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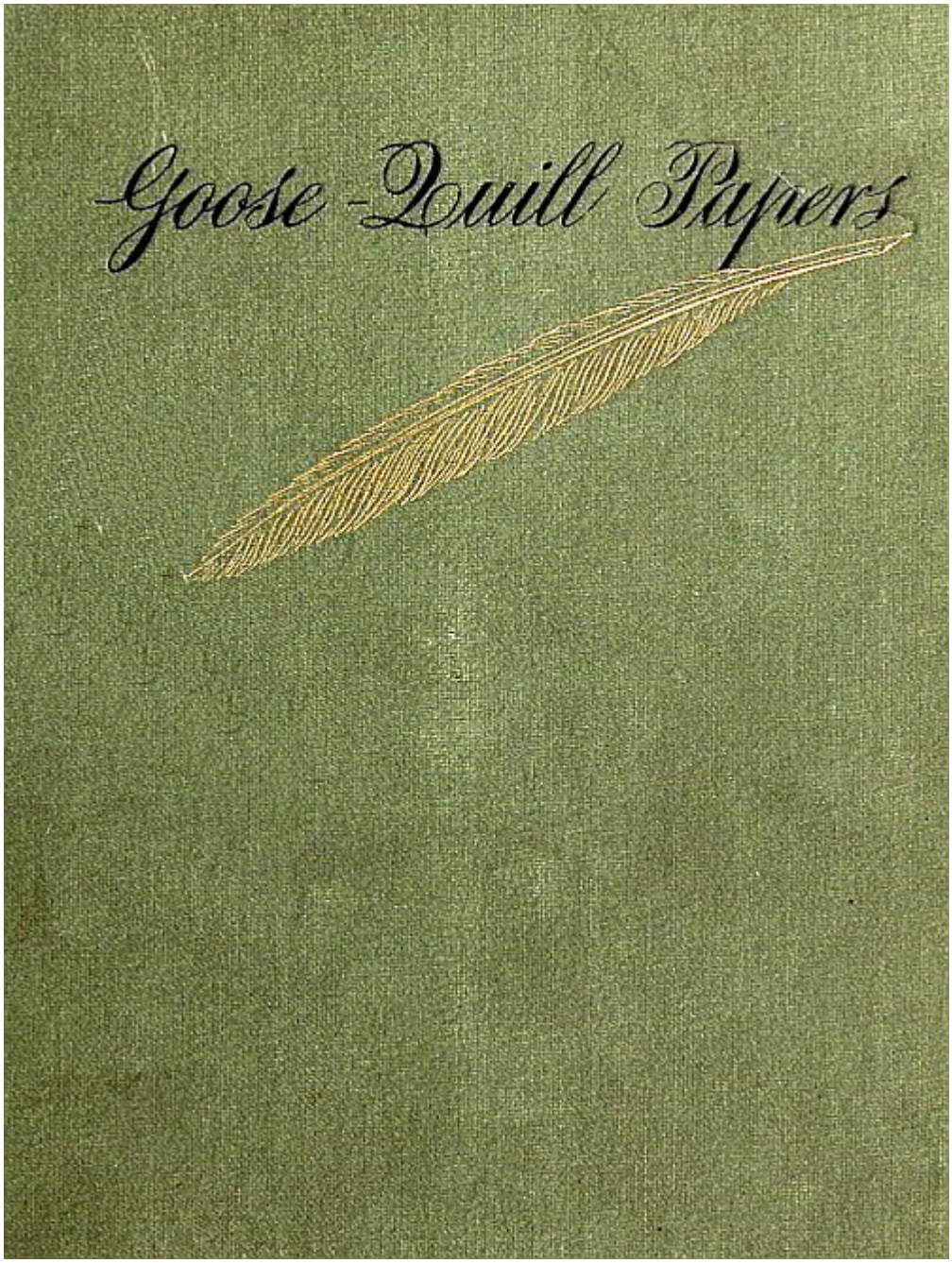
Goose-Quill Papers

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BY

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY.

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TO

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

THE LOVING HOMAGE

OF

This Book.

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GOOSE-QUILL PAPERS.

ON THE GOOD REPUTE OF THE APPLE.

FOR the sake of an apple Atalanta lost her nigh-won victory; and that other apple, thrown for the fairest, moved all Olympus into discord. Bragi, the north-god, and his peers renewed their youth with one touch of its cool juices. Dragons circled it in the enchanted garden; "the daughters three" stood about it in a sacred ring, and none but Hercules was its captor. The renascent marbles of the Greeks are dug out of earth, —"Praxitelean shapes!"—with its rounded beauty yet in their outstretched hands. What a superb mythologic pedigree! What noble mention (each worth an -10-
immortality) from old poets, romancers, historians! All heterodoxy lauded thee, apple of mine eye. It was reserved for true-church traditions to belie thee.

Thou who art full of virtue, what is this rumor of thy defection in Eden, thy remote causing of all contemporaneous woe? Thou who art fair without as a cherub's cheek, how couldst thou be abettor to the treacherous spirit? Shall the fault of our frail ancestress rest upon thy rosy head? "That the forbidden fruit of Paradise was an apple," saith a grave and learned author, "is commonly believed, confirmed by tradition, perpetuated by writings, verses, pictures; and some are so bad prosodians as thence to derive the Latin word *malum*, because that fruit was the first occasion of evil: wherein, notwithstanding determinations are presumptuous, many, I perceive, are of another belief." Let the personal argument stand, in default of a bolder plea. Mephisto, who hath had no chance of reformation, and who may be supposed to keep his early leanings, is in modern times no frequenter of orchards. Not by farmer, nor wayside knight, nor -11-
loitering sweethearts at dusk, hath he ever been detected prowling about an innocent apple-tree.

It hath, on the other hand, been affirmed by an ingenious clerk, that apple-eating is a masculine passion, and that no woman hath a dominating natural relish for

this hearty fruit; which, proven, would seem to indicate (as a burnt child dreads the fire, according to the proverb) that Eve's mindful daughters shun by instinct the immemorial enemy. If, indeed, it needs must be demonstrated by some unborn logician, that our primal happiness was forfeited by nought else, beyond the serpent's wiles, than a Gilliflower or a Greening, hanging on the representative tree, and criterion of obedience,—then there exist myriads of her descendants with the ancestral weakness, who shall look on our abused common mother with new and tender consideration, such as her disastrous connection with a plum, or a currant, or a quince, could never have evoked.

The apple is the only fruit which deserveth the name of genial. A peach is but a Capuan dish; the lime approacheth with cold infrequency; the amiable pear hath too little character; the grape is chiefly suggestive, anticipatory of its hereafter, as the larva of the gorgeous butterfly. But Apple standeth on her own merits. Tart, jelly, fritters, dumpling, enter not into the imagination of her possessor. Nay, nor even cider, that fretful disempurpled wine,—wine, as it were, with the bar sinister. Apple hath not the flippant gayety of the cherry; her glad humor is somewhat dashed with cynicism: she warmeth the heart, and trippeth up the tongue, and is, in the accepted phrase of artists, "a good fellow;" foe to unrighteous melancholy, as Laurentius writ, and frankly compassionate. She should have had Horace for her court-poet. One can conceive of poor, manly Fielding loving her at the modest ratio of three dozen a day; and of little Mr. Pope brushing her aside with fastidious petulance. -12-

The friends of Apple, your sworn familiars, who offend not her sun-mottled exterior with barbaric divisions of the knife, may be known by their ready wit and their bright glances. Hath not the wholesome autumn light, which filtered into the fruit they affect, permeated their moral temperament? They must needs be sound, consolatory, humane, and fit to wrestle with every wind that blows. "Man is that he eats," we read among the bewilderments of German speculation. But of her chaste and subtle cup, rimmed with gold or crimson, as Nature willed, the elect drink invigoration. -13-

"Encompass me about with apples," saith the Canticle, "for I am sick with love;" which, driven to its bare and literal sense, implies that apples are antidotes to languor and over-fondness. Apple, be it said, is a Platonist.

