between the barrera and the seats, came walking back and stood in a group talking, under the electric light in the patio. A good-looking lad in a silver-and-orange suit came up to Manuel and smiled.

'I'm Hernandez,' he said and put out his hand.

Manuel shook it.

'They're regular elephants we've got to-night,' the boy said cheerfully.

'They're big ones with horns,' Manuel agreed.

'You drew the worst lot,' the boy said.

'That's all right,' Manuel said. 'The bigger they are, the more meat for the poor.'

'Where did you get that one?' Hernandez grinned.

'That's an old one,' Manuel said. 'You line up your cuadrilla, so I can see what I've got.'

'You've got some good kids,' Hernandez said. He was very cheerful. He had been on twice before in nocturnals and was beginning to get a following in Madrid. He was happy the fight would start in a few minutes.

'Where are the pics?' Manuel asked.

'They're back in the corrals fighting about who gets the beautiful horses,' Hernandez grinned.

The mules came through the gate in a rush, the whips snapping, bells jangling and the young bull ploughing a furrow of sand.

They formed up for the paseo as soon as the bull had gone through.

Manuel and Hernandez stood in front. The youths of the cuadrillas were behind, their heavy capes furled over their arms. In back, the four picadors, mounted, holding their steel-tipped push-poles erect in the half-dark of the corral.

'It's a wonder Retana wouldn't give us enough light to see the horses by,' one picador said.

'He knows we'll be happier if we don't get too good a look at these skins,' another pic answered.

'This thing I'm on barely keeps me off the ground,' the first picador said.

'Well, they're horses.'

'Sure, they're horses.'

They talked, sitting their gaunt horses in the dark.

Zurito said nothing. He had the only steady horse of the lot. He had tried him, wheeling him in the corrals and he responded to the bit and the spurs. He had taken the bandage off his right eye and cut the strings where they had tied his ears tight shut at the base. He was a good, solid horse, solid on his legs. That was all he needed. He intended to ride him all through the corrida. He had already, since he had mounted, sitting in the half-dark in the big, quilted saddle, waiting for the paseo, pic-ed through the whole corrida in his mind. The other picadors went on talking on both sides of him. He did not hear them.

The two matadors stood together in front of their three peones, their capes furled over their left arms in the same fashion. Manuel was thinking about the three lads in back of him. They were all three Madrilenos, like Hernandez, boys about nineteen. One of them, a gypsy, serious, aloof, and dark-faced, he liked the look of. He turned.

'What's your name, kid?' he asked the gypsy.

'Fuentes,' the gypsy said.

'That's a good name,' Manuel said.

The gypsy smiled, showing his teeth.

'You take the bull and give him a little run when he comes out,' Manuel said.

'All right,' the gypsy said. His face was serious. He began to think about just what he would do.

'Here she goes,' Manuel said to Hernandez.

'All right. We'll go.'

Heads up, swinging with the music, their right arms swinging free, they stepped out, crossing the sanded arena under the arc-lights, the cuadrillas opening out behind, the picadors riding after, behind came the bull-ring servants and the jingling mules. The crowd applauded Hernandez as they marched across the arena. Arrogant, swinging, they looked straight ahead as they marched.

They bowed before the president, and the procession broke up into its component parts. The bull-fighters went over to the barrera and changed their heavy mantles for the light fighting capes. The mules went out. The picadors galloped jerkily around the ring, and two rode out the gate they had come in by. The servants swept the sand smooth.

Manuel drank a glass of water poured for him by one of Retana's deputies, who was acting as his manager and sword-handler. Hernandez came over from speaking with his own manager.

'You got a good hand, kid,' Manuel complimented him.

'They like me,' Hernandez said happily.

'How did the paseo go?' Manuel asked Retana's man.

'Like a wedding,' said the handler. 'Fine. You came out like Joselito and Belmonte.'

Zurito rode by, a bulky equestrian statue. He wheeled his horse and faced him toward the toril on the far side of the ring where the bull would come out. It was strange under the arc-light. He pic-ed in the hot afternoon sun for big money. He didn't like this arc-light business. He wished they would get started.

Manuel went up to him.

'Pic him, Manos,' he said. 'Cut him down to size for me.'

'I'll pic him, kid,' Zurito spat on the sand. 'I'll make him jump out of the ring.'

'Lean on him, Manos,' Manuel said.

'I'll lean on him,' Zurito said. 'What's holding it up?'

'He's coming now,' Manuel said.

Zurito sat there, his feet in the box-stirrups, his great legs in the buckskin-covered armor gripping the horse, the reins in his left hand, the long pic held in his right hand, his broad hat well down over his eyes to shade them from the lights, watching the distant door of the toril. His horse's ears quivered. Zurito patted him with his left hand.

The red door of the toril swung back and for a moment Zurito looked into the empty passageway far across the arena. Then the bull came out in a rush, skidding on his four legs as he came out under the lights, then charging in a gallop, moving softly in a fast gallop, silent except as he woofed through wide nostrils as he charged, glad to be free after the dark pen.

In the first row of seats, slightly bored, leaning forward to write on the cement wall in front of his knees, the substitute bull-fight critic of *El Heraldo* scribbled: 'Campagnero, Negro, 42, came out at 90 miles an hour with plenty of gas—'

Manuel, leaning against the barrera, watching the bull, waved his hand and the gypsy ran out, trailing his cape. The bull, in full gallop, pivoted and charged the cape, his head down, his tail rising. The gypsy moved in a zigzag, and as he passed, the bull caught sight of him and abandoned the cape to charge the man. The gyp sprinted and vaulted the red fence of the barrera as the bull struck it with his horns. He tossed into it twice with his horns, banging into the wood blindly.

The critic of *El Heraldo* lit a cigarette and tossed the match at the bull, then wrote in his note-book, 'large and with enough horns to satisfy the cash customers, Campagnero showed a tendency to cut into the terrane of the bull-fighters.'

Manuel stepped out on the hard sand as the bull banged into the fence. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Zurito sitting the white horse close to the barrera, about a quarter of the way around the ring to the left. Manuel held the cape close in front of him, a fold in each hand, and shouted at the bull. 'Huh! Huh!' The bull turned, seemed to brace against the fence as he charged in a scramble, driving into the cape as Manuel side-stepped, pivoted on his heels with the charge of the bull, and swung the cape just ahead of the horns. At the end of the swing he was facing the bull again and held the cape in the same position close in front of his body, and pivoted again as the bull recharged. Each time, as he swung, the crowd shouted.

Four times he swung with the bull, lifting the cape so it billowed full, and each time bringing the bull around to charge again. Then, at the end of the fifth swing, he held the cape against his hip and pivoted, so the cape swung out like a ballet dancer's skirt and wound the bull around himself like a belt, to step clear, leaving the bull facing Zurito on the white horse, come up and planted firm, the horse facing the bull, its ears forward, its lips nervous, Zurito, his hat over his eyes, leaning forward, the long pole sticking out before and behind in a sharp angle under his right arm, held halfway down, the triangular iron point facing the bull.

El Heraldo's second-string critic, drawing on his cigarette, his eyes on the bull, wrote: 'the veteran Manolo designed a series of acceptable veronicas, ending in a very Belmontistic recorte that earned applause from the regulars, and we entered the tercio of the cavalry.'

Zurito sat his horse, measuring the distance between the bull and the end of the pic. As he looked, the bull gathered himself together and charged, his eyes on the horse's chest. As he lowered his head to hook, Zurito sunk the point of the pic in the swelling hump of muscle above the bull's shoulder, leaned all his weight on the

shaft, and with his left hand pulled the white horse into the air, front hoofs pawing, and swung him to the right as he pushed the bull under and through so the horns passed safely under the horse's belly and the horse came down, quivering, the bull's tail brushing his chest as he charged the cape Hernandez offered him.

Hernandez ran sideways, taking the bull out and away with the cape, toward the other picador. He fixed him with a swing of the cape, squarely facing the horse and rider, and stepped back. As the bull saw the horse he charged. The picador's lance slid along his back, and as the shock of the charge lifted the horse, the picador was already half-way out of the saddle, lifting his right leg clear as he missed with the lance and falling to the left side to keep the horse between him and the bull. The horse, lifted and gored, crashed over with the bull driving into him, the picador gave a shove with his boots against the horse and lay clear, waiting to be lifted and hauled away and put on his feet.

Manuel let the bull drive into the fallen horse; he was in no hurry, the picador was safe; besides, it did a picador like that good to worry. He'd stay on longer next time. Lousy pics! He looked across the sand at Zurito a little way out from the barrera, his horse rigid, waiting.

'Huh!' he called to the bull, 'Tomar!' holding the cape in both hands so it would catch his eye. The bull detached himself from the horse and charged the cape, and Manuel, running sideways and holding the cape spread wide, stopped, swung on his heels, and brought the bull sharply around facing Zurito.

'Campagnero accepted a pair of varas for the death of one rosinante, with Hernandez and Manolo at the quites,' *El Heraldo's* critic wrote. 'He pressed on the iron and clearly showed he was no horse-lover. The veteran Zurito resurrected some of his old stuff with the pike-pole, notably the suerte—'

'Olé! Olé!' the man sitting beside him shouted. The shout was lost in the roar of the crowd, and he slapped the critic on the back. The critic looked up to see Zurito, directly below him, leaning far out over his horse, the length of the pic rising in a sharp angle under his armpit, holding the pic almost by the point, bearing down with all his weight, holding the bull off, the bull pushing and driving to get at the horse, and Zurito, far out, on top of him, holding him, holding him, and slowly pivoting the horse against the pressure, so that at last he was clear. Zurito felt the moment when the horse was clear and the bull could come past, and relaxed the absolute steel lock of his resistance, and the triangular steel point of the pic ripped in the bull's hump of shoulder muscle as he tore loose to find Hernandez's cape before his muzzle. He charged blindly into the cape and the boy took him out into the open arena.

Zurito sat patting his horse and looking at the bull charging the cape that Hernandez swung for him out under the bright light while the crowd shouted.

'You see that one?' he said to Manuel.

'It was a wonder,' Manuel said.

'I got him that time,' Zurito said. 'Look at him now.'

At the conclusion of a closely turned pass of the cape the bull slid to his knees. He was up at once, but far out across the sand Manuel and Zurito saw the shine of the pumping flow of blood, smooth against the black of the bull's shoulder.

'I got him that time,' Zurito said.

'He's a good bull,' Manuel said.

'If they gave me another shot at him, I'd kill him,' Zurito said.

'They'll change the thirds on us,' Manuel said.

'Look at him now,' Zurito said.

'I got to go over there,' Manuel said, and started on a run for the other side of the ring, where the monos were leading a horse out by the bridle toward the bull, whacking him on the legs with rods and all, in a procession, trying to get him toward the bull, who stood, dropping his head, pawing, unable to make up his mind to charge.

Zurito, sitting his horse, walking him toward the scene, not missing any detail, scowled.

Finally the bull charged, the horse leaders ran for the barrera, the picador hit too far back, and the bull got under the horse, lifted him, threw him onto his back.

Zurito watched. The monos, in their red shirts, running out to drag the picador clear. The picador, now on his feet, swearing and flopping his arms. Manuel and

Hernandez standing ready with their capes. And the bull, the great, black bull, with a horse on his back, hooves dangling, the bridle caught in the horns. Black bull with a horse on his back, staggering short-legged, then arching his neck and lifting, thrusting, charging to slide the horse off, horse sliding down. Then the bull into a lunging charge at the cape Manuel spread for him.

The bull was slower now, Manuel felt. He was bleeding badly. There was a sheen of blood all down his flank.

Manuel offered him the cape again. There he came, eyes open, ugly, watching the cape. Manuel stepped to the side and raised his arms, tightening the cape ahead of the bull for the veronica.

Now he was facing the bull. Yes, his head was going down a little. He was carrying it lower. That was Zurito.

Manuel flopped the cape; there he comes; he side-stepped and swung in another veronica. He's shooting awfully accurately, he thought. He's had enough fight, so he's watching now. He's hunting now. Got his eye on me. But I always give him the cape.

He shook the cape at the bull; there he comes; he side-stepped. Awful close that time. I don't want to work that close to him.

The edge of the cape was wet with blood where it had swept along the bull's back as he went by.

All right, here's the last one.

Manuel, facing the bull, having turned with him each charge, offered the cape with his two hands. The bull looked at him. Eyes watching, horns straight forward, the bull looked at him, watching.

'Huh!' Manuel said, 'Toro!' and leaning back, swung the cape forward. Here he comes. He side-stepped, swung the cape in back of him, and pivoted, so the bull followed a swirl of cape and then was left with nothing, fixed by the pass, dominated by the cape. Manuel swung the cape under his muzzle with one hand, to show the bull was fixed, and walked away.

There was no applause.

Manuel walked across the sand towards the barrera, while Zurito rode out of the ring. The trumpet had blown to change the act to the planting of the banderillos while Manuel had been working with the bull. He had not consciously noticed it. The monos were spreading canvas over the two dead horses and sprinkling sawdust around them.

Manuel came up to the barrera for a drink of water. Retana's man handed him the heavy porous jug.

Fuentes, the tall gypsy, was standing holding a pair of banderillos, holding them together, slim, red sticks, fish-hook points out. He looked at Manuel.

'Go on out there,' Manuel said.

The gypsy trotted out. Manuel set down the jug and watched. He wiped his face with his handkerchief.

The critic of *El Heraldo* reached for the bottle of warm champagne that stood between his feet, took a drink, and finished his paragraph.

'—the aged Manolo rated no applause for a vulgar series of lances with the cape and we entered the third of the palings.'

Alone in the centre of the ring the bull stood, still fixed. Fuentes, tall, flat-backed, walking toward him arrogantly, his arms spread out, the two slim, red sticks, one in each hand, held by the fingers, points straight forward. Fuentes walked forward. Back of him and to one side was a peon with a cape. The bull looked at him and was no longer fixed.

His eyes watched Fuentes, now standing still. Now he leaned back, calling to him. Fuentes twitched the two banderillos and the light on the steel points caught the bull's eye.

His tail went up and he charged.

He came straight, his eyes on the man. Fuentes stood still, leaning back, the banderillos pointing forward. As the bull lowered his head to hook, Fuentes leaned backward, his arms came together and rose, his two hands touching, the banderillos two descending red lines, and leaning forward drove the points into the bull's shoulder, leaning far in over the bull's horns and pivoting on the two upright sticks, his legs tight together, his body curving to one side to let the bull pass.

'Olé!' from the crowd.

The bull was hooking wildly, jumping like a trout, all four feet off the ground. The red shafts of the banderillos tossed as he jumped.

Manuel standing at the barrera, noticed that he hooked always to the right.

'Tell him to drop the next pair on the right,' he said to the kid who started to run out to Fuentes with the new banderillos.

A heavy hand fell on his shoulder. It was Zurito.

'How do you feel, kid?' he asked.

Manuel was watching the bull.

Zurito leaned forward on the barrera, leaning the weight of his body on his arms. Manuel turned to him.

'You're going good,' Zurito said.

Manuel shook his head. He had nothing to do now until the next third. The gypsy was very good with the banderillos. The bull would come to him in the next third in good shape. He was a good bull. It had all been easy up to now. The final stuff with the sword was all he worried over. He did not really worry. He did not even think about it. But standing there he had a heavy sense of apprehension. He looked out at the bull, planning his faena, his work with the red cloth that was to reduce the bull, to make him manageable.

The gypsy was walking out toward the bull again, walking heel-and-toe, insultingly, like a ball-room dancer, the red shafts of the banderillos twitching with his walk. The bull watched him, not fixed now, hunting him, but waiting to get close enough so he could be sure of getting him, getting the horns into him.

As Fuentes walked forward the bull charged. Fuentes ran across the quarter of a circle as the bull charged and, as he passed running backward, stopped, swung forward, rose on his toes, arms straight out, and sunk the banderillos straight down into the tight of the big shoulder muscles as the bull missed him.

The crowd were wild about it.

'That kid won't stay in this night stuff long,' Retana's man said to Zurito.

'He's good,' Zurito said.

'Watch him now.'

They watched.

Fuentes was standing with his back against the barrera. Two of the cuadrilla were back of him, with their capes ready to flop over the fence to distract the bull.

The bull, with his tongue out, his barrel heaving, was watching the gypsy. He thought he had him now. Back against the red planks. Only a short charge away. The bull watched him.

The gypsy bent back, drew back his arms, the banderillos pointing at the bull. He called to the bull, stamped one foot. The bull was suspicious. He wanted the man. No more barbs in the shoulder.

Fuentes walked a little closer to the bull. Bent back. Called again. Somebody in the crowd shouted a warning.

'He's too damn close,' Zurito said.

'Watch him,' Retina's man said.

Leaning back, inciting the bull with the banderillos, Fuentes jumped, both feet off the ground. As he jumped the bull's tail rose and he charged. Fuentes came down on his toes, arms straight out, whole body arching forward, and drove the shafts straight down as he swung his body clear of the right horn.

The bull crashed into the barrera where the flopping capes had attracted his eye as he lost the man.

The gypsy came running along the barrera toward Manuel, taking the applause of the crowd. His vest was ripped where he had not quite cleared the point of the horn. He was happy about it, showing it to the spectators. He made the tour of the ring. Zurito saw him go by, smiling, pointing at his vest. He smiled.

Somebody else was planting the last pair of banderillos. Nobody was paying any attention.

Retana's man tucked a baton inside the red cloth of a muleta, folded the cloth over it, and handed it over the barrera to Manuel. He reached in the leather sword-case, took out a sword, and holding it by its leather scabbard, reached it over the fence to Manuel. Manuel pulled the blade out by the red hilt and the scabbard fell limp.

He looked at Zurito. The big man saw he was sweating.

'Now you get him, kid,' Zurito said.

Manuel nodded.

'He's in good shape,' Zurito said.

'Just like you want him,' Retana's man assured him.

Manuel nodded.

The trumpeter, up under the roof, blew for the final act, and Manuel walked across the arena toward where, up in the dark boxes, the president must be.

In the front row seats the substitute bullfight critic of *El Heraldo* took a long drink of the warm champagne. He had decided

it was not worth while to write a running story and would write up the corrida back in the office. What the hell was it anyway? Only a nocturnal. If he missed anything he would get it out of the morning papers. He took another drink of the champagne. He had a date at Maxim's at twelve. Who were these bull-fighters anyway? Kids and bums. A bunch of bums. He put his pad of paper in his pocket and looked over toward Manuel, standing very much alone in the ring, gesturing with his hat in a salute toward a box he could not see high up in the dark plaza. Out in the ring the bull stood quiet, looking at nothing.

'I dedicate this bull to you, Mr. President, and to the public of Madrid, the most intelligent and generous of the world,' was what Manuel was saying. It was a formula. He said it all. It was a little long for nocturnal use.

He bowed at the dark, straightened, tossed his hat over his shoulder, and, carrying the muleta in his left hand and the sword in his right, walked out toward the bull.

Manuel walked toward the bull. The bull looked at him; his eyes were quick. Manuel noticed the way the banderillos hung down on his left shoulder and the steady sheen of blood from Zurito's pic-ing. He noticed the way the bull's feet were. As he walked forward, holding the muleta in his left hand and the sword in his right, he watched the bull's feet. The bull could not charge without gathering his feet together. Now he stood square on them, dully.

Manuel walked toward him, watching his feet. This was all right. He could do this. He must work to get the bull's head down, so he could go in past the horns and kill him. He did not think about the sword, not about killing the bull. He thought about one thing at a time. The coming things oppressed him, though. Walking forward, watching the bull's feet, he saw successively his eyes, his wet muzzle, and the wide, forward-pointing spread of his horns. The bull had light circles about his eyes. His eyes watched Manuel. He felt he was going to get this little one with the white face.

Standing still now and spreading the red cloth of the muleta with the sword, pricking the point into the cloth so that the sword, now held in his left hand, spread the red flannel like the jib of a boat, Manuel noticed the points of the bull's horns. One of them was splintered from banging against the barrera. The other was sharp as a porcupine quill. Manuel noticed while spreading the muleta that the white base of the horn was stained red. While he noticed these things he did not lose sight of the bull's feet. The bull watched Manuel steadily.

He's on the defensive now, Manuel thought. He's reserving himself. I've got to bring him out of that and get his head down. Always get his head down. Zurito had his head down once, but he's come back. He'll bleed when I start him going and that will bring it down.

Holding the muleta, with the sword in his left hand widening it in front of him, he called to the bull.

The bull looked at him.

He leaned back insultingly and shook the wide-spread flannel.

The bull saw the muleta. It was a bright scarlet under the arc-light. The bull's legs tightened.

Here he comes. Whoosh! Manuel turned as the bull came and raised the muleta so that it passed over the bull's horns and swept down his broad back from head to tail. The bull had gone clean up in the air with the charge. Manuel had not moved.

At the end of the pass the bull turned like a cat coming around a corner and faced Manuel.

He was on the offensive again. His heaviness was gone. Manuel noted the fresh blood shining down the black shoulder and dripping down the bull's leg. He drew the sword out of the muleta and held it in his right hand. The muleta held low down in his left hand, leaning toward the left, he called to the bull. The bull's legs tightened, his eyes on the muleta. Here he comes, Manuel thought. Yuh!

He swung with the charge, sweeping the muleta ahead of the bull, his feet firm, the sword following the curve, a point of light under the arcs.

The bull recharged as the pase natural finished and Manuel raised the muleta for a pase de pecho. Firmly planted, the bull came by his chest under the raised muleta. Manuel leaned his head back to avoid the

clattering banderillo shafts. The hot, black bull body touched his chest as it passed.

Too damn close, Manuel thought. Zurito, leaning on the barrera, spoke rapidly to the gypsy, who trotted out toward Manuel with a cape, Zurito pulled his hat down low and looked out across the arena at Manuel.

Manuel was facing the bull again, the muleta held low and to the left. The bull's head was down as he watched the muleta.

'If it was Belmonte doing that stuff, they'd go crazy,' Retana's man said.

Zurito said nothing. He was watching Manuel out in the centre of the arena.

'Where did the boss dig this fellow up?' Retana's man asked.

'Out of the hospital,' Zurito said.

'That's where he's going damn quick,' Retana's man said.

Zurito turned on him.

'Knock on that,' he said, pointing to the barrera.

'I was just kidding, man,' Retana's man said.

'Knock on the wood.'

Retana's man leaned forward and knocked three times on the barrera.

'Watch the faena,' Zurito said.

Out in the centre of the ring, under the lights, Manuel was kneeling, facing the bull, and as he raised the muleta in both hands the bull charged, tail up.

Manuel swung his body clear and, as the bull recharged, brought around the muleta in a half-circle that pulled the bull to his knees.

'Why, that one's a great bull-fighter,' Retana's man said.

'No, he's not,' said Zurito.

Manuel stood up and, the muleta in his left hand, the sword in his right, acknowledged the applause from the dark plaza.

The bull had humped himself up from his knees and stood waiting, his head hung low.

Zurito spoke to two of the other lads of the cuadrilla and they ran out to stand back of Manuel with their capes. There were four men back of him now. Hernandez had followed him since he first came out with the muleta. Fuentes stood watching, his cape held against his body, tall, in repose, watching lazy-eyed. Now the two came up. Hernandez motioned them to stand one at each side. Manuel stood alone, facing the bull.

Manuel waved back the men with the capes. Stepping back cautiously, they saw his face was white and sweating.

Didn't they know enough to keep back? Did they want to catch the bull's eye with the capes after he was fixed and ready? He had enough to worry about without that kind of thing.

The bull was standing, his four feet square, looking at the muleta. Manuel furled the muleta in his left hand. The bull's eyes watched it. His body was heavy on his feet. He carried his head low, but not too low.

Manuel lifted the muleta at him. The bull did not move. Only his eyes watched.

He's all lead, Manuel thought. He's all square. He's framed right. He'll take it.

He thought in bull-fight terms. Sometimes he had a thought and the particular piece of slang would not come into his mind and he could not realize the thought. His instincts and his knowledge worked automatically, and his brain worked slowly and in words. He knew all about bulls. He did not have to think about them. He just did the right thing. His eyes noted things and his body performed the necessary measures without thought. If he thought about it, he would be gone.

Now, facing the bull, he was conscious of many things at the same time. There were the horns, the one splintered, the other smoothly sharp, the need to profile himself toward the left horn, lance himself short and straight, lower the muleta so the bull would follow it, and, going in over the horns, put the sword all the way into a little spot about as big as a five-peseta piece straight in back of the neck, between the sharp pitch of the bull's shoulders. He must do all this and must then come out from between the horns. He was conscious he must do all this, but his only thought was in words: 'Corto y derecho.'

'Corto y derecho,' he thought, furling the muleta. Short and straight. Corto y derecho, he drew the sword out of the muleta, profiled on the splintered left horn, dropped the muleta across his body, so his right hand with the sword on the level with his eye made the sign of the cross, and, rising on his toes, sighted along

the dipping blade of the sword at the spot high up between the bull's shoulders.

Corto y derecho he lanced himself on the bull.

There was a shock, and he felt himself go up in the air. He pushed on the sword as he went up and over, and it flew out of his hand. He hit the ground and the bull was on him. Manuel, lying on the ground, kicked at the bull's muzzle with his slippered feet. Kicking, kicking, the bull after him, missing him in his excitement, bumping him with his head, driving the horns into the sand. Kicking like a man keeping a ball in the air, Manuel kept the bull from getting a clean thrust at him.

Manuel felt the wind on his back from the capes flopping at the bull, and then the bull was gone, gone over him in a rush. Dark, as his belly went over. Not even stepped on.

Manuel stood up and picked up the muleta. Fuentes handed him the sword. It was bent where it had struck the shoulder-blade. Manuel straightened it on his knee and ran toward the bull, standing now beside one of the dead horses. As he ran, his jacket flopped where it had been ripped under his armpit.

'Get him out of there,' Manuel shouted to the gypsy. The bull had smelled the blood of the dead horse and ripped into the canvas cover with his horns. He charged Fuentes's cape, with the canvas hanging from his splintered horn, and the crowd laughed. Out in the ring, he tossed his head to rid himself of the canvas. Hernandez, running up from behind him, grabbed the end of the canvas and neatly lifted it off the horn.

The bull followed it in a half-charge and stopped still. He was on the defensive again. Manuel was walking toward him with the sword and muleta. Manuel swung the muleta before him. The bull would not charge.

Manuel profiled toward the bull, sighting along the dipping blade of the sword. The bull was motionless, seemingly dead on his feet, incapable of another charge.

Manuel rose to his toes, sighting along the steel, and charged.

Again there was the shock and he felt himself being borne back in a rush, to strike hard on the sand. There was no chance of kicking this time. The bull was on top of him. Manuel lay as though dead, his head on his arms, and the bull bumped him. Bumped his back, bumped his face in the sand. He felt the horn go into the sand between his folded arms. The bull hit him in the small of the back. His face drove into the sand. The horn drove through one of his sleeves and the bull ripped it off. Manuel was tossed clear and the bull followed the capes.

Manuel got up, found the sword and muleta, tried the point of the sword with his thumb, and then ran toward the barrera for a new sword.

Retana's man handed him the sword over the edge of the barrera.

'Wipe off your face,' he said.

Manuel, running again toward the bull, wiped his bloody face with his handkerchief. He had not seen Zurito. Where was Zurito?

The cuadrilla had stepped away from the bull and waited with their capes. The bull stood, heavy and dull again after the action.

Manuel walked toward him with the muleta. He stopped and shook it. The bull did not respond. He passed it right and left, left and right before the bull's muzzle. The bull's eyes watched it and turned with the swing, but he would not charge. He was waiting for Manuel.

Manuel was worried. There was nothing to do but go in. Corto y derecho. He profiled close to the bull, crossed the muleta in front of his body and charged. As he pushed in the sword, he jerked his body to the left to clear the horn. The bull passed him and the sword shot up in the air, twinkling under the arc-lights, to fall red-hilted on the sand.

Manuel ran over and picked it up. It was bent and he straightened it over his knee.

As he came running toward the bull, fixed again now, he passed Hernandez standing with his cape.

'He's all bone,' the boy said encouragingly.

Manuel nodded, wiping his face. He put the bloody handkerchief in his pocket.

There was the bull. He was close to the barrera now. Damn him. Maybe he was all bone. Maybe there was not any place for the sword to go in. The hell there wasn't! He'd show them.

He tried a pass with the muleta and the bull did not move. Manuel chopped the muleta back and forth in front of the bull. Nothing doing.

He furled the muleta, drew the sword out, profiled and drove in on the bull. He felt the sword buckle as he shoved it in, leaning his weight on it, and then it shot high in the air, end-over-ending into the crowd. Manuel had jerked clear as the sword jumped.

The first cushions thrown down out of the dark missed him. Then one hit him in the face, his bloody face looking toward the crowd. They were coming down fast. Spotting the sand. Somebody threw an empty champagne-bottle from close range. It hit Manuel on the foot. He stood there watching the dark, where the things were coming from. Then something whished through the air and struck by him. Manuel leaned over and picked it up. It was his sword. He straightened it over his knee and gestured with it to the crowd.

'Thank you,' he said. 'Thank you.'

Oh, the dirty bastards! Dirty bastards! Oh, the lousy, dirty bastards! He kicked into a cushion as he ran.

There was the bull. The same as ever. All right, you dirty, lousy bastard!

Manuel passed the muleta in front of the bull's black muzzle.

Nothing doing.

You won't! All right. He stepped close and jammed the sharp peak of the muleta into the bull's damp muzzle.

The bull was on him as he jumped back and as he tripped on a cushion he felt the horn go into him, into his side. He grabbed the horn with his two hands and rode backward, holding tight onto the place. The bull tossed him and he was clear. He lay still. It was all right. The bull was gone.

He got up coughing and feeling broken and gone. The dirty bastards!

'Give me the sword,' he shouted. 'Give me the stuff.'

Fuentes came up with the muleta and the sword.

Hernandez put his arm around him.

'Go on to the infirmary, man,' he said. 'Don't be a damn fool.'

'Get away from me,' Manuel said. 'Get to hell away from me.'

He twisted free. Hernandez shrugged his shoulders. Manuel ran toward the bull.

There was the bull standing, heavy, firmly planted.

All right, you bastard! Manuel drew the sword out of the muleta, sighted with the same movement, and flung himself on to the bull. He felt the sword go in all the way. Right up to the guard. Four fingers and his thumb into the bull. The blood was hot on his knuckles, and he was on top of the bull.

The bull lurched with him as he lay on, and seemed to sink; then he was standing clear. He looked at the bull going down slowly over on his side, then suddenly four feet in the air.

Then he gestured at the crowd, his hand warm from the bull blood.

All right, you bastards! He wanted to say something, but he started to cough. It was hot and choking. He looked down for the muleta. He must go over and salute the president. President hell! He was sitting down looking at something. It was the bull. His four feet up. Thick tongue out. Things crawling around on his belly and under his legs. Crawling where the hair was thin. Dead bull. To hell with the bull! To hell with them all! He started to get to his feet and commenced to cough. He sat down again, coughing. Somebody came and pushed him up.

They carried him across the ring to the infirmary, running with him across the sand, standing blocked at the gate as the mules came in, then around under the dark passageway, men grunting as they took him up the stairway, and then laid him down.

The doctor and two men in white were waiting for him. They laid him out on the table. They were cutting away his shirt. Manuel felt tired. His whole chest felt scalding inside. He started to cough and they held something to his mouth. Everybody was very busy.

There was an electric light in his eyes. He shut his eyes.

He heard someone coming very heavily up the stairs. Then he did not hear it. Then he heard a noise far off. That was the crowd. Well, somebody would have to kill his other bull. They had cut away all his shirt. The doctor smiled at him. There was Retana.

'Hello, Retana!' Manuel said. He could not hear his voice.

Retana smiled at him and said something. Manuel could not hear it.

Zurito stood beside the table, bending over where the doctor was working. He was in his picador clothes, without his hat.

Zurito said something to him. Manuel could not hear it.

Zurito was speaking to Retana. One of the men in white smiled and handed Retana a pair of scissors. Retana gave them to Zurito. Zurito said something to Manuel. He could not hear it.

To hell with this operating-table! He'd been on plenty of operating-tables before. He was not going to die. There would be a priest if he was going to die.

Zurito was saying something to him. Holding up the scissors.

That was it. They were going to cut off his coleta. They were going to cut off his pigtail.

Manuel sat up on the operating-table. The doctor stepped back, angry. Someone grabbed him and held him.

'You couldn't do a thing like that, Manos,' he said.

He heard suddenly, clearly, Zurito's voice.

'That's all right,' Zurito said. 'I won't do it. I was joking.'

'I was going good,' Manuel said. 'I didn't have any luck. That was all.'

Manuel lay back. They had put something over his face. It was all familiar. He inhaled deeply. He felt very tired. He was very, very tired. They took the thing away from his face.

'I was going good,' Manuel said weakly. 'I was going great.'

Retana looked at Zurito and started for the door.

'I'll stay here with him,' Zurito said.

Retana shrugged his shoulders.

Manuel opened his eyes and looked at Zurito.

'Wasn't I going good, Manos?' he asked, for confirmation.

'Sure,' said Zurito. 'You were going great.'

The doctor's assistant put the cone over Manuel's face and he inhaled deeply. Zurito stood awkwardly, watching.

1927

JOHN DOS PASSOS

1896–

FROM U.S.A.

TIN LIZZIE [1]

'*Mr. Ford the automobileer*,' the feature-writer wrote in 1900,

'*Mr. Ford the automobileer began by giving his steed three or four sharp jerks with the lever at the righthand side of the seat; that is, he pulled the lever up and down sharply in order, as he said, to mix air with gasoline and drive the charge into the exploding cylinder. . . . Mr. Ford slipped a small electric switch handle and there followed a puff, puff, puff. . . . The puffing of the machine assumed a higher key. She was flying along about eight miles an hour. The ruts in the road were deep, but the machine certainly went with a dreamlike smoothness. There was none of the bumping common even to a streetcar. . . . By this time the boulevard had been reached, and the automobileer, letting a lever fall a little, let her out. Whiz! She picked up speed with infinite rapidity. As she ran on there was a clattering behind, the new noise of the automobile.*

For twenty years or more,

ever since he'd left his father's farm when he was sixteen to get a job in a Detroit machineshop, Henry Ford had been nuts about machinery. First it was watches, then he designed a steamtractor, then he built a horseless carriage with an engine adapted from the Otto gasengine he'd read about in *The World of Science*, then a mechanical buggy with a onecylinder fourcycle motor, that would run forward but not back;

at last, in ninetyeight, he felt he was far enough along to risk throwing up his job

1 The selection is one of the biographical interludes from *The Big Money* (N.Y., 1936), 47–57, reprinted in the trilogy *U.S.A.* (N.Y., 1937).

with the Detroit Edison Company, where he'd worked his way up from night fireman to chief engineer, to put all his time into working on a new gasoline engine,

(in the late eighties he'd met Edison at a meeting of electriclight employees in Atlantic City. He'd gone up to Edison after Edison had delivered an address and asked him if he thought gasoline was practical as a motor fuel. Edison had said yes. If Edison said it, it was true. Edison was the great admiration of Henry Ford's life);

and in driving his mechanical buggy, sitting there at the lever jauntily dressed in a tightbuttoned jacket and a high collar and a derby hat, back and forth over the level illpaved streets of Detroit,

scaring the big brewery horses and the skinny trotting horses and the sleekrumped pacers with the motor's loud explosions,

looking for men scatterbrained enough to invest money in a factory for building automobiles.

He was the eldest son of an Irish immigrant who during the Civil War had married the daughter of a prosperous Pennsylvania Dutch farmer and settled down to farming near Dearborn in Wayne County, Michigan;

like plenty of other Americans, young Henry grew up hating the endless sogging through the mud about the chores, the hauling and pitching manure, the kerosene lamps to clean, the irk and sweat and solitude of the farm.

He was a slender, active youngster, a good skater, clever with his hands; what he liked was to tend the machinery and let the others do the heavy work. His mother had told him not to drink, smoke, gamble or go into debt, and he never did.

When he was in his early twenties his father tried to get him back from Detroit, where he was working as mechanic and repairman for the Drydock Engine Company that built engines for steamboats, by giving him forty acres of land.

Young Henry built himself an uptodate square white dwellinghouse with a false mansard roof and married and settled down on the farm,

but he let the hired men do the farming;

he bought himself a buzzsaw and rented a stationary engine and cut the timber off the woodlots.

He was a thrifty young man who never drank or smoked or gambled or coveted his neighbor's wife, but he couldn't stand living on the farm.

He moved to Detroit, and in the brick barn behind his house tinkered for years in his spare time with a mechanical buggy that would be light enough to run over the clayey wagonroads of Wayne County, Michigan.

By 1900 he had a practicable car to promote.

He was forty years old before the Ford Motor Company was started and production began to move.

Speed was the first thing the early automobile manufacturers went after. Races advertised the makes of cars.

Henry Ford himself hung up several records at the track at Grosse Pointe and on the ice on Lake St. Clair. In his 999 he did the mile in thirtynine and fourfifths seconds.

But it had always been his custom to hire others to do the heavy work. The speed he was busy with was speed in production, the records records in efficient output. He hired Barney Oldfield, a stunt bicyclerider from Salt Lake City, to do the racing for him.

Henry Ford had ideas about other things than the designing of motors, carburetors, magnetos, jigs and fixtures, punches and dies; he had ideas about sales,

that the big money was in economical quantity production, quick turnover, cheap interchangeable easilyreplaced standardized parts;

it wasn't until 1909, after years of arguing with his partners, that Ford put out the first Model T.

Henry Ford was right.

That season he sold more than ten thousand tin lizzies, ten years later he was selling almost a million a year.

In these years the Taylor Plan was stirring up plantmanagers and manufacturers all over the country. Efficiency was the word. The same ingenuity that went into improving the performance of a machine

could go into improving the performance of the workmen producing the machine.

In 1913 they established the assembly-line at Ford's. That season the profits were something like twentyfive million dollars, but they had trouble in keeping the men on the job, machinists didn't seem to like it at Ford's.

Henry Ford had ideas about other things than production.

He was the largest automobile manufacturer in the world; he paid high wages; maybe if the steady workers thought they were getting a cut (a very small cut) in the profits, it would give trained men an inducement to stick to their jobs,

wellpaid workers might save enough money to buy a tin lizzie; the first day Ford's announced that cleancut properly-married American workers who wanted jobs had a chance to make five bucks a day (of course it turned out that there were strings to it; always there were strings to it)

such an enormous crowd waited outside the Highland Park plant

all through the zero January night

that there was a riot when the gates were opened; cops broke heads, jobhunters threw bricks; property, Henry Ford's own property, was destroyed. The company dicks had to turn on the firehose to beat back the crowd.

The American Plan; automotive prosperity seeping down from above; it turned out there were strings to it.

But that five dollars a day

paid to good, clean American workmen

who didn't drink or smoke cigarettes or read or think,

and who didn't commit adultery

and whose wives didn't take in boarders,

made America once more the Yukon of the sweated workers of the world;

made all the tin lizzies and the automotive age, and incidentally,

made Henry Ford the automobileer, the admirer of Edison, the birdlover,

the great American of his time.

But Henry Ford had ideas about other things besides assemblylines and the living-habits of his employees. He was full of ideas. Instead of going to the city to make his fortune, here was a country boy who'd made his fortune by bringing the city out to the farm. The precepts he'd learned out of McGuffey's Reader, his mother's prejudices and preconceptions, he had preserved clean and unworn as freshprinted bills in the safe in a bank.

He wanted people to know about his ideas, so he bought the *Dearborn Independent* and started a campaign against cigarettesmoking.

When war broke out in Europe, he had ideas about that too. (Suspicion of armymen and soldiering were part of the midwest farm tradition, like thrift, stickativeness, temperance and sharp practice in money matters.) Any intelligent American mechanic could see that if the Europeans hadn't been a lot of ignorant underpaid foreigners who drank, smoked, were loose about women and wasteful in their methods of production, the war could never have happened.

When Rosika Schwimmer broke through the stockade of secretaries and servicemen who surrounded Henry Ford and suggested to him that he could stop the war,

he said sure they'd hire a ship and go over and get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas.

He hired a steamboat, the *Oscar II*, and filled it up with pacifists and socialworkers,

to go over to explain to the princelings of Europe

that what they were doing was vicious and silly.

It wasn't his fault that Poor Richard's commonsense no longer rules the world and that most of the pacifists were nuts,

goofy with headlines.

When William Jennings Bryan went over to Hoboken to see him off, somebody handed William Jennings Bryan a squirrel in a cage; William Jennings Bryan made a speech with the squirrel under his arm. Henry Ford threw American Beauty roses to the crowd. The band played *I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier*. Practical jokers let loose more squirrels. An eloping couple was married by a platoon of ministers in the saloon, and Mr. Zero, the flophouse humanitarian, who reached the dock too late to sail,

dove into the North River and swam after the boat.

The *Oscar II* was described as a floating Chautauqua; Henry Ford said it felt like a middlewestern village, but by the time they reached Christiansand in Norway, the reporters had kidded him so that he had gotten cold feet and gone to bed. The world was too crazy outside of Wayne County, Michigan. Mrs. Ford and the management sent an Episcopal dean after him who brought him home under wraps,

and the pacifists had to speechify without him.

Two years later Ford's was manufacturing munitions, Eagle boats; Henry Ford was planning oneman tanks, and oneman submarines like the one tried out in the Revolutionary War. He announced to the press that he'd turn over his war profits to the government,

but there's no record that he ever did.

One thing he brought back from his trip
was the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

He started a campaign to enlighten the world in the *Dearborn Independent*; the Jews were why the world wasn't like Wayne County, Michigan, in the old horse and buggy days;

the Jews had started the war, Bolshevism, Darwinism, Marxism, Nietzsche, short skirts and lipstick. They were behind Wall Street and the international bankers, and the whiteslave traffic and the movies and the Supreme Court and ragtime and the illegal liquor business.

Henry Ford denounced the Jews and ran for senator and sued the *Chicago Tribune* for libel,

and was the laughingstock of the kept metropolitan press;

but when the metropolitan bankers tried to horn in on his business
he thoroughly outsmarted them.

In 1918 he had borrowed on notes to buy out his minority stockholders for the picayune sum of seventyfive million dollars.

In February, 1920, he needed cash to pay off some of these notes that were coming due. A banker is supposed to have called on him and offered him every facility if the bankers' representative could be made a member of the board of directors. Henry Ford handed the banker his hat,

and went about raising the money in his own way:

he shipped every car and part he had in his plant to his dealers and demanded immediate cash payment. Let the other fellow do the borrowing had always been a cardinal principle. He shut down production and canceled all orders from the supplyfirms. Many dealers were ruined, many supplyfirms failed, but when he reopened his plant,

he owned it absolutely,

the way a man owns an unmortgaged farm with the taxes paid up.

In 1922 there started the Ford boom for President (high wages, waterpower, industry scattered to the small towns) that was skillfully pricked behind the scenes

by another crackerbarrel philosopher,
Calvin Coolidge;

but in 1922 Henry Ford sold one million three hundred and thirtytwo thousand two hundred and nine tin lizzies; he was the richest man in the world.

Good roads had followed the narrow ruts made in the mud by the Model T. The great automotive boom was on. At Ford's production was improving all the time; less waste, more spotters, strawbosses, stoolpigeons (fifteen minutes for lunch, three minutes to go to the toilet, the Taylorized speedup everywhere, reach under, adjust washer, screw down bolt, shove in cotterpin, reachunder adjustwasher, screwdown bolt, reachunderadjustscrewdownreachunderadjust until every ounce of life was sucked off into production and at night the workmen went home grey shaking husks).

Ford owned every detail of the process from the ore in the hills until the car rolled off the end of the assemblyline under its own power, the plants were rationalized to the last tenthousandth of an inch as measured by the Johansen scale;

in 1926 the production cycle was reduced to eightyone hours from the ore in the mine to the finished salable car proceeding under its own power,

but the Model T was obsolete.

New Era prosperity and the American Plan

(there were strings to it, always there were strings to it)

had killed Tin Lizzie.

Ford's was just one of many automobile plants.
When the stockmarket bubble burst,
Mr. Ford the crackerbarrel philosopher said jubilantly,
'I told you so.
Serves you right for gambling and getting in debt.
The country is sound.'
But when the country on cracked shoes, in frayed trousers, belts tightened over hollow bellies,
idle hands cracked and chapped with the cold of that coldest March day of 1932,
started marching from Detroit to Dearborn, asking for work and the American Plan, all they could think of at Ford's was machineguns.
The country was sound, but they mowed the marchers down.
They shot four of them dead.

Henry Ford as an old man
is a passionate antiquarian,
(lives besieged on his father's farm embedded in an estate of thousands of millionaire acres, protected by an army of servicemen, secretaries, secret agents, dicks under orders of an English exprizefighter,
always afraid of the feet in broken shoes on the roads, afraid the gangs will kidnap his grandchildren,
that a crank will shoot him,
that Change and the idle hands out of work will break through the gates and the high fences;
protected by a private army against
the new America of starved children and hollow bellies and cracked shoes stamping on souplines,
that has swallowed up the old thrifty farmlands
of Wayne County, Michigan,
as if they had never been).
Henry Ford as an old man
is a passionate antiquarian.
He rebuilt his father's farmhouse and put it back exactly in the state he remembered it in as a boy. He built a village of museums for buggies, sleighs, coaches, old plows, waterwheels, obsolete models of motorcars. He scoured the country for fiddlers to play old-fashioned square-dances.
Even old taverns he bought and put back into their original shape, as well as Thomas Edison's early laboratories.
When he bought the Wayside Inn near Sudbury, Massachusetts, he had the new highway where the newmodel cars roared and slithered and hissed oilily past (*the new noise of the automobile*),
moved away from the door,
put back the old bad road,
so that everything might be
the way it used to be,
in the days of horses and buggies.

1936

T. S. ELIOT

1888–

TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT

I

IN English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to 'the tradition' or to 'a tradition'; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-so is 'traditional' or even 'too traditional.' Seldom, perhaps, does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archæological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archæology.

Certainly the word is not likely to appear in our appreciations of living or dead writers. Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind; and is even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius. We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we

only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are 'more critical' than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism. One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity.

Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, 'tradition' should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of æsthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not onesided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

In a peculiar sense he will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past. I say judged, not amputated, by them; not judged to be as good as, or worse or better than, the dead; and certainly not judged by the canons of dead critics. It is a judgment, a comparison, in which two things are measured by each other. To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art. And we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value—a test, it is true, which can

only be slowly and cautiously applied, for we are none of us infallible judges of conformity. We say: it appears to conform, and is perhaps individual, or it appears individual, and may conform; but we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other.

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. Perhaps not even an improvement from the point of view of the psychologist or not to the extent which we imagine; perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery. But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show.

Someone said: 'The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did.' Precisely, and they are that which we know.

I am alive to a usual objection to what is clearly part of my programme for the *métier* of poetry. The objection is that the doctrine requires a ridiculous amount of erudition (pedantry), a claim which can be rejected by appeal to the lives of poets in any pantheon. It will even be affirmed that much learning deadens or perverts poetic sensibility. While, however, we persist in believing that a poet ought to know as much as will not encroach upon his necessary receptivity and necessary laziness, it is not desirable to confine knowledge to whatever can be put into a useful shape for examinations, drawing-rooms, or the still more pretentious modes of publicity. Some can absorb knowledge, the more tardy must sweat for it. Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum. What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career.

What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I therefore invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide.

2

Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. If we attend to the confused cries of the newspaper critics and the susurrus of popular repetition that follows, we shall hear the names of poets in great numbers; if we seek not Blue-book knowledge but the enjoyment of poetry, and ask for a poem, we shall seldom find it. I have tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this Impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in

any valuation of 'personality,' not being necessarily more interesting, or having 'more to say,' but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.

The analogy was that of the catalyst. When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected: has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely. Canto XV of the *Inferno* (Brunetto Latini) is a working up of the emotion evident in the situation; but the effect, though single as that of any work of art, is obtained by considerable complexity of detail. The last quatrain gives an image, a feeling attaching to an image, which 'came,' which did not develop simply out of what precedes, but which was probably in suspension in the poet's mind until the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to. The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.

If you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of 'sublimity' misses the mark. For it is not the 'greatness,' the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience it may give the impression of. It is no more intense, furthermore, than Canto XXVI, the voyage of Ulysses, which has not the direct dependence upon an emotion. Great variety is possible in the process of transmutation of emotion: the murder of Agamemnon, or the agony of Othello, gives an artistic effect apparently closer to a possible original than the scenes from Dante. In the *Agamemnon*, the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in *Othello* to the emotion of the protagonist himself. But the difference between art and the event is always absolute; the combination which is the murder of Agamemnon is probably as complex as that which is the voyage of Ulysses. In either case there has been a fusion of elements. The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly perhaps because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality.

I will quote a passage which is unfamiliar enough to be regarded with fresh attention in the light—or darkness—of these observations:

And now methinks I could e'en chide
myself
For doating on her beauty, though her
death
Shall be revenged after no common action.
Does the silkworm expend her yellow
labours
For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
For the poor benefit of a bewildering
minute?
Why does yon fellow falsify highways,
And put his life between the judge's lips,
To refine such a thing—keeps horse and
men
To beat their valours for her? . . .

In this passage (as is evident if it is taken in its context) there is a combination of positive and negative emotions: an intensely strong attraction toward beauty and an equally intense fascination by the ugliness which is contrasted with it and which destroys it. This balance of contrasted emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.

It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the emotions of people who have very complex or unusual emotions in life. One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek for new human emotions to express; and in this search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all. And emotions which he has never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him. Consequently, we must believe that 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not 'recollected,' and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is 'tranquil' only in that it is a passive attending upon the event. Of course this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal, in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact, the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious. Both errors tend to make him 'personal.' Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.

3

ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἴσως θειότερόν τι καὶ ἀπαθές ἐστιν.[1]

This essay proposes to halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism, and confine itself to such practical conclusions as can be applied by the responsible person interested in poetry. To divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim: for it would conduce to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good and bad. There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is an expression of *significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present,

1 'The mind seems to be something more divine and unaffected.'

but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.

1920

RELIGION AND LITERATURE

WHAT I have to say is largely in support of the following propositions: Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint. In so far as in any age there is common agreement on ethical and theological matters, so far can literary criticism be substantive. In ages like our own, in which there is no such common agreement, it is the more necessary for Christian readers to scrutinize their reading, especially of works of imagination, with explicit ethical and theological standards. The 'greatness' of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards.[1]

We have tacitly assumed, for some centuries past, that there is *no* relation between literature and theology. This is not to deny that literature—I mean, again, primarily works of imagination—has been, is, and probably always will be judged by some moral standards. But moral judgements of literary works are made only according to the moral code accepted by each generation, whether it lives according to that code or not. In an age which accepts some precise Christian theology, the common code may be fairly orthodox: though even in such periods the common code may exalt such concepts as 'honour,' 'glory' or 'revenge' to a position quite intolerable to Christianity. The dramatic ethics of the Elizabethan Age offers an interesting study. But when the common code is detached from its theological background, and is consequently more and more merely a matter of habit, it is exposed both to prejudice and to change. At such times morals are open to being altered *by* literature; so that we find in practice that what is 'objectionable' in literature is merely what the present generation is not used to. It is a commonplace that what shocks one generation is accepted quite calmly by the next. This adaptability to change of moral standards is sometimes greeted with satisfaction as an evidence of human perfectibility: whereas it is only evidence of what unsubstantial foundations people's moral judgements have.

I am not concerned here with religious literature but with the application of our religion to the criticism of any literature. It may be as well, however, to distinguish first what I consider to be the three senses in which we can speak of 'religious literature.' The first is that of which we say that it is 'religious literature' in the same way that we speak of 'historical literature' or of 'scientific literature.' I mean that we can treat the Authorized translation of the Bible, or the works of Jeremy Taylor, as literature, in the same way that we treat the historical writing of Clarendon or of Gibbon—our two great English historians —as literature; or Bradley's *Logic*, or Buffon's *Natural History*. All of these writers were men who, incidentally to their religious, or historical, or philosophic purpose, had a gift of language which makes them delightful to read to all those who can enjoy language well written, even if they are unconcerned with the objects which the writers had in view. And I would add that though a scientific, or historical, or theological, or philosophic work which is also 'literature,' may become superannuated as anything but literature, yet it is not likely to be 'literature' unless it had its scientific or other value for its own time. While I acknowledge the legitimacy of this enjoyment, I am more acutely aware of its abuse. The persons who enjoy these writings *solely* because of their literary merit are essentially parasites; and we know that parasites, when they become too numerous, are pests. I could easily fulminate for a whole hour against the men of letters who have gone into ecstasies over 'the Bible as literature,' the Bible as 'the noblest monument of English prose.' Those who talk of the Bible as a 'monument of English prose' are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity. I must try to avoid the by-paths of my

1 'As an example of literary criticism given greater significance by theological interests, I would call attention to Theodor Haecker: *Virgil* . . . [London, 1934].' Author's note, *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London, 1936), 93.

discourse: it is enough to suggest that just as the work of Clarendon, or Gibbon, or Buffon, or Bradley would be of inferior literary value if it were insignificant as history, science and philosophy respectively, so the Bible has had a *literary* influence upon English literature *not* because it has been considered as literature, but because it has been considered as the report of the Word of God. And the fact that men of letters now discuss it as 'literature' probably indicates the *end* of its 'literary' influence.

The second kind of relation of religion to literature is that which is found in what is called 'religious' or 'devotional' poetry. Now what is the usual attitude of the lover of poetry—and I mean the person who is a genuine and first-hand enjoyer and appreciator of poetry, not the person who follows the admirations of others—towards this department of poetry? I believe, all that may be implied in his calling it a *department*. He believes, not always explicitly, that when you qualify poetry as 'religious' you are indicating very clear limitations. For the great majority of people who love poetry, '*religious* poetry' is a variety of *minor* poetry: the religious poet is not a poet who is treating the whole subject matter of poetry in a religious spirit, but a poet who is dealing with a confined part of this subject matter: who is leaving out what men consider their major passions, and thereby confessing his ignorance of them. I think that this is the real attitude of most poetry lovers towards such poets as Vaughan, or Southwell, or Crashaw, or George Herbert, or Gerard Hopkins.

But what is more, I am ready to admit that up to a point these critics are right. For there is a kind of poetry, such as most of the work of the authors I have mentioned, which is the product of a special religious awareness, which may exist without the general awareness which we expect of the major poet. In some poets, or in some of their works, this general awareness may have existed; but the preliminary steps which represent it may have been suppressed, and only the end-product presented. Between these, and those in which the religious or devotional genius represents the *special* and limited awareness, it may be very difficult to discriminate. I do not pretend to offer Vaughan, or Southwell, or George Herbert, or Hopkins as major poets: I feel sure that the first three, at least, are poets of this limited awareness. They are not great religious poets in the sense in which Dante, or Corneille, or Racine, even in those of their plays which do not touch upon Christian themes, are great Christian religious poets. Or even in the sense in which Villon and Baudelaire, with all their imperfections and delinquencies, are Christian poets. Since the time of Chaucer, Christian poetry (in the sense in which I shall mean it) has been limited in England almost exclusively to minor poetry.

I repeat that when I am considering Religion and Literature, I speak of these things only to make clear that I am not concerned primarily with Religious Literature, I am concerned with what should be the relation between Religion and all Literature. Therefore the third type of 'religious literature' may be more quickly passed over. I mean the literary works of men who are sincerely desirous of forwarding the cause of religion: that which may come under the heading of Propaganda. I am thinking, of course, of such delightful fiction as Mr. Chesterton's *Man Who Was Thursday*, or his *Father Brown*. No one admires and enjoys these things more than I do; I would only remark that when the same effect is aimed at by zealous persons of less talent than Mr. Chesterton the effect is negative. But my point is that such writings do not enter into any serious consideration of the relation of Religion and Literature: because they are conscious operations in a world in which it is assumed that Religion and Literature are not related. It is a conscious and limited relating. What I want is a literature which should be *un*consciously, rather than deliberately and defiantly, Christian: because the work of Mr. Chesterton has its point from appearing in a world which is definitely not Christian.

I am convinced that we fail to realize how completely, and yet how irrationally, we separate our literary from our religious judgements. If there could be a complete separation, perhaps it might not matter: but the separation is not, and never can be, complete. If we exemplify literature by

the novel—for the novel is the form in which literature affects the greatest number—we may remark this gradual secularization of literature during at least the last three hundred years. Bunyan, and to some extent Defoe, had moral purposes: the former is beyond suspicion, the latter may be suspect. But since Defoe the secularization of the novel has been continuous. There have been three chief phases. In the first, the novel took the Faith, in its contemporary version, for granted, and omitted it from its picture of life. Fielding, Dickens and Thackeray belong to this phase. In the second, it doubted, worried about, or contested the Faith. To this phase belong George Eliot, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. To the third phase, in which we are living, belong nearly all contemporary novelists except Mr. James Joyce. It is the phase of those who have never heard the Christian Faith spoken of as anything but an anachronism.

Now, do people in general hold a definite opinion, that is to say religious or anti-religious; and do they read novels, or poetry for that matter, with a separate compartment of their minds? The common ground between religion and fiction is behaviour. Our religion imposes our ethics, our judgement and criticism of ourselves, and our behaviour towards our fellow men. The fiction that we read affects our behaviour towards our fellow men, affects our patterns of ourselves. When we read of human beings behaving in certain ways, with the approval of the author, who gives his benediction to this behaviour by his attitude towards the result of the behaviour arranged by himself, we can be influenced towards behaving in the same way.[1] When the contemporary novelist is an individual thinking for himself in isolation, he may have something important to offer to those who are able to receive it. He who is alone may speak to the individual. But the majority of novelists are persons drifting in the stream, only a little faster. They have some sensitiveness, but little intellect.

We are expected to be broadminded about literature, to put aside prejudice or conviction, and to look at fiction as fiction and at drama as drama. With what is inaccurately called 'censorship' in this country—with what is much more difficult to cope with than an official censorship, because it represents the opinions of individuals in an irresponsible democracy, I have very little sympathy; partly because it so often suppresses the wrong books, and partly because it is little more effective than Prohibition of Liquor; partly because it is one manifestation of the desire that state control should take the place of decent domestic influence; and wholly because it acts only from custom and habit, not from decided theological and moral principles. Incidentally, it gives people a false sense of security in leading them to believe that books which are *not* suppressed are harmless. Whether there *is* such a thing as a harmless book I am not sure: but there very likely are books so utterly unreadable as to be incapable of injuring anybody. But it is certain that a book is not harmless merely because no one is consciously offended by it. And if we, as readers, keep our religious and moral convictions in one compartment, and take our reading merely for entertainment, or on a higher plane, for æsthetic pleasure, I would point out that the author, whatever his conscious intentions in writing, in practice recognizes no such distinctions. The author of a work of imagination is trying to affect us wholly, as human beings, whether he knows it or not; and we are affected by it, as human beings, whether we intend to be or not. I suppose that everything we eat has some other effect upon us than merely the pleasure of taste and mastication; it affects us during the process of assimilation and digestion; and I believe that exactly the same is true of anything we read.

The fact that what we read does not concern merely something called our *literary taste*, but that it affects directly, though only amongst many other influences, the whole of what we are, is best elicited, I think, by a conscientious examination of the history of our individual literary education. Consider the adolescent reading of any person with some literary sensibility. Everyone, I believe, who is at all sensible to the seductions of poetry, can remember some moment in youth when he

1 'Here and later I am indebted to Montgomery Belgion. *The Human Parrot*(chapter on The Irresponsible Propagandist)[London, 1931].' Author's note, ibid., 100.

or she was completely carried away by the work of one poet. Very likely he was carried away by several poets, one after the other. The reason for this passing infatuation is not merely that our sensibility to poetry is keener in adolescence than in maturity. What happens is a kind of inundation, of invasion of the undeveloped personality, the empty (swept and garnished) room, by the stronger personality of the poet. The same thing may happen at a later age to persons who have not done much reading. One author takes complete possession of us for a time; then another; and finally they begin to affect each other in our mind. We weigh one against another; we see that each has qualities absent from others, and qualities incompatible with the qualities of others: we begin to be, in fact, critical; and it is our growing critical power which protects us from excessive possession by any one literary personality. The good critic—and we should all try to be critics, and not leave criticism to the fellows who write reviews in the papers—is the man who, to a keen and abiding sensibility, joins wide and increasingly discriminating reading. Wide reading is not valuable as a kind of hoarding, an accumulation of knowledge, or what sometimes is meant by the term 'a well-stocked mind.' It is valuable because in the process of being affected by one powerful personality after another, we cease to be dominated by any one, or by any small number. The very different views of life, cohabiting in our minds, affect each other, and our own personality asserts itself and gives each a place in some arrangement peculiar to ourself.

It is simply not true that works of fiction, prose or verse, that is to say works depicting the actions, thoughts and words and passions of imaginary human beings, *directly* extend our knowledge of life. Direct knowledge of life is knowledge directly in relation to ourselves, it is our knowledge of *how* people behave in general, of *what* they are like in general, in so far as that part of life in which we ourselves have participated gives us material for generalization. Knowledge of life obtained through fiction is only possible by another stage of self-consciousness. That is to say, it can only be a knowledge of other people's knowledge of life, not of life itself. So far as we are taken up with the happenings in any novel in the same way in which we are taken up with what happens under our eyes, we are acquiring at least as much falsehood as truth. But when we are developed enough to say: 'This is the view of life of a person who was a good observer within his limits, Dickens, or Thackeray, or George Eliot, or Balzac; but he looked at it in a different way from me, because he was a different man; he even selected rather different things to look at, or the same things in a different order of importance, because he was a different man; so what I am looking at is the world as seen by a particular mind'—then we are in a position to gain something from reading fiction. We are learning *something* about life from these authors direct, just as we learn something from the reading of history direct; but these authors are only really helping us when we can see, and allow for, their differences from ourselves.

Now what we get, as we gradually grow up and read more and more, and read a greater diversity of authors, is a variety of views of life. But what people commonly assume, I suspect, is that we gain this experience of other men's views of life only by 'improving reading.' This, it is supposed, is a reward we get by applying ourselves to Shakespeare, and Dante, and Goethe, and Emerson, and Carlyle, and dozens of other respectable writers. The rest of our reading for amusement is merely killing time. But I incline to come to the alarming conclusion that it is just the literature that we read for 'amusement,' or 'purely for pleasure' that may have the greatest and least suspected influence upon us. It is the literature which we read with the least effort that can have the easiest and most insidious influence upon us. Hence it is that the influence of popular novelists, and of popular plays of contemporary life, requires to be scrutinized most closely. And it is chiefly *contemporary* literature that the majority of people ever read in this attitude of 'purely for pleasure,' of pure passivity.

The relation of what I have been saying to the subject announced for my discourse should now be a little more apparent. Though we may read literature merely for

pleasure, of 'entertainment' or of 'æsthetic enjoyment,' this reading never affects simply a sort of special sense: it affects us as entire human beings; it affects our moral and religious existence. And I say that while individual modern writers of eminence can be improving, contemporary literature as a whole tends to be degrading. And that even the effect of the better writers, in an age like ours, may be degrading to some readers; for we must remember that what a writer does to people is not necessarily what he intends to do. It may be only what people are capable of having done to them. People exercise an unconscious selection, in being influenced. A writer like D. H. Lawrence may be in his effect either beneficial or pernicious. I am not even sure that I have not had some pernicious influence myself.

At this point I anticipate a rejoinder from the liberal-minded, from all those who are convinced that if everybody says what he thinks, and does what he likes, things will somehow, by some automatic compensation and adjustment, come right in the end. 'Let everything be tried,' they say, 'and if it is a mistake, then we shall learn by experience.' This argument might have some value, if we were always the same generation upon earth; or if, as we know to be not the case, people ever learned much from the experience of their elders. These liberals are convinced that only by what is called unrestrained individualism will truth ever emerge. Ideas, views of life, they think, issue distinct from independent heads, and in consequence of their knocking violently against each other, the fittest survive, and truth rises triumphant. Anyone who dissents from this view must be either a mediævalist, wishful only to set back the clock, or else a fascist, and probably both.

If the mass of contemporary authors were really individualists, every one of them inspired Blakes, each with his separate vision, and if the mass of the contemporary public were really a mass of *individuals* there might be something to be said for this attitude. But this is not, and never has been, and never will be. It is not only that the reading individual to-day (or at any day) is not enough an individual to be able to absorb all the 'views of life' of all the authors pressed upon us by the publishers' advertisements and reviewers, and to be able to arrive at wisdom by considering one against another. It is that the contemporary authors are not individuals enough either. It is not that the world of separate individuals of the liberal democrat is undesirable; it is simply that this world does not exist. For the reader of contemporary literature is not, like the reader of the established great literature of all time, exposing himself to the influence of divers and contradictory personalities; he is exposing himself to a mass movement of writers who, each of them, think that they have something individually to offer, but are really all working together in the same direction. And there never was a time, I believe, when the reading public was so large, or so helplessly exposed to the influences of its own time. There never was a time, I believe, when those who read at all, read so many more books by living authors than books by dead authors; there never was a time so completely parochial, so shut off from the past. There may be too many publishers; there are certainly too many books published; and the journals ever incite the reader to 'keep up' with what is being published. Individualistic democracy has come to high tide: and it is more difficult to-day to be an individual than it ever was before.

Within itself, modern literature has perfectly valid distinctions of good and bad, better and worse: and I do not wish to suggest that I confound Mr. Bernard Shaw with Mr. Noel Coward, Mrs. Woolf with Miss Mannin. On the other hand, I should like it to be clear that I am not defending a 'high'-brow against a 'low'-brow literature. What I do wish to affirm is that the whole of modern literature is corrupted by what I call Secularism, that it is simply unaware of, simply cannot understand the meaning of, the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life: of something which I assume to be our primary concern.

I do not want to give the impression that I have delivered a mere fretful jeremiad against contemporary literature. Assuming a common attitude between you, or some of you, and myself, the question is not so much, what is to be done about it? as, how should we behave towards it?

I have suggested that the liberal attitude towards literature will not work. Even if the writers who make their attempt to impose their 'view of life' upon us were really distinct individuals, even if we as readers were distinct individuals, what would be the result? It would be, surely, that each reader would be impressed, in his reading, merely by what he was previously prepared to be impressed by; he would follow the 'line of least resistance,' and there would be no assurance that he would be made a better man. For literary judgement we need to be acutely aware of two things at once: of 'what we like,' and of 'what we *ought* to like.' Few people are honest enough to know either. The first means knowing what we really feel: very few know that. The second involves understanding our shortcomings; for we do not really know what we ought to like unless we also know why we ought to like it, which involves knowing why we don't yet like it. It is not enough to understand what we ought to be, unless we know what we are; and we do not understand what we are, unless we know what we ought to be. The two forms of self-consciousness, knowing what we are and what we ought to be, must go together.

It is our business, as readers of literature, to know what we like. It is our business, as Christians, *as well as* readers of literature, to know what we ought to like. It is our business as honest men not to assume that whatever we like is what we ought to like; and it is our business as honest Christians not to assume that we do like what we ought to like. And the last thing I would wish for would be the existence of two literatures, one for Christian consumption and the other for the pagan world. What I believe to be incumbent upon all Christians is the duty of maintaining consciously certain standards and criteria of criticism over and above those applied by the rest of the world; and that by these criteria and standards everything that we read must be tested. We must remember that the greater part of our current reading matter is written for us by people who have no real belief in a supernatural order, though some of it may be written by people with individual notions of a supernatural order which are not ours. And the greater part of our reading matter is coming to be written by people who not only have no such belief, but are even ignorant of the fact that there are still people in the world so 'backward' or so 'eccentric' as to continue to believe. So long as we are conscious of the gulf fixed between ourselves and the greater part of contemporary literature, we are more or less protected from being harmed by it, and are in a position to extract from it what good it has to offer us.

There are a very large number of people in the world to-day who believe that all ills are fundamentally economic. Some believe that various specific economic changes alone would be enough to set the world right; others demand more or less drastic changes in the social as well, changes chiefly of two opposed types. These changes demanded, and in some places carried out, are alike in one respect, that they hold the assumptions of what I call Secularism: they concern themselves only with changes of a temporal, material, and external nature; they concern themselves with morals only of a collective nature. In an exposition of one such new faith I read the following words:

'In our morality the one single test of any moral question is whether it impedes or destroys in any way the power of the individual to serve the State. [The individual] must answer the questions: "Does this action injure the nation? Does it injure other members of the nation? Does it injure my ability to serve the nation?" And if the answer is clear on all those questions, the individual has absolute liberty to do as he will.'

Now I do not deny that this is a kind of morality, and that it is capable of great good within limits; but I think that we should all repudiate a morality which had no higher ideal to set before us than that. It represents, of course, one of the violent reactions we are witnessing, against the view that the community is solely for the benefit of the individual; but it is equally a gospel of this world, and of this world alone. My complaint against modern literature is of the same kind. It is not that modern literature is in the ordinary sense 'immoral' or even 'amoral'; and in any case to prefer that charge would not be enough

It is simply that it repudiates, or is wholly ignorant of, our most fundamental and important beliefs; and that in consequence its tendency is to encourage its readers to get what they can out of life while it lasts, to miss no 'experience' that presents itself, and to sacrifice themselves, if they make any sacrifice at all, only for the sake of tangible benefits to others in this world either now or in the future. We shall certainly continue to read the best of its kind, of what our time provides; but we must tirelessly criticize it according to our own principles, and not merely according to the principles admitted by the writers and by the critics who discuss it in the public press.

1935

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo. [1]

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question. . .
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, 'Do I dare?' and, 'Do I dare?'
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
[They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!']
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
[They will say: 'But how his arms and legs are thin!']
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:—

1 'If I could believe that my answer might be to a person who should ever return into the world, this flame would stand without more quiverings; but inasmuch as, if I hear the truth, never from this depth did any living man return, without fear of infamy I answer thee.' (trans., C.E.Norton). The passage is spoken by a soul in hell to Dante, in his *Inferno*, XXVII, 61–66.

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
[But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!]
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

. . . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?

But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head [grown slightly bald] brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: 'I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all'—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
Should say: 'That is not what I meant at all,
That is not it, at all.'

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
'That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all.'

. . . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,

Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

1915

LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE [1]

O quam te memorem virgo . . . [2]

STAND on the highest pavement of the stair—
Lean on a garden urn—
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—
Fling them to the ground and turn
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,
So I would have had her stand and grieve,
So he would have left
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,
As the mind deserts the body it has used.
I should find
Some way incomparably light and deft,
Some way we both should understand,
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather
Compelled my imagination many days,
Many days and many hours:
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers.
And I wonder how they should have been together!
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

1917

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS [3]

Similiter et omnes revereantur Diaconos, ut mandatum Jesu Christi; et Episcopum, ut Jesum Christum, existentem filium Patris; Presbyteros autem, ut concilium Dei et conjunctionem Apostolorum. Sine his Ecclesia non vocatur; de quibus suadeo vos sic habeo.

S. IGNATII AD TRALLIANOS.[4]

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.[5]

THE broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud;
Although he seems so firm to us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material ends,
While the True Church need never stir
To gather in its dividends.

1 'The Weeping Maiden.'

2 'O—how shall I address you, O maiden!' Virgil, *Æneid*, I, 327.

3 'The Hippopotamus' is a free, satirical paraphrase of a poem of the same title by Theophile Gautier (1811–1872).

4 'In like manner, let all reverence the Deacons as Jesus Christ, and the Bishop as the Father; and the Presbyters as the council of God, and the assembly of the Apostles. Without these there is no Church. Concerning all which I am persuaded that ye think after the same manner.' Chevallier, trans., 'The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians,' *Epistles . . . of Ignatius* (London, 1833), 96.

5 *Colossians*. 4:16.

The 'potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,
But every week we hear rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing
Ascending from the damp savannas,
And quiring angels round him sing
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him
clean
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,
While the True Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

1919

WHISPERS OF IMMORTALITY

WEBSTER was much possessed by death
And saw the skull beneath the skin;
And breastless creatures underground
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.

Daffodil bulbs instead of balls
Stared from the sockets of the eyes!
He knew that thought clings round dead
limbs
Tightening its lusts and luxuries.

Donne, I suppose, was such another
Who found no substitute for sense,
To seize and clutch and penetrate;
Expert beyond experience,

He knew the anguish of the marrow
The ague of the skeleton;
No contact possible to flesh
Allayed the fever of the bone.

. . . . . .

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye
Is underlined for emphasis;
Uncorseted, her friendly bust
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

The couched Brazilian jaguar
Compels the scampering marmoset
With subtle effluence of a cat;
Grishkin has a maisonette:

The sleek Brazilian jaguar
Does not in his arboreal gloom
Distil so rank a feline smell
As Grishkin in a drawing-room.

And even the Abstract Entities
Circumambulate her charm;
But our lot crawls between dry ribs
To keep our metaphysics warm.

1919

SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES [1]

ὤμοι πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω.[2]

APENECK Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward to the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

1 'Eliot once remarked that all he consciously set out to create in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" was a sense of foreboding. Yet the very exactitude with which he has built up his impression by means of the close details of his night-town scene, as well as by the way he underlines his effect both through a reference in the epigraph and in the final stanza to another scene of foreboding that ended in the murder of Agamemnon, inevitably causes his delineation to take on wider implications. The sharp contrast that seems at first simply to be mocking a debased present as it juxtaposes Sweeney with the hero of antiquity, ends in establishing also an undercurrent of moving drama: for a sympathetic feeling for Sweeney is set up by the realization that he is a man as well as Agamemnon, and that his plotted death is therefore likewise a human tragedy.' Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S.Eliot* (Boston, 1935),129–30.

2 'Alas! I am stricken by a timely blow within.'

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-cup,
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wistaria
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

1919

GERONTION [1]

Thou hast nor youth nor age
But as it were an after dinner sleep
Dreaming of both.[2]

HERE I am, an old man in a dry month,
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.
I was neither at the hot gates
Nor fought in the warm rain
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,
Bitten by flies, fought.
My house is a decayed house,
And the jew squats on the window sill, the owner,
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.
I an old man,
A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders. 'We would see a sign!'
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year
Came Christ the tiger
In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk
Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero
With caressing hands, at Limoges
Who walked all night in the next room;

By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room
Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant shuttles
Weave the wind. I have no ghosts,
An old man in a draughty house
Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,

1 'The poem opens with what is to be a recurrent theme of Mr. Eliot's: the mixing of "memory and desire" in present barrenness. The old man in his "dry month," waiting for the life-giving 'rain" that he knows will never come, is stirred to envy, then to poignant recollection by the story of hot-blooded vitality, which contrasts with the squalour of his actual surrounding. Youthful desire mingles in memory with the most exalted emotions, those associated with the mysteries of religion.' Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London, 1932),84.

'As he [Eliot] said once in conversation, the images here are "consciously concrete;" they correspond as closely as possible to something he has actually seen and remembered. But he also believes that if they are clearly rendered, they will stand for something larger than themselves; they will not depend for their apprehension upon any private reference, but will become "unconsciously general." ' Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S.Eliot*(Boston, 1935),62.

2 Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*,III,i,32-34.

Guides us by vanities. Think now
She gives when our attention is distracted
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
What's not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think
Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices
Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.
These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at last
We have not reached conclusion, when I
Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last
I have not made this show purposelessly
And it is not by any concitation
Of the backward devils
I would meet you upon this honestly.
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:
How should I use them for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
With pungent sauces, multiply variety
In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,
Suspend its operations, will the weevil
Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled
Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear
In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits
Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,
White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,
And an old man driven by the Trades
To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house,
Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

1920

ASH-WEDNESDAY [1]

I

BECAUSE I do not hope to turn again
Because I do not hope
Because I do not hope to turn
Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope
I no longer strive to strive towards such things
(Why should the agèd eagle stretch its wings?)
Why should I mourn
The vanished power of the usual reign?

Because I do not hope to know again
The infirm glory of the positive hour
Because I do not think
Because I know I shall not know
The one veritable transitory power
Because I cannot drink
There, where trees flower, and springs flow, for there is nothing again

Because I know that time is always time
And place is always and only place
And what is actual is actual only for one time
And only for one place
I rejoice that things are as they are and
I renounce the blessèd face
And renounce the voice

1 '. . . The balance that is sustained in "Ash-Wednesday" between knowledge of the desert and perception of the garden gives a full tone of authority to both, and thus to the range of experience which they encompass. This poem is not an escape from the problem of life into an easy dream world. The most urgent notes are suggested by the connotations of its title. On Ash-Wednesday is performed the ritual of anointing the forehead with ashes, while the priest recites: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." . . . By the time we reach the last poem of the series, we have a full sense of the wavering of an individual spirit, its desire to lose itself in the universal Will, and yet its continual distraction back to the world of desire and loss.' Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S.Eliot* (Boston, 1935),120–22.

Because I cannot hope to turn again
Consequently I rejoice, having to construct something
Upon which to rejoice

And pray to God to have mercy upon us
And I pray that I may forget
These matters that with myself I too much discuss
Too much explain
Because I do not hope to turn again
Let these words answer
For what is done, not to be done again
May the judgement not be too heavy upon us

Because these wings are no longer wings to fly
But merely vans to beat the air
The air which is now thoroughly small and dry
Smaller and dryer than the will
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still.

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death
Pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

2

Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree
In the cool of the day, having fed to satiety
On my legs my heart my liver and that which had been contained
In the hollow round of my skull. And God said
Shall these bones live? shall these
Bones live? And that which had been contained
In the bones (which were already dry) said chirping:
Because of the goodness of this Lady
And because of her loveliness, and because
She honours the Virgin in meditation,
We shine with brightness. And I who am here dissembled
Proffer my deeds to oblivion, and my love
To the posterity of the desert and the fruit of the gourd.
It is this which recovers
My guts the strings of my eyes and the indigestible portions
Which the leopards reject. The Lady is withdrawn
In a white gown, to contemplation, in a white gown.
Let the whiteness of bones atone to forgetfulness.
There is no life in them. As I am forgotten
And would be forgotten, so I would forget
Thus devoted, concentrated in purpose. And God said
Prophesy to the wind, to the wind only for only
The wind will listen. And the bones sang chirping
With the burden of the grasshopper, saying

Lady of silences
Calm and distressed
Torn and most whole
Rose of memory
Rose of forgetfulness
Exhausted and life-giving
Worried resposeful
The single Rose
Is now the Garden
Where all loves end
Terminate torment
Of love unsatisfied
The greater torment
Of love satisfied
End of the endless
Journey to no end
Conclusion of all that
Is inconclusible
Speech without word and
Word of no speech
Grace to the Mother
For the Garden
Where all love ends.

Under a juniper-tree the bones sang, scattered and shining
We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other,
Under a tree in the cool of the day, with the blessing of sand,
Forgetting themselves and each other, united
In the quiet of the desert. This is the land which ye
Shall divide by lot. And neither division nor unity
Matters. This is the land. We have our inheritance.

3[1]

At the first turning of the second stair
I turned and saw below
The same shape twisted on the banister
Under the vapour in the fetid air
Struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears
The deceitful face of hope and of despair.

At the second turning of the second stair
I left them twisting, turning below;
There were no more faces and the stair was dark,
Damp, jaggèd, like an old man's mouth drivelling, beyond repair,
Or the toothed gullet of an agèd shark.

At the first turning of the third stair
Was a slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit
And beyond the hawthorn blossom and a pasture scene
The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green
Enchanted the maytime with an antique flute.
Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,
Lilac and brown hair;
Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the mind over the third stair,
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair
Climbing the third stair.

Lord, I am not worthy
Lord, I am not worthy

but speak the word only.

4

Who walked between the violet and the violet
Who walked between
The various ranks of varied green
Going in white and blue, in Mary's colour,
Talking of trivial things
In ignorance and in knowledge of eternal dolour
Who moved among the others as they walked,
Who then made strong the fountains and made fresh the springs

Made cool the dry rock and made firm the sand
In blue of larkspur, blue of Mary's colour,
Sovegna vos [2]

Here are the years that walk between, bearing
Away the fiddles and the flutes, restoring
One who moves in the time between sleep and waking, wearing

White light folded, sheathed about her, folded.
The new years walk, restoring
Through a bright cloud of tears, the years, restoring
With a new verse the ancient rhyme. Redeem
The time. Redeem
The unread vision in the higher dream
While jewelled unicorns draw by the gilded hearse.
The silent sister veiled in white and blue
Between the yews, behind the garden god,
Whose flute is breathless, bent her head and signed but spoke no word

But the fountain sprang up and the bird sang down
Redeem the time, redeem the dream
The token of the word unheard, unspoken

Till the wind shake a thousand whispers from the yew

And after this our exile

1 'It is more than likely that he [Eliot] meant the turnings of his stair to represent something even more definite, to remind the reader that they correspond in general to the three divisions of Dante's hill of Purgatory. At the foot of the hill were those whose sin had been the greatest, who had been guilty of love distorted, those who had loved evil things instead of God, those whose self-absorbed pride had shut them off from Him. Higher up were those whose love of God had been defective; higher still, the least gravely sinful, those who had loved excessively things which should take only a secondary place in the affections, among them the sensual and lustful. (A hint of the correspondence between these particular qualities of excess and Eliot's third stair is underscored by the image describing the window itself "bellied like the fig's fruit"). Such a reminder that the stages of the soul which Eliot is depicting correspond also to a completely developed pattern of philosophic and religious thought, would remove the experience entirely from anything purely personal, and would thus enable it to possess a more universal significance.' Matthiessen, ibid.,65–66.

2 'Remember.'

5

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
If the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard;
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
The Word without a word, the Word within
The world and for the world;
And the light shone in darkness and
Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled
About the centre of the silent Word.

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Where shall the word be found, where will the word
Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence
Not on the sea or on the islands, not
On the mainland, in the desert or the rain land,
For those who walk in darkness
Both in the day time and in the night time
The right time and the right place are not here
No place of grace for those who avoid the face
No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny the voice

Will the veiled sister pray for
Those who walk in darkness, who chose thee and oppose thee,
Those who are torn on the horn between season and season, time and time, between
Hour and hour, word and word, power and power, those who wait
In darkness? Will the veiled sister pray
For children at the gate
Who will not go away and cannot pray:
Pray for those who chose and oppose

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Will the veiled sister between the slender
Yew trees pray for those who offend her
And are terrified and cannot surrender
And affirm before the world and deny between the rocks
In the last desert between the last blue rocks
The desert in the garden the garden in the desert
Of drouth, spitting from the mouth the withered apple-seed.

O my people.

6

Although I do not hope to turn again
Although I do not hope
Although I do not hope to turn

Wavering between the profit and the loss
In this brief transit where the dreams cross
The dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying
(Bless me father) though I do not wish to wish these things
From the wide window towards the granite shore
The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying
Unbroken wings

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel
For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell
Quickens to recover
The cry of quail and the whirling plover
And the blind eye creates
The empty forms between the ivory gates
And smell renews the salt savour of the sandy earth

This is the time of tension between dying and birth
The place of solitude where three dreams cross
Between blue rocks
But when the voices shaken from the yew-tree drift away
Let the other yew be shaken and reply.

Blessèd sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden,
Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks,
Our peace in His will
And even among these rocks
Sister, mother

And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,
Suffer me not to be separated

And let my cry come unto Thee.

1930

MARINA [1]

Quis hic locus, quae regio, quae mundi plaga? [2]

WHAT seas what shores what grey rocks and
what islands
What water lapping the bow
And scent of pine and the woodthrush
singing through the fog
What images return
O my daughter.

Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog,
meaning
Death
Those who glitter with the glory of the
hummingbird, meaning
Death
Those who sit in the stye of contentment,
meaning
Death
Those who suffer the ecstasy of the animals,
meaning
Death

Are become unsubstantial, reduced by a
wind,
A breath of pine, and the woodsong fog
By this grace dissolved in place

What is this face, less clear and clearer
The pulse in the arm, less strong and
stronger—
Given or lent? more distant than stars and
nearer than the eye

Whispers and small laughter between leaves
and hurrying feet

Under sleep, where all the waters meet.

Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint
cracked with heat.
I made this, I have forgotten
And remember.
The rigging weak and the canvas rotten
Between one June and another September.
Made this unknowing, half conscious,
unknown, my own.
The garboard strake leaks, the seams need
caulking.
This form, this face, this life
Living to live in a world of time beyond me;
let me
Resign my life for this life, my speech for
that unspoken,
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the
new ships.

What seas what shores what granite islands
towards my timbers
And woodthrush calling through the fog
My daughter.

1930

FROM CORIOLAN

TRIUMPHAL MARCH [3]

STONE, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves
horses' heels
Over the paving.
And the flags. And the trumpets. And so
many eagles.

1 'It is Marina, who was lost and found again, who becomes the symbol for the new realization striven after. . . . "Marina" belongs, like "Ash-Wednesday," to "the time of tension between dying and birth," and exhibits an even more subtle ambiguity than anything in the sequence. The liturgical note is absent, and one may indicate the change in rhythm by saying that it has about it nothing of ritual, yet the poem expresses something nearer to assurance than anything in "Ash-Wednesday." ' Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London, 1932), 129–30.