Bake her not. Take her in her gypsy wildness, in the homespun, lovelier so than pomegranates in their velvet: not too untimely, either, lest she be vindictive, and become the apothecary's friend rather than thine. Learn to trace her maiden growth among her cheery sisters, from some gnarled seat. Deny her not the arm-chair with thee before the flickering hearth-fire; and in thy most solitary meditations, thy rapt brooding-hours, trust her that she shall not distract thee. Out of celestial gardens, in the tender Cappadocian legend, maid Dorothy's angel brought apples to Theophilus; to him, indeed, the fruit of salvation. Yet, having lost the sweet symbolic grace of yore, she comes ever benignly, and without malice. Lavish October's legacy, foretelling to thy fancy other seasons yet to make glad the earth, she, more than any other, is the staunch stand-by, the winter friend. Her native orchards droop lifelessly in snows; but, like a fair deed, she surviveth mortality, a kind and vital influence still. Darling of the tourist and the huntsman that she is, never was there creature so absolutely adapted to the student. Her happy moisture fructifieth the brain. -14-

Only our neighboring Concord sages, far back in the Athenian beginnings of the present school, sought her intellectual aid in vain. They, and the listening element, met for conversation,—Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, Curtis, even

Hawthorne, with his sylvan shyness about him. There were appalling breaks, pertinacious "flashes of silence," such as were indigenous to Macaulay. The philosophers sat erect, and struggled; then the narrator tells us how, with Olympic sweetness, the host, Ralph Waldo Emerson, brought out a dish of russets,—*magna spes altera*, genius having failed,—which were consumed, unavailingly, in silence. The ally was wistfully courted on after occasions; but the club solemnly dispersed on the third night.

If Apple, alas! hath her freaks, let them be expended on philosophers. For her humbler adherents, she hath too constant a good-will. To us, at least, she is faithful, recompensing our old affection for every branch of her house. We are no specialist, but cherish her to the twentieth remove: all her pale and soured graftings, her pungent windfalls, her eccentric hangers-on, her disregarded poor relations.

Yea, till our judgment and our gallantry forsake us, be thou our deity, Pomona!

"Candles we'll give to thee,
And a new altar."

Nothing shall divert our vow. Wilfully and in cold blood, we subscribe ourself thy pagan.

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A HAND.

IT would be a judicious pastime for some curious scholar to write up the antecedents and traditions of these ten ubiquitous digits with which Nature dowers most of us; a survey reaching from the crime that darkened the morning of the world—the handiwork of Cain—to the most delicate outcome of art, finished yesterday; a summary of all the vicissitudes and symbolisms connected with the hand and its doings; challenges, investitures, perjuries, salutations; the science of chiromancy that the Romans loved; records made by chisel or pen by Michael Angelo, Goethe, Palestrina; of gloves and rings and falcon-jesses; of armor buckled on by saddened sweethearts, and prizes bestowed at tourneys; of power in the soldier, and persuasiveness in the fair lady; of Eastern juggling, and missal illuminations in gray cells, and manuscripts folded and preserved through centuries; of "pickers and stealers" and money-getting associations, seizures, bestowals, and benedictions. The Dutch boy, stopping the dyke with his frozen thumb in times of flood, shall not be forgotten; nor that maid of honor who, with her slender wrist, bolted the door against the raging mob of revolutionists, undauntedly long, and at last vainly; and in the chapter of heroisms shall be found the patient pyramid-builders, and Mucius Scævola, unflinching in fire; how with his hand Attila made kings tremble, Xerxes scourged the sea, and the saint of old Assisi won bird and beast from solitude, to feed and be caressed. We bethink us lastly of antique instruments, old tapestries, intaglios, and rare lamps; of the child Christopher Wren, raising card-houses and forecasting the stone glories of London; or of Petrarch, roving in a dusty world of books, and so dying, suddenly and without pain, with his arm about them, as of things among those which our historian shall touch.

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Scarce any author, save Sir Thomas Browne, hath thought it worth while to spend learned discussion on the right and the left hand. Yet it is a peculiar schism we graft on a youngling's mind when we teach it to discard the good service and ready offices of its honest sinistral member; so that we may come to look upon a left-handed neighbor as a sort of natural protest against an ill custom, and a vindication of unjustly suppressed forces.

A hand clinched, a hand outstretched, have in them all of defiance and supplication; hospitality shines in a hand proffered,—"a frank hand," as the Moor saith. Like a shell turned from the light, but with the tints of the morning not yet faded from it, is a babe's hand, "tip-tilted," lovely, as if it should close on

nothing ruder than a flower. The bronzed hands of toil, the opaque hands of idleness, differing even as life and death, the dear, remembered, cordial hands of one's youth,—shall they not have their laureate also in the commentator that is -19- to be, this new philosopher in trifles, this student of the furthest and subtlest bodily activities, and chronicler, as it were, *in extremis*?

The hand betrays the heart; not to thee, obstreperous gypsy! with thy sapient life-lines, but even to the unchrismed eye of the laity. We detect good-nature in yon plump matron, because of that pudgy but roseate part of her appended to her Tuscan bracelet; good-nature and generosity and simple faith. We have close acquaintance with courageous hands, melancholy hands, avaricious hands, compassionate hands, fastidious hands, hands sensitive and fair, friends to all things gentle, and pulsing with intelligence. We read in this hand how it hath healed a bitter wound; and in that, how it hath locked the door against a cry. Have we not known hands dark and shrunken with age or suffering, instinct yet with so-called patrician blood? The memory comes over us of the prince (such was verily his meek title) from a far isle, the inscrutable Asiatic, acclimated in speech and dress, whose chilling touch, recalling icicles in midsummer, we -20- superstitiously evaded at meeting and parting, and over whose origin we sun-lovers made jests, in the halls of that dreaming heir of a later dynasty, Madame B.

It was the boast of Job that he had not kissed his hand in sign of worship to sun nor moon nor stars. Note the pertinent and noble metaphor of Banquo, to express reliance and rest in time of perplexity:—

"In the great hand of God I stand."

To what fopperies, what wild freaks of mediæval years, hath the pliant hand lent itself! to the triangles, stars, portraits of ancient caligraphic cunning; to the wig, shape facetious, embodying a request to the barber, or the heart, dolphin, and true-love knot, that revealed a swain's metrical sighs to the scrutinizing eyes of Phyllis. Peace to those old minimizers! to him, the spider-worker, whose elfin Iliad Cicero saw, packed miraculously in a nutshell; to sturdy Peter Bales, "that did so take Eliza" with his infinitesimal tracery, which the lion-queen delighted -21- to read through a mighty glass, holding his airy volume on her thumb-nail!

Disraeli the elder tells us of the pleasing origin of that modern phrase,—"to write like an angel;" gracefully derived from one Angelo Vergecio, a scribe who drifted to Paris under Francis I., and whose name became in time a synonyme for beautiful caligraphy. To write like an angel! Now, with due allowance of the possession, among celestial beings, of our poor terrene accomplishments, yet may angels themselves most solemnly and securely preserve us from the foregoing solecism! Saving the primordial Angelo, a legend incorporated, none do so much write like angels as that slave-trader, the writing-master, enemy and subjugator of the hand's natural freedom. Handwriting, that should be matter of separate mental habit and muscular action, as Hartley Coleridge averred, the writing-master artificializes into a set form: a young lady is to write so; a clerk, so. There is a rascally supposed respectability in keeping to this masquerade, -22- where revelations of individuality are never in order. Spectre of our childhood, bugbear of ambrosial years, tyrant, nay, what can we call thee worse than thou art in bare English, Copy-book! the faithfullest vow of our life, religious as Hannibal's, was against thee. We recall with unalterable haughtiness, that not for one moment did we tolerate thee, save under burning protest; that thy long-drawn *da capo* moralities, all letter and no spirit, made our soul shudder; that every hour at the desk of old, under thy correct, staring eye, was an hour of

scorn and insurrection; and that we celebrate daily thine anniversary and thy festival, after our own heart, in cherishing every irregularity that thy Puritan code abhorreth. Aye, tails and quirks are dear to us, and we fear not to send forth our *t* without his bar, our *i* without her dot, lest we should seem reconciled to thine atrocious ritual. We shake our enfranchised hand in thy face, thou stereotyped impostor!

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We are not of misanthropic habit, but we reserve a sentiment warm as York's against Lancaster, or a right Carlist's towards the mild usurping race of Spain, for that fellow-mortal whose traceries in ink and pencil are sealed with orthodoxy. By the accepted wretchedness of their capitals, the moral depravity of their loop-letters, we choose our friends,—the least erring the least dear. We cannot abide Giotto, because of his *O*, that had no blemish. We take solace and delight in that exquisite Janus-jest of the last Bourbon Louis, who, re-entering his palace, the Imperial initial everywhere above and beside him, said, with a light shudder, to one of his blood, "*Voilà des ennemis autour de nous!*" Not for all the authority of divine Prudence herself, shall we be mindful of our *P*'s and *Q*'s. A flourish—not, indeed, the martial blare of trumpets, but the misguided capers of a pen-point—we look upon as a cardinal, yea (if we may proportion adjectives to our grade of feeling), a pontifical sin.

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Character demonstrates itself in trifles. Washington wrote with clearness and deliberation, like a law-maker; Rufus Choate, intricately and whimsically, like a wit. Oldys runs down the list of English royal autographs, drawing no inferences, and set solely on his fact. Cromwell's signature is paradoxically faint and vacillating. "Elizabeth writ an upright hand,—a large, tall character; James I., in an ungainly fashion, all awry; Charles I., an Italian hand, the most correct of any prince we ever had; Charles II., a little, fair, running, uneasy hand," such, adds a commentator, as we might expect from that illustrious vagabond, who had much to write, often in odd situations, and never could get rid of his natural restlessness and vivacity. It goes somewhat hard with us that Porson, Young, and especially Thackeray, wielded a proper quill, and were prone to consider penmanship as one of the fine arts. Nevertheless, we take it that Mr. Joseph Surface, in the comedy, would write so as to gladden the "herte's roote" of a school-mistress; as, likewise, might our honest friend Iago. Item, that Homer's mark was but a hen-scratch, outdone, in his own day, by the most time-out-of-mind stroller that sang, eyeless, with him.

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No missionary, fretting over the innocent rascalities of Afric tribes, burns with holier wrath than seizes us on beholding the prospectus of the "Penman's Gazette." Hark to its beguiling philippics: "Good penmanship hath made fortunes; every year thousands are advanced by it to position and liberal salaries; students make it a specialty. It is worth more than all the Greek and Latin, the *antiquated rubbish* of the higher schools and colleges, for, ('thine exquisite reason, dear knight?')—for it yields prompt and generous returns in money, food, clothing, good associations, and incentives to usefulness in the world!" The gentle reader is to imagine MONEY in huge capitals, and the other rewards of merit dwindling successively, till the incentives to usefulness are scarce visible to the naked eye. And then, forsooth, one is encouraged periodically by the fish-like portraits of Famous Penmen! Have a care, have a care, little guileless abecedarian, lest thy physiognomy, some black morning, should lend its beauty to the procession of fiends who Write Like Angels!

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Whom shall we hire to shout from the house-tops, vehemently, and with Quixotic disinterestedness, that success should be won through ambitions a trifle

exclusive of money, food, and clothing; and that this "new heraldry of hands, not hearts," is a monstrous error? Who is there to heed that strange doctrine? Think into what grave parley we might be drawn, even by the silken string of the "Penman's Gazette;" into what resentment of an unheavenly lesson! But we forbear.

A century closes at the finger-tips of two men of unequal age, and every touch of palm to palm forges a link of the unseen social chain which connects us with the father of our race. We take in ours, with enthusiastic consciousness, a hand we honor, or a hand that by representation has, perhaps, held cordially that of "the great of old." So chance we to strike, across the gulf of time, into the grasp of Caedmon, the Saxon beginner, or the real Roland of the horn, or Plato, or Alcuin, or him of Salzburg, the sunniest-hearted maker of music. Neither in our speculations can we forget that a Hand not all of earth rested once upon childish heads in Galilee, and passed among vast crowds, forgiving, healing, and doing good; and we know not but that our meanest brother, coming as a stranger, may bring to us, in more ways than one, its transmitted benediction.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MOON.

"To the Celestial and my Soul's Idol, the Most Beautified:"—

IT might appear to us an imperative, though agreeable duty, most high and serene Madame, to waft towards you, occasionally, a transcript of our humble doings on this nether planet, were we not sure, in the matter of friendly understanding, that we opened correspondence long ago. You were one of our earliest familiars. You stood in that same office to our fathers and mothers, back to your sometime contemporary, Adam of the Garden; and while we are worried into acquiescence with years, cares, wrinkles, and such inevitable designs of age, we are more pleased than envious to discover that you grow never old to the outward eye, and that you appear the -29-
same "lovesome ladie bright," as when we first stared at you from a child's pillow. You are acquainted, not by hearsay, but by actual evidence, with our family history, having seen what sort of figure our ancestors cut, and being infinitely better aware of the peculiarities of the genealogical shrub than we can ever be. Therefore we make no reference to a matter so devoid of novelty. But we do mean to frankly free our mind on the subject of your Ladyship's own behavior. We take this resolve to be no breach of that exalted courtesy which befits us, no less than you, in your skyward station.

We have, in part, lost our ancient respect for you,—a sorry fact to chronicle. There were once various statements floating about our cradle, complimentary to your supposed virtues. You were Phœbe, twin to Phœbus, "goddess excellently bright;" a queen, having a separate establishment, coming into a deserted court by night, and kindling it into more than daytime revelry. You were an enchantress, the tutelary divinity of water-sprites and greensward fairies. Your -30-
presence was indispensable for felicitous dreams. To be moon-struck, then, meant to be charmed inexpressibly,—to be lifted off our feet.

Now, we allow that you may have suffered by misrepresentation, or else are we right in detecting your arts; for, by all your starry handmaidens, you are not what we took you to be. We are informed (our quondam faith in you almost beshrews the day we learned to read!) that you are a timid dependent only of the sun, afraid to show yourself while he is on his peregrinations; that you slyly steal the garb of his splendor as he lays it aside, and blaze forthwith in your borrowed finery.

You are no friend to innocent goblins, but abettor to house-breakers. You are conspirator in many direful deeds, attending base nocturnal councils, and tacitly arraigning yourself against the law. "Let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, ... governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress, the moon, under whose countenance we—steal." Was it not well said, not frankly? -31-

Your gossip is the ominous owl, and not Titania.

Your inconstancy, to come on delicate ground, shineth above your other characteristics. Since we have seen your color come and go, we surmise there is no dearth of intrigue and repartee up there; and being, moreover, well acquainted with the texture of your red and your gray veil, we infer that you masquerade periodically at very unseasonable hours. Of painting your complexion we are disposed to acquit you; yet it is a severe blow to us to learn from the most trustworthy sources, that you wax.

Selene, Artemis! you are worldly beyond worldlings. We hear that you have quarters, and that you jingle them triumphantly in the ears of Orion, who is nobody but a poor hunter. Beware of the exasperation of the lower classes! whose awakening is what we call below, a French Revolution.

Who, indeed, that hath a mote in his eye, cannot still discern a huge beam in yours? You are in grievous need of a resident missionary, considering that you persist in obstinate schisms, and flaunt that exploded Orientalism, the Crescent, in the face and eyes of Christendom. -32-

You are much more distant and reserved, O beguiler! than you pretend. Your temper is said to be volcanic.

You that were Diana! who is this Falstaffian, Toby Belchian, Kriss Kringlish person we see about your premises? He hangeth his great, ruddy, comfortable phiz out of your casements, and holdeth it sidewise with a wink or a leer. We look on him as an officious rascal. He peereth where you only, by privilege, have permission to enter. He hath the evil eye. He thinketh himself a proper substitute for you, and King of the Illuminari; he reproduceth your smile, and scattereth your largesses; he maketh faces—we say it shudderingly—at your worshippers below. Frequently hath he appropriated kisses that were blown to you personally, or consigned to you for delivery from one sweetheart to another.

O Lady, O Light-dispenser! think, we hereby beseech you, of the danger of his being taken for you! Picture the discomfiture of your minstrel, who, intoning a rapturous recital of your charms, and casting about for a sight of your delectable loveliness, is confronted instead with that broad, ingenuous vagabond! In some such despairing rage as the minstrel's must have been the inventor of the German tongue, who discarded all other chances of observation after once beholding this thing ycleped your MAN, and angrily insisted on "Der Mond"—the Moon, he—as the proper mode of speech. -33-

Get you straightway a more acceptable minion, one of more chivalric habit, of more spare and ascetic exterior. Your credit and our comfort demand it. "Pray you, remember."

Less know we of your interminable starry neighbors. Is Mars civil, or heavy Saturn capable of laughter? Hath a comet vexed you,—that tireless incendiary? Doth Leo roar too loudly on your sensitive ear? We fancy that the Dipper is replenished frequently in your Ladyship's court; that the Milky Way is -34-

pleasantest of your pastures; that the Scorpion guardeth your palace gateway; and that Aquarius, be he not delinquent, tendeth your flower-beds.

What scenes, Cosmopolite, Circumnavigator, Universalist, have you beheld! What joy, what plenty; what riot and desolation! You are the arch-spectator. Death sees not half so widely. He lurketh like an anxious thief in the crowd, seeking what he may take away. But your bland leisurely eye looketh down impartially on all.