2 'What is this place, what region, what part of the world?'

3 In the context of the lines at the end of 'Triumphal March,' 'the central figure of the poem is seen to be neither Coriolanus nor a modern statesman alone, no more an Elizabethan than a Roman general; not even a symbol for leadership so much as the embodiment of qualities of spiritual perception and mastery that are integral to any deep apprehension of the meaning of life, and thus also to the existence of any adequate society. The hidden sources of inner life, the reserved balance, which sustain this individual and mark him off from the shallow chaotic flux of mere externalized rootless existence, make him almost a symbol for the harmonious union of emotion and thought that Eliot has so frequently stressed as characteristic of a "firm grasp of human experience"; these qualities likewise demand a sustained equilibrium in the relations between the individual and the social structure. The ripely developed human being has gained the integrity that comes from mature self-knowledge, and he therefore understands that no wholeness exists in isolation, that the individual cannot find fulfillment except through also giving himself to society—a truth none the less implied in "Difficulties of a Statesman" [the remaining section of "Coriolan"] by the fact that what is presented there is the break-down of the relation between the leader and the state in the hopeless con-

How many? Count them. And such a press
of people.
We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew
the City.
This is the way to the temple, and we so
many crowding the way.
So many waiting, how many waiting? what
did it matter, on such a day?
Are they coming? No, not yet. You can see
some eagles. And hear the trumpets.
Here they come. Is he coming?
The natural wakeful life of our Ego is a
perceiving.
We can wait with our stools and our
sausages.
What comes first? Can you see? Tell us. It is

5,800,000 rifles and carbines,
102,000 machine guns,
28,000 trench mortars,
53,000 field and heavy guns,
I cannot tell how many projectiles, mines
and fuses,
13,000 aeroplanes,
24,000 aeroplane engines,
50,000 ammunition waggons,
now 55,000 army waggons,
11,000 field kitchens,
1,150 field bakeries.

What a time that took. Will it be he now?
No,
Those are the golf club Captains, these the
Scouts,
And now the *société gymnastique de Poissy*
And now come the Mayor and the
Liverymen. Look
There he is now, look:
There is no interrogation in his eyes
Or in the hands, quiet over the horse's
neck,
And the eyes watchful, waiting, perceiving,
indifferent.
O hidden under the dove's wing, hidden in
the turtle's breast,
Under the palmtree at noon, under the
running water
At the still point of the turning world. O
hidden.

Now they go up to the temple. Then the
sacrifice.
Now come the virgins bearing urns, urns
containing
Dust
Dust
Dust of dust, and now
Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves,
horses' heels
Over the paving.

That is all we could see. But how many
eagles! and how many trumpets!
(And Easter Day, we didn't get to the
country,
So we took young Cyril to church. And
they rang a bell
And he said right out loud, *crumpets.*)
Don't throw away that sausage,
It'll come in handy. He's artful. Please, will
you
Give us a light?
Light
Light
Et les soldats faisaient la haie? ILS LA FAISAIENT.[1]

1931

fusion of bureaucracy.' Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S.Eliot*(Boston, 1935),140–41.

'It happens that I have recently come across an interesting example of how Eliot's own feeling for syllable and rhythm, encountering a passage in prose seems to have started the movement of his "Triumphal March," and hence gives an illuminating glimpse of his own "auditory imagination" in action. I began reading Charles Maurras's *L'Avenir de l'Intelligence* largely because Eliot had recommended it as one of the standard expositions of the classical point of view. It opens with an ironic account of how each new tawdry journalistic triumph is now greeted in the streets with procession and applause. A mediocre writer is represented as talking excitedly: "—Y avez-vous pris garde? dit-il, les yeux serrés, le chef de l'État s'était fait représenter. Nous avions la moitié du Conseil des ministres et les deux préfets. Tant de généraux! Des régiments avec drapeau, des musiciens et leur bannière. Sans compter beaucoup de magistrats en hermine et de professeurs, ces derniers sans leur toge, ce qui est malheureux.—Et les soldats faisaient la haie?—Ils la faisaient.—En armes? Vous l'avez dit.—Mais que disait le peuple?—Il n'en croyait pas ses cent yeux!"

'I have given a whole paragraph in order that the reader can also sense the possible way in which Eliot's ear quickened at "Tant de généraux"; and can perceive not only the source from which he took his final marching line: "Et les soldats faisaient la haie? ILS LA FAISAIENT"; but, more importantly, the source from which he also incorporated something of the whole sensation of movement that he transformed into the rhythms of his verse. In calculating what elements a poet's ear takes from the sources of his inspiration, it should also be observed that Eliot transformed the context here into quite a new pattern of his own, utilizing, however, a suggestion of the futile bustle of the crowd to contrast with the momentary vision of the serenity of his hero.' Matthiessen, ibid.,82–83.

1 'So the soldiers drew up a cordon?' 'They did!'

FROM THE ROCK

10

. . . .

O LIGHT Invisible, we praise Thee!
Too bright for mortal vision.
O Greater Light, we praise Thee for the less;
The eastern light our spires touch at morning,
The light that slants upon our western doors at evening,
The twilight over stagnant pools at batflight,
Moon light and star light, owl and moth light,
Glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade.
O Light Invisible, we worship Thee!

We thank Thee for the lights that we have kindled,
The light of altar and of sanctuary;
Small lights of those who meditate at midnight
And lights directed through the coloured panes of windows
And light reflected from the polished stone,
The gilded carven wood, the coloured fresco.
Our gaze is submarine, our eyes look upward
And see the light that fractures through unquiet water.
We see the light but see not whence it comes.
O Light Invisible, we glorify Thee!

In our rhythm of earthly life we tire of light.
We are glad when the day ends, when the play ends; and ecstasy is too much pain.
We are children quickly tired: children who are up in the night and fall asleep as the rocket is fired; and the day is long for work or play.
We tire of distraction or concentration, we sleep and are glad to sleep,
Controlled by the rhythm of blood and the day and the night and the seasons.
And we must extinguish the candle, put out the light and relight it;
Forever must quench, forever relight the flame.
Therefore we thank Thee for our little light, that is dappled with shadow.
We thank Thee who hast moved us to building, to finding, to forming at the ends of our fingers and beams of our eyes.
And when we have built an altar to the Invisible Light, we may set thereon the little lights for which our bodily vision is made.
And we thank Thee that darkness reminds us of light.
O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!

1934

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

1892–

NOTE BY A. MACL.

THE one man who should never attempt an explanation of a poem is its author. If the poem can be improved by its author's explanations it never should have been published, and if the poem cannot be improved by its author's explanations the explanations are scarcely worth reading. The following brief notes therefore are offered not by way of interpretation of the poems but by way of illustration of the materials out of which the poems came. They are excerpts from note-books kept at the time.

'Ars Poetica' was written in 1924. Notebook references to its subject read as follows: 'The purpose of the expression of emotion in a poem is not to recreate the poet's emotion in some one else. . . . Art is not a pandar. . . . The poem itself is a finality, an end, a creation—not a stimulant.'

'Fenellosa says truly that metaphor "the revealer of nature" is the very essence of poetry. But metaphor is not exegesis or demonstration. Metaphor is experience: it is the conviction of the senses and the conviction of the senses is experience.'

'The essential fact about form in poetry is that poetry is an art in and of time and that its form is the line of a succession.'

'You Andrew Marvell' (so-called in ref-

erence to the famous 'Ever at my back' lines from Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress') was written in the fall of 1926 after a return from Persia. It originated with a phrase in the following note written on the Mediterranean. 'The unforeseen experience —consciousness now of the other side of the earth: the always westward coming on of night—Teheran dark—Pa-i-Tak—the Tigris—the house at Rutba Wells—the Levant shore—Crete—Messina—the Garoupe Light—Saragossa the round domes —ocean.'

'L'An Trentiesme de Mon Eage' was written in France in December 1924. A note made in Paris reads: 'The curious fact that significance in our time has fallen from the sun and the stars and the vast words with the resounding vowels to light upon the minute facets of minute experience—the door knob, the coat buttons and the bannisters. And this would not be strange were it not that we retain so strongly the sense of mortality.'

'Conquistador' was begun in 1929. The first note referring to the project runs: ' "The Conquest of the New World" which is the metaphor not only of our continent but (and most movingly) of our time—as "America" is the metaphor of all human hope—as "west" is the metaphor of the dreamed-of future. . . . The reports of the existence of this world: the rumors of its riches; the discovery of its coast, of its mountains westward; the arduous journey; the hopeless battles; the beautiful city; the victory which yields defeat. . . . The heroism and the nobility and the pathos of our indestructible belief in that kingdom in the west, our search for it, our discovery of it; our conquest of it and its forever loss. . .'

Of the other poems selected it is perhaps only necessary to give the dates. 'Not Marble, Nor the Gilded Monuments' was written in New York about 1926, 'The End of the World' in Normandy in 1924, the 'Too-Late Born' at the end of 1924, the 'Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City' (the reference being to the fresco Diego Rivera painted for Mr. Rockefeller's Radio City, and was compelled to paint out) in 1932, the 'Speech to Those Who Say Comrade' and 'Pole Star for This Year' in 1935, 'Pony Rock' in 1929.

1937 1938

ARS POETICA

A POEM should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

. . . . . .

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind—

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

. . . . . .

A poem should be equal to:
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean
But be

1924 1926

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

AND here face down beneath the sun
And here upon earth's noonward height
To feel the always coming on
The always rising of the night

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthy chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever climbing shadow grow

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening strange
The flooding dark about their knees
The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate
Dark empty and the withered grass
And through the twilight now the late
Few travelers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa the gilded sand
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea

And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift how secretly
The shadow of the night comes on. . .
1926 1930

'NOT MARBLE NOR THE GILDED MONUMENTS'

THE praisers of women in their proud and beautiful poems
Naming the grave mouth and the hair and the eyes
Boasted those they loved should be forever remembered
These were lies

The words sound but the face in the Istrian sun is forgotten
The poet speaks but to her dead ears no more
The sleek throat is gone—and the breast that was troubled to listen
Shadow from door

Therefore I will not praise your knees nor your fine walking
Telling you men shall remember your name as long
As lips move or breath is spent or the iron of English
Rings from a tongue

I shall say you were young and your arms straight and your mouth scarlet
I shall say you will die and none will remember you
Your arms change and none remember the swish of your garments
Nor the click of your shoe

Not with my hand's strength not with difficult labor
Springing the obstinate words to the bones of your breast
And the stubborn line to your young stride and the breath to your breathing
And the beat to your haste
Shall I prevail on the hearts of unborn men to remember

(What is a dead girl but a shadowy ghost
Or a dead man's voice but a distant and vain affirmation
Like dream words most)

Therefore I will not speak of the undying glory of women
I will say you were young and straight and your skin fair
And you stood in the door and the sun was a shadow of leaves on your shoulders
And a leaf on your hair

I will not speak of the famous beauty of dead women
I will say the shape of a leaf lay once on your hair
Till the world ends and the eyes are out and the mouths broken
Look! It is there!
1926 1930

THE END OF THE WORLD

QUITE unexpectedly as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum

Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb—
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the canceled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

1925 1926

L'AN TRENTIESME DE MON EAGE

AND I have come upon this place
By lost ways, by a nod, by words,
By faces, by an old man's face
At Morlaix lifted to the birds,

By hands upon the tablecloth
At Aldebori's, by the thin
Child's hands that opened to the moth
And let the flutter of the moonlight in,

By hands, by voices, by the voice
Of Mrs. Whitman on the stair,
By Margaret's 'If we had the choice
To choose or not—' through her thick hair,

By voices, by the creak and fall
Of footsteps on the upper floor,
By silence waiting in the hall
Between the doorbell and the door,

By words, by voices, a lost way—
And here above the chimney stack
The unknown constellations sway—
And by what way shall I go back?

1924 1926

THE TOO-LATE BORN

WE too, we too, descending once again
The hills of our own land, we too have heard
Far off—Ah, que ce cor a longue haleine—
The horn of Roland in the passages of Spain,
The first, the second blast, the failing third,
And with the third turned back and climbed once more
The steep road southward, and heard faint the sound
Of swords, of horses, the disastrous war,
And crossed the dark defile at last, and found
At Roncevaux upon the darkening plain
The dead against the dead and on the silent ground
The silent slain—

1924 1926

PONY ROCK

ONE who has loved the hills and died, a man
Intimate with them—how their profiles fade
Large out of evening or through veils of rain
Vanish and reappear or how the sad
Long look of moonlight troubles their blind stones—
One who has loved them does not utterly,
Letting his fingers loosen and the green
Ebb from his eyeballs, close his eyes and go:

But other men long after he is dead
Seeing those hills will catch their breath and stare
As one who reading in a book some word
That calls joy back but can recall not where—
Only the crazy sweetness in the head—
Will stare at the black print till the page is blurred.

1929 1933

FROM FRESCOES FOR MR. ROCKEFELLER'S CITY

I

LANDSCAPE AS A NUDE

SHE lies on her left side her flank golden:
Her hair is burned black with the strong sun:
The scent of her hair is of rain in the dust on her shoulders:
She has brown breasts and the mouth of no other country:

Ah she is beautiful here in the sun where she lies:

She is not like the soft girls naked in vineyards
Nor the soft naked girls of the English islands
Where the rain comes in with the surf on an east wind:

Hers is the west wind and the sunlight: the west
Wind is the long clean wind of the continents—
The wind turning with earth: the wind descending
Steadily out of the evening and following on:

The wind here where she lies is west: the trees
Oak ironwood cottonwood hickory: standing in
Great groves they roll on the wind as the sea would:
The grasses of Iowa Illinois Indiana

Run with the plunge of the wind as a wave tumbling:

Under her knees there is no green lawn of the Florentines:
Under her dusty knees is the corn stubble:
Her belly is flecked with the flickering light of the corn:

She lies on her left side her flank golden:
Her hair is burned black with the strong sun:
The scent of her hair is of dust and of smoke on her shoulders:
She has brown breasts and the mouth of no other country:

2

WILDWEST

THERE were none of my blood in this battle:
There were Minneconjous: Sans Arcs: Brules:
Many nations of Sioux: they were few men galloping:

This would have been in the long days in June:
They were galloping well deployed under the plum-trees:
They were driving riderless horses: themselves they were few:
Crazy Horse had done it with few numbers:
Crazy Horse was small for a Lakota:
He was riding always alone thinking of something:

He was standing alone by the picket lines by the ropes:
He was young then: he was thirty when he died:
Unless there were children to talk he took no notice:

When the soldiers came for him there on the other side
On the Greasy Grass in the villages we were shouting
'Hoka Hey! Crazy Horse will be riding!'

They fought in the water: horses and men were drowning:
They rode on the butte: dust settled in sunlight:
Hoka Hey! they lay on the bloody ground:

No one could tell of the dead which man was Custer. . .
That was the end of his luck: by that river:
The soldiers beat him at Slim Buttes once:

They beat him at Willow Creek when the snow lifted:
The last time they beat him was the Tongue:
He had only the meat he had made and of that little:

Do you ask why he should fight? It was his country:
My God should he not fight? It was his:
But after the Tongue there were no herds to be hunting:

He cut the knots of the tails and he led them in:
He cried out 'I am Crazy Horse! Do not touch me!'
There were many soldiers between and the gun glinting. . .

And a Mister Josiah Perham of Maine had much of the
land Mister Perham was building the Northern Pacific
railroad that is Mister Perham was saying at lunch that

forty say fifty millions of acres in gift and
government grant outright ought to be
worth a
wide price on the Board at two-fifty and

later a Mister Cooke had relieved Mister
Perham and
later a Mister Morgan relieved Mister
Cooke:
Mister Morgan converted at prices current:

It was all prices to them: they never looked
at it:
why should they look at the land: they were
Empire Builders:
it was all in the bid and the asked and the
ink on their books. . .

When Crazy Horse was there by the Black
Hills
His heart would be big with the love he had
for that country
And all the game he had seen and the
mares he had ridden

And how it went out from you wide and
clean in the sunlight

3

BURYING GROUND BY THE TIES

AYEE! Ai! This is heavy earth on our
shoulders:
There were none of us born to be buried in
this earth:
Niggers we were Portuguese Magyars
Polacks:

We were born to another look of the sky
certainly:
Now we lie here in the river pastures:
We lie in the mowings under the thick
turf:

We hear the earth and the all-day rasp of
the grasshoppers:
It was we laid the steel on this land from
ocean to ocean:
It was we (if you know) put the U. P.
through the passes

Bringing her down into Laramie full load
Eighteen mile on the granite anticlinal
Forty-three foot to the mile and the grade
holding:

It was we did it: hunkies of our kind:
It was we dug the caved-in holes for the
cold water:
It was we built the gully spurs and the
freight sidings:

Who would do it but we and the Irishmen
bossing us?
It was all foreign-born men there were in
this country:
It was Scotsmen Englishmen Chinese
Squareheads Austrians. . .

Ayee! but there's weight to the earth under
it:
Not for this did we come out—to be lying
here
Nameless under the ties in the clay cuts:

There's nothing good in the world but the
rich will buy it:
Everything sticks to the grease of a gold
note—
Even a continent—even a new sky!

Do not pity us much for the strange grass
over us:
We laid the steel to the stone stock of these
mountains:
The place of our graves is marked by the
telegraph poles!

It was not to lie in the bottoms we came
out
And the trains going over us here in the dry
hollows . . .

5

EMPIRE BUILDERS

The Museum Attendant:

THIS is *The Making of America in Five
Panels:*

This is Mister Harriman making America:
Mister-Harriman-is-buying-the-Union-
Pacific-at-Seventy:
The Sante Fe is shining on his hair:

This is Commodore Vanderbilt making
America:
Mister-Vanderbilt-is-eliminating-the-
short-interest-in-Hudson:
Observe the carving on the rocking chair:

This is J.P.Morgan making America:
(The Tennessee Coal is behind to the left
of the Steel Company:)
Those in mauve are braces he is wearing:

This is Mister Mellon making America:
Mister-Mellon-is-represented-as-a-
symbolical-figure-in-aluminum-
Strewing-bank-stocks-on-a-burnished-
stair:

This is the Bruce is the Barton making
America:
Mister-Barton-is-selling-us-Doctor's-
Deliciousest-Dentifrice:
This is he in beige with the canary:

You have just beheld the Makers making
America:
This is *The Making of America in Five
Panels:*
America lies to the west-southwest of the
Switch-Tower:
There is nothing to see of America but
land:

*The Original Document
under the Panel Paint:*
'To Thos. Jefferson Esq. his obd't serv't
M. Lewis: captain: detached:
Sir:

Having in mind your repeated commands
in this matter:
And the worst half of it done and the
streams mapped:

And we here on the back of this beach
beholding the
Other ocean—two years gone and the cold

Breaking with rain for the third spring
since St. Louis:
The crows at the fishbones on the frozen
dunes:

The first cranes going over from south
north:
And the river down by a mark of the pole
since the morning:

And time near to return, and a ship
(Spanish)
Lying in for the salmon: and fearing chance
or the
Drought or the Sioux should deprive you
of these discoveries—
Therefore we send by sea in this writing:

Above the
Platte there were long plains and a clay
country:
Rim of the sky far off: grass under it:

Dung for the cook fires by the sulphur licks:
After that there were low hills and the
sycamores:

And we poled up by the Great Bend in the
skiffs:
The honey bees left us after the Osage
River:

The wind was west in the evenings and no
dew and the
Morning Star larger and whiter than
usual—

The winter rattling in the brittle haws:
The second year there was sage and the
quail calling:

All that valley is good land by the river:
Three thousand miles and the clay cliffs
and

Rue and beargrass by the water banks
And many birds and the brant going over
and tracks of

Bear elk wolves marten: the buffalo
Numberless so that the cloud of their dust
covers them:

The antelope fording the fall creeks: and
the mountains and
Grazing lands and the meadow lands and
the ground

Sweet and open and well-drained:
We advise you to
Settle troops at the forks and to issue
licenses:

Many men will have living on these lands:
There is wealth in the earth for them all
and the wood standing

And wild birds on the water where they
sleep:

There is stone in the hills for the towns of
a great people . . .'

You have just beheld the Makers making
America:

They screwed her scrawny and gaunt with
their seven-year panics:
They bought her back on their mortgages
old-whore-cheap:
They fattened their bonds at her breasts
till the thin blood ran from them:

Men have forgotten how full clear and deep
The Yellowstone moved on the gravel and
grass grew
When the land lay waiting for her westward
people!

1932 1933

FROM CONQUISTADOR

TENTH BOOK

O Halcyon! O sea-conceiving bird!
The bright surf breaking on thy silver
beaches

And the life goes out of us leaving the
chucked sherds!

Leaving an old man's memories to leach
Like a cock's jewels of gravel and worn
thin
With the sleepless caul of the heart and
hard and clean:

Leaving within the eyes behind the fingers
Back of the soft lid and the scarlet vein
The harsh flash of the steel where the light
lingers! . . .

Leaving the slag in us. . . .
leaving us those days. . . .

And I see well as from dark into light lying
here:
The lint of the broom-straw turns in the
sun's ray:

The cocks sing in the heat: there are cakes
frying:
The drinking water drops from the hung
gourd:
The rafters circle with the dozing flies:

The dogs rise and cross to the cool of the
urine:

I see well in the dark of the room—as
through shutters the
Sun is white on a street and the shadows
sure—

As men move under tree-boughs and the
sunlight
Leaps like a cat on their gilt capes and
clings
And is swept off by the next branch:
shunted. . . .

So I remember it: yes: and the evening
bringing the
Doves down from the air: their wings steep
to it!
And thou Colúa! and the paddles rinsed in
the

Clear pools of thy sun! I cannot sleep for
the
Light under my lids of thy bitter water:
I cannot sleep for thy cries and the walls
keeping the

Leaning weight of thy sun by night and the
autumn
Smelling of flowers as spring does: (wearing
the
Cotton sleeves we were drunk and the wind
caught in them):

And the girls they gave us for love with the
scented hair:
The green light through the leaves: the
slow awakening:
How there were many and small birds in
the air then. . . .

We were like those that in their lands they
say
The steers of the sun went up through the
wave-lit orchards
Shaking the water drops and those gold
naked

Girls before them at their dripping horns!
And they ate the sea-doused figs with the
salt taste:
And all their time was of kine and of sea
and of morning:

So did we lie in that land in the long days:
And they gave us a king's house to our heads and we dwelt in it:
And the house was smooth and of clean walls and so spacious

And well made and with lime and the stone set there was
Place for us all and the guns and our goods and our Indians:
Each man his mat under him smelling of

Lake grass and of leeks and an ell in width
And his painted cloth with the corn and the cones and the aloes
(For in that land there were men skilled in these images—

Such as sit with a day's sun in their laps
And they stare in the eyes of the trapped hare in the stubble:)
And the rooms smelled of the sweet wood like a chapel:

And all were of plank and were ceiled and of pinned lumber
And painted with scarlet beams and their out-walls burnished
And made to shine as a good coin: and some were

Build to the water and the light returned
And spilled up from the float of the ripples and ran on the
Wall's glare as a flame where the sunlight blurs it:

And some were shadowed to the cool canals:
And they poled in with their slow skiffs and their melons
Leaning against the gaff's end and the slash and

Drip of the stroke came back: and the cries sending the
Sun-bright birds up—and the beat of sound
Would pass and float on the stream and the wings settle:

(For all the isle was channeled as that ground
That takes its stars from Istria and their eyes
See first the new moon toward the Tuscan Mountain:)

And the town rang with the clang of oars and the cries:
And they brought the corn through the water-streets and the faggots:
They poled in with the heaped fish: the hides

Smelling of oak: the bowls slobbered with maguey:
They stood in the cool of the dark arcades in the market:
Many there were of them: tall men with the hank of the

Coarse skein on their wrists and their thumbs parting it:
Sellers of split fruits: of blue stones:
Of brass: of the nubile slaves—their hands bargaining:

Stroking the breasts up: and the thing was shown:
Merchants of sweet nuts and of chives and of honey:
Of leaves of dock for the eyes: of a calf's bone for the

Gloss of the hair as the hand draws it: of dung
For salt for the tanning of leather: sellers of yarn:
Old men with the sun-bleached hair and the bunches of

Herbs: of lettuces washed cool: of garlic
Dried brown on a withy of plaited grass:
Sellers of cooked dough by the coal-fires larding the

Stained skirt with the spittle of burning fat:
Those the makers of ropes: those that shredded the
Silken down of a seed and their fingers fastened the

Stone to the twist of it turning the scarlet thread:
Sellers of good dreams: of blue clay for the
Baking of gods: of quills of the gold: of hennequin:

Sellers of beetles for red dyes: makers of
Stone masks of the dead and of stone
mirrors:
Makers of fortunate knots: magistrates in
the

Swept porch—and they kept the names of
the year:
They took the tax on the red stones and the
herons:
They judged of the levies of salt: venders of
syrups:

Of harsh drugs for the old from the
coupling of hares:
Of dry seeds: of sweet straws . . . . many
and
Strange cries that they had . . . . and they
stood wearing the

Knotted and white cloths like capes and
they went with
Strong knees through the heat of the sun
and their thighs were
Straight and their bellies like knuckles of
bronze: and they set their

Heels in the sand of the earth as a man
riding a
Wave's back in the sea and their sex was
naked
And stained with the salt of the sun like a
golden hide:

And the tall girls there were in the wind
and the way of the
Sun was under their knees and the way of
the wind
Like a hand over them: smoothing the
scarves out: shaking an

Odor of noon from their skirts like the odor
at midday of
Clean cloths to bleach on the water stones
(And the butterfly opens his slow wings:)
and their skin like the

Rain's fragrance of water: (one alone
Returns from a shadow of plantains and
her mouth
Secret with lust as the honey of black
combs):

And their loins were heavy with love and
they laid them down
Under the lids of their eyes as under a
garment:
They gave themselves in the green herb
and the flowers:

Ah how the throat of a girl and a girl's arms
are
Bright in the riding sun and the young sky
And the green year of our lives where the
willows are!

How they were slender with strong breasts
and the light of the
Leaves over them! How there were tall men
And the wading lake to their wrists and
their wet thighs

Dabbled with sunlight: and they drew the
nets
In the green sedge of the shore and they
came singing:
The sea-film silvered in the lifting web:

Ah how the land was a good land! and the
king of it
Rich and with young wives and with gold
and his gardens
Sounding with water: and he went to drink

At noon at the grooved stone by the sheds
and the jars were
Choked with the float of the sun: and he ate
simnel
And sweet cakes he ate and a kind of
partridges:

And none knew his ways or his times with
women:
Silent he was and not seen and he came by
Dark: and his desire was in their limbs as an

Odor of plums in the night air and they
wakened
Stretching their arms out and between
their knees
Delight like the sun's mouth and the
water's weight:

And all his house was sounding as of trees
And the leaves of the trees were dark and a
dew came down from them:
Even at noon the dew fell like an ease of

Dusk to comfort a man's eyes: and the
ground was

Trodden with naked heels: and he kept
beasts:
And birds he kept in a grove and the green
loud with the

Locusts and golden and shrill wrens and
the bees
In the split hive of the wall and the names
of serpents
Curled in the painted vessels at his feet:

And he kept marks on a stone for the sky's
turning—
For the way of stars in the trees and the
moon's toil:
Niter and salt he ate from the quick earth:

They brought baskets of sweetened seeds
and of oil to him:
They cried to him Lord! my Lord! my
great Lord!
They came with naked feet and the small
voices:

Ah how the land was a good land! and the
doors with
Morning with many leaves with the clean
odor of
Water sluiced on the night stones: (and the
core of the

Broken melon smelled of a girl's robe:)
We woke scenting the slot of the heat on the
air:
We rinsed our mouths in the sun: by the
listed boats

Purging ourselves to the coarse sand the
glare of the
Sun was a cleanness of pebbles: far out
The fisherman leaned to his line and the
silent herons:

And we lay under a lift of the green and
their gowns were of
Spun twist in our hands: the hollow groin
Beat with a small heart: we heard the
trowels

Strike on the brick of the roofs like silver
coins:
We heard the whistle of tamed birds: to our
tongues
Our mouths were sweetened with the
scented ointment:

And we drank of the milk of the aloe and
were drunk:
And the words hived in the heap of our
bones and we praised the
Taste of a bitter leaf: we praised the sun

And the earth for the odor of men in its hot
days—
For a woman's color of pink shell or the
pock of the
Purple vein at her breast as a bruise made
in it:

We praised the trampling of sun as a gilt
cock:
Our hearts were singing as hammered
bronze and our mouths with
Sound as the corn is where the wind goes:
and we mocked the

Shape of love with our thumbs: we cried
aloud of the
Great sky: of the salt rock: of the land. . . .

And nevertheless it was not so: for the
ground was

Silent against us: on our foreign hands
The dust was a solemn and red stain: our
tongues were
Unskilled to the pulp of their fruits as a
language of

Sullen stones in our mouths: we heard the
sun in the
Crackle of live trees with the ears of
strangers. . . .

And they passed with their cries at dawn
and their deep drums:

And we saw them go by the stone courts
and the cages:
And all clean and with coarse lime and the
temple
Steep in the reach of the sky. . .
and the boy was slain!

The belly arched to the stone knife: I
remember
They sang and were glad as a small child in
the sunlight
And they ate the limbs for a feast and the
flesh trembled. . . .

1929 1932

SPEECH TO THOSE WHO SAY COMRADE

THE brotherhood is not by the blood certainly:
But neither are men brothers by speech—by saying so:
Men are brothers by life lived and are hurt for it:

Hunger and hurt are the great begetters of brotherhood:
Humiliation has gotten much love:
Danger I say is the nobler father and mother:

Those are as brothers whose bodies have shared fear
Or shared harm or shared hurt or indignity.
Why are the old soldiers brothers and nearest?

For this: with their minds they go over the sea a little
And find themselves in their youth again as they were in
Soissons and Meaux and at Ypres and those cities:

A French loaf and the girls with their eyelids painted
Bring back to aging and lonely men
Their twentieth year and the metal odor of danger:

It is this in life which of all things is tenderest—
To remember together with unknown men the days
Common also to them and perils ended:

It is this which makes of many a generation—
A wave of men who having the same years
Have in common the same dead and the changes.

The solitary and unshared experience
Dies of itself like the violations of love
Or lives on as the dead live eerily:

The unshared and single man must cover his
Loneliness as a girl her shame for the way of
Life is neither by one man nor by suffering.

Who are the born brothers in truth? The puddlers
Scorched by the same flame in the same foundries:
Those who have spit on the same boards with the blood in it:

Ridden the same rivers with green logs:
Fought the police in the parks of the same cities:
Grinned for the same blows: the same flogging:

Veterans out of the same ships—factories—
Expeditions for fame: the founders of continents:
Those that hid in Geneva a time back:

Those that have hidden and hunted and all such—
Fought together: labored together: they carry the
Common look like a card and they pass touching.

Brotherhood! No word said can make you brothers!
Brotherhood only the brave earn and by danger or
Harm or by bearing hurt and by no other.

Brotherhood here in the strange world is the rich and
Rarest giving of life and the most valued:
Not to be had for a word or a week's wishing.

1935 1936

POLE STAR FOR THIS YEAR

WHERE the wheel of light is turned:
Where the axle of the night is
Turned: is motionless: where holds
And has held ancient sureness always:

Where of faring men the eyes
At oar bench at the rising bow
Have seen—torn shrouds between—the Wain
And that star's changelessness: not changing:

There upon that intent star:
Trust of wandering men: of truth
The most reminding witness: we
Fix our eyes also: waylost: the wanderers:

We too turn now to that star:
We too in whose trustless hearts
All truth alters and the lights
Of earth are out now turn to that star:

Liberty of man and mind
That once was mind's necessity
And made the West blaze up has burned
To bloody embers and the lamp's out:

Hope that was a noble flame
Has fanned to violence and feeds
On cities and the flesh of men
And chokes where unclean smoke
defiles it:

Even the small spark of pride
That taught the tyrant once is dark
Where gunfire rules the starving street
And justice cheats the dead of honor:

Liberty and pride and hope
And every guide-mark of the mind
That led our blindness once has vanished.
This star will not. Love's star will not.

Love that has beheld the face
A man has with a man's eyes in it
Bloody from the slugger's blows
Or heard the cold child cry for hunger—

Love that listens where the good:
The virtuous: the men of faith:
Proclaim the paradise on earth
And murder starve and burn to make it—

Love that cannot either sleep
Or keep rich music in the ear
Or lose itself for the wild beat
The anger in the blood makes raging—

Love that hardens into hate—
Love like hatred and as bright—
Love is that one waking light
That leads now when all others darken.
1935 1936

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

1888–

SPECTRAL LOVERS

By night they haunted a thicket of April mist,
As out of the rich ground strangely come to
birth,
Else two immaculate angels fallen on earth.
Lovers they knew they were, but why
unclasped, unkissed?
Why should two lovers go frozen asunder
in fear?
And yet they were, they were.

Over the shredding of an April blossom
Her thrilling fingers touched him quick
with care;
Of many delicate postures she cast a snare;
But for all the red heart beating in the bale
bosom,
Her face as of cunningly tinctured ivory
Was hard with an agony.

Stormed by the little batteries of an April
night,
Passionate being the essences of the field,
Should the penetrable walls of the
crumbling prison yield
And open her treasure to the first
clamourous knight?
'This is the mad moon, and must I
surrender all?
If he but ask it, I shall.'

And gesturing largely to the very moon of
Easter,
Mincing his steps, and swishing the
jubilant grass,
And beheading some field-flowers that had
come to pass,
He had reduced his tributaries faster,
Had not considerations pinched his heart
Unfitly for his art.

'Am I reeling with the sap of April like a
drunkard?
Blessed is he that taketh this richest of cities;
But it is so stainless, the sack were a
thousand pities;
This is that marble fortress not to be
conquered,
Lest its white peace in the black flame turn
to tinder
And an unutterable cinder.'

They passed me once in April, in the mist.
No other season is it, when one walks and discovers
Two clad in the shapes of angels, being spectral lovers,
Trailing a glory of moon-gold and amethyst,
Who touch their quick fingers fluttering like a bird
Whose songs shall never be heard.

1924

OLD MAN PLAYING WITH CHILDREN

A DISCREET householder exclaims on the grandsire
In war-paint and feathers, with fierce grandsons and axes,
Dancing around a backyard fire of boxes,
'Watch grandfather, he'll set the house on fire.'

But I will unriddle for you the thought of his mind,
An old one you cannot open with conversation.
What animates those thin legs in risky motion?
Mixes the snow on the head with snow on the wind?

'Grandson, grandsire. We are equally boy and boy.
Do not offer me your reclining-chair and slippers
With tedious old women talking in wrappers.
This life is not good but in danger and in joy.

'It is you who are elder to these and younger to me
That are penned as slaves by your properties and causes
And never walk out of your shaped insupportable houses,
And shamefully, when boys shout, go in and flee.

'God forgive me, I know too well your middling ways,
Having taken care and performed ignominies unreckoned
Between the first brief childhood and the brief second,
But I will be more honourable in these days.'

1924

PHILOMELA

PROCNE, Philomela, and Itylus,
Your names are liquid, your improbable tale
Is recited in the classic numbers of the nightingale.
Ah, but our numbers are not felicitous,
It goes not liquidly for us.

Perched on a Roman ilex, and duly apostrophized,
The nightingale descanted unto Ovid;
She has even appeared to the Teutons, the swilled and gravid;
At Fontainebleau it may be the bird was gallicized;
Never was she baptized.

To England came Philomela with her pain,
Fleeing the hawk her husband; querulous ghost,
She wanders when he sits heavy on his roost,
Utters herself in the original again,
The untranslatable refrain.

Not to these shores she came! this other Thrace,
Environ barbarous to the royal Attic;
How could her delicate dirge run democratic,
Delivered in a cloudless boundless public place
To an inordinate race?

I pernoctated with the Oxford students once,
And in the quadrangles, in the cloisters, on the Cher,
Precociously knocked at antique doors ajar,
Fatuously touched the hems of the hierophants,
Sick of my dissonance.

I went out to Bagley Wood, I climbed the hill;
Even the moon had slanted off in a twinkling,

I heard the sepulchral owl and a few bells
tinkling,
There was no more villainous day to
unfulfil,
The diuternity was still.

Up from the darkest wood where Philomela
sat,
Her fairy numbers issued. What then ailed
me?
My ears are called capacious but they
failed me,
Her classics registered a little flat!
I rose, and venomously spat.

Philomela, Philomela, lover of song,
I am in despair if we may make us
worthy,
A bantering breed sophistical and
swarthy;
Unto more beautiful, persistently more
young
Thy fabulous provinces belong.

1924

ALLEN TATE

1899–

ELEGY [1]

JEFFERSON DAVIS: 1808–1889

No more the white refulgent streets,
Never the dry hollows of the mind
Shall he in fine courtesy walk
Again, for death is not unkind.

A civil war cast on his fame,
The four years' odium of strife
Unbodies his dust; love cannot warm
His tall corpuscles to this life.

What did we gain? What did we lose?
Be still; grief for the pious dead
Suspires from bosoms of kind souls
Lavender-wise, propped up in bed.

Our loss put six feet under ground
Is measured by the magnolia's root;
Our gain's the intellectual sound
Of death's feet round a weedy tomb.

In the back chambers of the State
(Just preterition for his crimes)
We curse him to our busy sky
Who's busy in hell a hundred times

A day, though profitless his task,
Heedless what Belial may say—
He who wore out the perfect mask
Orestes fled in night and day.

1922–1931 1928

ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD [2]

Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones yield their names to the
element,

[1] The first version of this poem, just four stanzas, was written in 1921, and called "Euthanasia"; the first I ever had in print. It wasn't good and it had nothing to do with Jefferson Davis. I forgot it until, one day in 1930, in the way things begin to run about loose in one's head, the first two lines came back to me, with the original "gutter" automatically changed to "hollows." The man walking the street became an elegant figure. He was unmistakably Jefferson Davis. I wrote the new poem in a very few minutes. From the original only four lines were carried over without change into the new poem, though a good deal of the imagery, slightly altered, was still useful. I ignore Davis' pathetic old age, and conceive him as a tragic person, as he would have been had the Federal Government executed him for "treason." I often think of my poems as commentaries on those human situations from which there is no escape.' Author's note.

[2] 'The structure of the "Ode" is simple. Figure to yourself a man stopping at the gate of a Confederate graveyard on a late autumn afternoon. The leaves are falling; his first impressions bring him the "rumor of mortality"; and the desolation barely allows him, at the beginning of the second stanza, the heroically conventional surmise that the dead will enrich the earth, "where these memories grow." From those quoted words to the end of that passage he pauses for a baroque meditation on the ravages of time, concluding with the figure of the "blind crab." This creature has mobility but no direction, energy but no purposeful world to use it in: in the entire poem there are only two explicit symbols for the locked-in ego; the crab is the first and less explicit symbol, a mere hint, a planting of the idea that will become overt in its second instance—the jaguar towards the end. The crab is the first intimation of the nature of the moral conflict upon which the drama of the poem develops: the cut-offness of the modern "intellectual man" from the world.

'The next long passage or strophe, beginning "You know who have waited by the wall," states the other term of the conflict. It is the theme of heroism, not merely moral heroism, but heroism in a grand style,

The wind whirrs without recollection;
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
To the seasonal eternity of death;
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
Of heaven to their election in the vast
breath,
They sough the rumor of mortality.

Autumn is desolation in the plot
Of a thousand acres where these memories
grow
From the inexhaustible bodies that are not
Dead, but feed the grass row after rich
row.
Think of the autumns that have come and
gone!—
Ambitious November with the humors of
the year,
With a particular zeal for every slab,
Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm
there:
The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
Turns you, like them, to stone,
Transforms the heaving air
Till plunged to a heavier world below
You shift your sea-space blindly
Heaving, turning like the blind crab.

Dazed by the wind, only the wind
The leaves flying, plunge

You know who have waited by the wall
The twilight certainty of an animal,
Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know—the immitigable pines, the
smoky frieze
Of the sky, the sudden call: you know the
rage,
The cold pool left by the mounting flood,
Of muted Zeno and Parmenides.
You who have waited for the angry
resolution
Of those desires that should be yours
tomorrow,
You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision
And praise the arrogant circumstance
Of those who fall
Rank upon rank, hurried beyond
decision—
Here by the sagging gate, stopped by the
wall.

Seeing, seeing only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

Turn your eyes to the immoderate past,
Turn to the inscrutable infantry rising
Demons out of the earth—they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall, and the sunken fields
of hemp,
Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run.
Lost in that orient of the thick and fast
You will curse the setting sun.

Cursing only the leaves crying
Like an old man in a storm

You hear the shout, the crazy hemlocks
point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Smothers you, a mummy, in time.

The hound bitch
Toothless and dying, in a musty cellar
Hears the wind only.

Now that the salt of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity,
What shall we say of the bones, unclean,
Whose verdurous anonymity will grow?
The ragged arms, the ragged heads and
eyes
Lost in these acres of the insane green?
The gray lean spiders come, they come and
go;

elevating even death from mere physical dissolution into a formal ritual: this heroism is a formal ebullience of the human spirit in an entire society, not private, romantic illusion—something better than moral heroism, great as that may be, for moral heroism, being personal and individual, may be achieved by certain men in all ages, even ages of decadence. But the late Hart Crane's commentary is better than any I can make: "The theme of chivalry, a tradition of excess (not literally excess, rather active faith) which cannot be perpetuated in the fragmentary cosmos of today—'those desires that should be yours tomorrow,' but which, you know, will not persist nor find any way into action." ' Tate, 'Narcissus as Narcissus,' *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, XIV, i, 113–14. The essay also contains a valuable analysis of the poetics of his 'Ode.'

In a tangle of willows without light
The singular screech-owl's tight
Invisible lyric seeds the mind
With the furious murmur of their chivalry.

We shall say only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

We shall say only the leaves whispering
In the improbable mist of nightfall
That flies on multiple wing:
Night is the beginning and the end
And in between the ends of distraction
Waits mute speculation, the patient curse
That stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
For his own image in a jungle pool, his
victim.

What shall we say who have knowledge
Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set
up the grave
In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now
The shut gate and the decomposing wall:
The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry
bush,
Riots with his tongue through the hush—
Sentinel of the grave who counts us all!
1926–1936 1928

MOTHER AND SON [1]

Now all day long the man who is not dead
Hastens the dark with inattentive eyes,
The lady of the white hand, of the erect
head,
Stares at the cover, leans for the son's
replies

At last to her importunate womanhood—
That hand of death laid on the living bed;
Such is the fierce compositor of blood.

She waits; he lies upon the bed of sin
Where greed, avarice, anger writhed and
slept
Till to their silence they were gathered in:
There, fallen with time, his tall and wicked
kin
Once fired the passions that were never
kept
In the permanent heart, and there his
mother lay
To bear him on the impenetrable day.

The falcon mother cannot will her hand
Up to the bed, nor break the manacle
That exile sets upon her harsh command
That he should say the time is beautiful—
Transfigured with her own devouring
light:
The sick man craves the impalpable night.

Loosed betwixt eye and lid, the swimming
beams
Of memory, that school of cuttlefish,
Rise to the air, plunge to the cold streams—
Rising and plunging the half-forgotten
wish
To tear his heart out in a slow disgrace
And freeze the hue of terror to her face.

Hate, misery, and fear beat off his heart
To the dry fury of the woman's mind,
The son prone in his autumn moves apart
A seed blown upon a returning wind.
O child, be vigilant till towards the south
On the flowered wall all the sweet
afternoon,
That reach of sun, swift as the
cottonmouth,
Strikes at the black crucifix on her breast
Where the cold dusk comes suddenly to
rest—
Mortality will speak the victor soon!

The dreary flies lazy and casual
Stick to the ceiling, buzz along the wall,
O heart, the spider shuffles from the mould
Weaving, between the pinks and grapes, his
pall.
The bright wallpaper, imperishably old,
Uncurls and flutters, it will never fall.
1928 1928

1 'This poem was written in Paris in 1928, one morning when suddenly the first line came to mind, without warning of what the poem would be about; the first draft was very rapid. But it has been retouched many times. I think there is little in it to interpret. The cuttlefish, symbol of memory, has puzzled a few readers. This disagreeable creature blinds its prey by squirting a black fluid into the water, in which it then hides: a man in emotional danger withdraws into his private mind where not even maternal love can follow him and where he becomes mysterious and menacing. I speak of this dark place as "beams of memory" because I want the blackness to shine. Milton and Dante in two famous phrases make you see darkness, but I cannot without subterfuge: of course Dante cheats a little too by calling it *perso*. At the end of the poem the spider is not a symbol, merely an image of horror.' Author's note.

TO THE ROMANTIC TRADITIONISTS [1]

I HAVE looked at them long,
My eyes blur; sourceless light
Keeps them forever young
Before our aging sight.

You see them too—strict forms
Of will, the secret dignity
Of our dissolute storms;
They grow too bright to be.

What were they like? What mark
Can signify their charm?
They never saw the dark;
Rigid, they never knew alarm.

Do not the scene rehearse!
The perfect eyes enjoin
A contemptuous verse;
We speak the crabbed line.

Immaculate race! to yield
Us final knowledge set
In a cold frieze, a field
Of war but no blood let.

Are they quite willing,
Do they ask to pose
Naked and simple, chilling
The very wind's nose?

They ask us how to live!
We answer: Again try
Being the drops we sieve.
What death it is to die!

Therefore because they nod
Being too full of us
I look at the turned sod
Where it is perilous

And yawning all the same
As if we knew them not
And history had no name—
No need to name the spot!

1934 1936

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

1898–

KING DAVID [2]

I

DAVID sang to his hook-nosed harp:
'The Lord God is a jealous God!
His violent vengeance is swift and sharp!
And the Lord is King above all gods!

'Blest be the Lord, through years untold,
The Lord Who has blessed me a thousand fold!

'Cattle and concubines, corn and hives
Enough to last me a dozen lives.

'Plump, good women with noses flat,
Marrowful blessings, weighty and fat.

'I wax in His peace like a pious gourd,
The Lord God is a pleasant God,

1 'This poem is addressed to people who destroy the past by trying to live it, but it might have been written to persons who give the same allegiance to the future. This kind of romantic character imagines a life from which evil, and so the life, is removed. At bottom the heresy like other romantic attitudes however finespun, is pragmatical and secular, putting its faith in the externals of a system. The poem is like a speech from a conversation; one of the talkers takes the floor to admonish his friends; but he appears to have the grace to include himself in the censure. For after he addresses the romantics as "you" in the second stanza, he speaks of "we" from then on, and it may not be mere politeness. "Them" in the first line alludes to the perfect men of a perfect past. They cannot shield us from death, the "turned sod," which is the goal and meaning of the eternal evil in life. (Of course, there ought to be a poem some time on the barbarians of the pure present, who think they can ignore the past entirely.)' Author's note.

2 ' "King David" and "The Mountain Whippoorwill" are both ballads, and written as such: "King David" in the strict ballad-form with refrain; "The Mountain Whippoorwill" with variations. A ballad ought to have pace. I hope they both have it. In "The Mountain Whippoorwill" I was trying to adapt the strict ballad form to a contemporary American subject, vary it as I chose, and use colloquial speech—get the note of the boxwood fiddle into it, if it could be done. I had heard the mountain fiddlers in the North Carolinas, and their tunes stuck in my mind. Of course I didn't draw up these rules on paper before I wrote the poem, any more than you say to yourself: "I will now have a blue-eyed child with a Roman nose and a hare-lip." But I was trying to think back to the fiddle music and the speech.' Author's note.

Break mine enemy's jaw, O Lord!
For the Lord is King above all gods!'

His hand dropped slack from the tunable strings,
A sorrow came on him—a sorrow of kings.

A sorrow sat on the arm of his throne,
An eagle sorrow with claws of stone.

'I am merry, yes, when I am not thinking,
But life is nothing but eating and drinking.

'I can shape my psalms like daggers of jade,
But they do not shine like the first I made.

'I can harry the heathen from North to South,
But no hot taste comes into my mouth.

'My wives are comely as long-haired goats,
But I would not care if they cut their throats!

'Where are the maids of the desert tents
With lips like flagons of frankincense?

'Where is Jonathan? Where is Saul?
The captain-towers of Zion wall?

'The trees of cedar, the hills of Nod,
The kings, the running lions of God?

'Their words were a writing in golden dust,
Their names are myrrh in the mouths of the just.

'The sword of the slayer could never divide them—
Would God I had died in battle beside them!'

The Lord looked down from a thunder-clap.
(The Lord God is a crafty God.)
He heard the strings of the shrewd harp snap.
(The Lord who is King above all gods.)

He pricked the king with an airy thorn,
It burnt in his body like grapes of scorn.

The eyelids roused that had drooped like lead.
David lifted his heavy head.

The thorn stung at him, a fiery bee,
'The world is wide. I will go and see
From the roof of my haughty palace,' said he.

2

Bathsheba bathed on her vine-decked roof.
(The Lord God is a mighty God.)
Her body glittered like mail of proof.
(And the Lord is King above all gods.)

Her body shimmered, tender and white
As the flesh of aloes in candlelight.

King David forgot to be old or wise.
He spied on her bathing with sultry eyes.

A breath of spice came into his nose.
He said, 'Her breasts are like two young roes.'

His eyes were bright with a crafty gleam.
He thought, 'Her body is soft as cream.'

He straightened himself like an unbent bow
And called a servant and bade him go.

3

Uriah the Hittite came to his lord,
Dusty with war as a well-used sword.

A close, trim man like a belt, well-buckled;
A jealous gentleman, hard to cuckold.

David entreated him, soft and bland,
Offered him comfits from his own hand.

Drank with him deep till his eyes grew red,
And laughed in his beard as he went to bed.

The days slipped by without hurry or strife,
Like apple-parings under a knife.
And still Uriah kept from his wife.

Lean fear tittered through David's psalm,
'This merry husband is far too calm!'

David sent for Uriah then,
They greeted each other like pious men.

'Thou hast borne the battle, the dust and the heat.
Go down to thy house and wash thy feet!'

Uriah frowned at the words of the king.
His brisk, hard voice had a leaden ring.

'While the hosts of God still camp in the field,
My house to me is a garden sealed.

'How shall I rest while the arrow yet flies?
The dust of the war is still in my eyes.'

David spoke with his lion's roar.
'If Peace be a bridle that rubs you sore,
You shall fill your belly with blood and war!'

Uriah departed, calling him kind.
His eyes were serpents in David's mind.

He summoned a captain, a pliable man.
'Uriah the Hittite shall lead the van.

'In the next assault when the fight roars high,
And the Lord God is a hostile God,
Retire from Uriah that he may die.
For the Lord is King above all gods.'

4

The messenger came while King David played
The friskiest ditty ever made.

'News, O King, from our dubious war!
The Lord of Hosts hath prevailed once more!

'His foes are scattered like chirping sparrows,
Their kings lie breathless, feathered with arrows.

'Many are dead of your captains tall.
Uriah the Hittite was first to fall.'

David turned from the frolicsome strings
And rent his clothes for the death of kings.

Yet, as he rent them, he smiled for joy,
The sly, wide smile of a wicked boy.

'The powerful grace of the Lord prevails!
He has cracked Uriah between His nails!

'His blessings are mighty, they shall not cease!
And my days henceforth shall be days of peace!'

His mind grew tranquil, smoother than fleece.
He rubbed his body with scented grease.
And his days thenceforward were days of peace.

His days were fair as the flowering lime
—For a little time, for a little time.

And Bathsheba lay in his breast like a dove,
A vessel of amber, made for love.

5

When Bathsheba was great with child,
(The Lord God is a jealous God!)
Portly and meek as a moon grown mild,
(The Lord is King above all gods!)

Nathan, the prophet, wry and dying,
Preached to the king like a locust crying:

'Hearken awhile to a doleful thing!
There were two men in thy land, O King!

'One was rich as a gilded ram.
One had one treasure, a poor ewe-lamb.

'Rich man wasted his wealth like spittle.
Poor man shared with his lamb spare victual.

'A traveler came to the rich man's door.
"Give me to eat, for I hunger sore!"

'Rich man feasted him fatly, true,
But the meat that he gave him was fiends' meat, too,
Stolen and roasted, the poor man's ewe!

'Hearken, my lord, to a deadly thing!
What shall be done with these men, O King?'

David hearkened, seeing it plain,
His heart grew heavy with angry pain:
'Show me the rich man, that he be slain!'

Nathan barked as a jackal can.
'Just, O King! And thou art the man!'

David rose as the thunders rise
When some one in Heaven is telling lies.

But his eyes were weaker than Nathan's
eyes.

His huge bulk shivered like quaking sod,
Shoulders bowing to Nathan's rod,
Nathan, the bitter apple of God.

His great voice shook like a runner's, spent.
'My sin has found me! Oh, I repent!'

Answered Nathan, that talkative Jew:
'For many great services, comely and true,
The Lord of Mercy will pardon you.

'But the child in Bathsheba, come of your
seed,
Shall sicken and die like a blasted weed.'

David groaned when he heard him speak.
The painful tears ran hot on his cheek.

Ashes he cast on his kingly locks.
All night long he lay on the rocks.

Beseeching his Lord with a howling cry:
'O Lord God, O my jealous God,
Be kind to the child that it may not die,
For thou art King above all gods!'

6

Seven long nights he lay there, howling,
A lion wounded, moaning and growling.

Seven long midnights, sorrowing greatly,
While Sin, like a dead man, embraced him
straitly.

Till he was abased from his lust and pride
And the child was born and sickened and
died.

He arose at last. It was ruddy Day.
And his sin like water had washed away.

He cleansed and anointed, took fresh
apparel,
And worshiped the Lord in a tuneful carol.

His servants, bearing the child to bury,
Marveled greatly to see him so merry.

He spoke to them mildly as mid-May
weather:
'The child and my sin are perished
together.

'He is dead, my son. Though his whole
soul yearn to me,
I must go to him, he may not return to
me.

'Why should I sorrow for what was
pain?
A cherished grief is an iron chain.'

He took up his harp, the sage old
chief,
His heart felt clean as a new green
leaf.

His soul smelt pleasant as rain-wet
clover.
'I have sinned and repented and that's all
over.

'In his dealings with heathen, the Lord is
hard.
But the humble soul is his spikenard.'

His wise thoughts fluttered like doves in the
air.
'I wonder is Bathsheba still so fair?

'Does she weep for the child that our sin
made perish?
I must comfort my ewe-lamb, comfort and
cherish.

'The justice of God is honey and balm.
I will soothe her heart with a little
psalm.'

He went to her chamber, no longer sad,
Walking as light as a shepherd lad.

He found her weeping, her garments
rent,
Trodden like straw by God's punishment.
He solaced her out of his great content.

Being but a woman, a while she grieved,
But at last she was comforted, and
conceived.

Nine months later she bore him a son.
(The Lord God is a mighty God!)
The name of that child was SOLOMON.
He was God's tough staff till his days were
run!
(And the Lord is King above all gods!)

1923 1923

THE MOUNTAIN WHIPPOORWILL

(OR, HOW HILL-BILLY JIM WON THE GREAT FIDDLERS' PRIZE)

(*A Georgia Romance*)

Up in the mountains, it's lonesome all the time,
(Sof' win' slewin' thu' the sweet-potato vine.)

Up in the mountains, it's lonesome for a child,
(Whippoorwills a-callin' when the sap runs wild.)

Up in the mountains, mountains in the fog,
Everythin's as lazy as an old houn' dog.

Born in the mountains, never raised a pet,
Don't want nuthin' an' never got it yet.

Born in the mountains, lonesome-born,
Raised runnin' ragged thu' the cockleburrs and corn.

Never knew my pappy, mebbe never should.
Think he was a fiddle made of mountain laurel-wood.

Never had a mammy to teach me pretty-please.
Think she was a whippoorwill, a-skitin' thu' the trees.

Never had a brother ner a whole pair of pants,
But when I start to fiddle, why, yuh got to start to dance!

Listen to my fiddle—Kingdom Come—
Kingdom Come!
Hear the frogs a-chunkin' 'Jug o' rum, Jug o' rum!'
Hear that mountain-whippoorwill be lonesome in the air,
An' I'll tell yuh how I traveled to the Essex County Fair.

Essex County has a mighty pretty fair,
All the smarty fiddlers from the South come there.

Elbows flyin' as they rosin up the bow
For the First Prize Contest in the Georgia Fiddlers' Show.

Old Dan Wheeling, with his whiskers in his ears,
King-pin fiddler for nearly twenty years.

Big Tom Sargent, with his blue wall-eye,
An' Little Jimmy Weezer that can make a fiddle cry.

All sittin' roun', spittin' high an' struttin' proud,
(Listen, little whippoorwill, yuh better bug yore eyes!)
Tun-a-tun-a-tunin' while the jedges told the crowd
Them that got the mostest claps'd win the bestest prize.

Everybody waitin' for the first tweedle-dee,
When in comes a-stumblin'—hill-billy me!

Bowed right pretty to the jedges an' the rest,
Took a silver dollar from a hole inside my vest,

Plunked it on the table an' said 'There's my callin' card!
An' anyone that licks me—well, he's got to fiddle hard!'

Old Dan Wheeling, he was laughin' fit to holler,
Little Jimmy Weezer said, 'There's one dead dollar!'

Big Tom Sargent had a yaller-toothy grin,
But I tucked my little whippoorwill spang underneath my chin,
An' petted it an' tuned it till the jedges said, 'Begin!'

Big Tom Sargent was the first in line;
He could fiddle all the bugs off a sweet-potato-vine.

He could fiddle down a possum from a mile-high tree.
He could fiddle up a whale from the bottom of the sea.

Yuh could hear hands spankin' till they spanked each other raw,

When he finished variations on 'Turkey in the Straw.'

Little Jimmy Weezer was the next to play;
He could fiddle all night, he could fiddle all day.

He could fiddle chills, he could fiddle fever,
He could make a fiddle rustle like a lowland river.

He could make a fiddle croon like a lovin' woman.
An' they clapped like thunder when he'd finished strummin'.

Then came the ruck of the bob-tailed fiddlers,
The let's-go-easies, the fair-to-middlers.

They got their claps an' they lost their bicker,
An' settled back for some more corn-licker.

An' the crowd was tired of their no-count squealing,
When out in the center steps Old Dan Wheeling.

He fiddled high and he fiddled low,
(Listen, little whippoorwill; yuh got to spread yore wings!)
He fiddled with a cherrywood bow.
(Old Dan Wheeling's got bee-honey in his strings.)

He fiddled the wind by the lonesome moon,
He fiddled a most almighty tune.

He started fiddling like a ghost,
He ended fiddling like a host.

He fiddled north an' he fiddled south,
He fiddled the heart right out of yore mouth.

He fiddled here an' he fiddled there.
He fiddled salvation everywhere.

When he was finished, the crowd cut loose,
(Whippoorwill, they's rain on yore breast.)
An' I sat there wonderin' 'What's the use?'
(Whippoorwill, fly home to yore nest.)

But I stood up pert an' I took my bow,
An' my fiddle went to my shoulder, so.

An'—they wasn't no crowd to get me fazed—
But I was alone where I was raised.

Up in the mountains, so still it makes yuh skeered,
Where God lies sleepin' in his big white beard.

An' I heard the sound of the squirrel in the pine,
An' I heard the earth a-breathin' thu' the long night-time.

They've fiddled the rose, an' they've fiddled the thorn,
But they haven't fiddled the mountain-corn.

They've fiddled sinful an' fiddled moral,
But they haven't fiddled the breshwood-laurel.

They've fiddled loud, an' they've fiddled still,
But they haven't fiddled the whippoorwill.

I started off with a *dump-diddle-dump,*
(Oh, hell's broke loose in Georgia!)
Skunk-cabbage growin' by the bee-gum stump,
(Whippoorwill, yo're singin' now!)

Oh, Georgia booze is mighty fine booze,
The best yuh ever poured yuh,
But it eats the soles right offen yore shoes,
For Hell's broke loose in Georgia.

My mother was a whippoorwill pert,
My father, he was lazy,
But I'm Hell broke loose in a new store shirt
To fiddle all Georgia crazy.

Swing yore partners—up an' down the middle!
Sashay now—oh, listen to that fiddle!
Flapjacks flippin' on a red-hot griddle,
An' Hell broke loose,
Hell broke loose,
Fire on the mountains—snakes in the grass.
Satan's here a-bilin'—oh, Lordy, let him pass!

Go down Moses, set my people free,
Pop goes the weasel thu' the old Red Sea!
Jonah sittin' on a hickory-bough,
Up jumps a whale—an' where's yore prophet now?
Rabbit in the pea-patch, possum in the pot,
Try an' stop my fiddle, now my fiddle's gettin' hot!
Whippoorwill, singin' thu' the mountain hush,
Whippoorwill, shoutin' from the burnin' bush,
Whippoorwill, cryin' in the stable-door,
Sing tonight as yuh never sang before!
Hell's broke loose like a stompin' mountain-shoat,
Sing till yuh bust the gold in yore throat!
Hell's broke loose for forty miles aroun'
Bound to stop yore music if yuh don't sing it down.
Sing on the mountains, little whippoorwill,
Sing to the valleys, an' slap 'em with a hill,
For I'm struttin' high as an eagle's quill,
An' Hell's broke loose,
Hell's broke loose,
Hell's broke loose in Georgia!

They wasn't a sound when I stopped bowin',
(*Whippoorwill, yuh can sing no more.*)
But, somewhere or other, the dawn was growin',
(*Oh, mountain whippoorwill!*)

An' I thought, 'I've fiddled all night an' lost.
Yo're a good hill-billy, but yuh've been bossed.'

So I went to congratulate old man Dan,
—But he put his fiddle into my han'—
An' then the noise of the crowd began.
1923 1923

FROM JOHN BROWN'S BODY [1]

INVOCATION

AMERICAN muse, whose strong and diverse heart
So many men have tried to understand
But only made it smaller with their art,
Because you are as various as your land,

As mountainous-deep, as flowered with blue rivers,
Thirsty with deserts, buried under snows,
As native as the shape of Navajo quivers,
And native, too, as the sea-voyaged rose.

Swift runner, never captured or subdued,
Seven-branched elk beside the mountain stream,
That half a hundred hunters have pursued
But never matched their bullets with the dream,

Where the great huntsmen failed, I set my sorry
And mortal snare for your immortal quarry.

You are the buffalo-ghost, the broncho-ghost
With dollar-silver in your saddle-horn,
The cowboys riding in from Painted Post,
The Indian arrow in the Indian corn,

And you are the clipped velvet of the lawns
Where Shropshire grows from Massachusetts sods,
The grey Maine rocks—and the war-painted dawns
That break above the Garden of the Gods.

The prairie-schooners crawling toward the ore
And the cheap car, parked by the station-door.

Where the skyscrapers lift their foggy plumes
Of stranded smoke out of a stony mouth
You are that high stone and its arrogant fumes,
And you are ruined gardens in the South

And bleak New England farms, so winter-white
Even their roofs look lonely, and the deep
The middle grainland where the wind of night
Is like all blind earth sighing in her sleep.

1 'The method of *John Brown's Body* is an expansion of the method used in *Five Men and Pompey*. The "Invocation" was, originally, the start of the Third Book. Then, when finished, it seemed to go more naturally as the beginning of the whole poem. The incidental lyrics, of which "The Hider's Song" is one, are in the poem for relief, change of mood, etc.; but I wanted them to be an essential part of the poem, not just stuck in like currants in a cake. They are part of the building, not removable ornaments. "Pickett's Charge" was a try for an unrhymed form that would carry ballad narrative.' Author's note.

A friend, an enemy, a sacred hag
With two tied oceans in her medicine-bag.

They tried to fit you with an English song
And clip your speech into the English tale.
But, even from the first, the words went wrong,
The catbird pecked away the nightingale.

The homesick men begot high-cheekboned things
Whose wit was whittled with a different sound
And Thames and all the rivers of the kings
Ran into Mississippi and were drowned.

They planted England with a stubborn trust.
But the cleft dust was never English dust.

Stepchild of every exile from content
And all the disavouched, hard-bitten pack
Shipped overseas to steal a continent
With neither shirts nor honor to their back.

Pimping grandee and rump-faced regicide,
Apple-cheeked younkers from a windmill-square,
Puritans stubborn as the nails of Pride,
Rakes from Versailles and thieves from County Clare,

The black-robed priests who broke their hearts in vain
To make you God and France or God and Spain.

These were your lovers in your buckskin-youth.
And each one married with a dream so proud
He never knew it could not be the truth
And that he coupled with a girl of cloud.

And now to see you is more difficult yet
Except as an immensity of wheel
Made up of wheels, oiled with inhuman sweat
And glittering with the heat of ladled steel.

All these you are, and each is partly you,
And none is false, and none is wholly true.

So how to see you as you really are,
So how to suck the pure, distillate, stored
Essence of essence from the hidden star
And make it pierce like a riposting sword.

For, as we hunt you down, you must escape
And we pursue a shadow of our own
That can be caught in a magician's cape
But has the flatness of a painted stone.

Never the running stag, the gull at wing,
The pure elixir, the American thing.

And yet, at moments when the mind was hot
With something fierier than joy or grief,
When each known spot was an eternal spot
And every leaf was an immortal leaf,

I think that I have seen you, not as one,
But clad in diverse semblances and powers,
Always the same, as light falls from the sun,
And always different, as the differing hours.

Yet, through each altered garment that you wore
The naked body, shaking the heart's core.

All day the snow fell on that Eastern town
With its soft, pelting, little, endless sigh
Of infinite flakes that brought the tall sky down
Till I could put my hands in the white sky

And taste cold scraps of heaven on my tongue
And walk in such a changed and luminous light
As gods inhabit when the gods are young.
All day it fell. And when the gathered night

Was a blue shadow cast by a pale glow
I saw you then, snow-image, bird of the snow.

And I have seen and heard you in the dry
Close-huddled furnace of the city street
When the parched moon was planted in the sky
And the limp air hung dead against the heat.

I saw you rise, red as that rusty plant,
Dizzied with lights, half-mad with senseless sound,
Enormous metal, shaking to the chant
Of a triphammer striking iron ground.

Enormous power, ugly to the fool,
And beautiful as a well-handled tool.

These, and the memory of that windy day
On the bare hills, beyond the last barbed wire,
When all the orange poppies bloomed one way
As if a breath would blow them into fire,

I keep forever, like the sea-lion's tusk
The broken sailor brings away to land,
But when he touches it, he smells the musk,
And the whole sea lies hollow in his hand.

So, from a hundred visions, I make one,
And out of darkness build my mocking sun.

And should that task seem fruitless in the eyes
Of those a different magic sets apart
To see through the ice-crystal of the wise
No nation but the nation that is Art,

Their words are just. But when the birchbark-call
Is shaken with the sound that hunters make
The moose comes plunging through the forest-wall
Although the rifle waits beside the lake.

Art has no nations—but the mortal sky
Lingers like gold in immortality.

This flesh was seeded from no foreign grain
But Pennsylvania and Kentucky wheat,
And it has soaked in California rain
And five years tempered in New England sleet

To strive at last, against an alien proof
And by the changes of an alien moon,
To build again that blue, American roof
Over a half-forgotten battle-tune

And call unsurely, from a haunted ground,
Armies of shadows and the shadow-sound.

In your Long House there is an attic-place
Full of dead epics and machines that rust,
And there, occasionally, with casual face,
You come awhile to stir the sleepy dust;

Neither in pride nor mercy, but in vast
Indifference at so many gifts unsought,
The yellowed satins, smelling of the past,
And all the loot the lucky pirates brought.

I only bring a cup of silver air,
Yet, in your casualness, receive it there.

Receive the dream too haughty for the breast,
Receive the words that should have walked as bold
As the storm walks along the mountain-crest
And are like beggars whining in the cold.

The maimed presumption, the unskilful skill,
The patchwork colors, fading from the first,
And all the fire that fretted at the will
With such a barren ecstasy of thirst.

Receive them all—and should you choose to touch them
With one slant ray of quick, American light,
Even the dust will have no power to smutch them,
Even the worst will glitter in the night.

If not—the dry bones littered by the way
May still point giants toward their golden prey.

1928

THE HIDER'S SONG

THIS is the hidden place that hiders know.
This is where hiders go.
Step softly, the snow that falls here is different snow,
The rain has a different sting.
Step softly, step like a cloud, step softly as the least
Whisper of air against the beating wing,
And let your eyes be sealed
With two blue muscadines
Stolen from secret vines,
Or you will never find in the lost field
The table spread, the signs of the hidden feast.

This is where hiders live.
This is the tentative
And outcast corner where hiders steal away
To bake their hedgehogs in a lump of clay,
To raise their crops and children wild and shy,

And let the world go by
In accidental marches of armed wrath
That stumble blindly past the buried path.
Step softly, step like a whisper, but do not speak
Or you will never see
The furriness curled within the hollow tree,
The shadow-dance upon the wilderness creek.
This is the hiders' house.
This is the ark of pine-and-willow-boughs.
This is the quiet place.
You may call now, but let your call be sweet
As clover-honey strained through silver sieves
And delicate as the dust upon the moth
Or you will never find your fugitives.
Call once, and call again,
Then, if the lifted strain
Has the true color and substance of the wild,
You may perceive, if you have lucky eyes,
Something that ran away from being wise
And changed silk ribbons for a greener cloth,
Some budding-horned and deer-milk-suckled child
Some lightness, moving toward you on light feet,
Some girl with indolent passion in her face.

1928

Pickett's Charge

The cannonade fell still. All along the fish-hook line,
The tired men stared at the smoke and waited for it to clear;
The men in the centre waited, their rifles gripped in their hands,
By the trees of the riding fate, and the low stone wall, and the guns.

These were Hancock's men, the men of the Second Corps,
Eleven States were mixed there, where Minnesota stood
In battle-order with Maine, and Rhode Island beside New York,
The metals of all the North, cooled into an axe of war.

The strong sticks of the North, bound into a fasces-shape,
The hard winters of snow, the wind with the cutting edge,
And against them came that summer that does not die with the year,
Magnolia and honeysuckle and the blue Virginia flag.

Tall Pickett went up to Longstreet—his handsome face was drawn.
George Pickett, old friend of Lincoln's in days gone by with the blast.
When he was a courteous youth and Lincoln the strange shawled man
Who would talk in a Springfield street with a boy who dreamt of a sword.

Dreamt of a martial sword, as swords are martial in dreams,
And the courtesy to use it, in the old bright way of the tales.
Those days are gone with the blast. He has his sword in his hand.
And he will use it today, and remember that using long.

He came to Longstreet for orders, but Longstreet would not speak.
He saw Old Peter's mouth and the thought in Old Peter's mind.
He knew the task that was set and the men that he had to lead
And a pride came into his face while Longstreet stood there dumb.

'I shall go forward, sir,' he said and turned to his men.
The commands went down the line. The grey ranks started to move.
Slowly at first, then faster, in order, stepping like deer,
The Virginians, the fifteen thousand, the seventh wave of the tide.

There was a death-torn mile of broken ground to cross,
And a low stone wall at the end, and behind it the Second Corps,
And behind that force another, fresh men who had not yet fought.
They started to cross that ground. The guns began to tear them.

From the hill they say that it seemed more like a sea than a wave,

A sea continually torn by stones flung out of the sky,
And yet, as it came, still closing, closing and rolling on,
As the moving sea closes over the flaws and rips of the tide.

You could mark the path that they took by the dead that they left behind,
Spilled from that deadly march as a cart spills meal on a road,
And yet they came on unceasing, the fifteen thousand no more,
And the blue Virginia flag did not fall, did not fall, did not fall.

They halted but once to fire as they came. Then the smoke closed down
And you could not see them, and then, as it cleared again for a breath,
They were coming still but divided, gnawed at by blue attacks,
One flank half-severed and halted, but the centre still like a tide.

Cushing ran down the last of his guns to the battle-line,
The rest had been smashed to scrap by Lee's artillery fire.
He held his guts in his hand as the charge came up to the wall
And his gun spoke out for him once before he fell to the ground.

Armistead leapt the wall and laid his hand on the gun,
The last of the three brigadiers who ordered Pickett's brigades,
He waved his hat on his sword and 'Give 'em the steel!' he cried,
A few men followed him over. The rest were beaten or dead.

A few men followed him over. There had been fifteen thousand
When that sea began its march toward the fish-hook ridge and the wall.
So they came on in strength, light-footed, stepping like deer,
So they died or were taken. So the iron entered their flesh.

Lee, a mile away, in the shade of a little wood,
Stared, with his mouth shut down, and saw them go and be slain,
And then saw for a single moment, the blue Virginia flag
Planted beyond the wall, by that other flag that he knew.

The two flags planted together, one instant, like hostile flowers.
Then the smoke wrapped both in a mantle —and when it had blown away,
Armistead lay in his blood, and the rest were dead or down,
And the valley grey with the fallen and the wreck of the broken wave.

Pickett gazed around him, the boy who had dreamt of a sword
And talked with a man named Lincoln. The sword was still in his hand.
He had gone out with fifteen thousand. He came back to his lines with five.
He fought well till the war was over, but a thing was cracked in his heart.

1928

LITANY FOR DICTATORSHIPS [1]

For all those beaten, for the broken heads,
The fosterless, the simple, the oppressed,
The ghosts in the burning city of our time . . .

.

For those taken in rapid cars to the house and beaten
By the skilful boys, the boys with the rubber fists,
—Held down and beaten, the table cutting their loins,
Or kicked in the groin and left, with the muscles jerking
Like a headless hen's on the floor of the slaughter-house
While they brought the next man in with his white eyes staring.
For those who still said 'Red Front!' or 'God Save the Crown!'

1 '"Litany for Dictatorships" began with the obvious idea: "For all those . . .," "For all those, who . . .," and developed, starting with the general statement, widening out, and coming back to general statement again. It was meant to hurt, and, again, I hope it does. The last lines are as flat and definite a statement as I could get—each line ends with a period, and the voice is not raised.' Author's note.

And for those who were not courageous
But were beaten nevertheless.
For those who spit out the bloody stumps
of their teeth
Quietly in the hall,
Sleep well on stone or iron, watch for the
time
And kill the guard in the privy before they
die,
Those with the deep-socketed eyes and the
lamp burning.

For those who carry the scars, who walk
lame—for those
Whose nameless graves are made in the
prison-yard
And the earth smoothed back before
morning and the lime scattered.

For those slain at once. For those living
through months and years
Enduring, watching, hoping, going each
day
To the work or the queue for meat or the
secret club,
Living meanwhile, begetting children,
smuggling guns,
And found and killed at the end like rats in
a drain.

For those escaping
Incredibly into exile and wandering there.
For those who live in the small rooms of
foreign cities
And who yet think of the country, the long
green grass,
The childhood voices, the language, the
way wind smelt then,
The shape of rooms, the coffee drunk at
the table,
The talk with friends, the loved city, the
waiter's face,
The gravestones, with the name, where
they will not lie
Nor in any of that earth. Their children are
strangers.

For those who planned and were leaders
and were beaten
And for those, humble and stupid, who had
no plan
But were denounced, but grew angry, but
told a joke,
But could not explain, but were sent away
to the camp,
But had their bodies shipped back in the
sealed coffins,
'Died of pneumonia.' 'Died trying to
escape.'

For those growers of wheat who were shot
by their own wheat-stacks,
For those growers of bread who were sent
to the ice-locked wastes,
And their flesh remembers their fields.

For those denounced by their smug,
horrible children
For a peppermint-star and the praise of the
Perfect State,
For all those strangled or gelded or merely
starved
To make perfect states; for the priest
hanged in his cassock,
The Jew with his chest crushed in and his
eyes dying,
The revolutionist lynched by the private
guards
To make perfect states, in the names of the
perfect states.

For those betrayed by the neighbors they
shook hands with
And for the traitors, sitting in the hard
chair
With the loose sweat crawling their hair and
their fingers restless
As they tell the street and the house and the
man's name.

And for those sitting at table in the house
With the lamp lit and the plates and the
smell of food,
Talking so quietly; when they hear the cars
And the knock at the door, and they look at
each other quickly
And the woman goes to the door with a stiff
face,
Smoothing her dress.
'We are all good citizens here.
We believe in the Perfect State.'
And that was the last
Time Tony or Karl or Shorty came to the
house
And the family was liquidated later.

It was the last time.
We heard the shots in the night
But nobody knew next day what the trouble
was

And a man must go to his work. So I didn't see him
For three days, then, and me near out of my mind
And all the patrols on the streets with their dirty guns
And when he came back, he looked drunk, and the blood was on him.

For the women who mourn their dead in the secret night,
For the children taught to keep quiet, the old children,
The children spat-on at school.
For the wrecked laboratory,
The gutted house, the dunged picture, the pissed-in well,
The naked corpse of Knowledge flung in the square
And no man lifting a hand and no man speaking.

For the cold of the pistol-butt and the bullet's heat,
For the rope that chokes, the manacles that bind,
The huge voice, metal, that lies from a thousand tubes
And the stuttering machine-gun that answers all.

For the man crucified on the crossed machine-guns
Without name, without resurrection, without stars,
His dark head heavy with death and his flesh long sour
With the smell of his many prisons—John Smith, John Doe,
John Nobody—oh, crack your mind for his name!
Faceless as water, naked as the dust,
Dishonored as the earth the gas-shells poison
And barbarous with portent.
This is he.
This is the man they ate at the green table
Putting their gloves on ere they touched the meat.
This is the fruit of war, the fruit of peace,
The ripeness of invention, the new lamb,
The answer to the wisdom of the wise.
And still he hangs, and still he will not die,
And still, on the steel city of our years
The light fails and the terrible blood streams down.

We thought we were done with these things but we were wrong.
We thought, because we had power, we had wisdom.
We thought the long train would run to the end of Time.
We thought the light would increase.
Now the long train stands derailed and the bandits loot it.
Now the boar and the asp have power in our time.
Now the night rolls back on the West and the night is solid.
Our fathers and ourselves sowed dragon's teeth.
Our children know and suffer the armed men.

1935 1936

LÉONIE ADAMS

1899–

AN OLD SPELL

HEARTS may not bend in course, but toward its loves,
Through heaping time, shall run the simple river;
And that enchantment that I lightly took
Out of the lovely April is for ever.

O falsely hearing, since of lying tunes,
Three notes were solitary, three apart,
That made of all the insolent armour wax,
Sank in the breast, and pierced the sensible heart;

And eyes forsworn, that, busied with your cheats,
Were fixed with tears, is not that only need,
Beauty's, the desolate wanderer of waste earth,
The sower in darkness of an exquisite seed?

These dropped like dew upon a dreaming flower

That in my breast stirred with delicious morn,
And breathed upon its colour the bleak air,
And felt along its lovely side the thorn.

Not now will I turn from comfortless love again,
Nor, heart, forget the burden that you hold,
And flesh, though it harry you unto the last,
Go ridden through darkness to an end of gold.
1923 1925

SAID OF THE EARTH AND THE MOON

Now moony light
The dews drink over the black turf,
And earth, at bottom darkness lying,
Looks up on heaven and heavenly night;
Stares on the glittering lady climbing
Her airy arch away,
Till a cold humour of her breast
Infests her clay.

The huntress of the air lets fly,
The beast of earth receives her arrow,
And by those silver arrows maimed,
The bones course with watery marrow.

Now fever-bright the dead moon goes,
The mistress to the sun, that crept
From starveling death, and on his breath
Has fed her lustre while her lover slept.

For the swart earth has breeded of her loves,
But the moon spent upon her withered shell;
And though the moon is barren, she's not cursed,
Nor the fruit unholy to be beautiful.

The stars were scattered at the edge of even,
Clouds may not snare her glittering heels tonight,
And still the amorous gold sun is sleeping,
The earth lies moored, she mounts the brink of heaven.
1925 1925

THE RIVER IN THE MEADOWS [1]

CRYSTAL parting the meads,
A boat drifted up like a swan,
Tranquil, dipping his bright front to the waters,
A slow swan is gone.

Full water, O flowing silver,
Clear, level with the clover,
It will stain drowning a star,
With the moon it will brim over.

Runner through lands dewy and shorn,
Cattle stoop at its brink,
And every fawny-coloured throat
Will sway its bells and drink.

I saw a boat sailing the meadows
With a tranced gait; it seemed
Loosed by a spell from its moorings,
By a thing the helmsman dreamed.

And I saw it could carry no traveller,
For the vessel would go down
If a heart were heavy winged
Or the bosom it dwelt in stone.
1925 1929

COUNTRY SUMMER

Now the rich cherry whose sleek wood
And top with silver petals traced
Like a strict box its gems encased
Has spilt from out that cunning lid,
All in an innocent green round
Those melting rubies which it hid;
With moss ripe-strawberry encrusted
So birds get half and lips are merry
To taste that deep-red, lark'sbite berry;
And blackcap bloom meal-yellow dusted.

The wren that thieved it in the eaves
A trailer of the rose could catch
To her poor droopy sloven thatch;
And side by side with the wren's brood—
O quarry Rour of beggars' luck!—
Opens the quaint and hairy bud;
And full, and golden is the yield
Of cows that never have to house,
But all night nibble under boughs
Or cool their sides in the moist field.

Into the rooms flow meadow airs,
The warm farm-baking smell's blown round;

1 The texts of 'The River in the Meadows,' 'Country Summer,' and 'Word for Harvest' are the revised versions to be included in Miss Adams's forthcoming volume of selected poems.

Inside and out, and sky and ground
Are much the same: the wishing star,
Hesperus, kind and early-born,
Is risen only finger-far;
All stars are close in summer air,
And tremble, and beam mild as amber,
And wicks in the blue evening chamber
Shine hushed as stars which settled there.

Now straightening from the flowery hay
Down the still light the mowers look,
Then turn, as they in slumber shook
And stirred, half-waked, to later days
When left alone in the yellow stubble
The rusty-coated mare would graze;
Yet thick the lazy dreams are born;
A second thought will come to mind
Small as the shivering of the wind
Morning and evening in the corn.
1926 1929

THE MOUNT

No, I have tempered haste,
The joyous traveller said,
The steed has passed me now
Whose hurrying hooves I fled.
My spectre rides thereon,
I learned what mount he has,
Upon what summers fed,
And wept to know again,
Beneath the saddle swung,
Treasure for whose great theft
This breast was wrung.
His bridle bells sang out,
I could not tell their chime,
So brilliantly he rings,
But called his name as Time.
His bin was morning light,
Those straws which gild his bed
Are of the fallen West.
Although green lands consume
Beneath their burning tread,
In everlasting bright
His hooves have rest.
1929 1929

WORD FOR HARVEST

THE year turns to its rest;
Up from the earth, the fields, the early-fallen dew
Moves the large star with evening,
Arcturus, low with autumn,
And summer calls in her many voices upon the frost.

I, who have not seen for weeping
The plum ripen and fall or the yellowing sheaf,
Am not unmindful now of the season which came and went,
The hours which told off sweetness,
The bud, and the rich leaf.

Though I turned aside before the summer,
And weathered a gaunt season of the mind,
Let me sit among you when the husk is stripped,
Let me weigh by the bright grain
Those labours in an acre of cloud and the reap of the wind.
1927 1929

WILLIAM FAULKNER

1897–

DRY SEPTEMBER

THROUGH the bloody September twilight, aftermath of sixty-two rainless days, it had gone like a fire in dry grass—the rumor, the story, whatever it was. Something about Miss Minnie Cooper and a Negro. Attacked, insulted, frightened: none of them, gathered in the barber shop on that Saturday evening where the ceiling fan stirred, without freshening it, the vitiated air, sending back upon them, in recurrent surges of stale pomade and lotion, their own stale breath and odors, knew exactly what had happened.

'Except it wasn't Will Mayes,' a barber said. He was a man of middle age; a thin, sand-colored man with a mild face, who was shaving a client. 'I know Will Mayes. He's a good nigger. And I know Miss Minnie Cooper, too.'

'What do you know about her?' a second barber said.

'Who is she?' the client said. 'A young girl?'

'No,' the barber said. 'She's about forty.

I reckon. She aint married. That's why I dont believe—'

'Believe, hell!' a hulking youth in a sweat-stained silk shirt said. 'Wont you take a white woman's word before a nigger's?'

'I dont believe Will Mayes did it,' the barber said. 'I know Will Mayes.'

'Maybe you know who did it, then. Maybe you already got him out of town, you damn niggerlover.'

'I dont believe anybody did anything. I dont believe anything happened. I leave it to you fellows if them ladies that get old without getting married dont have notions that a man cant—'

'Then you are a hell of a white man,' the client said. He moved under the cloth. The youth had sprung to his feet.

'You dont?' he said. 'Do you accuse a white woman of lying?'

The barber held the razor poised above the half-risen client. He did not look around.

'It's this durn weather,' another said. 'It's enough to make a man do anything. Even to her.'

Nobody laughed. The barber said in his mild, stubborn tone: 'I aint accusing nobody of nothing. I just know and you fellows know how a woman that never—'

'You damn niggerlover!' the youth said.