Caravans rested a thousand years ago beneath you in the desert; Assyrian shepherds chanted to you with their long-hushed voices; the Euphrates, while the infant world fell into its first slumber, leaped up and played with you in Paradise. You have known the chaos before man, and yet we saw you laugh upon last April's rain. Are there none for whom you are lonely through the ages? Are there not centuries of old delight in your memory, unequalled now? faces fairer than the lilies, on whose repose you still yearn to shine? Do you miss the -35-
smoke of altars? Have you forgotten the beginners of the "star-ypointing pyramid"? Can you not tell us a tale of the Visigoth? How sang Blondel against the prison-door? How brawny was Bajazet? How fair was Helen; Semiramis how cruel? Moon! where be the treasures of the doughty Kidd?

Where, too, is the slow, mysterious evening of our childhood, or its dawn, anticipating change, as you turned away? Or, rather, where is the child that enjoyed them by your kindly ray,—retaining now, of all which was its identity, only the dense sleep, the illimitable dreams, of those intervening nights? Do you call to mind, you that saw them often, its after-supper frolics; its Hallow-e'en captures, despite tub and candle; its inopportune studies, stolen out of mere greediness to know,—a fever long subsided? You were kind to that something of yesterday, dead as Amenophis now. Gleam, in some recess of the south, to-night, on bright-eyed F., who answered its young jests, and journeyed with it -36-
over the icy river, arm-in-arm; and on B.G., austere yet gentle, who played Brutus once to its Cassius; and rise not, rise not too soon upon our Philippi!

You have been fed, O Cynthia! upon the homage of mortal lips: you have had praises from the poets exquisite as calamus and myrrh. Many a time have we rehearsed before you such as we recall, from the sigh of Enobarbus,—

"O sovereign mistress of true melancholy!"

to the hymnal

"Orbèd maiden! with white fire laden,"

or the noble salutation of a mirthful-mournful spirit over seas:—

"Oh! thou art beautiful, howe'er it be,
Huntress or Dian, or whatever named;
And he the veriest pagan, that first framed
His silver idol, and ne'er worshipped thee!"

Drummond, Sidney, Milton, glorified your wanderings. And your truest votary, one John Keats, spake out boldly that,

——"the oldest shade midst oldest trees
Feels palpitations when thou lookest in!"

You are an incorrigible charmer; but as you are likewise -37-

——"a relief
To the poor, patient oyster, where he sleeps
Within his pearly house,"

we infer, with pleasurable surprise, that you are something better: a humanitarian.

Now, we venture to assert that you remember compliments, meant to be of this same Orphic strain, and inscribed to you, of which we are not wholly guiltless. We have all but knelt to you. The primeval heathen has stirred within us. We have been under the witchery of Isis. We aspire to be a Moonshee, rather than any potentate of this universe.

We wound you not with the analytic eye, nor startle you with telescopes. The scepticisms of astronomy enter not into our rubric. Are you not comely? Do you not spiritualize the darkness with one touch of your pale garment? Then what are they to us,—your dimensions and your distances? Gross vanity of knowledge! Abuse of earthly privileges!

If we affect the abusive, shy of more ceremonious forms of address, forgive us, -38-
Luna! We make recantation, and disown our banter. We extend the hand of cordiality even to your Man. How blithe and beauteous he is! He is embodied Gentility. We bow to him as your anointed Viceroy, your illustrious Nuncio. You know our immemorial loyalty, nor shall our rogueries teach you so late to doubt it. Forgive us, benignant, peaceful, affable, propitious Moon! Poet are we not, nor lunatic, nor lover; "but that we love thee best, O most best! believe it."

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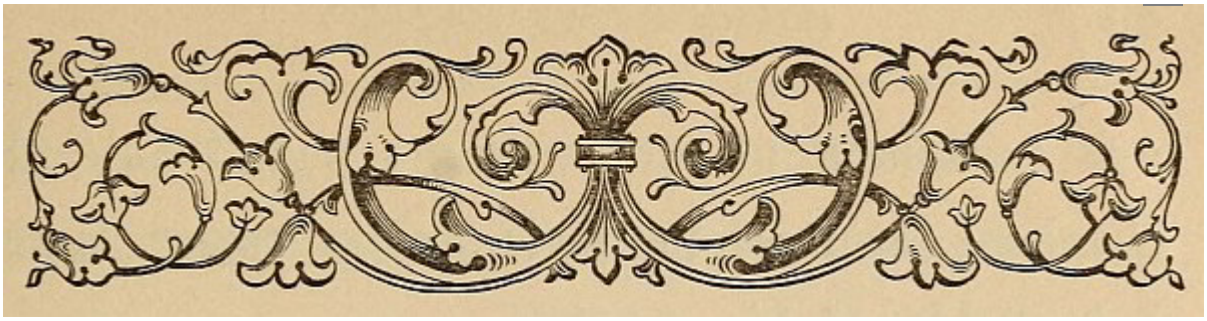


BRENTFORD PULPIT.

FROM a little church of some celebrity, and from a remote corner in its quiet nave, come these rude bygone impressions, transcribed faithfully, save in whatsoever is mainly personal and local. No word is here of Brentford choir or Brentford pews; but a record, strict and spare, of the now vanished figures who expounded texts to the village folk. For the most part, they were but birds of passage, seldom remaining long enough to lose the gloss of novelty, or to escape the awakened scrutiny of young eyes. Two only of these preachers were widely known; but each of them, on the other hand, possessed a striking individuality. The "King of Brentford," as readers of a certain swinging translation of Béranger will remember, was something of an -40- anomaly; and Brentford chaplains, at least in their public career, were indubitably of his court.

First, shall we not recall the Reverend L., with his soft majesty of speech, having in it an ever-recurring *sforzando*, peculiarly impressive and overpowering,—L., with his benignity of soul and his keen, evanescent smile, intellect flashing through it, like lightning over a sombre waste of waters? He required the closest attention of any speaker to whom we have listened. The following must be incessant, the allegiance unabated, lest the Emersonian and gossamer-like sequence of ideas, the swift beauty of phrase and figure, elude you, never to reappear the same. His playfulness in the pulpit was unique. Subdued it was, yet how potent! Humor has many a fit abiding-place in this world, of which the pulpit seems last to be chosen. But L.'s discretion was royally sure. His salutary wit, felicitous in placing itself, and infrequent enough to rouse attention always newly, went on angelic errands with its Puck's wings. An apostolic purpose consecrated his airy thrusts at evil. The hand of steel was -41- present ever under his caressing touches.

We surmise that if there was anything connected with his vocation which L. abhorred, it was the necessity of periodical charity-sermons. When induced to appear as pleader on these occasions, his conduct was amusingly characteristic. He played hide-and-seek with his petition; he put it off, eyed it curiously, fenced with it, and kept it at arm's length; then, beginning to advocate its claims, he held it up for your inspection reluctantly, as if it were no child of his, and his right were rather to befriend it in private than thrust it into public notice. He would say a few glowing words, making his fortitude under such an emergency

as truly a hint to your benevolence as his spoken plea. He would sum up for you the misery of the poor, the lamentable differences in comfort, the evils that spring from unalleviated poverty, the precept of brotherly love, the imperative command of giving and sharing and making glad; all this with an air of indifference over facts in array, and of needless appealing to such hearts and -42- such purses as yours were sure to be! L. could have written noble charity-sermons for another's delivery, but to ask in his own person was wellnigh impossible. He seemed to rebel, not against the actual discomfort of his position, but rather against the advisability of reminding you of a duty you never could have forgotten. In his chivalrous dealing he smote your sensibilities more surely than many a professional beggar with seven small children; and the shekels leaped in a fountain from you and from everybody else, until the alms-box overflowed. L.'s utility in this strange office was quite wonderful, even to himself. His very exordium, "Dear old friends!" was, though he knew it not, irresistible. On the morrow, Workhouse Tommy with a new cap, or barefooted Molly in the exhilaration of a sturdy dinner, must have blessed the shy and half-resentful claim which a great heart put forth as theirs.

L.'s preaching, for the most part, whether in its bright or solemn phases, was best understood by those who best knew the man. Like Walter Savage Landor, in whom he delighted, and whom he strongly resembled, he required appreciators -43- as well as hearers. He loved a thoughtful audience, and to such spoke with all the outpouring of his mightier self. There were minds of a certain cast, wholly foreign to his sympathies, which were slow to be persuaded into a belief of his accessibility. Yet a meeker and kinder heart than L.'s never beat. Half the country knew him as a fine theologian, and scarce fifty for the "sweet sociable spirit" that he was. A touch of the intolerance of genius he had indeed, without which the symmetry of his character would have been impaired.

D., with his active and high-strung temperament, was your true conversational preacher, treating with glad and reverent familiarity "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." Beneath the sounding-board he was perpetually on the defensive. He was always setting you straight, putting you in the way of seeing good, reconciling you to your antipathies. If we may use the word to signify a process so gentle, he *hammered* his optimism into you. You must be cheerful, you must be thankful, you must be self-sacrificing; there was no escaping it. D., -44- in his zeal and his amiability, was a far-away echo of John the Evangelist; and the phrase, "My little children," came with peculiar unction from his lips. His voice was not powerful. It may have been a slight hesitation and reluctance of speech which gave it an especial charm. "Somewhat he lispèd," also, like Chaucer's Friar; if not

——"for his wantonnesse
To make his English sweete upon his tonge."

We remember that once, by some chance development of his favorite topic, he came across a wayside tramp, and gave him an apotheosis laughingly called to mind whenever one of that thenceforth respected species lights upon our path.

"Here is a vagabond, an outcast of society," began the Reverend D., with his usual high-bred gesture of expostulation,—"a good-for-nothing beggar whom you brush as you pass; and drawing aside, mayhap in your heart of hearts you despise him. You have no right to despise him. Nothing has destroyed or will destroy the eternal brotherhood between you. Despise him? Why, it is a -45-

disloyalty to mankind. In the eye of Heaven sinlessness is the criterion, not riches or health or intelligence. And he may stand nearer to the Throne than you, because of a more repentant spirit. Why should you despise him? It belongs to you rather to love and aid him. He is a reflection of yourselves, distanced from you by the mean formalities of the world, but fashioned like you without and within, and co-heir of whatever has fallen to your share. What you have been taught through the dignity of manhood and womanhood to think yourselves—that is he. He is the Image of Uncreated Beauty. He is the Wedding Guest in the palace of the King. He is the Mortal who shall put on Immortality. He is the Son of the House of David, the hope and joy of Israel. His head is like Carmel, and his form as of Libanus, excellent as the cedars. Dare you despise him? Even as you deal with him in your thought, should the Most High deal with you in our great day forthcoming!"

This extraordinary burst was delivered with indescribable serenity. We have but -46-
suggested the gorgeous language in which D. revelled when he chose, nor hinted at the peculiarity of pose and intonation which helped to make his words vital. To one hearer, at least, the effect was superb, and the tramp was established in his native dignity forever.

Dr. R. had the artistic temperament, being a poet of rare worth. There was always a fine metaphoric haze about his sermons. He was by nature diffident and somewhat listless; the effort of mounting the pulpit stair must have been distasteful to him. His phrasing was of extreme nicety and justness; and he spoke English pure and simple. Yet his "Greek languor," his low, unobtrusive voice, served to veil the excellence of his thoughts. He was shy of any display. His Sunday efforts certainly did not become popular, in the Brentford acceptance of that term. But while R., like the clouds, seemed gray always to heedless eyes, to brighter perceptions he must have shown the delicate, transitory tints of the rainbow. He had two great merits: his quotations, scriptural -47-
and other, were exquisitely apt; he likewise knew the value of sudden epilogues. You had not time to suspect that the last rounded period was having its dying fall, before

> "He straight, disburthened, bounded off as fleet
> As ever any arrow from a cord."

Altogether another type of Levite was the Reverend M., of clear Puritan descent. He had an expansive personality, and could rise to any occasion, clothing what he had to say in easy and elegant language. As a rule, his sermons, not to speak it profanely, were pacifying as an opiate. But sometimes he stood before his astonished hearers not wholly as a symbol of the peace-maker.

For his text, many years back, he once took the "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," Matthew xxiv. The awful sublimity of his reading prepared his auditors for what was to follow. Hearts were stirred to the depths that day, with the measured musical utterance, the dread and calm authority, such as fancy had conceived proper to the Recording Angel. M. never -48-
seemed quite so aerial and boyish in his proper person again. That one grand sermon shed its supernatural light still over him, as he walked on Monday and Tuesday in view of the laity. It seemed as if all his previous and subsequent words and ways were a disguise, and that only on the never-to-be-forgotten morning he had been revealed. None of his other attempts were thereafter held in comparison with this, an advantage not to be doubted. A magnificent

prejudice in his favor would fain have forced upon his every parley the beauty which the first had worn.

We last heard the Reverend M. (he was then nearing his sixtieth year) on the evening of a Christmas day. We recall that he began by poetically picturing the corresponsive hour of that primal Christmas when the divine Child lay slumbering in His mother's arms, the hush of the Bethlehem hills, the unconsciousness of the broad kingdom that "knew him not." Little by little, the monotones of this tranquil discourse fell, like so many snow-flakes, upon our -49-
eyelids. A swinging festoon of smilax, stirred by chance beneath the pulpit edge, charmed us deeper into oblivion. The light ran in eddies on the faint gray walls. The visible, the palpable, were as if they had not been. We had slipped from our moorings into the irresistible depth of dreams.

Presently we heard anew, half-distinctly, half-confusedly, "*O expectatio gentium!*" We looked towards the starting-point of that Latin spray, but nothing followed upon our sudden rousing save the burst of the organ. All about us was a rustling and a stirring, such as the Ephesian sleepers might make at the awakening. Horrible! Dreams were over for many others beside the solitary culprit we had supposed ourself. Bonnets nodded; furs were smoothed; numbed feet were tapped upon the carpet for resuscitation; and Chubbuck in the next pew rubbed his eyes, to the imminent extinction of those useful auxiliaries. Heaven forgive us our drowsiness! How much æsthetic pleasure, how much -50-
spiritual profit Brentford missed that night, befits us not to conjecture. Yet we palliate the disgraceful circumstances, due in no wise to lack of virtue on our part, or of eloquence on the Reverend M.'s, by surmising that the general slumber was a tribute of itself; not, indeed, a protest of weariness, or ungracious abstraction from duty, but rather an affiliation with the time and the theme

——"made all of sweet accord."

Who shall gainsay it?

The like hap, we are sorry to state, never befell us under the spell of that austere prelate, Theophilus A. One could as soon have grown mindless of a Gatling gun in full activity. He was an ecclesiastical thunderbolt. Ferdinand would have put him on the Inquisition. He could have served the mediæval writs of excommunication on kings, or stood with high-hearted Hildebrand to confront the German at Canossa.

A. was pale, but not weakly, with his dauntless eye, his luminous front, his unrelaxed lips drawn like a bowstring. He was all vehemence; his dearly- -51-
beloveds had scintillations to them; his very firstlys and secondlys had the heroic ring.

Did he wear the armor of the ancestral Franks under his clerical dress? Whence got he that tremendous vigor, that aptitude for great and hazardous things? Apollyon could scarcely have lessened the vitality of this Christian by any combat, however long and fierce.

You must have felt his presence helpful or harsh, as your organization prompted. A harp will quiver with a concussion in its vicinity. So with mortal men and women in juxtaposition with the Reverend A. He had aroused splendid impulses, so it was said, in many lands; but the ultra-sensitive soul was scarcely adapted to his touch. He it was who could make Willard, serene as a child, shake like an aspen-leaf at his mildest peroration.

More comfortably enchanting wert thou, O K.! whom every tongue praised. Welcome was thy young cherubic countenance, dawning midway between the -52-
roof and the aisles! Worthy of Talma was that shining dramatic gift which brightened a hundred-fold the utterances of thy manly piety! Who could make doubtful issues surer than thou, least didactic, yet most practical of preachers? Who could so boldly pursue a simile, eking analogies out of stones? Who so pitiless on impostures and shams, when thy gallant oratory

"Blew them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry"?

Peter the Hermit, with his crusading spirit, would have loved thee.

It was the fashion at one time to classify K. along with Dr. S., of a neighboring city, a gentleman with whom he had few mental traits in common, outside of the gift of eloquence. S. was the inimitable to his parishioners; and he had, like Bobadil, "most un—in one breath—utterable skill, sir!" The matter of his sermons could have been turned without alteration into blank verse, having cadences manifold. He spoke rapidly and moved alternately from side to side in -53-
lieu of gesticulation; he studied no opportunity, but lavished his fine things, like an almoner at a coronation, here and there and everywhere.

K., never a user of notes, and no less spontaneous than his famous reputed rival, was habitually careful of detail. His imagination was gorgeous. His activity ran to the verge of restlessness. Thoroughly earnest and exhilarating, his large intelligence was cheery as a breeze from the mountain-top.

Neither can we forget Brentford's Titanic visitor, magnificently verbose, looming at his extraordinary height, with a fund of simplicity and gentleness hidden somewhere beneath that generous exterior. How guileless he was, how tender!—"invaluable at a tragedy." The petition which Mr. Thomas Prince delivered in the Old South would have fallen with equal grace from N.'s lips:—

"O Lord! we would not advise;
But if, in Thy Providence,
A tempest should arise
And drive the French fleet hence, -54-
And scatter it far and wide,
And sink it in the sea,
We should be satisfied,
And Thine the glory be!"