'Shut up, Butch,' another said. 'We'll get the facts in plenty of time to act.'

'Who is? Who's getting them?' the youth said. 'Facts, hell! I—'

'You're a fine white man,' the client said. 'Aint you?' In his frothy beard he looked like a desert rat in the moving pictures. 'You tell them, Jack,' he said to the youth. 'If there aint any white men in this town, you can count on me, even if I aint only a drummer and a stranger.'

'That's right, boys,' the barber said. 'Find out the truth first. I know Will Mayes.'

'Well, by God!' the youth shouted. 'To think that a white man in this town—'

'Shut up, Butch,' the second speaker said. 'We got plenty of time.'

The client sat up. He looked at the speaker. 'Do you claim that anything excuses a nigger attacking a white woman? Do you mean to tell me you are a white man and you'll stand for it? You better go back North where you came from. The South dont want your kind here.'

'North what?' the second said. 'I was born and raised in this town.'

'Well, by God!' the youth said. He looked about with a strained, baffled gaze, as if he was trying to remember what it was he wanted to say or to do. He drew his sleeve across his sweating face. 'Damn if I'm going to let a white woman—'

'You tell them, Jack,' the drummer said. 'By God, if they—'

The screen door crashed open. A man stood in the floor, his feet apart and his heavy-set body poised easily. His white shirt was open at the throat; he wore a felt hat. His hot, bold glance swept the group. His name was McLendon. He had commanded troops at the front in France and had been decorated for valor.

'Well,' he said, 'are you going to sit there and let a black son rape a white woman on the streets of Jefferson?'

Butch sprang up again. The silk of his shirt clung flat to his heavy shoulders. At each armpit was a dark halfmoon. 'That's what I been telling them! That's what I—'

'Did it really happen?' a third said. 'This aint the first man scare she ever had, like Hawkshaw says. Wasn't there something about a man on the kitchen roof, watching her undress, about a year ago?'

'What?' the client said. 'What's that?' The barber had been slowly forcing him back into the chair; he arrested himself reclining, his head lifted, the barber still pressing him down.

McLendon whirled on the third speaker. 'Happen? What the hell difference does it make? Are you going to let the black sons get away with it until one really does it?'

'That's what I'm telling them!' Butch shouted. He cursed, long and steady, pointless.

'Here, here,' a fourth said. 'Not so loud. Dont talk so loud.'

'Sure,' McLendon said; 'no talking necessary at all. I've done my talking. Who's with me?' He poised on the balls of his feet, roving his gaze.

The barber held the drummer's face down, the razor poised. 'Find out the facts first, boys. I know Willy Mayes. It wasn't him. Let's get the sheriff and do this thing right.'

McLendon whirled upon him his furious, rigid face. The barber did not look away. They looked like men of different races. The other barbers had ceased also above their prone clients. 'You mean to tell me,' McLendon said, 'that you'd take a nigger's word before a white woman's? Why, you damn niggerloving—'

The third speaker rose and grasped McLendon's arm; he too had been a soldier. 'Now, now. Let's figure this thing out. Who knows anything about what really happened?'

'Figure out hell!' McLendon jerked his arm free. 'All that're with me get up from there. The ones that aint—' He roved his gaze, dragging his sleeve across his face.

Three men rose. The drummer in the chair sat up. 'Here,' he said, jerking at the cloth about his neck; 'get this rag off me. I'm with him. I dont live here, but by God, if our mothers and wives and sisters—' He smeared the cloth over his face and flung it to the floor. McLendon stood in the floor and cursed the others. Another rose and moved toward him. The remainder sat uncomfortable, not looking at one another, then one by one they rose and joined him.

The barber picked the cloth from the floor. He began to fold it neatly. 'Boys, dont do that. Will Mayes never done it. I know.'

'Come on,' McLendon said. He whirled. From his hip pocket protruded the butt of a heavy automatic pistol. They went out. The screen door crashed behind them reverberant in the dead air.

The barber wiped the razor carefully and swiftly, and put it away, and ran to the rear, and took his hat from the wall. 'I'll be back as soon as I can,' he said to the other barbers. 'I cant let—' He went out, running. The two other barbers followed him to the door and caught it on the rebound, leaning out and looking up the street after him. The air was flat and dead. It had a metallic taste at the base of the tongue.

'What can he do?' the first said. The second one was saying 'Jees Christ, Jees Christ' under his breath. 'I'd just as lief be Will Mayes as Hawk, if he gets McLendon riled.'

'Jees Christ, Jees Christ,' the second whispered.

'You reckon he really done it to her?' the first said.

II

She was thirty-eight or thirty-nine. She lived in a small frame house with her invalid mother and a thin, sallow, unflagging aunt, where each morning between ten and eleven she would appear on the porch in a lace-trimmed boudoir cap, to sit swinging in the porch swing until noon. After dinner she lay down for a while, until the afternoon began to cool. Then, in one of the three or four new voile dresses which she had each summer, she would go downtown to spend the afternoon in the stores with the other ladies, where they would handle the goods and haggle over the prices in cold, immediate voices, without any intention of buying.

She was of comfortable people—not the best in Jefferson, but good people enough —and she was still on the slender side of ordinary looking, with a bright, faintly haggard manner and dress. When she was young she had had a slender, nervous body and a sort of hard vivacity which had enabled her for a time to ride upon the crest of the town's social life as exemplified by the high school party and church social period of her contemporaries while still children enough to be unclassconscious.

She was the last to realize that she was losing ground; that those among whom she had been a little brighter and louder flame than any other were beginning to learn the pleasure of snobbery—male—and retaliation—female. That was when her face began to wear that bright, haggard look. She still carried it to parties on shadowy porticoes and summer lawns, like a mask or a flag, with that bafflement of furious repudiation of truth in her eyes. One evening at a party she heard a boy and two girls, all schoolmates, talking. She never accepted another invitation.

She watched the girls with whom she had grown up as they married and got homes and children, but no man ever called on her steadily until the children of the other girls had been calling her 'aunty' for several years, the while their mothers told them in bright voices about how popu-

lar Aunt Minnie had been as a girl. Then the town began to see her driving on Sunday afternoons with the cashier in the bank. He was a widower of about forty—a high-colored man, smelling always faintly of the barber shop or of whisky. He owned the first automobile in town, a red runabout; Minnie had the first motoring bonnet and veil the town ever saw. Then the town began to say: 'Poor Minnie.' 'But she is old enough to take care of herself,' others said. That was when she began to ask her old schoolmates that their children call her 'cousin' instead of 'aunty.'

It was twelve years now since she had been relegated into adultery by public opinion, and eight years since the cashier had gone to a Memphis bank, returning for one day each Christmas, which he spent at an annual bachelors' party at a hunting club on the river. From behind their curtains the neighbors would see the party pass, and during the over-the-way Christmas day visiting they would tell her about him, about how well he looked, and how they heard that he was prospering in the city, watching with bright, secret eyes her haggard, bright face. Usually by that hour there would be the scent of whisky on her breath. It was supplied her by a youth, a clerk at the soda fountain: 'Sure; I buy it for the old gal. I reckon she's entitled to a little fun.'

Her mother kept to her room altogether now; the gaunt aunt ran the house. Against that background Minnie's bright dresses, her idle and empty days, had a quality of furious unreality. She went out in the evenings only with women now, neighbors, to the moving pictures. Each afternoon she dressed in one of the new dresses and went downtown alone, where her young 'cousins' were already strolling in the late afternoons with their delicate, silken heads and thin, awkward arms and conscious hips, clinging to one another or shrieking and giggling with paired boys in the soda fountain when she passed and went on along the serried store fronts, in the doors of which the sitting and lounging men did not even follow her with their eyes any more.

III

The barber went swiftly up the street where the sparse lights, insect-swirled, glared in rigid and violent suspension in the lifeless air. The day had died in a pall of dust; above the darkened square, shrouded by the spent dust, the sky was as clear as the inside of a brass bell. Below the east was a rumor of the twice-waxed moon.

When he overtook them McLendon and three others were getting into a car parked in an alley. McLendon stooped his thick head, peering out beneath the top. 'Changed your mind, did you?' he said. 'Damn good thing; by God, tomorrow when this town hears about how you talked tonight—'

'Now, now,' the other ex-soldier said. 'Hawkshaw's all right. Come on, Hawk; jump in.'

'Will Mayes never done it, boys,' the barber said. 'If anybody done it. Why, you all know well as I do there aint any town where they got better niggers than us. And you know how a lady will kind of think things about men when there aint any reason to, and Miss Minnie anyway—'

'Sure, sure,' the soldier said. 'We're just going to talk to him a little; that's all.'

'Talk hell!' Butch said. 'When we're through with the—'

'Shut up, for God's sake!' the soldier said. 'Do you want everybody in town—'

'Tell them, by God!' McLendon said. 'Tell every one of the sons that'll let a white woman—'

'Let's go; let's go: here's the other car.' The second car slid squealing out of a cloud of dust at the alley mouth. McLendon started his car and took the lead. Dust lay like fog in the street. The street lights hung nimbused as in water. They drove on out of town.

A rutted lane turned at right angles. Dust hung above it too, and above all the land. The dark bulk of the ice plant, where the Negro Mayes was night watchman, rose against the sky. 'Better stop here, hadn't we?' the soldier said. McLendon did not reply. He hurled the car up and slammed to a stop, the headlights glaring on the blank wall.

'Listen here, boys,' the barber said; 'if he's here, dont that prove he never done it? Dont it? If it was him, he would run. Dont you see he would?' The second car came up and stopped. McLendon got

down; Butch sprang down beside him. 'Listen, boys,' the barber said.

'Cut the lights off!' McLendon said. The breathless dark rushed down. There was no sound in it save their lungs as they sought air in the parched dust in which for two months they had lived; then the diminishing crunch of McLendon's and Butch's feet, and a moment later McLendon's voice:

'Will! . . . Will!'

Below the east the wan hemorrhage of the moon increased. It heaved above the ridge, silvering the air, the dust, so that they seemed to breathe, live, in a bowl of molten lead. There was no sound of nightbird nor insect, no sound save their breathing and a faint ticking of contracting metal about the cars. Where their bodies touched one another they seemed to sweat dryly, for no more moisture came. 'Christ!' a voice said; 'let's get out of here.'

But they didn't move until vague noises began to grow out of the darkness ahead; then they got out and waited tensely in the breathless dark. There was another sound: a blow, a hissing expulsion of breath and McLendon cursing in undertone. They stood a moment longer, then they ran forward. They ran in a stumbling clump, as though they were fleeing something. 'Kill him, kill the son,' a voice whispered. McLendon flung them back.

'Not here,' he said. 'Get him into the car.' 'Kill him, kill the black son!' the voice murmured. They dragged the Negro to the car. The barber had waited beside the car. He could feel himself sweating and he knew he was going to be sick at the stomach.

'What is it, captains?' the Negro said. 'I aint done nothing. 'Fore God, Mr. John.' Someone produced handcuffs. They worked busily about the Negro as though he were a post, quiet, intent, getting in one another's way. He submitted to the handcuffs, looking swiftly and constantly from dim face to dim face. 'Who's here, captains?' he said, leaning to peer into the faces until they could feel his breath and smell his sweaty reek. He spoke a name or two. 'What you all say I done, Mr. John?'

McLendon jerked the car door open. 'Get in!' he said.

The Negro did not move. 'What you all going to do with me, Mr. John? I aint done nothing. White folks, captains, I aint done nothing: I swear 'fore God.' He called another name.

'Get in!' McLendon said. He struck the Negro. The others expelled their breath in a dry hissing and struck him with random blows and he whirled and cursed them, and swept his manacled hands across their faces and slashed the barber upon the mouth, and the barber struck him also. 'Get him in there,' McLendon said. They pushed at him. He ceased struggling and got in and sat quietly as the others took their places. He sat between the barber and the soldier, drawing his limbs in so as not to touch them, his eyes going swiftly and constantly from face to face. Butch clung to the running board. The car moved on. The barber nursed his mouth with his handkerchief.

'What's the matter, Hawk?' the soldier said.

'Nothing,' the barber said. They regained the highroad and turned away from town. The second car dropped back out of the dusk. They went on, gaining speed; the final fringe of houses dropped behind.

'Goddamn, he stinks!' the soldier said.

'We'll fix that,' the drummer in front beside McLendon said. On the running board Butch cursed into the hot rush of air. The barber leaned suddenly forward and touched McLendon's arm.

'Let me out, John,' he said.

'Jump out, niggerlover,' McLendon said without turning his head. He drove swiftly. Behind them the sourceless lights of the second car glared in the dust. Presently McLendon turned into a narrow road. It was rutted with disuse. It led back to an abandoned brick kiln—a series of reddish mounds and weed- and vine-choked vats without bottom. It had been used for pasture once, until one day the owner missed one of his mules. Although he prodded carefully in the vats with a long pole, he could not even find the bottom of them.

'John,' the barber said.

'Jump out, then,' McLendon said, hurling the car along the ruts. Beside the barber the Negro spoke:

'Mr Henry.'

The barber sat forward. The narrow tunnel of the road rushed up and past. Their motion was like an extinct furnace

blast: cooler, but utterly dead. The car bounded from rut to rut.

'Mr Henry,' the Negro said.

The barber began to tug furiously at the door. 'Look out, there!' the soldier said, but the barber had already kicked the door open and swung onto the running board. The soldier leaned across the Negro and grasped at him, but he had already jumped. The car went on without checking speed.

The impetus hurled him crashing through dust-sheathed weeds, into the ditch. Dust puffed about him, and in a thin, vicious crackling of sapless stems he lay choking and retching until the second car passed and died away. Then he rose and limped on until he reached the high-road and turned toward town, brushing at his clothes with his hands. The moon was higher, riding high and clear of the dust at last, and after a while the town began to glare beneath the dust. He went on, limping. Presently he heard cars and the glow of them grew in the dust behind him and he left the road and crouched again in the weeds until they passed. McLendon's car came last now. There were four people in it and Butch was not on the running board.

They went on; the dust swallowed them; the glare and the sound died away. The dust of them hung for a while, but soon the eternal dust absorbed it again. The barber climbed back onto the road and limped on toward town.

IV

As she dressed for supper on that Saturday evening, her own flesh felt like fever. Her hands trembled among the hooks and eyes, and her eyes had a feverish look, and her hair swirled crisp and crackling under the comb. While she was still dressing the friends called for her and sat while she donned her sheerest underthings and stockings and a new voile dress. 'Do you feel strong enough to go out?' they said, their eyes bright too, with a dark glitter. 'When you have had time to get over the shock, you must tell us what happened. What he said and did; everything.'

In the leafed darkness, as they walked toward the square, she began to breathe deeply, something like a swimmer preparing to dive, until she ceased trembling, the four of them walking slowly because of the terrible heat and out of solicitude for her. But as they neared the square she began to tremble again, walking with her head up, her hands clinched at her sides, their voices about her murmurous, also with that feverish, glittering quality of their eyes.

They entered the square, she in the center of the group, fragile in her fresh dress. She was trembling worse. She walked slower and slower, as children eat ice cream, her head up and her eyes bright in the haggard banner of her face, passing the hotel and the coatless drummers in chairs along the curb looking around at her: 'That's the one: see? The one in pink in the middle.' 'Is that her? What did they do with the nigger? Did they—?' 'Sure. He's all right.' 'All right, is he?' 'Sure. He went on a little trip.' Then the drug store, where even the young men lounging in the doorway tipped their hats and followed with their eyes the motion of her hips and legs when she passed.

They went on, passing the lifted hats of the gentlemen, the suddenly ceased voices, deferent, protective. 'Do you see?' the friends said. Their voices sounded like long, hovering sighs of hissing exultation. 'There's not a Negro on the square. Not one.'

They reached the picture show. It was like a miniature fairyland with its lighted lobby and colored lithographs of life caught in its terrible and beautiful mutations. Her lips began to tingle. In the dark, when the picture began, it would be all right; she could hold back the laughing so it would not waste away so fast and so soon. So she hurried on before the turning faces, the undertones of low astonishment, and they took their accustomed places where she could see the aisle against the silver glare and the young men and girls coming in two and two against it.

The lights flicked away; the screen glowed silver, and soon life began to unfold, beautiful and passionate and sad, while still the young men and girls entered, scented and sibilant in the half dark, their paired backs in silhouette delicate and sleek, their slim, quick bodies awkward, divinely young, while beyond them the silver dream accumulated, inevitably on and on. She began to laugh. In trying to suppress it, it made more noise than ever;

heads began to turn. Still laughing, her friends raised her and led her out, and she stood at the curb, laughing on a high, sustained note, until the taxi came up and they helped her in.

They removed the pink voile and the sheer underthings and the stockings, and put her to bed, and cracked ice for her temples, and sent for the doctor. He was hard to locate, so they ministered to her with hushed ejaculations, renewing the ice and fanning her. While the ice was fresh and cold she stopped laughing and lay still for a time, moaning only a little. But soon the laughing welled again and her voice rose screaming.

'Shhhhhhh! Shhhhhhhhhh!' they said, freshening the icepack, smoothing her hair, examining it for gray; 'poor girl!' Then to one another: 'Do you suppose anything really happened?' their eyes darkly aglitter, secret and passionate. 'Shhhhhhhhhh! Poor girl! Poor Minnie!'

V

It was midnight when McLendon drove up to his neat new house. It was trim and fresh as a birdcage and almost as small, with its clean green-and-white paint. He locked the car and mounted the porch and entered. His wife rose from a chair beside the reading lamp. McLendon stopped in the floor and stared at her until she looked down.

'Look at that clock,' he said, lifting his arm, pointing. She stood before him, her face lowered, a magazine in her hands. Her face was pale, strained, and weary-looking. 'Haven't I told you about sitting up like this, waiting to see when I come in?'

'John,' she said. She laid the magazine down. Poised on the balls of his feet, he glared at her with his hot eyes, his sweating face.

'Didn't I tell you?' He went toward her. She looked up then. He caught her shoulder. She stood passive, looking at him.

'Dont, John. I couldn't sleep. . . . The heat; something. Please, John. You're hurting me.'

'Didn't I tell you?' He released her and half struck, half flung her across the chair, and she lay there and watched him quietly as he left the room.

He went on through the house, ripping off his shirt, and on the dark, screened porch at the rear he stood and mopped his head and shoulders with the shirt and flung it away. He took the pistol from his hip and laid it on the table beside the bed, and sat on the bed and removed his shoes, and rose and slipped his trousers off. He was sweating again already, and he stooped and hunted furiously for the shirt. At last he found it and wiped his body again, and, with his body pressed against the dusty screen, he stood panting. There was no movement, no sound, not even an insect. The dark world seemed to lie stricken beneath the cold moon and the lidless stars.

1931

THOMAS WOLFE

1900–1938

FROM OF TIME AND THE RIVER

THE DEATH OF STONEMAN GANT [1]

I

THE news that Gant was dying had spread rapidly through the town and, as often happens, that news had brought him back to life again in the heart and living memory of men who had known him, and who had scarcely thought of him for years. That night—the night of his death—the house was filled with some of the men who had known him best since he came to the town forty years before.

Among these people were several of the prominent and wealthy business men of the community: these included, naturally, Eliza's brothers, William and James Pentland, both wealthy lumber dealers, as well as one of her younger brothers, Crockett, who was Will Pentland's bookkeeper, a pleasant, ruddy, bucolic man of fifty years. Among the other men of wealth and influence who had been Gant's friends there

1 The selection is from *Of Time and the River*(N.Y., 1935),246–273. The title is that originally given by Wolfe to this section, when writing the novel.

was Fagg Sluder, who had made a fortune as a contractor and retired to invest his money in business property, and to spend his time seated in an easy creaking chair before the fire department, in incessant gossip about baseball with the firemen and the young professional baseball players whose chief support he was, whose annual deficit he cheerfully supplied, and to whom he had given the local baseball park, which bore his name. He had been one of Gant's best friends for twenty years, he was immensely fond of him, and now, assembled in the broad front hall in earnest discussion with the Pentlands and Mike Fogarty, another of Gant's friends, and armed with the invariable cigar (despite his doctor's orders he smoked thirty or forty strong black cigars every day), which he chewed on, took out of his mouth, and put back again, with quick, short, unconscious movements, he could be heard saying in the rapid, earnest, stammering tone that was one of the most attractive qualities of his buoyant and constantly hopeful nature:

'I-I-I-I just believe he's going to pull right out of this and-and-and-get well! Why-why-why-why-when I went in there tonight he spoke right up and-and-and knew me right away!' he blurted out, sticking the cigar in his mouth and chewing on it vigorously a moment—'why-why-why his mind is-is-is-is just as clear—as it always was—spoke right up, you know, says "Sit down, Fagg"—shook hands with me—knew me right away—talked to me just the same way he always talked—says "Sit down, Fagg. I'm glad to see you. How have you been?" he says—and-and-and—I just believe he's going to pull right out of this,' Mr. Sluder blurted out,—'be damned if I don't—what do *you* say, Will?' and snatching his chewed cigar butt from his mouth he turned eagerly to Will Pentland for confirmation. And Will, who, as usual, had been paring his stubby nails during the whole course of the conversation, his lips pursed in their characteristic family grimace, now studied his clenched fingers for a moment, pocketed his knife and turning to Fagg Sluder, with a little bird-like nod and wink, and with the incomparable Pentland drawl, at once precise, and full of the relish of self-satisfaction, said:

'Well, if any man alive can do it, W.O. is that man. I've seen him time and again when I thought every breath would be his last—and he's got over it every time. I've always said,' he went on precisely, and with a kind of deadly directness in his small compact and almost wizened face, 'that he has more real vitality than any two men that I ever knew—he's got out of worse holes than this before—and he may do it again.' He was silent a moment, his small packed face pursed suddenly in its animal-like grimace that had an almost savage ferocity and a sense of deadly and indomitable power.

Even more astonishing and troubling was the presence of these four older members of the Pentland family gathered together in his mother's hall. As they stood there talking—Eliza with her hands held in their loose and powerful clasp across her waist, Will intently busy with his fingernails, Jim listening attentively to all that was said, his solid porcine face and small eyes wincing from time to time in a powerful but unconscious grimace, and Crockett, gentlest, ruddiest, most easy-going and dreamy of them all, speaking in his quiet drawling tone and stroking his soft brown mustaches in a gesture of quiet and bucolic meditation, Luke could not recall having seen so many of them together at one time and the astonishing enigma of their oneness and variety was strikingly apparent.

What was it?—this indefinable tribal similarity that united these people so unmistakably. No one could say: it would have been difficult to find four people more unlike in physical appearance, more strongly marked by individual qualities. Whatever it was—whether some chemistry of blood and character, or perhaps some physical identity of broad and fleshy nose, pursed reflective lips and flat wide cheeks, or the energies of powerfully concentrated egotisms—their kinship with one another was astonishing and instantly apparent.

2

In a curious and indefinable way the two groups of men in the hallway had become divided: the wealthier group of prominent citizens, which was composed of the brothers William, James, and Crockett Pentland, Mr. Sluder and Eliza, stood in a group near the front hall door, engaged in earnest con-

versation. The second group, which was composed of working men, who had known Gant well, and worked for or with him—a group composed of Jannadeau the jeweller, old Alec Ramsay and Saul Gudger, who were stonecutters, Gant's nephew, Ollie Gant, who was a plasterer, Ernest Pegram, the city plumber, and Mike Fogarty, who was perhaps Gant's closest friend, a building contractor—this group, composed of men who had all their lives done stern labor with their hands, and who were really the men who had known the stonecutter best, stood apart from the group of prominent and wealthy men who were talking so earnestly to Eliza.

And in this circumstance, in this unconscious division, in the air of constraint, vague uneasiness and awkward silence that was evident among these working men, as they stood there in the hallway dressed in their 'good clothes,' nervously fingering their hats in their big hands, there was something immensely moving. The men had the look that working people the world over have always had when they found themselves suddenly gathered together on terms of social intimacy with their employers or with members of the governing class.

And Helen, coming out at this instant from her father's room into the hall, suddenly saw and felt the awkward division between these two groups of men, as she had never before felt or noticed it, as sharply as if they had been divided with a knife.

And, it must be admitted, her first feeling was an unworthy one—an instinctive wish to approach the more 'important' group, to join her life to the lives of these 'influential' people who represented to her a 'higher' social level. She found herself walking towards the group of wealthy and prominent men at the front of the hall, and away from the group of working men who had really been Gant's best friends.

But seeing the brick-red face of Alec Ramsay, the mountainous figure of Mike Fogarty, suddenly with a sense of disbelief, and almost terrified revelation of the truth, she thought: 'Why-why-why—these men are really the closest friends he's got—not rich men like Uncle Will or Uncle Jim or even Mr. Sluder—but men like Mike Fogarty—and Jannadeau—and Mr. Duncan—and Alec Ramsay—and Ernest Pegram—and Ollie Gant—but—but—good heavens, no!' she thought, almost desperately—'surely these are not his closest friends—why-why—of course, they're decent people—they're honest men—but they're only common people—I've always considered them as just *working* men—and-and-and—my God!' she thought, with that terrible feeling of discovery we have when we suddenly see ourselves as others see us—'do you suppose that's the way people in this town think of Papa? Do you suppose they have always thought of him as just a common working man—oh, no! but of course not!' she went on impatiently, trying to put the troubling thought out of her mind. 'Papa's not a working man—Papa is a *business* man—a well thought of business man in this community. Papa has always owned property since he came here—he has always had his own shop'—she did not like the sound of the word shop, and in her mind she hastily amended it to 'place'—'he's always had his own place, up on the public square—he's—he's rented places to other people—he's—he's—oh, of course not!—Papa is different from men like Ernest Pegram, and Ollie, and Jannadeau and Alec Ramsay—why, they're just working men—they work with their hands—Ollie's just an ordinary plasterer—and-and—Mr. Ramsay is nothing but a stonecutter.'

And a small insistent voice inside her said most quietly: 'And your father?'

And suddenly Helen remembered Gant's great hands of power and strength, and how they now lay quietly beside him on the bed, and lived and would not die, even when the rest of him had died, and she remembered the thousands of times she had gone to his shop in the afternoon and found the stonecutter in his long striped apron bending with delicate concentration over a stone inscription on a trestle, holding in his great hands the chisel and the heavy wooden mallet the stonecutters use, and remembering, the whole rich and living compact of the past came back to her, in a rush of tenderness and joy and terror, and on that flood a proud and bitter honesty returned. She thought: 'Yes, he was a stonecutter, no different from these other men, and these men were his real friends.'

And going directly to old Alec Ramsay she grasped his blunt thick fingers, the nails of which were always whitened a little with stone dust, and greeted him in her large and spacious way:

'Mr. Ramsay,' she said, 'I want you to know how glad we are that you could come. And that goes for all of you—Mr. Jannadeau, and Mr. Duncan, and Mr. Fogarty, and you, Ernest, and you, too, Ollie—you are the best friends Papa has, there's no one he thinks more of, and no one he would rather see.'

Mr. Ramsay's brick-red face and brick-red neck became even redder before he spoke, and beneath his grizzled brows his blue eyes suddenly were smoke blue. He put his blunt hand to his mustache for a moment, and tugged at it, then he said in his gruff, quiet, and matter-of-fact voice:

'I guess we know Will about as well as any one, Miss Helen. I've worked for him off and on for thirty years.'

At the same moment, she heard Ollie Gant's easy, deep, and powerful laugh, and saw him slowly lift his cigarette in his coarse paw; she saw Jannadeau's great yellow face and massive domy brow, and heard him laugh with guttural pleasure, saying, 'Ah-h! I tell you vat! Dat girl has alvays looked out for her datty—she's de only vun dat coult hantle him; efer since she vas ten years olt it has been de same.' And she was overwhelmingly conscious of that immeasurable mountain of a man, Mike Fogarty, beside her, the sweet clarity of his blue eyes, and the almost purring music of his voice as he gently laid his mutton of a hand upon her shoulder for a moment, saying,

'Ah, Miss Helen, I don't know how Will could have got along all these years without ye—for he has said the same himself a thousand times—aye! that he has!'

And instantly, having heard these words, and feeling the strong calm presences of these powerful men around her, it seemed to Helen she had somehow re-entered a magic world that she thought was gone forever. And she was immensely content.

At the same moment, with a sense of wonder, she discovered an astonishing thing, that she had never noticed before, but that she must have heard a thousand times;—this was that of all these people, who knew Gant best, and had a deep and true affection for him, there were only two —Mr. Fogarty and Mr. Ramsay—who had ever addressed him by his first name. And so far as she could now remember, these two men, together with Gant's mother, his brothers, his sister Augusta, and a few of the others who had known him in his boyhood in Pennsylvania, were the only people who ever had. And this revelation cast a strange, a lonely and a troubling light upon the great gaunt figure of the stonecutter, which moved her powerfully and which she had never felt before. And most strange of all was the variety of names by which these various people called her father.

As for Eliza, had any of her children ever heard her address her husband as anything but 'Mr. Gant'—had she ever called him by one of his first names—their anguish of shame and impropriety would have been so great that they could hardly have endured it. But such a lapse would have been incredible: Eliza could no more have addressed Gant by his first name, than she could have quoted Homer's Greek; had she tried to address him so, the muscles of her tongue would have found it physically impossible to pronounce the word. And in this fact there was somehow, now that Gant was dying, an enormous pathos. It gave to Eliza's life with him a pitiable and moving dignity, the compensation of a proud and wounded spirit for all the insults and injuries that had been heaped upon it. She had been a young country woman of twenty-four when she had met him, she had been ignorant of life, and innocent of the cruelty, the violence, the drunkenness and abuse of which men are capable, she had borne this man fifteen children, of whom eight had come to life, and had for forty years eaten the bread of blood and tears and joy and grief and terror, she had wanted affection and had been given taunts, abuse, and curses, and somehow her proud and wounded spirit had endured with an anguished but unshaken fortitude all the wrongs and cruelties and injustices of which he had been guilty toward her. And now at the very end her pride still had this pitiable distinction, her spirit still preserved this last integrity: she had not betrayed her wounded soul to a shameful familiarity, he had remained to her—it

mind and heart and living word—what he had been from the first day that she met him; the author of her grief and misery, the agent of her suffering, the gaunt and lonely stranger who had come into her hills from a strange land and a distant people—that furious, gaunt, and lonely stranger with whom by fatal accident her destiny—past hate or love or birth or death or human error and confusion—had been insolubly enmeshed, with whom for forty years she had lived, a wife, a mother, and a stranger—and who would to the end remain to her a stranger—'Mr. Gant.'

What was it? What was the secret of this strange and bitter mystery of life that had made of Gant a stranger to all men, and most of all a stranger to his wife? Perhaps some of the answer might have been found in Eliza's own unconscious words when she described her meeting with him forty years before:

'It was not that he was old,' she said,—'he was only thirty-three—but he *looked* old—his *ways* were old—he had lived so much among old people.—Pshaw!' she continued, with a little puckered smile, 'if any one had told me that night I saw him sitting there with Lydia and old Mrs. Mason—that was the very day they moved into the house, the night he gave the big dinner—and Lydia was still alive and, of course, she was ten years older than he was, and that may have had something to do with it—but I got to studying him as he sat there, of course, he was tired and run down and depressed and worried over all that trouble that he'd had in Sidney before he came up here, when he lost everything, and he knew that Lydia was dying, and that was preyin' on his mind—but he *looked* old, thin as a rake you know, and sallow and run down, and with those *old* ways he had acquired, I reckon, from associatin' with Lydia and old Mrs. Mason and people like that—but I just sat there studying him as he sat there with them and I said—"Well, you're an old man, aren't you, sure enough?"—pshaw! if any one had told me that night that some day I'd be married to him I'd have laughed at them—I'd have considered that I was marrying an old man—and that's just exactly what a lot of people thought, sir, when the news got out that I was goin' to marry him—I know Martha Patton came running to me, all excited and out of breath—said, "Eliza! You're not going to marry that old man—you know you're not!"—you see, his *ways* were old, he *looked* old, *dressed* old, *acted* old—everything he did was old; there was always, it seemed, something strange and old-like about him, almost like he had been born that way.'

And it was at this time that Eliza met him, saw him first—'Mr. Gant'—an immensely tall, gaunt, cadaverous-looking man, with a face stern and sad with care, lank, drooping mustaches, sandy hair, and cold-gray staring eyes—'not so old, you know—he was only thirty-three—but he *looked* old, he *acted* old, his *ways* were old—he had lived so much among older people he seemed older than he was—I thought of him as an old man.'

This, then, was 'Mr. Gant' at thirty-three, and since then, although his fortunes and position had improved, his character had changed little. And now Helen, faced by all these working men, who had known, liked, and respected him, and had now come to see him again before he died—suddenly knew the reason for his loneliness, the reason so few people—least of all, his wife—had ever dared address him by his first name. And with a swift and piercing revelation, his muttered words, which she had heard him use a thousand times when speaking of his childhood—'We had a tough time of it—I tell you what, we did!'—now came back to her with the unutterable poignancy of discovery. For the first time she understood what they meant. And suddenly, with the same swift and nameless pity, she remembered all the pictures which she had seen of her father as a boy and a young man. There were a half dozen of them in the big family album, together with pictures of his own and Eliza's family: they were the small daguerreotypes of fifty years before, in small frames of faded plush, with glass covers, touched with the faint pale pinks with which the photographers of an earlier time tried to paint with life the sallow hues of their photography. The first of these pictures showed Gant as a little boy; later, a boy of twelve, he was standing in a chair beside his brother Wesley, who was seated, with a wooden smile upon his face. Later, a picture of

Gant in the years in Baltimore, standing, his feet crossed, leaning elegantly upon a marble slab beside a vase; later still, the young stonecutter before his little shop in the years at Sidney; finally, Gant, after his marriage with Eliza, standing with gaunt face and lank drooping mustaches before his shop upon the square, in the company of Will Pentland, who was at the time his business partner.

And all these pictures, from first to last, from the little boy to the man with the lank drooping mustaches, had been marked by the same expression: the sharp thin face was always stern and sad with care, the shallow cold-gray eyes always stared out of the bony cage-formation of the skull with a cold mournfulness—the whole impression was always one of gaunt sad loneliness. And it was not the loneliness of the dreamer, the poet, or the misjudged prophet, it was just the cold and terrible loneliness of man, of every man, and of the lost American who has been brought forth naked under immense and lonely skies, to 'shift for himself,' to grope his way blindly through the confusion and brutal chaos of a life as naked and unsure as he, to wander blindly down across the continent, to hunt forever for a goal, a wall, a dwelling place of warmth and certitude, a light, a door.

And for this reason, she now understood something about her father, this great gaunt figure of a stonecutter that she had never understood or thought about before: she suddenly understood his order, sense of decency and dispatch; his love of cleanness, roaring fires, and rich abundance, his foul drunkenness, violence, and howling fury, his naked shame and trembling penitence, his good clothes of heavy monumental black that he always kept well pressed, his clean boiled shirts, wing collars, and his love of hotels, ships, and trains, his love of gardens, new lands, cities, voyages. She knew suddenly that he was unlike any other man that ever lived, and that every man that ever lived was like her father. And remembering the cold and mournful look in his shallow staring eyes of cold hard gray, she suddenly knew the reason for that look, as she had never known it before, and understood now why so few men had ever called him by his first name —why he was known to all the world as 'Mr. Gant.'

Having joined this group of working men, Helen immediately felt an indefinable but powerful sense of comfort and physical well-being which the presence of such men as these always gave to her. And she did not know why; but immediately, once she had grasped Mr. Ramsay by the hand, and was aware of Mike Fogarty's mountainous form and clear-blue eye above her, and Ollie Gant's deep and lazy laugh, and the deliberate and sensual languor with which he raised his cigarette to his lips with his powerful plasterer's hand, drawing the smoke deep into his strong lungs and letting it trickle slowly from his nostrils as he talked—she was conscious of a feeling of enormous security and relief which she had not known in years.

And this feeling, as with every person of strong sensuous perceptions, was literal, physical, chemical, astoundingly acute. She not only felt an enormous relief and joy to get back to these working people, it even seemed to her that everything they did—the way Mr. Duncan held his strong cheap cigar in his thick dry fingers, the immense satisfaction with which he drew on it, the languid and sensual trickling of cigarette smoke from Ollie Gant's nostrils, his deep, good-natured, indolently lazy laugh, even the perceptible bulge of tobacco-quid in Alec Ramsay's brick-red face, his barely perceptible rumination of it—all these things, though manlike in their nature, seemed wonderfully good and fresh and living to her—the whole plain priceless glory of the earth restored to her—and gave her a feeling of wonderful happiness and joy.

And later that night when all these men, her father's friends, had gone into his room, filling it with their enormous and full-blooded vitality, as she saw him lying there, wax-pale, bloodless, motionless, yet with a faint grin at the edge of his thin mouth as he received them, as she heard their deep full-fibred voices, Mike Fogarty's lilting Irish, Mr. Duncan's thick Scotch burr, Ollie Gant's deep and lazy laugh, and the humor of Alec Ramsay's deep, gruff and matter-of-fact tone, relating old times—'God, Will!' he said, 'at

your worst, you weren't in it compared to Wes! He was a holy terror when he drank! Do you remember the day he drove his fist through your plate-glass window right in the face of Jannadeau—and went home then and tore all the plumbing out of the house and pitched the bathtub out of the second-story window into Orchard Street —God! Will!—you weren't in it compared to Wes'—as she heard all this, and saw Gant's thin grin and heard his faint and rusty cackle, his almost inaudible 'E'God! Poor Wes!'—she could not believe that he was going to die, the great full-blooded working men filled the room with the vitality of a life which had returned in all its rich and living flood, and seemed intolerably near and familiar—and she kept thinking with a feeling of wonderful happiness and disbelief: 'Oh, but Papa's not going to die! It's not possible! He can't! He can't!'

3

The dying man himself was no longer to be fooled and duped by hope; he knew that he was done for, and he no longer cared. Rather, as if that knowledge had brought him a new strength—the immense and measureless strength that comes from resignation, and that has vanquished terror and despair—Gant had already consigned himself to death, and now was waiting for it, without weariness or anxiety, and with a perfect and peaceful acquiescence.

This complete resignation and tranquillity of a man whose life had been so full of violence, protest, and howling fury stunned and silenced them, and left them helpless. It seemed that Gant, knowing that often he had lived badly, was now determined to die well. And in this he succeeded. He accepted every ministration, every visit, every stammering reassurance, or frenzied activity, with a passive gratefulness which he seemed to want every one to know. On the evening of the day after his first hemorrhage, he asked for food and Eliza, bustling out, pathetically eager to do something, killed a chicken and cooked it for him.

And as if, from that infinite depth of death and silence from which he looked at her, he had seen, behind the bridling brisk activity of her figure, forever bustling back and forth, saying confusedly— 'Why, yes! The very thing! This very minute, sir!'—had seen the white strained face, the stricken eyes of a proud and sensitive woman who had wanted affection all her life, had received for the most part injury and abuse, and who was ready to clutch at any crust of comfort that might console or justify her before he died—he ate part of the chicken with relish, and then looking up at her, said quietly:

'I tell you what—that was a good chicken.'

And Helen, who had been sitting beside him on the bed, and feeding him, now cried out in a tone of bantering and good-humored challenge:

'What! Is it better than the ones *I* cook for you! You'd better not say it is—I'll beat you if you do.'

And Gant, grinning feebly, shook his head, and answered:

'Ah-h! Your mother is a good cook, Helen. You're a good cook, too—but there's no one else can cook a chicken like your mother!'

And stretching out his great right hand, he patted Eliza's worn fingers with his own.

And Eliza, suddenly touched by that word of unaccustomed praise and tenderness, turned and rushed blindly from the room at a clumsy bridling gait, clasping her hands together at the wrist, her weak eyes blind with tears—shaking her head in a strong convulsive movement, her mouth smiling a pale tremulous smile, ludicrous, touching, made unnatural by her false teeth, whispering over and over to herself, 'Poor fellow! Says, "There's no one else can cook a chicken like your mother." Reached out and patted me on the hand, you know. Says "I tell you what, there's no one who can cook a chicken like your mother." I reckon he wanted to let me know, to tell me, but says, "The rest of you have all been good to me, Helen's a good cook, but there's no one else can cook like your mother." '

'Oh, here, here, here,' said Helen, who, laughing uncertainly had followed her mother from the room when Eliza had rushed out, and had seized her by the arms, and shook her gently, 'good heavens! *Here!* You mustn't carry on like this! You mustn't take it this way! Why, he's all right!' she cried out heartily and shook

Eliza again. 'Papa's going to be all right! Why, what are you crying for?' she laughed. 'He's going to get well now—don't you know that?'

And Eliza could say nothing for a moment but kept smiling that false trembling and unnatural smile, shaking her head in a slight convulsive movement, her eyes blind with tears.

'I tell you what,' she whispered, smiling tremulously again and shaking her head, 'there was something about it—you know, the way he said it—says, "There's no one who can come up to your mother"—there was something in the way he said it! Poor fellow, says, "None of the rest of you can cook like her"—says, "I tell you what, that was certainly a good chicken"— Poor fellow! It wasn't so much what he said as the way he said it—there was something about it that went through me like a knife —I tell you what it did!'

'Oh, here, here, here!' Helen cried again, laughing. But her own eyes were also wet, the bitter possessiveness that had dominated all her relations with her father, and that had thrust Eliza away from him, was suddenly vanquished. At that moment she began to feel an affection for her mother that she had never felt before, a deep and nameless pity and regret, and a sense of sombre satisfaction.

'Well,' she thought, 'I guess it's all she's had, but I'm glad she's got that much to remember. I'm glad he said it: she'll always have that now to hang on to.'

And Gant lay looking up from that sunken depth of death and silence, his great hands of living power quiet with their immense and passive strength beside him on the bed.

4

Towards one o'clock that night Gant fell asleep and dreamed that he was walking down the road that led to Spangler's Run. And although he had not been along that road for fifty years everything was as fresh, as green, as living and familiar as it had ever been to him. He came out on the road from Schaefer's farm, and on his left he passed by the little white frame church of the United Brethren, and the graveyard about the church where his friends and family had been buried. From the road he could see the line of family gravestones which he himself had carved and set up after he had returned from serving his apprenticeship in Baltimore. The stones were all alike: tall flat slabs of marble with plain rounded tops, and there was one for his sister Susan, who had died in infancy, and one for his sister Huldah, who had died in childbirth while the war was on, and one for Huldah's husband, a young farmer named Jake Lentz who had been killed at Chancellorsville, and one for the husband of his oldest sister, Augusta, a man named Martin, who had been an itinerant photographer and had died soon after the war, and finally one for Gant's own father. And since there were no stones for his brother George or for Elmer or for John, and none for his mother or Augusta, Gant knew that he was still a young man, and had just recently come home. The stones which he had put up were still white and new, and in the lower right hand corner of each stone, he had carved his own name: W.O. Gant.

It was a fine morning in early May and everything was sweet and green and as familiar as it had always been. The graveyard was carpeted with thick green grass, and all around the graveyard and the church there was the incomparable green velvet of young wheat. And the thought came back to Gant, as it had come to him a thousand times, that the wheat around the graveyard looked greener and richer than any other wheat that he had ever seen. And beside him on his right were the great fields of the Schaefer farm, some richly carpeted with young green wheat, and some ploughed, showing great bronzed strips of fertile nobly swelling earth. And behind him on the great swell of the land, and commanding that sweet and casual scene with the majesty of its incomparable lay was Jacob Schaefer's great red barn and to the right the neat brick house with the white trimming of its windows, the white picket fence, the green yard with its rich tapestry of flowers and lilac bushes and the massed leafy spread of its big maple trees. And behind the house the hill rose, and all its woods were just greening into May, still smoky, tender and unfledged, gold-yellow with the magic of young green. And before the woods began

there was the apple orchard halfway up the hill; the trees were heavy with the blossoms and stood there in all their dense still bloom incredible.

And from the greening trees the bird-song rose, the grass was thick with the dense gold glory of the dandelions, and all about him were a thousand magic things that came and went and never could be captured. Below the church, he passed the old frame house where Elly Spangler, who kept the church keys, lived, and there were apple trees behind the house, all dense with bloom, but the house was rickety, unpainted and dilapidated as it had always been, and he wondered if the kitchen was still buzzing with a million flies, and if Elly's half-wit brothers, Jim and Willy, were inside. And even as he shook his head and thought, as he had thought so many times 'Poor Elly,' the back door opened and Willy Spangler, a man past thirty wearing overalls, and with a fond, foolish witless face, came galloping down across the yard toward him, flinging his arms out in exuberant greeting, and shouting to him the same welcome that he shouted out to every one who passed, friends and strangers all alike— 'I've been lookin' fer ye! I've been lookin' fer ye, Oll,' using, as was the custom of the friends and kinsmen of his Pennsylvania boyhood, his second name—and then, anxiously, pleadingly, again the same words that he spoke to every one: 'Ain't ye goin' to stay?'

And Gant, grinning, but touched by the indefinable sadness and pity which that kind and witless greeting had always stirred in him since his own childhood, shook his head, and said quietly:

'No, Willy. Not to-day. I'm meeting some one down the road'—and straightway felt, with thudding heart, a powerful and nameless excitement, the urgency of that impending meeting—why, where, with whom, he did not know—but all-compelling now, inevitable.

And Willy, still with wondering, foolish, kindly face followed along beside him now, saying eagerly, as he said to every one:

'Did ye bring anythin' fer me? Have ye got a chew?'

And Gant, starting to shake his head in refusal, stopped suddenly, seeing the look of disappointment on the idiot's face, and putting his hand in the pocket of his coat, took out a plug of apple-tobacco, saying:

'Yes. Here you are, Willy. You can have this.'

And Willy, grinning with foolish joy, had clutched the plug of tobacco and, still kind and foolish, had followed on a few steps more, saying anxiously:

'Are ye comin' back, Oll? Will ye be comin' back real soon?'

And Gant, feeling a strange and nameless sorrow, answered:

'I don't know, Willy'—for suddenly he saw that he might never come this way again.

But Willy, still happy, foolish, and contented, had turned and galloped away toward the house, flinging his arms out and shouting as he went:

'I'll be waitin' fer ye. I'll be waitin' fer ye, Oll.'

And Gant went on then, down the road, and there was a nameless sorrow in him that he could not understand, and some of the brightness had gone out of the day.

When he got to the mill, he turned left along the road that went down by Spangler's Run, crossed by the bridge below, and turned from the road into the wood-path on the other side. A child was standing in the path, and turned and went on ahead of him. In the wood the sunlight made swarming moths of light across the path, and through the leafy tangle of the trees: the sunlight kept shifting and swarming on the child's gold hair, and all around him were the sudden noises of the wood, the stir, the rustle, and the bullet thrum of wings, the cool broken sound of hidden water.

The wood got denser, darker as he went on and coming to a place where the path split away into two forks, Gant stopped, and turning to the child said, 'Which one shall I take?' And the child did not answer him.

But some one was there in the wood before him. He heard footsteps on the path, and saw a footprint in the earth, and turning took the path where the footprint was, and where it seemed he could hear some one walking.

And then, with the bridgeless instancy of dreams, it seemed to him that all of the bright green-gold around him in the wood

grew dark and sombre, the path grew darker, and suddenly he was walking in a strange and gloomy forest, haunted by the brown and tragic light of dreams. The forest shapes of great trees rose around him, he could hear no bird-song now, even his own feet on the path were soundless, but he always thought he heard the sound of some one walking in the wood before him. He stopped and listened: the steps were muffled, softly thunderous, they seemed so near that he thought that he must catch up with the one he followed in another second, and then they seemed immensely far away, receding in the dark mystery of that gloomy wood. And again he stopped and listened, the footsteps faded, vanished, he shouted, no one answered. And suddenly he knew that he had taken the wrong path, that he was lost. And in his heart there was an immense and quiet sadness, and the dark light of the enormous wood was all around him; no birds sang.

5

Gant awoke suddenly and found himself looking straight up at Eliza who was seated in a chair beside the bed.

'You were asleep,' she said quietly with a grave smile, looking at him in her direct and almost accusing fashion.

'Yes,' he said, breathing a little hoarsely, 'what time is it?'

It was a few minutes before three o'clock in the morning. She looked at the clock and told him the time: he asked where Helen was.

'Why,' said Eliza quickly, 'she's right here in this hall room: I reckon she's asleep, too. Said she was tired, you know, but that if you woke up and needed her to call her. Do you want me to get her?'

'No,' said Gant. 'Don't bother her. I guess she needs the rest, poor child. Let her sleep.'

'Yes,' said Eliza, nodding, 'and that's exactly what you must do, too, Mr. Gant. You try to go on back to sleep now,' she said coaxingly, 'for that's what we all need. There's no medicine like sleep—as the fellow says, it's Nature's sovereign remedy,' said Eliza, with that form of sententiousness that she was very fond of—'so you go on, now, Mr. Gant, and get a good night's sleep, and when you wake up in the morning, you'll feel like a new man. That's half the battle—if you can get your sleep, you're already on the road to recovery.'

'No,' said Gant, 'I've slept enough.'

He was breathing rather hoarsely and heavily and she asked him if he was comfortable and needed anything. He made no answer for a moment, and then muttered something under his breath that she could not hear plainly, but that sounded like 'little boy.'

'Hah? What say? What is it, Mr. Gant?' Eliza said. 'Little boy?' she said sharply, as he did not answer.

'Did you see him?' he said.

She looked at him for a moment with troubled eyes, then said:

'Pshaw, Mr. Gant, I guess you must have been dreaming.'

He did not answer, and for a moment there was no sound in the room but his breathing, hoarse, a little heavy. Then he muttered:

'Did some one come into the house?'

She looked at him sharply, inquiringly again, with troubled eyes:

'Hah? What say? Why, no, I think not,' she said doubtfully, 'unless you may have heard Gilmer come in an' go up to his room.'

And Gant was again silent for several moments, breathing a little heavily and hoarsely, his hands resting with an enormous passive strength, upon the bed. Presently he said quietly:

'Where's Bacchus?'

'Hah? Who's that?' Eliza said sharply, in a startled kind of tone. 'Bacchus? You mean Uncle Bacchus?'

'Yes,' said Gant.

'Why, pshaw, Mr. Gant!' cried Eliza laughing—for a startled moment she had wondered if 'his mind was wanderin',' but one glance at his quiet eyes, the tranquil sanity of his quiet tone, reassured her——

'Pshaw!' she said, putting one finger up to her broad nose-wing and laughing slyly. 'You must have been havin' queer dreams, for a fact!'

'Is he here?'

'Why, I'll vow, Mr. Gant!' she cried again. 'What on earth is in your mind? You know that Uncle Bacchus is way out West in Oregon—it's been ten years since

he came back home last—that summer of the reunion at Gettysburg.'

'Yes,' said Gant. 'I remember now.'

And again he fell silent, staring upward in the semi-darkness, his hands quietly at rest beside him, breathing a little hoarsely, but without pain. Eliza sat in the chair watching him, her hands clasped loosely at her waist, her lips pursed reflectively, and a puzzled look in her eyes: 'Now I wonder what ever put that in his mind?' she thought. 'I wonder what made him think of Bacchus. Now his mind's not wanderin' —that's one thing sure. He knows what he's doing just as well as I do—I reckon he must have dreamed it—that Bacchus was here—but that's certainly a strange thing, that he should bring it up like this.'

He was so silent that she thought he might have gone to sleep again, he lay motionless with his eyes turned upward in the semi-darkness of the room, his hands immense and passive at his side. But suddenly he startled her again by speaking, a voice so quiet and low that he might have been talking to himself.

'Father died the year before the war,' he said, 'when I was nine years old. I never got to know him very well. I guess Mother had a hard time of it. There were seven of us—and nothing but that little place to live on—and some of us too young to help her much—and George away at war. She spoke pretty hard to us sometimes—but I guess she had a hard time of it. It was a tough time for all of us,' he muttered, 'I tell you what, it was.'

'Yes,' Eliza said, 'I guess it was. I know she told me—I talked to her, you know, the time we went there on our honeymoon—whew! what about it?' she shrieked faintly, and put her finger up to her broad nose-wing with the same sly gesture—'it was all I could do to keep a straight face sometimes—why, you know, the way she had of talkin'—the expressions she used—oh! came right out with it, you know—sometimes I'd have to turn my head away so she wouldn't see me laughin'—says, you know, "I was left a widow with seven children to bring up, but I never took charity from no one; as I told 'em all, I've crawled under the dog's belly all my life; now I guess I can get over its back." '

'Yes,' said Gant with a faint grin. 'Many's the time I've heard her say that.'

'But she told it then, you know,' Eliza went on in explanatory fashion, 'about your father and how he'd done hard labor on a farm all his life and died—well, I reckon you'd call it consumption.'

'Yes,' said Gant. 'That was it.'

'And,' Eliza said reflectively, 'I never asked—of course, I didn't want to embarrass her—but I reckon from what she said, he may have been—well, I suppose you might say he was a drinkin' man.'

'Yes,' said Gant, 'I guess he was.'

'And I know she told it on him,' said Eliza, laughing again, and passing one finger slyly at the corner of her broad nose-wing, 'how he went to town that time—to Brant's Mill, I guess it was—and how she was afraid he'd get to drinkin', and she sent you and Wes along to watch him and to see he got home again—and how he met up with some fellers there and, sure enough, I guess he started drinkin' and stayed away too long—and then, I reckon he was afraid of what she'd say to him when he got back—and that was when he bought the clock—it's that very clock upon the mantel, Mr. Gant—but that was when he got the clock, all right—I guess he thought it would pacify her when she started out to scold him for gettin' drunk and bein' late.'

'Yes,' said Gant, who had listened without moving, staring at the ceiling, and with a faint grin printed at the corners of his mouth, 'well do I remember: that was it, all right.'

'And then,' Eliza went on, 'he lost the way comin' home—it had been snowin', and I reckon it was getting dark, and he had been drinkin'—and instead of turnin' in on the road that went down by your place he kept goin' on until he passed Jake Schaefer's farm—an' I guess Wes and you, poor child, kept follerin' where he led, thinkin' it was all right—and when he realized his mistake he said he was tired an' had to rest a while and—I'll vow! to think he'd go and do a thing like that,' said Eliza, laughing again—'he lay right down in the snow, sir, with the clock beside him—and went sound to sleep.'

'Yes,' said Gant, 'and the clock was broken.'

'Yes,' Eliza said, 'she told me about that

too—and how she heard you all come creepin' in real quiet an' easy-like about nine o'clock that night, when she and all the children were in bed—an' how she could hear him whisperin' to you and Wes to be quiet—an' how she heard you all come creepin' up the steps—and how he came tip-toein' in real easy-like an' laid the clock down on the bed—I reckon the glass had been broken out of it—hopin' she'd see it when she woke up in the morning an' wouldn't scold him then for stayin' out——'

'Yes,' said Gant, still with the faint attentive grin, 'and then the clock began to strike.'

'Whew-w!' cried Eliza, putting her finger underneath her broad nose-wing—'I know she had to laugh about it when she told it to me—she said that all of you looked so sheepish when the clock began to strike that she didn't have the heart to scold him.'

And Gant, grinning faintly again, emitted a faint rusty cackle that sounded like 'E'God!' and said: 'Yes, that was it. Poor fellow.'

'But to think,' Eliza went on, 'that he would have no more sense than to do a thing like that—to lay right down there in the snow an' go to sleep with you two children watchin' him. And I know how she told it, how she questioned you and Wes next day, and I reckon started in to scold you for not takin' better care of him, and how you told her, "Well, Mother, I thought that it would be all right. I kept steppin' where he stepped, I thought he knew the way." And said she didn't have the heart to scold you after that—poor child, I reckon you were only eight or nine years old, and boy-like thought you'd follow in your father's footsteps and that everything would be all right.'

'Yes,' said Gant, with the faint grin again, 'I kept stretchin' my legs to put my feet down in his tracks—it was all I could do to keep up with him. . . . Ah, Lord,' he said, and in a moment said in a faint low voice, 'how well I can remember it. That was just the winter before he died.'

'And you've had that old clock ever since,' Eliza said. 'That very clock upon the mantel, sir—at least, you've had it ever since I've known you, and I reckon you had it long before that—for I know you told me how you brought it South with you. And that clock must be all of sixty or seventy years old—if it's a day.'

'Yes,' said Gant, 'it's all of that.'

And again he was silent, and lay so still and motionless that there was no sound in the room except his faint and labored breathing, the languid stir of the curtains in the cool night breeze, and the punctual tocking of the old wooden clock. And presently, when she thought that he might have gone off to sleep again, he spoke, in the same remote and detached voice as before:

'Eliza,'—he said—and at the sound of that unaccustomed word, a name he had spoken only twice in forty years—her white face and her worn brown eyes turned toward him with the quick and startled look of an animal—'Eliza,' he said quietly, 'you have had a hard life with me, a hard time. I want to tell you that I'm sorry.'

And before she could move from her white stillness of shocked surprise, he lifted his great right hand and put it gently down across her own. And for a moment she sat there bolt upright, shaken, frozen, with a look of terror in her eyes, her heart drained of blood, a pale smile trembling uncertainly and foolishly on her lips. Then she tried to withdraw her hand with a clumsy movement, she began to stammer with an air of ludicrous embarrassment, she bridled, saying—'Aw-w, now, Mr. Gant. Well, now, I reckon,'—and suddenly these few simple words of regret and affection did what all the violence, abuse, drunkenness and injury of forty years had failed to do. She wrenched her hand free like a wounded creature, her face was suddenly contorted by that grotesque and pitiable grimace of sorrow that women have had in moments of grief since the beginning of time, and digging her fist into her closed eye quickly with the pathetic gesture of a child, she lowered her head and wept bitterly:

'It was a hard time, Mr. Gant,' she whispered, 'a hard time, sure enough. . . . It wasn't all the cursin' and the drinkin'—I got used to that. . . . I reckon I was only an ignorant sort of girl when I met you and I guess,' she went on with a pathetic

and unconscious humor, 'I didn't know what married life was like . . . but I could have stood the rest of it . . . the bad names an' all the things you called me when I was goin' to have another child . . . but it was what you said when Grover died . . . accusin' me of bein' responsible for his death because I took the children to St. Louis to the Fair—' and at the words as if an old and lacerated wound had been re-opened raw and bleeding, she wept hoarsely, harshly, bitterly—'that was the worst time that I had—sometimes I prayed to God that I would not wake up—he was a fine boy, Mr. Gant, the best I had—like the write-up in the paper said he had the sense an' judgment of one twice his age . . . an' somehow it had grown a part of me, I expected him to lead the others—when he died it seemed like everything was gone . . . an' then to have you say that I had—' her voice faltered to a whisper, stopped: with a pathetic gesture she wiped the sleeve of her old frayed sweater across her eyes and already ashamed of her tears, said hastily:

'Not that I'm blamin' you, Mr. Gant. . . . I reckon we were both at fault . . . we were both to blame . . . if I had it to do all over I know I could do better . . . but I was so young and ignorant when I met you, Mr. Gant . . . knew nothing of the world . . . there was always something strange-like about you that I didn't understand.'

Then, as he said nothing, but lay still and passive, looking at the ceiling, she said quickly, drying her eyes and speaking with a brisk and instant cheerfulness, the undaunted optimism of her ever-hopeful nature:

'Well, now, Mr. Gant, that's all over, and the best thing we can do is to forget about it. . . . We've both made our mistakes—we wouldn't be human if we didn't—but now we've got to profit by experience—the worst of all this trouble is all over—you've got to think of getting well now, that's the only thing you've got to do, sir,' she said pursing her lips and winking briskly at him—'just set your mind on getting well—that's all you've got to do now, Mr. Gant—and the battle is half won. For half our ills and troubles are all imagination,' she said sententiously, 'and if you'll just make up your mind now that you're going to get well—why, sir, you'll do it,' and she looked at him with a brisk nod. 'And we've both got years before us, Mr. Gant—for all we know, the best years of our life are still ahead of us—so we'll both go on and profit by the mistakes of the past and make the most of what time's left,' she said. 'That's just exactly what we'll do!'

And quietly, kindly, without moving, and with the impassive and limitless regret of a man who knows that there is no return, he answered:

'Yes, Eliza. That is what we'll do.'

'And now,' she went on coaxingly, 'why don't you go on back to sleep now, Mr. Gant? There's nothin' like sleep to restore a man to health—as the feller says, it's Nature's sovereign remedy, worth all the doctors and all the medicine on earth,' she winked at him, and then concluded on a note of cheerful finality, 'so you go on and get some sleep now, and to-morrow you will feel like a new man.'

And again he shook his head in an almost imperceptible gesture of negation:

'No,' he said, 'not now. Can't sleep.'

He was silent again, and presently, his breath coming somewhat hoarse and labored, he cleared his throat, and put one hand up to his throat, as if to relieve himself of some impediment.

Eliza looked at him with troubled eyes and said:

'What's the matter, Mr. Gant? There's nothing hurtin' you?'

'No,' he said. 'Just something in my throat. Could I have some water?'

'Why, yes, sir! That's the very thing!' She got up hastily, and looking about in a somewhat confused manner, saw behind her a pitcher of water and a glass upon his old walnut bureau, and saying 'This very minute, sir!' started across the room.

And at the same moment, Gant was aware that some one had entered the house, was coming towards him through the hall, would soon be with him. Turning his head towards the door he was conscious of something approaching with the speed of light, the instancy of thought, and at that moment he was filled with a sense of inexpressible joy, a feeling of triumph and security he had never known. Something

immensely bright and beautiful was converging in a flare of light, and at that instant, the whole room blurred around him, his sight was fixed upon that focal image in the door, and suddenly the child was standing there and looking towards him.

And even as he started from his pillows, and tried to call his wife he felt something thick and heavy in his throat that would not let him speak. He tried to call to her again but no sound came, then something wet and warm began to flow out of his mouth and nostrils, he lifted his hands up to his throat, the warm wet blood came pouring out across his fingers; he saw it and felt joy.

For now the child—or some one in the house was speaking, calling to him; he heard great footsteps, soft but thunderous, imminent, yet immensely far, a voice well-known, never heard before. He called to it, and then it seemed to answer him; he called to it with faith and joy to give him rescue, strength, and life, and it answered him and told him that all the error, old age, pain and grief of life was nothing but an evil dream; that he who had been lost was found again, that his youth would be restored to him and that he would never die, and that he would find again the path he had not taken long ago in a dark wood.

And the child still smiled at him from the dark door; the great steps, soft and powerful, came ever closer, and as the instant imminent approach of that last meeting came intolerably near, he cried out through the lake of jetting blood, 'Here, Father, here!' and heard a strong voice answer him, 'My son!'

At that instant he was torn by a rending cough, something was wrenched loose in him, the death gasp rattled through his blood, and a mass of greenish matter foamed out through his lips. Then the world was blotted out, a blind black fog swam up and closed above his head, some one seized him, he was held, supported in two arms, he heard some one's voice saying in a low tone of terror and of pity, 'Mr. Gant! Mr. Gant! Oh, poor man, poor man! He's gone!' And his brain faded into night. Even before she lowered him back upon the pillows, she knew that he was dead.

Eliza's sharp scream brought three of her children—Daisy, Steve, and Luke, and the nurse, Bessie Gant, who was the wife of Gant's nephew Ollie—running from the kitchen. At the same moment Helen, who had taken an hour's sleep—her first in two days—in the little hall-bedroom off the porch, was wakened by her mother's cry, the sound of a screen-door slammed, and the sound of footsteps running past her window on the porch. Then, for several minutes she had no consciousness of what she did, and later she could not remember it. Her actions were those of a person driven by a desperate force, who acts from blind intuition, not from reason. Instantly, the moment that she heard her mother scream, the slam of the screen-door, and the running feet, she knew what had happened, and from that moment she knew only one frenzied desire; somehow to get to her father before he died.

The breath caught hoarse and sharp in her throat in a kind of nervous sob, it seemed that her heart had stopped beating and that her whole life-force was paralyzed; but she was out of her bed with a movement that left the old springs rattling, and she came across the back-porch with a kind of tornado-like speed that just came instantly from nowhere: in a moment she was standing in the open door with the sudden bolted look of a person who has been shot through the heart, staring at the silent group of people, and at the figure on the bed, with a dull strained stare of disbelief and horror.

All the time, although she was not conscious of it, her breath kept coming in a kind of hoarse short sob, her large big-boned face had an almost animal look of anguish and surprise, her mouth was partly open, her large chin hung down, and at this moment, as they turned towards her she began to moan, 'Oh-h, oh-h, oh-h, oh-h!' in the same unconscious way, like a person who has received a heavy blow in the pit of the stomach. Then her mouth gaped open, a hoarse and ugly cry was torn from her throat—a cry not of grief but loss—and she rushed forward like a mad woman. They tried to stop her, to restrain her, she flung them away as if they had been rag dolls and hurled herself down across the body on the bed, raving like a maniac.

'Oh, Papa, Papa. . . . Why didn't they

tell me? . . . Why didn't they let me know? . . . Why didn't they call me? . . . Oh, Papa, Papa, Papa! . . . dead, dead, dead . . . and they didn't tell me . . . they didn't let me know . . . they let you die . . . and I wasn't here! . . . I wasn't here!'—and she wept harshly, horribly, bitterly, rocking back and forth like a mad woman, with a dead man in her arms. She kept moaning, '. . . They didn't tell me . . . they let you die without me . . . I wasn't here . . . I wasn't here . . .'

And even when they lifted her up from the bed, detached her arms from the body they had held in such a desperate hug, she still kept moaning in a demented manner, as if talking to the corpse, and oblivious of the presence of these living people:

'They never told me . . . they never told me. . . . They let you die here all by yourself . . . and I wasn't here . . . I wasn't here.'

All of the women, except Bessie Gant, had now begun to weep hysterically, more from shock, exhaustion, and the nervous strain than from grief, and now Bessie Gant's voice could be heard speaking to them sharply, coldly, peremptorily, as she tried to bring back order and calmness to the distracted scene:

'Now, you get out of here—all of you! . . . There's nothing more any of you can do—I'll take care of all the rest of it! . . . Get out, now . . . I can't have you in the room while there's work to do. . . . Helen, go on back to bed and get some sleep. . . . You'll feel better in the morning.'

'They never told me! . . . They never told me,' she turned and stared stupidly at Bessie Gant with dull glazed eyes. 'Can't you do something? . . . Where's McGuire? Has any one called him yet?'

'No,' said the nurse sharply and angrily, 'and no one's going to. You're not going to get that man out of bed at this hour of the night when there's nothing to be done. . . . Get out of here, now, all of you,' she began to push and herd them towards the door. 'I can't be bothered with you. . . . Go somewhere—anywhere—get drunk—only don't come back in here.'

The whole house had come to life; in the excitement, shock, and exhaustion of their nerves the dead man still lying there in such a grotesque and twisted position, was forgotten. One of Eliza's lodgers, a man named Gilmer, who had been in the house for years, was wakened, went out, and got a gallon of corn whiskey; every one drank a great deal, became, in fact, somewhat intoxicated; when the undertakers came to take Gant away, none of the family was present. No one saw it. They were all in the kitchen seated around Eliza's battered old kitchen table, with the jug of whiskey on the table before them. They drank and talked together all night long until dawn came.

6

The morning of Gant's funeral the house was filled with people who had known him and the air was heavy with the sweet, cloying fragrance of the funeral flowers: the odors of lilies, roses, and carnations. His coffin was banked with flowers, but in the centre there was a curious and arresting plainness, a simple wreath of laurel leaves. Attached to the wreath was a small card on which these words were written: 'Hugh McGuire.'

And people passing by the coffin paused for a moment and stared at the name with a feeling of unspoken wonder in their hearts. Eliza stood looking at the wreath a moment with hands clasped across her waist, and then turned away, shaking her head rapidly, with a short convulsive pucker of her lips, as she spoke to Helen in a low voice:

'I tell you what—it's pretty strange when you come to think of it—it gives you a queer feeling—I tell you what, it does.'

And this expressed the emotion that every one felt when they saw the wreath. For Hugh McGuire had been found dead at his desk at six o'clock that morning, the news had just spread through the town, and now, when people saw the wreath upon Gant's coffin, there was something in their hearts they could not utter.

Gant lay in the splendid coffin, with his great hands folded quietly on his breast. Later, the boy could not forget his father's hands. They were the largest, most powerful, and somehow the most shapely hands he had ever seen. And even though his great right hand had been so crippled and stiffened by an attack of inflammatory rheu-

matism ten years before that he had never regained the full use of it, and since that time could only hold the great wooden mallet that the stonecutters use in a painful and clumsy half-clasp between the thumb and the big stiffened fingers, his hands had never lost their character of life, strength, and powerful shapeliness.

The hands had given to the interminable protraction of his living death a kind of concrete horror that it otherwise would not have had. For as his powerful gaunt figure waned and wasted under the ravages of the cancer that was consuming him until he had become only the enfeebled shadow of his former self, his gaunt hands, on which there was so little which death could consume, lost none of their former rock-like heaviness, strength and shapely power. Thus, even when the giant figure of the man had become nothing but a spectral remnant of itself, sunk in a sorrow of time, awaiting death, those great, still-living hands of power and strength hung incredibly, horribly, from that spectral form of death to which they were attached.

And for this reason those powerful hands of life evoked, as nothing else could have done, in an instant searing flash of memory and recognition the lost world of his father's life of manual power, hunger, fury, savage abundance and wild joy, the whole enchanted structure of that lost life of magic he had made for them. Constantly, those great hands of life joined, with an almost grotesque incongruity, to that scarecrow form of wasting death would awake for them, as nothing else on earth could do, all of the sorrowful ghosts of time, the dream-like spell and terror of the years between, the years of phantom death, the horror of unreality, strangeness, disbelief, and memory, that haunted them.

So was it now, even in death, with his father's hands. In their powerful, gaunt and shapely clasp, as he lay dead in his coffin, there seemed to be held and gathered, somehow, all of his life that could never die—a living image of the essential quality of his whole life with its fury and unrest, desire and hunger, the tremendous sweep and relish of its enormous appetites and the huge endowment of its physical and sensual powers.

Thus, one could suppose that on the face of a dead poet there might remain—how, where or in what way we could not tell, a kind of flame, a light, a glory,—the magic and still living chrysm of his genius. And on the face of the dead conqueror we might still see living, arrogant, and proud with all its dark authorities the frown of power, the inflexible tyranny of stern command, the special infinitude of the invincible will that would not die with life, and that incredibly remains, still dark and living in its scorn and mockery of time.

Then, on the face of an old dead prophet or philosopher there would live and would not die the immortality of proud, lonely thought. We could not say just where that spirit rested. Sometimes it would seem to rest upon the temples of the grand and lonely head. Sometimes we would think it was a kind of darkness in the shadows of the closed and sunken eyes, sometimes the marsh fire of a dark and lambent flame that hovered round the face, that could never be fixed, but that we always knew was there.

And just as poet, prophet, priest and conqueror might each retain in death some living and fitting image of his whole life's truth, so would the strength, the skill, all of the hope, hunger, fury, and unrest that had lashed and driven on through life the gaunt figure of a stonecutter be marvellously preserved in the granite power and symmetry of those undying hands.

Now the corpse was stretched out on the splendid satin cushions of the expensive coffin. It has been barbered, powdered, disembowelled, and pumped full of embalming fluid. And as it lay there with its waxen head set forward in its curious gaunt projectiveness, the pale lips firmly closed and with a little line of waxen mucous in the lips, the women came forward with their oily swollen faces, and a look of ravenous eagerness in their eyes, stared at it hard and long, lifted their sodden handkerchiefs slowly to their oily mouths, and were borne away, sobbing hysterically, by their equally oily, ravenous, sister orgiasts in sorrow.

Meanwhile his father's friends, the stonecutters, masons, building contractors, butchers, business men and male relatives were standing awkwardly about, dressed in their good, black clothes which

they seemed not to wear so much as to inhabit with a kind of unrestful itchiness, lowering their eyes gravely and regretfully as the women put on their revolting show, talking together in low voices, and wondering when it would all be over.

These circumstances, together with the heavy unnatural languor of the funeral smells, the sweet-sick heaviness of the carnations, the funereal weepy blacks in which the women had arrayed themselves, the satiny sandalwood scent that came from the splendid coffin, and the fragrant faintly acrid odor of embalmed flesh, particularly when blended with the smell of cooking turnip greens, roast pork and apple sauce out in the kitchen, combined to create an atmosphere somewhat like a dinner party in a comfortably furnished morgue.

In all this obscene pomp of burial there was something so grotesque, unnatural, disgusting, and remote from all he could remember of the dead man's life and personality that everything about him—even the physical horror of his bloody death—now seemed so far away he could hardly believe it ever happened. Therefore, he stared at this waxen and eviscerated relic in the coffin with a sense of weird disbelief, unable to relate it to the living man who had bled great lakes of blood the night before.

Yet, even in his death, his father's hands still seemed to live, and would not die. And this was the reason why the memory of those hands haunted him then and would haunt him forever after. This was the reason why, when he would try to remember how he looked when dead, he could remember nothing clearly except the powerful sculptured weight and symmetry of his tremendous hands as they lay folded on his body in the coffin. The great hands had a stony, sculptured and yet living strength and vitality, as if Michelangelo had carved them. They seemed to rest there upon the groomed, bereft and vacant horror of the corpse with a kind of terrible reality as if there really is, in death, some energy of life that will not die, some element of man's life that must persist and that resumes into a single feature of his life the core and essence of his character.

1934 1935

HART CRANE

1899–1932

GENERAL AIMS AND THEORIES [1]

WHEN I started writing Faustus & Helen it was my intention to embody in modern terms (words, symbols, metaphors) a contemporary approximation to an ancient human culture or mythology that seems to have been obscured rather than illumined with the frequency of poetic allusions made to it during the last century. The name of Helen, for instance, has become an all-too-easily employed crutch for evocation whenever a poet felt a stitch in his side. The real evocation of this (to me) very real and absolute conception of beauty seemed to consist in a reconstruction in these modern terms of the basic emotional attitude toward beauty that the Greeks had. And in so doing I found that I was really building a bridge between so-called classic experience and many divergent realities of our seething, confused cosmos of today, which has no formulated mythology yet for classic poetic reference or for religious exploitation.

So I found 'Helen' sitting in a street car; the Dionysian revels of her court and her seduction were transferred to a Metropolitan roof garden with a jazz orchestra; and the *katharsis* of the fall of Troy I saw approximated in the recent World War. The importance of this scaffolding may easily be exaggerated, but it gave me a series of correspondences between two widely separated worlds on which to sound some major themes of human speculation—love, beauty, death, renascence. It was a kind of grafting process that I shall doubt-

1 This explanatory essay was given by Crane to his friend Miss Laura Riding, and remained unpublished until its inclusion in Philip Horton's *Hart Crane* (N.Y., 1937).

less not be interested in repeating, but which is consistent with subsequent theories of mine on the relation of tradition to the contemporary creating imagination.

It is a terrific problem that faces the poet today—a world that is so in transition from a decayed culture toward a reorganization of human evaluations that there are few common terms, general denominators of speech that are solid enough or that ring with any vibration or spiritual conviction. The great mythologies of the past (including the Church) are deprived of enough façade to even launch good raillery against. Yet much of their traditions are operative still—in millions of chance combinations of related and unrelated detail, psychological reference, figures of speech, precepts, etc. These are all a part of our common experience and the terms, at least partially, of that very experience when it defines or extends itself.

The deliberate program, then, of a 'break' with the past or tradition seems to me to be a sentimental fallacy. . . . The poet has a right to draw on whatever practical resources he finds in books or otherwise about him. He must tax his sensibility and his touchstone of experience for the proper selections of these themes and details, however,—and that is where he either stands, or falls into useless archeology.

I put no particular value on the simple objective of 'modernity.' The element of the temporal location of an artist's creation is of very secondary importance; it can be left to the impressionist or historian just as well. It seems to me that a poet will accidentally define his time well enough simply by reacting honestly and to the full extent of his sensibilities to the states of passion, experience and rumination that fate forces on him, first hand. He must, of course, have a sufficiently universal basis of experience to make his imagination selective and valuable. His picture of the 'period,' then, will simply be a by-product of his curiosity and the relation of his experience to a postulated 'eternity.'

I am concerned with the future of America, but not because I think that America has any so-called par value as a state or as a group of people. . . . It is only because I feel persuaded that here are destined to be discovered certain as yet undefined spiritual quantities, perhaps a new hierarchy of faith not to be developed so completely elsewhere. And in this process I like to feel myself as a potential factor; certainly I must speak in its terms and what discoveries I may make are situated in its experience.

But to fool one's self that definitions are being reached by merely referring frequently to skyscrapers, radio antennæ, steam whistles, or other surface phenomena of our time is merely to paint a photograph. I think that what is interesting and significant will emerge only under the conditions of our submission to, and examination and assimilation of the organic effects on us of these and other fundamental factors of our experience. It can certainly not be an organic expression otherwise. And the expression of such values may often be as well accomplished with the vocabulary and blank verse of the Elizabethans as with the calligraphic tricks and slang used so brilliantly at times by an impressionist like Cummings.

It may not be possible to say that there is, strictly speaking, any 'absolute' experience. But it seems evident that certain æsthetic experience (and this may for a time engross the total faculties of the spectator) can be called absolute, inasmuch as it approximates a formally convincing statement of a conception or apprehension of life that gains our unquestioning assent, and under the conditions of which our imagination is unable to suggest a further detail consistent with the design of the æsthetic whole.

I have been called an 'absolutist' in poetry, and if I am to welcome such a label it should be under the terms of the above definition. It is really only a *modus operandi*, however, and as such has been used organically before by at least a dozen poets such as Donne, Blake, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, etc. I may succeed in defining it better by contrasting it with the impressionistic method. The impressionist is interesting as far as he goes—but his goal has been reached when he has succeeded in projecting certain selected factual details into his reader's consciousness. He is really not interested in the *causes* (metaphysical) of his materials, their emotional derivations or their utmost spiritual consequences. A

kind of retinal registration is enough, along with a certain psychological stimulation. And this is also true of your realist (of the Zola type), and to a certain extent of the classicist, like Horace, Ovid, Pope, etc.

Blake meant these differences when he wrote:

> We are led to believe in a lie
> When we see *with* not *through* the eye.

The impressionist creates only with the eye and for the readiest surface of the consciousness, at least relatively so. If the effect has been harmonious or even stimulating, he can stop there, relinquishing entirely to his audience the problematic synthesis of the details into terms of their own personal consciousness.

It is my hope to go *through* the combined materials of the poem, using our 'real' world somewhat as a spring-board, and to give the poem *as a whole* an orbit or predetermined direction of its own. I would like to establish it as free from my own personality as from any chance evaluation on the reader's part. (This is, of course, an impossibility, but it is a characteristic worth mentioning.) Such a poem is at least a stab at a truth, and to such an extent may be differentiated from other kinds of poetry and called 'absolute.' Its evocation will not be toward decoration or amusement, but rather toward a state of consciousness, an 'innocence' (Blake) or absolute beauty. In this condition there may be discoverable under new forms certain spiritual illuminations, shining with a morality essentialized from experience directly, and not from previous precepts or preconceptions. It is as though a poem gave the reader as he left it a single, new *word*, never before spoken and impossible to actually enunciate, but self-evident as an active principle in the reader's consciousness henceforward.

As to technical considerations: the motivation of the poem must be derived from the implicit emotional dynamics of the materials used, and the terms of expression employed are often selected less for their logical (literal) significance than for their associational meanings. Via this and their metaphorical inter-relationships, the entire construction of the poem is raised on the organic principle of a 'logic of metaphor,' which antedates our so-called pure logic, and which is the genetic basis of all speech, hence consciousness and thought-extension.

These dynamics often result, I'm told, in certain initial difficulties in understanding my poems. But on the other hand I find them at times the only means possible for expressing certain concepts in any forceful or direct way whatever. To cite two examples:—when, in Voyages (II), I speak of 'adagios of islands,' the reference is to the motion of a boat through islands clustered thickly, the rhythm of the motion, etc. And it seems a much more direct and creative statement than any more logical employment of words such as 'coasting slowly through the islands,' besides ushering in a whole world of music. Similarly in Faustus and Helen (III) the speed and tense altitude of an aeroplane are much better suggested by the idea of 'nimble blue plateaus'—*implying* the aeroplane and its speed against a contrast of stationary elevated earth. Although the statement is pseudo in relation to formal logic—it *is* completely logical in relation to the truth of the imagination, and there is expressed a concept of speed and space that could not be handled so well in other terms.

In manipulating the more imponderable phenomena of psychic motives, pure emotional crystallizations, etc., I have had to rely even more on these dynamics of inferential mention, and I am doubtless still very unconscious of having committed myself to what seems nothing but obscurities to some minds. A poem like Possessions really cannot be technically explained. It must rely (even to a large extent with myself) on its organic impact on the imagination to successfully imply its meaning. This seems to me to present an exceptionally difficult problem, however, considering the real clarity and consistent logic of many of the other poems.

I know that I run the risk of much criticism by defending such theories as I have, but as it is part of a poet's business to risk not only criticism—but folly—in the conquest of consciousness I can only say that I attach no intrinsic value to what means I use beyond their practical service in giving form to the living stuff of the imagination.

New conditions of life germinate new

forms of spiritual articulation. And while I feel that my work includes a more consistent extension of traditional literary elements than many contemporary poets are capable of appraising, I realize that I am utilizing the gifts of the past as instruments principally; and that the voice of the present, if it is to be known, must be caught at the risk of speaking in idioms and circumlocutions sometimes shocking to the scholar and historians of logic. Language has built towers and bridges, but itself is inevitably as fluid as always.

1925 1937

FOR THE MARRIAGE OF FAUSTUS AND HELEN [1]

'And so we may arrive by Talmud skill
And profane Greek to raise the building up
Of Helen's house against the Ismaelite,
King of Thogarma, and his habergeons
Brimstony, blue and fiery; and the force
Of King Abaddon, and the beast of Cittim;
Which Rabbi David Kimchi, Onkelos,
And Aben Ezra do interpret Rome.'

—THE ALCHEMIST

I

THE mind has shown itself at times
Too much the baked and labeled dough
Divided by accepted multitudes.
Across the stacked partitions of the day—
Across the memoranda, baseball scores,
The stenographic smiles and stock
quotations
Smutty wings flash out equivocations.
The mind is brushed by sparrow wings;
Numbers, rebuffed by asphalt, crowd
The margins of the day, accent the curbs,
Convoying divers dawns on every corner
To druggist, barber and tobacconist,
Until the graduate opacities of evening
Take them away as suddenly to somewhere
Virginal perhaps, less fragmentary, cool.

There is the world dimensional
for those untwisted by the love of
things irreconcilable . . .

And yet, suppose some evening I forgot
The fare and transfer, yet go by that way
Without recall,—lost yet poised in traffic.
Then I might find your eyes across an
aisle,
Still flickering with those prefigurations—
Prodigal, yet uncontested now,
Half-riant before the jerky window frame.

There is some way, I think, to touch
Those hands of yours that count the nights
Stippled with pink and green
advertisements.
And now, before its arteries turn dark,
I would have you meet this bartered blood.
Imminent in his dream, none better knows
The white wafer cheek of love, or offers
words
Lightly as moonlight on the eaves meets
snow.

Reflective conversion of all things
At your deep blush, when ecstasies thread
The limbs and belly, when rainbows spread
Impinging on the throat and sides . . .
Inevitable, the body of the world
Weeps in inventive dust for the hiatus
That winks above it, bluet in your breasts.

The earth may glide diaphanous to death;
But if I lift my arms it is to bend
To you who turned away once, Helen,
knowing
The press of troubled hands, too alternate
With steel and soil to hold you endlessly.
I meet you, therefore, in that eventual
flame
You found in final chains, no captive then—
Beyond their million brittle, bloodshot
eyes;
White, through white cities passed on to
assume

1 Horton says of this poem: 'Arranged in three parts, which he conceived as spanning a rising scale from the "quotidian" to the universal, this work was his first attempt to deal with the major problems of poetry. That parts as he described them were colorless abstractions: first, "Meditation, Evocation, Love, Beauty"; second, "Dance, Humor, Satisfaction"; and third, "Tragedy, War (the eternal soldier), Résumé, Ecstasy, Final Declaration." But the symbolism he chose provided a concrete, even a dramatic, framework. Once it is known that Helen is "the symbol of this abstract 'sense of beauty'—Faustus the symbol of myself, the poetic or imaginative man of all time," the action of the poem and its philosophical implications become perfectly apparent. Crane imagined the poem as a kind of prothalamion celebrating his pursuit and capture of the Platonic idea of beauty, and at the same time defining his relation not only to his art, but also to the world of tradition in which beauty had sometimes lived as a vital principle.' Horton, *Hart Crane*(N.Y., 1937),119–20.

That world which comes to each of us
alone.

Accept a lone eye riveted to your plane,
Bent axle of devotion along companion
ways
That beat, continuous, to hourless days—
One inconspicuous, glowing orb of praise.