With what fervor, two parts patriotism, one part innocence, would N. have pronounced that mischievous supplication!

His conscientiousness carried him once a little too far; and the sequel "dimmed these spectacles," as Thackeray used to say. It was to us the funniest thing that ever happened in sacred precincts,—funny beyond all power of endurance.

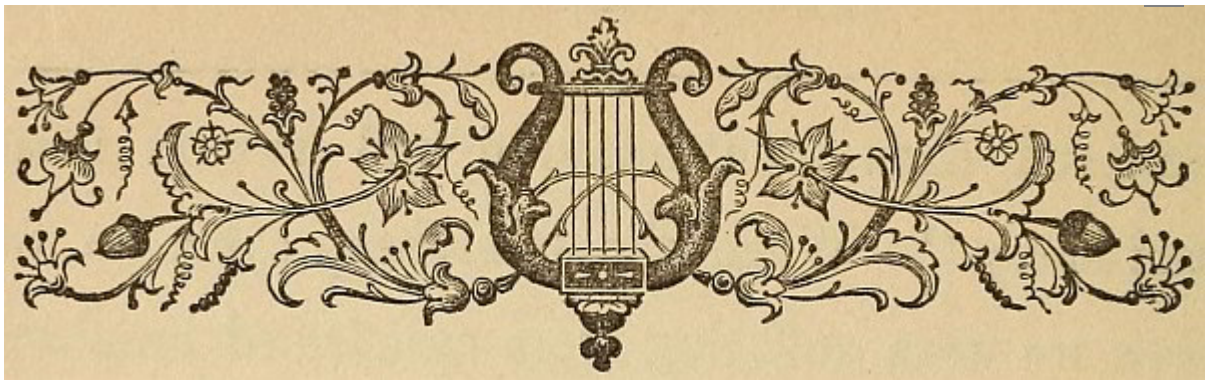
"When Solomon finished the Temple," said the Reverend N., in his sonorous tones,—"when Solomon finished the Temple he sacrificed one hundred and twenty thousand sheep and twenty-two thousand oxen." Now, that was incontestable. But immediately a wretched little doubt crept in upon his Biblical assertion. "Seventy thousand—ur—ur—twenty thousand sheep," continued the Reverend N., "twenty hundred thousand ox—ahem! I mean two hundred thousand, a hundred and twenty—ur—[very slow and deliberate reiteration]: two and twenty thousand oxen, one hundred and twenty thousand sheep." When -55-

the last sheep came on the scene we were suffering from agonies of laughter. Let us trust that they turned their meek and startled eyes another way.

There was H., too, a white-haired logician who had proved everything, from the Creation down to the principles of good and evil in the most neglected "queer small boy;" E., drawing exquisite homely illustrations from the sea; and gracious little B., the polished rhetorician, most deferent in his manners of address, most scrupulously reliant on the sense and rectitude of those around him.

"Honor and reverence and good repute" be with them all now, wheresoever they may labor or rest. We think sometimes we have heard Cyril and Polycarp among them.

Our incurable tendency towards observation—the fact of our having been born in an Observatory, so to speak—stands as apology for touching on the heaven-appointed mannerisms of Brentford Polycarps and Cyrils.



NOTES MADE BY TROILUS GENTLY.

GENTLY was a middle-aged, bookish friend of ours, in no way remarkable save that he unconsciously nullified Emerson's smiling prediction, and wore off a pencil-point in writing down the disconnected fancies of a few days. Poor T.G. has long been gathered to his fathers. In justice to the pencil, we transcribe some of his memoranda:—

No pleasure or success in life quite meets the capacity of our hearts. We take in our good things with enthusiasm, and think ourselves happy and satisfied; but afterward, when the froth and foam have subsided, we discover that the goblet is not more than half-filled with the golden liquid that was poured into it.

Reciprocity of good-will, and not compatibility of tastes, is the first requisite of friendship.

How singularly fresh and sweet is Mozart's music!—like the cadence of waters over a rocky bed, or the bird-chorus of a May morning. His melodies and those of Nature have always some subtle association. It is as if we knew the noble mother, and walked often by her side, and some fine day we meet the intelligent and sportive child, finding in his voice, his gestures, his salutation, something foreshadowed to us in that other, and beautiful in both.

Life is a breathing-space between two eternities, a holiday with appalling realities behind and before.

Barbarians "speak with naked hearts together:" we have polite conversation.

I am fond of smelling the spring,—detecting growth before it shows itself by the delicious damp odor in the fields. Snow and rain have their separate fragrance. I know at a distance the aromatic pine, the eatable whiff of birch-bark, the oily sweetness of sappy maples, the tart goodness of a sorrel-patch, and the scent of crushed tansy. -58-

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The Chinese countenance is impassive, as if the old, old weight of Asiatic civilization had blunted and oppressed it.

Vandyck deified his sitters. He is like the sun in Shakespeare's line,—

"Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy."

A good dinner is not to be despised. It paves the way for all the virtues.

B. knew a little French girl who always insisted, with a pretty extravagance of intonation, that pigs in their grunt were saying, "Nous aurons congé."

When a soul finds nothing to reverence among its common surroundings, it is blind indeed.

The beauty of youth is inconstant and shifting as the tint at the heart of a rose, not two mornings the same; or the fall of snow-flakes, blown by every wind into new and airy relationships.

-59-

The Brook Farmer is extinct now as the dodo. It would be a delight to come across one who is sensitive yet on the subject of that Arcadian failure.

When genius seems to work disregarding rule, we may be sure that it has assimilated to itself whatever is best in every rule.

The undertaker ostensibly reverses the venerable truism that "the young may die, the old must," by thrusting forward the smaller coffins in his awful windows, and keeping the others (in the subjunctive mood, as it were) well in the background.

The mind is fearless so long as there is no reproach of conscience. When that comes, come breakage and bondage and a host of terrors.

Shelley was all fire and air. His eye had perpetually the fixed light of a day-dreamer's. There is a marked resemblance between the portrait of him taken at Rome in 1819, by Miss Curran, and that of Sir Philip Sidney, engraved from the original and prefixed to Grosart's edition,—a resemblance not astonishing save to those unacquainted with both mild and "heroick spirits."

It seems a little difficult to discern clearly the happiness or misery of those very near to us in affection. Souls have their perspective, and need to be removed from the eye, that it may scan them justly.

Sickness is such a humiliation that some cannot survive its first infliction.

We try hard to cure superstition, which has been defined as the surplus of faith, the mere foam and scum of what is valuable. Over-confidence and enthusiasm, which are in the same degree the excess of hope and love, we do not try to cure at all.

Thomson, the poet, was so lazy that he used to eat peaches off the trees, standing with his hands contentedly plunged in his pockets.

Would not the weather hang itself in despair if no notice were taken of it, and if every man, woman, and child forbore to speak of it for three successive days?

"Frostling" used to signify a bough, blossom, or fruit nipped by the cold; and "windling" one blown from its natural support; two sweet and expressive words, now obsolete and without synonymes. It is hard to account for their being left behind in the race for the development of our English.

W., whose beliefs are quite fixed, vacillates nobly in matters of opinion. In a group of debaters he holds with no one long, but must needs jump at a conclusion so liberal and sure that it reconciles all hostilities.

All lovers are bewitched, steeped in illusions, versed in the oracles,—the riddle themselves of the whole world.

"Ye smiler with ye knif under ye cloke!" What a picture in that line of Chaucer!

The Puritan was a man of severities. He never forgot that God struck Oza and buried Pharaoh in the sea. He went through the world wearing his creed, like a sword, solely for aggressive purposes.

-62-

The deficiency of gentle manners, in one not bred to their practice, can nearly always be supplied by sensibility or by tact.

"Take them, O great eternity!
Our little life is but a gust
Which bends the branches of thy tree
And trails its blossoms thro' the dust."

I never knew a critic to note the metaphor in these musical lines of Longfellow, but it seems to me quite haunting and overpowering, and of extraordinary beauty.

When you wear your old and shabby coat, anticipating a continued storm; and the sun shines, making you out of place with your ill-chosen garb, how natural it is to trace the analogy from dress to manners, and to reflect how poor a show premeditated surliness and sourness make in the broad light of the world!

We die and are forgotten; but must we forget?

The Greek pastoral compliment, "Thou singest better than a cicada," would do very well now-a-days for an amiable old lady to address to her tea-kettle on the hob.

-63-

Thoreau greatly rejoiced in what he called his "invisible suit," a sort of mottled brown-and-green stuff in which he could cross a field undetected.

There was once a golden age because golden hearts beat in it. If it come again, it will scarcely be through scientific progress.

What an excellent, high-minded motto would the last words of Walter Raleigh make: "So the heart be straight, it matters nought how the head lieth." It is an

echo of that celestial text, "Be ye not solicitous," and implies serene disregard of all but things essential.

It may be exacting, but not a whit so beyond justice, when I feel that if I serve the king, he must repay me in love and trust, or my allegiance cannot thrive.

I came of late across a newly told jest of C. Lamb's concerning Stilton cheese, which pleased me tremendously, having the indubitable flavor of his wit, and being (what is rarely the case with floating anecdotes of him) unmistakably his.

I cannot recall faces or forms that I have seldom met, or recognize them again with ease, unless some revealed trait or expression of soul has made gait, contour, and presence memorable.

Pride is the distorter of souls; cheerfulness the helper; love the beautifier; sorrow the redeemer.

If I ever had the heroic strain, it has receded beyond my own perception; and like an athlete out of practice, I have to "brace" before doing that which is right, in defiance of inclination.

"The pure in heart shall see God,"—severe and lovely touchstone for mankind.

I saw once two sisters, the younger resembling the other as the translation of a poem does its original, moving by the same laws of beauty, yet inevitably lacking something of the earlier grace and flavor.

Twenty-third May, 1881. Hawthorne buried seventeen years ago to-day. "Who henceforth shall sing to thy pipe, O thrice-lamented? Who shall set mouth to thy reeds?"

How very considerate of the failings of others must that man be who remembers constantly the Infinite Mercy he himself needs!

A good temper is a jewel extraordinary, and a worker of wonders. One of the old chroniclers tells of an irresistibly amiable monk who for some misdemeanor was

sent to hell and released again, because Satan could not provoke or torment him.

The sight of a hearse against the joyous streets is always depressing: a dark line drawn through thoughtless festivity, like the dread writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast.

C.'s poetry has much simplicity, calmness, pastoral sense, and beauty; his prose is jerky and barbaric. He is a sort of medal having the king's head finished on one side, the rough uncouth surface wanting a stamp on the other.

An odd and good resolve,—to carry the right hand always ungloved, lest one should meet a friend, and be off one's cordiality, so to speak; or a foe, and be off one's self-defence.

Reserve is made sometimes of chain-mail, sometimes of solid plate steel. One is as good armor as the other, though not so obvious.

Some people wear out everything quickly and naturally,—clothes, acquaintanceship, books, pleasures, even dear life itself.

I am delighted at Lowell's saying that our modern terms, "the deuce" and "Old Scratch," were evidently derived from *dus* and *scrat*, hairy wood-demons among the Celts and Teutons.

The best of everything is the only individual of that thing. We should ignore the rest.

I think one of the drollest stories I ever heard of absent-mindedness, is this of old P., the barrister. He and his friend M. were sitting close together about the hearth of a winter night. There was no light; they were alone and silent. Suddenly P. got thinking of some project, and according to his villanous and immemorial habit, meditatively began to scratch his cranium. He came to a pause; but recovering the sequence of his thoughts, felt compelled likewise to resume the physical operation. But this time P. wildly clutched not his own, but M.'s profuser locks, and furiously recommenced. M. stood it for a moment, inwardly convulsed with laughter, then lightly removed the offending hand; and P. roared out angrily, faltering in the middle of his speech with a bewilderment beautiful to see: "Great George! don't you suppose I have a right, a right to— to — You don't mean to say that wasn't my own head!"

Standing is the most royal and natural pose. I have a sympathy for that Roman emperor who sprang to his feet to meet the quick death that came upon him.

Spenser: "The noblest mind the best contentment has." Thoreau, by way of exemplification: "I shall not fret to be a giant, but be the biggest pygmy that I can."

Hawthorne wrote with his conscience. It was a sort of celestial-colored ink which he kept by him, and into which ever and anon he dipped his pen.

-68-

I was struck anew, of late, with the complete ideality of the Venus of Melos, its charm of detail, out-naturing Nature: the head so delicately moulded, the neck so slender yet so strong, the scarce-deviating outline from shoulder to hip; the very apotheosis of health and beauty, with a spirituality over all that sets you thinking of a sweet and ample heart within.

There is scarcely a blow in after life comparable to that first sad intimation (perhaps in early youth), that human nature is not what we thought it, not the thing of our dreams; little else than a tissue of frailties woven together.

Shakespeare's "Rosalind" is not very dissimilar to the best type of the much-maligned American girl. She is full of "frolic parley," self-reliant, tender, womanly.

"Old hushed Egypt." Put down that golden phrase, along with many another, to Leigh Hunt. When a delightsome author threatens to be forgotten, credit him at least with what he has added to the soul of literature, and let him be buried "with all his travelling glories round him."

-69-

The French language is *eau sucré*; the German "A cup o' thy small beer, sweet hostess."

If I have a friend, though absent many years, I hold a true treasure with fear and trembling, knowing that whatever losses come, I have been blessed beyond measure with the wealth no chance can take away.

Love is unlike the bow of Ulysses, in that it can be drawn to its full capacity of magnificence or destruction not only by the greatest.

I know a man who looks like Boccaccio, and does not appreciate it.

Genius, like the lowly insect having prophetic stirrings of the beauty it is to evolve, needs solitude, and must build it unaided for itself. If it come forth in due time winged and lovely to the sun, or if it die in the dark, unsuspected of its aim, either end will be found best relatively to the life it affects.

There is no participator who serves so well in any conversation as an adept in commonplaces and "words, words, words."

Milton's "charm of half-awakened birds" means *charm* in the pretty old English sense of "twittering," "piping softly and confusedly."

Much of Thomas Hood's more serious work is overlooked by the public eye. Some one will be obliged to come forth by and by to say, and to say truly, that nobler poems than the "Haunted House," the "Poet's Portion," and "Death" were never written.

In the matter of reform, I should choose often to be a crab-reformer, and to move backward after many wish-worthy things of yesterday.

Thackeray says somewhere that "we see the world, each of us, with our own sight, and make from within us the world we see."

By way of experiment, a youngling of scholarly race might be kept wholly from books, etc., to see if the ancestral learning would not revive of itself.

It pains me to see coarseness predominant in the human countenance,—a thing so ethereal and divine of itself. Think of the forerunning wrongs back in the generations which have prompted and helped it to its present degradation!

The poets, in chronicling strong emotion over things actual or imagined, must frequently outgo the force of the emotion in the expression of it, so that they

have the power of draining off the whole supply and depth of their feeling.

Coleridge should have lived in the times of the oracles. He would have "drawn," as we say, better than Delphi.

At the funeral of a celebrated artist, wherein I took no part whatever, and had only a genuine sorrow for the public loss to excuse my slipping into the church, the sexton wanted to seat me conspicuously, taking me for a chief mourner, for a relative *at least*, he said. I was pleased at the limiting clause.

Children are born optimists, and we slowly educate them out of their heresy.

We are stricken mute by an heroic death. Praise is poor and vain if the life forerunning it was heroic too; and if it was not, love and forgiveness seem not half good enough to offer at the ruined shrine, where at last a divinity has descended.

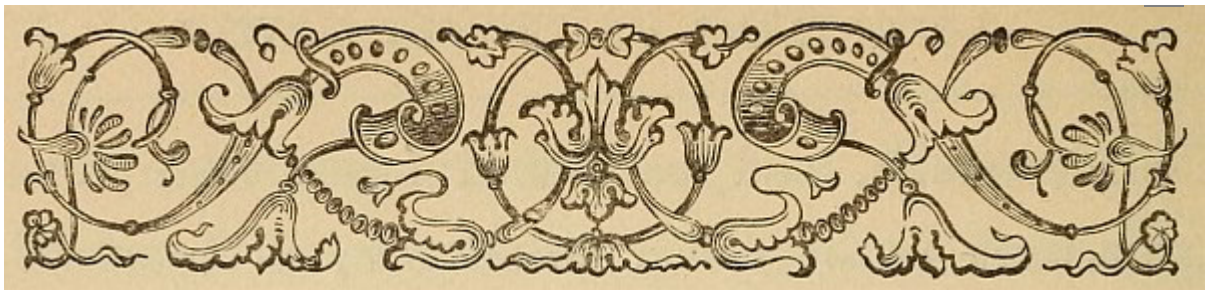
In sensitive natures, just as the ordinary blessings of life cast an aggrandized shadow and result in supreme pleasure, so their denial becomes a matter of deep pain, equally disproportionate to the cause.

It is better to fall into added disrepute with an enemy than to alienate a would-be friend.

Frankness prevents troubles that only time can cure.