II

Brazen hypnotics glitter here;
Glee shifts from foot to foot,
Magnetic to their tremolo.
This crashing opéra bouffe,
Blest excursion! this ricochet
From roof to roof—
Know, Olympians, we are breathless
While nigger cupids scour the stars!

A thousand light shrugs balance us
Through snarling hails of melody.
White shadows slip across the floor
Splayed like cards from a loose hand;
Rhythmic ellipses lead into canters
Until somewhere a rooster banters.

Greet naïvely—yet intrepidly
New soothings, new amazements
That cornets introduce at every turn—
And you may fall downstairs with me
With perfect grace and equanimity.
Or, plaintively scud past shores
Where, by strange harmonic laws
All relatives, serene and cool,
Sit rocked in patent armchairs.

O, I have known metallic paradises
Where cuckoos clucked to finches
Above the deft catastrophes of drums.
While titters hailed the groans of death
Beneath gyrating awnings I have seen
The incunabula of the divine grotesque.
This music has a reassuring way.

The siren of the springs of guilty song—
Let us take her on the incandescent wax
Striated with nuances, nervosities
That we are heir to: she is still so young,
We cannot frown upon her as she smiles,
Dipping here in this cultivated storm
Among slim skaters of the gardened skies.

III

Capped arbiter of beauty in this street
That narrows darkly into motor dawn,—
You, here beside me, delicate ambassador
Of intricate slain numbers that arise
In whispers, naked of steel;
religious gunman!
Who faithfully, yourself, will fall too soon,
And in other ways than as the wind settles
On the sixteen thrifty bridges of the city:
Let us unbind our throats of fear and pity.

We even,
Who drove speediest destruction
In corymbulous formations of
mechanics,—
Who hurried the hill breezes, spouting
malice
Plangent over meadows, and looked down
On rifts of torn and empty houses
Like old women with teeth unjubilant
That waited faintly, briefly and in vain:

We know, eternal gunman, our flesh
remembers
The tensile boughs, the nimble blue
plateaus,
The mounted, yielding cities of the air!
That saddled sky that shook down vertical
Repeated play of fire—no hypogeum
Of wave or rock was good against one hour.

We did not ask for that, but have survived,
And will persist to speak again before
All stubble streets that have not curved
To memory, or known the ominous lifted
arm
That lowers down the arc of Helen's brow
To saturate with blessing and dismay.

A goose, tobacco and cologne—
Three-winged and gold-shod prophecies of
heaven,
The lavish heart shall always have to leaven
And spread with bells and voices, and atone
The abating shadows of our conscript dust.

Anchises' navel, dripping of the sea,—
The hands Erasmus dipped in gleaming
tides,
Gathered the voltage of blown blood and
vine;
Delve upward for the new and scattered
wine,
O brother-thief of time, that we recall.
Laugh out the meager penance of their days
Who dare not share with us the breath
released,

The substance drilled and spent beyond repair
For golden, or the shadow of gold hair.

Distinctly praise the years, whose volatile
Blamed bleeding hands extend and thresh the height
The imagination spans beyond despair,
Outpacing bargain, vocable and prayer.
1923 1926

BLACK TAMBOURINE

THE interests of a black man in a cellar
Mark tardy judgment on the world's closed door.
Gnats toss in the shadow of a bottle,
And a roach spans a crevice in the floor.

Æsop, driven to pondering, found
Heaven with the tortoise and the hare;
Fox brush and sow ear top his grave
And mingling incantations on the air.

The black man, forlorn in the cellar,
Wanders in some mid-kingdom, dark, that lies,
Between his tambourine, stuck on the wall,
And, in Africa, a carcass quick with flies.
1921 1926

PRAISE FOR AN URN

IN MEMORIAM: ERNEST NELSON

IT was a kind and northern face
That mingled in such exile guise
The everlasting eyes of Pierrot
And, of Gargantua, the laughter.

His thoughts, delivered to me
From the white coverlet and pillow,
I see now, were inheritances—
Delicate riders of the storm.

The slant moon on the slanting hill
Once moved us toward presentiments
Of what the dead keep, living still,
And such assessments of the soul

As, perched in the crematory lobby,
The insistent clock commented on,
Touching as well upon our praise
Of glories proper to the time.

Still, having in mind gold hair,
I cannot see that broken brow
And miss the dry sound of bees
Stretching across a lucid space.

Scatter these well-meant idioms
Into the smoky spring that fills
The suburbs, where they will be lost.
They are no trophies of the sun.
1922 1926

FROM VOYAGES

2

AND yet this great wink of eternity,
Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,
Samite sheeted and processioned where
Her undinal vast belly moonward bends,
Laughing the wrapt inflections of our love;

Take this Sea, whose diapason knells
On scrolls of silver snowy sentences,
The sceptred terror of whose sessions rends
As her demeanors motion well or ill,
All but the pieties of lovers' hands.

And onward, as bells off San Salvador
Salute the crocus lustres of the stars,
In these poinsettia meadows of her tides,—
Adagios of islands, O my Prodigal,
Complete the dark confessions her veins spell.

Mark how her turning shoulders wind the hours,
And hasten while her penniless rich palms
Pass superscription of bent foam and wave,—
Hasten, while they are true,—sleep, death, desire,
Close round one instant in one floating flower.

Bind us in time, O Seasons clear, and awe.
O minstrel galleons of Carib fire,
Bequeath us to no earthly shore until
Is answered in the vortex of our grave
The seal's wide spindrift gaze toward paradise.
1924–1925 1926

FROM THE BRIDGE

PROEM:

TO BROOKLYN BRIDGE [1]

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high
Over the chained bay waters Liberty—

Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes
As apparitional as sails that cross
Some page of figures to be filed away;
—Till elevators drop us from our day . . .

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen;

And Thee, across the harbor, silver-paced
As though the sun took step of thee, yet left
Some motion ever unspent in thy stride,—
Implicitly thy freedom staying thee!

Out of some subway scuttle, cell or loft
A bedlamite speeds to thy parapets,
Tilting there momently, shrill shirt ballooning,
A jest falls from the speechless caravan.

Down Wall, from girder into street noon leaks,
A rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene;
All afternoon the cloud-flown derricks turn . . .
Thy cables breathe the North Atlantic still.

And obscure as that heaven of the Jews,
Thy guerdon . . . Accolade thou dost bestow
Of anonymity time cannot raise:
Vibrant reprieve and pardon thou dost show.

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)
Terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge,
Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry,—

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift
Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars,
Beading thy path—condense eternity:
And we have seen night lifted in thine arms.

Under thy shadow by the piers I waited;
Only in darkness is thy shadow clear.
The City's fiery parcels all undone,
Already snow submerges an iron year . . .

O Sleepless as the river under thee,
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend
And of the curveship lend a myth to God.
1926 1930

1 Crane wrote, 18 Feb. 1923, to a friend: 'Very roughly, it [*The Bridge*] concerns a mystical synthesis of America. History and fact, location etc. all have to be transfigured into abstract form that would almost function independently of its subject matter. The initial impulses of our people will have to be gathered up toward the climax of the bridge, symbol of our constructive future, our unique identity, in which is also included our scientific hopes and achievements of the future.' Ibid.,142.

II.4

THE DANCE [2]

THE swift red flesh, a winter king—
Who squired the glacier woman down the sky?
She ran the neighing canyons all the spring;
She spouted arms; she rose with maize—to die.

And in the autumn drouth, whose burnished hands

2 'The Dance' is from Part II: 'Powhatan's Daughter.' Crane wrote, 12 Sept. 1927, of it to Otto Kahn: 'Powhatan's daughter, or Pocahontas, is the mythological nature-symbol chosen to represent the physical body of the continent, or the soil. . . . The five subsections of Part II are mainly concerned with a gradual exploration of this "body" whose first possessor was the Indian. . . . [Section] 4. "The Dance": Here one is on the pure mythical and smoky soil at last! Not only do I describe the conflict between the two races in this dance—I also become identified with the Indian and his world before it is over, which is the only method possible of ever really possessing the Indian and his world as a cultural factor. I think I really succeed in getting under the skin of this glorious and dying animal, in terms of expression, in symbols, which he, himself, would comprehend. Pocahontas (the continent) is the common basis of our meeting, she survives the extinction of the Indian, who finally, after being assumed into the elements of nature (as he understood them) persists only as a kind of "eye" in the sky, or as a star that hangs between day and night—"the twilight's dim perpetual throne." ' Ibid.,335–38.

With mineral wariness found out the stone
Where prayers, forgotten, streamed the
mesa sands?
He holds the twilight's dim, perpetual
throne.

Mythical brows we saw retiring—loth,
Disturbed and destined, into denser green.
Greeting they sped us, on the arrow's oath:
Now lie incorrigibly what years
between . . .

There was a bed of leaves, and broken play;
There was a veil upon you, Pocahontas,
bride—
O princess whose brown lap was virgin
May;
And bridal flanks and eyes hid tawny pride.

I left the village for dogwood. By the canoe
Tugging below the mill-race, I could see
Your hair's keen crescent running, and the
blue
First moth of evening take wing stealthily.

What laughing chains the water wove and
threw!
I learned to catch the trout's moon
whisper; I
Drifted how many hours I never knew,
But, watching, saw that fleet young crescent
die,—

And one star, swinging, take its place,
alone,
Cupped in the larches of the mountain
pass—
Until, immortally, it bled into the dawn.
I left my sleek boat nibbling margin
grass . . .

I took the portage climb, then chose
A further valley-shed; I could not stop.
Feet nozzled wat'ry webs of upper flows;
One white veil gusted from the very top.

O Appalachian Spring! I gained the ledge;
Steep, inaccessible smile that eastward
bends
And northward reaches in that violet
wedge
Of Adirondacks!—wisped of azure wands,

Over how many bluffs, tarns, streams I
sped!
—And knew myself within some boding
shade:—
Grey tepees tufting the blue knolls ahead,
Smoke swirling through the yellow
chestnut glade . . .

A distant cloud, a thunder-bud—it grew,
That blanket of the skies: the padded foot
Within,—I heard it; 'til its rhythm drew,
—Siphoned the black pool from the heart's
hot root!

A cyclone threshes in the turbine crest,
Swooping in eagle feathers down your
back;
Know, Maquokeeta, greeting; know death's
best;
—Fall, Sachem, strictly as the tamarack!

A birch kneels. All her whistling fingers fly.
The oak grove circles in a crash of leaves;
The long moan of a dance is in the sky.
Dance, Maquokeeta: Pocahontas
grieves . . .

And every tendon scurries toward the
twangs
Of lightning deltaed down your saber hair,
Now snaps the flint in every tooth; red
fangs
And splay tongues thinly busy the blue
air . . .

Dance, Maquokeeta! snake that lives
before,
That casts his pelt, and lives beyond!
Sprout, horn!
Spark, tooth! Medicine-man, relent,
restore—
Lie to us,—dance us back the tribal morn!

Spears and assemblies: black drums
thrusting on—
O yelling battlements,—I, too, was liege
To rainbows currying each pulsant bone:
Surpassed the circumstance, danced out
the siege!

And buzzard-circleted, screamed from the
stake;
I could not pick the arrows from my side.
Wrapped in that fire, I saw more escorts
wake—
Flickering, sprint up the hill groins like a
tide.

I heard the hush of lava wrestling your
arms,
And stag teeth foam about the raven throat;
Flame cataracts of heaven in seething
swarms
Fed down your anklets to the sunset's
moat.

O, like the lizard in the furious noon,
That drops his legs and colors in the sun,
—And laughs, pure serpent, Time itself,
and moon
Of his own fate, I saw thy change begun!

And saw thee dive to kiss that destiny
Like one white meteor, sacrosanct and
blent
At last with all that's consummate and free
There, where the first and last gods keep
thy tent.

. . . . . .

Thewed of the levin, thunder-shod and
lean,
Lo, through what infinite seasons dost thou
gaze—
Across what bivouacs of thin angered
slain,
And see'st thy bride immortal in the maize!

Totem and fire-gall, slumbering pyramid—
Though other calendars now stack the sky,
Thy freedom is her largesse, Prince, and
hid
On paths thou knewest best to claim her by.

High unto Labrador the sun strikes free
Her speechless dream of snow, and stirred
again,
She is the torrent and the singing tree;
And she is virgin to the last of men . . .

West, west and south! winds over
Cumberland
And winds across the llano grass resume
Her hair's warm sibilance. Her breasts are
fanned
O stream by slope and vineyard—into
bloom!

And when the caribou slant down for salt
Do arrows thirst and leap? Do antlers shine
Alert, star-triggered in the listening vault
Of dusk?—And are her perfect brows to
thine?

We danced, O Brave, we danced beyond
their farms,
In cobalt desert closures made our
vows . . .
Now is the strong prayer folded in thine
arms,
The serpent with the eagle in the boughs.
1926 1930

III

CUTTY SARK [1]

O, the navies old and oaken,
O, the Temeraire no more!
—MELVILLE.

I met a man in South Street, tall—
a nervous shark tooth swung on his
chain.
His eyes pressed through green grass
—green glasses, or bar lights made them
so—
shine—
GREEN—
eyes—
stepped out—forgot to look at you
or left you several blocks away—

in the nickel-in-the-slot piano jogged
'Stamboul Nights'—weaving somebody's
nickel—sang—

O Stamboul Rose—dreams weave the
rose!

Murmurs of Leviathan he spoke,
and rum was Plato in our heads . . .

1 In the same letter to Kahn, Crane wrote: ' "Cutty Sark" is a phantasy on the period of the whalers and clipper ships. It also starts in the present and "progresses backwards." The form of the poem may seem erratic, but is meant to present the hallucinations incident to rum-drinking in a South Street dive, as well as reminiscent lurchings of a boat in heavy seas, etc. So I allow myself something of the same freedom of punctuation which E.E.Cummings employs.

' "Cutty Sark" is arranged on the plan of a fugue. Two voices—that of the world of Time, and that of the World of Eternity—are interwoven in the action. The Atlantis theme (Eternity, or the Absolute) is the transmuted voice of the nickel-in-the-slot piano, and this voice alternates with that of the derelict sailor and the description of the action. It is into this Absolute that the finale to the whole poem (Atlantis) projects at the close of the book.

'The calligramme of ships, seen as a phantom regatta from Brooklyn Bridge on the way "home" is simply a lyrical apostrophe to a world of loveliness forever vanished.' Ibid.,339.

'It's S.S.*Ala*—Antwerp—now remember
kid
to put me out at three she sails on time.
I'm not much good at time any more
keep
weakeyed watches sometimes snooze—' his
bony hands
got to beating time . . . 'A whaler
once—
I ought to keep time and get over it—I'm a
Democrat—I know what time it is—No
I don't want to know what time it is—that
damned white Arctic killed my time . . .'

O Stamboul Rose—drums weave—

'I ran a donkey engine down there on the
Canal
in Panama—got tired of that—
then Yucatan selling kitchenware—
beads—
have you seen Popocatepetl—birdless
mouth
with ashes sifting down—?
and then the coast again . . .'

Rose of Stamboul O coral Queen—
teased remnants of the skeletons of cities—
and galleries, galleries of watergutted lava
snarling stone—green—drums—drown
Sing!
'—that spiracle!' he shot a finger out the
door . . .
'O life's a geyser—beautiful—my lungs—
No—I can't live on land—!'

I saw the frontiers gleaming of his mind;
or are there frontiers—running sands
sometimes
running sands—somewhere—sands
running . . .
Or they may start some white machine that
sings.
Then you may laugh and dance the
axletree—
steel—silver—kick the traces—and know—

ATLANTIS ROSE drums wreathe the
rose,
the star floats burning in a gulf of tears
and sleep another thousand—

interminably
long since somebody's nickel—stopped—
playing—

A wind worried those wicker-neat lapels, the
swinging summer entrances to cooler
hells . . .
Outside a wharf truck nearly ran him down
—he lunged up Bowery way while the dawn
was putting the Statue of Liberty out—that
torch of hers you know—

I started walking home across the
Bridge . . .

. . . . . .

Blithe Yankee vanities, turreted sprites,
winged
British repartees, skil-
ful savage sea-girls
that bloomed in the spring—Heave, weave
those bright designs the trade winds
drive . . .

Sweet opium and tea, Yo-ho!
Pennies for porpoises that bank the keel!
Fins whip the breeze around Japan!

Bright skysails ticketing the line, wink
round the Horn
to Frisco, Melbourne . . .
Pennants, parabolas—
clipper dreams indelible and ranging,
baronial white on lucky blue!
Perennial-*Cutty*-trophied-*Sark*!

Thermopylæ, Black Prince, Flying Cloud
through Sunda
—scarfed of foam, their bellies veered
green esplanades,
locked in wind-humors, ran their eastings
down;

at Java Head freshened the nip
(sweet opium and tea!)
and turned and left us on the lee . . .

Buntlines tusseling (91 days, 20 hours and
anchored!)
Rainbow, Leander
(last trip a tragedy)—where can you be
Nimbus? and you rivals two—

a long tack keeping—

Taeping?
Ariel?

1926 1930

VII

THE TUNNEL [1]

To Find the Western path
Right thro' the Gates of Wrath.
—BLAKE.

PERFORMANCES, assortments, résumés—
Up Times Square to Columbus Circle lights
Channel the congresses, nightly sessions,
Refractions of the thousand theatres, faces—
Mysterious kitchens. . . . You shall search them all.
Some day by heart you'll learn each famous sight
And watch the curtain lift in hell's despite;
You'll find the garden in the third act dead,
Finger your knees—and wish yourself in bed
With tabloid crime-sheets perched in easy sight.

Then let you reach your hat
and go.
As usual, let you—also
walking down—exclaim
to twelve upward leaving
a subscription praise
for what time slays.

Or can't you quite make up your mind to ride;
A walk is better underneath the L a brisk
Ten blocks or so before? But you find yourself
Preparing penguin flexions of the arms,—
As usual you will meet the scuttle yawn:
The subway yawns the quickest promise home.

Be minimum, then, to swim the hiving swarms
Out of the Square, the Circle burning bright—
Avoid the glass doors gyring at your right,
Where boxed alone a second, eyes take fright
—Quite unprepared rush naked back to light:

And down beside the turnstile press the coin
Into the slot. The gongs already rattle.

And so
of cities you bespeak
subways, rivered under streets
and rivers. . . . In the car
the overtone of motion
underground, the monotone
of motion is the sound
of other faces, also underground—

'Let's have a pencil Jimmy—living now
at Floral Park
Flatbush—on the fourth of July—
like a pigeon's muddy dream—potatoes
to dig in the field—travlin the town—too—
night after night—the Culver line—the
girls all shaping up—it used to be—'

Our tongues recant like beaten weather vanes.
This answer lives like verdigris, like hair
Beyond extinction, surcease of the bone;
And repetition freezes—'What

'what do you want? getting weak on the links?
fandaddle daddy don't ask for change—IS THIS
FOURTEENTH? it's half past six she said—if
you don't like my gate why did you
swing on it, why *didja*
swing on it
anyhow—'
And somehow anyhow swing—

The phonographs of hades in the brain
Are tunnels that re-wind themselves, and love
A burnt match skating in a urinal—
Somewhere above Fourteenth TAKE THE EXPRESS
To brush some new presentiment of pain—

'But I want service in this office SERVICE
I said—after
the show she cried a little afterwards but—'

Whose head is swinging from the swollen strap?
Whose body smokes along the bitten rails,

1 In an earlier letter to Kahn, 18 March 1926, Crane spoke of 'The Tunnel' as 'the encroachment of machinery on humanity; a kind of purgatory in relation to the open sky of the last section.' *Hound and Horn*, VII,iv,678.

Bursts from a smouldering bundle far
behind
In back forks of the chasms of the
brain,—
Puffs from a riven stump far out behind
In interborough fissures of the mind . . . ?

And why do I often meet your visage here,
Your eyes like agate lanterns—on and on
Below the toothpaste and the dandruff ads?
—And did their riding eyes right through
your side,
And did their eyes like unwashed platters
ride?
And Death, aloft—gigantically down
Probing through you—toward me, O
Evermore!
And when they dragged your retching
flesh,
Your trembling hands that night through
Baltimore—
That last night on the ballot rounds, did
you
Shaking, did you deny the ticket, Poe?

For Gravesend Manor change at Chambers
Street.
The platform hurries along to a dead stop.

The intent escalator lifts a serenade
Stilly
Of shoes, umbrellas, each eye attending its
shoe, then
Bolting outright somewhere above where
streets
Burst suddenly in rain. . . . The gongs
recur:
Elbows and levers, guard and hissing door.
Thunder is galvothermic here below. . . .
The car
Wheels off. The train rounds, bending to a
scream,
Taking the final level for the dive
Under the river—
And somewhat emptier than before,
Demented, for a hitching second, humps;
then
Lets go. . . . Toward corners of the floor
Newspapers wing, revolve and wing.
Blank windows gargle signals through the
roar.

And does the Dæmon take you home, also,
Wop washerwoman, with the bandaged
hair?

After the corridors are swept, the
cuspidors—
The gaunt sky-barracks cleanly now, and
bare,
O Genoese, do you bring mother eyes and
hands
Back home to children and to golden hair?

Dæmon, demurring and eventful yawn!
Whose hideous laughter is a bellows
mirth
—Or the muffled slaughter of a day in
birth—
O cruelly to inoculate the brinking dawn
With antennæ toward worlds that glow
and sink;—
To spoon us out more liquid than the dim
Locution of the eldest star, and pack
The conscience navelled in the plunging
wind,
Umbilical to call—and straightway die!

O caught like pennies beneath soot and
steam,
Kiss of our agony thou gatherest;
Condensed, thou takest all—shrill ganglia
Impassioned with some song we fail to
keep.
And yet, like Lazarus, to feel the slope,
The sod and billow breaking,—lifting
ground,
—A sound of waters bending astride the sky
Unceasing with some Word that will not
die . . . !

. . . . . .

A tugboat, wheezing wreaths of steam,
Lunged past, with one galvanic blare stove
up the River.
I counted the echoes assembling, one after
one,
Searching, thumbing the midnight on the
piers.
Lights, coasting, left the oily tympanum of
waters;
The blackness somewhere gouged glass on
a sky.
And this thy harbor, O my City, I have
driven under,
Tossed from the coil of ticking towers. . . .
Tomorrow,
And to be. . . . Here by the River that is
East—
Here at the waters' edge the hands drop
memory;

Shadowless in that abyss they unaccounting lie.
How far away the star has pooled the sea—
Or shall the hands be drawn away, to die?

1926

Kiss of our agony Thou gatherest,
O Hand of Fire gatherest—

1930

HORACE GREGORY

1898–

A NOTE ON POETRY

THE language of modern poetry is best explained by Wallace Stevens in his introduction to William Carlos Williams's *Collected Poems*: I cannot presume to say more than he has said in that significant essay. But there is perhaps something to be said about my technic of recreating images, for it is often closely related to the physical environment in which I live. The motion picture has deeply influenced our visual consciousness, quite as a speech heard over the radio enters our conception of the spoken word. And certain other means of mechanical invention, as well as the sciences of physical-chemistry, have greatly altered our conceptions of time and space. In so far as these actually enter our lives and become part of human consciousness, they become important and from them 'new' sensations are aroused, so much so, that it may be said that we see and feel things in a 'new' perspective. Some few of my poems reveal the direct influence of *montage*, particularly, 'New York, Cassandra' in which images are superimposed one upon the other in rapid succession, in the order of their emotional intensity. This poem must not be read as one might read a narrative, nor should the Emerson section of *Chorus For Survival*, nor 'It is Later Than You Think.' In these poems the visual technic owes a debt to the consciousness of living in a world in which human emotions are deeply affected by 'new' sensations. It is my hope always to convey precise emotion which is the function of poetry, no matter where or when it happens to be written.

NEW YORK, CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA, the world's on fire; the harvest's sour:
from Salem into China, an old sailor's song
sung to the yellow sea that pours
oceans of grain over us, fire and flood;
it will be hard to sleep.

Macbeth has murder'd sleep, sleep festering
under his eyelids, Cassandra, like an old wound split wide.
Macbeth shall sleep no more—good night, Macbeth—
wake well tonight:
spring (naked mind)
arms, sheets, window curtains pushed aside
to see the fire, hear the guns.

Breakfast will be delayed beyond Canopus,
lunch clean, untouched by human hands, embalmed in cellophane,
revolving in an automat, will wait . . .

Somebody said that Macbeth went insane,
leaped thirty stories down to Birnam wood
(inane,
O Dunsinane, your palaces are empty)

The king bled through the sheets (cock crow) Macbeth
grew sick, cracked the eternal verities
engraved upon his heart in rock:

Pick me sweet verities,
sweet verities;
where shall we find again such girls as these?
Nightingale Venus, bright Beatrice shall sing tonight,
silverlipped requiem Mary shall answer them,
clothed in the blood of Christ down to her knees.
Pick me sweet verities,
sweet verities.

They stand,
a row of broken statues from Alexandria (B.C.)
to Salt Lake City.

II

Give Cerberus a non-employment wage, the dog is hungry.
This head served in the war, Cassandra, it lost an eye;
that head spits fire, for it lost its tongue licking the paws
of lions caged in Wall Street and their claws
were merciless.

Follow, O follow him, loam-limbed Apollo, crumbling before
Tiffany's window; he must buy
himself earrings for he meets his love tonight,
(Blossoming Juliet
emptied her love into her true love's lap)
dies in his arms.
He is a poet,
kiss him, Socrates.

They say the red arm of the Proletariat swings,
Hammer and Sickle, a quarter moon in the sky,
The dogstar comets leap . . .
They say Macbeth embezzled funds, the market
fell too soon, too soon the hands of Christ
withered on the cross.
His wife was barren
(her eyes are flowers
blowing in the field down where the Lackawanna railroad runs:
flow softly rivers of coal and steam)
His life insurance went to the banks.

III

There are five limousines, unbought, rotting behind plate glass,
delicate worms in leather and sharp April grass
piercing steel joints . . .
Talk to the guns, Cassandra, tell them this is peace,
not war, not war,
peace,
PEACE.

IV

We came to you with a city in our hands;
we said:
Destroy this city, by God, we hate this city.
You heard us and your house was a tower of flames . . .
Remember there was once a king, an old king with an iron beard,
Whose life was like your house, a floor of ashes.

He put out his eyes, Cassandra.
We shall keep
our eyes though we learn nothing . . .
The night is cold,
Cassandra.
1932 1933

POEM FOR MY DAUGHTER

TELL her I love
she will remember me
always, for she
is of my tissues made;
she will remember
these streets where the moon's shade
falls and my shadow mingles
with shadows sprung
from a midnight tree.

Tell her I love that I
am neither in earth nor sky,
stone nor cloud,
but only this
walled garden she knows well
and which her body is.

Her eyes alone shall make
me blossom for her sake;
contained within her, all
my days shall flower or die,
birthday or funeral
concealed where no man's eye
finds me unless she says:
He is my flesh and I
am what he was.
1932 1933

FROM CHORUS FOR SURVIVAL

VI

UNDER the stone I saw them flow,
express Times Square at five o'clock
eyes set in darkness, trampling down
all under, limbs and bodies driven

in crowds, crowds over crowds, the street
exit in starlight and dark air
to empty rooms, to empty arms,
wall paper gardens flowering there,
error and loss upon the walls.

I saw each man who rode alone
prepare for sleep in deeper sleep
and there to ride, sightless, unknown,
to darkness that no day recalls.

Riderless home, shoulder to head,
feet on concrete and steel to ride
Times Square at morning and repeat
tomorrow's five o'clock in crowds
(red light and green for speed) descend:
break entrance home to love or hate
(I read the answer at the door)
the destination marked 'Return,
no stop till here; this is the end.'
1934–1935 1935

XIII

THROUGH streets where crooked Wicklow flows
I saw a man with broken nose:
His venomous eyes turned full on me
And cursed the ancient poverty
That scarred his limbs and mired his clothes.

O cursed, wind-driven poverty
That breaks the man and mires his clothes.

Beyond the street, beyond the town,
Rose hill and tree and sea and down:
O drear and shadowy green ash-tree,
O hills that neither sleep nor rest
But are like waves in that dark sea
That rides the wind, nor-east, nor-west,

O cursed, wind-driven poverty!

Below the hill, below the town,
Deep, whispering voices everywhere
Break quiet in the morning air
And mount the skies to pierce the sun.

I saw the naked, cowering man
Shrink in the midnight of his eye,
There, to eat bitterness within,
And close the door and hide the sin
That made his withering heart run dry.
O venomous, dark, unceasing eye
That turned on street and town and me,
Between the waves of hill and sea
Until his eyelid closed the sky.

The rain-rilled, shaken, green ash-tree
Spread roots to gather him and me
In downward pull of earth that drains
The blood that empties through men's veins
Under the churchyard, under stone
Until the body lies alone
And will not wake: nor wind, nor sky
Bring sunlight into morning air
And breathe disquiet everywhere
Into the heart of hill and town.

O heart whose heart is like my own
And not to rest or sleep but climb
Wearily out of earth again
To feed again that venomous eye
That is the manhood of my time,
Whether at home or Wicklow town.

This is my street to walk again,
O cursed, wind-driven poverty,
I hear the coming of the rain.

1934 1935

XIV

After a year's travel Emerson recrosses the Atlantic and is back home in Concord, 1833.

'THE voyage crossed, the firmament one star,
New found New England, home:
Now meet me there
In Concord's orchard where the apple bough
Swings over shoulder at the window-pane
In the green season . . .
Wake my limbs again
Adam-Ralph Emerson, the first man here;
Eden, the gate unlatched, this place my own.

He recalls London:

And I have seen the world, heard the lark climbing
His golden sinuous music in dark air,
That speech unknown but to the subtlest ear
Echo through morning over St. Paul's dome,
Wing following through April's hemisphere,
Not less familiar now than earth at home:
England, the colosseum of great minds

Visits Coleridge,

Under deep trees, the bright-eyed mariner,
Coleridge, speaking and the music gone:
Miraculous white hair, the oracle
Voice descending, flowing on,

Knowing, perhaps, that I would understand:
Me, in a vision, under visionary eyes,
My pale, frail body and the profile spare.

Visible the wedding guest who must depart,
Must go like youth before the day is done,
Saying "good-bye" and clasp an aged hand.

then Carlyle.

Perhaps he knew, perhaps he saw . . .

Perhaps Carlyle
Read something in my veins.

Mary, 'the aunt of genius' speaks

We are a little mad,
The Emersons, blood thin but deep and the quick body given
To God at bed-time, clipped within the spirit
In sleep, in prayers, the candle lit at dark
In homage to the sun.
Dissolve the body and the light is gone:
The stars expire and angels lose their glory,
The vertebræ within a nest of quiet
Between the sheets to fear the wind that stirs
Cypress and willow over us. . . .

Essential
I, the boy, the curious scientific dreaming eye
Fixed on the landscape ash-tree, elm,
And rippling grass like water at low tide:
Trees' branches spars of Salem's ships that rode
Jewel-edged at sunset into Asia's side,
Her night our noon, her noon-day our tomorrow,
The tropic desert silence under snow. . . .

The Emerson family fireside.

Lyceum
Lectures at the hearth at home, and in the fire there,
My boyhood saw
Greek islands floating over Harvard Square:
Homer, the blind head sleeping
In celestial seas;
Everett, the voice, asking whose lips were these
Come out of time to breathe our native air?
State House, the fallen stone Acropolis. . . .

The Emerson poets: Dante, the old poet,

And at my hearth, the family Lyceum:
Feed the soul's sepulture, they said, and hear
Dante the Florentine who walked to heaven,
Spiring in golden cages out of hell
To hail unearthly love, the Beatrice
Lady and bride,
spirit on the last hill
Of that high world,
O Paradiso!
And the last desire
Turned in a crystal image on the stair:
More beautiful than dress that angels wear
Was hers, whose waking limbs were cloaked with fire

and Thomas Gray, the new.

Read Thomas Gray, the grave-yard nightingale,
The cold rhyme out of season, raven-dark
November-piercing death at April's core:
Love, fame, Cromwell or Milton sleep at last
In dust that circles at the cottage door. . . .
Worship and heresy: God's food, the devil's meat,
Black cloth and ashes where I sit to eat—

The rejection of the ministry and Calvinism.

To be divine
(and through my heart great goodness flows)
To walk in India at a Concord shrine.

Bitter the thinking man who sees
The careful millionaire, the red frontier
In city walls closed; and the hot mills pour
Iron for guns, starvation, war:
To know too well, to think too long:

The bitter hours into seasons pass
Until the soul fills up,
Breaks, scatters backward into that better time that never was.
We are alive this hour and survive:
Then, walk with me alone an orchard mile
Into the twilight end of Concord days,
Know in my face the acquiescent smile,
Dissention always deepest in mild gaze
To look down darkness toward the trembling light—

Prince Arthur in the Tower: No more the eyes of youth.

Lights out! and the globe broken, *And with hot irons*
Put out both mine eyes?,
Still gaze toward music where the light
Was and the song:

The last memory of Europe:

Swing chariot philomel in midnight skies!
Broken, yet not unheard.
Say in my heart I am
That angry ancient legend of a bird
Who walked alive
eating the ashes of his funeral urn,
Alive to walk until the memory fails
In clapboard lecture halls.

Phoenix

O my America,
And not to speak of you except in praise,
The midland ocean at my heart,
Thou art Atlantis risen from the seas,
Bride of the Indian Summer and the corn,

The mountain forest, slow, unwinding plain:
The many footed cities at thy side . . .

I am thy husband to divorce thee never:
Never-forever is a long, long time
For faith in blindness and the memory gone.

This place an orchard and no roads,
Yet every step I take shall be my own
Till houses fall in houses, cities fall:
Still floats the wedding caul, the oversoul,
My name the hydrographic written on
This stone that crumbles with the garden wall.

Cheerful, the actual smile is permanent,
I turn my head always to face the sun.'

1933–1935 1935

XV

The meek shall disinherit the earth

From Furnished Rooms at twilight through the rain,—
Traffic in asphalt mirrors on the Square
Gathers before it mounts Fifth Avenue,
North through the white-arc'd victory in stone,
Toward five o'clock, past Forty Second Street,—
Midnight at Riverside and no return . . .
The voices out of air,
The dying echoes of a bitter year:
'Come talk to me at 61, my attic
An antique stairway-landing in the sky,
My heart, your friend . . .'
O poet, dying at this year's end,
An old man in the mirror's calendar!

The house, an old ship harbored into alien time,
Dry-docked in broken timber, the bricks fallen,
Steel hawsers split, the cornice sprung:
Here, the brass plate, another poet's name,
'Where Allen Seeger lived,' but read no more,
See this man leaning from the top flight floor,
Unfolding light from the quick eye,
Mid-darkness, down.

His body was a shadow on the stair,
The resurrection from a wax museum
In X-ray photographs against the wall,
The voice, Isaiah's noise at heaven's throne.

'I have been ill, been poor, the menopause
Too long and all gestation ceased, yet in my dreams alive
With poetry, the long wave coiling
In my blood, and after it, the tide.

I am the poet of the golden bird,

The winged bough whose day is always spring,
Whose fiery chariot is the song unheard
Leaping the ashes of time's Illium
From dark to dark . . .
Perhaps no one will hear

Me when I say "It is impossible to die,"
Seeing men starve at street corners in rain,
(My face reflected in each eye,
The soul's glass inward down the vertebræ),
When there's a word unsaid that I must find
Written across the bottom of my brain,
There, in the long quietus after pain,
In sleep, in memories . . .
Shakespeare and Dante singing in the shade,
Perpetual oak and olive sheltering
The delicate laurel of middle-aged spring—
May in October and an early frost . . .
The dream still warm—
Will no one hear my dream?
Before the words are lost
In speech of men unborn on foreign shores?

Weeping in gas-lit solitudes of fame,
I saw the naked goddess of the sky
Open her lips to mine
Until I waked "Good morning" to the sun,
And no one knew my name . . .
I had been gone
Too long, revolving doors, no entrance, here's the street,
We'll take your finger prints next time we meet,
The face is unfamiliar—
And old friends
Stored all my letters in forgotten drawers.

Then my book perished
At second-hand, old stock, unsold in dust,
The leaf uncut, unfallen from the tree.
Who touches it unfolds my heart, heart, body
Trembling between sheets in a cold room
On winter mornings and the sun gone out
To pace the park with nursemaids in the Square . . .

O my America, in me discover
Thy face in darkness and thy road dissevered,
The hundred million souls unknown, unknown
Bright in oblivion and yet unseen,
Each house an institution for the blind,
A local habitation with no name,
Until the blow-torch splinters stone . . .
I saw the flame
Leap fifty stories high in elevators
Riding through the sky.
Will someone speak? There is no requiem.'

1933 1935

IT IS LATER THAN YOU THINK

Abigail to Minerva

Save us, O save us, cries Abigail to Minerva:
Do you see what time it is
On the clock's face, full moon half-risen in July,
Bells chiming? Look at time, Minerva, O come in from the tomb,
That orchard where the apple tree's last century
Now blooms underground, its dry roots spreading
Across the graveyard whose only flower is thin grass
Of lost New Milford. I am here on the top stair
Holding the banister to keep from falling.

Come, come to me, Minerva, before the clock strikes,
Before we dissolve in night wind, the pure darkness that has no name.
Do not wait now until I call no more,
Until the voice itself is gone, when hands lose hold on oak,
When stays in calico no longer hold weak body.
Is that your footstep at the door?
Is your hand raised to knock, have you come quietly
As you once did as a child, deceiving me, stealing the young heart
Out of my clumsy flesh, perfect cool fingers closing over the rich heart?
My body trembling, my lips saying: 'No, this is not my sister,
This gold-haired girl, whose pale skin is delight,
Clear water in crystal as the noon sun shines through it,
She is not my sister,' but someone seen
As a vision in a noon-tide dream, naked and faintly smiling,
Small hand of love extended from thin arm,
The bare feet scarcely pressing grass
And love's hand offering new-picked buttercups.

Come, come, O come, Minerva, both of us must be here
To meet this hour in an old empty house
Where the clock strikes everywhere, even between its walls,
Through coverlet, through pillow: 'One, two; one, two'
As though distant owls called us awake to tell us the actual dream had fled:
That we could not return to what we were
In the old orchard on a summer noon,
There, quite alone, locked in each other's arms in prayer;
That a third face had slipped between us
And a third pair of eyes looked down
From heaven unmoving, piercing sun's rays at noon,
Entering even the darkness of the night that has no moon.

If I were calling someone who had no name, she would come sooner, Minerva!
If my voice were a voice without words,
Would you hear me calling, calling as a bird calls
After the trap has sprung and will call again
After he has been set free, knowing the cage is always there,
Even in the topmost branches of the tallest elm?
Would you hear me then, Minerva, would you know the voice was I,
A tired woman, who has lived fifty years too long
Beyond noon when we met and from that hour had no need of love?

This white house is no longer white, but gray rain-beaten,

Difficult to see at night unless the lamp
Is lit at kitchen window or the moon carries our iron
Cock-crowing weather vane across her face.
Do not step from the path, Minerva, clear road between our hearts,
Sun-lit, moon-lit, for the orchard grass
Uncut so long conceals the treacherous dead grape vine, apple root,
Rose brier, rusty scythe and the half-dug pit that was to be a grave.
Come to the door, say without words through faintly smiling lips:
'Yes, we have lived too long and there is danger everywhere'
Because the clock's hands move across the full moon's face,
Because Grandfather Colby died before the hour struck,
And the whole town knew the clock was slow,
Retarding time that I could not set right:
Loss of a million hours in our blood.
I heard him scream in the same voice that I call now:
'It's late, it's very late'
And after him banks closed, crops failed,
And the workmen starved like varnished rats between factory walls
And the food store failed.
'It's late,' he said, 'will someone break the clock that's always late!'

Come to me, child Minerva, like the child Christ
In a vision to his dying mother,
Thorn-free and body whole, the cross forgotten,
Eyes wide and beautiful, forever piercing death.
Come, come, Minerva, close the door softly as I no longer wait,
Feeling the earth downplunging in darkness, sink in deeper earth,
I saying quietly: 'It is very late;
It is later than you think.'
1936

COMMENTARIES

VOLUME II

WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)

'THE United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem.' Whitman's early life was his best preparation for expressing this poem in *Leaves of Grass*. He was born on Long Island in 1819, the son of a carpenter. He became first an office boy for a lawyer, then printer's devil, then schoolmaster, and finally newspaper editor. Off and on he returned to carpentering with his father. The countryside and seashore of Brooklyn and the crowded streets of New York became familiar to him; he even wandered as far afield as New Orleans and Chicago. As an editorial writer he understood the enthusiasms and aspirations of the people, and as a constant reader and reviewer he absorbed something from articulate philosophies. Tentatively, as early as 1847, he began to sketch poems which should give form to the body, the sense of fraternity, and the soul of the American people.

Leaves of Grass, first set in type by his own hands, was issued in 1855 as a slender volume of twelve poems. In each of the numerous, successive editions it grew larger, as he included new volumes, some of which were first separately published.

'The want for something finished, completed, and technically beautiful will certainly not be supplied by this writer, as it is by existing esthetic works. For the best poems both the old ones and later ones now accepted as first class are polished, rhymed regular, with all the elegance of fine conceits, carefully elaborated, showing under all the restraints of art, language and phrase chosen after very much has been rejected, and only the best admitted, and then all joined and cemented together, and finally presenting the beauty of some architectural temple—some palace, proudly rising in proportions of marble, entered from superb porticos and adorned with statuary satisfying the art sense and that of form, fulfilling beauty and inviting criticism. Not so his poetry. Its likeness is not the solid stately palace, nor the sculpture that adorns it, nor the paintings on its walls. Its analogy is *the Ocean*. Its verses are the liquid, billowy waves, ever rising and falling, perhaps sunny and smooth, perhaps wild with storm, always moving, always alike in their nature as rolling waves, but hardly any two exactly alike in size or measure (meter), never having the sense of something finished and fixed, always suggesting something beyond.'

The form of Whitman's poetry came from its subject; the freeness of his verse was an expression of the freeness of nature and the people, seen, however, through his own personality.

Whitman's early *Leaves of Grass* was the exuberant outgrowth of an almost adolescent enthusiasm for body and brotherhood. The Civil War matured him. In 1862 he began to nurse the wounded; day after day

he passed tirelessly from bedside to bedside, his sensitive hands cooling fevered brows, his strong arms about the shoulders of dying men. Whitman had always been fascinated by death, as 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking' indicates; 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd,' however, was written not from the single incident of the assassination of President Lincoln, but soberly drawn from the suffering and deaths of countless common soldiers.

The poems which Whitman wrote after the Civil War were chiefly concerned with the soul. Whitman grew to understand that any significance attached to the American people meant little as a lusty cry of nationalism, and carried weight only as a thoughtful expression of mankind. His ear for poetry also developed and became more sensitive; and it is in his later work that he became a great poet.

Whitman was often criticized for the lengthy cataloguings to be found in poems like his 'Song of Myself.' He intended the mass effect of such *pointillisme* to blend the individual citations into a single gigantic impression, full of life. Similarly impressionistic is the effect of his prose jottings in *Specimen Days and Collect*(Philadelphia, 1882–83), except that here the greater individual length and his increased sensibility gave to each its own life.

Whitman's influence has not always been direct, but it has been profound. Such widely different English writers as Robert Louis Stevenson and Gerard Manley Hopkins were indebted to him. 'French poetry,' said Richard Aldington, 'from about 1908 to 1914, was largely Whitman.' In America his influence was not widely felt until after 1910. To poets everywhere, once the lesson had sunk in, Whitman's pioneer work meant the extension of territory and the possibility of individual expression. He seemed to be 'The Poet' for whom Emerson had called.

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EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)

QUIETLY and perceptively, in a corner of Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson was writing poetry. Like Thoreau, she had 'business with a drop of dew.' She centered her attention not on the unusual, but on customary things seen unusually.

Her life was confined to her red-brick home in Amherst, to the flowers in her garden, and to the thick trees which shut both in. She seldom saw those outside of her immediate family, yet she seemed perfectly happy. She had no regrets at having given up the gaiety of her life as a young girl in a college town. 'I am small,' she wrote to a friend, 'like the wren; and my hair is bold, like the chestnut burr; and my eyes, like the sherry in the glass that the guest leaves.' 'I find ecstasy in living; the mere sense of living is joy enough.'

She expressed her rapture in a thousand brief poems, charged with the highest emotion, familiarity, and wit. Her quick perception delighted in provocative incongruities. God was a next-door neighbor to talk pleasantly with; the burdens of human existence were to be expressed in terms of the trivialities of a household. She liked piquancy of rhyme as well as of thought, and deliberately sought the effect of assonance, half-rhymes, or no rhyme at all.

Emily Dickinson was perfectly sure of herself; she would never change a line for the sake of convention.

She sought also to escape from the tired language of poetry. The hummingbird among the blossoms followed 'a route of evanescence,' and she saw the railway train, like the sun, 'lap the miles.' She weeded and trimmed the diction of her poetry with the busy fingers of a woman in her garden. Like a good housewife she kept words from standing idle, and her sense of economy of expression brought sharpness and distinction.

'Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?' With this intelligent query, and definition of her aim, she sent four poems in 1862 to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, whose work she admired. Higginson became her friend and critic, though she never changed one line to please him, and neither he nor the few who knew she was writing could persuade her to publish her work. Her poems were meant to be sent with a letter, to be tucked into a cluster of flowers for a friend, or to be lowered in a basket from her room to children at play.

'If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her,' she said; nor could she, even by death. In 1890, 1891, and 1896, three series of her poems were published. Gradually the public came to understand that one of America's finest poets had lived without their having known her. It was not, however, until in the nineteen-twenties, with her inclusion in various anthologies and with the publication of *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* by her niece, that there was true appreciation of her poetic significance.

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A.L.Hampson, *Emily Dickinson: A Bibliography*(Northampton, Mass., 1930).

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (1836–1907)

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH'S first book of poems, *The Bells*(N.Y., 1855), appeared in the same year as Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, but their futures as poets could hardly have been more widely different. Aldrich had been born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and was in 1855 a clerk in a New York counting-room. Through the success of his romantic and sentimental poems he soon became an editor, and in 1866 moved to Boston, which he found delightful. Within a few months he wrote to Bayard Taylor: 'The humblest man of letters has a position here which he doesn't have in New York. To be known as an able writer is to have the choicest society opened to you. . . . A knight of the quill here is supposed necessarily to be a gentleman. In New York—he's a Bohemian!'

Aldrich was no Bohemian, and became a very good editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He was never very original, but was a man of great taste and a writer of considerable skill. Certain of his short stories, such as

'Marjorie Daw,' were extremely popular in their day, while the reminiscences of his childhood, in *The Story of a Bad Boy*(Boston, 1870), became a minor classic of juvenile literature.

His best work is to be found in the poetry of his later years. Here he wrote with all the precision of an engraver upon silver. He used to like to say of himself, 'Though I am not genuine Boston, I am Boston-plated.' Most people agreed that it was excellent plate.

The Writings of T.B.Aldrich, 9 vols.(Boston, 1896).

A Book of Songs and Sonnets Selected from the Poems of Thomas Bailey Aldrich(Boston, 1906). This represents Aldrich's own selection from his poetry.

Ponkapog Papers(Boston, 1903).

Ferris Greenslet, *The Life of T.B.Aldrich* (Boston, 1908). Contains a bibliography.

Lilian W.Aldrich, *Crowding Memories*(Boston, 1920).

BAYARD TAYLOR (1825–1878)

BAYARD TAYLOR described his *Views A-Foot* (N.Y., 1846) as 'a new voice from the track where thousands had been before him.' This account of a pilgrimage through Europe made him famous at the age of twenty-one. Most of his poetry was a similarly romantic pilgrimage where thousands had been, and was equally popular. Taylor wrote several novels and dramas, a fine translation of Goethe's *Faust*, and innumerable travel books and volumes of poetry. Few, however, have any literary distinction.

Taylor was born in 1825 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and was largely self-educated. In 1844 he published his first book of poems; partly with the meagre proceeds from it, and partly with the financial assistance of editors who were willing to print accounts of his travels, he immediately went abroad for two years. In 1849 he journeyed to California to report the gold rush, his impressions of which are to be found in *Eldorado*(N.Y., 1850) and *A Book of Romances, Lyrics and Songs*(Boston, 1851). In 1851 he made another trip to Europe, and continued his travels to the Near East and the Orient. His *Poems of the Orient*(N.Y., 1854), and particularly the 'Bedouin Song,' brought a sensuous titillation similar to that occasioned by Melville's *Typee*. The public looked on him as the ideal romantic, and whether he grasped an Alpine stock, swung a miner's pick, or stood clad in Bedouin robes, they thronged to hear him lecture on his travels.

The exoticism of his experiences, the charm of his personality, and the great seriousness with which he undertook deeper and deeper themes of poetry blinded critics, as well as the public, to the shallowness of his achievement. It was, perhaps, because he felt so strongly that a poet 'must pitch his tent on many a distant field' that his work lacks any definite integrity.

M.H.Taylor, ed., *B.Taylor, Poetical Works* (Boston, 1907).

J.R.Schultz, ed., *The Unpublished Letters of Bayard Taylor in the Huntington Library* (San Marino, Calif., 1937).

Marie Hansen-Taylor and H.E.Scudder, *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1884).

A.H.Smyth, *Bayard Taylor*(Boston, 1896). Contains bibliography.

R.C.Beatty, *Bayard Taylor: Laureate of the Gilded Age*(Norman, Okla., 1936).

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN (1833–1908)

THE leader of the American late-Victorian poets was Edmund Clarence Stedman. He was brought up in Norwich, Connecticut, and was a student at Yale until he was expelled in 1852 after his second year. Following periods as newspaper editor, manufacturer, war correspondent, and assistant in the office of the Attorney-General of the United States, in 1863 he entered Wall Street. The rest of his life was divided between Bears, Bulls, and the Muse of Poetry. 'You know that *all* my writing is done after a long day's work.'

Stedman's own poetry of consequence is confined to a few lyrics and ballads. His chief significance to the historian of American literature comes through his immense influence as an editor and as the

friend and critic of almost every contemporary poet from Taylor to Robinson. He wrote a critical study of British verse in his *Victorian Poets*(Boston, 1875) and, to supplement it, edited *A Victorian Anthology* (Boston, 1895); to cover the American scene he wrote *Poets of America*(Boston, 1885) and edited *An American Anthology* (Boston, 1900). Each is an important summary of the general taste formed by an admiration of the technique and aims of Tennyson.

Stedman realized that 'a new land calls for a new song,' and he sensed that the poetry of his time should bear a direct and vigorous relationship to contemporary thought. Yet he wrote: 'To my notion, metaphysics and transcendentalism are at the opposite pole from the divine and clear spirit of poetry.' 'The traits . . . which I have deprecated earnestly are in the first place obscurity and hardness. . . .' By the rejection of attempts to grapple with the problem of expression, Stedman encouraged poetry which dealt more with mood than with the mind. He failed to understand that a clear lyric spirit not only cannot express the uncertain and troubled times of intellectual change, but does not arise from them. Stedman's chief concern was with conventional craftsmanship, and he helped to stifle any potential vigor by too great an emphasis on traditional forms. If poetry was truly to express his transitional age, it should have been allowed to develop its own strength and to find its own forms.

The Poems of Edmund Clarence Stedman (Boston, 1908).

The Nature and Elements of Poetry(Boston, 1892).

Laura Stedman and G.M.Gould, *Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman*, 2 vols.(N.Y., 1910). Contains bibliography.

BRET HARTE (1836–1902)

THE literary exploitation of the frontier received its first great impetus from Francis Bret Harte. He was born in 1836 in Albany, New York, and in 1854 followed his widowed mother to California. Harte tried his hand at numerous occupations which took him into the mining country, but what he really wanted to do was to write. When he was twenty-one he began contributing to the *Golden Era* and finally became one of its editors, then editor of the *Californian*, and finally of the *Overland Monthly*, all local magazines. His earliest literary attempts were, in the manner of Irving, to make use of the romantic Spanish civilization of California's past, and 'The Legend of Monte del Diablo' appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1863. It was, however, through stories like 'The Outcasts of Poker Flat' and poems like 'Plain Language from Truthful James' that he became by 1870 famous throughout the country. In 1871 he left for the East, where for a few years he was the darling of publishers and the public. In 1878, his funds growing low, he went as consul to Crefield in Germany, and after two years of service there and five years as consul in Glasgow, he settled in England for the rest of his life.

It was altogether fitting for Bret Harte to lay a sprig of western pine at the grave of Dickens. From him he learned the trick of making unusual characters seem typical, and of providing reality with an atmosphere of sentiment. Harte had a fine eye for the colorful and a keen sense of dramatic form, to both of which the development of the short story owed much. Rudyard Kipling, in 1881, when he was editing *The Pioneer* in India, queried, 'Why buy Bret Harte . . . when I was prepared to supply home-grown fiction on the hoof?' It was exactly what Harte himself had done with Dickens.

Harte wrote on the same theme for the rest of his life, but he never developed his art beyond that of his earliest successes, nor did he ever have much understanding of anything but the obvious dramatic significance of his material. Harte was an Easterner who had struck it rich by stumbling on a vein of free gold. Unfortunately for him it petered out.

The Writings of Bret Harte, 19 vols.(Boston, 1896–1903).

G.R.Stewart, Jr., *Bret Harte, Argonaut and Exile*(Boston, 1931).

H.C.Merwin, *The Life of Bret Harte, with*

Some Account of the California Pioneers (Boston, 1911).
T.E.Pemberton, *The Life of Bret Harte* (London, 1903).
F.L.Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story*(New York, 1923),220–44.

JOHN HAY (1838–1905)

JOHN HAY is best known in political history as a suave and brilliant statesman, but in literature he is remembered for his coarse *Pike County Ballads*(Boston, 1871). Hay knew the Pikes, who were the chief stock figures of early frontier literature, from having lived among them on the edge of the Mississippi, in the village of Warsaw, Illinois, where he spent most of his boyhood, and from his school days in Pike County, Illinois. He attended a small college in Springfield, but finished his studies at Brown University in Rhode Island. It was his ambition, as his close friend Henry Adams later observed, 'to fill in the social gaps of a class which, as yet, showed but thin ranks and little cohesion.'

The fact that his uncle's law office, where he studied after graduation, was next to Lincoln's in Springfield, Illinois, led, through the persuasion of John G. Nicolay, to Hay's being made an assistant private secretary to the President in Washington. The ten-volume chronicle of these years, which he wrote with Nicolay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*(N.Y., 1890), became famous.

Hay's career included the role of historian, novelist, journalist, and diplomat, but only incidentally that of poet. After several years in minor diplomatic posts he became an editorial writer and night editor of the New York *Tribune*, for which he wrote poems like 'Jim Bludsoe.' In these roughhewn ballads his work was original and native, but he was unfortunately turned to conventional and unimportant versifying both by the misdirected criticism of his time and his own conception of the expression of a gentleman. This ideal he achieved as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, a post which he filled with 'completeness,' 'harmony,' and 'perfect ease.'

The Complete Poetical Works of John Hay (Boston, 1916).
Tyler Dennett, *John Hay: From Poetry to Politics*(N.Y., 1930).
F.L.Pattee, 'The Discovery of Pike County,' *A History of American Literature Since* 1870(N.Y., 1915).
Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, in Modern Library(N.Y., 1931).

JOAQUIN MILLER (1839–1913)

JOAQUIN MILLER loved dash, and he lived picturesquely. 'My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west.' He was a son of the open. His parents, who named him Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, were restless pioneers; his first years were spent on the Mississippi frontier, and in 1852 he travelled with them in a covered wagon to Oregon. He at one time attended a mission school at Eugene, but what he preferred to remember from his youth were his adventures as a runaway boy in California mining camps, his establishment of a pony express, and his life among the Indians. What he did not actually experience he later imagined, and an exciting legend grew up around him. In 1868 he published his first volume of poems, and in 1869 his second. In 1870 he went to San Francisco, where he met Bret Harte and his circle, and had a taste of what the public liked. He moved east to New York, and on to London. There, in 1871, he published his *Songs of the Sierras*, which caused a literary sensation. William Michael Rossetti, in particular, took him under his wing and introduced him to everyone. In his spurred boots and sombrero, Miller became at once for the British a symbol of the 'picturesqueness' of America. 'It helps sell the poems, boys! And it tickles the duchesses!'

Miller lived with dash, and he wrote with

dash. 'All life, all action that is beautiful and grand and good is poetry waiting for expression. The world is one great poem, because it is very grand, very good, and very beautiful.' This optimism helped him to find heroic elements wherever he turned, but particularly in the West. Byron and, later, Browning influenced him poetically, but his vigor and sense of natural grandeur are particularly his own.

Miller returned to America in September 1871, and after other sojourns in England, South America, and Italy, and brief returns to America, he settled for three years in a log cabin outside of Washington, D.C. Then he moved in 1886 to Oakland, California, where for the rest of his life he lived at 'The Hights,' a frame hut which he built above the city. There as a sage and eccentric he became a Californian phenomenon, representing a mysticism that was still popular and a West that had passed.

Joaquin Miller's Poems, 6 vols.(San Francisco, 1909–10).
Memorie and Rime(N.Y., 1884).
S.G.Firman, ed., *Overland in a Covered Wagon: An Autobiography of Joaquin Miller*(N.Y., 1930).
Martin S. Peterson, *Joaquin Miller: Literary Frontiersman*(Stanford University, Calif., 1937).

SAMUEL CLEMENS (1835–1910)

SAMUEL CLEMENS was born in Florida, Missouri, and moved when he was four to the Mississippi river town of Hannibal. In *Tom Sawyer*(Hartford, 1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*(N.Y., 1885) he made out of a somewhat romanticized Hannibal that which came to be the common scene of American childhood. In 1848 he became a printer, and two years later made a start as a newspaper man. In 1853 he left Hannibal to go down the river to St. Louis, and during the next few years travelled as far afield in his work as New York and Philadelphia. In 1857 he set out for South America, but on reaching New Orleans decided instead to become a river pilot. When the river traffic was closed at the outbreak of the Civil War, he moved on to Nevada to join his brother. There, in reporting for the Virginia City *Enterprise*, he began to develop his power as a writer.

Samuel Clemens became 'Mark Twain' at Virginia City. In the lusty and exaggerated language of the men who thronged there at the discovery of the Comstock Lode he found expression for his genius. No matter how greatly he later refined his vocabulary for the public, the richness and vitality of frontier speech remained with him.

'The humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the *manner* of the telling; the comic story and the witty story upon the *matter*. The humorous story may be spun out to great length, and may wander around as much as it pleases, and arrive nowhere in particular; but the comic and witty stories must be brief and end with a point. . . . The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it . . .' This was Mark Twain's analysis of his 'Jumping Frog,' and was the basis of all his humorous and satiric writings. It was exaggeration of one sort, as 'Huck Finn on the Raft' was of the opposite. Less fortunately, it was also the cause of his continued insensitivity to form.

'The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,' written in 1865 when he was a reporter in California, made him nationally known. *Innocents Abroad*(Hartford, 1869) heightened his popularity. Mark Twain travelled to the Holy Land, and poked, en route, into the same shadowy corners which had lured authors from the time of Irving to that of Taylor. He roared with scornful delight at what he discovered, and Americans howled with him. It was the beginning of another declaration of independence on the part of the people.

Shortly after his return, in 1870, he married, and became editor of the Buffalo *Express*. In 1872 he published *Roughing It*, one of the few books worthy of the frontier life it portrayed. *Life on the Mississippi*(Boston, 1883) was a somewhat more polished, but equally worthy, account of flush times on

the river. These and the stories of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn are, in every important sense, classics.

In 1872 he moved to Hartford, Connecticut, and guided by his wife's conventional touch settled down to a quiet and on the whole conventional life. Emotionally, however, he rebelled, and he developed a bitter cynicism towards most of the opinions and beliefs which his fellow citizens held proper. His Voltairean dialogue on Little Bessie is a far cry from his account of the Jumping Frog.

The Writings of Mark Twain, 25 vols.(N.Y., 1899–1910).

F.L.Pattee, ed., *Mark Twain*, Representative Selections, with Introduction and Bibliography, in American Writers Series (N.Y., 1935).

A.B.Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography*, 3 vols.(N.Y., 1912).

——, ed., *Mark Twain's Letters*, 2 vols. (N.Y., 1917).

——, ed., *Mark Twain's Autobiography*, 2 vols.(N.Y., 1924).

——, ed., *Mark Twain's Notebook*(N.Y., 1935).

Gamaliel Bradford, 'Mark Twain,' *American Portraits*(Boston, 1922), 1–28.

Van Wyck Brooks, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*(N.Y., rev. ed., 1933).

Bernard De Voto, *Mark Twain's America* (Boston, 1932).

E.C.Wagenknecht, *Mark Twain: The Man and His Work*(New Haven, 1935).

Merle Johnson, comp., *A Bibliography of the Works of Mark Twain*(N.Y., rev. ed., 1935).

HENRY TIMROD (1828–1867)

HENRY TIMROD was born in Charleston, South Carolina. In this Cambridge of the South he became a friend of Paul Hayne, when they were boys together at Mr. Coate's school. The two later joined the group which gathered about the aging William Gilmore Simms, and were filled with Simms' ambition for a Southern literature.

Timrod, who was the son of a literary editor and minor poet, studied for a time at what is now the University of Georgia, tried law, and finally became a private tutor. Most of his poetry was published in *The Southern Literary Messenger*, or in *Russell's Magazine* which succeeded it as the voice of the South. A volume of his poems was published in Boston in 1860, and was favorably reviewed, but no other volume appeared until Hayne edited, with a laudatory preface, the posthumous *Poems of Henry Timrod* (N.Y., 1873).

'The Cotton Boll' and 'Charleston' are given significance by their sense of the impending Civil War, but have a poetical strength and independence of their own. The greater part of his work, however, was merely a languorous blending of Wordsworth and Tennyson. As much as Timrod admired Poe, he could not accept the latter's insistence on Beauty as the sole criterion of poetry. He preferred Wordsworth's lesson, 'first, that the materials and stimulants of poetry might be found in the commonest things about us; and second, behind the sights, sounds, and hues of external nature there is "something more than meets the senses, something undefined and unutterable which must be felt and perceived by the soul" in its moments of rapt contemplation.' 'When I stand in the presence of Truth, Beauty, and Power I recognize poetry.' As a poetic principle it ought to have been enough, and was, at least, responsible for 'The Cotton Boll.'

It was not Timrod's continued poverty, illness, and early death which explain the mediocrity of the greater number of his poems. He was on the whole too imitative and too easily seduced by poetic diction and rhyme. Not even his tenderness and sincerity could redeem his poetry from its conventionality.

Poems of Henry Timrod(Richmond, Va., 1901).

Henry Timrod, 'A Theory of Poetry,' *Atlantic Monthly*,XCVI,313–26.

G.A.Wauchope, *Henry Timrod, Man and Poet: A Critical Study*(Columbia, S.C., 1915).

G.P.Voigt, 'Timrod's Essays in Literary Criticism,' *American Literature*,VI, 163–7.

——, 'Timrod in the Light of Newly Revealed Letters,' *South Atlantic Quar.*, XXXVII,263–9.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1830–1886)

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE achieved much wider fame than did his friend Timrod. The son of an American naval officer who died when the boy was young, he was cared for by his mother and by an uncle who was the Hayne of Webster's famous address in the United States Senate. He was graduated from Charleston College and then took up law, which he dropped for journalism and poetry. His chief position and most brilliant success was as editor of *Russell's Magazine* during its brief existence from 1857 to 1860. *Poems*(Boston, 1855), *Sonnets and Other Poems*(Boston, 1857), and *Avolio*(Boston, 1860) helped establish his reputation as a poet.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Hayne was an aide on the staff of Governor Picken, but being physically frail was soon forced to retire. Like Timrod, but not so successfully, he wrote patriotic verse. The bombardment of Charleston and the ravages of Sherman's army caused him to lose his home and his possessions, and after the war he retired with his wife to Copse Hill, a shanty in the pine barrens near Augusta, Georgia, where they lived romantically and in poverty. 'Perhaps you know,' Lanier wrote to a friend, 'that, with us of the younger generation in the South since the War, pretty much of the whole of life has been merely not dying.'

Hayne's poetry attracted such friends in England as Tennyson, Swinburne, and Jean Ingelow; and in America the New England coterie all paid him tribute. They respected his skill, but mostly they admired a certain romantic sentimentality which we are accustomed to associate with his period and particularly with the poetry of the South.

Poems of Paul Hamilton Hayne(Boston, 1882). Contains biographical sketch by Margaret J.Preston.

A.H.Starke, 'Sidney Lanier and Paul Hamilton Hayne: Three Unpublished Letters,' *American Literature*,I,32–9.

E.Mims, 'Paul Hamilton Hayne,' *Library of Southern Literature*,V,2265–71.

Sidney Lanier, *Music and Poetry*(N.Y., 1898),197–211.

SIDNEY LANIER (1842–1881)

SIDNEY LANIER'S perception that verse is a phenomenon of sound, and his attempts to write poetical harmony instead of mere melody make him one of the important figures of American poetry in the nineteenth century. Lanier was the greatest virtuoso flautist of his day, and his training as a musician is responsible for his accomplishment as a poet. 'Whatever turn I have for art,' he said, 'is purely musical.' His taste for Mendelssohn in preference to Bach may weaken his musically imitative verse, but it does not alter the correctness of his initial perception.

Lanier was born in 1842 in Macon, Georgia, and was graduated from Oglethorpe College at the age of eighteen. He was appointed a tutor there, but in 1861, during the first year of the Civil War, he enlisted in the Confederate Army. Finally, near the end of the war, he was captured and imprisoned. He tried teaching again, and law, but his health was broken and he went to Texas in what proved at last to be a vain fight against consumption. In Texas he resumed his study of the flute, which he had played since boyhood, and attempted to secure a position in a symphony orchestra in New York. From there he went in 1873 to Baltimore as a member of the Peabody Symphony Orchestra. Later, in 1879, as a result of his intensive study of English literature, he was appointed a member of the faculty of Johns Hopkins. It was in this post that he wrote *The Science of English Verse*(N.Y., 1880) and *Music and Poetry* (N.Y., 1898).

Tiger Lilies(N.Y., 1867), Lanier's only novel, is a backwoods account of the Civil War, and is important as an early example of local color. His keen ear enlivens the dialogue, uneven in quality though it is, and his sensibility accounts for innumerable passages of great poetic beauty. Unfortunately the book appears never to have been reprinted.

In all his writing, Lanier is an admirable representative of the agricultural romantic tradition of the post-war South, sharing the common and deep-rooted antagonism to Northern industrialism which lingers on even today in the magnolia metaphysics of many who take their Southern stand. Lanier's particular position was reinforced by an overwhelming reliance on the spirit of brotherhood, and the concluding line of 'The Symphony' best summarizes both his philosophical and his poetical creeds:

Music is love in search of a word.

It has often been argued that Lanier confused two mediums of expression in stressing the relationship between music and poetry. This may be partially true in his practice, but not in his theory. What he actually said was that each was a phenomenon of sound. It is not without significance that Lanier was fond of *Piers Plowman*, nor that he returned to the oldest tradition of English poetry in 'The Revenge of Hamish.' Lanier's emphasis foreshadowed the modern poets' reliance on the ear. Despite the inadequacy of his system of indicating metrics through musical notation, *The Science of English Verse* is one of the few important American contributions to the theory of poetry.

Poems of Sidney Lanier(N.Y., 1929).
A.H.Starke, *Sidney Lanier: A Biographical and Critical Study*(Chapel Hill, N.C., 1933). Contains a bibliography.
E.Mims, *Sidney Lanier*, in American Men of Letters Series(Boston, 1905).
H.W.Lanier, ed., *Letters of Sidney Lanier: Selections from His Correspondence*, 1866–1881(N.Y., 1899).
N.B.Fagin, 'Sidney Lanier: Poet of the South,' *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine*, XX,232–41.
R.P.Warren, 'The Blind Poet: Sidney Lanier,' *American Review*,II,27–45.
S.T.Williams, 'Lanier,' in Macy, J., ed., *American Writers on American Literature* (N.Y., 1931), 327–41.
Gay W.Allen, 'Sidney Lanier as a Literary Critic,' *Phil.Quar.*,XVII,121–38.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE (1844–1925)

THE most popular American literature during the last quarter of the nineteenth century dealt with unfamiliar and romantic sections of the country. George Washington Cable became famous for his tales of New Orleans. He was born there in 1844, and was brought up in close familiarity with its neighboring plantations, its great town houses, its French Quarter, and the soft patois of the Creoles. He served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, then became a reporter, and after 1869 worked as a clerk in a firm of cotton factors for as long as he lived in New Orleans. His first use of local material was in his column for the New Orleans *Picayune*, but it was not until 1873 that his first tale appeared in a magazine. 'Belles Demoiselles Plantation' appeared in 1874, and in 1879 his stories were collected in *Old Creole Days*. This and his novel, *The Grandissimes*(N.Y., 1880), were his best work.

Cable himself considered that his greatest literary influences came from the work, somewhat oddly grouped, of Dickens, Thackeray, Poe, and Irving. To Poe he apparently owed his fine sense of structure, but his style seems closer to the leisurely but crisp exposition of Prosper Merimée, one of the many Frenchmen whom he read. Cable's chief interest was psychological rather than dramatic, and his characterizations, though penetrating, are indicated lightly rather than in the probing manner of a Hawthorne.

Cable's research into the social history of New Orleans disclosed certain details which made him unpopular in the South. In 1885 he moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, where he lived for the rest of his life. He continued to write, but increasingly it became difficult to recognize in the pious man who went to seed among home-culture clubs, garden plans, and Northampton society, the author who had once written with the verve and apparent worldliness of a Frenchman.

The Creoles of Louisiana(N.Y., 1884).
M.E.Burt and L.L.Cable, eds., *The Cable Story Book*(N.Y., 1899).
L.L.C.Bikle, *George W.Cable, His Life and*

Letters(N.Y., 1928). Contains a checklist of Cable's writings.
E.W.Bowen, 'George W.Cable: An Appreciation,' *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XVIII,145–55.
E.L.Tinker, 'Cable and the Creoles,' *American Literature*,V,313–26.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848–1908)

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS extended the use of regional material into that of folk-lore. Harris was born in 1848 in Eatonton, Georgia, and as a boy was trained as a printer. He began contributing to the paper in whose printing office he worked, and after the Civil War was a reporter on papers in Macon, in New Orleans, and in Savannah. In 1876 he became an editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, a position which he retained for the next twenty-five years. Harris' first sketches of Negro life were written to fill a column for this paper. In these local stories he was particularly concerned with an accurate transmission of Negro speech.

An article by William Owens, 'Folk-Lore of the Southern Negroes,' in *Lippincott's Magazine* for December 1877, apparently opened Harris' eyes to the wealth that lay near at hand. Owens, after discussing the folk-lore of all tribes and peoples, laid particular stress on that of Africo-Americans, which he described as 'a medley of fables, songs, sayings, incantations, charms and superstitious traditions brought from various tribes along the West African coasts.' 'Almost without exception the actors in these fables are brute animals endowed with speech and reason, in whom mingle strangely and with ludicrous incongruity, the human and brute characteristics. The dramatis personæ are always honored with the title of Buh, which is generally supposed to be an abbreviation of the word "brother" . . . Of the Buh fables, that which is by all odds the greatest favorite, and which appears in the greatest variety of forms, is the "Story of Buh Rabbit and the Tar Baby." '

Harris took immediate advantage of the suggestion, and became an avid collector of Negro fables. His first volume, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*(N.Y., 1881), had an immediate popularity. Parallel stories poured in on him from all lands, and his work took on a significance somewhat similar to that of the collection of Chaucerian analogues or to the assembling of English and Scottish ballads by Professor Francis Child of Harvard.

'The story of the Rabbit and the Fox, as told by the Southern Negroes,' said Harris, 'is artistically dramatic in this: it progresses in an orderly way from a beginning to a well-defined conclusion, and is full of striking episodes that suggest the culmination. It seems to me to be to a certain extent allegorical, albeit such an interpretation may be unreasonable. At least it is a fable thoroughly characteristic of the Negro; and it needs no scientific investigation to show why he selects as his hero the weakest and most harmless of all animals, and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf, and the fox. It is not virtue that triumphs, but helplessness; it is not malice, but mischievousness.'

Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings(N.Y., 1881).
Nights with Uncle Remus(N.Y., 1883).
J.C.Harris, ed., *Joel Chandler Harris, Editor and Essayist*(Chapel Hill, N.C., 1931).
Julia C.Harris, *The Life and Letters of Joel Chandler Harris*(Boston, 1918). Contains a bibliography.
E.C.Parsons, 'Joel Chandler Harris and Negro Folklore,' *Dial*,LXVI,491–93.

LAFCADIO HEARN (1850–1904)

LAFCADIO HEARN'S life was as exotically romantic as the tinge he gave to his writing. He was born on the Ionian island of Leucadia, from which he received his Christian name, and was the son of an Irish army surgeon and a Greek mother. He was

brought up by a great-aunt in Ireland, and attended for a time Roman Catholic seminaries in France and England. At the age of sixteen he ran away, spent three years in poverty in London, and in 1869 drifted to New York. 'I was nineteen years old and a stranger in the great strange world of America, and grievously tormented by grim realities. As I did not know how to face those realities, I tried to forget them as much as possible; and romantic dreams, daily nourished at a public library helped me to forget.' He left New York for Cincinnati, where he became a reporter, and in 1877 went on to New Orleans in his 'worship of the Odd, the Queer, the Strange, the Exotic, the Monstrous' to which he pledged himself. His search led him to the West Indies, and finally to Japan, where he married and lived for the rest of his life.

'His idea of work was to illustrate with a mosaic of rare and richly-coloured words. But there is a wonderful tenderness, a nervous sensibility of feeling, an Oriental sensuousness of warmth in his creations . . .' This was Hearn's description of Théophile Gautier, but it might as well have been of his own writing. Hearn translated and was enormously impressed with the work of French romanticists, particularly that of Gautier and Loti. It was the spirit of these impressionists that led him to state: 'I write for beloved friends who can see colour in words, can smell the perfume of syllables in blossoms, can be shocked with the fine elfish electricity of words. And in the eternal order of things, words will eventually have their rights recognized by the people.'

'The Legend of L'Île Dernière' is the first section, and background, of the account of a child saved from the storm which swept Lost Island in 1856. Hearn's familiarity with the scene came from his visit in 1884 to the near-by Grand Island, near the mouth of the Mississippi, which possessed, he wrote to a friend, 'subjects innumerable for artistic studies—a hybrid population from all the ends of heaven, white, yellow, red, brown, cinnamon-color, and the tints of bronze and gold. Basques, Andalusians, Portugese, Malays, Chinamen, etc.' On Hearn's return to New Orleans, his tale was printed in the columns of the local *Times-Democrat*, and some years later was expanded into *Chita*(N.Y., 1888). 'My work is ornamental—my dream is poetical prose.'

Interpretations of Literature(N.Y., 1915).
An American Miscellany(N.Y., 1924).
K.Koizumi, *Father and I*(Boston, 1935).
S.Koizumi(Mrs. Hearn), *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*(Boston, 1918).
Y.Noguchi, *Lafcadio Hearn in Japan*(N.Y., 1911).
J.Temple, *Blue Ghost*(N.Y., 1931).
E.L.Tinker, *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days*(N.Y., 1924).

SARAH ORNE JEWETT (1849–1909)

THE finest local writing of this period is to be found in Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs*(Boston, 1896). 'People talk about dwelling upon trivialities and commonplaces in life,' she said, 'but a master writer gives everything weight, and makes you feel the distinction and importance of it, and count upon the right or the wrong side of a life's account.' Her sketches of the country people of Maine, among whom she was brought up, are full of quiet and sympathetic charm, and mellow with Miss Jewett's own ripeness of spirit. By understatement and indirection, faintly flavored with the dialect her keen ear caught, she was able to capture the mood and character of New Englanders as no one else has done, before her time or since.

At the back of her desk she kept pinned, as a constant reminder, 'those two wonderful little bits of Flaubert,—*Écrire la vie ordinaire comme on écrit l'histoire;* and the other *Ce n'est pas de faire rire—mais d'agir a la façon de la nature, c'est à dire de faire rêver.*'

Sarah Orne Jewett achieved the goal of all local-colorists of her time; that if a writer can faithfully portray human nature, the characters of his particular region will be in reality universal. The common error of local colorists, as of most regional

writers, was, however, as Carl Van Doren has observed, that in actuality they 'thought first of color and then of form, first of the piquant surfaces and then—if at all—of the stubborn deeps of human life.'

Miss Jewett learned to know the people about South Berwick, where she was born, during the many rides about the countryside which she took with her father, who was a country doctor. She never travelled widely nor led an exciting life. She never needed to, for like Thoreau she discovered that the world was close at hand.

Deephaven(Boston, 1877).
A Country Doctor(Boston, 1884).
A White Heron and Other Stories(Boston, 1886).
Willa Cather, ed., *The Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett*, 2 vols.(Boston, 1925). With introduction.
Annie Fields, ed., *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*(Boston, 1911).
F.O.Matthiessen, *Sarah Orne Jewett*(Boston, 1929).

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (1837–1920)

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS' chief contribution to American literature was the advancement of realism, but his long career as a writer included most of the literary phases of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Howells was born in 1837 in Martin's Ferry, a small Ohio village. The village life meant little to him, however, and his first book, *Poems of Two Friends*(Columbus, Ohio, 1860) was the reflection of his reading of early romanticists. A biography of Abraham Lincoln for the campaign of 1860 earned him an appointment to the consulship at Venice, where he remained for four years. This experience was expressed in *Venetian Life*(N.Y., 1866) and *Italian Journeys*(N.Y., 1867), graceful travel sketches in the tradition of Bayard Taylor. In 1866 he became an assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, in what he called 'his Holy Land of Boston.' For a time he wrote little but innocuous verse, and it was not until his novels of New England life that he entered the field of 'reticent realism,' the boundaries of which he describes in the selection titled 'The Novel.' 'Ah! poor Real Life, which I love,' he wrote, 'can I make others share the delight I find in thy foolish and insipid face?' Of these novels the best are *A Modern Instance*(Boston, 1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham*(Boston, 1885). Balzac and, later, the Russians became his models, or at least his admirations. From 1871 to 1881 he was the editor of the *Atlantic*, and then settled in New York, the new literary capital, for the remainder of his life. In *A Traveler from Altruria*(N.Y., 1894) he wrote a mildly socialistic and Utopian novel which reflected his increasing discontent with the structure of capitalistic society. It is difficult to determine whether Howells was a little ahead of or a little behind his times, but he kept close to them.

Criticism and Fiction(N.Y., 1891).
My Literary Passions(N.Y., 1895).
Impressions and Experiences(N.Y., 1896).
Literary Friends and Acquaintances(N.Y., 1900).
Mildred Howells, ed., *Life in Letters of William Dean Howells*, 2 vols.(Garden City, N.Y., 1928).
D.G.Cooke, *William Dean Howells*(N.Y., 1922). Contains bibliography.
O.W.Firkins, *William Dean Howells*(Cambridge, Mass., 1924). Contains bibliography.
Herbert Edwards, 'Howells and the Controversy over Realism in American Fiction,' *American Literature*,III,237–48.

FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN (1821–1873)

FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN'S sonnets seem to have been written ahead of their time. To a form which poetasters customarily rendered silken and sleek he dared to give homeliness and rough strength. He did not care, however, to publish, and his

poetic skill was known to his contemporaries only through his occasionally sensitive but generally orthodox volume, *Poems*, published in 1860, 1864, and 1869. It was not until 1908 when Walter Prichard Eaton discovered several sonnets in an unpublished anthology by Louis How, looked up *Poems*, and wrote an article on Tuckerman's verse that he was at all remembered; and not until 1931, when Witter Bynner edited a collection of Tuckerman's published and hitherto unpublished sonnets, did he become well known.

The subject matter of his sonnets comes close to what the nineteenth century would have considered anti-poetic. As to their form Bynner says, 'In the light of Tuckerman's obvious familiarity with the classics, in the light of recent experiment with variations in verse, in the light of present knowledge that Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson had ears more sensitive than their contemporaries had, we may be sure that Tuckerman knew what he was doing when he ended a sonnet with an Alexandrine or shortened the last line by a foot, or when he shuffled the rhyme-scheme to suit the rise and fall of his meaning. He was aware of his irregularity, as was George Meredith in "Modern Love," adding to the sonnet the two extra lines. He was as tenderly conscious of his form as was ever any maker of the sonnet. Instead of bungling or staling the sonnet-form he renewed it and, moulding it to his emotion, made it inevitable.'

Tuckerman was born of a distinguished Boston family, and entered Harvard at the age of sixteen. Because of trouble with his eyes he quit college and never returned. Later he studied law and in 1844 was admitted to the bar. During a visit to Europe he was the guest of Lord Tennyson, who, as a token of admiration, presented him with the manuscript of 'Locksley Hall.' Most of his life, however, was passed in seclusion from the world, in his home at Greenfield, Massachusetts, where he settled in 1847 and where he remained until his death.

The Sonnets of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman(N.Y., 1931). Edited, with an introduction by Witter Bynner.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL (1841–1887)

THE poetry of Edward Rowland Sill has its chief importance in his effort to bring into his verse some sense of the intellectual currents of his time. Sill was for the *idea*. 'I almost feel like despising and violating all *form*, when I see the fools that worship it. I always understood why Emerson made his poems rough—and I sympathize more than ever.' To a publisher he wrote: 'You cannot, of course, realize (till you have come to teach the subject) how all our best literature in this century—and a good deal of it in the last century—dips continually into this underlying stream of philosophical thought, and ethical feeling. "In Memoriam," for example, is one of the poems I read with my senior classes. You may discuss its rhythms, its epithets, its metaphors, its felicities and infelicities of Art,—you are still on the surface of it. The fact is that a thinking man puts a lot of his views in general into it—and those views and his feelings about them are precisely the "literature" there is in the thing. And the study of it, as literature, should transfer these views and feelings straight and clear to the brain of the student.'

Josiah Royce, the philosopher and his friend, wrote of him: 'As for Sill's ideal itself, it was an ideal of the highest manhood, an ideal towards which he desired all his friends to strive. His ideal future man was the combination of the truth-seeker and the doer of good into the one person of the true poet. He would never admit any real opposition between the scientific and the poetical spirit, or between either and the capacity for simple practical devotion to one's daily tasks. We ourselves, he taught, make in our false one-sidedness the so-called oppositions of these ideals. In themselves they are one. Science is, or ought to be, poetry, and poetry is knowledge, and the humanity of the future will not divide life, but will unite it.'

Sill was born in Connecticut, and was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and at Yale. In 1861, after his graduation, he

travelled by sea to California, where he taught first in the Oakland High School, and from 1874 to 1882 as professor of English at the University of California. In 1868 he published *The Hermitage and Other Poems*, the only book of his poems made public during his life. In protest against the increasing vocationalism of the University of California he resigned his position in 1882 and moved back to the East. Thereafter he became a fairly regular contributor of both prose and poetry to the leading magazines. An exceptionally shy man, he seldom published over his own name; and it may have been his general lack of self-confidence which kept him from striking out as boldly in the form of his verse as he did in its ideas.

The Poetical Works of Edward Rowland Sill (N.Y., 1906).
The Prose of Edward Rowland Sill(N.Y., 1900).
W.B.Parker, *Edward Rowland Sill: His Life and Work*(Boston, 1915).
Newton Arvin, 'The Failure of E.R.Sill,' *Bookman*,LXXII,581–89.

JOHN BANISTER TABB (1845–1909)

THE memorable quality of the verse written by 'Father Tabb' lies in its orthodox devotion to Roman Catholicism and the warmth of its kindly, if unsophisticated, wit. Some few of his contemporaries likened his verse to the poetry of Robert Herrick, George Herbert, and William Blake. With characteristic modesty he refuted their claims in a letter to his friend Browne, dated 25 December 1906:

> I am getting, dear Doctor, from England the very kindest notices of my book [*A Selection from the Verses of John B. Tabb* (London, 1906)]. . . . From the *Tribune* comes a clipping so like your own estimate and worded so like it, that were you in London, I should lay it to your charge. 'A Modern Herrick,' it is headed. Of this poet, the *Golden Treasury* has all that I know. With Herbert and Blake I am even less familiar; and yet it is to these three that they compare me. Nothing, I am glad to observe, is detected of my worship of Keats, whom I know best of the gods. . . .

His verse, however, bears traces of a literary influence exerted by a reading of Edgar Allan Poe, and in the humorous poems, as well as in those written obviously for the enjoyment of small children, one finds a clear resemblance to the punning of Thomas Hood and the charm of Robert Louis Stevenson.

'Father Tabb' was born at 'The Forest,' the family estate at Mattoax, in Amelia County, Virginia, in 1845. He served in the Confederate cause during the Civil War, and after the War, he was appointed to an instructorship at the Episcopal St. Paul's School for Boys in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1872 he entered St. Charles College, Maryland, to study for the Catholic priesthood. In 1884 he was ordained priest in the Baltimore Cathedral, and from then onward until his death in 1909 he was a member of the faculty at St. Charles.

Francis E.A. Litz, ed., *The Poetry of Father Tabb*(N.Y., 1928).
J.M.Tabb, *Father Tabb, His Life and Work*(Boston, 1921).
F.E.A.Litz, *Father Tabb—A Study of His Life and Works*(Baltimore, 1923).

RICHARD HOVEY (1864–1900)

DESPITE Richard Hovey's ambition to recreate the Arthurian legends in the form of poetic drama, his abilities as a poet are chiefly remembered through his collaboration with Bliss Carmen in writing *Songs from Vagabondia*(Boston, 1894) and *More Songs from Vagabondia*(Boston, 1896). The collaboration also included the work of Tom Buford Meteyard, who designed with a touch of Pre-Raphaelite craftsmanship

the covers and end papers of the Vagabondia volumes which were to attain such widespread popularity. The three friends had spent a holiday together, including a winter in New York, a trip to Arcadie, and an autumn tour to Washington, D.C. The early winter of 1894 was to bring to fruition the ideal of spiritual vagrancy and literary Bohemianism in the first *Songs from Vagabondia.*

Hovey's education at Dartmouth College, where he emerged as a class poet, author of 'Men of Dartmouth,' a song still sung today at Hanover, and subsequent journeys across the Atlantic to Paris and Avignon, furnished the background for the kind of lyricism which was to become known as the poetry of Vagabondia. However far he travelled, he was never to lose the spirit of:

The campus is reborn in us to-day;
The old grip stirs our hearts with new-old joy;
Again bursts bonds for madcap holiday
The eternal boy.

Hovey attempted to combine the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Whitman with his admiration for the ecstatic utterances of the French Symbolists and Parnassians, particularly as he interpreted them in the work of Mallarmé, Verlaine and Verhaeren. The exuberance of Bliss Carmen's

All the world is Vagabondia
To him who is a vagabond

overrode whatever contradictions may have been felt in an equal love for Paul Verlaine, Hovey's 'Prince of Vagabonds,' and Walt Whitman, his 'King of Free-Versists.'

Some hint of the historical importance of the *Songs from Vagabondia* is indicated by Muriel Miller's *Bliss Carmen: A Portrait* (Toronto, 1935), in which she wrote:

> However, the two poets did not mean their Vagabondian scheme to be a mere idle pastime of a summer's day; it represented far more to them: It was their joint protest against the warped convention-bound lives of the material, money-making American citizen of their day . . .

Hovey was to intersperse his songs from Vagabondia with translations of Maurice Maeterlinck, more songs for Dartmouth and the Psi Upsilon fraternity, *Seaward: An Elegy*, in memory of Thomas Williams Parsons, as well as further experiments in the writing of poetic drama. His brief career which came to an end at the age of thirty-six in 1900 was to symbolize for the American reading public the promise and vitality of a hybrid Bohemianism which had taken root in the literary circles of New York and San Francisco.

Along the Trail(Boston, 1898).
The Birth of Galahad(Boston, 1898).
Taliesin: A Masque(Boston, 1900).
The Holy Grail and Other Fragments(Boston, 1900).
Last Songs from Vagabondia(Boston, 1901).
To the End of the Trail(N.Y., 1908).

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY (1861–1920)

LIKE her contemporary, Lizette Woodward Reese, Louise Imogen Guiney turned to the poetry of the seventeenth century to find a criterion for the writing of her own verse. But unlike Miss Reese's verse her work bears traces of a wide, yet specific reading of the Cavalier poets. 'I owe much to the minor lyricists of King Charles I.'s time,' she wrote, 'and to Sidney and Spencer before them. . . . The great prose writers who taught me my little prose are Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Burke, Lamb, Hazlitt, Newman and Stevenson.' Among her lyrics one finds evidence of her reading the poetry of Marvell, Campion, Vaughan, Lovelace and Suckling, yet whatever literary influences marked her style, she retained throughout her work the stronger impress of an individual discrimination in its choice of diction. As she wrote in her 'A Talisman:'

For better than fortune's best
Is mastery in the using,
And sweeter than anything sweet
The art to lay it aside!

The distinct quality of her literary admirations as well as the quickened perceptions of her own poetic gifts may be found in the first stanza of her poem, 'Written in my Lord Clarendon his History of the Rebellion:'

How life hath cheapen'd, and how blanke
The Worlde is! like a fen
Where long ago unstained sanke
The starrie gentlemen:
Since Marston Moor and Newbury dranke
King Charles his gentlemen.

Happy Ending(Boston, 1927). Collected Lyrics, new edition.
Grace Guiney, ed., *Letters of Louise Imogen Guiney*(N.Y., 1926), 2 vols.
Alice Brown, *Louise Imogen Guiney*(Boston, 1921).
E.M.Tenison, *Louise Imogen Guiney, Her Life and Works, 1861–1920*(London, 1923).
E.M.Tenison (comp.), 'A Bibliography of Louise Imogen Guiney,' *Bookman's Journal and Print Collector*, December 1922–January, March 1923.

LIZETTE REESE (1856–1936)

THE lyricism of Lizette Reese owed a confessed indebtedness to the English lyric of the early seventeenth century and in particular to the poetry of Robert Herrick. To this marked literary influence she contributed her own art of understatement as well as a singular perception into the physical beauty of the gardens and countryside of suburban Baltimore. Something of her attitude toward her contemporaries of the later nineteenth century may be found in *A Victorian Village*(New York, 1929):

> The Victorians had a full cup and it spilled over. I think that this is the reason that their faults, worst among which were their over elaboration and sentimentality, are so apparent. They had so much material on hand, so much creative ability, that at times and too often they were mastered by them. If they had been poor and idle, they might have had fewer defects. . . . To judge their poetry and prose a critic must have a poetic sense and a sense of humor.

The criterion that Miss Reese set for her own work is also suggested by her commentary on poetry: 'The novelists must stand by their creation of character, which is the decisive test of the artist, the poets by their perpetuation in word and phrase of beauty, that readjusted of the changes and chances, the confusions and rancors of life.'

As Harriet Monroe once wrote of her:

> Miss Reese's method was always simple. If the personal poems in her early books confess a few Victorian frailties of diction and sentiment—faint whiffs of faded perfume, a bit trite like pressed flowers—her best work, even of the 80's and 90's escaped that softness; and her latest style is free of archaism, as her motives of sentimentality. Her poems considered as a whole have a rare unity and harmony. . . . Always carefully studied, they do not try to say or do anything startlingly original; but they sing, with austere taste and musical precision, a clear minor tune all in the same key.

Selected Poems(N.Y., 1926).
White April(N.Y., 1930).
The York Road(N.Y., 1931).
Pastures(N.Y., 1933).

GEORGE STERLING (1869–1926)

THE career of George Sterling and his influence upon the writers of the Pacific Coast comprise one of the most spectacular, if not one of the most notable, chapters

in American literary history. Born at Sag Harbor, New York, in 1869, at the age of twenty-six he moved to California, where under the patronage of Ambrose Bierce and within the environment of the Bohemian Club he combined political Socialism with an aesthetic that ran parallel to the *Yellow Book* doctrines of Ernest Dowson and the later Oscar Wilde. His verse, however, revealed the uses of a Miltonic rhetoric that overweighted the latter-day Romanticism which entered the phrasing of the titles of his books: *A Wine of Wizardry*, *The Triumph of Bohemia*, *The House of Orchids*, *The Caged Eagle*, *The Binding of the Beast*.

His friends in writing of him had much to say of his physical appearance. They spoke of his 'long-featured mediaeval face' or with equal freedom of his seeming to be 'a reincarnation perhaps from the Athens of the fourth or third century B.C.' Jack London said, 'He looks like a Greek coin run over by a Roman chariot'—all of which was testimony to the fact that his personal character contributed its share to his literary influence.

He was among the first to recognize the abilities of younger Californian writers and in 1926 he wrote of Robinson Jeffers under the title *Robinson Jeffers, the Man and the Artist*, paying tribute to a quality in Jeffers which most closely resembled his own emotion as he once wrote:

I stand as one whose feet at noontide gain
A lonely shore; who feels his soul set free,
And hears the blind sea chanting to the sun.

George Sterling died by his own hand in 1926.

Selected Poems(San Francisco, 1923).
Poems to Vera(N.Y., 1938).
R.G.Berkelman, 'George Sterling on "The Black Vulture," ' *American Literature*,X, 223–4.
Cecil Johnson (comp.), *A Bibliography of the Works of George Sterling*(San Francisco, 1931).

AMBROSE BIERCE (1842–1914?)

AMBROSE BIERCE wrote a few of the finest short stories in American literature, and some of its most trenchant cynicism. He was born in Pomery, Meiggs County, Ohio, in 1842. During the Civil War he served in the Union Army, and took part in the battles of Chickamauga, Shiloh, Kenesaw Mountain, and others. After the war was concluded, he travelled to San Francisco where he finally became a newspaper editor. In 1871 he went to London where he contributed to humorous magazines and became a fellow of minor literary circles. In 1876 he returned to San Francisco. Here, the combination of his talent and his sarcasm made his 'Prattle,' a column which he conducted for the *San Francisco Examiner*, read and feared by the public. Admiration of this kind of power continued among bright and ambitious newspapermen until it culminated in the schools of H.L.Mencken and Ben Hecht. However widely the public read him in newspapers, Bierce's published volumes had no great success. Toward the end of the year 1913 he disappeared, presumably to fight with Villa in Mexico. Nothing more was heard of him.

Tales of Soldiers and Civilians(N.Y., 1891), later titled *In the Midst of Life*, and *Can Such Things Be?*(N.Y., 1893) contain his best short stories. Of the first volume, Boynton has said: 'The constant factor in the book is extreme emotional tension. Sometimes the characters are pathological and the situations abnormal. The people and the events are barely within the reach of credibility. Bierce thus often turned naturally to war episodes, because, though actual, they were farthest from the even tenor of normal life. In these it was the rarest occurrence for him to reveal a sense of humankind in general. The mass, the herd, the crowd, served as a dim background for one man living at the highest pitch and often enough dying of the tension; and the individual himself was less a character than a piece of susceptibility played on by overwhelming emotions.' This is the character not only of such tales as 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,' but of the mystery stories of *Can Such Things Be?*

The quality of his emotion which made him known as 'Bitter Bierce' can be seen in the admirable compression of his *Fantastic Fables*(N.Y., 1899) and *The Cynic's Word Book*(N.Y., 1906), later titled *The Devil's Dictionary*. Poor Richard had undergone a remarkable transformation.

Collected Works(N.Y., 1909–12). 12 vols.
B.C.Pope, ed., *The Letters of Ambrose Bierce*(San Francisco, 1922).
Vincent Starrett, *Ambrose Bierce*(Chicago, 1920).
Walter Neale, *The Life of Ambrose Bierce* (N.Y., 1929).
C.Hartley Grattan, *Bitter Bierce*(N.Y., 1929).
Cary McWilliams, *Ambrose Bierce*(N.Y., 1929).
A.M.Miller, 'The Influence of Edgar Allan Poe on Ambrose Bierce,' *American Literature*,IV,130–50.
George Sterling, 'The Shadow Maker,' *American Mercury*,VI,10–19.
N.Wilt, 'Ambrose Bierce and the Civil War,' *American Literature*,I,260–85.
Vincent Starrett, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Ambrose Bierce*(Philadelphia, 1929).

STEPHEN CRANE (1871–1900)

THE brilliant precocity of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*(N.Y., 1895) placed him in the foreground of a new generation of writers who came of age in the closing years of the nineteenth century. It was as though his admirers were waiting for the very type of psychological fiction that *The Red Badge of Courage* was to introduce. His earlier novel *Maggie*(N.Y., 1892), which had been rejected by magazine editors and publishing houses of the day, has left its impress as one of the first experiments in naturalistic prose written in America.

Upon reading the poems of Emily Dickinson, and under the stimulus of his 'discovery' of a highly original American genius, he wrote his first book of poems, *The Black Riders*, which he issued in 1895. Harriet Monroe, in her introduction to *The New Poetry*(N.Y., 1917), quoted the title poem of his second book of verse, *War Is Kind*, to illustrate the character of a kind of poetry which she regarded as being in the line of a tradition that foreshadowed the work of the Imagist and the 'free verse writers' of the poetic Renaissance in 1912.

Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1871. He entered Lafayette College, but before receiving a degree left at the age of sixteen to test his skill at journalism. The spectacular success of *The Red Badge of Courage*, with its vivid detail of character and situations on the battlefield, insured the further success of his journalistic career. He was sent as war correspondent to the Greco-Turkish War in 1897 and in the following year to the Spanish-American War.

His success also brought with it the rapid expenditure of his remarkable nervous energy which seemed to produce at white heat the impressionistic vividness of such short stories as 'The Open Boat' and 'The Upturned Face,' as well as the highly-keyed output of many reportorial sketches, stories for children, and new poems. No less energetic was his invasion of England during the last two years of his life, where he moved toward the center of a literary group that included such men as Joseph Conrad, Henry James, and Ford Madox Ford. He died in the Black Forest, Germany, in 1900.

W.Follett, ed., *The Work of Stephen Crane* (N.Y., 1925–26), 12 vols.
——,*The Collected Poems of Stephen Crane* (N.Y., 1930).
T.Beer, *Stephen Crane, A Study in American Letters*(N.Y., 1923).
Joseph Conrad, 'Stephen Crane: A Note without Dates,' *Bookman*,L,529–31.
Hamlin Garland, 'Stephen Crane as I Knew Him,' *Yale Review*,n.s.III,494–506.
W.Follett, 'The Second Twenty-Eight Years,' *Bookman*,LXVIII,532–37.
V.Starrett, *Stephen Crane: A Bibliography* (Philadelphia, 1923).

FRANK NORRIS (1870–1902)

FRANK NORRIS brought force to American fiction. 'Give us stories now, give us men, strong, brutal men, with red-hot blood in 'em, with unleashed passions rampant in 'em . . .' *Moran of the Lady Letty*(N.Y., 1898), a novel of the tigers of the sea, and *McTeague*(N.Y., 1899), the story of the disintegration of a brute of society, displayed a type of romantic materialism. But Norris began to perceive a deeper significance to force:

> Men were naught, death was naught, life was naught; FORCE only existed—FORCE that brought men into the World, FORCE that crowded them out of it to make way for the succeeding generation, FORCE that made the wheat grow, FORCE that garnered it from the soul to give place to the succeeding crop.
>
> It was the mystery of creation, the stupendous mystery of re-creation; the vast rhythm of the seasons, measured, alternative, the sun and the stars keeping time as the eternal symphony of reproduction swung its tremendous cadences, like the colossal pendulum of an almighty machine—primordial energy flung out from the hand of the Lord God himself, immortal, calm, infinitely strong.

On this concept Norris patterned his uncompleted trilogy on wheat, his symbol of world force, the scheme of which is described in the annotation to the selection 'Wheat' from its first two novels. It was not, however, solely the display of force which gave these books their significance, but Norris' increasing implication that such force must be understood and controlled by man.

Frank Norris was born in 1870 in Chicago, the son of a wealthy wholesale jeweler, and spent a great part of his youth in San Francisco. For about two years Norris studied art in Paris, filled with the spirit of romantic mediaevalism which had marked the nineteenth century. He returned home in 1890 and entered the University of California, but left after four years without graduating, and spent a year at Harvard. It was during his college years that he began *McTeague*. Later he became a newspaper correspondent, was sent to South Africa to cover the Boer War, and later to Cuba for the Spanish-American War. His last years were spent in New York in the office of a publisher. Before he could either complete his trilogy on wheat or commence his projected trilogy on the Battle of Gettysburg as a symbol of the spirit of America, he died of peritonitis.

'Every novel,' Norris wrote, 'must do one of three things—it must (1) tell something, (2) show something, or (3) prove something. Some novels do all three of these; some do only two; all must do at least one . . . . The third and what we hold to be the best class, proves something, draws conclusions from a whole congeries of forces, social tendencies, race impulses, devotes itself not to a study of men but of man.' It is this perception on Norris' part of the function of a novelist which brings regret that he did not live long enough truly to fulfill it.

The Responsibilities of the Novelist(N.Y., 1903).

The Complete Works of Frank Norris, 10 vols.(Garden City, N.Y., 1928).

Stories and Sketches from the San Francisco Weekly, 1893 *to* 1897, with a Foreword by Charles G. Norris(San Francisco, 1931).

F.Walker, *Frank Norris*(Garden City, N.Y., 1932).

Frank Norris: Two Poems and 'Kim' Reviewed, with a Bibliography by Harvey Taylor(San Francisco, 1930).

EDWIN MARKHAM (1852–1940)

EDWIN MARKHAM'S reputation rests almost solely upon the publication of a single poem, 'The Man with The Hoe,' which appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* on 15 January 1899. Its long worked-over and rhetorical plea for social justice

was inspired by Markham's admiration for Millet's famous painting from which he borrowed the title of the poem and dramatized the figure of a French peasant, 'Bowed by the weight of centuries . . . Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox.'

Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, in 1852, and was the youngest son in a family that had moved westward across the continent. He was educated at the State Normal at San Jose, California, and graduated from the College at Santa Rosa. His verse was written in the Byronic convention that had been established by Joaquin Miller on the Pacific Coast and which marked the dramatic mannerisms of everything he wrote. The publication of *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* in 1899 was followed two years later by a second volume, *Lincoln, and Other Poems*, in which the same Populist note of eloquence was struck. The character of Markham's Populism at the turn of the nineteenth century was to be reflected later in the literature of 'Muck-raking' and in the journalism of the 'Trust-busting' era.

He moved to New York in 1901, making his home on Staten Island.

The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems (Garden City, N.Y., 1899).
Lincoln, and Other Poems(N.Y., 1901).
New Poems(Garden City, N.Y., 1932).
'The Man with the Hoe' and other poems. (Timely Recording Co., Nos. 1000–02.) A recording of selected poems by Markham.
W.L.Stidger, *Edwin Markham*(N.Y., 1933).
A Wreath for Edwin Markham(Chicago, 1922).

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD (1852–)

THE life of Charles Erskine Scott Wood has been that of the complete man. Trained at West Point, he served in many Indian campaigns, then left the army to study law, receiving the degrees of Ph.B. and LL.B. from Columbia in 1883. He settled in Portland, Oregon, and became widely known in the Northwest as an attorney. Soon he began to lead his own kind of double life: in one of his two offices he met corporation clients, and in the other greeted poets, artists, rebels, hoboes, and dreamers. At one time, when he was still in Oregon, he took over the editorship of *The Pacific Monthly*, and almost single-handed wrote the entire magazine, under various pseudonyms, at the same time that he was carrying on his work in law. His practice became more and more that of defending the downtrodden, and his best writing has come out of his intense sympathy and understanding of their plight.

His most important works in prose are his satirical *Heavenly Discourse*(N.Y., 1927) and *Earthly Discourse*(N.Y., 1937), which deftly remove the epidermis from contemporary shams and illustrate his burning passion for social justice. In poetry he has made of *The Poet in the Desert*(Portland, Oregon, 1915) both a rhapsody and a vehement protest against the man-made ills of life. So frequently has he revised this work, and so completely does it include his attitude toward life that it becomes something of a modern *Leaves of Grass*. Its free verse and sweep are vaguely suggestive of Whitman, but the voice is that of Wood.

With his wife, Sarah Bard Field, the poet, he has made his home at Los Gatos, California, into a haven and salon for writers on the Pacific Coast.

A Masque of Love(Chicago, 1904).
The Poet in the Desert(N.Y., 1928).
Poems from the Ranges(N.Y., 1929).

TRUMBULL STICKNEY (1874–1904)

TRUMBULL STICKNEY was perhaps the most gifted and certainly the most precocious member of a 'tragic generation' in America which came of age in the years immediately preceding the end of the nineteenth century. William Vaughn Moody himself has

said that Stickney's 'Prometheus Pyrphoros' antedated his own "The Fire Bringer' by several years. It was at Stickney's own request that Moody did not then acknowledge the other's priority in the use of the material and what Moody calls 'my deep obligation to his work.' The sources of Stickney's poem were in the account given by Hesiod. Stickney also left a splendid fragment, begun in the first half of the year 1901, of a drama on the life of the Emperor Julian.

Trumbull Stickney was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1874. He was graduated with high classical honors from Harvard in 1895 and in France studied for seven years at the Sorbonne and at the Collège de France. He was the first American ever to receive the degree of *docteur ès lettres* from a French university. His *Les Sentences dans la Poésie Grecque* was accepted as one of the best of modern studies in Hellenic literature. In the autumn of 1903 he became an instructor of Greek at Harvard. He died in the fall of 1904.

As E.K.Rand wrote of Stickney in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine:* 'A rare intellectual leadership a command of affections and enthusiasms, was in store for him' in his teaching at the time of his death. Considering the nature of his death, for he died of a tumor in the brain, the lines his editors place at the end of his *Poems* are significant:

Sir, say no more,
Within me 'tis as if
The green and climbing eyesight of a cat
Crawled near my mind's poor birds.

Dramatic Verses(Boston, 1902).
Poems(Boston, 1905).

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY (1869–1910)

In the year 1900 no poet in America occupied as significant a position as William Vaughn Moody. In 'An Ode in Time of Hesitation' and in his 'Gloucester Moors' he spoke directly to the literary public of his day. He was a leader in what might well be called America's 'tragic generation' in literature, a generation which after the death of Longfellow, Lanier, and Whitman faced the not unconscious danger of failure in a concerted effort to revive the power of poetic drama in English verse and to make their creation flourish on American soil.

William Vaughn Moody was born in Spencer, Indiana, in 1869, and after leaving high school did some local newspaper work and studied drawing and painting. By teaching and tutoring he earned his way through Riverview Academy, New York, and then through Harvard, from which he received an A.B. in 1893 and an A.M. in 1894. In 1895 he was appointed to an instructorship at the University of Chicago, at which he wrote, in collaboration with Robert Morss Lovett, a *History of English Literature.*

While in Chicago he began his ambitious projects in poetic drama, choosing as a central theme the union of God with man and the incompleteness of either without the other. The very diction of his verse became possessed by the desire to recreate Miltonic grandeur and was typified by his writing such lines as

I am the Woman, ark of the law and its
breaker.

His very consciousness that America was 'the eagle nation Milton saw Mewing its mighty youth' seemed to lead him further toward the creation of awe-inspiring themes in epic phrasing. Yet, as Percy H. Boynton remarked, 'His love for America, however, did not dull his sense of the dangers that threatened its youth. Within its boundaries he was well aware of the economic evils which menaced it . . . . In "Gloucester Moors" he was disturbed, if not made fearful. . . . There was no hope in the poem, only speculation and distress.' And that distress was only partially relieved by the satire which animated his convictions in 'The Menagerie.'

The commercial success of his play in prose, *The Great Divide*(N.Y., 1906), fell far short of the goal that he had sought in his rejection of materialism and his deeply felt need for a transcendental salvation. He

was to follow this success with another play in prose, *The Faith Healer*(Boston, 1909), the year before his death, still seeking the adequate medium for the expression of a neo-transcendental philosophy in a world that his friend Edwin Arlington Robinson described in 'The Valley of the Shadow.'

R.M.Lovett, ed., *Selected Poems of William Vaughn Moody*, in Riverside College Classics(Boston, 1931).

J.M.Manly, ed., *The Poems and Plays of William Vaughn Moody*, 2 vols.(Boston, 1912).

P.MacKaye, ed., *Letters to Harriet*(Boston, 1936).

D.G.Mason, ed., *Some Letters of William Vaughn Moody*(Boston, 1913).

D.D.Henry, *William Vaughn Moody*(Boston, 1934). Contains bibliography.

N.F.Adkins, 'The Poetic Philosophy of William V. Moody,' *Texas Review*,IX, 97–112.

A.H.Quinn, *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day*(N.Y., 1927),II,1-26.

HENRY ADAMS (1838–1918)

HENRY ADAMS brought the problem of Force into American letters with infinitely more subtlety and importance than had Frank Norris. 'Like his masters, since thought began,' Adams wrote of himself, in his account of his education, 'he was handicapped by the eternal mystery of Force—the sink of all science.' 'Any schoolboy could see that man as a force must be measured by motion, from a fixed point. Psychology helped here by suggesting a unit—the point of history where man held the highest idea of himself in a unified universe. Eight or ten years of study had led Adams to think he might use the century 1150–1250, expressed in Amiens Cathedral and the Works of Thomas Aquinas, as the unit from which he might measure motion down to his own time, without assuming anything as true or untrue, except relation. The movement might be studied at once in philosophy and mechanics. Setting himself to the task, he began a volume which he mentally knew as *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres: a Study of Thirteenth-Century Unity*. From that point he proposed to fix a position for himself, which he could label: *The Education of Henry Adams: a Study of Twentieth-Century Multiplicity*. With the help of these two points of relation, he hoped to project his lines forward and backward indefinitely, subject to correction from anyone who should know better.'

Adams' life was spent in this education. He was the son of an Ambassador to the Court of St. James's and the grandson of a President of the United States. He was graduated from Harvard in 1858, and for seven years afterwards was his father's secretary in London. He tried newspaper reporting of the sessions of Congress; he tried serving as professor of history at Harvard; he was editor for a time of *The North American Review*; he travelled widely in Europe; he journeyed to the islands of the Pacific; he passed most of his life in Washington as a friend of the near-great. He wrote biographies of Albert Gallatin and John Randolph, two men who had helped to fashion their age; he wrote two novels, *Democracy*(Boston, 1880) and *Esther*(Boston, 1884), the first of which treated society in terms of politics, and the second, in terms of religion; he wrote a brilliant nine-volume social and political history of the administrations of Jefferson and Madison in his *History of the United States of America*, 1801–1817(Boston 1889–91). Each was a probing.

His conclusion was: 'To educate—one's self to begin with—had been the effort of one's life for sixty years; and the difficulties of education had gone on doubling with the coal-output, until the prospect of waiting on another ten years, in order to face a seventh doubling of complexities, allured one's mind but slightly. The law of acceleration was definite, and did not require ten years' more study except to show whether it held good. No scheme could be suggested to the new American, and no fault needed to be found, or complaint made; but the next great influx of new forces seemed near

at hand, and its style of education promised to be violently coercive. The movement from unity into multiplicity, between 1200 and 1900, was unbroken in sequence, and rapid in acceleration. Prolonged one generation longer, it would require a new social mind. As though thought were common salt in indefinite solution it must enter a new phase subject to new laws.'

In summing up Adams' education, R.P.Blackmur has observed: 'Again and again he describes unifying conceptions as working principles; without them no work could be done; with them, even at the expense of final failure, every value could be provisionally ascertained. That is the value of Adams for us: the double value of his scrupulous attitude towards his unifying notions and of the human aspirations he was able to express under them. To feel that value as education is a profound deliverance: the same deliverance Adams felt in the Gothic Cathedral. "The delight of its aspiration is flung up to the sky. The pathos of its self-distrust and anguish of doubt is buried in the earth as its last secret." The principles asserted are nothing, though desperate and necessary; the values expressed because of the principles are everything. For Adams, as for everyone, the principle of unity carried to failure showed the most value by the way, and the value was worth the expense.'

Historical Essays(N.Y., 1891).
Mont St. Michel and Chartres(Boston, 1913). Privately printed, Washington, 1904.
The Education of Henry Adams(Boston, 1918). Privately printed, Washington, 1904.
The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma (N.Y., 1919).
Letters to a Niece and Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres(Boston, 1920).
W.C.Ford, ed., *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, 1861–1865(Boston, 1920).
——, *Letters of Henry Adams*, 1858–1891 (Boston, 1930).
Gamaliel Bradford, 'Henry Adams,' in *American Portraits*(Boston, 1920).
R.P.Blackmur, 'The Expense of Greatness. Three Emphases on Henry Adams,' *The Virginia Quarterly Review*,XII,396–415.

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER (O. HENRY) (1862–1910)

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER developed the structure of the plot of the short story to the breaking point. The tricks of Bret Harte, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and Frank Stockton served him to supply the incessant demands of newspapers and magazines, and his formula left little freshness either to sentiment or to the surprise ending.

Porter was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1862. At the age of fifteen he began working in his uncle's drugstore, but after five years of this left for Texas. He drifted from one occupation to another, and finally became teller in the First National Bank in Austin. He quit this to begin newspaper work. When he was accused of embezzling from the bank, he fled to Honduras, but returned because of his wife's illness, and served three years in prison. During the period of his sentence he continued writing, and began to sell under the pseudonym of O. Henry to magazines in New York. Shortly after his release he went there, and there he stayed until his death.

Porter had begun to know small-town folk when he first stood behind a drugstore counter, and these characters he used in his stories of metropolitan life. Even his description of New York as 'Bagdad' is typical of his approach, and it is doubtful if he is deserving of his repeated praise as 'the narrator and supreme celebrant of the life of the great city.' It is understandable that the most nationally popular writers and columnists on New York life should be those who come from the village and who pretend to find little difference between New York life and that of their own Main Streets.

Not all of Porter's stories deal with city life, and many are drawn from his experiences in the South, in the West, and in Central America. Occasionally in each group he was successful, for within the limitations of his formula Porter had great ability. It is not surprising, however, that future American writers of the short story

were to react against a predominant emphasis on plot.

The Complete Works of O. Henry(N.Y., 1912).

C.A.Smith, *O. Henry*(N.Y., 1916).

R.H.Davis and A.B.Maurice, *The Caliph of Bagdad*(N.Y., 1931).

P.S.Clarkson, *A Bibliography of William Sidney Porter*(Caldwell, Idaho, 1938).

HENRY JAMES (1843–1916)

DURING the latter half of the nineteenth century, it was Henry James, the American expatriate, who revived the virtues of sensibility in English fiction. Since the publication of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, no writer of prose had had a keener perception into the conventions which sustained yet ruled society than Henry James. Not the least interest in reading his work is to observe the development of his sensibility from its earliest demonstration through the obvious juxtaposition of contrary elements until its mature expression in the dramatization of apparently static situations.

The rudimentary practice of James is to be found in what has come to be known as the 'international novel.' Writing in this manner, James developed the technique of what he called 'reflectors,' by which both Americans and Europeans stood out in mutual chiaroscuro, not only in differentiations of racial characteristics but of individual characteristics among themselves. In its theory it was an unwitting expansion of the principle of James Fenimore Cooper's *Homeward Bound*. Brilliant examples of this type of James' fiction are to be found in such novels as *The American*(Boston, 1877), *Daisy Miller*(N.Y., 1879), and *The Portrait of a Lady*(Boston, 1882).

The Portrait of a Lady serves as a bridge between his early and his later, and more mature, writing. In its preface may be found, as R.P.Blackmur has pointed out, 'the genius and intention of James the novelist:'

> There is, I think, no more nutritive or suggestive truth in this connection than that of the perfect dependence of the 'moral' sense of a work of art on the amount of felt life concerned in producing it. The question comes back thus, obviously, to the kind and degree of the artist's prime sensibility, which is the soil out of which his subject springs. The quality and capacity of that soil, its capacity to 'grow' with due freshness and straightness any vision of life, represents, strongly or weakly, the projected morality. . . . Here we get exactly the high price of the novel as a literary form with closeness, to range through all the differences of the individual relation to its general subject-matter, all the varieties of outlook on life, of disposition to reflect and project, created by conditions that are never the same from man to man (or, as far as that goes, from woman to woman), but positively to appear more true to its character in proportion as it strains, or tends to burst, with a latent extravaganza, its mould.

James was not merely interested in emotion or in plot, but rather in the mind and its complex revelation of the character of 'the fine intelligence, either as agent or as the object of action or as both, . . . at the heart of James' work.' Only by penetration, minute examination, and scrupulous exegesis on the part of the author was such complex revelation possible. Consequently James is best read, as it were, from his own creative position within his material, for only by this inner approach can the remarkable subtlety and the perfect order of his works of art be felt.

James' own rootless life is perhaps one reason for his lack of interest in the variety of physical realism which increasingly occupied the attention of American writers during his lifetime. His father, Henry James, Sr., was a wealthy litterateur who trained Henry James and his brother William James, the psychologist, like highly bred race horses. They were tutored, sent abroad for education, and primed for the expression of genius. Fortunately both possessed it. Henry James was never able to be completely contented anywhere, but

after 1869 he lived abroad, and shortly after the onset of the World War became a British subject in protest against America's failure to enter on the side of the Allies.

His life was entirely devoted to the art of writing, not only its practice but its theory. 'The Art of Fiction' is an early example of the latter. His finest discussions of this subject occur, however, in the prefaces which he wrote for the collected edition of his work. Unfortunately these must be read in entirety for any satisfactory understanding, and only recently, in *The Art of the Novel*, have they been brought together and made generally accessible. 'No man of our time,' said Ezra Pound in 1918, in one of the first, and few, intelligent essays on James, 'has so laboured to create means of communication as did the late Henry James. The whole of great art is a struggle for communication.' It was for his advancement of the means of communication through prose that James had his greatest importance to literature.

The Novels and Tales of Henry James, 26 vols.(N.Y., 1907–17).
The American Scene(N.Y., 1907).
The Finer Grain(N.Y., 1910).
Notes on Novelists(N.Y., 1914).
Notes of a Son and Brother(N.Y., 1914).
The Ivory Tower(N.Y., 1917).
The Middle Years(N.Y., 1917).
The Sense of the Past(N.Y., 1917).
Notes and Reviews(Cambridge, Mass., 1921).
The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James, with an Introduction by R.P.Blackmur(N.Y., 1934).
P.Lubbock, ed., *The Letters of Henry James*, 2 vols.(N.Y., 1920).
C.H.Grattan, *The Three Jameses*(N.Y., 1932).
J.W.Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (New Haven, 1918).
Marianne Moore and others, 'Homage to Henry James,' *Hound & Horn*,VII, 361–562.
Le R. Phillips, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Henry James*(N.Y., 1930).

EDITH WHARTON (1862–1937)

EDITH WHARTON was born an aristocrat, and wisely wrote about the life she knew best. She was aware of the structure of Society, for during the years she had spent in New York, Long Island, Newport, Lenox, and Paris she had had ample opportunity to observe both its advantages and its limitations. The resultant, shrewd commentary is unique and valuable.

Her greatest literary influence was from the early work and personal criticisms of Henry James. It is in fact doubtful if the literary significance of James' early period can be as well grasped from his own work as from that of his pupil.

Mrs. Wharton was extraordinarily successful in both the short story and the novel. 'The chief technical difference between the short story and the novel may . . .' she says, 'be summed up by saying that situation is the main concern of the short story, character of the novel; and it follows that the effect produced by the short story depends almost entirely upon its form, or presentation.' Nowhere better than in 'The Other Two' is there a defter illustration of her perfect control of form and her ability to draw by implication from a single situation a penetrating analysis of Society.

The Valley of Decision(N.Y., 1902), *The House of Mirth*(N.Y., 1905), and *The Age of Innocence*(N.Y., 1922) best illustrate her particular combination of the novel of manners and that of character (or psychology). As with her short stories, these works keep within the scope of her experience. If Mrs. Wharton is to be criticized it must not be on the ground that she did not write about other groups of society but that, even within her own province, she too frequently succumbed to literary fashions.

The Writing of Fiction(N.Y., 1925).
A Backward Glance, an autobiography (N.Y., 1934).
W.L.Cross, 'Edith Wharton,' *Bookman*, LXIII,641–46.
Henry James, *Notes on Novelists*(N.Y., 1914),353–56.
Edmund Wilson, 'Justice to Edith Wharton,' *New Republic*,XCV,209–13.
L.Davis, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Edith Wharton*(Portland, Me., 1933).

Bryant's poetry. Though he loved nature, his poetry seldom contains any quick perception, and his observation is colored by romantic sentiment rather than charged with emotion.

He wrote comparatively little poetry. After 1825, when he moved to New York, he was chiefly concerned with the editing of newspapers and magazines. He was a sober-minded liberal in his editorial columns as in his poetry, and although he never had any wide popularity, he gave to journalism the same new dignity which he had given to poetry.

P.Godwin, ed., *The Life and Works of William Cullen Bryant*, 6 vols.(N.Y., 1883–84).

T.McDowell, ed., *William Cullen Bryant*, Representative Selections, with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes, in American Writers Series(N.Y., 1935).

W.A.Bradley, *William Cullen Bryant*, in English Men of Letters Series(N.Y., 1905).

H.C.Sturges, *Chronologies of the Life and Writings of William Cullen Bryant, with a Bibliography of His Works in Prose and Verse*(N.Y., 1903).

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL (1795–1856)

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL is the poet of a single poem. From 1821, when his first book appeared, he published much verse, but—'Although Percival remained the ranking American poet until the appearance of Bryant's *Poems* (1832), his work is now read only in anthologies, and he was soon forgotten.' So states a recent biographer.

Percival, a Yale graduate and a New Havener, was a man of much learning and varied talents. Eccentricities overpowered his abilities as doctor, editor, and geologist; and a penchant for sentimentalism undermined his poetry. His verse contains flashes of poetic richness, which are sustained only in 'The Coral Grove.'

The Poetical Works of James Gates Percival, with a Biographical Sketch, 2 vols. (Boston, 1859).

J.H.Ward, *The Life and Letters of James Gates Percival*(Boston, 1866).

H.E.Legler, *James G. Percival.* An Anecdotal Sketch and a Bibliography(Milwaukee, Wis., 1901).

GRENVILLE MELLEN (1799–1841)

GRENVILLE MELLEN is known as the poet of a single line:

And high above the fight the lonely bugle grieves,

from an ode delivered at the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Mellen was born in Maine, and practised law there for most of his life. In 1833 he published a volume of verse, *The Martyr's Triumph, Buried Valleys, and Other Poems.* Nothing in it alters his reputation.

EDWARD COOTE PINKNEY (1802–1828)

EDWARD COOTE PINKNEY had the spirit of a cavalier. He was born an aristocrat and was educated in England and Baltimore. As a young naval officer he was cited for bravery when fighting against the West Indian pirates. As a young lawyer in Baltimore he wrote occasional verse to lighten a party or to flatter a woman. In 1823, in *Rodolph, A Fragment*, he attempted dramatic verse, but the best and most characteristic of his *Poems*(Baltimore, 1825) is of a more casual nature. He died at the age of twenty-six.

T.O.Mabbott and F.L.Pleadwell, *The Life and Works of Edward C. Pinkney*(N.Y., 1926).

THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS (1809–1858)

POE dubbed Thomas Holley Chivers 'one of the best and one of the worst poets in America,' a dictum that holds true today. 'Avalon' in its complete form contains stanzas of incredible badness; yet, when edited, it is one of the finest poems of its time. His 'Sonnet—To Isa Sleeping' was also rarely equalled. How much Poe owed to Chivers, or Chivers to Poe, was disputed by them, and has never been determined. Chivers died before he was fifty, having written some nine volumes. With his wild and unreined fancy, his profusion of exotic imagery, and his romantic sentiment, he remains one of American poetry's eccentricities—a strange phenomenon to have sprung from a Georgian cotton-farm.

Eonchs of Ruby, a Gift of Love(N.Y., 1851).
S.F.Damon, *Thomas Holley Chivers, Friend of Poe*(N.Y., 1930).

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809–1849)

POE is the first American poet and the first American writer of prose whose work can be said to have been of importance to the world.

Poe was born in 1809 in Boston, but, when his actress mother died in poverty two years later, he was taken into the family of John Allan, a wealthy tobacco exporter of Baltimore, and brought up by him. From 1815–20 he lived abroad with the Allans, partly in Scotland but mostly at school in England. After his return he studied in Richmond, and in 1826 entered the University of Virginia. He was soon dismissed for bad debts, then quarreled with his foster-father and enlisted in the army. In 1830 he entered West Point, from which he was dismissed, this time for deliberate disobedience. In 1827 he had published *Tamerlane*, in 1829 another volume of poems, and in 1831 still a third. Now quite cast off by Allan, he supported himself by writing and by intermittent editorial positions with newly-popular magazines. In this capacity he became the first practising critic of any dignity in American letters.

The publication of books written by Americans was made difficult by the ease with which English writing could be pirated. American magazines, however, were willing to pay for native material, and the stimulus to write what they would accept was intense. Poe wrote in 1841 to Fitz-Greene Halleck: 'I need not call your attention to the signs of the times in respect to Magazine literature. You will admit the tendency of the age in this direction. The brief, the terse, and the easily circulated will take the place of the diffuse, the ponderous, and the inaccessible.'

It is hardly surprising that Poe's genius should have developed a theory of composition concentrated on closely-knit form and unity of tone. His mind developed form to a point of stiffness and artificiality, and it is difficult to read Poe without an excessive awareness of structure. His acute sensibility permitted him to express tone in terms of sound, color, and, at times, in that most difficult to convey of all perceptions, the tactile.

The structure of the short story, which had been loose in Irving's hands, Poe tightened so that emotion was allowed free play in such works as the tonal 'Fall of the House of Usher' or the psychological 'Cask of Amontillado.' In his tales of ratiocination, like 'The Purloined Letter,' the interest is more directly in the structure, and through the perfect co-ordination of its elements he was able to achieve an almost metaphysical beauty. Here in the character of Dupin is, incidentally, the prototype of a long line of master-minds.

'Poetry, above all things,' said Poe, 'is a beautiful painting, whose tints, to minute inspection, are a confusion worse confounded, but start boldly out to the cursory glance of the connoisseur.' The force of this impressionistic criterion of poetry was not felt in American literature until it had travelled a devious path, by way of the French symbolists, to the poetic renaissance of the early twentieth century.

J.A.Harrison, ed., *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 17 vols.(N.Y., 1902).
M.Alterton and H.Craig, eds., *Edgar Allan Poe*, Representative Selections, with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes, in American Writers Series(N.Y., 1935).
K.Campbell, ed., *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*(Boston, 1917).
——, *Poe's Short Stories*, in American Authors Series(N.Y., 1927).
——, *The Mind of Poe and Other Studies* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933).
Hervey Allen, *Israfel: the Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe*(N.Y., 1926).
G.E.Woodberry, *The Life of Edgar Allan Poe, Personal and Literary, with His Chief Correspondence with Men of Letters*, 2 vols.(Boston, 1909).
C.P.Cambiaire, *The Influence of Edgar Allan Poe in France*(N.Y., 1927).
J.W.Robertson, *Bibliography of the Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2 vols. (San Francisco, 1934).

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804–1864)

IN the prose of Nathaniel Hawthorne, America had the work of another genius. Hawthorne was one of the group in New England who, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, gave to this section a pre-eminency of literary prestige which for a long time served popularly to identify 'New England' with 'American.'

He was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts, out of whose port his father sailed as captain. In 1808 his father died at Surinam, and Hawthorne was brought up in polite impoverishment and dependence upon his maternal relatives. With their help he was sent to Bowdoin College, from which he was graduated in 1825. By all New England standards he should then have earned a living to support his widowed mother and his two sisters. Instead, he determined to become a writer, and anonymously published a novel, *Fanshawe*(Boston, 1828).

This first book gave a romantic touch to the milieu of his college days. Although it was favorably reviewed, Hawthorne was not satisfied and later destroyed whatever copies he could obtain. He then followed Scott into the past; but, in accord with nativism, the past was American. For a number of years he kept romantically to himself, writing occasionally for the newspapers, doing odd bits of hackwork, polishing his style, and acquiring a limited, though definite, reputation. In 1837 the first edition of *Twice-Told Tales* was published.

This increased his prestige but not his income. In an effort to establish himself economically he became a weigher and gauger in the Boston Custom House, an occupation which he found grimy and exhausting, and then took part in the transcendental socialism of Brook Farm. This was no better. He married in 1842, and moved to the old parsonage in Concord, where Emerson, in 1836, had written a part of *Nature*. It was here that Hawthorne wrote his *Mosses from an Old Manse*(N.Y., 1846).

Hawthorne was not only a writer of historical sketches like 'The Gray Champion,' but a distinguished essayist. Few of his achievements were more successful than his creation of atmosphere. This he could call up not only out of the mistiness of the past, but from the present as well. There are no finer examples of his descriptive prose than the graphic passages of 'The Old Manse.'

He was never satisfied with his tales, and longed 'to achieve a novel that should evolve some deep lesson and should possess physical substance enough to stand alone.' In 1850 he published *The Scarlet Letter*. This had, at least, psychological substance. From the cue of an old New England punishment for adultery, he described the effect of sin on those involved. In the novel he developed an elaborate technique of dynamic symbolism, foreshadowed in his earlier tales, by which he could express the nuances of his problem. Through this, and through his sensitive understanding of the play of conscience, he constructed an elaborate drama of the mind which was of inestimably greater importance to literature than was his physical reconstruction of the past. Such a scene from the inner drama is shown in the chapter 'The Leech and his Patient.'

The problem of physical substance continually perplexed Hawthorne, and he

acutely observed of his tales that they had 'the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade.' Melville expressed it more bluntly: 'He doesn't patronise the butcher—he needs roast-beef done rare.'

In 'Ethan Brand,' *The House of the Seven Gables* (Boston, 1851), and *The Blithedale Romance* (Boston, 1852) Hawthorne indicated his drift toward contemporary material, utilizing in the first some earlier observations made on a trip to the Berkshires, in the second his recollections of Salem, and in the third his experiences at Brook Farm. A character like Hepzibah has poignancy and charm; but though Hawthorne was able to picture the contemporary individual and the details of the contemporary scene, he was unable to recreate the feeling of his time.

In 1853 Hawthorne went to Liverpool as consul, and later spent some months in Italy, from which experience he gained material for his inferior *Marble Faun* (Boston, 1860). He returned to America in 1860, exhausted by his daughter's illness and perhaps by his own touch of the Roman fever. He was able to write nothing more of consequence before his death in 1864. He had done enough.

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RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803–1882)

THE greatest American Romantic was Ralph Waldo Emerson. Nowhere better than in the words of this spokesman of nineteenth-century America can one find the natural enthusiasm of a nation faced with no apparent limits to prosperity nor checks to the individual; nor, using 'Romantic' in a more philosophical sense, can one observe more typically the loose distinction between understanding and reason.

Emerson was born in Boston in 1803, the descendant of a long line of men who had taught the public from the pulpit. No one was surprised when, four years after his graduation from Harvard in 1821, he quit teaching to enter divinity school. It was more startling when, in 1832, he resigned the ministry of the Second Church of Boston, after a dispute over the significance of the Lord's Supper, and sailed for Europe. He travelled widely, visited Carlyle among others, and returned to Boston in 1833, glad to be 'back again to myself.' In 1834 he moved to Concord.

The general loosening of Calvinistic rigor and the popular demand for things American found an enthusiastic supporter in Emerson. In 1836 he published *Nature*; in 1837 he spoke before the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Society on 'The American Scholar'; and in 1838 he gave his startling and unorthodox 'Divinity School Address.'

Thereafter he travelled about America, giving innumerable lectures on these three cardinal points, which he collected and published as essays. Between tours, he rested comfortably in his snug, white home.

Santayana has best summarized the character of Emerson's thought: 'Philosophy for him was rather a moral energy flowering into sprightliness of thought than a body of serious and defensible doctrines. In practising transcendental speculation only in this poetic and sporadic fashion, Emerson retained its true value and avoided its greatest danger. He secured the freedom and fertility of his thought and did not allow one conception of law or one hint of harmony to sterilize the mind and prevent the subsequent birth within it of other ideas, no less just and imposing than their predecessors. For we are not dealing at all with matters of fact or with such verifiable truths as exclude their opposites. We are dealing only with imagination, with the art of conception, and with the various forms in which reflection, like a poet, may compose and recompose human experience.'

The philosophies of Plotinus, the Orientals, Kant, and Carlyle have all been shown to have their relationship to the expression of Emerson's thought, but they are like tags and trimmings. 'Transcendentalism,' Professor Townsend has observed, 'lies somewhere between the poetic metaphysics of Edwards and the prosaic, almost profane deism of Paine and Franklin.' Emerson's marrow is American.

It was not only the congenial stimulation of Emerson's message that made him popular, but the sparkle of his style. Emerson was an exuberant aphorist. He wrote sentences so brilliant that their successive haloes combine to obscure the vital weaknesses of the structure of the whole. One remembers Emerson for his sudden flashes of insight which pierce to the heart of the matter. He had the tricks of an orator and preacher, and it is rarely possible to forget in his prose the voice of a Lyceum lecturer inspiring and exciting his audience.

In his theory of poetry, Emerson also was American. His comment that 'it is not metres, but a metre-making argument that makes a poem,' and his scorn of Poe as 'the jingle man' recall the emphasis which seventeenth-century New England poets placed on the substance rather than on the fine lace of poetry. He believed that the idea and its expression were inseparable, a concept which differs little from the Edwardian metaphysics of beauty as an expression of divine order, which was at the root of the Calvinism from which he and his contemporaries were reacting.

In many ways Emerson is more distinguished as a poet than as a writer of prose. In his poetry the brevity of form serves to isolate the expression of single ideas, which his attempts to expand in prose often confused or, at least, weakened. Emerson's reaction against the softness of the lyric gave him a sympathy for English metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, which can be paralleled by their sympathetic reception in the twentieth century. Emerson had, as the metaphysical poets had, a faculty of rescuing poetry from the mire of sentiment by placing it firmly on the basis of ideas.

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HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817–1862)

'If I seem out of step with the world,' said Thoreau, 'it is because I hear another drummer.' His spiritual rat-tat led him from Concord, where his father was a pencil-maker, to Harvard; called him back to Concord; hurried him from work each

time he earned enough to eat; drew him into Emerson's household in 1841, and, still beating clear, drew him out again in 1843. In 1845 it signalled to him from the shores of Walden Pond.

There Thoreau tested his self-reliance. With his own hands he built his house, and with his own eyes he looked about him. Man saddled himself with property, and was then sway-backed. He galloped, to arrive nowhere. Thoreau stayed put.

What he saw he set down in *Walden* (Boston, 1854). It is one of the greatest of travel books, for Thoreau explored both the boundaries of man's impulses and the resources of his soul. He pondered, and he observed. With his skill he brought forth the insects, the birds, and the fishes, the flowers, the shrubs, and the trees to fill the earth.

Emerson, like so many others, forgetting Thoreau's 'Conclusion,' wrote, 'Instead of engineering for all America, he was captain of a huckleberry party.' But Thoreau heard the drum beat. *Walden* was his microcosmography, his little world.

The source of *Walden* was the record of his journal, carefully reworked before publication. Thoreau was one of the first Americans to try for a native idiom. 'Enough has been said in these days of the charm of fluent writing. . . . All men are really most attracted by the beauty of plain speech, and they even write in a florid style in imitation of this. . . . Where shall we look for a standard English but to the words of a standard man. . . . Whose are the truly *labored* sentences? From the weak and flimsy periods of the politician and literary man, we are glad to turn even to the description of work, the simple record of the month's labor in the farmer's almanac, to restore our tone and spirits. . . . The surliness with which the woodchopper speaks of his woods, handling them as indifferently as his axe, is better than the mealy-mouthed enthusiasm of the lover of nature. Better that the primrose by the river's brim be a yellow primrose, and nothing more, than that it be something less.' 'The language of excitement is at best picturesque merely. You must be calm before you can utter oracles.'

Men have caught up with his prose; they have scarcely begun with his poetry. His verse had toughness, and he knew why. 'The poet is no tender slip of fairy stock, who requires peculiar institutions and edicts for his defense, but the toughest son of earth and of Heaven. . . .' 'A true poem is distinguished not so much by a felicitous expression, or any thought it suggests, as by the atmosphere which surrounds it.' 'There is a soberness in a rough aspect, as of unhewn granite, which addresses a depth in us, but a polished surface hits only the ball of the eye.'

A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers(Boston, 1849) was Thoreau's only book besides *Walden* to be published during his lifetime. He died of tuberculosis in 1862, before he was ready for another. Whatever other volumes have been published over his name have been culled from his journals and letters.

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CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH (1813–1892)

CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH was one of the many intellectuals who were drawn into the stream of Transcendentalism. He was born in Alexandria, Virginia, of New England parents, and as a young clergyman filled many pastorates in the East and Mid-

dle West. In 1840, after he had come to Boston, his kinsman John Quincy Adams was startled enough to comment in his diary: 'Pearse Cranch, *ex ephebis*, preached here last week, and gave out quite a stream of transcendentalism, most unexpectedly.'

Cranch left the ministry, and painted and wrote poetry. Several of his poems were published in the *Dial*, Transcendentalism's organ, and he is remembered as one of the lesser poets whose inspiration came from this intellectual quickening. As a painter of landscapes he lived for many years abroad, in Rome, Florence, and Paris. Finally, in 1863, he returned to America, and in 1873 to Cambridge, as a talented, but minor, figure.

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WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1818–1901)

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING'S life was spent in trusting himself. Thoreau, his great friend, called him 'as naturally whimsical as a cow is brindled.' Channing was the son of a prominent Boston doctor, and the nephew and namesake of the famous Unitarian radical and abolitionist. In 1834 he entered Harvard, but left in boredom after a few months and disappeared into the country to write poetry. He later lived for a time in Cincinnati, but in 1842 he came to Concord, which, as much as anywhere, was his home for the rest of his life. 'Ellery Channing,' said Hawthorne, 'is one of those queer and clever young men, whom Mr. Emerson (that everlasting rejecter of all that is, and seeker for he knows not what) is continually picking up by way of a genius.'

Channing was eccentric and unreliable, but only his family could never forgive him. His friends saw in his character that which critics can find in his poetry: a freshness and individuality rising out of an undisciplined spirit.

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HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807–1882)

LONGFELLOW was born in 1807 in Portland, Maine, into a family of distinction and a milieu of culture. When he entered Bowdoin, as a sophomore and a member of the same class as Hawthorne, his intellectual snobbery was perhaps sufficient to make him uncongenial to his classmates and to mark him for a professorial career.

On his graduation in 1825, the college proposed that he prepare himself to teach modern languages there by a period of study abroad. He accepted, and for three years luxuriated in Continental culture and sentiment. He came back to Bowdoin, but, in 1834, after a similar proposal from Harvard, returned to Europe for an additional year of study.

His life in Cambridge, against the handsome background of Craigie House, became one of ease. 'Longfellow,' as Whitman described him, 'reminiscent, polish'd, elegant, with the air of finest conventional library, picture-gallery or parlor, with ladies and gentlemen in them, and plush and rosewood, and ground-glass lamps, and mahogany and ebony furniture, and a silver inkstand and scented paper to write on.'

This was a man, as Simms would have described him, prepared to write 'for' and not 'from' the people.

The nineteenth century was attracted by the sentiment with which he perfumed his verse; his pictures of an honest village blacksmith and a pathetic Evangeline reaffirmed for the public his truism that life was real and earnest. Longfellow supplied

their demand, with a natural pleasure at their approval.

At the same time he was searching the literatures of a dozen tongues to find fresh subjects and meters. He translated sentimental lyrics from the German, songs from the Troubadours, sonnets from the Italian, eclogues from the Latin, a hymn from the Byzantine Greek, laments from the Anglo-Saxon, ballads from the Spanish, and sagas from the Scandinavian. His work as a translator had its climax in his version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. All these stocked his lectures and made him an expert metrist.

No other American poet had his skill. It found expression not only in his translations, but in his own poetry. 'Paul Revere's Ride' is a swift-moving, skilfully constructed ballad; 'Serenade,' an exquisite lyric; 'Divina Commedia' and 'Venice' are sensitive sonnets.

The taste for his variety of sentiment has passed, and no other American poetry has undergone a more thorough reversal of its original popularity among critics than has that of Longfellow.

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OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809–1894)

'THE Brahmin caste of New England' Holmes defined as its 'harmless, inoffensive, untitled aristocracy.' He was all Brahmin. His ancestry was linked with the early settlers of New England, and as an adult he lived for many years on the water side of Beacon Street. His father was an orthodox minister. 'I might have been a minister myself, for aught I know,' Holmes said, 'if [a certain] clergyman had not looked and talked so like an undertaker.' Only a few contemporaries found his liberalism harmful, and no one found even his slight snobbery offensive.

For a year after his graduation from Harvard in 1829 Holmes read law, but gave this up for medicine, which he studied for two years at Boston and Harvard. For two more years he studied in Paris, before returning to Boston to establish his practice. He wrote frequently on medical matters, and in 1838 was made professor of anatomy at Dartmouth, a duty which required only three months of each year. In 1843 he published his famous study of 'The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever.' In 1847 he was made Parkman Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Harvard Medical School, and until 1882 he instructed and amused his classes.

'Now, James, let me talk and don't interrupt me,' Holmes once chided Lowell. After 1857, few Americans would have wanted to interrupt the wittiest man of the century. In November of that year, in the first issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, appeared 'The Autocrat.' Holmes concentrated the best of his table-talk in this and succeeding numbers. In the next year these essays were published as *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*(Boston, 1858); a second group appeared as *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*(Boston, 1860); and a third as *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (Boston, 1872).

The sprightly turn of Holmes's mind marked his poetry as well as his prose. He was the great writer of 'occasional' verse. Whether it was a description of a family caudle-cup or Smibert's portrait of an an-

cestor, a poem for a class reunion or for the bicentenary of King's Chapel, an attack on Calvinism or a pleasant homily, he managed deftly to bring it into meter.

Holmes wrote three novels, more or less similar. The best known, *Elsie Venner* (Boston, 1861), was, Holmes explained, an attempt 'to *stir* the question of automatic agency in its relation to self-determination. To do this by means of a palpable outside agency, predetermining certain traits of character and certain apparently voluntary acts, such as the common judgment of mankind and the tribunals of law and theology have been in the habit of recognizing as sin and crime.' Holmes was equal to the theme, but he was too inherently a rambling conversationalist to meet the formal requirements of a novel. His novels are interesting because it is Holmes who talks; they lack, however, the personality of his essays.

Holmes lived to be an old man, saddened by the deaths of his fellow members of the Saturday Club, but seldom able to refuse the right word or the right bit of verse to celebrate an occasion. He died in 1894, and his mantle of wit and wisdom passed almost imperceptibly onto the shoulders of his son, Mr. Justice Holmes.

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JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807–1892)

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER was born in 1807 in Haverhill, in Massachusetts. His parents were Quaker, and his childhood was passed in the atmosphere of homely friendliness which he describes in *Snowbound*. It was evidently the poetry of Robert Burns which set him at verse-making, and directed his attention to the farm-life about him. In 1827 his father agreed with the entreaties of editors interested in the work of his son, and sent him to Haverhill Academy. Flushed by encouragement, Whittier wrote, during the next five years, almost a poem a week. Verse was always a little too easy for him.

In 1829 he became editor of *The American Manufacturer*, a partisan paper. This was the first of many editorial positions which took him for brief periods to Hartford and Philadelphia, and occupied him during the greater part of his life, which he passed in Haverhill or nearby Amesbury. In 1833, excited by the message of William Lloyd Garrison, he became an abolitionist, and until the Civil War devoted his life to the cause.

His propagandist poetry is unsurpassed in American literature. He also wrote brief pastorals, but checked himself from the thought of long or elaborate poetry. 'I frankly confess that I have not resolution to attempt anything of the kind. Besides, unless consecrated to the sacred interests of religion and humanity, it would be a criminal waste of life, and abuse of the powers which God has given for his own glory and the welfare of the world.'

The advent of the Civil War, and the awkward situation of a Friend encouraging strife, more or less brought a close to Whittier's propagandist activities. From that time on he devoted himself to writing in terms of the gospel of love and natural simplicity, through which he became thought of as the kindly old man of America.

The quietness of Whittier's best verse dulls the appreciation of its artistic merit. Whittier consciously sought simplicity, and deleted whatever jarred. No other American poet has created homely imagery equal to that of *Snowbound*, nor has one written religious verse of a purity comparable with his.

Between Whittier and the literary figures of Cambridge and Boston stretched a long frontier of countryside.

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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819–1891)

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, the descendant of an old New England family, was graduated from Harvard in 1838 after four years of 'the merest browsing.' In a desultory fashion he then proceeded to a degree in law. His love for Maria White woke him up. She was an enthusiast for the antislavery movement, and through her and her circle of friends Lowell had a period of excited liberalism.

For most of his life, Lowell was buffeted between two intellectual currents of the New England renaissance: the urge to revolt and the love of refinement. In 1843, a year before his marriage to Miss White, he could write to his friend Briggs, apropos of radicalism, 'I believe that no poet in this age can write much that is good unless he give himself up to this tendency.' But in 1850 he was saying to the same correspondent: 'My poems have thus far had a regular and natural sequence. First, Love and the mere happiness of existence beginning to be conscious of itself, then Freedom—both being the sides which Beauty presented to me—and now I am going to try more *wholly* after Beauty herself. . . . Certainly I shall not grind for any Philistines, whether Reformers or Conservatives.'

His direction was never final. In a single year, 1848, appeared *A Fable for Critics; Poems, Second Series; The Biglow Papers, First Series;* and *The Vision of Sir Launfal.* In 1888, three years before his death, he published both *Political Essays* and *Heartsease and Rue.* He was never essentially radical, nor intently for Beauty; yet he continued to play with each.

In 1855 he succeeded Longfellow at Harvard as Smith Professor of the French and Spanish Languages and Literatures, and was made professor of belles-lettres. From 1857 to 1861 he was the first editor of the newly-founded *Atlantic Monthly*, and in 1864 became an editor of the *North American Review.* Such activities demanded varied talents. He responded with editorials, essays, literary criticism, and poems of every sort. These were consistently graceful, always proficient, and almost invariably superficial.

'I reckon myself a good taster of dialects,' he said; and, after the publication of *The Biglow Papers*, boasted, 'I am the first poet who has endeavored to express the American Idea.' Such an expression of the vernacular was admirable for satirical attacks, but its thinness became apparent when Lowell attempted to extend its use in 'The Courtin'.

Even in literary criticism, with which he was most occupied, he was content to relate the expressions of a cultivated mind. He seemed too awed by the classics of English literature to strike out for himself, either critically or creatively, but his observations are always interesting. It is only because there have since been so many men of good taste that his remarks are being forgotten. Certain of his essays, such as 'On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners,' will not be so readily passed by. These more directly express himself.

In 1877 he was appointed Minister to Spain, and in 1880 was sent to the Court of St. James's. In London his wit, good-breeding, and general respect for things British made him a universally satisfactory representative of the American people. That he was an index only to a minority did not matter. What the British admired, and what we still respect, was a man of very great ease, and an example of the new refinement to be found among Americans.

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MARIA LOWELL (1821–1853)

'THAT is *poetry*!' Amy Lowell exclaimed, on reading 'An Opium Fantasy.' 'It is better than anything her husband ever wrote, and he always said that she was a better poet than he.'

Maria White was eighteen when she and James Russell Lowell first met. Her home in Watertown was the center of a group of young Harvard graduates and their sisters, who alternated serious discussions of reform movements with music and dancing. 'The Band' took an immediate interest in the pair. 'They tell me I shall be in love with her,' Lowell jubilantly reported, soon after their meeting. Their courtship took on a general interest, and their love letters were passed about from one member of 'the Band' to another.

In 1840 they became engaged, but they were not married until four years later. After their wedding they moved to Philadelphia, where for a few months Lowell wrote editorials for the *Pennsylvania Freeman*. His wife helped their income a little by selling translations of German poetry. In 1845 they returned to his father's home in Cambridge. The deaths of three of their four children, and Maria's illness, saddened their happiness together.

Occasionally her poems appeared in magazines or anthologies. There was no collection of her work, however, until after her death in 1852. Then, in 1855, Lowell had privately printed an edition of fifty copies. In 1907 another limited edition appeared, but it was not until the publication of an enlarged edition in 1936 that her poetry became generally accessible.

Her poems have a richness of color and imagination reminiscent of Coleridge and Keats. She wrote comparatively little, but the quality of her verse is surpassed by that of no other American woman in the mid-nineteenth century save Emily Dickinson.

Hope J. Vernon, ed., *The Poems of Maria Lowell*. With Unpublished Letters and a Biography(Providence, R.I., 1936).

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT (1796–1859)

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT described the story of the Spanish conquest of Mexico as 'a rich prose epic.' Narrative history had the appeal of romance based on history. Motley's novel, *Merry Mount*(Boston, 1849), was followed by *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*(London and N.Y., 1856). The sequence is not strange.

In 1813, during his junior year at Harvard, Prescott lost the sight of one eye and, two years later, much use of the second. From 1815 to 1817 he travelled abroad in a vain attempt to restore the sight of the latter to normality. The effort was unsuccessful, and Prescott was faced with the realization that most professions were closed to him. With the assistance of friends who read to him, he continued his study, which had been cut short by his accident. With them he read widely in the various literatures of Europe, and decided to become a writer. He tried his hand at a tale or two, then considered writing a survey of some national literature, and at last rejected a study of Italian literature in favor of some phase of Spanish history. 'I believe the Spanish subject will be more new than the Italian.'

His study of Mably's *Sur l'Étude de l'Histoire* determined his approach. 'I like particularly his notion of the necessity of giving an interest as well as utility to his-

tory, by letting events tend to some obvious point or moral; in short, by paying such attention to the development of events tending to this leading result, as one would in the construction of a romance or drama.'

This principle was behind not only the writing of *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*(Boston, 1838), but behind two of his subsequent narratives, *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*(N.Y., 1843) and *The History of the Conquest of Peru*(N.Y., 1847). The most dramatic passages of these are descriptions of actual conquest, but in many ways the most skilfully written are those in which he reconstructs 'the development of events tending to this leading result.' Such is 'The Foundation of Vera Cruz,' with its concluding intimation of doom.

The Works of William H. Prescott, 22 vols. (Philadelphia, 1904).
G.Ticknor, *Life of William Hickling Prescott*(Boston, 1864).
J.S.Bassett, *The Middle Group of American Historians*(N.Y., 1917),211–23.

FRANCIS PARKMAN (1823–1893)

THE character of the Indian, Parkman wrote in 1845, 'will always remain more or less of a mystery to one who does not add practical observations to his closest studies. In fact, I am more than half resolved to devote a few months to visiting the distant tribes.' In April of the next year he set out on the journey which he describes in *The Oregon Trail*.

Since childhood, Francis Parkman had been interested in the American Indian, and at the age of eighteen had formed the plan for a history of the struggle between the French and English for Canada, in which the Indian had been a prime factor. His chief concern at Harvard, from which he was graduated in 1844, and subsequently while at law school was in his preparation for such a work. He studied intensively, but 'my reliance was less on books than on such personal experiences as should in some sense identify me with my theme.' For this experience he penetrated such wilderness as could be found in New England, 'merely to have a taste of the half savage kind of life necessary to be led.' Accounts of certain of these trips he published as articles.

The Oregon Trail had been a subject of interest to Americans since the early eighteen-thirties, when Lee and Whitman had each led groups to settle near the Columbia River. Since 1842 the 'Oregon fever' had grown hotter, and the subject of possession was continually debated between the United States and Great Britain. President Polk's ultimatum to Great Britain came in the same month as Parkman's departure. It is not surprising that Parkman should have been interested in the Trail, nor that in the *Knickerbocker* for February 1847 he should have begun a narrative of his journey. In 1849 it appeared as a book. *The Oregon Trail* brought back into popular literature a realistic approach to the frontier and the Indian, which had been rare since the time of Mrs. Rowlandson.

Parkman's health had been overstrained before his departure; on his return it was almost ruined, and for the rest of his life he suffered from intense illness and partial blindness. Nevertheless, in 1848 he began his history of France in the New World,[1] with *The History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac*(Boston, 1851), and in 1892 the series was completed. It represents probably the finest work by any American historian. Parkman's flair for narrative and the power of observation displayed in *The Oregon Trail* transform the material of his exhaustive research into an epic of conquest even finer than that of Prescott.

The Works of Francis Parkman, 20 vols. (Boston, 1897–98).
W.L.Schramm, ed., *Francis Parkman*, Representative Selections, with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes, in American Writers Series(N.Y., 1938).
C.H.Farnham, *A Life of Francis Parkman* (Boston, 1900).

1 The series includes: *Pioneers of France in the New World*(1865); *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century*(1867); *La Salle; or, The Discovery of the Great West*(1869); *The Old Régime in Canada*(1874); *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV* (1877); *Montcalm and Wolfe*(1884); *A Half-Century of Conflict*(1892).

H.D.Sedwick, *Francis Parkman*, in American Men of Letters Series(Boston, 1904).
H.C.Lodge, 'Francis Parkman,' *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, LVI,319–35.
G.M.Wrong, 'Francis Parkman,' *Canadian Historical Review*,IV,289–303.

RICHARD HENRY DANA, JR. (1815–1882)

RICHARD HENRY DANA, JR., wrote as realistically about life at sea as Parkman had written about life on the frontier. Dana had entered Harvard in 1831, but in his third year his eyesight grew weak, and to recover his health he sailed as a member of the crew of the brig 'Pilgrim,' bound for California.

'All the books professing to give life at sea,' Dana wrote in his preface, 'have been written by persons who have gained their experience as naval officers, or passengers, and of these, there are very few which are intended to be taken as narratives of facts. . . . *A voice from the forecastle* has hardly yet been heard. . . . My design is, and it is this which has induced me to publish the book, to present the life of a common sailor at sea as it really is,—the light and the dark together.'

The 'voice from the forecastle' was, however, that of a gentleman; its expression was that of an observer rather than that of a common sailor. This important distinction should always be made between types of realism.

Dana returned to be graduated from Harvard in 1837. He then studied to become a lawyer, and in 1841 published *The Seaman's Friend*, an important study of maritime law. He became a distinguished member of his profession, but *Two Years before the Mast* (1840) was his only great literary success.

Two Years before the Mast(N.Y., 1936).
C.F.Adams, *Richard Henry Dana: A Biography*, 2 vols.(Boston, 1890).
Bliss Perry, *The Praise of Folly and Other Papers*(Boston, 1923),53–62.

HERMAN MELVILLE (1819–1891)

'IN this world of lies, Truth is forced to flee like a scared white doe in the woodlands.' Melville observed this, and spent his life in pursuit.

Herman Melville was born in 1819 in New York City. His family's fortune having fallen, his schooling was cut short and he was forced to work as a clerk, farm-boy, and schoolmaster. In 1837 he sailed to Liverpool as a cabin-boy, an experience which he later described in *Redburn*(N.Y., 1849). After his return and a period of various attempts to satisfy himself with employment on land, he sailed again on 3 January 1841, this time aboard the whaler 'Acushnet,' bound for the South Seas. 'A whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard.' On 9 July 1842, he deserted ship at the Marquesas Islands, fled inland and lived among the natives. He escaped on the 'Lucy Ann,' an Australian whaler, and deserted her on 9 September 1842, at Tahiti, where with a new friend he tried farming on the islands. In August 1843, he shipped on the frigate 'United States,' the scene of *White Jacket*(N.Y., 1850), and in October of the next year he reached home. In *Typee* (London, 1846) and *Omoo*(London, 1847), he passed on a romantic dream of the Pacific to a delighted public.

Melville was not content with his easy success. In *Mardi*(N.Y., 1849),with a Rabelaisian freedom, he explored other men's minds. He discovered that it was his own depth which he should have plumbed. This he did, with elaborate symbolism, in *Moby Dick*(N.Y., 1851) and *Pierre*(N.Y., 1852). Ahab was unhampered in his pursuit of the white whale, which stood for the insoluble and evil mystery of the universe. Pierre was Ahab come ashore, to the more difficult task of reconciling conventionality and the pursuit of truth amidst the complexities of society. 'Is this the warm lad that once sung to the world of the Tropical Summer?' The public would have none of Melville's naturalism; his books were ignored, and his fame was snuffed out.

The remaining years of his life were spent in obscurity, mostly as a customs in-

spector in New York City. He wrote more prose, *Israel Potter*(N.Y., 1855), *Piazza Tales*(N.Y., 1856), and *The Confidence Man* (N.Y., 1857), but none of it was successful. After a trip to the Holy Land in 1856–57, he began *Clarel*(N.Y., 1876), a long poem examining contemporary beliefs. This poem plus the poems in *Battle-Pieces* (N.Y., 1866), *John Marr*(N.Y., 1888), and *Timoleon*(N.Y., 1891), the last two privately printed, constituted his only literary work until, in the last few months before his death in 1891, he wrote the short novel *Billy Budd*(London, 1924).

Melville was the most versatile American writer of prose in the nineteenth century. His dexterity is displayed not only by the obvious contrasts between his lush descriptions of the land of the Typees, the exuberance of *Mardi*, and the harshness of Cuticle's operation at sea, but even more by his constant manipulation of style to give particular emotional effects. The Shakespearian quality of Ahab's soliloquies brings tragic overtones of Lear and Hamlet, and the conversation of the youthful Pierre is like that of a Romeo or the hero of a cheap romance. More subtly, the decay of Pierre's sense of time is illustrated by a disintegration of sequence in the beginning of the last section of 'The History of an Author.' Melville also knew the value of sound in prose; he had ears to help him write, as well as eyes. No writer of prose in his century so well understood the various potentialities of his medium.

It was not until 1919 that the greatness of Melville's achievement in the novel began to be recognized in America; but not even yet has the freshness and vigor of his poetry received its due attention. In an age when verse was polite and conventional, Melville was not afraid of roughness and individuality.

The Works of Herman Melville, 16 vols. (London, 1922–24).
Willard Thorp, ed., *Herman Melville*, Representative Selections, with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes, in American Writers Series(N.Y., 1938).
R.Weaver, *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic*(N.Y., 1921).
J.Freeman, *Herman Melville*, in English Men of Letters Series(N.Y., 1926).
L.Mumford, *Herman Melville*(N.Y., 1929).
R.P.Blackmur, 'The Craft of Herman Melville,' *Virginia Quarterly Review*,XIV, 266–82.
E.L.G.Watson, 'Melville's *Pierre*,' *New England Quarterly*,III,195–234.
——,'Melville's Testament of Acceptance,' *New England Quarterly*,VI,319–27.
M.Sadleir, *Excursions in Victorian Bibliography*(London, 1922),217ff.

POEMS OF THE CIVIL WAR

WARFARE today evokes but little poetry; confronted with the modern holocaust, the imagination is stricken dumb. In the time of the American Civil War, however, there was still an atmosphere of romance, and the spirit of gallantry and sacrifice found expression in such ballads and elegies as are illustrated here.

The poets were from all sorts and conditions of men: Parsons was a Boston dentist and a famous translator of Dante; Meredith became a New York banker; Brownell was a Rhode Island poet who served as Farragut's secretary at the time of the battle of Mobile Bay; Read was a major on the staff of General Lew Wallace; Boker was a Philadelphian playwright and poet; Thompson was a lawyer; and Lathrop, who was only a boy during the war, was an author and editor.

Such poems as these have helped to make the struggle between the North and the South even more popular than the Revolution as a display of romantic heroism.

Thomas William Parsons, *Poems*(Boston, 1893).
R.Hovey, *Seaward: An Elegy on the Death of Thomas William Parsons*(Boston, 1893). Contains critical essay.
Henry Howard Brownell, *Lines of Battle*, ed. with an introduction by M.A.De W. Howe(N.Y., 1912).
The Poetical Works of T.B.Read(Philadelphia, 1883).
George Henry Boker, *Poems of the War* (Boston, 1864, 1890).
George Parsons Lathrop, *Dreams and Days* (N.Y., 1892).

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809–1865)

THE epitaph to the Civil War was written by Abraham Lincoln. Despite the fact that war was not ended when he helped to dedicate a portion of the battlefield of Gettysburg as a national cemetery, his words have become attached to the memory of all who fell during this great disruption of national unity.

The quietness and brevity of his benediction are in sharp contrast to the excited, two-hour long declamation of Edward Everett, which preceded it. Lincoln understood, far better than Everett, the need for repose which accompanies any tragedy, and knew that victory alone achieves no goal.

N.W.Stephenson, *Lincoln: An Account of His Personal Life*(Indianapolis, 1922).
William E.Barton, *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (Indianapolis, 1930).
Edgar Lee Masters, *Lincoln the Man*(N.Y., 1931),478–98.

WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)

'THE United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem.' Whitman's early life was his best preparation for expressing this poem in *Leaves of Grass*. He was born on Long Island in 1819, the son of a carpenter. He became first an office boy for a lawyer, then printer's devil, then schoolmaster, and finally newspaper editor. Off and on he returned to carpentering with his father. The countryside and seashore of Brooklyn and the crowded streets of New York became familiar to him; he even wandered as far afield as New Orleans and Chicago. As an editorial writer he understood the enthusiasms and aspirations of the people, and as a constant reader and reviewer he absorbed something from articulate philosophies. Tentatively, as early as 1847, he began to sketch poems which should give form to the body, the sense of fraternity, and the soul of the American people.

Leaves of Grass, first set in type by his own hands, was issued in 1855 as a slender volume of twelve poems. In each of the numerous, successive editions it grew larger, as he included new volumes, some of which were first separately published.

'The want for something finished, completed, and technically beautiful will certainly not be supplied by this writer, as it is by existing esthetic works. For the best poems both the old ones and later ones now accepted as first class are polished, rhymed regular, with all the elegance of fine conceits, carefully elaborated, showing under all the restraints of art, language and phrase chosen after very much has been rejected, and only the best admitted, and then all joined and cemented together, and finally presenting the beauty of some architectural temple—some palace, proudly rising in proportions of marble, entered from superb porticos and adorned with statuary satisfying the art sense and that of form, fulfilling beauty and inviting criticism. Not so his poetry. Its likeness is not the solid stately palace, nor the sculpture that adorns it, nor the paintings on its walls. Its analogy is *the Ocean*. Its verses are the liquid, billowy waves, ever rising and falling, perhaps sunny and smooth, perhaps wild with storm, always moving, always alike in their nature as rolling waves, but hardly any two exactly alike in size or measure (meter), never having the sense of something finished and fixed, always suggesting something beyond.'

The form of Whitman's poetry came from its subject; the freeness of his verse was an expression of the freeness of nature and the people, seen, however, through his own personality.

Whitman's early *Leaves of Grass* was the exuberant outgrowth of an almost adolescent enthusiasm for body and brotherhood. The Civil War matured him. In 1862 he began to nurse the wounded; day after day

he passed tirelessly from bedside to bedside, his sensitive hands cooling fevered brows, his strong arms about the shoulders of dying men. Whitman had always been fascinated by death, as 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking' indicates; 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd,' however, was written not from the single incident of the assassination of President Lincoln, but soberly drawn from the suffering and deaths of countless common soldiers.

The poems which Whitman wrote after the Civil War were chiefly concerned with the soul. Whitman grew to understand that any significance attached to the American people meant little as a lusty cry of nationalism, and carried weight only as a thoughtful expression of mankind. His ear for poetry also developed and became more sensitive; and it is in his later work that he became a great poet.

Whitman was often criticized for the lengthy cataloguings to be found in poems like his 'Song of Myself.' He intended the mass effect of such *pointillisme* to blend the individual citations into a single gigantic impression, full of life. Similarly impressionistic is the effect of his prose jottings in *Specimen Days and Collect*(Philadelphia, 1882–83), except that here the greater individual length and his increased sensibility gave to each its own life.

Whitman's influence has not always been direct, but it has been profound. Such widely different English writers as Robert Louis Stevenson and Gerard Manley Hopkins were indebted to him. 'French poetry,' said Richard Aldington, 'from about 1908 to 1914, was largely Whitman.' In America his influence was not widely felt until after 1910. To poets everywhere, once the lesson had sunk in, Whitman's pioneer work meant the extension of territory and the possibility of individual expression. He seemed to be 'The Poet' for whom Emerson had called.

H.L.Traubel and others, eds., *The Complete Writings of Walt Whitman*, 10 vols.(N.Y., 1902).
Emory Holloway, ed., *Leaves of Grass*, Inclusive Edition(N.Y., 1925).
Floyd Stovall, ed., *Walt Whitman*, Representative Selections, with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes in American Writers Series(N.Y., 1934).
C.J.Furness, ed., *Walt Whitman's Workshop*(Cambridge, Mass., 1928).
Emory Holloway, *Whitman: An Interpretation in Narrative*(N.Y., 1926).
Bliss Perry, *Walt Whitman*, in American Men of Letters Series(Boston, 1906).
John Burroughs, *Whitman: A Study*(Boston, 1896).
Newton Arvin, *Whitman*(N.Y., 1938).
K.Campbell, 'The Evolution of Whitman as an Artist,' *American Literature*,VI, 254–63.
C.F.Strauch, 'The Structure of Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," ' *English Journal*(College Ed.),XXVII,597–607.
Carolyn Wells and Alfred F.Goldsmith, *A Concise Bibliography of the Works of Walt Whitman*(Boston, 1922).

EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)

QUIETLY and perceptively, in a corner of Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson was writing poetry. Like Thoreau, she had 'business with a drop of dew.' She centered her attention not on the unusual, but on customary things seen unusually.

Her life was confined to her red-brick home in Amherst, to the flowers in her garden, and to the thick trees which shut both in. She seldom saw those outside of her immediate family, yet she seemed perfectly happy. She had no regrets at having given up the gaiety of her life as a young girl in a college town. 'I am small,' she wrote to a friend, 'like the wren; and my hair is bold, like the chestnut burr; and my eyes, like the sherry in the glass that the guest leaves.' 'I find ecstasy in living; the mere sense of living is joy enough.'

She expressed her rapture in a thousand brief poems, charged with the highest emotion, familiarity, and wit. Her quick perception delighted in provocative incongruities. God was a next-door neighbor to talk pleasantly with; the burdens of human existence were to be expressed in terms of the trivialities of a household. She liked piquancy of rhyme as well as of thought, and deliberately sought the effect of assonance, half-rhymes, or no rhyme at all.

Emily Dickinson was perfectly sure of herself; she would never change a line for the sake of convention.

She sought also to escape from the tired language of poetry. The hummingbird among the blossoms followed 'a route of evanescence,' and she saw the railway train, like the sun, 'lap the miles.' She weeded and trimmed the diction of her poetry with the busy fingers of a woman in her garden. Like a good housewife she kept words from standing idle, and her sense of economy of expression brought sharpness and distinction.

'Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?' With this intelligent query, and definition of her aim, she sent four poems in 1862 to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, whose work she admired. Higginson became her friend and critic, though she never changed one line to please him, and neither he nor the few who knew she was writing could persuade her to publish her work. Her poems were meant to be sent with a letter, to be tucked into a cluster of flowers for a friend, or to be lowered in a basket from her room to children at play.

'If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her,' she said; nor could she, even by death. In 1890, 1891, and 1896, three series of her poems were published. Gradually the public came to understand that one of America's finest poets had lived without their having known her. It was not, however, until in the nineteen-twenties, with her inclusion in various anthologies and with the publication of *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* by her niece, that there was true appreciation of her poetic significance.

M.D.Bianchi and A.L.Hampson, eds., *The Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson*(Boston, 1937), with a biographical introduction by A.L.Hampson.

M.D.Bianchi, ed., *The Single Hound, Poems of a Lifetime*, by Emily Dickinson (Boston, 1914), with an introduction by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi.

A.L.Hampson, ed., *Poems for Youth*, by Emily Dickinson(Boston, 1934), with a foreword by May Lamberton Becker and illustrations by George and Doris Hauman.

M.D.Bianchi and A.L.Hampson, eds., *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson*(Boston, 1929), with an introduction by A.L.Hampson.

——, *The Unpublished Poems of Emily Dickinson*(Boston, 1935).

M.L.Todd, ed., *Letters of Emily Dickinson*, 2 vols.(N.Y., 1931).

M.D.Bianchi, *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*(Boston, 1924).

M.D.Bianchi, *Emily Dickinson Face to Face* (Boston, 1932), with a foreword by A.L.Hampson.

J.Pollitt, *Emily Dickinson: The Human Background of Her Poetry*(N.Y., 1930).

G.Taggard, *The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson*(N.Y., 1930).

G.F.Whicher, *This Was a Poet: A Critical Biography of Emily Dickinson*(N.Y., 1938).

C.Aiken, 'Emily Dickinson,' *Dial*,LXXVI, 301–08.

A.L.Hampson, *Emily Dickinson: A Bibliography*(Northampton, Mass., 1930).

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (1836–1907)

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH'S first book of poems, *The Bells*(N.Y., 1855), appeared in the same year as Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, but their futures as poets could hardly have been more widely different. Aldrich had been born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and was in 1855 a clerk in a New York counting-room. Through the success of his romantic and sentimental poems he soon became an editor, and in 1866 moved to Boston, which he found delightful. Within a few months he wrote to Bayard Taylor: 'The humblest man of letters has a position here which he doesn't have in New York. To be known as an able writer is to have the choicest society opened to you. . . . A knight of the quill here is supposed necessarily to be a gentleman. In New York—he's a Bohemian!'

Aldrich was no Bohemian, and became a very good editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He was never very original, but was a man of great taste and a writer of considerable skill. Certain of his short stories, such as

'Marjorie Daw,' were extremely popular in their day, while the reminiscences of his childhood, in *The Story of a Bad Boy*(Boston, 1870), became a minor classic of juvenile literature.

His best work is to be found in the poetry of his later years. Here he wrote with all the precision of an engraver upon silver. He used to like to say of himself, 'Though I am not genuine Boston, I am Boston-plated.' Most people agreed that it was excellent plate.

The Writings of T.B.Aldrich, 9 vols.(Boston, 1896).

A Book of Songs and Sonnets Selected from the Poems of Thomas Bailey Aldrich(Boston, 1906). This represents Aldrich's own selection from his poetry.

Ponkapog Papers(Boston, 1903).

Ferris Greenslet, *The Life of T.B.Aldrich* (Boston, 1908). Contains a bibliography.

Lilian W.Aldrich, *Crowding Memories*(Boston, 1920).

BAYARD TAYLOR (1825–1878)

BAYARD TAYLOR described his *Views A-Foot* (N Y., 1846) as 'a new voice from the track where thousands had been before him.' This account of a pilgrimage through Europe made him famous at the age of twenty-one. Most of his poetry was a similarly romantic pilgrimage where thousands had been, and was equally popular. Taylor wrote several novels and dramas, a fine translation of Goethe's *Faust*, and innumerable travel books and volumes of poetry. Few, however, have any literary distinction.

Taylor was born in 1825 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and was largely self-educated. In 1844 he published his first book of poems; partly with the meagre proceeds from it, and partly with the financial assistance of editors who were willing to print accounts of his travels, he immediately went abroad for two years. In 1849 he journeyed to California to report the gold rush, his impressions of which are to be found in *Eldorado*(N.Y., 1850) and *A Book of Romances, Lyrics and Songs*(Boston, 1851). In 1851 he made another trip to Europe, and continued his travels to the Near East and the Orient. His *Poems of the Orient*(N.Y., 1854), and particularly the 'Bedouin Song,' brought a sensuous titillation similar to that occasioned by Melville's *Typee*. The public looked on him as the ideal romantic, and whether he grasped an Alpine stock, swung a miner's pick, or stood clad in Bedouin robes, they thronged to hear him lecture on his travels.

The exoticism of his experiences, the charm of his personality, and the great seriousness with which he undertook deeper and deeper themes of poetry blinded critics, as well as the public, to the shallowness of his achievement. It was, perhaps, because he felt so strongly that a poet 'must pitch his tent on many a distant field' that his work lacks any definite integrity.

M.H.Taylor, ed., *B.Taylor, Poetical Works* (Boston, 1907).

J.R.Schultz, ed., *The Unpublished Letters of Bayard Taylor in the Huntington Library* (San Marino, Calif., 1937).

Marie Hansen-Taylor and H.E.Scudder, *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1884).

A.H.Smyth, *Bayard Taylor*(Boston, 1896). Contains bibliography.

R.C.Beatty, *Bayard Taylor: Laureate of the Gilded Age*(Norman, Okla., 1936).

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN (1833–1908)

THE leader of the American late-Victorian poets was Edmund Clarence Stedman. He was brought up in Norwich, Connecticut, and was a student at Yale until he was expelled in 1852 after his second year. Following periods as newspaper editor, manufacturer, war correspondent, and assistant in the office of the Attorney-General of the United States, in 1863 he entered Wall Street. The rest of his life was divided between Bears, Bulls, and the Muse of Poetry. 'You know that *all* my writing is done after a long day's work.'

Stedman's own poetry of consequence is confined to a few lyrics and ballads. His chief significance to the historian of American literature comes through his immense influence as an editor and as the

friend and critic of almost every contemporary poet from Taylor to Robinson. He wrote a critical study of British verse in his *Victorian Poets*(Boston, 1875) and, to supplement it, edited *A Victorian Anthology* (Boston, 1895); to cover the American scene he wrote *Poets of America*(Boston, 1885) and edited *An American Anthology* (Boston, 1900). Each is an important summary of the general taste formed by an admiration of the technique and aims of Tennyson.

Stedman realized that 'a new land calls for a new song,' and he sensed that the poetry of his time should bear a direct and vigorous relationship to contemporary thought. Yet he wrote: 'To my notion, metaphysics and transcendentalism are at the opposite pole from the divine and clear spirit of poetry.' 'The traits . . . which I have deprecated earnestly are in the first place obscurity and hardness. . . .' By the rejection of attempts to grapple with the problem of expression, Stedman encouraged poetry which dealt more with mood than with the mind. He failed to understand that a clear lyric spirit not only cannot express the uncertain and troubled times of intellectual change, but does not arise from them. Stedman's chief concern was with conventional craftsmanship, and he helped to stifle any potential vigor by too great an emphasis on traditional forms. If poetry was truly to express his transitional age, it should have been allowed to develop its own strength and to find its own forms.

The Poems of Edmund Clarence Stedman (Boston, 1908).

The Nature and Elements of Poetry(Boston, 1892).

Laura Stedman and G.M.Gould, *Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman*, 2 vols.(N.Y., 1910). Contains bibliography.

BRET HARTE (1836–1902)

THE literary exploitation of the frontier received its first great impetus from Francis Bret Harte. He was born in 1836 in Albany, New York, and in 1854 followed his widowed mother to California. Harte tried his hand at numerous occupations which took him into the mining country, but what he really wanted to do was to write. When he was twenty-one he began contributing to the *Golden Era* and finally became one of its editors, then editor of the *Californian*, and finally of the *Overland Monthly*, all local magazines. His earliest literary attempts were, in the manner of Irving, to make use of the romantic Spanish civilization of California's past, and 'The Legend of Monte del Diablo' appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1863. It was, however, through stories like 'The Outcasts of Poker Flat' and poems like 'Plain Language from Truthful James' that he became by 1870 famous throughout the country. In 1871 he left for the East, where for a few years he was the darling of publishers and the public. In 1878, his funds growing low, he went as consul to Crefeld in Germany, and after two years of service there and five years as consul in Glasgow, he settled in England for the rest of his life.

It was altogether fitting for Bret Harte to lay a sprig of western pine at the grave of Dickens. From him he learned the trick of making unusual characters seem typical, and of providing reality with an atmosphere of sentiment. Harte had a fine eye for the colorful and a keen sense of dramatic form, to both of which the development of the short story owed much. Rudyard Kipling, in 1881, when he was editing *The Pioneer* in India, queried, 'Why buy Bret Harte . . . when I was prepared to supply home-grown fiction on the hoof?' It was exactly what Harte himself had done with Dickens.

Harte wrote on the same theme for the rest of his life, but he never developed his art beyond that of his earliest successes, nor did he ever have much understanding of anything but the obvious dramatic significance of his material. Harte was an Easterner who had struck it rich by stumbling on a vein of free gold. Unfortunately for him it petered out.

The Writings of Bret Harte, 19 vols.(Boston, 1896–1903).

G.R.Stewart, Jr., *Bret Harte, Argonaut and Exile*(Boston, 1931).

H.C.Merwin, *The Life of Bret Harte, with*

Some Account of the California Pioneers (Boston, 1911).
T.E.Pemberton, *The Life of Bret Harte* (London, 1903).
F.L.Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story*(New York, 1923),220–44.

JOHN HAY (1838–1905)

JOHN HAY is best known in political history as a suave and brilliant statesman, but in literature he is remembered for his coarse *Pike County Ballads*(Boston, 1871). Hay knew the Pikes, who were the chief stock figures of early frontier literature, from having lived among them on the edge of the Mississippi, in the village of Warsaw, Illinois, where he spent most of his boyhood, and from his school days in Pike County, Illinois. He attended a small college in Springfield, but finished his studies at Brown University in Rhode Island. It was his ambition, as his close friend Henry Adams later observed, 'to fill in the social gaps of a class which, as yet, showed but thin ranks and little cohesion.'

The fact that his uncle's law office, where he studied after graduation, was next to Lincoln's in Springfield, Illinois, led, through the persuasion of John G. Nicolay, to Hay's being made an assistant private secretary to the President in Washington. The ten-volume chronicle of these years, which he wrote with Nicolay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*(N.Y., 1890), became famous.

Hay's career included the role of historian, novelist, journalist, and diplomat, but only incidentally that of poet. After several years in minor diplomatic posts he became an editorial writer and night editor of the New York *Tribune*, for which he wrote poems like 'Jim Bludsoe.' In these roughhewn ballads his work was original and native, but he was unfortunately turned to conventional and unimportant versifying both by the misdirected criticism of his time and his own conception of the expression of a gentleman. This ideal he achieved as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, a post which he filled with 'completeness,' 'harmony,' and 'perfect ease.'

The Complete Poetical Works of John Hay (Boston, 1916).
Tyler Dennett, *John Hay: From Poetry to Politics*(N.Y., 1930).
F.L.Pattee, 'The Discovery of Pike County,' *A History of American Literature Since* 1870(N.Y., 1915).
Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, in Modern Library(N.Y., 1931).

JOAQUIN MILLER (1839–1913)

JOAQUIN MILLER loved dash, and he lived picturesquely. 'My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west.' He was a son of the open. His parents, who named him Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, were restless pioneers; his first years were spent on the Mississippi frontier, and in 1852 he travelled with them in a covered wagon to Oregon. He at one time attended a mission school at Eugene, but what he preferred to remember from his youth were his adventures as a runaway boy in California mining camps, his establishment of a pony express, and his life among the Indians. What he did not actually experience he later imagined, and an exciting legend grew up around him. In 1868 he published his first volume of poems, and in 1869 his second. In 1870 he went to San Francisco, where he met Bret Harte and his circle, and had a taste of what the public liked. He moved east to New York, and on to London. There, in 1871, he published his *Songs of the Sierras*, which caused a literary sensation. William Michael Rossetti, in particular, took him under his wing and introduced him to everyone. In his spurred boots and sombrero, Miller became at once for the British a symbol of the 'picturesqueness' of America. 'It helps sell the poems, boys! And it tickles the duchesses!'

Miller lived with dash, and he wrote with

dash. 'All life, all action that is beautiful and grand and good is poetry waiting for expression. The world is one great poem, because it is very grand, very good, and very beautiful.' This optimism helped him to find heroic elements wherever he turned, but particularly in the West. Byron and, later, Browning influenced him poetically, but his vigor and sense of natural grandeur are particularly his own.

Miller returned to America in September 1871, and after other sojourns in England, South America, and Italy, and brief returns to America, he settled for three years in a log cabin outside of Washington, D.C. Then he moved in 1886 to Oakland, California, where for the rest of his life he lived at 'The Hights,' a frame hut which he built above the city. There as a sage and eccentric he became a Californian phenomenon, representing a mysticism that was still popular and a West that had passed.

Joaquin Miller's Poems, 6 vols.(San Francisco, 1909–10).
Memorie and Rime(N.Y., 1884).
S.G.Firman, ed., *Overland in a Covered Wagon: An Autobiography of Joaquin Miller*(N.Y., 1930).
Martin S. Peterson, *Joaquin Miller: Literary Frontiersman*(Stanford University, Calif., 1937).

SAMUEL CLEMENS (1835–1910)

SAMUEL CLEMENS was born in Florida, Missouri, and moved when he was four to the Mississippi river town of Hannibal. In *Tom Sawyer*(Hartford, 1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*(N.Y., 1885) he made out of a somewhat romanticized Hannibal that which came to be the common scene of American childhood. In 1848 he became a printer, and two years later made a start as a newspaper man. In 1853 he left Hannibal to go down the river to St. Louis, and during the next few years travelled as far afield in his work as New York and Philadelphia. In 1857 he set out for South America, but on reaching New Orleans decided instead to become a river pilot. When the river traffic was closed at the outbreak of the Civil War, he moved on to Nevada to join his brother. There, in reporting for the Virginia City *Enterprise*, he began to develop his power as a writer.

Samuel Clemens became 'Mark Twain' at Virginia City. In the lusty and exaggerated language of the men who thronged there at the discovery of the Comstock Lode he found expression for his genius. No matter how greatly he later refined his vocabulary for the public, the richness and vitality of frontier speech remained with him.

'The humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the *manner* of the telling; the comic story and the witty story upon the *matter*. The humorous story may be spun out to great length, and may wander around as much as it pleases, and arrive nowhere in particular; but the comic and witty stories must be brief and end with a point. . . . The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it . . .' This was Mark Twain's analysis of his 'Jumping Frog,' and was the basis of all his humorous and satiric writings. It was exaggeration of one sort, as 'Huck Finn on the Raft' was of the opposite. Less fortunately, it was also the cause of his continued insensitivity to form.

'The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,' written in 1865 when he was a reporter in California, made him nationally known. *Innocents Abroad*(Hartford, 1869) heightened his popularity. Mark Twain travelled to the Holy Land, and poked, en route, into the same shadowy corners which had lured authors from the time of Irving to that of Taylor. He roared with scornful delight at what he discovered, and Americans howled with him. It was the beginning of another declaration of independence on the part of the people.

Shortly after his return, in 1870, he married, and became editor of the Buffalo *Express*. In 1872 he published *Roughing It*, one of the few books worthy of the frontier life it portrayed. *Life on the Mississippi*(Boston, 1883) was a somewhat more polished, but equally worthy, account of flush times on

the river. These and the stories of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn are, in every important sense, classics.

In 1872 he moved to Hartford, Connecticut, and guided by his wife's conventional touch settled down to a quiet and on the whole conventional life. Emotionally, however, he rebelled, and he developed a bitter cynicism towards most of the opinions and beliefs which his fellow citizens held proper. His Voltairean dialogue on Little Bessie is a far cry from his account of the Jumping Frog.

The Writings of Mark Twain, 25 vols.(N.Y., 1899–1910).

F.L.Pattee, ed., *Mark Twain*, Representative Selections, with Introduction and Bibliography, in American Writers Series (N.Y., 1935).

A.B.Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography*, 3 vols.(N.Y., 1912).

——, ed., *Mark Twain's Letters*, 2 vols. (N.Y., 1917).

——, ed., *Mark Twain's Autobiography*, 2 vols.(N.Y., 1924).

——, ed., *Mark Twain's Notebook*(N.Y., 1935).

Gamaliel Bradford, 'Mark Twain,' *American Portraits*(Boston, 1922), 1–28.

Van Wyck Brooks, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*(N.Y., rev. ed., 1933).

Bernard De Voto, *Mark Twain's America* (Boston, 1932).

E.C.Wagenknecht, *Mark Twain: The Man and His Work*(New Haven, 1935).

Merle Johnson, comp., *A Bibliography of the Works of Mark Twain*(N.Y., rev. ed., 1935).

HENRY TIMROD (1828–1867)

HENRY TIMROD was born in Charleston, South Carolina. In this Cambridge of the South he became a friend of Paul Hayne, when they were boys together at Mr. Coate's school. The two later joined the group which gathered about the aging William Gilmore Simms, and were filled with Simms' ambition for a Southern literature.

Timrod, who was the son of a literary editor and minor poet, studied for a time at what is now the University of Georgia, tried law, and finally became a private tutor. Most of his poetry was published in *The Southern Literary Messenger*, or in *Russell's Magazine* which succeeded it as the voice of the South. A volume of his poems was published in Boston in 1860, and was favorably reviewed, but no other volume appeared until Hayne edited, with a laudatory preface, the posthumous *Poems of Henry Timrod* (N.Y., 1873).

'The Cotton Boll' and 'Charleston' are given significance by their sense of the impending Civil War, but have a poetical strength and independence of their own. The greater part of his work, however, was merely a languorous blending of Wordsworth and Tennyson. As much as Timrod admired Poe, he could not accept the latter's insistence on Beauty as the sole criterion of poetry. He preferred Wordsworth's lesson, 'first, that the materials and stimulants of poetry might be found in the commonest things about us; and second, behind the sights, sounds, and hues of external nature there is "something more than meets the senses, something undefined and unutterable which must be felt and perceived by the soul" in its moments of rapt contemplation.' 'When I stand in the presence of Truth, Beauty, and Power I recognize poetry.' As a poetic principle it ought to have been enough, and was, at least, responsible for 'The Cotton Boll.'

It was not Timrod's continued poverty, illness, and early death which explain the mediocrity of the greater number of his poems. He was on the whole too imitative and too easily seduced by poetic diction and rhyme. Not even his tenderness and sincerity could redeem his poetry from its conventionality.

Poems of Henry Timrod(Richmond, Va., 1901).

Henry Timrod, 'A Theory of Poetry,' *Atlantic Monthly*,XCVI,313–26.

G.A.Wauchope, *Henry Timrod, Man and Poet: A Critical Study*(Columbia, S.C., 1915).

G.P.Voigt, 'Timrod's Essays in Literary Criticism,' *American Literature*,VI, 163–7.

——, 'Timrod in the Light of Newly Revealed Letters,' *South Atlantic Quar.*, XXXVII,263–9.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1830–1886)

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE achieved much wider fame than did his friend Timrod. The son of an American naval officer who died when the boy was young, he was cared for by his mother and by an uncle who was the Hayne of Webster's famous address in the United States Senate. He was graduated from Charleston College and then took up law, which he dropped for journalism and poetry. His chief position and most brilliant success was as editor of *Russell's Magazine* during its brief existence from 1857 to 1860. *Poems*(Boston, 1855), *Sonnets and Other Poems*(Boston, 1857), and *Avolio*(Boston, 1860) helped establish his reputation as a poet.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Hayne was an aide on the staff of Governor Picken, but being physically frail was soon forced to retire. Like Timrod, but not so successfully, he wrote patriotic verse. The bombardment of Charleston and the ravages of Sherman's army caused him to lose his home and his possessions, and after the war he retired with his wife to Copse Hill, a shanty in the pine barrens near Augusta, Georgia, where they lived romantically and in poverty. 'Perhaps you know,' Lanier wrote to a friend, 'that, with us of the younger generation in the South since the War, pretty much of the whole of life has been merely not dying.'

Hayne's poetry attracted such friends in England as Tennyson, Swinburne, and Jean Ingelow; and in America the New England coterie all paid him tribute. They respected his skill, but mostly they admired a certain romantic sentimentality which we are accustomed to associate with his period and particularly with the poetry of the South.

Poems of Paul Hamilton Hayne(Boston, 1882). Contains biographical sketch by Margaret J.Preston.

A.H.Starke, 'Sidney Lanier and Paul Hamilton Hayne: Three Unpublished Letters,' *American Literature*,I,32–9.

E.Mims, 'Paul Hamilton Hayne,' *Library of Southern Literature*,V,2265–71.

Sidney Lanier, *Music and Poetry*(N.Y., 1898),197–211.

SIDNEY LANIER (1842–1881)

SIDNEY LANIER'S perception that verse is a phenomenon of sound, and his attempts to write poetical harmony instead of mere melody make him one of the important figures of American poetry in the nineteenth century. Lanier was the greatest virtuoso flautist of his day, and his training as a musician is responsible for his accomplishment as a poet. 'Whatever turn I have for art,' he said, 'is purely musical.' His taste for Mendelssohn in preference to Bach may weaken his musically imitative verse, but it does not alter the correctness of his initial perception.

Lanier was born in 1842 in Macon, Georgia, and was graduated from Oglethorpe College at the age of eighteen. He was appointed a tutor there, but in 1861, during the first year of the Civil War, he enlisted in the Confederate Army. Finally, near the end of the war, he was captured and imprisoned. He tried teaching again, and law, but his health was broken and he went to Texas in what proved at last to be a vain fight against consumption. In Texas he resumed his study of the flute, which he had played since boyhood, and attempted to secure a position in a symphony orchestra in New York. From there he went in 1873 to Baltimore as a member of the Peabody Symphony Orchestra. Later, in 1879, as a result of his intensive study of English literature, he was appointed a member of the faculty of Johns Hopkins. It was in this post that he wrote *The Science of English Verse*(N.Y., 1880) and *Music and Poetry* (N.Y., 1898).

Tiger Lilies(N.Y., 1867), Lanier's only novel, is a backwoods account of the Civil War, and is important as an early example of local color. His keen ear enlivens the dialogue, uneven in quality though it is, and his sensibility accounts for innumerable passages of great poetic beauty. Unfortunately the book appears never to have been reprinted.

In all his writing, Lanier is an admirable representative of the agricultural romantic tradition of the post-war South, sharing the common and deep-rooted antagonism to Northern industrialism which lingers on even today in the magnolia metaphysics of many who take their Southern stand. Lanier's particular position was reinforced by an overwhelming reliance on the spirit of brotherhood, and the concluding line of 'The Symphony' best summarizes both his philosophical and his poetical creeds:

Music is love in search of a word.

It has often been argued that Lanier confused two mediums of expression in stressing the relationship between music and poetry. This may be partially true in his practice, but not in his theory. What he actually said was that each was a phenomenon of sound. It is not without significance that Lanier was fond of *Piers Plowman*, nor that he returned to the oldest tradition of English poetry in 'The Revenge of Hamish.' Lanier's emphasis foreshadowed the modern poets' reliance on the ear. Despite the inadequacy of his system of indicating metrics through musical notation, *The Science of English Verse* is one of the few important American contributions to the theory of poetry.

Poems of Sidney Lanier(N.Y., 1929).
A.H.Starke, *Sidney Lanier: A Biographical and Critical Study*(Chapel Hill, N.C., 1933). Contains a bibliography.
E.Mims, *Sidney Lanier*, in American Men of Letters Series(Boston, 1905).
H.W.Lanier, ed., *Letters of Sidney Lanier: Selections from His Correspondence*, 1866–1881(N.Y., 1899).
N.B.Fagin, 'Sidney Lanier: Poet of the South,' *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine*, XX,232–41.
R.P.Warren, 'The Blind Poet: Sidney Lanier,' *American Review*,II,27–45.
S.T.Williams, 'Lanier,' in Macy, J., ed., *American Writers on American Literature* (N.Y., 1931), 327–41.
Gay W.Allen, 'Sidney Lanier as a Literary Critic,' *Phil.Quar.*,XVII,121–38.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE (1844–1925)

THE most popular American literature during the last quarter of the nineteenth century dealt with unfamiliar and romantic sections of the country. George Washington Cable became famous for his tales of New Orleans. He was born there in 1844, and was brought up in close familiarity with its neighboring plantations, its great town houses, its French Quarter, and the soft patois of the Creoles. He served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, then became a reporter, and after 1869 worked as a clerk in a firm of cotton factors for as long as he lived in New Orleans. His first use of local material was in his column for the New Orleans *Picayune*, but it was not until 1873 that his first tale appeared in a magazine. 'Belles Demoiselles Plantation' appeared in 1874, and in 1879 his stories were collected in *Old Creole Days*. This and his novel, *The Grandissimes*(N.Y., 1880), were his best work.

Cable himself considered that his greatest literary influences came from the work, somewhat oddly grouped, of Dickens, Thackeray, Poe, and Irving. To Poe he apparently owed his fine sense of structure, but his style seems closer to the leisurely but crisp exposition of Prosper Merimée, one of the many Frenchmen whom he read. Cable's chief interest was psychological rather than dramatic, and his characterizations, though penetrating, are indicated lightly rather than in the probing manner of a Hawthorne.

Cable's research into the social history of New Orleans disclosed certain details which made him unpopular in the South. In 1885 he moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, where he lived for the rest of his life. He continued to write, but increasingly it became difficult to recognize in the pious man who went to seed among home-culture clubs, garden plans, and Northampton society, the author who had once written with the verve and apparent worldliness of a Frenchman.

The Creoles of Louisiana(N.Y., 1884).
M.E.Burt and L.L.Cable, eds., *The Cable Story Book*(N.Y., 1899).
L.L.C.Bikle, *George W.Cable, His Life and*

Letters(N.Y., 1928). Contains a checklist of Cable's writings.
E.W.Bowen, 'George W.Cable: An Appreciation,' *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XVIII,145–55.
E.L.Tinker, 'Cable and the Creoles,' *American Literature*,V,313–26.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848–1908)

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS extended the use of regional material into that of folk-lore. Harris was born in 1848 in Eatonton, Georgia, and as a boy was trained as a printer. He began contributing to the paper in whose printing office he worked, and after the Civil War was a reporter on papers in Macon, in New Orleans, and in Savannah. In 1876 he became an editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, a position which he retained for the next twenty-five years. Harris' first sketches of Negro life were written to fill a column for this paper. In these local stories he was particularly concerned with an accurate transmission of Negro speech.

An article by William Owens, 'Folk-Lore of the Southern Negroes,' in *Lippincott's Magazine* for December 1877, apparently opened Harris' eyes to the wealth that lay near at hand. Owens, after discussing the folk-lore of all tribes and peoples, laid particular stress on that of Afrıco-Americans, which he described as 'a medley of fables, songs, sayings, incantations, charms and superstitious traditions brought from various tribes along the West African coasts.' 'Almost without exception the actors in these fables are brute animals endowed with speech and reason, in whom mingle strangely and with ludicrous incongruity, the human and brute characteristics. The dramatis personæ are always honored with the title of Buh, which is generally supposed to be an abbreviation of the word "brother" . . . Of the Buh fables, that which is by all odds the greatest favorite, and which appears in the greatest variety of forms, is the "Story of Buh Rabbit and the Tar Baby." '

Harris took immediate advantage of the suggestion, and became an avid collector of Negro fables. His first volume, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*(N.Y., 1881), had an immediate popularity. Parallel stories poured in on him from all lands, and his work took on a significance somewhat similar to that of the collection of Chaucerian analogues or to the assembling of English and Scottish ballads by Professor Francis Child of Harvard.

'The story of the Rabbit and the Fox, as told by the Southern Negroes,' said Harris, 'is artistically dramatic in this: it progresses in an orderly way from a beginning to a well-defined conclusion, and is full of striking episodes that suggest the culmination. It seems to me to be to a certain extent allegorical, albeit such an interpretation may be unreasonable. At least it is a fable thoroughly characteristic of the Negro; and it needs no scientific investigation to show why he selects as his hero the weakest and most harmless of all animals, and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf, and the fox. It is not virtue that triumphs, but helplessness; it is not malice, but mischievousness.'

Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings(N.Y., 1881).
Nights with Uncle Remus(N.Y., 1883).
J.C.Harris, ed., *Joel Chandler Harris, Editor and Essayist*(Chapel Hill, N.C., 1931).
Julia C.Harris, *The Life and Letters of Joel Chandler Harris*(Boston, 1918). Contains a bibliography.
E.C.Parsons, 'Joel Chandler Harris and Negro Folklore,' *Dial*,LXVI,491–93.

LAFCADIO HEARN (1850–1904)

LAFCADIO HEARN'S life was as exotically romantic as the tinge he gave to his writing. He was born on the Ionian island of Leucadia, from which he received his Christian name, and was the son of an Irish army surgeon and a Greek mother. He was

brought up by a great-aunt in Ireland, and attended for a time Roman Catholic seminaries in France and England. At the age of sixteen he ran away, spent three years in poverty in London, and in 1869 drifted to New York. 'I was nineteen years old and a stranger in the great strange world of America, and grievously tormented by grim realities. As I did not know how to face those realities, I tried to forget them as much as possible; and romantic dreams, daily nourished at a public library helped me to forget.' He left New York for Cincinnati, where he became a reporter, and in 1877 went on to New Orleans in his 'worship of the Odd, the Queer, the Strange, the Exotic, the Monstrous' to which he pledged himself. His search led him to the West Indies, and finally to Japan, where he married and lived for the rest of his life.

'His idea of work was to illustrate with a mosaic of rare and richly-coloured words. But there is a wonderful tenderness, a nervous sensibility of feeling, an Oriental sensuousness of warmth in his creations . . .' This was Hearn's description of Théophile Gautier, but it might as well have been of his own writing. Hearn translated and was enormously impressed with the work of French romanticists, particularly that of Gautier and Loti. It was the spirit of these impressionists that led him to state: 'I write for beloved friends who can see colour in words, can smell the perfume of syllables in blossoms, can be shocked with the fine elfish electricity of words. And in the eternal order of things, words will eventually have their rights recognized by the people.'

'The Legend of L'Île Dernière' is the first section, and background, of the account of a child saved from the storm which swept Lost Island in 1856. Hearn's familiarity with the scene came from his visit in 1884 to the near-by Grand Island, near the mouth of the Mississippi, which possessed, he wrote to a friend, 'subjects innumerable for artistic studies—a hybrid population from all the ends of heaven, white, yellow, red, brown, cinnamon-color, and the tints of bronze and gold. Basques, Andalusians, Portugese, Malays, Chinamen, etc.' On Hearn's return to New Orleans, his tale was printed in the columns of the local *Times-Democrat*, and some years later was expanded into *Chita*(N.Y., 1888). 'My work is ornamental—my dream is poetical prose.'

Interpretations of Literature(N.Y., 1915).
An American Miscellany(N.Y., 1924).
K.Koizumi, *Father and I*(Boston, 1935).
S.Koizumi(Mrs. Hearn), *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*(Boston, 1918).
Y.Noguchi, *Lafcadio Hearn in Japan*(N.Y., 1911).
J.Temple, *Blue Ghost*(N.Y., 1931).
E.L.Tinker, *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days*(N.Y., 1924).

SARAH ORNE JEWETT (1849–1909)

THE finest local writing of this period is to be found in Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs*(Boston, 1896). 'People talk about dwelling upon trivialities and commonplaces in life,' she said, 'but a master writer gives everything weight, and makes you feel the distinction and importance of it, and count upon the right or the wrong side of a life's account.' Her sketches of the country people of Maine, among whom she was brought up, are full of quiet and sympathetic charm, and mellow with Miss Jewett's own ripeness of spirit. By understatement and indirection, faintly flavored with the dialect her keen ear caught, she was able to capture the mood and character of New Englanders as no one else has done, before her time or since.

At the back of her desk she kept pinned, as a constant reminder, 'those two wonderful little bits of Flaubert,—*Écrire la vie ordinaire comme on écrit l'histoire;* and the other *Ce n'est pas de faire rire—mais d'agir a la façon de la nature, c'est à dire de faire rêver.*'

Sarah Orne Jewett achieved the goal of all local-colorists of her time; that if a writer can faithfully portray human nature, the characters of his particular region will be in reality universal. The common error of local colorists, as of most regional

writers, was, however, as Carl Van Doren has observed, that in actuality they 'thought first of color and then of form, first of the piquant surfaces and then—if at all—of the stubborn deeps of human life.'

Miss Jewett learned to know the people about South Berwick, where she was born, during the many rides about the countryside which she took with her father, who was a country doctor. She never travelled widely nor led an exciting life. She never needed to, for like Thoreau she discovered that the world was close at hand.

Deephaven(Boston, 1877).
A Country Doctor(Boston, 1884).
A White Heron and Other Stories(Boston, 1886).
Willa Cather, ed., *The Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett*, 2 vols.(Boston, 1925). With introduction.
Annie Fields, ed., *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*(Boston, 1911).
F.O.Matthiessen, *Sarah Orne Jewett*(Boston, 1929).

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (1837–1920)

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS' chief contribution to American literature was the advancement of realism, but his long career as a writer included most of the literary phases of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Howells was born in 1837 in Martin's Ferry, a small Ohio village. The village life meant little to him, however, and his first book, *Poems of Two Friends*(Columbus, Ohio, 1860) was the reflection of his reading of early romanticists. A biography of Abraham Lincoln for the campaign of 1860 earned him an appointment to the consulship at Venice, where he remained for four years. This experience was expressed in *Venetian Life*(N.Y., 1866) and *Italian Journeys*(N.Y., 1867), graceful travel sketches in the tradition of Bayard Taylor. In 1866 he became an assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, in what he called 'his Holy Land of Boston.' For a time he wrote little but innocuous verse, and it was not until his novels of New England life that he entered the field of 'reticent realism,' the boundaries of which he describes in the selection titled 'The Novel.' 'Ah! poor Real Life, which I love,' he wrote, 'can I make others share the delight I find in thy foolish and insipid face?' Of these novels the best are *A Modern Instance*(Boston, 1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham*(Boston, 1885). Balzac and, later, the Russians became his models, or at least his admirations. From 1871 to 1881 he was the editor of the *Atlantic*, and then settled in New York, the new literary capital, for the remainder of his life. In *A Traveler from Altruria*(N.Y., 1894) he wrote a mildly socialistic and Utopian novel which reflected his increasing discontent with the structure of capitalistic society. It is difficult to determine whether Howells was a little ahead of or a little behind his times, but he kept close to them.

Criticism and Fiction(N.Y., 1891).
My Literary Passions(N.Y., 1895).
Impressions and Experiences(N.Y., 1896).
Literary Friends and Acquaintances(N.Y., 1900).
Mildred Howells, ed., *Life in Letters of William Dean Howells*, 2 vols.(Garden City, N.Y., 1928).
D.G.Cooke, *William Dean Howells*(N.Y., 1922). Contains bibliography.
O.W.Firkins, *William Dean Howells*(Cambridge, Mass., 1924). Contains bibliography.
Herbert Edwards, 'Howells and the Controversy over Realism in American Fiction,' *American Literature*,III,237–48.

FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN (1821–1873)

FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN'S sonnets seem to have been written ahead of their time. To a form which poetasters customarily rendered silken and sleek he dared to give homeliness and rough strength. He did not care, however, to publish, and his

poetic skill was known to his contemporaries only through his occasionally sensitive but generally orthodox volume, *Poems*, published in 1860, 1864, and 1869. It was not until 1908 when Walter Prichard Eaton discovered several sonnets in an unpublished anthology by Louis How, looked up *Poems*, and wrote an article on Tuckerman's verse that he was at all remembered; and not until 1931, when Witter Bynner edited a collection of Tuckerman's published and hitherto unpublished sonnets, did he become well known.

The subject matter of his sonnets comes close to what the nineteenth century would have considered anti-poetic. As to their form Bynner says, 'In the light of Tuckerman's obvious familiarity with the classics, in the light of recent experiment with variations in verse, in the light of present knowledge that Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson had ears more sensitive than their contemporaries had, we may be sure that Tuckerman knew what he was doing when he ended a sonnet with an Alexandrine or shortened the last line by a foot, or when he shuffled the rhyme-scheme to suit the rise and fall of his meaning. He was aware of his irregularity, as was George Meredith in "Modern Love," adding to the sonnet the two extra lines. He was as tenderly conscious of his form as was ever any maker of the sonnet. Instead of bungling or staling the sonnet-form he renewed it and, moulding it to his emotion, made it inevitable.'

Tuckerman was born of a distinguished Boston family, and entered Harvard at the age of sixteen. Because of trouble with his eyes he quit college and never returned. Later he studied law and in 1844 was admitted to the bar. During a visit to Europe he was the guest of Lord Tennyson, who, as a token of admiration, presented him with the manuscript of 'Locksley Hall.' Most of his life, however, was passed in seclusion from the world, in his home at Greenfield, Massachusetts, where he settled in 1847 and where he remained until his death.

The Sonnets of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman(N.Y., 1931). Edited, with an introduction by Witter Bynner.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL (1841–1887)

THE poetry of Edward Rowland Sill has its chief importance in his effort to bring into his verse some sense of the intellectual currents of his time. Sill was for the *idea*. 'I almost feel like despising and violating all *form*, when I see the fools that worship it. I always understood why Emerson made his poems rough—and I sympathize more than ever.' To a publisher he wrote: 'You cannot, of course, realize (till you have come to teach the subject) how all our best literature in this century—and a good deal of it in the last century—dips continually into this underlying stream of philosophical thought, and ethical feeling. "In Memoriam," for example, is one of the poems I read with my senior classes. You may discuss its rhythms, its epithets, its metaphors, its felicities and infelicities of Art,—you are still on the surface of it. The fact is that a thinking man puts a lot of his views in general into it—and those views and his feelings about them are precisely the "literature" there is in the thing. And the study of it, as literature, should transfer these views and feelings straight and clear to the brain of the student.'

Josiah Royce, the philosopher and his friend, wrote of him: 'As for Sill's ideal itself, it was an ideal of the highest manhood, an ideal towards which he desired all his friends to strive. His ideal future man was the combination of the truth-seeker and the doer of good into the one person of the true poet. He would never admit any real opposition between the scientific and the poetical spirit, or between either and the capacity for simple practical devotion to one's daily tasks. We ourselves, he taught, make in our false one-sidedness the so-called oppositions of these ideals. In themselves they are one. Science is, or ought to be, poetry, and poetry is knowledge, and the humanity of the future will not divide life, but will unite it.'

Sill was born in Connecticut, and was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and at Yale. In 1861, after his graduation, he

travelled by sea to California, where he taught first in the Oakland High School, and from 1874 to 1882 as professor of English at the University of California. In 1868 he published *The Hermitage and Other Poems*, the only book of his poems made public during his life. In protest against the increasing vocationalism of the University of California he resigned his position in 1882 and moved back to the East. Thereafter he became a fairly regular contributor of both prose and poetry to the leading magazines. An exceptionally shy man, he seldom published over his own name; and it may have been his general lack of self-confidence which kept him from striking out as boldly in the form of his verse as he did in its ideas.

The Poetical Works of Edward Rowland Sill (N.Y., 1906).
The Prose of Edward Rowland Sill(N.Y., 1900).
W.B.Parker, *Edward Rowland Sill: His Life and Work*(Boston, 1915).
Newton Arvin, 'The Failure of E.R.Sill,' *Bookman*,LXXII,581–89.

JOHN BANISTER TABB (1845–1909)

THE memorable quality of the verse written by 'Father Tabb' lies in its orthodox devotion to Roman Catholicism and the warmth of its kindly, if unsophisticated, wit. Some few of his contemporaries likened his verse to the poetry of Robert Herrick, George Herbert, and William Blake. With characteristic modesty he refuted their claims in a letter to his friend Browne, dated 25 December 1906:

> I am getting, dear Doctor, from England the very kindest notices of my book [*A Selection from the Verses of John B. Tabb* (London, 1906)]. . . . From the *Tribune* comes a clipping so like your own estimate and worded so like it, that were you in London, I should lay it to your charge. 'A Modern Herrick,' it is headed. Of this poet, the *Golden Treasury* has all that I know. With Herbert and Blake I am even less familiar; and yet it is to these three that they compare me. Nothing, I am glad to observe, is detected of my worship of Keats, whom I know best of the gods. . . .

His verse, however, bears traces of a literary influence exerted by a reading of Edgar Allan Poe, and in the humorous poems, as well as in those written obviously for the enjoyment of small children, one finds a clear resemblance to the punning of Thomas Hood and the charm of Robert Louis Stevenson.

'Father Tabb' was born at 'The Forest,' the family estate at Mattoax, in Amelia County, Virginia, in 1845. He served in the Confederate cause during the Civil War, and after the War, he was appointed to an instructorship at the Episcopal St. Paul's School for Boys in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1872 he entered St. Charles College, Maryland, to study for the Catholic priesthood. In 1884 he was ordained priest in the Baltimore Cathedral, and from then onward until his death in 1909 he was a member of the faculty at St. Charles.

Francis E.A. Litz, ed., *The Poetry of Father Tabb*(N.Y., 1928).
J.M.Tabb, *Father Tabb, His Life and Work*(Boston, 1921).
F.E.A.Litz, *Father Tabb—A Study of His Life and Works*(Baltimore, 1923).

RICHARD HOVEY (1864–1900)

DESPITE Richard Hovey's ambition to recreate the Arthurian legends in the form of poetic drama, his abilities as a poet are chiefly remembered through his collaboration with Bliss Carmen in writing *Songs from Vagabondia*(Boston, 1894) and *More Songs from Vagabondia*(Boston, 1896). The collaboration also included the work of Tom Buford Meteyard, who designed with a touch of Pre-Raphaelite craftsmanship

the covers and end papers of the Vagabondia volumes which were to attain such widespread popularity. The three friends had spent a holiday together, including a winter in New York, a trip to Arcadie, and an autumn tour to Washington, D.C. The early winter of 1894 was to bring to fruition the ideal of spiritual vagrancy and literary Bohemianism in the first *Songs from Vagabondia.*

Hovey's education at Dartmouth College, where he emerged as a class poet, author of 'Men of Dartmouth,' a song still sung today at Hanover, and subsequent journeys across the Atlantic to Paris and Avignon, furnished the background for the kind of lyricism which was to become known as the poetry of Vagabondia. However far he travelled, he was never to lose the spirit of:

The campus is reborn in us to-day;
The old grip stirs our hearts with new-old joy;
Again bursts bonds for madcap holiday
The eternal boy.

Hovey attempted to combine the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Whitman with his admiration for the ecstatic utterances of the French Symbolists and Parnassians, particularly as he interpreted them in the work of Mallarmé, Verlaine and Verhaeren. The exuberance of Bliss Carmen's

All the world is Vagabondia
To him who is a vagabond

overrode whatever contradictions may have been felt in an equal love for Paul Verlaine, Hovey's 'Prince of Vagabonds,' and Walt Whitman, his 'King of Free-Versists.'

Some hint of the historical importance of the *Songs from Vagabondia* is indicated by Muriel Miller's *Bliss Carmen: A Portrait* (Toronto, 1935), in which she wrote:

> However, the two poets did not mean their Vagabondian scheme to be a mere idle pastime of a summer's day; it represented far more to them: It was their joint protest against the warped convention-bound lives of the material, money-making American citizen of their day . . .

Hovey was to intersperse his songs from Vagabondia with translations of Maurice Maeterlinck, more songs for Dartmouth and the Psi Upsilon fraternity, *Seaward: An Elegy*, in memory of Thomas Williams Parsons, as well as further experiments in the writing of poetic drama. His brief career which came to an end at the age of thirty-six in 1900 was to symbolize for the American reading public the promise and vitality of a hybrid Bohemianism which had taken root in the literary circles of New York and San Francisco.

Along the Trail(Boston, 1898).
The Birth of Galahad(Boston, 1898).
Taliesin: A Masque(Boston, 1900).
The Holy Grail and Other Fragments(Boston, 1900).
Last Songs from Vagabondia(Boston, 1901).
To the End of the Trail(N.Y., 1908).

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY (1861–1920)

LIKE her contemporary, Lizette Woodward Reese, Louise Imogen Guiney turned to the poetry of the seventeenth century to find a criterion for the writing of her own verse. But unlike Miss Reese's verse her work bears traces of a wide, yet specific reading of the Cavalier poets. 'I owe much to the minor lyricists of King Charles I.'s time,' she wrote, 'and to Sidney and Spencer before them. . . . The great prose writers who taught me my little prose are Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Burke, Lamb, Hazlitt, Newman and Stevenson.' Among her lyrics one finds evidence of her reading the poetry of Marvell, Campion, Vaughan, Lovelace and Suckling, yet whatever literary influences marked her style, she retained throughout her work the stronger impress of an individual discrimination in its choice of diction. As she wrote in her 'A Talisman:'

For better than fortune's best
Is mastery in the using,
And sweeter than anything sweet
The art to lay it aside!

The distinct quality of her literary admirations as well as the quickened perceptions of her own poetic gifts may be found in the first stanza of her poem, 'Written in my Lord Clarendon his History of the Rebellion:'

How life hath cheapen'd, and how blanke
The Worlde is! like a fen
Where long ago unstained sanke
The starrie gentlemen:
Since Marston Moor and Newbury dranke
King Charles his gentlemen.

Happy Ending(Boston, 1927). Collected Lyrics, new edition.
Grace Guiney, ed., *Letters of Louise Imogen Guiney*(N.Y., 1926), 2 vols.
Alice Brown, *Louise Imogen Guiney*(Boston, 1921).
E.M.Tenison, *Louise Imogen Guiney, Her Life and Works, 1861–1920*(London, 1923).
E.M.Tenison (comp.), 'A Bibliography of Louise Imogen Guiney,' *Bookman's Journal and Print Collector*, December 1922–January, March 1923.

LIZETTE REESE (1856–1936)

THE lyricism of Lizette Reese owed a confessed indebtedness to the English lyric of the early seventeenth century and in particular to the poetry of Robert Herrick. To this marked literary influence she contributed her own art of understatement as well as a singular perception into the physical beauty of the gardens and countryside of suburban Baltimore. Something of her attitude toward her contemporaries of the later ninteenth century may be found in *A Victorian Village*(New York, 1929):

> The Victorians had a full cup and it spilled over. I think that this is the reason that their faults, worst among which were their over elaboration and sentimentality, are so apparent. They had so much material on hand, so much creative ability, that at times and too often they were mastered by them. If they had been poor and idle, they might have had fewer defects. . . . To judge their poetry and prose a critic must have a poetic sense and a sense of humor.

The criterion that Miss Reese set for her own work is also suggested by her commentary on poetry: 'The novelists must stand by their creation of character, which is the decisive test of the artist, the poets by their perpetuation in word and phrase of beauty, that readjusted of the changes and chances, the confusions and rancors of life.'

As Harriet Monroe once wrote of her:

> Miss Reese's method was always simple. If the personal poems in her early books confess a few Victorian frailties of diction and sentiment—faint whiffs of faded perfume, a bit trite like pressed flowers—her best work, even of the 80's and 90's escaped that softness; and her latest style is free of archaism, as her motives of sentimentality. Her poems considered as a whole have a rare unity and harmony. . . . Always carefully studied, they do not try to say or do anything startlingly original; but they sing, with austere taste and musical precision, a clear minor tune all in the same key.

Selected Poems(N.Y., 1926).
White April(N.Y., 1930).
The York Road(N.Y., 1931).
Pastures(N.Y., 1933).

GEORGE STERLING (1869–1926)

THE career of George Sterling and his influence upon the writers of the Pacific Coast comprise one of the most spectacular, if not one of the most notable, chapters

in American literary history. Born at Sag Harbor, New York, in 1869, at the age of twenty-six he moved to California, where under the patronage of Ambrose Bierce and within the environment of the Bohemian Club he combined political Socialism with an aesthetic that ran parallel to the *Yellow Book* doctrines of Ernest Dowson and the later Oscar Wilde. His verse, however, revealed the uses of a Miltonic rhetoric that overweighted the latter-day Romanticism which entered the phrasing of the titles of his books: *A Wine of Wizardry*, *The Triumph of Bohemia*, *The House of Orchids*, *The Caged Eagle*, *The Binding of the Beast*.

His friends in writing of him had much to say of his physical appearance. They spoke of his 'long-featured mediaeval face' or with equal freedom of his seeming to be 'a reincarnation perhaps from the Athens of the fourth or third century B.C.' Jack London said, 'He looks like a Greek coin run over by a Roman chariot'—all of which was testimony to the fact that his personal character contributed its share to his literary influence.

He was among the first to recognize the abilities of younger Californian writers and in 1926 he wrote of Robinson Jeffers under the title *Robinson Jeffers, the Man and the Artist*, paying tribute to a quality in Jeffers which most closely resembled his own emotion as he once wrote:

I stand as one whose feet at noontide gain
A lonely shore; who feels his soul set free,
And hears the blind sea chanting to the sun.

George Sterling died by his own hand in 1926.

Selected Poems(San Francisco, 1923).
Poems to Vera(N.Y., 1938).
R.G.Berkelman, 'George Sterling on "The Black Vulture," ' *American Literature*,X, 223–4.
Cecil Johnson (comp.), *A Bibliography of the Works of George Sterling*(San Francisco, 1931).

AMBROSE BIERCE (1842–1914?)

AMBROSE BIERCE wrote a few of the finest short stories in American literature, and some of its most trenchant cynicism. He was born in Pomery, Meiggs County, Ohio, in 1842. During the Civil War he served in the Union Army, and took part in the battles of Chickamauga, Shiloh, Kenesaw Mountain, and others. After the war was concluded, he travelled to San Francisco where he finally became a newspaper editor. In 1871 he went to London where he contributed to humorous magazines and became a fellow of minor literary circles. In 1876 he returned to San Francisco. Here, the combination of his talent and his sarcasm made his 'Prattle,' a column which he conducted for the *San Francisco Examiner*, read and feared by the public. Admiration of this kind of power continued among bright and ambitious newspapermen until it culminated in the schools of H.L.Mencken and Ben Hecht. However widely the public read him in newspapers, Bierce's published volumes had no great success. Toward the end of the year 1913 he disappeared, presumably to fight with Villa in Mexico. Nothing more was heard of him.

Tales of Soldiers and Civilians(N.Y., 1891), later titled *In the Midst of Life*, and *Can Such Things Be?*(N.Y., 1893) contain his best short stories. Of the first volume, Boynton has said: 'The constant factor in the book is extreme emotional tension. Sometimes the characters are pathological and the situations abnormal. The people and the events are barely within the reach of credibility. Bierce thus often turned naturally to war episodes, because, though actual, they were farthest from the even tenor of normal life. In these it was the rarest occurrence for him to reveal a sense of humankind in general. The mass, the herd, the crowd, served as a dim background for one man living at the highest pitch and often enough dying of the tension; and the individual himself was less a character than a piece of susceptibility played on by overwhelming emotions.' This is the character not only of such tales as 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,' but of the mystery stories of *Can Such Things Be?*

The quality of his emotion which made him known as 'Bitter Bierce' can be seen in the admirable compression of his *Fantastic Fables*(N.Y., 1899) and *The Cynic's Word Book*(N.Y., 1906), later titled *The Devil's Dictionary*. Poor Richard had undergone a remarkable transformation.

Collected Works(N.Y., 1909–12). 12 vols.
B.C.Pope, ed., *The Letters of Ambrose Bierce*(San Francisco, 1922).
Vincent Starrett, *Ambrose Bierce*(Chicago, 1920).
Walter Neale, *The Life of Ambrose Bierce* (N.Y., 1929).
C.Hartley Grattan, *Bitter Bierce*(N.Y., 1929).
Cary McWilliams, *Ambrose Bierce*(N.Y., 1929).
A.M.Miller, 'The Influence of Edgar Allan Poe on Ambrose Bierce,' *American Literature*,IV,130–50.
George Sterling, 'The Shadow Maker,' *American Mercury*,VI,10–19.
N.Wilt, 'Ambrose Bierce and the Civil War,' *American Literature*,I,260–85.
Vincent Starrett, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Ambrose Bierce*(Philadelphia, 1929).

STEPHEN CRANE (1871–1900)

THE brilliant precocity of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*(N.Y., 1895) placed him in the foreground of a new generation of writers who came of age in the closing years of the nineteenth century. It was as though his admirers were waiting for the very type of psychological fiction that *The Red Badge of Courage* was to introduce. His earlier novel *Maggie*(N.Y., 1892), which had been rejected by magazine editors and publishing houses of the day, has left its impress as one of the first experiments in naturalistic prose written in America.

Upon reading the poems of Emily Dickinson, and under the stimulus of his 'discovery' of a highly original American genius, he wrote his first book of poems, *The Black Riders*, which he issued in 1895. Harriet Monroe, in her introduction to *The New Poetry*(N.Y., 1917), quoted the title poem of his second book of verse, *War Is Kind*, to illustrate the character of a kind of poetry which she regarded as being in the line of a tradition that foreshadowed the work of the Imagist and the 'free verse writers' of the poetic Renaissance in 1912.

Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1871. He entered Lafayette College, but before receiving a degree left at the age of sixteen to test his skill at journalism. The spectacular success of *The Red Badge of Courage*, with its vivid detail of character and situations on the battlefield, insured the further success of his journalistic career. He was sent as war correspondent to the Greco-Turkish War in 1897 and in the following year to the Spanish-American War.

His success also brought with it the rapid expenditure of his remarkable nervous energy which seemed to produce at white heat the impressionistic vividness of such short stories as 'The Open Boat' and 'The Upturned Face,' as well as the highly-keyed output of many reportorial sketches, stories for children, and new poems. No less energetic was his invasion of England during the last two years of his life, where he moved toward the center of a literary group that included such men as Joseph Conrad, Henry James, and Ford Madox Ford. He died in the Black Forest, Germany, in 1900.

W.Follett, ed., *The Work of Stephen Crane* (N.Y., 1925–26), 12 vols.
——,*The Collected Poems of Stephen Crane* (N.Y., 1930).
T.Beer, *Stephen Crane, A Study in American Letters*(N.Y., 1923).
Joseph Conrad, 'Stephen Crane: A Note without Dates,' *Bookman*,L,529–31.
Hamlin Garland, 'Stephen Crane as I Knew Him,' *Yale Review*,n.s.III,494–506.
W.Follett, 'The Second Twenty-Eight Years,' *Bookman*,LXVIII,532–37.
V.Starrett, *Stephen Crane: A Bibliography* (Philadelphia, 1923).

FRANK NORRIS (1870–1902)

FRANK NORRIS brought force to American fiction. 'Give us stories now, give us men, strong, brutal men, with red-hot blood in 'em, with unleashed passions rampant in 'em . . .' *Moran of the Lady Letty*(N.Y., 1898), a novel of the tigers of the sea, and *McTeague*(N.Y., 1899), the story of the disintegration of a brute of society, displayed a type of romantic materialism. But Norris began to perceive a deeper significance to force:

> Men were naught, death was naught, life was naught; FORCE only existed—FORCE that brought men into the World, FORCE that crowded them out of it to make way for the succeeding generation, FORCE that made the wheat grow, FORCE that garnered it from the soul to give place to the succeeding crop.
>
> It was the mystery of creation, the stupendous mystery of re-creation; the vast rhythm of the seasons, measured, alternative, the sun and the stars keeping time as the eternal symphony of reproduction swung its tremendous cadences, like the colossal pendulum of an almighty machine—primordial energy flung out from the hand of the Lord God himself, immortal, calm, infinitely strong.

On this concept Norris patterned his uncompleted trilogy on wheat, his symbol of world force, the scheme of which is described in the annotation to the selection 'Wheat' from its first two novels. It was not, however, solely the display of force which gave these books their significance, but Norris' increasing implication that such force must be understood and controlled by man.

Frank Norris was born in 1870 in Chicago, the son of a wealthy wholesale jeweler, and spent a great part of his youth in San Francisco. For about two years Norris studied art in Paris, filled with the spirit of romantic mediaevalism which had marked the nineteenth century. He returned home in 1890 and entered the University of California, but left after four years without graduating, and spent a year at Harvard. It was during his college years that he began *McTeague*. Later he became a newspaper correspondent, was sent to South Africa to cover the Boer War, and later to Cuba for the Spanish-American War. His last years were spent in New York in the office of a publisher. Before he could either complete his trilogy on wheat or commence his projected trilogy on the Battle of Gettysburg as a symbol of the spirit of America, he died of peritonitis.

'Every novel,' Norris wrote, 'must do one of three things—it must (1) tell something, (2) show something, or (3) prove something. Some novels do all three of these; some do only two; all must do at least one . . . . The third and what we hold to be the best class, proves something, draws conclusions from a whole congeries of forces, social tendencies, race impulses, devotes itself not to a study of men but of man.' It is this perception on Norris' part of the function of a novelist which brings regret that he did not live long enough truly to fulfill it.

The Responsibilities of the Novelist(N.Y., 1903).

The Complete Works of Frank Norris, 10 vols.(Garden City, N.Y., 1928).

Stories and Sketches from the San Francisco Weekly, 1893 *to* 1897, with a Foreword by Charles G. Norris(San Francisco, 1931).

F.Walker, *Frank Norris*(Garden City, N.Y., 1932).

Frank Norris: Two Poems and 'Kim' Reviewed, with a Bibliography by Harvey Taylor(San Francisco, 1930).

EDWIN MARKHAM (1852–1940)

EDWIN MARKHAM'S reputation rests almost solely upon the publication of a single poem, 'The Man with The Hoe,' which appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* on 15 January 1899. Its long worked-over and rhetorical plea for social justice

was inspired by Markham's admiration for Millet's famous painting from which he borrowed the title of the poem and dramatized the figure of a French peasant, 'Bowed by the weight of centuries . . . Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox.'

Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, in 1852, and was the youngest son in a family that had moved westward across the continent. He was educated at the State Normal at San Jose, California, and graduated from the College at Santa Rosa. His verse was written in the Byronic convention that had been established by Joaquin Miller on the Pacific Coast and which marked the dramatic mannerisms of everything he wrote. The publication of *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* in 1899 was followed two years later by a second volume, *Lincoln, and Other Poems*, in which the same Populist note of eloquence was struck. The character of Markham's Populism at the turn of the nineteenth century was to be reflected later in the literature of 'Muck-raking' and in the journalism of the 'Trust-busting' era.

He moved to New York in 1901, making his home on Staten Island.

The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems (Garden City, N.Y., 1899).
Lincoln, and Other Poems(N.Y., 1901).
New Poems(Garden City, N.Y., 1932).
'The Man with the Hoe' and other poems. (Timely Recording Co., Nos. 1000–02.) A recording of selected poems by Markham.
W.L.Stidger, *Edwin Markham*(N.Y., 1933).
A Wreath for Edwin Markham(Chicago, 1922).

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD (1852–)

THE life of Charles Erskine Scott Wood has been that of the complete man. Trained at West Point, he served in many Indian campaigns, then left the army to study law, receiving the degrees of Ph.B. and LL.B. from Columbia in 1883. He settled in Portland, Oregon, and became widely known in the Northwest as an attorney. Soon he began to lead his own kind of double life: in one of his two offices he met corporation clients, and in the other greeted poets, artists, rebels, hoboes, and dreamers. At one time, when he was still in Oregon, he took over the editorship of *The Pacific Monthly*, and almost single-handed wrote the entire magazine, under various pseudonyms, at the same time that he was carrying on his work in law. His practice became more and more that of defending the downtrodden, and his best writing has come out of his intense sympathy and understanding of their plight.

His most important works in prose are his satirical *Heavenly Discourse*(N.Y., 1927) and *Earthly Discourse*(N.Y., 1937), which deftly remove the epidermis from contemporary shams and illustrate his burning passion for social justice. In poetry he has made of *The Poet in the Desert*(Portland, Oregon, 1915) both a rhapsody and a vehement protest against the man-made ills of life. So frequently has he revised this work, and so completely does it include his attitude toward life that it becomes something of a modern *Leaves of Grass*. Its free verse and sweep are vaguely suggestive of Whitman, but the voice is that of Wood.

With his wife, Sarah Bard Field, the poet, he has made his home at Los Gatos, California, into a haven and salon for writers on the Pacific Coast.

A Masque of Love(Chicago, 1904).
The Poet in the Desert(N.Y., 1928).
Poems from the Ranges(N.Y., 1929).

TRUMBULL STICKNEY (1874–1904)

TRUMBULL STICKNEY was perhaps the most gifted and certainly the most precocious member of a 'tragic generation' in America which came of age in the years immediately preceding the end of the nineteenth century. William Vaughn Moody himself has

said that Stickney's 'Prometheus Pyrphoros' antedated his own 'The Fire Bringer' by several years. It was at Stickney's own request that Moody did not then acknowledge the other's priority in the use of the material and what Moody calls 'my deep obligation to his work.' The sources of Stickney's poem were in the account given by Hesiod. Stickney also left a splendid fragment, begun in the first half of the year 1901, of a drama on the life of the Emperor Julian.

Trumbull Stickney was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1874. He was graduated with high classical honors from Harvard in 1895 and in France studied for seven years at the Sorbonne and at the Collège de France. He was the first American ever to receive the degree of *docteur ès lettres* from a French university. His *Les Sentences dans la Poésie Grecque* was accepted as one of the best of modern studies in Hellenic literature. In the autumn of 1903 he became an instructor of Greek at Harvard. He died in the fall of 1904.

As E.K.Rand wrote of Stickney in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine:* 'A rare intellectual leadership a command of affections and enthusiasms, was in store for him' in his teaching at the time of his death. Considering the nature of his death, for he died of a tumor in the brain, the lines his editors place at the end of his *Poems* are significant:

Sir, say no more,
Within me 'tis as if
The green and climbing eyesight of a cat
Crawled near my mind's poor birds.

Dramatic Verses(Boston, 1902).
Poems(Boston, 1905).

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY (1869–1910)

IN the year 1900 no poet in America occupied as significant a position as William Vaughn Moody. In 'An Ode in Time of Hesitation' and in his 'Gloucester Moors' he spoke directly to the literary public of his day. He was a leader in what might well be called America's 'tragic generation' in literature, a generation which after the death of Longfellow, Lanier, and Whitman faced the not unconscious danger of failure in a concerted effort to revive the power of poetic drama in English verse and to make their creation flourish on American soil.

William Vaughn Moody was born in Spencer, Indiana, in 1869, and after leaving high school did some local newspaper work and studied drawing and painting. By teaching and tutoring he earned his way through Riverview Academy, New York, and then through Harvard, from which he received an A.B. in 1893 and an A.M. in 1894. In 1895 he was appointed to an instructorship at the University of Chicago, at which he wrote, in collaboration with Robert Morss Lovett, a *History of English Literature.*

While in Chicago he began his ambitious projects in poetic drama, choosing as a central theme the union of God with man and the incompleteness of either without the other. The very diction of his verse became possessed by the desire to recreate Miltonic grandeur and was typified by his writing such lines as

I am the Woman, ark of the law and its
breaker.

His very consciousness that America was 'the eagle nation Milton saw Mewing its mighty youth' seemed to lead him further toward the creation of awe-inspiring themes in epic phrasing. Yet, as Percy H. Boynton remarked, 'His love for America, however, did not dull his sense of the dangers that threatened its youth. Within its boundaries he was well aware of the economic evils which menaced it . . . . In "Gloucester Moors" he was disturbed, if not made fearful. . . . There was no hope in the poem, only speculation and distress.' And that distress was only partially relieved by the satire which animated his convictions in 'The Menagerie.'

The commercial success of his play in prose, *The Great Divide*(N.Y., 1906), fell far short of the goal that he had sought in his rejection of materialism and his deeply felt need for a transcendental salvation. He

was to follow this success with another play in prose, *The Faith Healer*(Boston, 1909), the year before his death, still seeking the adequate medium for the expression of a neo-transcendental philosophy in a world that his friend Edwin Arlington Robinson described in 'The Valley of the Shadow.'

R.M.Lovett, ed., *Selected Poems of William Vaughn Moody*, in Riverside College Classics(Boston, 1931).

J.M.Manly, ed., *The Poems and Plays of William Vaughn Moody*, 2 vols.(Boston, 1912).

P.MacKaye, ed., *Letters to Harriet*(Boston, 1936).

D.G.Mason, ed., *Some Letters of William Vaughn Moody*(Boston, 1913).

D.D.Henry, *William Vaughn Moody*(Boston, 1934). Contains bibliography.

N.F.Adkins, 'The Poetic Philosophy of William V. Moody,' *Texas Review*,IX, 97–112.

A.H.Quinn, *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day*(N.Y., 1927),II,1-26.

HENRY ADAMS (1838–1918)

HENRY ADAMS brought the problem of Force into American letters with infinitely more subtlety and importance than had Frank Norris. 'Like his masters, since thought began,' Adams wrote of himself, in his account of his education, 'he was handicapped by the eternal mystery of Force—the sink of all science.' 'Any schoolboy could see that man as a force must be measured by motion, from a fixed point. Psychology helped here by suggesting a unit—the point of history where man held the highest idea of himself in a unified universe. Eight or ten years of study had led Adams to think he might use the century 1150–1250, expressed in Amiens Cathedral and the Works of Thomas Aquinas, as the unit from which he might measure motion down to his own time, without assuming anything as true or untrue, except relation. The movement might be studied at once in philosophy and mechanics. Setting himself to the task, he began a volume which he mentally knew as *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres: a Study of Thirteenth-Century Unity*. From that point he proposed to fix a position for himself, which he could label: *The Education of Henry Adams: a Study of Twentieth-Century Multiplicity*. With the help of these two points of relation, he hoped to project his lines forward and backward indefinitely, subject to correction from anyone who should know better.'

Adams' life was spent in this education. He was the son of an Ambassador to the Court of St. James's and the grandson of a President of the United States. He was graduated from Harvard in 1858, and for seven years afterwards was his father's secretary in London. He tried newspaper reporting of the sessions of Congress; he tried serving as professor of history at Harvard; he was editor for a time of *The North American Review*; he travelled widely in Europe; he journeyed to the islands of the Pacific; he passed most of his life in Washington as a friend of the near-great. He wrote biographies of Albert Gallatin and John Randolph, two men who had helped to fashion their age; he wrote two novels, *Democracy*(Boston, 1880) and *Esther*(Boston, 1884), the first of which treated society in terms of politics, and the second, in terms of religion; he wrote a brilliant nine-volume social and political history of the administrations of Jefferson and Madison in his *History of the United States of America*, 1801–1817(Boston 1889–91). Each was a probing.

His conclusion was: 'To educate—one's self to begin with—had been the effort of one's life for sixty years; and the difficulties of education had gone on doubling with the coal-output, until the prospect of waiting on another ten years, in order to face a seventh doubling of complexities, allured one's mind but slightly. The law of acceleration was definite, and did not require ten years' more study except to show whether it held good. No scheme could be suggested to the new American, and no fault needed to be found, or complaint made; but the next great influx of new forces seemed near

at hand, and its style of education promised to be violently coercive. The movement from unity into multiplicity, between 1200 and 1900, was unbroken in sequence, and rapid in acceleration. Prolonged one generation longer, it would require a new social mind. As though thought were common salt in indefinite solution it must enter a new phase subject to new laws.'

In summing up Adams' education, R.P.Blackmur has observed: 'Again and again he describes unifying conceptions as working principles; without them no work could be done; with them, even at the expense of final failure, every value could be provisionally ascertained. That is the value of Adams for us: the double value of his scrupulous attitude towards his unifying notions and of the human aspirations he was able to express under them. To feel that value as education is a profound deliverance: the same deliverance Adams felt in the Gothic Cathedral. "The delight of its aspiration is flung up to the sky. The pathos of its self-distrust and anguish of doubt is buried in the earth as its last secret." The principles asserted are nothing, though desperate and necessary; the values expressed because of the principles are everything. For Adams, as for everyone, the principle of unity carried to failure showed the most value by the way, and the value was worth the expense.'

Historical Essays(N.Y., 1891).
Mont St. Michel and Chartres(Boston, 1913). Privately printed, Washington, 1904.
The Education of Henry Adams(Boston, 1918). Privately printed, Washington, 1904.
The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma (N.Y., 1919).
Letters to a Niece and Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres(Boston, 1920).
W.C.Ford, ed., *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, 1861–1865(Boston, 1920).
——, *Letters of Henry Adams*, 1858–1891 (Boston, 1930).
Gamaliel Bradford, 'Henry Adams,' in *American Portraits*(Boston, 1920).
R.P.Blackmur, 'The Expense of Greatness. Three Emphases on Henry Adams,' *The Virginia Quarterly Review*,XII,396–415.

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER (O. HENRY) (1862–1910)

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER developed the structure of the plot of the short story to the breaking point. The tricks of Bret Harte, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and Frank Stockton served him to supply the incessant demands of newspapers and magazines, and his formula left little freshness either to sentiment or to the surprise ending.

Porter was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1862. At the age of fifteen he began working in his uncle's drugstore, but after five years of this left for Texas. He drifted from one occupation to another, and finally became teller in the First National Bank in Austin. He quit this to begin newspaper work. When he was accused of embezzling from the bank, he fled to Honduras, but returned because of his wife's illness, and served three years in prison. During the period of his sentence he continued writing, and began to sell under the pseudonym of O. Henry to magazines in New York. Shortly after his release he went there, and there he stayed until his death.

Porter had begun to know small-town folk when he first stood behind a drugstore counter, and these characters he used in his stories of metropolitan life. Even his description of New York as 'Bagdad' is typical of his approach, and it is doubtful if he is deserving of his repeated praise as 'the narrator and supreme celebrant of the life of the great city.' It is understandable that the most nationally popular writers and columnists on New York life should be those who come from the village and who pretend to find little difference between New York life and that of their own Main Streets.

Not all of Porter's stories deal with city life, and many are drawn from his experiences in the South, in the West, and in Central America. Occasionally in each group he was successful, for within the limitations of his formula Porter had great ability. It is not surprising, however, that future American writers of the short story

were to react against a predominant emphasis on plot.

The Complete Works of O. Henry(N.Y., 1912).
C.A.Smith, *O. Henry*(N.Y., 1916).
R.H.Davis and A.B.Maurice, *The Caliph of Bagdad*(N.Y., 1931).
P.S.Clarkson, *A Bibliography of William Sidney Porter*(Caldwell, Idaho, 1938).

HENRY JAMES (1843–1916)

DURING the latter half of the nineteenth century, it was Henry James, the American expatriate, who revived the virtues of sensibility in English fiction. Since the publication of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, no writer of prose had had a keener perception into the conventions which sustained yet ruled society than Henry James. Not the least interest in reading his work is to observe the development of his sensibility from its earliest demonstration through the obvious juxtaposition of contrary elements until its mature expression in the dramatization of apparently static situations.

The rudimentary practice of James is to be found in what has come to be known as the 'international novel.' Writing in this manner, James developed the technique of what he called 'reflectors,' by which both Americans and Europeans stood out in mutual chiaroscuro, not only in differentiations of racial characteristics but of individual characteristics among themselves. In its theory it was an unwitting expansion of the principle of James Fenimore Cooper's *Homeward Bound*. Brilliant examples of this type of James' fiction are to be found in such novels as *The American*(Boston, 1877), *Daisy Miller*(N.Y., 1879), and *The Portrait of a Lady*(Boston, 1882).

The Portrait of a Lady serves as a bridge between his early and his later, and more mature, writing. In its preface may be found, as R.P.Blackmur has pointed out, 'the genius and intention of James the novelist:'

> There is, I think, no more nutritive or suggestive truth in this connection than that of the perfect dependence of the 'moral' sense of a work of art on the amount of felt life concerned in producing it. The question comes back thus, obviously, to the kind and degree of the artist's prime sensibility, which is the soil out of which his subject springs. The quality and capacity of that soil, its capacity to 'grow' with due freshness and straightness any vision of life, represents, strongly or weakly, the projected morality. . . . Here we get exactly the high price of the novel as a literary form with closeness, to range through all the differences of the individual relation to its general subject-matter, all the varieties of outlook on life, of disposition to reflect and project, created by conditions that are never the same from man to man (or, as far as that goes, from woman to woman), but positively to appear more true to its character in proportion as it strains, or tends to burst, with a latent extravaganza, its mould.

James was not merely interested in emotion or in plot, but rather in the mind and its complex revelation of the character of 'the fine intelligence, either as agent or as the object of action or as both, . . . at the heart of James' work.' Only by penetration, minute examination, and scrupulous exegesis on the part of the author was such complex revelation possible. Consequently James is best read, as it were, from his own creative position within his material, for only by this inner approach can the remarkable subtlety and the perfect order of his works of art be felt.

James' own rootless life is perhaps one reason for his lack of interest in the variety of physical realism which increasingly occupied the attention of American writers during his lifetime. His father, Henry James, Sr., was a wealthy litterateur who trained Henry James and his brother William James, the psychologist, like highly bred race horses. They were tutored, sent abroad for education, and primed for the expression of genius. Fortunately both possessed it. Henry James was never able to be completely contented anywhere, but

after 1869 he lived abroad, and shortly after the onset of the World War became a British subject in protest against America's failure to enter on the side of the Allies.

His life was entirely devoted to the art of writing, not only its practice but its theory. 'The Art of Fiction' is an early example of the latter. His finest discussions of this subject occur, however, in the prefaces which he wrote for the collected edition of his work. Unfortunately these must be read in entirety for any satisfactory understanding, and only recently, in *The Art of the Novel*, have they been brought together and made generally accessible. 'No man of our time,' said Ezra Pound in 1918, in one of the first, and few, intelligent essays on James, 'has so laboured to create means of communication as did the late Henry James. The whole of great art is a struggle for communication.' It was for his advancement of the means of communication through prose that James had his greatest importance to literature.

The Novels and Tales of Henry James, 26 vols.(N.Y., 1907–17).
The American Scene(N.Y., 1907).
The Finer Grain(N.Y., 1910).
Notes on Novelists(N.Y., 1914).
Notes of a Son and Brother(N.Y., 1914).
The Ivory Tower(N.Y., 1917).
The Middle Years(N.Y., 1917).
The Sense of the Past(N.Y., 1917).
Notes and Reviews(Cambridge, Mass., 1921).
The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James, with an Introduction by R.P.Blackmur(N.Y., 1934).
P.Lubbock, ed., *The Letters of Henry James*, 2 vols.(N.Y., 1920).
C.H.Grattan, *The Three Jameses*(N.Y., 1932).
J.W.Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (New Haven, 1918).
Marianne Moore and others, 'Homage to Henry James,' *Hound & Horn*,VII, 361–562.
Le R. Phillips, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Henry James*(N.Y., 1930).

EDITH WHARTON (1862–1937)

EDITH WHARTON was born an aristocrat, and wisely wrote about the life she knew best. She was aware of the structure of Society, for during the years she had spent in New York, Long Island, Newport, Lenox, and Paris she had had ample opportunity to observe both its advantages and its limitations. The resultant, shrewd commentary is unique and valuable.

Her greatest literary influence was from the early work and personal criticisms of Henry James. It is in fact doubtful if the literary significance of James' early period can be as well grasped from his own work as from that of his pupil.

Mrs. Wharton was extraordinarily successful in both the short story and the novel. 'The chief technical difference between the short story and the novel may . . .' she says, 'be summed up by saying that situation is the main concern of the short story, character of the novel; and it follows that the effect produced by the short story depends almost entirely upon its form, or presentation.' Nowhere better than in 'The Other Two' is there a defter illustration of her perfect control of form and her ability to draw by implication from a single situation a penetrating analysis of Society.

The Valley of Decision(N.Y., 1902), *The House of Mirth*(N.Y., 1905), and *The Age of Innocence*(N.Y., 1922) best illustrate her particular combination of the novel of manners and that of character (or psychology). As with her short stories, these works keep within the scope of her experience. If Mrs. Wharton is to be criticized it must not be on the ground that she did not write about other groups of society but that, even within her own province, she too frequently succumbed to literary fashions.

The Writing of Fiction(N.Y., 1925).
A Backward Glance, an autobiography (N.Y., 1934).
W.L.Cross, 'Edith Wharton,' *Bookman*, LXIII,641–46.
Henry James, *Notes on Novelists*(N.Y., 1914),353–56.
Edmund Wilson, 'Justice to Edith Wharton,' *New Republic*,XCV,209–13.
L.Davis, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Edith Wharton*(Portland, Me., 1933).

PAUL ELMER MORE (1864–1937)

PAUL ELMER MORE was the most articulate leader of the group of neo-humanists which began to develop in the first years of the present century and attracted most attention during the nineteen-twenties. Its chief significance lay in its attempt to bring order to an increasingly chaotic world, the particular approach being through the precepts of tradition. Its earliest teacher was Irving Babbitt, a professor at Harvard, who found in the languishing ideal of Rousseau an easy straw dummy for a target. Through his students and his associates the movement spread.

More was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1864, and was educated at Washington University in that city, and at Harvard where he was an associate of Babbitt. He taught Sanscrit there and at Bryn Mawr, and then became literary editor, first of *The Independent* in 1901, and afterwards of *The New York Evening Sun* in 1903 and of *The Nation* from 1909 to 1914. After resigning from this position he became a lecturer at Princeton University. His principal writings are collected in the six volumes of *The Greek Tradition*(N.Y., 1917–27), in the eleven volumes of *The Shelburne Essays*(N.Y., 1904–21), and in the three supplementary volumes of *The New Shelburne Essays*(N.Y., 1928–35). The range of *The Shelburne Essays* includes all literature, and their quality is the finest of that of any American critic. In the advancement of the appreciation of American literature More's criticism has been of the greatest importance. Whittier, Longfellow, and others have received a new and deserved artistic dignity through his commentary, and few approaches to the backgrounds of Hawthorne and Poe have been keener than his. If More's essays on American writers were to be brought together into one collection, he would receive the general recognition which is his due.

The Religion of Plato(N.Y., 1921).
Hellenistic Philosophies(N.Y., 1923).
The Catholic Faith(N.Y., 1931).
R.Shafer, *Paul Elmer More and American Criticism*(New Haven, Conn., 1935).
H.P.Parkes, 'Paul Elmer More: Manichean,' *Hound & Horn*,V,477–83.
H.W.Peck, 'Some Aspects of the Criticism of Paul Elmer More,' *Sewanee Review*, XXVI,63–84.

GEORGE SANTAYANA (1863–)

IN the preface to his *Collected Poems*, George Santayana wrote:

> Of impassioned tenderness or Dionysiac frenzy I have nothing, nor even of that magic and pregnancy of phrase—really the creation of a fresh idiom—which marks the high light of poetry. Even if my temperament had been naturally warmer, the fact that the English language (and I can write no other with assurance) was not my mother-tongue would of itself preclude any inspired use of it on my part; its roots do not quite reach to my center. I never drank in in childhood the homely cadences and ditties which in pure spontaneous poetry set the essential key.

And in writing of poetry in *The Life of Reason* he remarked:

> For poetry, while truly poetical, never loses sight of initial feelings and underlying appeals; it is incorrigibly transcendental, and takes every present passion and every private dream in turn for the core of the universe. . . . Lying is a privilege of poets because they have not yet reached the level on which truth and error are discernible. Veracity and significance are not ideals for a primitive mind; we learn to value them as we learn to live, when we discover that the spirit cannot be wholly free and solipsistic.

The significance of these statements rests on the fact that they contain less modesty than a suggestion of finely tempered irony which marks the best of his highly conventionalized poetic utterance. His sonnet 'On the Death of a Metaphysician,' and his consciously poetical prose are perhaps the

best expression of the 'Genteel Tradition' in America: their purified nineteenth-century diction, their intellectual charm, their clear, if not specific, visual imagery—all serve to illustrate the importance of George Santayana's contribution to American literature.

George Santayana was born in Madrid, Spain, in 1863 and came to America at the age of nine. He was educated at Harvard, receiving his Ph.D. from that institution in 1889. As a lecturer at Harvard he became one of its most distinguished philosophers, and while at the University, 1889 to 1912, he wrote his four notable contributions to American philosophy and letters: *The Sense of Beauty*(N.Y., 1896), *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*(N.Y., 1900), *The Life of Reason*(N.Y., 1905–06), and *Three Philosophical Poets*(N.Y., 1910). In 1912 he left America and since then has lived in England, France, and Italy.

Poems, selected by the author and revised (N.Y., 1923).
Winds of Doctrine(N.Y., 1913).
Scepticism and Animal Faith(N.Y., 1923).
The Realm of Essence(N.Y., 1927).
The Genteel Tradition at Bay(N.Y., 1931).
The Last Puritan(N.Y., 1936).
Realm of Truth(N.Y., 1938).
I.Edman, 'Santayana at Seventy,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,X,349–50.
G.W.Howgate, *George Santayana*(Philadelphia, 1938).

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869–1935)

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON stripped poetry of the florid diction typical of the late nineteenth century and turned it toward straight-forward and hard speech. His first volume, *The Torrent and the Night Before*, was published in 1896. It was a sign for the direction which modern poetry was to take. His earliest poems, greatly influenced by the poetry of Thomas Hardy, were cryptic portraits of the people of Tilbury Town, reminiscent of Gardiner, Maine, where he was brought up. They have the dryness of New England and the dramatic quality which was always characteristic of his verse. This dramatic quality he extended to longer and even more effective results in such brilliant poems as 'Ben Johnson Entertains a Man from Stratford,' 'The Man Against the Sky,' and 'Mr. Flood's Party.' Increasingly he became fixed upon the idea that man must stand in darkness in order to see the light, and with this perhaps Puritan heritage he was always content.

'You must think of me as a disappointed playwright,' he once remarked to a friend. During the first decade of the twentieth century he became deeply interested in the vigorous movement for a poetic drama which was led by William Vaughn Moody and Percy MacKaye. Out of this interest came such plays in verse as his *Van Zorn* and *Porcupine*. The movement dwindled, and in 1910 and 1911 Robinson undertook to rewrite his plays in the form of novels. The results he tore up and burned; the effect, however, was lasting. His plays were originally closet drama, and any attempts to novelize them must have intellectualized and spun them out even more. Thus when at last he turned to the composition of the long narrative poems which chiefly occupied him for the rest of his life he appeared to be confused between the provinces of the novel and of poetry. Little narrative verse is successful unless it moves through the force of highly charged emotion. This, unfortunately, Robinson's highly psychological narratives never did.

It was not until the publication of *Tristram*(N.Y., 1927) that he met with anything like a popular success. The subject was reasonably enough within the Victorian conventions in poetry to be acceptable to the public, though there is no apparent reason why they should have welcomed this and have rejected his similar *Merlin* of a decade before. Of his poems written on the Arthurian legends, Robinson felt that '*Merlin*, *Lancelot*, and *Tristram*—taken together as a sort of unit—appear to me as likely to last as anything I have written.' General opinion, however, seems to favor his earlier work.

Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson(N.Y., 1937).
Mark Van Doren, *Edwin Arlington Robinson*(N.Y., 1927).
B.R.Redman, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (N.Y., 1926).
Hermann Hagedorn, *Edwin Arlington Robinson*(N.Y., 1938).
Amy Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*(Boston, 1917),3–75.
Harriet Monroe, *Poets & Their Art*(N.Y., 1926),1–11.
E.E.Pipkin, 'The Arthur of Edwin Arlington Robinson,' *English Journal*,XIX, 183–95.
F.I.Carpenter, 'Tristram the Transcendent,' *New England Quarterly*,XI,501–23.
C.B.Hogan, *A Bibliography of Edwin Arlington Robinson*(New Haven, Conn., 1936).

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD (1876–)

THE poetic conventions which mark the characteristic style of William Ellery Leonard's verse are those of the Miltonic tradition as it was exemplified in the work of the English Romantic poets. Leonard's narrative poem *Two Lives* (1925) displays at length the impress of the conventions which have given his style its Romantic quality. In subject the work resembles Richard Dehmel's *Zwei Menschen*, and in form the work is an avowed experiment in the use of the sonnet as a standard form in narrative poetry.

William Ellery Leonard was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1876. After receiving his A.M. in Harvard, in 1899 he extended his research in Philology at the University of Göttingen and Bonn. He has been a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin since 1906.

His translations of Beowulf and Empedocles and Lucretius are among the best of their kind in the English language. For the last ten years Leonard's remarkable literary insights and energies have been devoted to his researches in Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, and the Romance Languages.

Byron and Byronism in America(N.Y., 1905).
The Vaunt of Man and Other Poems(N.Y., 1912).
The Lynching Bee and Other Poems(N.Y., 1920).
A Son of Earth(N.Y., 1928). Collected poems.
The Poet of Galilee(N.Y., 1928).
The Locomotive God(N.Y., 1927).
Two Lives(N.Y., 1930).
'The Poetic Process from the Inside,' *Bookman*,LXXV,327–33.
Ludwig Lewisohn, 'Poet and Scholar,' *Nation*,CXVI,660–61.

ROBERT FROST (1875–)

THE plain speech of Robert Frost was a parallel to Edwin Arlington Robinson's in the reform of poetic diction. His manner of speech is as crisp and fresh as the taste of a good apple, and his wit and wisdom have the New England manner of cracker-box philosophy. 'The style is the man,' Frost has said. 'Rather say the style is the way the man takes himself; and to be at all charming or even bearable, the way is almost rigidly prescribed. If it is with outer seriousness, it must be with inner humor. If it is with outer humor, it must be with inner seriousness.' There need be no better proof that Frost is a New Englander.

Actually, he was born in San Francisco, California, but after his father's death, when Frost was nine, he returned with his mother to Lawrence, Massachusetts. For a few months in 1892 he was a student at Dartmouth, and from 1897 to 1899 he was enrolled in Harvard University. Thereafter he farmed in New Hampshire and taught school, until in 1912 he sailed with his wife and children for England. His first two books, *A Boy's Will*(London, 1913) and *North of Boston*(London, 1914), were published there, though he had been writing poetry for a decade before. It is an interesting commentary on the state of publishing and public taste in America. When he returned to America in 1915, however, many prejudices had been stripped away and his way made easier. In time it became easy.

Frost, like Edwin Arlington Robinson, had a predilection for the dramatic. In the preface to a one-act play that he wrote, he said: 'A dramatic necessity goes deep into the nature of the sentence. Sentences are not different enough to hold the attention unless they are dramatic. No ingenuity of varying structure will do. All that can save them is the speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination. That is all that can save poetry from sing-song, all that can save prose from itself.' And 'Everything written is as good as it is dramatic. It need not declare itself in form, but it is dramatic or nothing.' This perhaps natural tendency of poets intent on bringing the speaking voice of dramatic action into verse is clearly seen in such of Frost's work as 'The Death of the Hired Man' and 'Home Burial,' and is present in nearly all of his work.

Frost has always managed to exercise the greatest control over his verse, and the flatness of his lines becomes a perfect setting for his subdued imagery. 'A poem begins with a lump in the throat; a homesickness or a lovesickness. It is a reaching-out toward expression; an effort to find fulfilment.' This 'effort to find fulfilment' may be regarded as the work of a poet's lifetime. Frost has followed his own advice by evident care in the writing of his verse and by infrequent publication of its slender volumes.

Collected Poems of Robert Frost(N.Y., 1930).
A Further Range(N.Y., 1936).
G.B.Munson, *Robert Frost*(N.Y., 1927).
Robert S. Newdick, 'Robert Frost and the Dramatic,' *New England Quarterly*,X, 262–69.
——, 'Robert Frost and the Sound of Sense,' *American Literature*,IX,290–300.
Richard Thornton, ed., *Recognition of Robert Frost*(N.Y., 1937). A collection of reviews and essays in homage to Frost.
W.B.S.Clymer and C.R.Green, *Robert Frost:A Bibliography*(Amherst, Mass., 1937).
'The Tuft of Flowers,' 'A Peck of Gold,' 'Fire and Ice,' 'The Death of the Hired Man,' 'The Runaway,' 'The Road Not Taken,' 'Neither Out Far nor In Deep,' 'Two Tramps in Mud Time,' 'Mending Wall,' 'Dust of Snow,' 'Birches.' (Erpi Picture Consultants, SS 9608–6 to 9614–6). Recordings by Robert Frost for the National Council of Teachers of English.

VACHEL LINDSAY (1879–1931)

IN his introduction to *The Congo*(N.Y., 1916) Lindsay wrote: 'Mr. Yeats asked me recently in Chicago, "What are we going to do to restore the primitive singing voice of poetry?" ' This was another appeal for returning the cadence of the poetic line to that of the voice. Lindsay's response, already made, was with what he called the 'Higher Vaudeville imagination.' 'America needs the flamboyant to save her soul.' The public received his first flamboyant note in 1913 when Harriet Monroe published 'General William Booth Enters into Heaven' in her recently founded *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.*

Lindsay was a boy when he began his campaign to save souls, for if he was not born with the spirit of a missionary, his parents drilled the importance of such an obligation into him. From the age of six he had been trained as an artist, and after quitting Hiram College, Ohio, in 1900 he pondered a career of 'Christian cartooning.' His high seriousness, which came from the Campbellite religion of his parents, was reinforced and decorated by his unrelinquished devotion to the precepts of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Christian socialist doctrines of William Morris. Their amalgamation of the arts he himself first sought to express through poems which illustrated his drawings:

In the shade of a lantern unlighted
Awaits us a heathen benighted
He drinks Inspiration from a jar decoration
His exquisite taste is delighted.

It was a bad poetic beginning. After periods of studying art in New York, lecturing be-

fore a Y.M.C.A., and working for the Anti-Saloon League in the section of Illinois about Springfield, his birthplace, he made in 1912 his long and famous journey on foot from Illinois to New Mexico, with a packet of pamphlets, *Poems to be Traded for Bread*, and a bundle of his cartoons.

Like a troubadour circuit-rider he travelled from house to house, carrying on his 'warfare for Beauty and Democracy,' by showing his drawings and reading such poems as one

To Those That Would Mend These Times

Go plant the arts that woo the weariest,
Bold arts that simple workmen understand,
That make no poor men and keep all men
rich,
And throne our Lady Beauty in the land!

It was during this extension of the Ruskinesque revival with which he had hoped to bring about a 'Golden Springfield' that he formulated the 'bold arts' of his poem on Booth. This he sent in to Miss Monroe while he was still en route. Independently, and to an extent unwittingly, he joined the new movement of poetry.

Lindsay discovered that others besides simple workmen understood and liked verse, 'where every line may be two-thirds spoken and one-third sung, the entire rendering, musical and elocutionary, depending upon the improvising power and sure instinct of the performer.' Women's Clubs for the rest of his life insisted that he write and read only poems like 'The Congo,' 'Simon Legree,' and 'General William Booth,' until Lindsay could not bear even the thought of them.

His creative life was constantly buffeted between vaudeville and Ruskin. By instinct he was abreast of his time; emotionally he was behind it. The resulting conflict he could never resolve. One group of Lindsay's works is unforgettable for its vigorous movement and vital individuality; another is commonplace through its limp and sentimental unreality. As a result his verse is an exaggerated symbol both of what poetry was striving for and fighting against.

Collected Poems (N.Y., 1925).
Selected Poems(N.Y., 1931). Edited, with an introduction, by Hazleton Spencer.
Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty(N.Y., 1914).
A Handy Guide for Beggars(N.Y., 1916).
The Congo(Columbia University Phonograph Record No. 2). A recording by Lindsay.
John L. Sullivan(Columbia University Phonograph Record No. 3). A recording by Lindsay.
E.L.Masters, *Vachel Lindsay: A Poet in America*(N.Y., 1935).
H.Monroe, *Poets & Their Art*(N.Y., 1926), 21–28.
H.Spencer, 'The Life and Death of a Bard,' *American Mercury*,XXV,455–62.
Thelma Wiles Thalinger, 'Vachel Lindsay: Pen and Ink Symbolist,' *Magazine of Art*, XXXI,450–56.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS (1869–)

EDGAR LEE MASTERS' contribution to American literature is best represented by his *Spoon River Anthology* (N.Y., 1915) which first appeared in the pages of William Marion Reedy's magazine, *Reedy's Mirror*. In its unrhymed verse forms, its penetration into the lives of those who lived in a middle western community, its naturalism, its obvious veracity—all combined to make Edgar Lee Masters the personification of the small town freethinker. Like Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street*, Masters' *Anthology* is a landmark in American literature.

Edgar Lee Masters was born in Garnett, Kansas, in 1869. During his early adolescence his family moved to Louistown, Illinois, where he studied law in his father's office. He then left Louistown for Chicago where for many years he practiced law. Not unlike the work of many of his contemporaries, Masters' early work included two experiments in poetic drama, the first a play on Benedict Arnold written in 1895, and the second *Maximilian* published in 1902. Between 1898 and 1937 Masters has published many volumes of poetry, but of these only the *Spoon River* volumes, the *Domesday*

Book(N.Y., 1920), and *The Fate of the Jury* (N.Y., 1929) have contributed materially to his poetic reputation. Of recent years Masters' work in prose has been no less prolific, yet of it all only his autobiography, *Across Spoon River*(N.Y., 1936) seems to hold more than a transitory interest for his readers. *Across Spoon River* resembles Dreiser's *Dawn* in its evident desire to record faithfully the experiences of the author's life.

Selected Poems(N.Y., 1925).
Invisible Landscapes(N.Y., 1935).
Mitch Miller(N.Y., 1920).
Skeeters Kirby(N.Y., 1923).

'The Genesis of Spoon River,' *American Mercury*,XXVIII,38–55.
J.C.Chandler, 'The Spoon River Country,' *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*,XIV,252–329.
Conrad Aiken, *Scepticisms*(N.Y., 1919), 65–75.
Amy Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*(Boston, 1917),139–200.
Harriet Monroe, *Poets & Their Art*(N.Y., 1926),46–55.
Louis Untermeyer, *American Poetry Since 1900*(N.Y., 1923), 163–80.

CARL SANDBURG (1878–)

SANDBURG'S poem 'Chicago' was, when it first appeared in 1914, the apparent epitome of the anti-poetic. Its subject was not the only aspect which aroused opposition, for Sandburg had taken its language out of the mouths of the people rather than of the poets. His own life seemed in itself anti-poetic. He had had almost no schooling as a boy; he was a newspaper reporter, had driven a milk-wagon, had been a porter and a dishwasher, had worked in a brickyard, had harvested, been a soldier,—had in fact, by circumstance, combined the experiences of the people in himself.

It was the people from whom he got his strength, and their apostle, Whitman, from whom he received his directions on subject matter and freedom of expression. Sandburg was, however, not an imitator. 'The difference between Whitman and Sandburg,' Morton Zabel has observed,

> is primarily a difference between a visionary imagination and a realistic one, between a prophet who deals in the racial and social aspects of humanitarianism and a historian who handles the specific facts of industrial life and labor. Whitman, given his sympathies and cause and with his greater imaginative vision, might have written his book without any immediate contact with its materials, whereas Sandburg, so denied, could have written none of his. The two poets join only at the point which is their common weakness: in the rhapsodic cries and flights that are the diffused and prevalent bane of the one and the merely incidental weakness of the other. Sandburg is saved from this pretension by his plain verbal sanity. He does not discard the lyric imagination; it filters through his pages and produces many short passages of characteristic fancy:
>
> Alive yet the spillover of last night's moonrise
> brought returns of peculiar cash
> a cash of thin air alive yet.
>
> But it is seldom allowed to develop into vague apostrophe or inflated allegory, any more than his language is allowed to use the pompous phrases, French or Latin counterfeit, and hollow pedantry of Whitman's style.

Sandburg's imagination and expression is realistic, but his faith in the people is the vague mysticism of Christian socialism which he absorbed during the years 1910 to 1912 when he was secretary to the Social-Democratic mayor of Milwaukee.

His first volume of poetry was privately printed in 1904, but it was not until after the success of 'Chicago' and the publication of *Chicago Poems*(N.Y., 1916) that he became a poet by profession. Succeeding volumes, *Cornhuskers*(N.Y., 1918), *Smoke and Steel*(N.Y., 1920), *Slabs of the Sunburnt West*(N.Y., 1923), *Good Morning*

America(N.Y., 1928), and *The People, Yes* (N.Y., 1936) indicate his fidelity to his theme. These volumes of poetry he has interspersed with such fanciful books for children as *Rootabaga Stories*(N.Y., 1922) and with his extended work on the biography of Lincoln, of which the first volume, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (N.Y., 1926), has been unsurpassed by any other biographer. The common bond of all his works is indicated by his description of *The People, Yes* as 'a footnote to the Gettysburg Address.' His range has been extended into the field of balladry and folk songs, a large number of which he collected in *The American Songbag*(N.Y., 1927). From such varied interests, as well as from his personal experience, comes the richness of his vocabulary which is his chief strength.

Sandburg's poetry shows little development from his earliest volumes to his latest. He found a form of expression admirably suited to his thought, and his thought has changed but little.

R.West, ed., *Selected Poems of Carl Sandburg*(N.Y., 1926).

Carl Sandburg, *A Recital of Authentic American Folksongs from his collection 'The American Songbag,'* (Musicraft, Album II,207–10). A recording of eight folksongs.

H.Hansen, *Carl Sandburg: The Man and His Poetry*(Girard, Kan., 1925).

H.Monroe, *Poets & Their Art*(N.Y., 1926), 29–38.

M.D.Zabel, 'Sandburg's Testament,' in *Literary Opinion in America*(N.Y., 1937), 406–15.

William P. Schenk (comp.), 'Carl Sandburg—A Bibliography,' *Bulletin of Bibliography*,XVI,4–7.

THEODORE DREISER (1871–)

STEPHEN CRANE'S *Maggie*(N.Y., 1892) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*(N.Y., 1900) are indicative of the recognition in the American novel of naturalism. It is significant that it was Frank Norris, full of his comprehension of the 'responsibility of the novelist,' who arranged for the publication of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. Once issued, the book was sabotaged by its own publisher. It was not republished in America until 1914. The position of novelists at that time has been reminiscently described by Dreiser:

> I think it nothing less than tragic that these men, or boys, fresh, forceful, imbued with a burning desire to present life as they saw it, were thus completely overawed by the moral hypocrisy of the American mind and did not even dare to think of sending their novel to an American publisher. . . . You couldn't write about life as it was; you had to write about it as somebody else thought it was, the ministers and farmers and dullards of the home.

Dreiser learned to see life with the eyes of a newspaper reporter. He was born at Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1871, and attended first the public schools and later Indiana University. Then he worked for newspapers in Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburg, and New York. Chicago excited him, with its tonic clatter, its black factories and its spacious mansions, as later it excited Sandburg. Said Dreiser, 'I think I grasped Chicago in its larger material if not in its more complicated mental aspects.' But the task of having to cover in the course of a single day both a wedding and a suicide or to write impartially of both the well-fed and the starving taught him the carelessness of life. He came out of this experience with a lack of confidence: 'Man, as I was beginning to find—all of us—were small, irritable, nasty in their struggle for life.' 'Life is a god-damned stinking game.'

Nevertheless he developed his enormous capacity for sympathy which has marked all his writing.

> I was filled with an intense sympathy for the woes of others, life in all its helpless degradation and poverty, the unsatisfied dreams of people, their sweaty labors, the things they were compelled to endure—nameless impositions, curses,

> brutalities—the things they would never have, their hungers, thirsts, half-formed dreams of pleasures, their glittering insanities and beaten resolutions at the end. I have sobbed dry sobs looking into what I deemed to be broken faces and the eyes of human failures.

Dreiser's novels have been based on the give and take of these impositions and on the lives of human failures. He has always written best when he has described actual material. *The Titan*(N.Y., 1914) was based on the career of Charles Yerkes, the Chicago grain dealer about whom Norris wrote in *The Pit; The Genius*(N.Y., 1915), the story of a painter who became a magazine editor, was based on the career of Ben Hampton; and *An American Tragedy* (N.Y., 1925) was in spots an almost verbatim account of an upper New York State murder. Dreiser's genius lies in his ability to grasp many of the implications of these lives. Essentially Dreiser is an individualist as well as a materialist, and the tragedy of his characters comes from the failures of their material lives. The result is an admirable portrait of his age. From even a single chapter such as that titled by the editors 'An American Problem' one can grasp the legitimate quandary which faced Clyde Griffith.

Dreiser's prose stumbles along its path, eager, impetuous, awkward, and psychologically perfect. Dreiser's work was both revolutionary and unforgettable in American prose. As Sherwood Anderson has remarked:

> Theodore Dreiser is old—he is very, very old. . . . Something grey and bleak and hurtful, that has been in the world perhaps forever, is personified in him. . . . When Dreiser is gone men shall write books, many of them, and in the books they shall write there will be so many of the qualities Dreiser lacks. The new, the younger men shall have a sense of humor, and everyone knows Dreiser has no sense of humor. More than that, American prose writers shall have grace, lightness of touch, a dream of beauty breaking through the husks of life. . . . Heavy, heavy, the feet of Theodore. How easy to pick some of his books to pieces, to laugh at him for so much of his heavy prose. These feet are making a path, and the children who follow after will run quickly and nimbly because the path has been made. The fellows of the ink-pots, the prose writers of America who follow Dreiser will have much to do that he has never done. Their road is long, but, because of him, those who follow will never have to face the road through the wilderness of Puritan denial, the road that Dreiser faced alone.

Sister Carrie(N.Y., 1900).
Jennie Gerhardt(N.Y., 1911).
The Financier(N.Y., 1912).
A Traveler at Forty(N.Y., 1913).
Twelve Men(N.Y., 1919).
A Book about Myself(N.Y., 1922).
An American Tragedy(N.Y., 1925).
Dawn(N.Y., 1931).
D.Dudley, *Forgotten Frontiers*(N.Y., 1932).
Sherwood Anderson, *Horses and Men* (N.Y., 1923),xi–xii.
R.Bourne, *History of a Literary Radical* (N.Y.,1920),195–204.
H.L.Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces*(N.Y., 1917),67–148.
C.Fadiman, 'Dreiser and the American Dream,' *Nation*,CXXXV,364–65.

JAMES BRANCH CABELL (1879–)

JAMES BRANCH CABELL learned to see life through the veil of romantic mediaevalism. In his earliest writing, at the beginning of the century, he saw only the veil; then with *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* (N.Y., 1915) he began to cast his serious attention on American life. In his later work he did not throw aside the veil. 'It comes almost to saying that the novel of contemporary life, via the typewriter of the serious artist, will return to the oldest of forms, and become more or less an allegory. . . . Art, I repeat, must deal with contemporary life by means of symbols. And the creative writer should handle facts religiously, in that particular mood of piety which holds

that incomplete accord with a creator's will is irreligious. . . . Facts must be kept in their proper place, outside of which they lose veracity.' Such was Cabell's demiurge.

He was born a Southern gentleman, and his attitude was shaped by the period in which he taught French and Greek at William and Mary, from which he had been graduated. These two factors combined to make him into something of an American Anatole France, whose ironic commentary on his contemporary civilization had been written in his fabular *L'Île des Penguins*. Cabell's island was the imaginary French province of Poictesme. Within its boundaries he carried on his skirmishes against the forces of Philistia. Of these, *Jurgen*(N.Y., 1919) was best known. Puritan prudery and middle-class gaucheries were to be stung by his barbed satire, but the barb was so deftly concealed by the elaborated brilliance of his style that its wound was scarcely felt by the majority of his readers. They were not hurt but titillated.

The seriousness underlying his writing differed only in manner from the blatancy of the 'Menckenoids,' as Cabell called them, who were his fellow contributors to the *Smart Set* and the *American Mercury* in a general age of criticism. On his standards of Southern gentility, younger writers of his section first modelled their own attacks.

The Works of James Branch Cabell(N.Y., 1927–30), 18 vols.
These Restless Heads(N.Y., 1934).
Smirt: an Urbane Nightmare(N.Y., 1934).
Smith: a Sylvan Interlude(N.Y., 1935).
H.L.Mencken, *James Branch Cabell*(N.Y., 1927).
Carl Van Doren, *James Branch Cabell* (N.Y., 1925).
Ellen Glasgow, 'The Biography of Manuel,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,VI, 1108–09.
J.Hergesheimer, 'James Branch Cabell,' *American Mercury*,XIII,38–47.
Leon Howard, 'Figures of Allegory,' *Sewanee Review*,XXXVII,193–203.
R.M.Lovett, 'Mr. James Branch Cabell,' *New Republic*,XXVI,187–89.
H.Walpole, *The Art of James Branch Cabell* (N.Y., 1920).
I.R.Brussel, *A Bibliography of the Writings of James Branch Cabell* (Philadelphia, 1932).

JOHN REED (1887–1920)

JOHN REED, in 1917, wrote of himself:

> I am twenty-nine years old, and I know that this is the end of a part of my life, the end of youth. Sometimes it seems to me the end of the world's youth too; certainly the Great War has done something to us all. But it is also the beginning of a new phase of life; and the world we live in is so full of swift change and color and meaning that I can hardly keep from imagining the splendid and terrible possibilities of the time to come. The last ten years I've gone up and down the earth drinking in experience, fighting and loving, seeing and hearing and testing things. I've traveled all over Europe, and to the borders of the East, and down in Mexico, having adventures; seeing men killed and broken, victorious and laughing, men with visions and men with a sense of humor. I've watched civilization change and broaden and sweeten in my lifetime; and I've watched it wither and crumble in the red blast of war. And war I have seen, too, in the trenches, with the armies. I'm not quite sick of seeing yet, but soon I will be—I know that. My future life will not be what it has been. And I so want to stop a minute, and look back, and get my bearings.

Reed was born in Portland, Oregon, of well-to-do parents, and was educated at Harvard during the stimulating decade when men like Walter Lippmann, Heywood Broun, T.S.Eliot, Conrad Aiken, and Joseph Ferdinand Gould were students there. After a Vagabondian tour abroad, Reed went to New York and entered its literary Bohemia. During this period he contributed verse to *Poetry* and to the *Masses*, and issued privately a long poem on life in Greenwich Village. In 1914,

when Villa had captured Chihahua, he left for Mexico as a correspondent for the *Metropolitan Magazine*. His articles were the most dramatic contributions to the journalistic literature of America since Richard Harding Davis' reports of the battle of San Juan hill. During the World War he was abroad as a foreign correspondent. It was after his return to America for an operation that he wrote the reminiscence quoted above. In August of that year he sailed for Russia where he arrived in time to witness the October revolution. As a friend of Lenin he was granted access to important documents, and was encouraged to write a history of what he had seen. This he did in *Ten Days that Shook the World* (N.Y., 1919), after his return to New York. 'I have to see,' Reed said. His history was a step toward the heightened reportorial sketches of Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos.

Later in the year of its publication Reed was forced to flee from America to escape charges of sedition, and went again to Russia. There he died of the typhus and was buried in the Kremlin. In a review of Reed's biography, Max Lerner wrote:

> He was no thinker but a man of action. But it was his good fortune to be led to the most desirable of all fates for a man of action who is also a writer and a poet—the chance at once to write history and to make it.
>
> It is this emphasis on freedom and action and joyousness—almost its obsession of Reed's with them—that gives his life its importance for us and makes the incidents of it credible. Reed died thinking he had found in communism a solution not only for himself but for the workers and the creative everywhere. How deep his communism was is a question that is difficult to answer. He probably understood communism only as he understood everything else—as a verifiable part of his own experience.

'Almost Thirty,' *The New Republic*, LXXXVI,267–70, 332–36.
Ten Days that Shook the World(N.Y., 1926). With an introduction by Lenin.
Granville Hicks, *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary*(N.Y., 1936).
Max Lerner, 'John Reed: No Legend,' *Nation*,CXLII,552–53.

HENRY L. MENCKEN (1880–)

THE popular rhetorician of post-war America was Henry Louis Mencken, and the textbooks were his series of *Prejudices*, made up of his editorials for the *Smart Set* and for the *American Mercury*. Such magazines represented the supreme national self-consciousness indicated at its best by Van Wyck Brooks' *America's Coming of Age*(N.Y., 1915). This self-consciousness found expression in a post-adolescent urge to hit out at everything and to applaud the blows.

Mencken's first series of *Prejudices* attacked the pedantries of professors, the utopianism of H.G.Wells; the social philosophies of Henry George and Thorsten Veblen; and sociology, psychology, and theology. His attitude toward the contemporary scene is indicated in the following quotation:

> But how, then, explain the fact that the populace is constantly ravished and set aflame by fresh brigades of moral, political and sociological revolutionists—that it is forever playing the eager victim to new mountebanks? The explanation lies in the simple circumstance that these performers upon the public midriff are always careful to ladle out nothing actually alarming and accursed. What they offer is always the same old panacea with an extra-gaudy label—the tried, tasted and much-loved dose, the colic cure that mother used to make. Superficially, the United States seems to suffer from an endless and astounding neophilism; actually all its thinking is done within the boundaries of a very small group of political, economic and religious ideas, most of them unsound. For example, there is the fundamental idea of democracy—the idea that all political power should remain in the hands of the populace, that its exercise by superior men is intrinsically immoral. Out of this idea

spring innumerable notions and crazes that are no more, at bottom, than restatements of it in sentimental terms: rotation in office, direct elections, the initiative and referendum, the recall, the popular primary, and so on. Again, there is the primary doctrine that the possession of great wealth is a crime—a doctrine half a religious heritage and half the product of mere mob envy. Out of it have come free silver, trust-busting, government ownership, muck-raking, Populism, Bleaseism, Progressivism, the milder forms of Socialism, the whole gasconade of 'reform' politics. Yet again, there is the ineradicable peasant suspicion of the man who is having a better time in the world—a suspicion grounded, like the foregoing, partly upon undisguised envy and partly upon archaic and barbaric religious taboos. Out of it have come all the glittering pearls of the uplift, from Abolition to Prohibition, and from the crusade against horse-racing to the Mann Act. The whole political history of the United States is a history of these three ideas.

Mencken's vigorous style is in consciously direct antithesis to John Dryden's remarks on the art of satire: 'How easy it is to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble trade, which yet no master can teach to his apprentice; he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the nearer in his practice.'

Damn! A Book of Calumny(N.Y., 1918).
Prejudices(N.Y.,1919,1920,1922,1924,1926, 1927).
Selected Prejudices(N.Y., 1930).
The American Language(N.Y., 1936).
I.Goldberg, *The Man Mencken*(N.Y., 1925).
E.Boyd, *H.L.Mencken*(N.Y., 1925).
J.B.Cabell, *Some of Us*(N.Y., 1930).
S.P.Sherman, *Americans*(N.Y., 1922),1-12.

WILLA CATHER (1875–)

DESPITE her early experience as a journalist, Willa Cather has turned elsewhere for a model of expression. 'If the novel is a form of imaginative art, it cannot be at the same time a vivid and brilliant form of journalism. . . . Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there—that, one might say, is created. It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself.'

This manner she has expressed most successfully in such of her novels as *The Professor's House*(N.Y., 1925), *Death Comes for the Archbishop*(N.Y., 1925), and *Shadows on the Rock*(N.Y., 1931). It is not the only mood to be found in her writing, but it is uniquely successful in contemporary American prose. That it should suit so admirably her pictures of frontier life comes from her concept of the moral certitude of pioneers. 'The generation that subdued the wild land and broke up the virgin prairie is passing, but there is still there, a group of rugged figures in the background which inspire respect, compel admiration. With these old men and women the attainment of material prosperity was a moral victory, because it was wrung from hard conditions, was the result of a struggle that tested character. They can look out over those broad stretches of fertility and say: "We made this, with our backs and hands." ' This 'moral victory' brings a calm to her successful characters which is admirably expressed through the quietness of her style. It was this same calm which was characteristic of the characters of Sarah Orne Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*, to whom Miss Cather avowedly owes so much.

In *Death Comes for the Archbishop* the first Archbishop of Santa Fé could say, in a spiritual sense, that the land was being won. 'We made this, with our backs and hands.' Thus Death, when it came in the

manner of Holbein's series of woodcuts, could be welcomed with composure. The character of Bishop Latour was based on that of the Rev. John Baptist Lamy, and that of Father Vaillant on Padre Joseph Machebeuf who became first Bishop of Denver. The incident of the pearl-grey mules was one actually related in outline by Machebeuf in a letter to his sister in France.

Miss Cather was born in Virginia, but was taken by her parents to Nebraska when she was nine. It was there that she observed and became friends with the immigrants whom she described in *My Ántonia*(N.Y., 1918). In her descriptions she has been careful to maintain her own position as an outsider, familiar with but not actually a part of the life she describes.

Novels and Stories(Boston, 1937–38), 12 vols.
Not Under Forty(N.Y., 1936). Contains 'The Novel Demeuble.'
'A Letter from Willa Cather,' *Commonweal*, VII,713–14. On the composition of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.
'Shadows on the Rock: A Letter,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,VIII,216.
R.Rapin, *Willa Cather*(N.Y., 1930). Contains a bibliography.
L.Carroll, 'Willa Sibert Cather,' *Bookman*, LIII,212–16.
H.Gregory, 'Review of *Shadows on the Rock*,' *Symposium*,II,551–54.
W.J.Howlett, *Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf, D.D.*(Pueblo, Colo., 1908).
L.H.Warner, *Archbishop Lamy, An Epoch Maker*(Santa Fé, N.M., 1936).

OLE RÖLVAAG (1876–1931)

OLE EDVART RÖLVAAG was himself an immigrant, and one of the few American writers able to write from within such experience. He was born in the village of Rölvaag, on an island just south of the Arctic Circle off the coast of Norway. It was from this village that he took his name after his arrival in America. Rölvaag was a fisherman, and as the result of a storm in the winter of 1893 resolved to emigrate to America. He finally arrived in 1896 and went immediately to his uncle's farm in South Dakota. He worked on the land for three years, and then entered a preparatory school in Canton, South Dakota. In 1905 he was graduated from St. Olaf's College in Minnesota, studied for a year in Norway, and became a member of the St. Olaf's faculty until his retirement in 1931.

His first book was *Amerika-Breve* [*Letters from America*](Minneapolis, 1912), and like all of his work was written in Norwegian. He wrote, however, comparatively little except textbooks until after 1920 when his third novel, *To Tullinger*[*Two Fools*] was published. In 1922 appeared *Længeslens Baat*[*The Boat of Longing*]. These were widely read by Norwegian-speaking Americans. In 1923, stimulated by the report that Johan Bojer, the Norwegian novelist, was about to visit America to write a novel about immigrant life, Rölvaag set immediately at work to compose his own. *Giants in the Earth* was first printed in Norway, and was then translated into English by Rölvaag, in collaboration with Lincoln Colcord. It was the first of a trilogy, of which *Peder Victorious*(N.Y., 1929) and *Their Father's God*(N.Y., 1931) were the remaining volumes.

Other writers have been able to indicate the psychological situation of immigrants who penetrated the American frontier, but Rölvaag's great gift was his ability to reproduce its effect. Such is the scene in which he describes the oncoming of winter to a woman like Beret, a scene differing from but as essentially American as that described by De Crêvecœur or by Whittier.

Paa Glemte Veie [*The Forgotten Path*](Minneapolis, 1914).
The Boat of Longing(N.Y., 1933).
Peder Seier [*Peder Victorious*](Oslo, Norway, 1928).
Den Signede Dag [*Their Father's God*] (Oslo, Norway, 1931).
L.Colcord, 'Rölvaag the Fisherman Shook His Fist at Fate,' *American Magazine*, CV,37,188–92.
P.H.Boynton, 'O.E.Rölvaag and the Con-

quest of the Pioneer,' *English Journal*, XVIII,535–42.
E.I.Haugen, 'Rölvaag: Norwegian-American,' *Norwegian-American Studies and Records*,VII,53–73.
J.E.Olson, 'Rölvaag's Novels of Norwegian Pioneer Life in the Dakotas,' *Scandinavian Studies and Notes*,IX,45–55.
V.L.Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*(N.Y., 1927–30),III,387–96.

SINCLAIR LEWIS (1885–)

THE overwhelming success of Sinclair Lewis' novel, *Main Street* (N.Y., 1920), came in the period which accepted Mencken as its schoolmaster. Lewis was born in 1885 in Sauk Center, Minnesota, the son of a country doctor, went east to Yale, and afterwards worked in numerous editorial offices. *Main Street* is usually thought of as his first novel; actually it was his seventh. The earlier novels had been more or less slight, but serious in intent.

According to Lewis he began to plan *Main Street* when he was a sophomore in college. It broke on the Sauk Centers of America like a torrent of rain after a thunderclap. Writers had been accusing them indirectly for years, but now there was a man to speak to them in their own language. The Jim Blausers always gave their extravagant praise, but here was Lewis dressed up as Carol Kennicott to explain that these things were not so. The novel was the sermon of a speaker who used their own technique of ridiculing through mimicry. Lewis' greatest power is as a mimic. He has an acute and sympathetic perception of the nuances of ordinary conversation, and a blindness for the nuances of landscape. Despite 'the broom-swish of Aunt Bessie's voice, and the mop-pounding of Uncle Whittier's grumble,' *Main Street* is more of a landmark than a work of art.

In *Babbitt*(N.Y., 1922), Lewis gave another word to the language, through his description of the American Everyman of the Nineteen-Twenties. The scope was wider than that of *Main Street*, the application was more universal, and the cure was less specific. Lewis realized the cultural deficiencies of George F. Babbitt, but recognized also the spiritual yearnings which drew Babbitt to Tavis, his mistress; which caused him to support Doane, the radical, to refuse to join the Good Citizen's League, and to support Paul Riesling when Paul shot his wife, Zilla. He sympathized with Myra's humdrum life and her temporary turn to New Thought. Lewis admitted the force of Babbitt's world to draw him back into its pattern, but allowed him enough of his former yearning to assert himself at moments of crisis, and to say at his son's marriage: 'Go ahead, old man! The world is yours!' It was easy enough for Carol to criticize Main Street, since she came freshly to it; Babbitt's criticism of himself was infinitely more significant.

Arrowsmith(N.Y., 1925), an account of the struggle of a doctor to keep the path of pure research, is perhaps his best work technically. It is not however the most interesting, for Arrowsmith is not personally so common a denominator. *Elmer Gantry* (N.Y., 1927), a satire on evangelism, was a cannonade directed against a toy figure. Lewis can hardly be called a distinguished writer of prose, but he has always possessed a sense of the timely, and his biting power of mimicry has won him approval in Europe and embarrassment and applause in America. In 1930 he became the first American to be awarded the Nobel Prize in literature.

Dodsworth(N.Y., 1929).
Ann Vickers(N.Y., 1933).
Selected Short Stories of Sinclair Lewis (N.Y., 1935).
It Can't Happen Here(N.Y., 1935).

O.Harrison, *Sinclair Lewis*(N.Y., 1925).
Carl Van Doren, *Sinclair Lewis*(N.Y., 1933). With a Bibliography by Harvey Taylor.
W.R.Benét, 'The Earlier Lewis,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,X,421–22.
H.S.Canby, 'Sinclair Lewis's Art of Work,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,X,465–473.
E.M.Forster, *Sinclair Lewis Interprets America*(N.Y., 1932).

RING LARDNER (1885–1933)

AN important aspect of modern prose, coincidental to the practice of modern poetry, has been an increasing sensitivity to the value of the spoken word. The exact phonetic reproduction of dialect by writers like Joel Chandler Harris was extended to common speech, and an increasing awareness of the relationship between the words and thoughts of characters has helped to remove from prose the artificial diction which marked much of the writing of the previous century. The work of few authors demonstrates this awareness better than that of Ring Lardner.

Lardner was born in 1885 at Niles, Michigan, and after two years at the Armour Institute of Technology in Chicago, became in 1905 a reporter for the South Bend, Indiana, *Times*. In 1907 he returned to Chicago where he was a sports-writer and columnist. It was while writing for the *Tribune* that he published *You Know Me Al*(N.Y., 1916) in the racy vernacular of the baseball player. In later stories like 'The Golden Honeymoon' he widened his gallery of American portraits.

Lardner's complete understanding of the people about whom he wrote accounts for the accuracy with which their speech expresses both their characters and their situations. Thus dialogue alone is sufficient, and in this economy he represents an increasing tendency among contemporary writers to discard that which is purely descriptive.

Round Up(N.Y., 1929).
First and Last(N.Y., 1934).

LOLA RIDGE (1883–1941)

THERE can be little doubt of the sincere and unified intention which lies behind the poetry of Lola Ridge. From the publication of her first book, *The Ghetto and Other Poems*(N.Y., 1918), to the writing of her *Dance of Fire*(N.Y., 1935), the theme of human martyrdom, particularly the martyrdom of the poor and disenfranchised has been the subject of her verse. *The Ghetto*, with its vivid, imagistic portraits of life in a lower Manhattan city street, illustrated her sincerity of feeling in the statement of her theme.

She was born in Dublin, Ireland, and spent her childhood in Australia and in New Zealand. Her early ambition was to be a painter, and she studied art at the Academie Julienne in Sydney. She came to the United States in 1907. For three years she wrote fiction for popular magazines. She took over the editorship of Alfred Kreymborg's magazine, *Others*, and was on the staff of *Broom*.

The technical development of her work is shown by her uses of light and fire symbolism in the most recent of her books of poetry, *The Dance of Fire*.

Sun-Up(N.Y., 1920).
Red Flag(N.Y., 1927).
Firehead(N.Y., 1929).

SARA TEASDALE (1884–1933)

THE reiteration of the Arthurian legend symbolism in American poetry was again made evident in the early verse of Sara Teasdale. During the year 1907, in which her first book, *Sonnets to Duse*, appeared, she also published her poem, 'Guinevere,' in William Marion Reedy's magazine, *Reedy's Mirror*. Although her first book preceded the excitement and enthusiasms of the 'poetic renaissance' of 1912, it was not until the 'renaissance' was five years old, that her characteristic *Love Songs* brought her work to the attention of a phenomenally large reading public. During the decade that was to 'discover' the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay, the verse of Sara Teasdale created a standard for feminine lyricism; and in this connection her great

popularity contributed its influence toward the publicity given to the feminist movement in America during the World War.

Sara Teasdale was born in 1884 in St. Louis, Missouri, and, after her education in that city, travelled in southern Europe and in the Near East. On her return to this continent in 1907 she began to make friends in literary circles in New York and in 1916 moved from her home in St. Louis to live there permanently.

In commenting on *The Collected Poems of Sara Teasdale,* Morton Dauwen Zabel wrote in *The Southern Review,*

> . . . careful selection offers its rewards here; fifty or sixty poems, instead of 350, should some day be bound together as among the best lyrics of the older tradition that America has produced. Miss Teasdale was known as an admirer of Christina Rossetti, of whose life and verse she was preparing a study when she died. Christina Rossetti is the mistress of the particular art in which poets of the sentimental tendency have written, from Laetitia Landon and Felicia Hemans down, but there is no question that she was a secure and impassioned mistress, particularly in the range of her resources, extending from the imaginative skill of 'Goblin Market' and 'Sing-Song' to the Elizabethan intensity of 'The Convent Threshold.' Miss Teasdale reached neither of these distances in her development. She moved in fact hardly at all from her initial attitude. All she could do was to refine and perfect that attitude to the utmost degree of sincerity she had in her. This refinement appears at its best in her volume *Dark of the Moon* in 1926, where may be found not only some love-songs of exquisite artistry like 'The Flight,' 'Arcturus in Autumn' and 'Words for an Old Air' but several lyrics of a more detached, laconic, and sophisticated nature which promised a richer maturity for her talents. . . . She was a poet whose work, with its easy sentiment and human appeal, can easily be mistaken for a distasteful kind of popular verse-journalism; it requires discriminating selection; but when it is given that . . . an art of unmistakable charm is retrieved, and it should always hold a place in American lyric verse.

The Collected Poems of Sara Teasdale (N.Y., 1937).
Harriet Monroe, *Poets & Their Art*(N.Y., 1926), 72–7.
Morton Zabel, 'Varieties of Poetic Experience,' *The Southern Review*,III,806–07.

WITTER BYNNER (1881–)

WITTER BYNNER is one of the few men writing poetry today in whose work may be found any considerable body of the simple lyric. He defines poetry as 'passionate patience,' but this definition is amplified by his conviction that: 'Primarily, poetry like music—as a matter of fact with music—came out of the heart and lips of simple mankind.' For Bynner, modern poetry began with Kipling and Housman, and has continued with Alfred Noyes and Masefield. He has on the whole been content to remain aloof from other techniques, though he has indulged himself in numerous tilts in opposition. The best known of these forays occurred when with Arthur Davison Ficke, under the respective pen-names of Emanuel Morgan and Anne Knish, he perpetrated the hoax of the school of *Spectra* (N.Y., 1915). His own experimentation has been largely in the practice of a kind of rhymed free verse, demonstrated in his first volume, *An Ode to Harvard and Other Poems*(Boston, 1907), and later expanded into a characteristic medium of his own.

Bynner has been a great admirer of the poetry and philosophy of the Chinese, and with Dr. Kiang Kang-hu has published in *The Jade Mountain*(N.Y., 1929) translations of some three hundred of the finest poems of the T'ang dynasty. In this interest, at least, he was in sympathy with the imagists in their general respect for the concentrated economy and simplicity of Chinese verse. Yet he is specific in limiting the influence on his own work: 'I am not referring to the superficial tricks by which a Chinese poet makes his words balanced

and melodious. The discovery which has largely undone my early convictions as to the way of writing poetry has really to do with use of substance rather than with turns of expression.'

Selected Poems by Witter Bynner(N.Y., 1936). With an editor's foreword by Robert Hunt, and a critical preface by Paul Horgan.

Eden Tree(N.Y., 1931).

The Persistence of Poetry(San Francisco, 1929).

ELINOR WYLIE (1885–1928)

FEW writers have been so essentially permeated with the spirit of a predecessor as was Elinor Wylie with that of Shelley. She read him first in her *Third Reader*, and at the age of eleven, when she read Trelawny's recollections of Shelley, she describes herself as so filled with emotion that she was

> afraid to move, afraid to cry for fear the scene within the pages of the book might be hidden from her eyes, wondering and wondering why the bright creature who had lived within that scene should have died and fallen into dust no stronger than the golden leaves blowing in at the window.

This enthusiasm remained with her, and she became a close student of his life. Two of her novels, *The Orphan Angel*(N.Y., 1926) and *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard* (N.Y., 1928), were concerned, directly or indirectly, with him. Something within the Puritan marrow of her bones caused her to reject the richness of Keats and to ally herself with Shelley. She did not imitate his poetry; she was merely, to borrow a phrase from 'One Person,' 'a woman by an archangel befriended.'

Her life as a poet was spent in stern self-discipline to attain clarity and sharpness of utterance within traditional verse-forms. Her first book of poems, *Incidental Numbers*, her mother had anonymously published at London in 1912 in an edition of sixty numbers for private distribution. She included no poems from it in her subsequent volumes. These were *Nets to Catch the Winds*(N.Y., 1921), *Black Armour* (N.Y., 1923), *Trivial Breath*(N.Y., 1928), and *Angels and Earthly Creatures*(N.Y., 1929). Each shows a steady advance over her previous work. It was in a sense as though she had been training herself for the time when she should have something to say. This came in the poetry of her last volume, and particularly in 'One Person,' one of the finest sonnet sequences in the English language.

Her prose illustrated the qualities which caused James Branch Cabell to characterize her as a 'Dresden china shepherdess.' Of *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard*, Isabel Paterson has said:

> The whole story of *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard* is the absence of Shelley. This is England after it rejected Shelley; England revisited by a melancholy stranger in 1833. Mr. Hazard, described as returning from years of exile in the East, was variously described as Byron or Trelawny; but he is rather a ghost, the Last of the Romantics. And he cut a very strange figure ten years after Byron expired at Missolonghi. . . .
>
> So this 'symbolic romance of the mind' is the epilogue of that great drama of a lost cause, dedicated to the burning heart of Shelley and the perverse ego of Byron. . . .
>
> This is also her best prose. Here she chastened the abundance of her imagery and disciplined her luxuriant talent. *Jennifer Lorn*[N.Y., 1923] is a dish of curds and cream flavoured with saffron. *The Venetian Glass Nephew*[N.Y., 1925] has the brittle exquisiteness of its title. *The Orphan Angel* is Shelley's own prose! In *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard*, at moments perhaps Lady Clara's muslins billow about her too ethereally; she all but floats away in an Angelica Kauffman apotheosis. But the common little man, Mr. Hartleigh, and his petulant shallow vulgar Annamaria are clothed in sentences of the most austere distinc-

tion. The course-grained matter-of-fact Mr. Hodge is depicted in his most stultifying aspect without resort to hyperbole or emphasis. He speaks, and he is there. This is the very object of prose, to render the substance of things so that the spirit is implicit. The prose of poets usually tends to a 'false gallop,' as the verse of the born prose-writer seldom quickens or lifts above a footpace. Elinor Wylie had both gifts; and she never once let a pedestrian line intrude into her verse, but at first her prose occasionally escaped restraint. Here at the last she compelled it to its true function.

She was born in Somerville, New Jersey, and spent much of her girlhood in Washington, D.C., where her father was Assistant Attorney-General under Theodore Roosevelt. For some years she lived abroad with her second husband, Horace Wylie, principally in rural England. Her third marriage was with William Rose Benét. Her health during her brief literary career was precarious, and she died instantly of a stroke in 1928, having just prepared for the printer her last volume of poems.

Collected Poems of Elinor Wylie(N.Y., 1932). Edited, with a foreword, by William Rose Benét.
Collected Prose of Elinor Wylie(N.Y., 1934). With prefaces by Carl Van Doren, Carl Van Vechten, Stephen Vincent Benét, Isabel Paterson, and William Rose Benét.
Nancy Hoyt, *Elinor Wylie: the Portrait of an Unknown Lady*(Indianapolis, 1935).
J.B.Cabell, *Some of Us*(N.Y., 1930),13–26.
M.M.Colum, 'O Virtuous Light!' *Saturday Review of Literature*,V,1043–44.
——, 'In Memory of Elinor Wylie,' *New Republic*,LVII,316–19.
W.R.Benét, *The Prose and Poetry of Elinor Wylie*(Norton, Massachusetts, 1934).
M.D.Zabel, 'The Pattern of the Atmosphere,' *Poetry*,XL,273–82.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY (1892–)

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY is indubitably the most popular American poet, and she has retained this popularity during the many phases of her verse. She began writing with comparative triviality, save for her fine 'Renascence,' but expressing with pith and salty phrases the plight of the modern sophisticated woman. The quatrain in which she burned her candle at both ends became the 'Psalm of Life' of the Nineteen-Twenties. Although her verse remained essentially conventional, she has achieved a manner and an idiom essentially her own. Both in lyrics and in the sonnet form she has succeeded as have few others of our time.

A publisher's announcement of her first volume, *Renascence*(N.Y., 1917), stated in regard to her verses:

> They deal, as poetry should deal, primarily with emotion; with the sense of tears and laughter, in mortal things; with beauty and passion; with having and losing; with discoveries and inventions.

Miss Millay has, however, increasingly concerned herself with social problems. The trial of Sacco and Vanzetti stirred her, as it did so many, and her most recent volume, *Conversation at Midnight* (N.Y., 1937) was an attempt to capture the flavor of political and social opinion of a few years past.

The magnificence of her language has been generously applauded, but the charm of her purely lyric lines has blinded many to the fact that her ear has always been closely tuned to the roughness of common speech. This is hardly surprising in view of her long interest in drama. For some years she worked with the Provincetown Playhouse in New York, and in 1921 three of her plays were published. In 1927 appeared *The King's Henchman*, the libretto of an operetta which was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Recently she has said of herself, in a published interview:

> 'I, for instance, am moving naturally in the direction of dramatic poetry—by

which I don't mean that I've given up writing lyric poetry. Really, the public is very stern with the artist—it looks upon him as an inspired scatter-brain, yet expects him to proceed in more rigidly methodical fashion than any banker! I've given up nothing. . . .

'If you don't change and develop between your first book and your 10th, then you just keep on re-writing yourself. And it seems to me that life should do more for you than just keep you alive. After all, a child is not merely fed with the food he eats; he is strengthened, and he grows. It's the same with the poet—that is to say, if he has a heart appetite for life. It's no good nibbling at it.' Then she added with a smile:

'He must also, of course, have an excellent digestion.'

A Few Figs from Thistles(N.Y., 1920).
The Lamp and the Bell(N.Y., 1921).
Aria da Capo(N.Y., 1921).
Second April(N.Y., 1921).
Two Slatterns and a King(N.Y., 1921).
The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver(N.Y., 1922).
The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems(N.Y., 1923).
The King's Henchman(N.Y., 1927).
The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems (N.Y., 1928).
Fatal Interview(N.Y., 1931).
The Princess Marries the Page(N.Y., 1932).
Wine from These Grapes(N.Y., 1934).
Elizabeth Atkins, *Edna St. Vincent Millay and Her Times*(Chicago, 1936).
E.Davison, 'Edna St. Vincent Millay,' *English Journal*,XVI,671–82.
J.H.Preston, 'Edna St. Vincent Millay,' *Sewanee Review*,XXXVIII,42–49.

EZRA POUND (1885–)

WHAT poetry needed at the turn of the last century was not new fields to conquer but a fresh manual of arms. This Ezra Pound helped, more than any other poet, to provide. Like Picasso he has been at the same time a critic and an artist.

Pound was born in Hailey, Idaho, in 1885, studied at the University of Pennsylvania, and was an instructor there from 1905 to 1907. No group in America's literary history has proved so significant as that in which, at this time, Ezra Pound, Hilda Doolittle, William Carlos Williams, and Marianne Moore moved as friends. Pound taught for a time in Indiana, but in 1908 sailed for Italy where he published his first book of poems, *A Lume Spento* (Venice, 1908). Within a few months he left for England where he published a second volume, *Personæ*(London, 1909).

It was in April of 1909 when Pound first joined the group led by T.E.Hulme, which met in a Soho restaurant to discuss and experiment with verse whose 'great aim is,' as Hulme expressed it, 'accurate, precise and definite description.' Hulme saw the necessity for a strict discipline in the expression of art, in contrast to the various forms of flabbiness which had come in the old age of nineteenth-century Romanticism. He recognized that a new youthfulness had brought about 'a change in sensibility,' and that the proper expression of art 'will culminate, not so much in the simple geometric forms found in archaic art, but in the more complicated ones associated in our minds with the age of machinery.' The group died out, but Pound carried on its spirit, gave the name 'Imagisme' to an important aspect of their experimentation, and with his particularly vigorous and common-sense commentaries brought their issues squarely before the literary world.

'Poetry,' said Pound, 'is the statement of overwhelming emotional values': but he also added that 'poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres and the like, but equations for the human emotions.' It was in this way that he extended the province of what might be termed the relatively static quality of early Imagism into the dynamic imagery of Vorticism. The limitations of the early manner of Imagism were what caused most poets to relinquish it after its discipline had been absorbed.

Pound's comment on a poem from the Provençal, that 'like all fine poetry it can be

well judged only when heard spoken,' indicates his awareness of the importance of sound in the practice of a medium which had become predominantly visual. The common relationship of verse and music to sound he has amplified by his observation in *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (Paris, 1924) that apparent discords in sound may be resolved by sufficient periods of rest. In a passage, unwittingly similar to the problem which had been faced by Lanier, Pound indicated some of the difficulties consequent to a return to the oral tradition in English verse:

> Everyone has been annoyed by the difficulty of indicating the *exact* tone and rhythm with which one's verse is to be read. One questions the locus of degrees, *sic*: at what point is it more expeditious to learn musical notation and to set one's words to, or print them with the current musical notation, rather than printing them hind-side-to and topsy-turvy on the page.

This problem of a visual indication of both sound and necessary periods of rest has been largely solved through typography and the arrangement of poetical lines.

These various comprehensions gave force and significance to Pound's searches through early literatures for examples of perfection in various techniques. His extraordinarily wide familiarity with the past was sufficient to give him a sense of the support of tradition. His objective increasingly became fixed ahead rather than behind, and in this respect he differed radically from the apparently similar utilization of the past on the part of such nineteenth-century Romantics as the Pre-Raphaelites, with whom he seemed as a youth to have been joined in spirit.

Pound has always had an acute sense of what is fresh in literature. Not only have his commentaries on recognized literature been provocative and illuminating, but it was he who sent to Harriet Monroe for *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* the poems of Frost, Eliot, H.D., Aldington, Lawrence, Joyce, Tagore, Flint, Yeats, and others; and it was he who made Margaret Anderson's *Little Review* into a magazine into which James Joyce's *Ulysses* found its first and congenial appearance.

The greatest importance must be attached to Pound's readiness to relinquish a position once its immediate potentialities have been exhausted by himself. This following of an Emersonian precept has given his poetry its steady progression, and solved in his case the dilemma later expressed by Zabel, that 'the greatest difficulty of being a pioneer is in remaining a contemporary.' It is in respect to this malleability of Pound's that 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' becomes not only an important technical demonstration but an equally significant personal document.

For the past two decades, Pound's most important work has been in the creation of a flexible yet definite stanza. These 'Cantos' proceed directly out of Pound's profound knowledge of the past, and are a direct reflection both of his own historical awareness and the modern sense of the mutual impingements of various flashes of memory and of contemporary consciousness. They are the speech of a brilliant and somewhat pedantic man. No one could possibly understand all his references, though footnotes will in time blind us into thinking that we did understand them from the beginning. The Cantos give the excitement of listening to a brilliant and rapid conversationalist who presents keys to the imagination and hurries his listener from door to door. It is perhaps idle to quibble about the plan before the series is completed. Pound has sensed potentialities in his medium not recognizable at first, and is presenting to poets, even now, as much stimulation as he gave in 1912 to the so-called Poetic Renaissance.

Exultations(London, 1909).
Provença(Boston, 1910).
The Spirit of Romance(London, 1910).
Canzoni(London, 1911).
Ripostes(London, 1912).
Des Imagistes(N.Y., 1914). Editor.
Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir(N.Y., 1916).
Lustra(N.Y., 1917).
Pavannes and Divisions(N.Y., 1918).
Instigations(N.Y., 1920).
A Draft of XXX Cantos(London, 1933).
Eleven New Cantos. XXXI–XLI(N.Y., 1934).

Make It New(New Haven, Conn., 1935).
[T.S.Eliot.] *Ezra Pound: His Metric Poetry* (N.Y., 1917).
R.P.Blackmur, *The Double Agent*(N.Y., 1935), 30–67.
D.Fitts, 'Music Fit for the Odes,' *Hound & Horn*,IV,278–89.
F.R.Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry*(London,1932),133–57.
L.Zukofsky, 'The Cantos of Ezra Pound,' *Criterion*,X,424–40.

H.D. (1886–)

OF the poets who were moved by the need for greater clarity and precision, H.D. has kept closest to the tenets which were formulated in definitions of Imagism; and her poem, 'Oread,' has on all sides been accepted as its classical example.

When Pound first sent her poems in 1912 to Harriet Monroe, he wrote of them:

> Objective—no slither; direct—no excessive use of adjectives, no metaphors that won't permit examination. It's straight talk, straight as the Greek!

While Pound had turned from one literature to another in rapid succession, H.D.'s interest has remained consistently Hellenic. The purity of the best Greek tradition is to be felt in the poems of her first book, *Sea Gardens*(London, 1916), and her most recent work has been the translation of the *Ion of Euripides*(Boston, 1937). With her, however, it is a matter of affinity with the Greek tradition rather than a pedantic adaptation of its forms. H.D. has simply used the past as an overtone to the expression of her own personality. Although she speaks of herself in terms of 'escapism,' even the ivory tower of her inner world of imagination has had its window from which she has looked out and recorded her observation. Certainly it was not mere chance which caused her to translate the *Ion* at a moment when Europe seemed again to be on the verge of war.

She has proved herself a modern again in her poetic diction, which might be characterized as a revolt against the school of Swinburne and Gilbert Murray. Nowhere is this more apparent than in her sparing use of adjectives, on which Pound commented, or in the stern discipline of her poetic lines. Her remarkably acute ear is always evident in the subtleties of her strict, yet original forms. She is herself the classicist whom so many admirers have vulgarized in imitation.

Hilda Doolittle was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, but passed most of her childhood in Philadelphia, where her father was Director of the Flower Observatory. She attended Bryn Mawr College, and it was as a student there that she was a friend of Williams, Pound, and Miss Moore. In 1911 she went to London, which she has made her home.

Collected Poems of H.D.(N.Y., 1925).
Palimpsest(London, 1926). A novel.
Hippolytus Temporizes(Boston, 1927).
Red Roses for Bronze(Boston, 1931).
Hedylus(London, 1928). A novel.
G.Hughes, *Imagism & the Imagists*(Stanford University,1931).
R.P.Blackmur, 'The Lesser Satisfactions,' *Poetry*,XLI,94–100.
W.Bryher, 'Spear-Shaft and Cyclamen-Flower,' *Poetry*, XIX,333–37.
F.S.Flint, 'The Poetry of H.D.,' *Egoist*,II, 72–73.
M.Sinclair, 'The Poems of H.D.,' *Fortnightly Review*,n.s.CXXI, 329–45.
L.Untermeyer, 'The Perfect Imagist,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,I,260.
H.P.Collins, *Modern Poetry*(London, n.d.), 154–202.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER (1886–)

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER is one of the many Americans who, early in the century, quit America in order to escape the conventionalities that were ready to strangle any creative expression which did not fit the norm. Fletcher was born at Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1886, and was sent north by his parents to complete his preparation for Harvard at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. He left Harvard before his gradua-

tion, and after a brief excursion with an archaeological expedition into the Southwest, sailed in 1908 for Italy. Finally, drawn by the newly-stirring poetical activity in London, he went to England, where he remained for many years. Without ever quite being at the center of any of the movements, he was interested in most of them, and certain of his poems appeared in Miss Lowell's first collection of Imagist poetry in 1915.

Fletcher has always been an experimentalist, and with greater ability than any of his contemporaries he was able to bring into English verse the transmutations of color practised by the French Symbolists. This ability he combined with an analogy of verse to music, in what he called 'a presentation of daily life in terms of highly-orchestrated and colored words.' Examples of this impressionistic method are to be found in his 'Symphonies,' the technique of which his annotation indicates in more detail. 'Fletcher,' Robert Penn Warren has pointed out, 'was the first, or one of the first, to develop in English a type of imagery which Edith Sitwell has since erected into something like an oblique technique of vision.'

His experimentation was further carried on, in conjunction with Amy Lowell, in the development of polyphonic prose; and his 'Clipper Ships' is perhaps the most successful example of this extension of the provinces of both prose and poetry. Of late years, and particularly since his return to America, he has interested himself more and more in conventional forms, the best expressions of which are to be found in *XXIV Elegies*(Santa Fé, N.M., 1935). In contrast with his earlier concentration on 'pure poetry,' these elegies also illustrate his increasing concern with contemporary life. Such an elegy as that on Tintern Abbey should not be thought of as an imitation of Wordsworth's lyric, but merely as a poet's attempt at utilizing it as a frame of reference to his own observation.

Fletcher has worked in other fields besides poetry. He has been a translator, critic, and biographer; and his autobiography, *Life Is My Song*(N.Y., 1937), is a revealing portrait of a sensitive and troubled mind.

Selected Poems(N.Y., 1938).
Paul Gauguin, his Life and Art (N.Y., 1921).
John Smith—Also Pocahontas(N.Y., 1928).
The Two Frontiers; a Study in Historical Psychology(N.Y., 1930).
C.Aiken, *Scepticisms*(N.Y., 1919),105–14.
D.Fitts, 'Poet and Theorist,' *Poetry*,IX, 43–47.
A.Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*(N.Y., 1917),280–343.
H.Monroe, *Poets & Their Art*(N.Y., 1926).
R.P.Warren, 'A Note on Three Southern Poets,' *Poetry*,XL,105–08.

AMY LOWELL (1874–1925)

AFTER some eight years of writing in the conventional 'poetic jargon' of nineteenth-century verse, Amy Lowell, on a visit to London in 1913, was among the first to recognize the value of the new poetic idiom which bore the name of Imagism. She had come to London armed with a letter of introduction from Harriet Monroe to Ezra Pound, and after meeting him as well as H.D., John Gould Fletcher, and Richard Aldington, and entering into correspondence with other young and promising poets who had welcomed a poetic renaissance in England, she returned to Boston as an enthusiastic convert to the doctrines of what she called 'Some Imagists.' Her particular enthusiasm, however, had its source in her discovery of Paul Fort, the French poet, and her early experiments in Imagistic verse were written in a vein that clearly showed his influence upon her imagination.

Her sincere desire to extend her recognition of the importance of the new poetry and its poets to the American public led her to carry her enthusiasms to the lecture platform where she faced ridicule with the utmost good humor as long as she was permitted the right to say:

> As a matter of fact the poet must learn his trade in the same manner, and with the same painstaking care, as the cabinet maker . . . a workman may be pardoned, therefore, for spending a few moments to explain and describe the

technique of his trade. A work of beauty which cannot stand an intimate examination is a poor and jerry-built thing. . . . Only a vigorous tree has the vitality to put forth new branches. The poet with originality and power is always seeking to give his readers the same poignant feeling which he has himself. To do this he must constantly find new and striking images, delightful and unexpected forms.

Quite as Theodore Roosevelt gave vitality and color to such phrases as 'the big stick' and 'the strenuous life,' so Amy Lowell endowed the phrases 'polyphonic prose' and 'imagist poetry' with the forces of her seemingly inexhaustible energy. Yet throughout the decade in which she wrote so valiantly for the cause of Imagism, she retained her early admiration for the personality and poetry of John Keats. The influence of Keats and Tennyson had left its traces on her first book of poems, and as she neared the completion of her biography of Keats in 1924, her own poetry reassumed the discipline of nineteenth-century lyric form. Although her poems 'Fireworks' and 'Patterns' are among the best known examples of her poetry and are often quoted as representative of the 'free verse' movement in America from 1912 to 1916, it is valuable to observe the unpretentious charm and simplicity of her later verse.

After many years of ill health she died at her home, 'Sevenells,' in Boston in 1925.

Selected Poems of Amy Lowell(Boston, 1928). Edited by John Livingston Lowes.
Six French Poets(N.Y., 1915).
Tendencies in Modern American Poetry (N.Y., 1917).
John Keats(Boston, 1925), 2 vols.
Poetry and Poets: Essays(Boston, 1930).
Some Imagist Poets (Boston, 1915, 1916, 1917). Editor.
S.Foster Damon, *Amy Lowell* (Boston, 1935). Contains a bibliography.
W.Bryher, *Amy Lowell: A Critical Appreciation*(London, 1918).
A.MacLeish, 'Amy Lowell and the Art of Poetry,' *North American Review*, CCXXI,508–21.
W.T.Scott, 'Amy Lowell After Ten Years,' *New England Quarterly*,VIII,320–30.
J.W.Tupper, 'The Poetry of Amy Lowell,' *Sewanee Review*,XXVIII,37–53.
J.G.Fletcher, *Life is My Song*(N.Y., 1937), *passim.*

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS (1883–)

THE most characteristic thing about my life, I suppose, is that I still live, working for my living, in the same suburb of New York City where I was born on the 17th of September, 1883. Whereas, my forebears seem to have been restless souls, never long in the same place. My father was born in Birmingham, England, and my mother in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. I went to the public schools here in Rutherford, N.J., until I was about twelve years old, then to a New York City high school, finally to the University of Pennsylvania for my degree in Medicine. Among these years was one when with my brother, I attended a school in Switzerland, living also in Paris for six months at that time. Later I studied Medicine at the University of Leipzig and took my interneship in two hospitals in New York. Writing has been my constant companion during these years.

No American has written cleaner verse, stripped to the elements of poetry, than has William Carlos Williams: yet an even more significant contribution to American literature has been his demonstration that the elements of poetry may be found anywhere, if the poet only charge the objects of his attention with their maximum emotional content. The importance of Williams' statement that he has lived always in the same locality lies in his consequent familiarity with the common things on which he bases his poetry. 'To each thing its special quality,' Williams has said, 'its special value that will enable it to stand alone. When each poem has achieved its particular form unlike any other, when it shall stand alone—then we have achieved our

language. We have said what it is in our minds to say.'

Williams is a romantic and somewhat of a sentimentalist. Of this quality, Wallace Stevens wrote in his introduction to Williams' *Collected Poems* 1921–1931:

> Sentiment has such an abhorrent name that one hesitates. But if what vitalizes Williams has an abhorrent name, its obviously generative function in his case may help to change its reputation. What Williams gives, on the whole, is not sentiment but the reaction from sentiment, or, rather, a little sentiment, very little, together with acute reaction.
>
> His passion for the anti-poetic is a blood passion and not a passion of the inkpot. The anti-poetic is his spirit's cure. He needs it as a naked man needs shelter or as an animal needs salt. To a man with a sentimental side the anti-poetic is that truth, that reality to which all of us are forever fleeing.
>
> The anti-poetic has many aspects. The aspect to which a poet is addicted is a test of his validity. Its merely rhetorical aspect is valueless. As an affectation, it is a commonplace. As a scourge, it has a little more meaning. But as a phase of a man's spirit, as a source of salvation, now, in the midst of a baffled generation, as one looks out of the window at Rutherford or Passaic, or as one walks the streets of New York, the anti-poetic acquires an extraordinary potency, especially if one's nature possesses that side so attractive to the Furies.
>
> Something of the unreal is necessary to fecundate the real; something of the sentimental is necessary to fecundate the anti-poetic. Williams, by nature, is more of a realist than is commonly true in the case of a poet.

The qualities of Williams' poetry are also those of his prose, of which *The White Mule* (Norfolk, Conn., 1937) and short stories like 'Old Doc Rivers' and 'The Girl with the Pimply Face' are perhaps his best examples. His introduction, 'A Note on Poetry,' is a sufficient explanation of his intent in both mediums.

The Tempers(London, 1913).
Al Que Quiere(Boston, 1917).
The Complete Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, 1906–1938(Norfolk, Conn., 1938).
An Early Martyr(N.Y., 1935).
Adam & Eve and The City(Peru, Vt., 1936).
'A Tentative Statement,' *The Little Review*,XII,95–98.
Life Along the Passaic River(Norfolk, Conn., 1938). Short stories.

MARIANNE MOORE (1887–)

IN his introduction to Marianne Moore's *Selected Poems*, T.S.Eliot wrote:

> My conviction, for what it is worth, has remained unchanged for the last fourteen years: that Miss Moore's poems form part of the small body of durable poetry written in our time; of that small body of writings, among what passes for poetry, in which an original sensibility and alert intelligence and deep feeling have been engaged in maintaining the life of the English language.

Of poetry, Miss Moore herself has written:

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are
important beyond all this fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in
it after all, a place for the genuine.

Of the poetic imagination, she has also written:

nor till the poets among us can be
'literalists of
the imagination'—above
insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real
toads
in them, shall we have
it.

Marianne Moore was born in St. Louis,

Missouri, in 1887 and received her B.A. at Bryn Mawr College in 1909. She taught stenography at the Carlisle Indian School from 1911 to 1915. Her first book, *Poems*, was published in London in 1921 and upon publication of her second book of poems in 1924 she received the Dial award for 'distinguished service to American letters.' She was an assistant in the Hudson Park Branch of the New York Public Library until she assumed her four-year editorship of *The Dial* from 1925 to 1929.

Starting with the first publication of her verse in an issue of *The Egoist* in London in 1915, Miss Moore's poetry has been associated with the work of H.D., T.S.Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams. With Williams, she shares the distinction of being one of the few American poets in her generation whose work has undergone the discipline of a slow maturity. As does the verse of Emily Dickinson, Miss Moore's verse combines acute and accurate perception of a physical world with the resourcefulness of poetic wit. 'No Swan So Fine' illustrates her mastery of a firm, yet subtle lyric form, and her most recent version of 'A Grave' again displays her sensibility to the tonal variations of verbal sound and visual image. The quality of Miss Moore's power to observe the detail of a richly varied physical world, both active and inanimate, suggests the very quality of a twentieth-century civilization in America that readily accepted the material aspects of William James' pragmatism.

Selected Poems by Marianne Moore(N.Y., 1935). With an introduction by T.S.Eliot.
Pangolin, and Other Verse(London, 1936).
R.P.Blackmur, *The Double Agent*(N.Y., 1935), 141–71.

WALLACE STEVENS (1879–)

NOT the least of the contributions made by Harriet Monroe's *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* was its early publication of the poetry of Wallace Stevens. His poetry is the work of a singularly sensitive imagination and the impression it conveys to the reader is one of a subdued elegance created by his choice of the precise visual image and an equally distinguished vocabulary. No less important than the poems themselves are their decorative titles placed in exact juxtaposition to what each poem has to say. If one looks for an analogy to Stevens' verse in painting, one thinks of Whistler, but it is Whistler who has come to life again with a peculiarly sharp-cued eye. The poetry of Wallace Stevens reveals not merely the connoisseur of fine rhythms and the nuances of the lyrical line, but a trained observer who gazes with an intelligent eye upon the decadence of a civilized world that follows the rapid acquisition of wealth and power.

Wallace Stevens was born in Pennsylvania, in 1879, and was educated at Harvard. In 1923 the first collection of his poems, *Harmonium* was published. This was followed by a second collection, including fourteen new poems, under the same title in 1931. Twelve years later a third book of poems *Ideas of Order* appeared, and in 1937 he published a fourth book, *The Man with the Blue Guitar*. He lives in Hartford, Connecticut.

R.P.Blackmur, *The Double Agent*(N.Y., 1935), 68–102.

CONRAD AIKEN (1889–)

SINCE the publication of his first book of poems, *Earth Triumphant and Other Tales and Verse*(N.Y., 1914), the poetry of Conrad Aiken has been written very near the center of each succeeding movement in American poetry. The tonal quality of Aiken's sensibility is apparent to even the most casual reader, and that sensibility is again apparent in the critical sensitivity of his anthologies of American verse.

His *Selected Poems*(N.Y., 1929) displayed the wide range of his poetic facilities, but it is in *The Morning Song from Senlin* that one finds the counters of his style which extend into his latest volume of Preludes: *Time in the Rock*. The title,

Preludes, which he has chosen as the general title for his work since 1930 is indicative of its character; for within the flexible stanza form he has created the poems in circular progression, never—like an unfinished symphony—quite reaching the conclusion of what he has to say.

Aiken said of himself that he was 'in quest of a sort of absolute poetry, a poetry in which the intention is not so much to arouse an emotion, or to persuade of a reality, as to employ such emotion or sense of reality (tangentially struck) with the same cool detachment with which a composer strikes notes or chords.'

Conrad Aiken was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1889. He was educated at Harvard, from which he received his A.B. in 1912. Since then, he has lived alternately in Rye, England, and in Boston.

Aside from his books of poems he has published two novels, *Blue Voyage*(N.Y., 1927) and *Great Circle*(N.Y., 1933), which possess something of the same preoccupation with psychoanalysis which may be found in his later poetry.

Selected Poems by Conrad Aiken(N.Y., 1929).
John Deth, a Metaphysical Legend, and Other Poems(N.Y., 1930).
Preludes for Memnon(N.Y., 1931).
Landscape West of Eden(N.Y., 1935).
Time in the Rock(N.Y., 1936).
Scepticisms: Notes on Contemporary Poetry (N.Y., 1919).
Marianne Moore, 'If a Man Die,' *Hound & Horn*,V,313–20.
Louis Untermeyer, *American Poetry Since* 1900 (N.Y., 1923), 170–82.

E. E. CUMMINGS (1894–)

THE one true wit among modern poets is Edward Estlin Cummings. He alone has understood the poetical conceit, and has employed it in the expression of the preoccupation with death, the materialism, and the sentiment of the 'War Generation.'

Cummings was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1894, and after receiving his master's degree at the age of twenty-two became one of the ambulance boys in France. It was this exposure to war which for him, as for so many other writers of his generation, concentrated attention upon the individual and through increased tension heightened all emotional values. His war novel, *The Enormous Room*(N.Y., 1922), was based on the sensibilities of an individual under such strain. There have been few novels of the World War to equal it.

Cummings had printed numerous conventional poems in *The Harvard Advocate* during his student days. The effect of the war on him as a poet is to be found expressed in his introduction to a later edition of *The Enormous Room*(N.Y., 1934):

> Did it ever occur to you that people in this socalled world of ours are not interested in art?
> Da da.

But Cummings was already too essentially a conventional poet to adopt the complete nihilism of the movement of dadaism, and the expression of his emotion was changed only in his attitude. This change of attitude found its outlet in inverted imagery, occasional preciosity, and in true conceit. The fundamental position of a lyric poet was not, however, altered; and his erotic poetry is the finest written by an American.

He was also preoccupied with the general problem of sound in poetics, and found his solution partly through his keen ear for the nuances of hard-boiled speech and most spectacularly through his experimentations with the serviceability of typography. The use of print to indicate the values of sound has been recognized for centuries, and it was because of the indicated stress of capitalization, black letters, and italics, that Thomas Prince could observe of the sermons of a preacher like Cotton Mather, that his style 'like his manner of speaking was very emphatical.' Similarly, Cummings has given specific directions for what must be heard in his poems. But so sensitive has been his ear, that through his use of tmeses, or the word-splitting practices of certain Greek and Latin poets, his readers can hear only through their eyes.

Collected Poems(N.Y., 1938).
Him(N.Y., 1927).
Eimi(N.Y., 1933).
'Seven Poems' (Decca Records and Harcourt, Brace & Co., N.Y., unnumbered). A recording by Cummings of 'Poem, or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal,' 'Item,' 'Buffalo Bill,' 'In Just Spring,' 'Oh Sweet Spontaneous Earth,' 'Since Feeling is First,' and 'Somewhere I have Never Traveled.'
R.P.Blackmur, *The Double Agent*(N.Y., 1935),1-29.
John Peale Bishop, 'The Poems and Prose of E.E.Cummings,' *Southern Revue*,IV, 173-86.

THORNTON WILDER (1897–)

THE popularity of Thornton Wilder's second novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (N.Y., 1928), was so spectacular that it acted as a disservice to its author. His first novel, *The Cabala*(N.Y., 1926), introduced the work of a young novelist who had accepted the conventions of French prose and who was interested primarily in reflecting what he conceived to be the classical clarity of expression that he had found in French literature. His *Bridge of San Luis Rey* was, in fact, a literary acknowledgment of his debt to the *Letters of Madame de Sévigné*. Even *The Woman of Andros*(N.Y., 1930), his delicately wrought reconstruction of the mood of paganism, reflected the quality of style to be found in the French letter writers of the eighteenth century.

From the character of his early prose, it was obvious that Wilder had little intention or desire to become a 'popular' American novelist of the later 1920's. His work seemed all to consciously removed from the realistic tendencies in the American novel of the twentieth century. With characteristic candor and honesty, he said to an interviewer from the *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 11, 1938:

> For years I shrank from describing the modern world. I was alarmed at finding a way of casting into generalization the world of doorbells and telephones. And now, though many of the subjects will often be of the past, I like to feel that I accept the twentieth century, not only as a fascinating age to live in, but as assimilable stuff to think with.

His excursions into the life of the past were followed by a satire in the form of a novel, *Heaven Is My Destination* (1935). This experiment in the writing of a contemporaneous and realistic satire showed Wilder's sensitivity to the criticism he had received for too sedulously reconstructing the themes and forms of the literature that belonged to an age other than his own. It was also characteristic of Wilder to attempt an answer to his critics in his own way.

No less remarkable than his popularity as a novelist was his sustained and at last successful development as a playwright. His earlier plays, *The Angel That Troubled the Waters, and Other Plays*(N.Y., 1928), and *The Long Christmas Dinner, and Other Plays in One Act*(N.Y., 1931) were first steps in the training which enabled him to write *Our Town*(N.Y., 1938). The seriousness of his intention is again significant in an interview by a reporter from the New York *Herald Tribune*. Wilder said:

> As drama students know, the French inherited from the Romans a great sense of economy of play structure and an urgent desire for unification. Only essentials occupied the classic French playwright and nothing not utterly necessary to the progress and motivation of the script was allowed to intrude upon it.

The devices of *Our Town* owe their precedence to an English adaptation of the Chinese play, *Yellow Jacket*, which was produced in America at a time when the 'Little Theater' movement was at its height. The essential materials of Wilder's play, however, seem to stem from another tradition in American culture. In its attempt to reproduce the universalities of American life, *Our Town* recalls the prose drama of William Vaughn Moody, which met with approval three decades before. The tradition was American.

Thornton Wilder was born in 1897 at Madison, Wisconsin, and at the age of nine accompanied his family to China, where

his father was consul-general at Hongkong and at Shanghai. After his return to America in 1914, Wilder studied at the Berkeley, California, public schools and at the Thacher School in the same state. In 1920, after an interlude of service in the Coast Artillery during the World War, he was graduated from Yale. For two years after that he was a student at the American Academy at Rome. From 1921 to 1928 he was a master at Lawrenceville Academy, in New Jersey, and later was for several years a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago.

R.P.Blackmur, 'Thornton Wilder,' *Hound & Horn*,III,586–89.
E.K.Brown, 'A Christian Humanist: Thornton Wilder,' *University of Toronto Quarterly*,IV,356–70.
M.Gold, 'Wilder: Prophet of the Genteel Christ,' *New Republic*,LXIV,266–67.
R.McNamara, 'Phases of American Religion in Thornton Wilder and Willa Cather,' *Catholic World*,CXXXV,641–49.
W.L.Phelps, 'Men Now Famous,' *Delineator*,CXVII,94–96.
E.G.Twitchett, 'Mr. Thornton Wilder,' *The London Mercury*,XXII,32–39.

ROBINSON JEFFERS (1887–)

IN a sense Robinson Jeffers is the obverse of Walt Whitman. Witter Bynner took up Whitman's philosophy of love for one's fellow men, and Carl Sandburg carried on Whitman's function as a poet of the people; but Jeffers has definitely said that he regards humanity as an excrescence on nature, and that the love of man is merely 'the trap that catches noblest spirits, that caught—they say—God, when he walked on earth.' If Whitman was the Yea-Sayer, Jeffers is the Nay-Sayer. And the expression of his dark philosophy, though nihilistic, is extraordinarily powerful. The man himself is like a force of nature. The reason he has dealt so much with the ugly theme of incest in his long poems in free verse is explained thus: 'In *Tamar* a little and in *The Women at Point Sur* consciously and definitely, incest is symbolized racial introversion: man regarding man exclusively—founding his values, desires, a picture of the universe, all on his own humanity. . . . The tendency to romanticize unmoral freedom leads to destruction—often of the individual but always of the social organism. One of the intentions of *Point Sur* was to indicate the destruction and strip everything but its natural ugliness from the unmorality.' If Jeffers seems to draw poison from life, he is like the King Mithridates that A.E.Housman celebrated by telling how he accustomed himself to poison to such an extent that he remained quite hale and hearty.

His *Roan Stallion* and his *Tower Beyond Tragedy* are generally regarded as his masterpieces. In commenting on the origin of the latter poem, Jeffers himself has said:

> My father gave me a good start in Latin and Greek when I was quite young, both at school and at college I took them as they came, and that was never profoundly. I think most of whatever acquaintance I have with the classic spirit came from reading English poetry.
>
> The origin of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* was probably in the rich voice and Amazon stature of a German-Jewish actress with whom we were casually acquainted a few years ago. She recited one of the more barbaric Scotch ballads magnificently in private, and her voice suggested Clytemnestra and Cassandra to me, all the more because she rather failed in the usual sort of play.
>
> I had no thought of production when I wrote, and for that reason began with some lines of narrative, but of course your advanced class is free to give a private performance if they should wish to.
>
> We turn to the classic stories, I suppose, as to Greek sculpture, for a more ideal and also more normal beauty, because the myths of our own race were never developed, and have been alienated from us.

The long, powerful rhythms that he has made his own, like the welter and assault of

waves on his own Carmel coast, the evocative strength of description, the right metaphor, the illuminating epithet, will be found throughout his work. In his shorter poems he reveals an ironic wit, some of which resembles the epigrammatic forcefulness of the Nay-saying paradoxes found in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. And in some of his shorter pieces there are also passages of descriptive brilliance, particularly in his 'Love the Wild Swan,' which are characteristic of the insight that illumines Jeffers' use of natural phenomena in the symbolism of his more ambitious poems. Despite his tendency to overstress the mere show of power in his vivid imagery, and despite his seemingly endless repetition of the theme of incest in his poetic narratives, he is justly regarded today as one of the major figures in American poetry.

Son of a scholar who taught him poetry, Jeffers went to school during his travels abroad as a child, was graduated from Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, and spent some time at the Universities of Zurich and Southern California, and at the Los Angeles Medical School. He now lives at Tor House, which he built with own hands at Mount Carmel in California.

Flagons and Apples(Los Angeles, Calif., 1912).
Californians(N.Y., 1916).
Tamar, and Other Poems(N.Y., 1924).
Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems (N.Y., 1925).
The Women at Point Sur(N.Y., 1927).
Cawdor, and Other Poems(N.Y., 1928).
Dear Judas, and Other Poems(N.Y., 1928).
Descent to the Dead(N.Y., 1931).
Thurso's Landing(N.Y., 1932).
Give Your Heart to the Hawks, and Other Poems(N.Y., 1933).
Solstice and Other Poems(N.Y., 1935).
Such Counsels You Gave to Me(N.Y., 1937).
The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers (N.Y., 1938).
L.Adamic, *Robinson Jeffers; a Portrait* (Seattle, Wash., 1929).
L.C.Powell, *Robinson Jeffers, the Man and His Work*(Los Angeles, Calif., 1934). Foreword by Robinson Jeffers.
G.Sterling, *Robinson Jeffers, the Man and the Artist*(N.Y., 1926).
H.Hatcher, 'The Torches of Violence,' *English Journal*,XXIII, 91–99.
R.Humphries, 'Robinson Jeffers,' *Modern Monthly*,VIII,680–89,748–53.
S.S.Alberts, *A Bibliography of the Works of Robinson Jeffers*(N.Y., 1933). Contains invaluable commentary by Jeffers on his poetry.

EUGENE O'NEILL (1888–)

EUGENE O'NEILL is the first American dramatist of importance, and with his plays the American theatre became something more than an expensive diversion for its audience. His first one-act plays of the sea were produced in 1916 on the wharves of Provincetown, Massachusetts, later in the stables of Greenwich Village, and finally in the gilt theatres of Broadway. O'Neill's success marked that of a concerted effort to bring a native dignity to the stage.

His father was the famous actor James O'Neill, who during the 'nineties played the role of the Count of Monte Cristo throughout America. Eugene O'Neill was brought up in the theatre, and has never lost his sense either of the dramatic or of the potentialities of the grandiose from which he ostensibly reacted. He has been a continual pioneer and experimenter in the technique of the theatre, and has brought into it most of the themes which had interested writers of his time.

O'Neill's first plays were based on his own experiences as a sailor in the Caribbean; they demonstrated both his sense of realism and his keen ear for common speech. The theatre needed such gifts. *Desire Under the Elms*, produced in 1924, was a brilliant example of his talents. The psychological value of sound he indicated through the tom-toms in his *Emperor Jones*, 1920. The force of psychological knowledge in its revelation of man's duality was brought out, in combination with man's spiritual and material ambiguity, by the use of the masks of *The Great God Brown*, 1925, the theme of which is in many ways the

most significant of O'Neill's plays. The interest in the dominating impulsions of sex was in his *Strange Interlude*, 1928, whose nine acts were an indication of his impatience with the restrictions of time in relation to theatrical production. Even the use of parallel overtones, which Pound and Eliot had used in poetry and James Joyce had employed in prose, were brought to the theatre in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, 1931, a modern application of the problems raised in the Agamemnon trilogy of Aeschylus. This awareness of the possibilities of the stage has been no small part of O'Neill's contribution. In recognition of his accomplishment, he was given in 1937 the Nobel Prize in literature.

O'Neill's desire to extend the boundaries of the stage has on occasion caused him to look beyond it. It is on these terms that *Lazarus Laughed*(N.Y., 1926), 'a play for the imaginary theatre,' should be read. The Lucretian laughter of Lazarus is the triumphant *Yes!* of modern materialism. But the significance of the play does not lie entirely in its summation of post-war belief. For both in its rhythmical language and in its use of the chorus it is an important milestone in a determined effort (since the era of William Vaughn Moody) to give life to poetical drama. O'Neill added what Moody's followers lacked: a sense of the theatre.

Thirst and Other One Act Plays(Boston, 1914).
The Moon of the Caribbees, and Six Other Plays of the Sea(N.Y., 1919).
Beyond the Horizon(N.Y., 1920).
Gold(N.Y., 1920).
The Emperor Jones, Diff'rent, The Straw (N.Y., 1921).
The Hairy Ape: Anna Christie: The First Man(N.Y., 1922).
All God's Chillun Got Wings, and Welded (N.Y., 1924).
Desire Under the Elms(N.Y., 1925).
The Great God Brown: The Fountain: The Moon of the Caribbees and Other Plays (N.Y., 1926).
Marco Millions(N.Y., 1927).
Lazarus Laughed(N.Y., 1927).
Strange Interlude(N.Y., 1928).
Dynamo(N.Y., 1929).
Mourning Becomes Electra(N.Y., 1931).
Ah, Wilderness!(N.Y., 1933).
Days Without End(N.Y., 1934).
The Plays of Eugene O'Neill(N.Y., 1934–35). 12 vols.
Nine Plays of Eugene O'Neill (N.Y., 1932).
B.H.Clark, *Eugene O'Neill; the Man and His Plays*(N.Y., 1936).
A.H.Quinn, *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day*(N.Y., 1927),II,165–206.
A.D.Mickle, *Six Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (N.Y., 1929).
J.T.Shipley, *The Art of Eugene O'Neill* (Seattle, Washington, 1928).
R.D.Skinner, *Eugene O'Neill*(N.Y. and Toronto, 1935).
S.K.Winther, *Eugene O'Neill*(N.Y., 1934).
F.Fergusson, 'Eugene O'Neill,' *Hound & Horn*,III,145–60.

GERTRUDE STEIN (1874–)

THE publication in 1909 of Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives* marked the appearance of a significant literary pioneer. These stories of Swedish and German peasants and of a Negress were Miss Stein's first attempts in what has been her constant aim, 'to get to the very core of the communication of the intuition.' She brought about this communication through words and rhythms particularly suited to the intelligences of her characters. Her discovery was an important step in realism.

Her work was an example of the increased sensitivity on the part of writers to the revelations of psychological research. She was herself a trained psychologist, and had been one of William James' favorite students when she attended Radcliffe College. This study she continued at Johns Hopkins until 1903, when she left America, to settle first in London and then in Paris. It was under James that she first began her research in the problem of automatic writing, out of which came her understanding of its value in the expression of character.

Out of her knowledge of psychology

came also her perception of the values attached to individual words, and the ambiguities which arise from the varying attachments of meaning by individuals. This led to her concentration upon the essence of words, and to a consequent simplification and clarity in their use. It was this aspect of her work which caused Sherwood Anderson to remark concerning her:

> Miss Stein is a worker in words with the same loving touch in her strong fingers that was characteristic of the women of the kitchens of the brick houses in the town of my boyhood. She is an American woman of the old sort, one who cares for the handmade goodies and who scorns the factory-made foods, and in her own great kitchen she is making something with her materials, something sweet to the tongue and fragrant to the nostrils.

And it was as a result of the encouragement and stimulation which her example gave to writers like Ernest Hemingway and Sherwood Anderson, that she could say of the latter: 'Sherwood Anderson had a genius for using the sentence to convey a direct emotion.' Such direct conveyance is an important characteristic of modern American prose.

In her essay, 'How Writing Is Written,' Miss Stein sums up the progress of her experimentation. That she had completed both *Three Lives* and *The Making of Americans*(Paris, 1924) during the first decade of the century demonstrates that much fine writing is unsuspected by its own age.

Tender Buttons(N.Y., 1914).
The Making of Americans(N.Y., 1934). Abridged, with a preface by Bernard Faÿ.
Three Lives(N.Y., 1933).
Lectures in America(N.Y., 1935).
Four Saints in Three Acts(N.Y., 1934).
The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (N.Y., 1933).
Everybody's Autobiography(N.Y., 1937).
Portraits and Prayers(N.Y., 1934).

SHERWOOD ANDERSON (1876–1941)

THE career of few writers better illustrates the common literary desire to attain the morality of form than does that of Sherwood Anderson. When as a middle-aged, fairly prosperous factory-owner, he walked out of his office to learn the craft of writing, he became as much a symbol of America's spiritual uneasiness as the factory was of America's urge for material achievement.

In the first years of Anderson's groping revolt he formulated his 'Apology for Crudity' which became a creed for lesser men and a stamp for himself.

> For a long time I have believed that crudity is an inevitable quality in the production of a really significant present-day American literature. How indeed is one to escape the obvious fact that there is as yet no native subtlety of thought or living among us? And if we are a crude and childlike people, how can our literature hope to escape the influence of that fact? Why indeed should we want it to escape?

Anderson recognized in other men a groping similar to his own. Mankind was represented in his symbol of the teacher whose sensitive hands had the artist's urge to create form or at least to touch beauty. The teacher was misunderstood and driven out. 'Men had erected walls about themselves and . . . all men were perhaps destined to stand forever behind the walls—on which they constantly beat with their fists, or with whatever tools they could get hold of. Wanted to break through to something, you understand. One couldn't quite make out whether there was just one great wall or many little individual walls.'

The highest wall, in the period when America was somewhat belatedly reading Freud, seemed to be Sex. Anderson's realistic stories of American village life in *Winesburg, Ohio*(N.Y., 1919) were chiefly concerned with this frustration. *Many Marriages*(N.Y., 1923) and *Dark Laughter* (N.Y., 1925) were novels based on the same, perhaps at the time unconscious, symbol of incompleteness.

'One who thinks a great deal about people and what they are up to in the world comes inevitably in time to relate them to experiences connected with his own life.' This notation in *Sherwood Anderson's Notebook*(N.Y., 1926) indicates both the structural method and the fuller comprehension demonstrated in his story 'Death in the Woods.' The nucleus of the story was an incident which he had witnessed as a boy, and which had haunted him by his initial perception of the incompleteness of his understanding. Reminiscently, in *A Story Teller's Story*(N.Y., 1924), he wrote:

> There are so many people in that land of whom I should like to tell you. I should like to take you with me through the gate into the land, let you wander there with me. There are people there with whom I should like you to talk. There is the old woman accompanied by the gigantic dogs who died alone in a wood on a winter day, the stout man with the gray eyes and with the pack on his back, who stands talking to the beautiful woman as she sits in her carriage, the little dark woman with the boyish husband who lives in a small house by a dusty road far out in the country.
>
> These and many other figures, all having a life of their own, all playing forever in the field of my fancy. The fanciful shadowy life striving to take on flesh, to live as you and I live, to come out of the shadowy world of the fancy into the actuality of accomplished art.

Gradually, as Anderson had his own experiences, he was able to relate them to the story of the old woman, and to express them in a series of convolutions from the central incident which represents the increasing circumference of his own comprehension. This is the formulation of all writing.

'I believe,' says Anderson, 'that, in this matter of form, it is largely a matter of depth of feeling.' The conclusion of 'Death in the Woods' is significant: 'A thing so complete has its own beauty.' It was Anderson's own answer to crudity.

He answered it as well in the bare beauty of his style. Anderson has contrived an idiom of his own, which at its best has the qualities of great prose. He has almost a poet's ear for rhythm, which he is able to control and turn to fit either the emotion or the idea with which he is concerned. 'The writer,' he says, 'is seeking a certain tune, a rhythm. When he has caught it the words and sentences flow freely. There is a new cunning, a new majesty to his thoughts.' This new cunning and majesty is apparent in 'Death in the Woods.'

Sherwood Anderson was born at Camden, Ohio, and brought up in an environment similar to that which he describes in the stories of his childhood: *Tar; a Midwest Childhood* (N.Y., 1926) and *Windy McPherson's Son* (N.Y., 1916). His later life of escape from the conventional life of a manufacturer and his development as a writer is told in *A Story Teller's Story* (N.Y., 1924). Recently he has lived at Marion, Virginia, where he is the owner of a newspaper.

Poor White(N.Y., 1920).
The Triumph of the Egg(N.Y., 1921).
Horses and Men(N.Y., 1923).
Hello Towns!(N.Y., 1929).
Death in the Woods and Other Stories(N.Y., 1933).
C.B.Chase, *Sherwood Anderson* (N.Y., 1927).
C.Fadiman, 'Sherwood Anderson: the Search for Salvation,' *Nation*,CXXXV, 454–56.
N.B.Fagin, *The Phenomenon of Sherwood Anderson*(Baltimore, 1927). Contains a bibliography.
R.Smith, 'Sherwood Anderson,' *Sewanee Review*,XXXVII,159–63.
C.Van Doren, 'Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson,' *Century*,CX, 362–69.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY (1898–)

THE influence of Ernest Hemingway's prose upon the younger short-story writers of the post-war period in American literature may be said to be as marked as the influence of T.S.Eliot's verse upon the younger poets of the same era. Hemingway,

like many other novelists of his generation, has acknowledged a debt to the early prose of Gertrude Stein. Yet Hemingway's earliest writing, exhumed from school publications, reveals the fact that his hard-hitting short sentences in prose preceded whatever literary influences his later work may possess.

During the World War he belonged to a group of writers which included John Dos Passos, Archibald MacLeish, and Malcolm Cowley. These men, who had served in the War, and who afterwards went to Paris to assimilate their War experiences, were the acknowledged leaders of what Gertrude Stein called 'the lost generation.' One of the best examples of the literature which was to define the character of 'America's Post-War Period' is Hemingway's short story, 'Hills Like White Elephants.' Another example of Hemingway's application of an extraordinary craftsmanship is 'The Undefeated.'

His second book, *In Our Time*, was published in Paris in 1924. It was followed by three novels, *The Sun Also Rises*(N.Y., 1926), *A Farewell to Arms*(N.Y., 1929), and *To Have and To Have Not*(N.Y., 1937); and two books of short stories *Men Without Women*(N.Y., 1926) and *Winner Take Nothing*(N.Y., 1933). No less important than the appearance of these books is the influence exerted by Hemingway's point of view towards literature—an influence which is exemplified in his short stories and which was stated in his *Death in the Afternoon*(N.Y., 1932):

> This too to remember. If a man writes clearly enough any one can see if he fakes. If he mystifies to avoid a straight statement, which is very different from breaking so-called rules of syntax or grammar to make an effect which can be obtained in no other way, the writer takes a longer time to be known as a fake and other writers who are afflicted by the same necessity will praise him in their own defense. True mysticism should not be confused with incompetence in writing which seeks to mystify where there is no mystery but is really only the necessity to fake to cover lack of knowledge or the inability to state clearly. Mysticism implies a mystery and there are many mysteries; but incompetence is not one of them; nor is overwritten journalism made literature by the injection of a false epic quality. Remember this too: all bad writers are in love with the epic.

Hemingway's preoccupation with the theme of death, which so frequently enters the violent action of his stories, is also characteristic of the group of writers in which he assumed leadership. It was as though the great sacrifice of the lives of young men during the World War had given Hemingway a particularly keen awareness to the precariousness of living. But this awareness also left its mark upon the elements of his prose style, which, in its effort to convey emotion in the fewest possible words, stripped naked the very core of the sentimentality that was characteristic of the men and women who were brought to life in his fiction.

Ernest Hemingway was born at Oak Park, Illinois, in 1898. He attended the public schools of Michigan, where he was brought up. He was a reporter in Kansas City at the outbreak of the World War, and he left to join the volunteer ambulance unit in France. Later he served with the Italian army, and after the war remained abroad as correspondent for the Toronto *Star*. He lived for some years in Paris as a correspondent for the Hearst papers, and while there came to know Gertrude Stein and to concentrate on his own writing. Of recent years he has lived at Key West, Florida.

Three Stories & Ten Poems(Dijon, France, 1923).
The Torrents of Spring(N.Y., 1926).
Green Hills of Africa(N.Y., 1935).
The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine (N.Y., 1938). Collected short stories.
M.Cowley, 'A Farewell to Spain,' *New Republic*,LXXIII, 76–77.
R.M.Lovett, 'Ernest Hemingway,' *English Journal*,XXI,609–17.
L.Kirstein, 'The Canon of Death,' *Hound & Horn*,V,519–39.
C.Fadiman, 'Ernest Hemingway: an American Byron,' *Nation*,CXXXVI,63–64.
L.H.Cohn, *A Bibliography of the writings of Ernest Hemingway*(N.Y., 1931).

JOHN DOS PASSOS (1896–)

ALTHOUGH John Dos Passos' first novel, *One Man's Initiation*—1917 (London, 1920), was the story based on his experiences in the World War, it was not until 1921, when his second novel of the War, *Three Soldiers*, was published in America that his abilities as a realistic prose writer were widely recognized. In 1927 his third novel, *Manhattan Transfer*, introduced a novelist whose experiments in the writing of prose are of first importance.

The extraverted energy which marks the prose of John Dos Passos has its origins in his boyhood reading of the novels of Captain Marryat as well as in his experiences in the writing of nervous, brilliant, liberal journalism. To these may be added his admiration for the poetry of Cendrars, a contemporary French poet, whose verse is characterized by its extraordinary velocity and vivid impressionism.

Upon completion of his trilogy, *The 42nd Parallel*(N.Y., 1930), *Nineteen Nineteen*(N.Y., 1932), and *The Big Money* (N.Y., 1936), brought together as *U.S.A.* (N.Y., 1937), John Dos Passos emerged as a major figure in contemporary American fiction. No less remarkable than his assimilation of the historical events and situations which characterized the years of the World War and the decade immediately following it was his ability to create a new technique in the writing of a social novel. It may be said that the technique of *U.S.A.* bears a close relationship to the technique of the cinema. John Dos Passos' method of telling a story has within it all the devices which have made the uses of montage so effective to audiences in a motion picture theater. His broken narrative of the lives of his characters, his 'news reels' which are direct quotations of headlines and fragments of items clipped from newspapers, his 'camera eye' which records his personal impressions of the events which dominate the lives of his characters, his biographies of the leading figures in contemporary American life, written in unrhymed and syncopated prose, a prose which closely resembles the verse of Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters, —all combine to create a visual impression of remarkable vividness and unquestionable veracity. The social philosophy which underlies the theme of *U.S.A.* is indicated by his sympathetic and penetrating biography of Thorsten Veblen in *The Big Money*, the last novel of his trilogy.

John Dos Passos was born in Chicago in 1896. During his adolescence, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was his Bible. He was educated at Harvard, where he received the degree of A.B. in 1916. In a news item in *Time*, August 10, 1936, it is reported that though he was graduated *cum laude* from Harvard he thinks he got little out of college and regards his four years there as largely wasted. His latest book is *Journeys Between Wars* (N.Y., 1938), a collection of the reportorial travel sketches which he has been writing since 1922.

A Pushcart at the Curb(N.Y., 1922).
Three Plays(N.Y., 1934).
M.Cowley, 'The Poet and the World,' *New Republic*,LXX,303–05.
G.Hicks, 'John Dos Passos,' *Bookman*, LXXV,32–42.

T. S. ELIOT (1888–)

THE general acceptance of modern verse has come very largely through the poetry of T.S.Eliot. This has been brought about not because other men have in general agreed with what Eliot has had to say at various stages of his development, but because his continued preoccupation with, and articulated solutions of, the problem of communication have both clarified his own expression and given the means to other poets to clarify theirs.

The position of the poet and of the critic today is indicated by Eliot in the first of the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures which he gave at Harvard University in the winter of 1932–33:

When I speak of modern poetry as being extremely critical, I mean that the contemporary poet, who is not merely a composer of graceful verses—is forced to ask himself such questions as 'what is poetry for?'; not merely 'what am I to say?' but rather 'how and to whom am I to say it?' We have to communicate—if it is communication, for the word may beg the question—an experience which is not an experience in the ordinary sense, for it may only exist, formed out of many personal experiences ordered in some way which may be very different from the way of valuation of practical life, in the expression of it. *If* poetry is a form of 'communication,' yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself, and only incidentally the experience and the thought which have gone into it. The poem's existence is somewhere between the writer and the reader; it has a reality which is not simply the reality of what the writer is trying to 'express,' or of his experience of writing it, or of the experience of the reader or of the writer as reader.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. In 1909 he was graduated from Harvard University, and in the next year was given his master's degree. During the winter of 1911–12 he was at the Sorbonne in Paris and from 1912 to 1914 was a student at Merton College, Oxford. Since then he has remained in England, where he has become a British subject.

In an introduction to *This American World*(London, 1928) by Edgar A. Mowrer, Eliot has discussed his past:

I have a background which Mr. Mowrer would recognize, and which is different from that of the native European and from that of many Americans. My family were New Englanders, who had been settled—my branch of it—for two generations in the South West—which was, in my own time, rapidly becoming merely the Middle West. The family guarded jealously its connections with New England; but it was not until years of maturity that I perceived that I myself had always been a New Englander in the South West, and a South Westerner in New England; when I was sent to school in New England I lost my southern accent without ever acquiring the accent of the native Bostonian. In New England I missed the long dark river, the ailanthus trees, the flaming cardinal birds, the high limestone bluffs where we searched for fossil shell-fish; in Missouri I missed the fir trees, the bay and goldenrod, the song-sparrows, the red granite and the blue sea of Massachusetts. I remember a friend of my school-days, whose family had lived in the same New England seaport for two hundred and fifty years. In some ways his background was as different from mine as that of any European. My grandmother—one of my grandmothers—had shot her own wild turkeys for dinner; his had collected Chinese pottery brought home by the Salem clippers. It was perhaps easier for the grandson of pioneers to migrate eastward than it would have been for my friend to migrate in any direction.

'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' was written while Eliot was still an undergraduate at Harvard, and its reflection of Laforgue is indicative of his early and independent recognition of the importance of French poetry to English verse. Eliot said in 1918: 'It is exactly as wasteful for a poet to do what has been done already, as for a biologist to rediscover Mendel's discoveries. The French poets in question have made "discoveries" in verse of which we cannot afford to be ignorant, discoveries which are not merely a concern for French syntax. To remain with Wordsworth is equivalent to ignoring the whole of science subsequent to Erasmus Darwin.' Eliot's receptivity to the lessons of the French, of the Elizabethan dramatists, as well as to the Pound of 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' and the 'Cantos' has given him the technical strength of tradition.

Eliot has also been one of the first to recognize in poetry the importance of anthropology as a frame of reference to the modern mind. The investigation of variant civilizations and religions has brought forth certain common denominators which can serve as fresh symbols of interrelationship. '*The Golden Bough*,' Eliot said in 1921, 'can be read in two ways: as a collection of

entertaining myths, or as a revelation of that vanished mind of which our mind is a continuation.' Eliot has chosen the second way, and utilized it in accord with his observation that 'in art there should be interpenetration and metamorphosis.' In this way he has managed to combine timeliness with timelessness.

The dramatic quality of Eliot's earliest verse makes it easy to understand why he has become more and more interested in dramatic poetry, until he might say in the last of the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures:

> The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social 'usefulness' for poetry, is the theatre. In a play of Shakespeare you get several levels of significance. For the simplest auditors there is the plot, for the more thoughtful the character and conflict of character, for the more literary the words and phrasing, for the musically sensitive the rhythm, and for auditors of greater sensitiveness and understanding a meaning which reveals itself gradually. And I do not believe that the classification of audience is so clear-cut as this; but rather that the sensitiveness of every auditor is acted upon by all these elements at once, though in different degrees of consciousness. At none of these levels is the auditor bothered by the presence of that which he does not understand, or by the presence of that in which he is not interested.

The development of Eliot's attitudes and beliefs has been always fresh and consistent. The uncertainty and timidity of J. Alfred Prufrock resulted naturally enough in the sterility of Gerontion, which he epitomized in his contemporary picture of 'The Waste Land.' Then, standing as it were at the edge of a precipice, and faced with the necessity of belief and advancement, Eliot turned to the right, as others were to turn to the left. Because he moved with the utmost seriousness and sincerity, the expression of his own progress has been vitally useful for the expression of any progress, and the implications of his essay on 'Religion and Literature' can serve many masters.

But above all Eliot is a poet.

Collected Poems, 1909–1935(N. Y., 1936).
The Rock(N.Y., 1934).
Murder in the Cathedral(N.Y., 1935).
Selected Essays, 1917–1932(N.Y., 1932).
The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (N.Y., 1933).
After Strange Gods(N.Y., 1934).
Essays, Ancient and Modern(N.Y., 1936).
'Gerontion' and 'The Hollow Men'(Harvard University Phonograph Records, No.3, SS–5053). A recording by Eliot.
F.O.Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S. Eliot*(Boston, 1935).
C.Aiken, 'After Ash Wednesday,' *Poetry*, XLV,161–65.
R.P.Blackmur, *The Double Agent*(N.Y., 1935),184–218.
F.R.Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry*(London, 1932),75–132.
T.McGreevy, *Thomas Stearns Eliot*(London, 1931).
J.C.Ransom, 'T.S.Eliot on Criticism,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,X,574.
I.A.Richards, 'The Poetry of T.S.Eliot,' *Living Age*,CCCXXIX,112–15.
A.Tate, 'Irony and Humility,' *Hound & Horn*,IV,290–97.
E.Wilson, *Axel's Castle*(N.Y., 1931),93–131.
H.R.Williamson, *The Poetry of T.S.Eliot* (London, 1932).
M.D.Zabel, 'T.S.Eliot in Mid-Career,' *Poetry*,XXXVI,330–37.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892–)

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH'S *New Found Land* (Boston, 1930) was the first articulate expression in poetry of a post-war generation, whose emotions had been reflected in the novels of Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos. MacLeish's conversation with Andrew Marvell represented the synthesis of the time-space relationship which, when crystallized in poetic form, represented the unity which the World War had seemed to deny. Its comprehension was demonstrated in the substance given to MacLeish's al-

ready characteristic smoothness and control of the lyric line.

It was at this time, when he was past thirty, that MacLeish says that he began his real writing. The verve with which he had been able to express his travels in Persia, where after quitting his law practice he had wandered from the central cities of Bushire to Ispahan and Teheran, is still evident in a similar synthesis of the American scene in 'Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City.' In addition to this verve, the brilliance and clarity of his visual imagery and his sensitivity to light and color contribute towards the success of his translation of Bernáe Díaz del Castillo's *True History of the Conquest of New Spain* into the narrative poem, *Conquistador*(Boston, 1932).

MacLeish's consistent experimentations within conventional verse forms have been extended into the forms of poetic drama in *Panic*(N.Y., 1935), of the radio play in *The Fall of the City*(N.Y., 1936), and into the newsreel sound-track technique of *Land of the Free*(N.Y., 1938). This willingness to explore the potentialities of contemporary media has been MacLeish's greatest strength, and promises his greatest contribution to American verse.

Archibald MacLeish was educated at the Hotchkiss School in Connecticut, at Yale University, and at the Harvard Law School. After a period during which he taught at Harvard and practised law, he went abroad in order to devote himself to writing. For some years he was an editor of *Fortune*.

Poems 1924–1933(Boston, 1933).
Union Pacific—A Ballet(N.Y., 1934).
Public Speech(N.Y., 1936).
D.Fitts, 'To Karthage Then I Came,' *Hound & Horn*,IV,637–41.
L.Jones, 'Archibald MacLeish: a Modern Metaphysical,' *English Journal*,XXIV, 441–51.
M.D.Zabel, 'The Cinema of Hamlet,' *Literary Opinion in America*(N.Y., 1937), 415–26.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM (1888–)

Of particular significance in modern American poetry was that group of Southern poets who issued, from the spring of 1922 to the winter of 1925, a co-operative journal of poetry, called *The Fugitive*, published at Nashville, Tennessee. The leader of this group of seven was John Crowe Ransom, who was graduated from Vanderbilt University, taught there for many years, and is now a member of the faculty of Kenyon College in Ohio. The magazine grew from the discussions of the original members, all friends. They included Allen Tate, Donald Davidson, and others. At first the poets contributing to the magazine used pseudonyms, and the foreword to its first number indicated, in an amusing fashion, a change in Southern literature. It said in part:

> *The Fugitive* flees from nothing faster than from the highcaste Brahmins of the Old South. Without raising the question of whether the blood in the veins of its editors runs red, they at any rate are not advertising it as blue; indeed, as to pedigree, they cheerfully invite the most unfavorable inference from the circumstances of their anonymity.

An anthology gathered from the poetry of this group and called *Fugitives* was published in 1928. It represents the South's most distinguished contribution to modern regional poetry.

Ransom is one of the most truly original poets of our time. His approach is tangential, and his verse is always sophisticated in its use of formal, lyrical device. Mark Van Doren has spoken of his 'almost acid gaiety' and of his use of 'fresh realistic words.' In general, it may be said that his verse suggests the very quality of ironic disillusionment that many writers of the South, who are less gifted than he, have attempted to convey.

A Tennesseean by birth, Ransom, after graduating from Vanderbilt, was a Rhodes scholar at Christ Church, Oxford, from 1910 to 1913, when he received his B.A. Six years later, in 1919 his first book, *Poems About God*, appeared, with an in-

troduction by Christopher Morley. After five more years his second volume, *Chills and Fever*(1924), showed the maturity of his craftsmanship, for it contains within it some of the best poetry, and certainly the most distinguished lyricism that the South has produced in its present generation.

Grace After Meat(N.Y., 1924).
Two Gentlemen in Bonds(N.Y., 1927).
God Without Thunder(N.Y., 1930).
The World's Body(N.Y., 1938).
'The Aesthetic of Regionalism,' *The American Review*,II,290–310.
R.P.Warren, 'John Crowe Ransom, a Study in Irony,' *Virginia Quarterly Review*,XI,93–112.

ALLEN TATE (1899–)

ALLEN TATE'S work is best known for its representation of culture to be found south of the Mason-Dixon line. Tate is the most eloquent member of the South's 'new generation' since the close of the World War. Perhaps the best known of his poems is 'The Ode to the Confederate Dead,' which is a brilliant exercise in the uses of twentieth-century rhetoric.

He has written exhaustively of his own work in an essay characteristically entitled 'Narcissus as Narcissus' in *The Virginia Quarterly Review*. Concerning his 'Ode to the Confederate Dead' he wrote:

> That poem is 'about' solipsism or Narcissism, or any other *ism* that denotes the failure of the human personality to function properly in nature and society. Society (and 'nature' as modern society constructs it) appears to offer limited fields for the exercise of the whole man, who wastes his energy piecemeal over separate functions that ought to come under a unity of being. (Until the last generation, only certain women were whores, having been set aside as special instances of sex amid a social scheme that held the general belief that sex must be part of a whole; now the general belief is that sex must be special.) Without unity we get the remarkable self-consciousness of our age.

The number of Greek and Latin derivatives in Tate's vocabulary indicates to his readers his admiration for the frequently elaborate sonorous and at times archaic word. His most enduring claims to originality, however, are to be found in the quality of his wit. This is used for the expression of mingled anger and disillusionment which characterizes the attitude of the post war Southerner who is all too conscious of the defects existing in contemporary American civilization.

Allen Tate was born in Winchester, Kentucky, in 1899. He received his A.B. from Vanderbilt University in 1922. Under the leadership of John Crowe Ransom he edited the *Fugitive*. His first book of poems, *Mr. Pope and Other Poems*, appeared in 1928. *Poems:* 1928–1931 was published in 1932. In 1936 he published *The Mediterranean and Other Poems*, and in 1937 his *Selected Poems*. He now lives in Tennessee in a large house overlooking the Cumberland River.

Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas (N.Y., 1936).
The Fathers(N.Y., 1938). A novel.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT (1898–)

THE appearance of Stephen Vincent Benét's fourth book of poems, *Tiger Joy* (N.Y., 1925), gave character to his rising reputation as a young and felicitous American poet. Three years later, his epic of the Civil War, *John Brown's Body*, brought with its publication the recognition of a wide reading public. The poem contained a great variety of diversification, extending from loose, long rhythms approximating prose to short passages of lyric eloquence. In his latest book of poems, *Burning City* (N.Y., 1936), he extended his range into free verse with powerful impact in his

'Litany for Dictatorships.' His octave of sonnets in 'The Golden Corpse' and the dedicatory sonnets to *John Brown's Body* paint purely American backgrounds in a manner fresh and new; and the recent series of 'Nightmares,' devoted to commentary on our possible future, seems little more fantastic than certain developments in the history of our own time.

Benét has come a long way since he overcame the early influence of Robert Browning, William Morris, and Gilbert K. Chesterton, which was at different times evident in his earliest work in verse. But even his first small book, published at the age of seventeen, presented a series of Roman portraits with remarkable vigor. The variety of his poetry, from bizarre and humorous to trenchantly grave and dramatic, may be safely left to the audit of the future. In prose, his work in the novel, always full of vitality, has steadily improved; and today his best short stories are recognized as of unusual originality.

Stephen Vincent Benét was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1898. He received his A.B. from Yale in 1919. He married Rosemary Carr of Chicago in 1921. He lives in New York City.

Ballads and Poems, 1915–1930(N.Y., 1931).
Spanish Bayonet(N.Y., 1926).
W.R.Benét, 'Round About Parnassus,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,VII,491.
L.Bacon, 'Stephen Vincent Benét,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,X,608.
S.R.Daniels, 'A Saga of the American Civil War,' *Contemporary Review*,CXLVI, 466–71.

LÉONIE ADAMS (1899–)

WITH the publication of her first book of poems, *Those Not Elect*(N.Y., 1925), Léonie Adams was immediately recognized as one of the few distinguished lyricists of the day. The quality of her imagination, which so closely resembles the characteristics of seventeenth-century devotional verse, caused her to be classified as a 'metaphysical poet.' Her lyricism, however, more closely resembles the tonal quality of the poetry of William Butler Yeats and Walter de la Mare; and the character of her 'metaphysics' has something of the same quickening influence upon contemporary poetry as the verse of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

As Babette Deutsch wrote in her critical study of modern verse, *This Modern Poetry:*

> None of her contemporaries has recorded with more delicate precision the motions of the hours and the seasons as sky and earth body them forth.

Miss Adams was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1899. She was graduated from Barnard College in 1922, and from 1928 to 1929 lived in London. She returned to New York City in 1930 and was appointed to an instructorship in English at New York University. Her second book, *High Falcon*, appeared in 1929. She is now a member of the English faculty of Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont.

WILLIAM FAULKNER (1897–)

No American writer has assimilated the various techniques of modern symbolism with greater ingenuity than has William Faulkner. Although *Sanctuary*(N.Y., 1931) is his best known novel, *As I Lay Dying* (N.Y., 1930) is his finest achievement. A kind of terrible awareness of death has been the theme he uses to symbolize the sense of decay which has preoccupied the South since the Reconstruction Period. The necessity of linking this emotion with its symbol has resulted in a brutal distortion of the incident on which he has based such stories as 'Dry September.'

Faulkner was born in 1897, and was brought up in Oxford, Mississippi. His undergraduate life at the University of Mississippi, which he had entered as a special student at the age of sixteen, was broken by his enlistment in the Canadian Flying Corps. During his station in Oxford, England, he listened to the university lec-

tures, and after the Armistice re-entered the University of Mississippi, where he remained from 1919 to 1921. His first publication was a volume of pastoral poetry, *The Marble Faun*(Boston, 1924). The appearance of *The Green Bough* in 1933 is evidence of his awareness of the value of the techniques of contemporary poetry to a writer of psychological fiction. His novel, *The Sound and the Fury*(N.Y., 1929), is an illustration of his application of those techniques to prose.

These 13(N.Y., 1931).
Light in August(N.Y., 1932).
Doctor Martino and Other Stories(N.Y., 1934).
Pylon(N.Y., 1935).
The Unvanquished(N.Y., 1938).
The Wild Palms(N.Y., 1939).
A.Buttitta, 'William Faulkner: That Writin' Man of Oxford,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,XVIII,6–8.
W.R.Benét, 'Faulkner as a Poet,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,IX,565.
H.S.Canby, 'The School of Cruelty,' *Saturday Review of Literature*,VII,673–74.
G.Hicks, 'The Past and Future of William Faulkner,' *Bookman*,LXXIV,17–24.
E.Scott, *On William Faulkner's 'The Sound and the Fury'*(N.Y., 1929).
A.R.Thompson, 'The Cult of Cruelty,' *Bookman*,LXXIV,477–87.
A.Starke, 'An American Comedy: an Introduction to a Bibliography of William Faulkner,' *Colophon*, Part XIX.

THOMAS WOLFE (1900–1938)

THE consciousness of disintegration which characterized the writing of the early nineteen-twenties changed to a general recognition of the necessity for some form of integration. The novels of Thomas Wolfe express through the sensibilities of a single man a synthesis of human experience.

The first two of Wolfe's projected series of six novels, *Look Homeward Angel*(N.Y., 1930) and *Of Time and the River*(N.Y., 1935), succeed in re-creating the essential emotions out of the physical reality of American life: such as a newsboy's life in a small town; the all-night restaurant; the death of one's father; a journey in a train; the introduction to university life; and an American's discovery of Europe. The emphasis which Wolfe placed on emotional values accounts for the extraordinary vividness with which he was able to reconstruct the remembrance of things past in American life.

The same emphasis on emotion accounts for Wolfe's approximation of poetry in the writing of his prose. The energy that this released resulted in one of the most spontaneous examples of prose ever written in this or any country. It is this spontaneity which brings to the reader those sensations which have been identified with the poetry of Whitman.

Wolfe's prose shows a duality of purpose in the creation of both the starkly realistic and the fabulous character of human experience. In the latter, in particular, he represented what promises to be a new and vigorous development of American prose.

Thomas Wolfe was born at Ashville, North Carolina, and attended both the University of North Carolina and Harvard University, where he was a student in Professor George Baker's '47 Workshop.' For a brief period he was an instructor in English literature at New York University. The manuscript of his third long novel, *The Web and the Rock*(N.Y., 1939), was delivered to his publishers just before his death in Baltimore in September 1938.

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HART CRANE (1899–1932)

THE publication of Hart Crane's *The Bridge* in 1930 was an event comparable to the appearance of T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land* in 1922. This ambitious poem was an attempt to synthesize the variety of poetic experience which during the preceding

decade had been subject to analysis. As Crane wrote in 1929:

> The poet's concern must be, as always, self-discipline toward a formal integration of experience. For poetry is an architectural art, based not on Evolution or the idea of progress, but on the articulation of the contemporary human consciousness *sub specie æternitatis*, and inclusive of all readjustments incident to science and other shifting factors related to that consciousness. The key to the process of free creative activity which Coleridge gave us in his *Lectures on Shakespeare* exposes the responsibilities of every poet, modern or ancient, and cannot be improved upon. 'No work of true genius,' he says, 'dares want its appropriate form, neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless: for it is even this that constitutes its genius—the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination.'

No less important was his statement concerning the more technical problems of the post-war poet who sought to assimilate what had been regarded as a conflict between the imagery of the machine and the imagery of natural phenomena:

> For unless poetry can absorb the machine, i.e., *acclimatize* it as naturally and casually as trees, cattle, galleons, castles and all other human associations of the past, then poetry has failed of its full contemporary function.

It was Crane's intention in writing *The Bridge* to recreate the *Myth of America*. His choices of Brooklyn Bridge, of Pocahontas, of Cutty Sark, and of the subway train for the symbolic representation of the American myth were deliberate: they represented the poet's effort to recreate the beauty and intensity of living close to the very heart of American civilization.

Despite the fact that *The Bridge* remains an unfinished poem, one must seek for an analogy to the work of Rimbaud to find poetry of like intensity and power. As in the work of Rimbaud, Crane's mysticism found its expression through the medium of concrete and realistic imagery and language. Perhaps no poet of his time so closely approximated the sensuous qualities of word, image, and tonal music that are generally regarded as characteristic of the poetry of John Keats.

Hart Crane was born in Garrettsville, Ohio, in 1899. He was educated in the public schools of Ohio and wrote copy in advertising offices in Cleveland and New York. Like other members of his generation, he crossed the Atlantic for a brief stay in Paris. In 1932 he committed suicide by leaping from the deck of a north-bound steamer on the Gulf of Mexico.

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A.Tate, 'In Memoriam: Hart Crane,' *Hound & Horn*,V,612–19.
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HORACE GREGORY (1898–)

A COLLECTED edition of the poems of Horace Gregory should bear its own title, for his three books of poems are a single expression of his search to know himself at the same time that he has been learning to understand the world in which he lives.

Chelsea Rooming House(N.Y., 1930) is a geographical illustration of the ultimately clarifying effect on the sensibilities of an unsatisfied and romantic mind of a plunge from the academic milieu of home and university into the coarse vitality of lower West Side Manhattan life. The toughening effect of this new milieu on his thought appears to have been paralleled by that of Thomas Hardy on his poetry. Somewhat belatedly, hence more eclectically, Gregory has increasingly learned the lessons of modern poetics.

The initial shock over, Gregory's subse-

quent volumes, *No Retreat* (N.Y., 1933) and *Chorus for Survival*(N.Y., 1935) indicate through their titles his own optimistic position. He has not written directly about himself so much as about that which he sees; and the implication of his work is not to be found in particular poems but rather through their relationship to his central theme. The characters of Chelsea have been increasingly supplemented by others which have come into Gregory's widening experience, as well as by a judicious utilization of his literary heritage. This heritage he has also developed by distinguished criticism. It is by these ways that he has achieved success in his expressed desire 'to combine the idiom of contemporary life with my early (and entirely literary) influences.' Or, as he has expressed the same thought in verse,

Envy the great but do not enter where they go.

Gregory's first volume demonstrated his admirable acuteness of ear both for idiom and rhythm, his clarity of expression, and his live fancy. His later work, however, has shown a greater imaginative insight and a heightened power of vivid expression which has given force and individuality to his poetry. His natural gift for the lyric, somewhat stifled by the uncertainties of his adjustment, is becoming stronger and clearer. In his own approaching maturity he indicates a promise of a general poetical maturity.

Horace Gregory was born in Milwaukee in 1898, and was educated at the German-English Academy in that city and at the University of Wisconsin. He now lectures on poetry and criticism at Sarah Lawrence College.

The necessity for a poet of this day to bear a conscious relationship to the age in which he lives has been recognized by many other poets besides Gregory. He stands alone with Crane, however, in his knowledge of America's past—not so much of its pageantry and color but of its spiritual tradition. It is in this way that he makes Emerson not only a figure of the past but of the present, and gives to American writers the much-needed lesson that America's future lies behind as well as ahead.

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Lists of current books and articles on American Literature may be found in the March issues of *PMLA*(since 1923), and lists of current articles in each issue of *American Literature*.

References to individual authors will be found under the commentaries.

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

A cloud possessed the hollow field, 751
A death-blow is a life-blow to some, 852
A discreet householder exclaims on the grandsire, 1513
A flying word from here and there, 1114
A golden pallor of voluptuous light, 909
A grand attempt some Amazonian dames, 58
A great year and place, 814
A late snow beats, 1240
A leaf may hide the largest star, 979
A line in the long array where they wind betwixt green islands, 822
A little colt—broncho, loaned to the farm, 1155
A little time of leisure full of the greatest pleasure or, 59
A man said to the universe, 1009
A march in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown, 823
A mighty Hand, from an exhaustless Urn, 337
A mile behind is Gloucester town, 1025
A mist was driving down the British Channel, 570
A newspaper is a collection of half-injustices, 1009
A noiseless patient spider, 843
A poem should be palpable and mute, 1501
A private madness has prevailed, 1257
A route of evanescence, 853
A ruddy drop of manly blood, 512
A sight in camp in the daybreak gray and dim, 823
A slant of sun on dull brown walls, 1009
A soldier of the Cromwell stamp, 854
A subtle spirit has my path attended, 1256
A youth in apparel that glittered, 1008
Above the forest of the parakeets, 1327
Above the pines the moon was slowly drifting, 865
Africanus meant, 1319
After the supper and talk—after the day is done, 845
After the whistle's roar has bellowed and shuddered, 1297
Against the wall of this sky, 1304
Ah, broken is the golden bowl!—the spirit flown forever, 391
Alas, what is the world? A sea of glass! 29
All day has the battle raged, 581
All Greece hates, 1294
All I can give you is broken-face gargoyles, 1176
All in green went my love riding, 1342
All things within this fading world hath end, 35
Alone on Lykaion since man hath been, 1024
along the brittle treacherous bright streets, 1349
Aloof within the day's enormous dome, 985
Alter? When the hills do, 850
Although I do not hope to turn again, 1497
Although these words are false, none shall prevail, 1254
American muse, whose strong and diverse heart, 1523
Among the pickled fœtuses and bottled bones, 1279
An eagle on the summit—Hope and Fear, 979
An old man bending I come among new faces, 824
An old man in a lodge within a park, 585
And here face down beneath the sun, 1501
And here the hermit sat, and told his beads, 566
And I began; 'O Poet, willingly,' 583
And I have come upon this place, 1503
And King Olaf heard the cry, 578
And then went down to the Ship, 1283
And two I knew, an old man and a boy, 976
And what is so rare as a day in June? 654
And yet this great wink of eternity, 1558
And you as well must die, belovèd dust, 1262
Announced by all the trumpets of the sky, 510
Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees, 1492
Are you alive? 1290
As at thy portals also death, 847
As graceful as the Babylonian willow, 343
As if the sun had trodden down the sky, 1296
As on some solitary height, 979
As one turned round on some high mountain top, 975
As the rain falls, 1315
'As unto the bow the cord is,' 571
As weary pilgrim, now at rest, 39
At Eutaw Springs the valiant died, 220
At midnight, death's and truth's unlocking time, 923
At midnight, in his guarded tent, 233
At midnight, in the month of June, 391
At Rochecoart, 1272
At the first turning of the second stair, 1496
At the last, tenderly, 843
Avoid the reeking herd, 1250
Awake, my soul, and with the constant morn, 110
Ay, tear her tattered ensign down! 597
Ayee! Ai! This is heavy earth on our shoulders, 1505

Back to the primal gloom, 979
Battles nor songs can from oblivion save, 983
Be composed—be at ease with me—I am Walt Whitman, liberal and lusty as nature, 834
Beaver roars hoarse with meltin' snows, 653
Because I could not stop for Death, 850
Because I do not hope to turn again, 1494
Because I feel that, in the Heavens above, 399

'Before I die, let me be happy here,' 1256
Begotten by the meeting of rock with rock, 1336
Behind him lay the gray Azores, 870
Behold silver-kirtled Dawn, the life-renewer, 1021
Between me and the sunset, like a dome, 1121
Between the dark and the daylight, 576
Beyond the low marsh-meadows and the beach, 564
Blessed with a joy that only she, 1125
Blessings on thee, little man, 609
Booth led boldly with his big bass drum—, 1149
Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans, 1020
Bring me wine, but wine which never grew, 513
Buffalo Bill's, 1344
Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint, 509
Burly, dozing humble-bee, 510
But I, grown fatuous in my love and lore, 1131
By a route obscure and lonely, 392
By night they haunted a thicket of April mist, 1512
By the city dead-house by the gate, 834
By the rude bridge that arched the flood, 514

Call the roller of big cigars, 1325
Calm as that second summer which precedes, 908
Cassandra, the world's on fire; the harvest's sour, 1565
Chanting the square deific, out of the One advancing, out of the sides, 841
'Children and dogs are subject to my power,' 1255
Children picking up our bones, 1330
Chinese magicians had conjured their chance, 1247
Cliff Klingenhagen had me in to dine, 1112
Close his eyes; his work is done! 750
Come forth, you workers! 1241
Come! let Mirth our hours employ, 205
Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions, 1275
Come my tan-faced children, 812
Come up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete, 822
Complacencies of the peignoir, and late, 1325
Comrades, pour the wine tonight, 980
Conscience is instinct bred in the house, 563
contend in a sea which the land partly encloses, 1318
Crow in pulpit lone and tall, 746
Cry bravely, O town-crier, 985
Crystal parting the meads, 1530

Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace, 1271
Dark hills at evening in the west, 1126
Dark, thinned, beside the wall of stone, 983
Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days, 518
David sang to his hook-nosed harp, 1517
Dear Lord and Father of mankind, 625
Death's pale cold orb has turned to an eclipse, 341
Deep in the man sits fast his fate, 514
Deep in the wave is a coral grove, 340
Did you ever hear of Editor Whedon, 1162
Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind, 1008
Does a man ever give up hope, I wonder, 976
Down the world with Marna! 980
Down, you mongrel, Death! 1261
Drink and be merry, merry, merry boys, 17
Drum on your drums, batter on your banjoes, 1177
Dull masses of dense green, 1296

Earth does not understand her child, 1264
Eternity! O soul-amazing thought, 29
Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare, 1263
Every day brings a ship, 517
Everybody loved Chick Lorimer in our town, 1173

Fair Cynthia, all the homage that I may, 104
Fair flower, that dost so comely grow, 224
Far off in the sea is Marlena, 741
Farewell, incomparable element, 1258
Farragut, Farragut, 748
Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room, 1150
Five mites of monads dwelt in a round drop, 977
Flinging its arc of silver bubbles, quickly shifts the moon, 1297
Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face! 809
Flowers through the window, 1317
For all those beaten, for the broken heads, 1527
For thee, the lion and the burning dove, 1244
For this agility chance found, 1282
For this the fruit, for this the seed, 979
For three years, out of key with his time, 1277
Forever over now, forever, forever gone, 1264
Frieze of warm bronze that glides with catlike movements, 1297
From her own lips I learned the awful truth, 1130
From her own lips—yes, even as they smiled, 1130
From my minaret the level desert widened, 1023
From the Desert I come to thee, 855

Gaily bedight, 398
Gallants attend and hear a friend, 206
gee i like to think of dead it means nearer because deeper, 1346
Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime, 981
Give all to love, 512
Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling, 825

Gladstone was still respected, 1279
Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven, 928
Go, dumb-born book, 1281
'God knows,' he said, 1127
God makes sech nights, all white an' still, 647
God sends his teachers unto every age, 638
Golden bees at the heart of violets, 1163
Gone while your tastes were keen to you, 1271
Good-bye my Fancy! 848
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home, 504
Grandmother's mother: her age, I guess, 602
Great God! Thy works our wonder raise, 108
Green be the turf above thee, 232
Grieve not for the invisible transported brow, 1246
Guvener B. is a sensible man, 645

Ha, Ha, gods and kings; fill high, one and all, 741
Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all, 1274
Had I as many days to live, as I, 29
Half of my life is gone, and I have let, 569
Hang it all, Robert Browning, 1285
Hast thou named all the birds without a gun? 512
Hast thou seen reversed the prophet's miracle, 976
Haste! Sylvia! haste, my charming Maid! 204
Have you ever noticed the mill pond in the dog days? 1163
Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay, 601
Have you read in the Talmud of old, 575
Having a wheel and four legs of its own, 1141
He ate and drank the precious words, 852
He preached upon 'breadth' till it argued him narrow, 852
He saw her from the bottom of the stairs, 1137
He sought an earthly leader who could stand, 1333
Hear the sledges with the bells—Silver bells! 397
Hearts may not bend in course, but toward its loves, 1529
Heav'ns only, in dark hours, can succor send, 58
Helen, thy beauty is to me, 389
Here I am, an old man in a dry month, 1493
Here is the place; right over the hill, 612
Here lies, and none to mourn him but the sea, 1266
Here stood a lofty church, there is a steeple, 104
Here the skeleton leaf, between, 1337
Here where the wind is always north-northeast, 1127
here's a little mouse) and, 1348
His triple star led on and on, 870
Hog Butcher for the World, 1171
Honest countryman, cultor virentis agelli, 59
How beautiful it was, that one bright day, 581
How cold are thy baths, Apollo! 586
'How, how,' he said. 'Friend Chang,' I said, 1156
How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest, 1559
How naked, how without a wall, 1265
How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers! 582
How was I worthy so divine a loss, 671
Humanity i love you, 1345

I am an ancient reluctant conscript, 1176
I am fevered with the sunset, 981
I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground, 1263
I am poor and old and blind, 584
I am the God Thor, 578
I am the people—the mob—the crowd—the mass, 1174
I ask thy aid, O potent rum! 105
I broke the spell that held me long, 333
I cannot but remember, 1260
I cannot live with you, 850
I cannot spare water or wine, 508
I celebrate myself, and sing myself, 774
I do not count the hours I spend, 518
I don't know how he came, 1177
I dreamed I moved among the Elysian fields, 1264
I enter, and I see thee in the gloom, 582
I every day do see that here below, 29
I felt a funeral in my brain, 852
I fill this cup to one made up of loveliness alone, 341
I found a paper on her chiffonier, 1131
I found the phrase to every thought, 851
I had not till today been sure, 1246
I had over-prepared the event, 1277
'I hate my verses, every line, every word,' 1382
I have been one acquainted with the night, 1144
I have believed that I prefer to live, 1255
I have eaten, 1318
I have looked at them long, 1517
I have woven shrouds of air, 565
I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear, 774
I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses, 982
I hear it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions, 808
I heard a voice, that cried, 570
I heard the trailing garments of the Night, 566
I hereby swear that to uphold your house, 1257
I know not what to do, 1291
I know that he told that I snared his soul, 1161
I lack the braver mind, 1252
I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze, 583
I like a church; I like a cowl, 505
I like to see it lap the miles, 852

I love the old melodious lays, 606
I met a man in South Street, tall, 1561
I must be mad, or very tired, 1312
I never saw a moor, 851
I pace the sounding sea-beach and behold, 585
I saw him once before, 598
I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing, 808
I saw the first pear, 1289
I saw the twinkle of white feet, 654
I shall forget you presently, my dear, 1260
I started early, took my dog, 849
I taste a liquor never brewed, 849
I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle, 1322
I walk down the garden paths, 1306
I was a boy when I heard three red words, 1178
I was asking for something specific and perfect for my city, 844
I was born in Illinois, 1147
I went out on an April morning, 1245
I went to the dances at Chandlerville, 1160
I went to turn the grass once after one, 1133
I wonder about the trees, 1141
I wrote some lines once on a time, 598
If 'compression is the first grace of style,' 1324
If ever two were one, then surely we, 35
If external action is effete, 1324
If I should pass the tomb of Jonah, 1178
If man, that angel of bright consciousness, 1340
If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent, 1497
If the red slayer thinks he slays, 514
If you should look for this place after a handful of lifetimes, 1380
If you were coming in the fall, 849
I'll tell you how the sun rose, 851
I'm nobody! Who are you? 851
Immortal Love, forever full, 623
In Byles's works an oversight, 109
In Campo Santo is a grave, 1024
In David's Psalms an oversight, 108
In heaven, 1008
In Heaven a spirit doth dwell, 389
In heaven soaring up I dropt an ear, 61
In many forms we try, 511
In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes, 510
In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain, 925
In our content, before the autumn came, 1256
In placid hours well pleased we dream, 746
In secret place where once I stood, 33
In spite of all the learned have said, 224
In that November off Tehuantepec, 1328
In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht, 1280
In the days of steaming swamps and tropic ferns, 1165
In the greenest of our valleys, 358
In the long, sleepless watches of the night, 586
In the night, 1009
In the Shenandoah Valley, one rider grey, 1176
In this sweet solitude, the Mountain's life, 565
In vain—the trump hath blown, 340
Into the woods my Master went, 923
Is it the tinkling of mandolins which disturbs you? 1312
Is not this April of our brief desire, 1244
It dropped so low in my regard, 852
It fell in the ancient periods, 506
It is a sultry day; the sun has drunk, 333
it is at moments after i have dreamed, 1344
It is done! 614
It is in captivity—, 1314
It is likely enough that lions and scorpions, 1380
It is no idle fabulous tale, nor is it feignéd news, 11
It is time to be old, 519
it really must, 1347
It was a kind and northern face, 1558
It was Einar Tamberskelver, 580
It was many and many a year ago, 399
It was three slim does and a tentined buck in the bracken lay, 921
It's going to come out all right—do you know? 1174

Jesus wept! 1385
John Brown in Kansas settled, like a steadfast Yankee farmer, 856
Judicious zeal! New England's Boanerges, 58
Just as my fingers on these keys, 1327
Just lost when I was saved! 849

Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree, 1495
Last night at black midnight I woke with a cry, 1154
Lay me on an anvil, O God, 1175
Leaves fall, 1311
Legree's big house was white and green, 1153
Let a joy keep you, 1173
Let her who walks in Paphos, 1293
Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten, 1245
Let not our town be large, remembering, 1147
Let not young souls be smothered out before, 1148
Let such pure hate still underprop, 561
Let them bury your big eyes, 1262
Let us go then, you and I, 1489
Let us leave talking of angelic hosts, 1257
Let us walk in the white snow, 1252
Like to the marigold I blushing close, 62
Lilacs, 1307
Listen a while, the moon is a lovely woman, 1178
Listen, children, 1262
Listen, my children, and you shall hear, 576
Listless he eyes the palisades, 742
Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown, 504

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne, 390
Lo! 'tis a gala night, 348
Long Island! Yes! When first my vision swept, 975
Look off, dear Love, across the sallow sands, 920
Look out upon the stars, my love, 341
Lord, can a crumb of earth the earth outweigh, 60
Love at the lips was touch, 1143
Low and mournful be the strain, 516
Luini in porcelain! 1283

Make me, O Lord, Thy spinning-wheel complete, 61
Man looking into the sea, 1323
Man's life is like a rose that in the spring, 29
Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table, 1134
May all that dread the cruel fiend of night, 106
May I for my own self song's truth reckon, 1273
Mid-morning of mid-June: Her sudden whim, 1130
Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn, 1113
Much madness is divinest sense, 852
Musa of the sea-blue eyes, 1252
Music I heard with you was more than music, 1333
My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read, 562
My fairer body and perfected spirit, 1257
My father used to say, 1324
My gen'rous heart disdains, 207
My heart I cannot still it, 672
My heart rebels against my generation, 1111
My honoured lord, forgive the unruly tongue, 1257
My life closed twice before its close, 848
My life is like a stroll upon the beach, 561
My life more civil is and free, 563
My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree, 1138
My mind lets go a thousand things, 854
My shirt is a token and symbol, 1177
My soul, be not disturbed, 1254

'Neath blue-bell or streamer, 388
Nevertheless, they all express, 49
No, I have tempered haste, 1531
No more the white refulgent streets, 1514
No more with overflowing light, 1113
No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately, 1276
'No water so still as the dead fountains of Versailles.' No swan, 1320
Nor skin nor hide nor fleece, 1293
Not honey, 1292
Not with a club the heart is broken, 853
Now all day long the man who is not dead, 1516
Now am I Orson to your Valentine, 1255
Now I have lost you, I must scatter, 1260
Now let no charitable hope, 1252
Now moony light, 1530
Now shall the long homesickness have an end, 1254
Now the frosty stars are gone, 854
Now the rich cherry whose sleek wood, 1530
Now there happened to be among Phoebus's followers, 656
Now they are resting, 1318
Now warm with ministerial ire, 208

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done, 832
O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun, 1132
O Friends! with whom my feet have trod, 615
O God, the cleanest offering, 979
O Halcyon! O sea-conceiving bird! 1507
O joy of creation, 866
O Light, forsake not thy adoring hills, 1244
O Light Invisible, we praise Thee! 1500
O love, how utterly am I bereaved, 1255
O lovely Light, look on thy ray perverse! 1244
O, mine is Psyche's heavy doom reversed, 1256
O star of morning and of liberty! 583
O swiftness of the swallow and strength, 1380
O Thou to whom the musical white spring, 1346
O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead, 916
O wind, rend open the heat, 1288
O world, thou choosest not the better part! 1110
Of all the rides since the birth of time, 611
of evident invisibles, 1343
Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill, 923
Of thee the Northman by his beachèd galley, 1110
Oft have I seen at some cathedral door, 582
Often I think of the beautiful town, 574
Oh Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun, 1132
Oh, mine is Psyche's heavy doom reversed, 1256
Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave, 1264
Oh! What a thing is man? Lord, who am I? 63
Old Age, on tiptoe, lays her jewelled hand, 1112
Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night, 1126
On the beach at night, 820
On the taut string He was the night bowed somberly its ancient music, 1242
Once git a smell o' musk into a draw, 649
Once it smiled a silent dell, 392
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, 393
Once when the snow of the year was beginning to fall, 1142
One hour to madness and joy! O furious! O confine me not! 807
One night when early winter had begun, 1129
One who has loved the hills and died, a man, 1503
One's self I sing, a simple separate person, 773

Only the chemist can tell, and not always the chemist, 1162
Only the diamond and the diamond's dust, 1265
Our share of night to bear, 850
Our temp'ral blessings did abound, 53
Ours not to sleep in shady bowers, 220
Out of me, unworthy and unknown, 1162
Out of the cradle endlessly rocking, 815
Out of the dusk a shadow, 979
Out of the hills of Habersham, 920
Out of the mud two strangers came, 1145
Out of the tomb, we bring Badroulbadour, 1325

Pain has an element of blank, 853
Performances, assortments, résumés—, 1563
Picasso, 1344
Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo, 1176
Pity me not because the light of day, 1263
Places among the stars, 1008
Procne, Philomela, and Itylus, 1513

Quack! Quack! Quack! 741
Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot, 1502

Rambling along the marshes, 566
Rapidly cruising or lying on the air there is a bird, 1320
Reading in Ovid the sorrowful story of Itys, 1160
Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens, 1276
Rimbaud and Verlaine, precious pair of poets, 1340
Rise, Œdipus, and, if thou canst, unfold, 16
Romance, who loves to nod and sing, 389
Room for a soldier! lay him in the clover, 746
Room! *room to turn round in, to breath and be free*, 868
Row after row with strict impunity, 1514

Said the old men to the young men, 1247
Save us, O save us, cries Abigail to Minerva, 1574
Say not of Beauty she is good, 1250
Say there! P'r'aps, 866
Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art! 388
See, as the carver carves a rose, 1335
See, they return; ah, see the tentative, 1274
'Seedsmen of old Saturn's land,' 742
She fears him, and will always ask, 1125
She had no saying dark enough, 1140
She lies on her left side her flank golden, 1503
She sang beyond the genius of the sea, 1330
Shoe the steed with silver, 742
Simon Danz has come home again, 585
Since feeling is first, 1349
Singing my days, 836
Sister and mother and diviner love, 1327
Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone, 1148
So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn, 609
so much depends, 1314
So that soldierly legend is still on its journey, 858
'So . . . ' they said, 1310
Soft hangs the opiate in the brain, 672
Some say the world will end in fire, 1142
Some time now past in the autumnal tide, 35
Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 1134
somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond, 1349
Somewhere—in desolate wind-swept space, 854
'Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!' 567
Stand on the highest pavement of the stair, 1491
Stars of the summer night! 569
Still was the night, serene and bright, 48
Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels, 1498
Stranger, if thou hast learned a truth which needs, 332
Strangers, your eyes are on that valley fixed, 234
'Strike the sails!' King Olaf said, 579
Stuff of the moon, 1173
Suddenly out of its stale and drowsy lair, the lair of slaves, 820
Suppose I plant you, 1313
Surgeons must be very careful, 851
Sweet sounds, oh, beautiful music, do not cease! 1264

Take home Thy prodigal child, O Lord of Hosts! 1260
Take this kiss upon the brow! 387
Tall, sombre, grim, against the morning sky, 909
Tell her I love, 1567
Tell me not, in mournful numbers, 567
'Tell me what you're doing over here, John Gorham,' 1124
Thank God my brain is not inclined to cut, 1026
Thank Heaven! The crisis, 398
That afternoon the Postman brought, among, 1131
That 'something far more deeply interfused,' 1302
That such have died enables us, 853
That you are fair or wise is vain, 508
The age is dull and mean. Men creep, 610
The alphabet of, 1316
The apparition of these faces in the crowd, 1276
The Archer is wake! 1314
The bay is not blue but sombre yellow, 1382

The bear puts both arms around the tree above her, 1144
The blast from Freedom's Northern hills, upon its Southern way, 606
The Body, long oppressed, 1259
The breath of dew and twilight's grace, 983
The broad-backed hippopotamus, 1491
The brotherhood is not by the blood certainly, 1511
The buzz-saw snarled and rattled in the yard, 1140
The cannonade fell still. All along the fish-hook line, 1526
The cows are bawling in the mountains, 1021
The dead man spoke to me and begged a penny, 1339
The debt is paid, 519
The desert murmurs to the sun a strange murmur, 1022
The earth keeps some vibration going, 1160
The ebb slips from the rock, the sunken, 1379
The fog comes, 1173
The glittering leaves of the rhododendrons, 1294
The great Overdog, 1144
The increasing moonlight drifts across my bed, 854
The interests of a black man in a cellar, 1558
The lake ink-black mid slopes of snow, 743
The last night that she lived, 851
The little beauty that I was allowed, 1255
The lords of life, the lords of life, 511
The man Flammonde, from God knows where, 1120
The meek shall disinherit the earth, 1572
The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year, 336
The mind has shown itself at times, 1556
The mountain and the squirrel, 511
The people along the sand, 1146
The people will live on, 1179
The praisers of women in their proud and beautiful poems, 1502
The prosperous and beautiful, 512
The pure air trembles, O pitiless God, 1378
The royal feast was done; the King, 978
The saints behold with courage bold, 52
The skies they were ashen and sober, 395
The sky is low, the clouds are mean, 853
The sky-like limpid eyes, 1279
The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell, 562
The soul selects her own society, 848
The Sphinx is drowsy, 506
The strong men keep coming on, 1179
The sun goes down, and with him takes, 517
The sun had set, 752
The sun set, but set not his hope, 512
The sun that brief December day, 616
The swift red flesh, a winter king, 1559
The swinging mill bell changed its rate, 1146
The thought beneath so slight a film, 853
The time of gifts has come again, 625
The time will be when we shall be *No more*, 29
The times wherein old Pompion was a saint, 56
The trees in the garden rained flowers, 1010
The turtle on yon' withered bough, 224
'The voyage crossed, the firmament one star,' 1569
The way a crow, 1142
The wayfarer, 1009
The word of the Lord by night, 515
The year turns to its rest, 1531
Thee for my recitative, 843
Their mouths have drunken Death's eternal wine, 984
Their noonday never knows, 979
Then were brought nigh a company of civil honest men, 51
There are two ways in life, 1163
There is a man whom rhapsodies of change, 1331
There is a serpent in perfection tarnished, 1252
There is a silence I carry about with me always, 1298
There is a wolf in me . . . fangs pointed, 1175
There is something about Death, 1162
There never was a mood of mine, 1245
There, peaked and gray, three haglets fly, 745
There was a child went forth every day, 833
There was never a sound beside the wood but one, 1133
There were none of my blood in this battle, 1504
Thereafter I found these Greek lines underscored, 1131
'They called it Annandale—and I was there,' 1113
They say that 'time assuages,' 848
They say there is no hope, 1289
They sent him back to her. The letter came, 1144
They talk of short-lived pleasure—be it so—, 336
Things you heard that blessed be, 1246
Think me not unkind and rude, 513
This ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good old times, 599
This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream, 978
This is Mister Harriman making America, 1505
This is our place of meeting; opposite, 603
this is the garden: colours come and go, 1346
This is the hidden place that hiders know, 1525
This is the pedigree of degradation, 1022
This is the shape of the leaf, and this of the flower, 1335
This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign, 600
This saying good-bye on the edge of the dark, 1143
Thou art the star for which all evening waits, 984

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew, 336
Thou, multi-one, whose contours none may mark, 1243
Thou sleepest sound, and I, 979
Thou wast that all to me, love, 392
Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm, 819
Thou who wouldst see the lovely and the wild, 334
Thou, who wouldst wear the name, 339
Though ill at ease, a stranger and alone, 106
Thought is deeper than all speech, 564
Thrash away, you'll *hev* to rattle, 642
Through streets where crooked Wicklow flows, 1568
Through that window—all else being extinct, 1336
Through the soft evening air enwinding all, 835
Thus all men's pleas the Judge with ease, 52
Thy summer voice, Musketaquit, 518
Till we watch the last low star, 1246
Time's a circumference, 1024
'Tis the middle watch of summer's night, 225
To conclude, I announce what comes after me, 846
To fight aloud is very brave, 852
To have known him, to have loved him, 745
To hear an oriole sing, 853
To him who in the love of Nature holds, 330
To leap and having leapt touch privity, 1244
To sing of wars, of captains, and of kings, 33
To the bob-white's call, 1317
To what new fates, my country, far, 981
Together in this grave lie Benjamin Pantier, attorney at law, 1161
Tom Mooney sits behind a grating, 1128
Trembling I write my dream, and recollect, 221
Trundled from, 1314
Turned from the 'eau-fort,' 1281
Twelve good friends, 1253
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, 1139

Under a wall of bronze, 1302
Under the stone I saw them flow, 1567
Unhappy dreamer, who outwinged in flight, 1110
Up from the meadows rich with corn, 613
Up from the South at break of day, 749
Up in the mountains, it's lonesome all the time, 1521
Upon what base was fixed the lath wherein, 60
Upon your heart, which is the heart of all, 1257

wade, 1322
Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives, 867
We act in crises not as one who dons, 1130
We are old, 1241
We follow where the Swamp Fox guides, 324
We too, we too, descending once again, 1503
Weak-winged is song, 665
Weapon shapely, naked, wan, 812
Webster was much possessed by death, 1492
Well, as you say, we live for small horizons, 1333
Well, Emily Sparks, your prayers were not wasted, 1161
What a moment of strange dying! Quickly, 1163
What are the islands to me, 1290
What face she put on it, we will not discuss, 1342
What great yoked brutes with briskets low, 869
What, I such praises sing! How can it be? 61
What is beauty? 'tis a dream, 743
What love is this of Thine, that cannot be, 62
What other name had half expressed the whole, 1254
What phantom is this that appears, 587
What say the Bells of San Blas, 587
What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands, 1498
What were the whole void world, if thou wert dead, 671
What without speech we knew and could not say, 1341
Whate'er we leave to God, God does, 559
When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, 1176
When Eve had led her lord away, 593
When foxes eat the last gold grape, 1252
When I am dead and over me bright April, 1245
When I consider Life and its few years, 984
When I go back to earth, 1245
When I heard the learn'd astronomer, 821
When I perceive the sable of your hair, 1256
When I see birches bend to left and right, 1139
When, in the gold October dusk, I saw you near to setting, 1245
When legislators keep the law, 596
When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd, 827
When the air of October is sweet and cold as the wine of apples, 1164
When the moon lights up, 1297
When the world turns completely upside down, 1251
When trout swim down Great Ormond Street, 1335
Whenever Richard Cory went down town, 1113
Where are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley, 1159
Where are we going? where are we going, 608
Where can the heart be hidden in the ground, 1265
Where is my boy, my boy—, 1161
Where is the nightingale, 1294
Where long the shadows of the wind had rolled, 1127
Where the slow river, 1290
Where the wheel of light is turned, 1511

Where's Commander All-a-Tanto? 744
Whether white or black be best, 40
Which I wish to remark, 864
While George went to the house, 1381
While I recline, 906
While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead, 1275
Whirl up, sea—, 1290
White swan of cities, slumbering in thy nest, 586
Whither, midst falling dew, 332
Who are you dusky woman so ancient hardly human, 826
Who learns my lesson complete? 834
Who walked between the violet and the violet, 1496
Whose woods these are I think I know, 1143
Why do you cry out, why do I like to hear you, 1337
Why should I keep holiday, 512
Why so desolate? 1324
Wild Carthage held her, Rome, 984
winked too much and were afraid of snakes, 1323
With husky-haughty lips, O sea! 845
With snow-white veil and garments as of flame, 583
With vast amazement we survey, 108, 109
Within this tomb a patriot lies, 34
Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze, 562
Word over all, beautiful as the sky, 827
Would I might make subliminal my flesh, 1255
Would you hear of the River-Fight? 747

Ye Alps audacious, through the heavens that rise, 214
Ye young debaters over the doctrine, 1162
Years of the modern! years of the unperform'd! 844
Yes, faith is a goodly anchor, 664
'Yes, the dead pines and deersfoot on the ground,' 976
Yes, we knew we must lose him,—though friendship may claim, 597
Yon whey-faced brother, who delights to wear, 600
You are a friend then, as I make it out, 1114
You are as gold, 1293
You come along . . . tearing your shirt . . . yelling about Jesus, 1172
You hate me and I hate you, 1305
You may never see rain, unless you see, 1247
You to the left and I to the right, 982
You'd never have thought the Queen was Helen's sister, 1354
Young poets in love, 110
'Young Silas Long, a carrier through these woods,' 975
Your bony head, Jazbo, O dock walloper, 1175

INDEX OF TITLES

Titles which repeat the first line of poems, chapter titles, or titles of fragments, have not been included in this index

A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads, 753
A Ballad of Trees and the Master, 923
A Dance for Rain, 1247
A Dithyrambic on Wine, 205
A Dramatic Scene, 1024
A Dream within a Dream, 387
A Dutch Picture, 585
A Fable for Critics, 655
A Foreboding, 671
A Friend's Song for Simoisius, 983
A Gospel of Beauty, 1147
A Grave, 1323
A Health, 341
A Letter to the Town of Providence, 28
A Lone Striker, 1146
A Long Gay Book, 1452
A Minuet, 1112
A Modern Instance, 969
A Municipal Report, 1042
A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, 40
A Neighbor's Tears, 58
A Note on Poetry [Gregory], 1565
A Note on Poetry [H.D.], 1287
A Note on Poetry [Moore], 1319
A Note on Poetry [Stevens], 1325
A Note on Poetry [Williams], 1313
A Note on Polyphonic Prose, 1298
A Postcard from the Volcano, 1330
A Psalm of Life, 567
A Progress to the Mines, 111
A Puritan Lady, 984
A Query on Style, 134
A Retrospect, 1266
A Snow Storm as it Affects the American Farmer, 170
A Song of Creation, 870
A Sonnet in Memory, 1265
A Stein Song, 981
A Tent Song, 1246
A Thought Revolved, 1333
A True Relation of Virginia, 3
A Virginal, 1276
Acquainted with the Night, 1144
Address to my Soul, 1254
After Apple-Picking, 1138
After the Burial, 664
Al Aaraaf, 388
Aldebaran at Dusk, 984
Alexander Campbell, 1147
An American Tragedy, 1180
An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, 986
An Old Spell, 1529
An Opium Fantasy, 672
Annabel Lee, 399
Ante Mortem, 1380
Arcturus in Autumn, 1245
Ariel in the Cloven Pine, 854
Ars Poetica, 1501
Art, 746
Ash Wednesday, 1494
Aspects of the Pines, 909
At Heaven's Gate, 1108
At the Crossroads, 982
At the Saturday Club, 603
Auspex, 672
Avalon, 341

Bacchus, 513
Ballad of the Goodly Fere, 1274
Barbara Frietchie, 613
Beauty, 1250
Bedouin Song, 855
Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the King Cobra, 1165
Before the Birth of One of Her Children, 35
Belisarius, 584
Belles Desmoiselles Plantation, 930
Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford, 1114
Birches, 1139
Birthday Sonnet, 1260
Black Tambourine, 1558
Blossom, 979
Boston Hymn, 515
Brahma, 514
Bridegroom Dick, 744
Broken-Face Gargoyles, 1176
Bryan, 1197

Caboose Thoughts, 1174
Canis Major, 1144
Cantos, 1283
Cavalry Crossing a Ford, 822
Cawdor, 1381
Chanting the Square Deific, 841
Character, 512
Charleston, 908
Chaucer, 585
Chicago, 1171
Chita, 941
Chorus for Survival, 1567
Clarel, 742
Cliff Klingenhagen, 1112
Clipper Ships, 1300
Columbus, 870
Common Sense, 190
Compensation, 512
Comrades, 980
Concord Hymn, 514
Confession of Faith, 1252
Conquistador, 1507

Conscience, 563
Contemplations, 35
Cool Tombs, 1176
Coriolan, 1498
Country Summer, 1530
Crapy Cornelia, 1061
Criticism and Fiction, 962
Criticism, 1094
Crossing Brooklyn Ferry, 809
Crossing the Plains, 869

Daily Meditations, 29
Das Ewig-Weibliche, 671
Days, 518
Death Comes for the Archbishop, 1200
Death in the Woods, 1453
Deliciae Hortenses, 59
Destiny, 508
Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout, 155
Diary of Samuel Sewall, 97
Dickens in Camp, 865
Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York, 235
Dirge, 746
Dirge for a Soldier, 750
Dirge without Music, 1263
Discordants, 1333
Divina Commedia, 582
Dorothy Q., 602
Down the Mississippi, 1296
Dream-Land, 392
Dry September, 1531
Dust of Snow, 1142

Each and All, 504
Eldorado, 398
Elegy [Tate], 1514
Elegy on an Empty Skyscraper, 1304
Elegy on Tintern Abbey, 1302
Epitaph for My Father, 58
Epitaph for the Race of Man, 1265
Epitaph on a Patriot, 34
Eros Turannos, 1125
Escape, 1252
Essays to do Good, 83
Ethan Brand, 422
Ethiopia Saluting the Colors, 826
Europe, 820
Evening Song, 920
Evolution, 979
Expectancy, 979
Experience, 511

Fable, 511
Faces, 1240
Fame, 979
Farewell, Sweet Dust, 1260
Farragut, 748
Fatal Interview, 1264
Fate, 514
Father Damien, 979
Fine Work with Pitch and Copper, 1318
Fire and Ice, 1142
Firehead, 1242
Fireworks, 1305
First Snow, 1021
Five Lives, 977
Flammonde, 1120
Flight of the Wild Geese, 566
Fog, 1173
For a Dead Lady, 1113
For Annie, 398
For E. McC., 1271
For Righteousness' Sake, 610
For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen, 1556
Forbearance, 512
France, 814
Fredericksburg, 854
Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City, 1503
Friendship [Emerson], 512
Friendship [Thoreau], 561
Further Instructions, 1275

Garden, 1288
General Aims and Theories, 1553
General William Booth Enters into Heaven, 1149
Gerontion, 1493
Giants in the Earth, 1209
Give All to Love, 512
Gloucester Moors, 1024
Gnosis, 564
God's Controversy with New England, 53
God's Determinations Touching His Elect, 60
Going Blind, 979
Gone, 1173
Good-bye, 504
Good-bye and Keep Cold, 1143
Grass, 1176
Green Symphony, 1294
Grenstone River, 1246
Grieve Not for Beauty, 1246

Hamatreya, 509
Hawthorne, 581
Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales, 344
Haze, 562
Hebe, 654
Helen, 1294
Helen of Tyre, 587
Heredity, 854
Hippolytus Temporizes, 1294
Home Burial, 1137
Housewifery, 61
How Annandale Went Out, 1113
How Old Brown Took Harper's Ferry, 856
How Writing Is Written, 1446
Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, 1277
Hymn Composed for Dr.B., 108
Hymn Composed for Mr.G., 108
Hymn to Earth, 1258
Hymn to the Morning, 110

Hymn to the Night, 566
Hymnology, 107
Hymns of the Marshes, 925

I am the People, the Mob, 1174
I Broke the Spell that Held me Long, 333
I Remembered, 1245
I Shall Not Care, 1245
Ichabod, 609
Identity, 854
Immortality, 983
In a Station of the Metro, 1276
In the Pauper's Turnip-Field, 746
In the Prison Pen, 742
In Time of Grief, 983
Independence, 563
Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood, 332
Inspiration, 559
Is Your Town Nineveh? 1324
Israfel, 389
It Is Later than You Think, 1574
Italian Music in Dakota, 835

Jazz Fantasia, 1177
'Jim,' 866
Jim Bludso, of the Prarie Belle, 867
John Brown's Body, 1523
John Gorham, 1124
Johnny Appleseed, 1164
Joy, 1173
Jugurtha, 586
Justification of Art, 1104

Kearny at Seven Pines, 858
Keenan's Charge, 752
King David, 1517
Kit Carson's Ride, 868
Knickerbocker's History of New York, 235

L'An trentiesme de mon eage, 1503
La Figlia che Piange, 1491
Lais, 1293
Lament, 1262
Laus Deo! 614
Lazarus Laughed, 1383
Leda, 1290
Legend of the Rose of the Alhambra, 258
Lenore, 391
'Let it be Forgotten,' 1245
Let No Charitable Hope, 1252
Lethe, 1293
Letter to B—, 378
Letters, 517
Life on the Mississippi, 875
Ligeia, 345
Lilacs, 1307
Litany for Dictatorships, 1527
Little Bessie Would Assist Providence, 905
Little Ivory Figures Pulled with String, 1312
Losers, 1178
Love the Wild Swan, 1382

Magnalia Christi Americana, 72
Main Street, 1214
Mannahatta, 844
Manuductio ad Ministerium, 88
Marco Bozzaris, 233
Mardi, 712
Marina, 1498
Mars and Hymen, 224
Massachusetts to Virginia, 606
Mauberley, 1281
Medallion, 1283
Meditations, 62
Meditations Divine and Moral, 29
Meeting-House Hill, 1312
Memorial to D.C., 1262
Memory, 854
Mending Wall, 1134
Mezzo Cammin, 569
M'Fingal, 208
Milton, 585
Miniver Cheevy, 1113
Mr. Flood's Party, 1126
Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard, 1248
Mithridates, 508
Moby Dick, 724
Monody, 745
Monument Mountain, 334
Moral Principle and Material Interest, 991
Morning, 1245
Mother and Son, 1516
Mt. Lykaion, 1024
Mowing, 1133
Mutation, 336
My Lost Youth, 574

Nantucket, 1317
Napoleon, 494
Nature [Jonathan Edwards], 117
Nature [Emerson], 442
Neither out Far nor in Deep, 1146
New England, 1127
New England's Crisis, 56
New England's Rarities Discovered, 40
New English Canaan, 16
New York, Cassandra, 1565
News from Virginia, 11
Night, 1379
Night Stuff, 1178
No Swan So Fine, 1320
Nocturne in a Deserted Brickyard, 1173
Noon, 1378
'Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments,' 1502
Not to Keep, 1144
Note by A. MacL., 1500

O Virtuous Light, 1257
Ode for the Celebration of the Battle of Bunker Hill, 340
Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration, 665

Ode to the Confederate Dead, 1514
Of Plymouth Plantation, 13
Of Time and the River, 1537
Old Ironsides, 597
Old Man Playing with Children, 1513
Old Timers, 1176
On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners, 626
On a Fortification at Boston Begun by Women, 58
On a Singing Girl, 1252
On Hearing a Symphony of Beethoven, 1264
On Lending a Punch-Bowl, 599
On the Building of Springfield, 1147
On the Death of a Metaphysician, 1110
On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake, 232
On the Value and Uses of Poetry, 326
One Person, 1254
Opportunity, 978
Opposition, 923
Orchard, 1289
Oread, 1290
Ossawatomie, 1177
Our Master, 623
'Out, out—,' 1140
Owl's Clover, 1331

Passage to India, 836
Passing Near, 1246
Patterns, 1306
Paul Revere's Ride, 576
Peace on Earth, 1314
Personal Narrative, 118
Peter and John, 1253
Peter Quince at the Clavier, 1327
Philomela, 1513
Philosophers Three, 991
Pierre, 715
Pioneers! O Pioneers! 812
Plain Language from Truthful James, 864
Poem for My Daughter, 1567
Poetry, 1322
Pole Star for This Year, 1511
Political Fables, 70
Pony Rock, 1503
Practical Discourses on the Parable of the Ten Virgins, 91
Praise for an Urn, 1558
Prayers of Steel, 1175
Preface to the Leatherstocking Tales, 277
Prejudice, 979
Preludes for Memnon, 1339
Priapus and the Pool, 1335
Proem, 606
Provincia Deserta, 1272

Rain, 1315
Reconciliation, 827
Religion and Literature, 1483
Reveille, 1241
Rhœcus, 638
Richard Cory, 1113
Rip Van Winkle, 250
Romance, 389

Said of the Earth and the Moon, 1530
Sandalphon, 575
Sapphic Fragments, 1291
Sarah Pierrepont, 117
Sea Gods, 1289
Sea Holly, 1336
Sea Surface Full of Clouds, 1328
Self Criticism in February, 1382
Self-Reliance, 461
Serenade, 341
Sestina: Altaforte, 1270
1777, 1311
Shenandoah, 1176
Sheridan at Cedar Creek, 742
Sheridan's Ride, 749
Shirt, 1177
Silence, 1324
Singing Nigger, 1175
Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, 125
Skipper Ireson's Ride, 611
Smoke in Winter, 562
Snow-Bound, 616
So Long! 846
Society and Solitude, 1106
Song [Dawson], 110
Song [H.D.], 1293
Song [Hopkinson], 207
Song of Myself, 774
Song of Slaves in the Desert, 608
Song of the Broad-Axe, 812
Song of the Chattahoochee, 920
Sonnet,—To Isa Sleeping, 343
Sonnet—To Science, 388
Sons of Belial, 1241
Sound of Breaking, 1337
Specimen Days, 762
Spectral Lovers, 1512
Speech to Those Who Say Comrade, 1511
Spoon River Anthology, 1159
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, 1143
Story of the Dogs and Wolves, 71
Summer Wind, 333
Sunday Morning, 1325
Sundered, 979
Sunrise, 925
Sweeney among the Nightingales, 1492

Tamar, 1380
Tears, 984
Tegnér's Drapa, 570
Telling the Bees, 612
Ten Days that Shook the World, 1190
Terminus, 519
Thanatopsis, 330
The American Scholar, 474
The Answer, 1245
The Apology, 513
The Art of Fiction, 1050

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, 135
The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, 588
The Barefoot Boy, 609
The Battle of the Kegs, 206
The Bear, 1144
The Bells, 397
The Bells of San Blas, 587
The Biglow Papers, 640
The Bird with the Coppery, Keen Claws, 1327
The Black Vulture, 985
The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody, 25
The Bohemian Hymn, 511
The Booker Washington Trilogy, 1153
The Botticellian Trees, 1316
The Brewing of Soma, 625
The Bridge, 1559
The Broncho that Would not Be Broken, 1155
The Bull, 1314
The Cameo, 1264
The Cask of Amontillado, 363
The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calavaras County, 872
The Chambered Nautilus, 600
The Children's Hour, 576
The Chinese Nightingale, 1156
The Christian Philosopher, 87
The City Dead-House, 834
The City in the Sea, 390
The Congo, 1150
The Conquest of Mexico, 673
The Coral Grove, 340
The Cotton Boll, 906
The Country of the Pointed Firs, 952
The Cross of Snow, 586
The Cross-Roads, 1308
The Crystal, 923
The Culprit Fay, 225
The Cynic's Word Book, 992
The Dark Hills, 1126
The Day of Doom, 48
The Deacon's Masterpiece, 601
The Death of the Flowers, 336
The Death of the Hired Man, 1134
The Declaration of Independence, 198
The Deerslayer, 279
The Demiurge, 1182
The Dinner-Party, 1310
The Divine Comedy, 583
The Eagle and the Mole, 1250
The Eagle That is Forgotten, 1148
The Earth Spirit, 565
The Education of Henry Adams, 1028
The Eligible Son-in-Law, 991
The Emperor of Ice-Cream, 1325
The End of the World, 1502
The Ephemera, 152
The Eternal Goodness, 615
The Fall of the House of Usher, 353
The Federalist, 200
The Field of the Grounded Arms, 234
The Fish, 1322
The Flesh and the Spirit, 33
The Flood of Years, 337
The Fool's Prayer, 978
The Frigate Pelican, 1320
The Game of Chess, 1276
The Gettysburg Address, 753
The Ghost of the Buffaloes, 1154
The Gift of God, 1125
The Golden Bowl, 1083
The Golden Honeymoon, 1232
The Gray Champion, 414
The Grindstone, 1141
The Haglets, 745
The Hasty Pudding, 214
The Height of the Ridiculous, 598
The Hider's Song, 1525
The High Tide at Gettysburg, 751
The Hill Wife, 1140
The Hippopotamus, 1491
The History of Massachusetts-Bay, 187
The Horse-Swap, 308
The House of Dust, 1333
The House of Night, 221
The House of the Seven Gables, 430
The Humble-Bee, 510
The Idea of Order at Key West, 1330
The Indian Burying Ground, 224
The Invitation, 204
The Islands, 1290
The Jerboa, 1319
The Journal of John Woolman, 158
The Journal of Madam Knight, 103
The Last Invocation, 843
The Last Leaf, 598
The Leaden-Eyed, 1148
The Life of Juan Gris, 1451
The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, 1489
The Man against the Sky, 1121
The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, 881
The Man with the Hoe, 1020
The Marshes of Glyn, 928
The Master, 1114
The Menagerie, 1026
The Mocking-Bird, 909
The Monkeys, 1323
The Moral Bully, 600
The Mount, 1531
The Mountain, 565
The Mountain Whippoorwill, 1521
The New Settlement of the Birds in New England, 70
The New Spoon River, 1163
The Night of Gods, 984
The Northern Soldier, 220
The Octopus, 1010
The Old Manse, 400
The Old Men and the Young Men, 1247
The On-Looker, 1313
The Open Boat, 994
The Oregon Trail, 680
The Other Two, 1084

The Outcasts of Poker Flat, 859
The Parable of the Ten Virgins, 91
The Park, 512
The Past, 519
The Past is the Present, 1324
The Peak, 979
The People, Yes, 1179
The Philosophy of Composition, 381
The Pilot, 265
The Pines and the Sea, 564
The Pit, 1010
The Poet [Bryant], 339
The Poet [Emerson], 483
The Poet and His Book, 1261
The Poet in the Desert, 1021
The Pomecitron Tree, 1337
The Pool, 1290
The Pressed Gentian, 625
The Problem, 505
The Prologue, 33
The Purloined Letter, 366
The Raven, 393
The Red Lily, 1317
The Red Wheelbarrow, 1314
The Return [Millay], 1264
The Return [Pound], 1274
The Revenge of Hamish, 921
The Rhodora, 510
The River Fight, 747
The River in the Meadows, 1530
The River Merchant's Wife, 1275
The Road Not Taken, 1139
The Rock, 1500
The Romany Girl, 517
The Room, 1336
The Runaway, 1142
The Saga of King Olaf, 578
The Sale of the Hessians, 151
The Scarlet Letter, 418
The Science of English Verse, 913
The Sea-Elephant, 1314
The Sea Gypsy, 981
The Seafarer, 1273
The Sense of Newport, 1075
The Sheaves, 1127
The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam, 20
The Skeleton in Armor, 567
The Sleeper, 391
The Snow-Storm, 510
The Song [Melville], 741
The Song of Hiawatha, 571
The Soul of Time, 1024
The Sound of Trees, 1141
The Spanish Student, 569
The Sphinx, 506
The Summer Rain, 562
The Swamp Fox, 324
The Swan, 1302
The Symphony, 916
The Tell-Tale Heart, 375
The Too-Late Born, 1503
The Tower Beyond Tragedy, 1354
The Tuft of Flowers, 1133
The Undefeated, 1460
The Upturned Face, 1006
The Valley of Unrest, 392
The Vision of Sir Launfal, 654
The Wander-Lovers, 980
The Warden of the Cinque Ports, 579
The Way to Wealth, 147
The Whistle, 154
The Wild Honeysuckle, 224
The Wild Ride, 982
The Wings of the Dove, 1082
The Woman of Andros, 1350
The Worms at Heaven's Gate, 1325
The Wound-Dresser, 824
The Yachts, 1318
The Young Witch, 985
This Corruptible, 1259
This Is Just to Say, 1318
Threes, 1178
Tiger Lilies, 910
Tiles, 1247
Time in the Rock, 1340
To a Common Prostitute, 834
To a Contemporary Bunkshooter, 1172
To a Locomotive in Winter, 843
To a Snail, 1324
To a Waterfowl, 332
To Brooklyn Bridge, 1559
To Earthward, 1143
To Helen, 389
To My Dear and Loving Husband, 35
To My Mother, 399
To One in Paradise, 392
To the Fringed Gentian, 336
To the Man-of-War-Bird, 819
To the Memory of the Brave Americans, 220
To the One of Fictive Music, 1327
To the Romantic Traditionists, 1517
Tom Mooney, 1128
Tor House, 1380
Tradition and the Individual Talent, 1478
Travels, 161
Tristram, 1127
True Vine, 1252
Truth at Last, 976
Two Lives, 1129
Two Rivers, 518
Two Sons, 991
Two Tramps in Mud Time, 1145
Two Years before the Mast, 687
Typee, 690

U.S.A., 1474
Ulalume—A Ballad, 395
Uncle Remus, 938
Unmanifest Destiny, 981
Upon the Objects then in View, 108
Upstream, 1179
Uriel, 500

Velvet Shoes, 1252
Venice, 586
Via Ignis, 1243
Villanelle: The Psychological Hour, 1277
Voluntaries, 516
Voluptates Apianae, 59
Voyages, 1558

Waldeinsamkeit, 518
Walden, 519
Westminster Abbey, 244
What is an American? 174
What the Bullet Sang, 866
When the Year Grows Old, 1260
Whispers of Immortality, 1492
White-Jacket, 702
Wild Peaches, 1251
Wilderness, 1175
Winter Meditations, 64
Woodcraft, 312
Word for Harvest, 1531

You, Andrew Marvell, 1501