A good and worthy life cannot be detached or wholly useless, because unfinished. When you throw a number of broken rings on the floor, on lifting one you find it casually joined with another, and each, in turn, with many more. So must a man's endeavor co-operate with a predecessor's, and be linked again with some life-work to be ended to-morrow, in beautiful, enduring sequence; though to outward vision all three were but severally a fragment and a failure.

-74-



ON TEACHING ONE'S GRANDMOTHER HOW TO SUCK EGGS.

IN the days of the schoolmen, when no vexed question went without its fair showing, it seems incredible that the proposition hereto affixed as a title provoked no labyrinthine reasoning from any of those musty and hair-splitting philosophers. Aristotle himself overlooked it; Duns Scotus and the noted Aureolus Philip Theophrastus Bombast de Hohenheim Paracelsus were content to repeat his sin of omission. Even that seventeenth-century English essayist and scholar, "whose understanding was wide as the terrene firmament," neither unearthed the origin of this singular implied practice, nor attempted in any way to uphold or depreciate it. The phrase hath scarce the grace of an Oriental precept, and scarce the dignity of Rome. It might -75- sooner appertain to Sparta, where the old were held in reverence, and where their education, in a burst of filial anxiety, might be prolonged beyond the usual term of mental receptivity.

It is reserved, therefore, for some modern inquirer to fix it, for certain, whether the strange accomplishment in mind was at any time, in any nation, barbarous or enlightened, in universal repute among venerable females; or else especially imparted, under the rose, as a sort of witch-trick, to conjurers, fortune-tellers, Pythonesses, Sibyls, and such secretive and oracular folk; whether the initiatory lessons were theoretical merely, and at what age the grandams (for the condition of *hypermaternity* was at least imperative) were allowed to matriculate themselves in the precincts of this lost art.

It is a partial argument against the antiquity of the custom, and against the supposition of its having prevailed among old Europe's nomadic tribes, that -76- several of these are accused by historians of having destroyed their progenitors so soon as the latter became idle and enfeebled; whereas it is reasonably to be inferred that the gentle process of ovisugescence, had such then been invented, would have kept the savage fireside peopled with happy and industrious centenarians. After the arduous labor of their long lives, this new, leisurely, immeasurably mild and genteel trade could be acquired with imperceptible trouble. Cato mastering Greek at eighty, Dandolo leading hosts when past his nonage, are kittenish and irreverend figures beside that of a toothless Goth grandmother learning, with melancholy energy, to suck eggs.

We know not why the privilege of education, if granted to them without question, should have been withheld from their gray spouses, who certainly would have preferred so sociable an industry to whetting the knives of the hunters, or tending watch-fires by night. But no one of us ever heard of a grandfather sucking eggs. The gentle art was apparently sacred to the gentle sex, and withheld from the shaggy lords of creation, until the fierce creatures, -77- ignorant of the innutritious properties of the shell, took to devouring them whole.

By what means was the race of hens, for instance, preserved? Statistics might be proffered concerning the ante-natal consumption of fledglings, which would edify students of natural history. One bitterly disputed point the noble adage under consideration permanently settles; a quibble which ought to have

——"staggered that stout Stagyrite,"

and which has come even to the notice of grave, inductive theologians: *videlicet*, that the bird, and not the egg, may claim the priority of existence. For had it been otherwise, *one's grandmother* would have been early acquainted with the very article which her posterity recommended to her as a novelty, and which, with respectful care, they taught her to utilize after a fashion best adapted to her time of life.

Fallen into desuetude is this judicious and salutary custom. There must have been a time when a yellowish stain about the mouth denoted an age, a vocation, -78- a limitation, effectually as the bulla of the youth, the maiden's girdle, "the marshal's truncheon, or the judge's robe," or any of the picturesque distinctions now crushed out of the social code. Let a cynic add, who does not fear to chase a trope beyond bounds, that though certain misguided ancient ladies may lapse, contemporaneously, into the burlesque and parody of suction, and draw towards themselves some yet coveted fooleries, compliments, gallantries,—alas! anachronisms both; yet the orthodox sucking of eggs, the innocent, austere, philosophic pastime, is no more, and that the glory of grandams is extinguished forever.

The dreadful civility of our Western woodsmen, the popular dissentient voice alike of the theatre and of the political meeting: the casting of eggs wherefrom the elements of youth and jucundity are wholly eliminated, affords a speculation on heredity, and appears as a faint echo of some traditional squabble in the morning of the world, among disagreeing kinswomen, the very primordial Battle -79- of Eggs! where reloading was superfluous, where every shell told; whose blackest spite was spent in a golden rain and hail! What havoc over the face of young creation; what coloring of pools, and of errant butterflies! What distress amid the cleanly pixies and dryads, whose shady haunts trickled unwelcome moisture! terror not unshared even in the recesses of the coast:—

"Intus aquae dulcis, vivoque sedilia saxo,
Nympharum domus!"

One can fancy the younglings of the vast human family, the success of whose lesson to their elders was thus over-well demonstrated, marking the ebb and flow of hostilities, like the spirits of Richelieu and of the superb fourteenth Louis eying the great Revolution. What marvel if, struck with remorse at the senile strife of them whom old Fuller would name "she-citizens," they vowed

never, never, to teach another grandmother to suck eggs. So was it, maybe, that the abused art was lost from the earth.

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Nay, more, its remembrance is perverted into a taunt more scorching than lightning, more silencing than the bolt of Jove. "Teach your grandmother to suck eggs!" Is not the phrase the "scorn of scorn," the catchword of insubordination, the blazing defiance of tongues unbroken as a two-years' colt? It grated strangely on our ear. We grieved over the transformation of a favorite saw, innocuous once, and conveying a meek educational suggestion. We came to admit that the Academe where the old sat at the feet of their descendants, to be ingratiated into the most amiable of professions, was nothing better in memory than an impertinence. And we sadly avowed, in the underground chamber of our private heart, that, as for worldly prospects, it would be fairly suicidal, all things considered, to aspire to the chair of that professorship.

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Let some reformer who cherishes his ancestress, and who is not averse to break his fast on an omelet, dissuade either object of his regard from longer lending name and countenance to a vulgar sneer. Shall such be thy mission, reader? We would wish thee extended acquaintance with that mysterious small cosmos which suggests to the liberal palate broiled wing and giblets *in posse*; and joy for many a year of thy parent's parent, who is in some sort thy reference and means of identification, the hub of thy far-reaching and more active life; but, prithee, wrench apart their sorry association in our English speech. Purists shall forgive thee if thou shalt, meanwhile, smile in thy sleeve at the fantastic text which brought them together.

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OLD HAUNTS.

I SOMETIMES whimsically liken myself to that pursued bird, who, according to naturalists, spends her fine speed and strength in racing in a circle about her nest, until overtaken and overborne. She may be said to travel a great deal, yet her steps tend nowhere, and despite her coming and going, she is indubitably at home.

I betake me, with all the exhilaration of a tourist, into an adjacent county, and after experiencing the forlornness proper to a forty-years' exile, board the railway train, and throw myself into the arms of my native town. My wildest perambulations are but twenty miles away. I set out, with vehement desires to behold the world, and threading the narrow highways known of mine infancy,— -83-

——"downwards to the sea
Or landwards to the west,"

return to look the stoutest navigators and explorers in the eye. My change of scene is mainly from Bromfield Street (what a green-and-golden westerly prospect it has!) to the Ridge Path of the Common; my perilous adventures are on side-walks; my discoveries, in omnibuses and the windows of shops.

Through sheer liberality and open-mindedness, when the first stirrings of spring are in the blood, or when a hearty October morning tempts idle feet afar, myself and one other seize on a map of the adjacent country, and push over hill and dale into some unexplored solitude. We make heroic efforts to appreciate a landscape. Was it not yesterday, thou best Bostonian! that we accomplished our showery pilgrimage across the Middlesex Fells, now drenched, now dried, by fickle skies, to sniff the young violet, and to pluck the silvern willow-tufts ere they had paled? or marched nigh six leagues of an Arcadian afternoon to front -84- the gleaming waters at Ponkapog, the purple crests of Milton Hill? Vainly! Never saw we a Nereid along a pebbly margin, nor caught the cadence of a Hamadryad's footfall, as she hurried back to her old woods. The curse is upon us, as saith the problematical Lady of Shalott. What business have we in the country? Where is the plant that will teach us its name? Not green fields, but bricks and mortar are our affinity; and the ears that delight in the familiar roar of a crowd barely attend by courtesy to the madrigals of thrushes.

Rivers I can put up with. I can keep pace with Charles from Hopkinton to the sea. Neponset is a dear good prattler. Musketaquid, with his two exquisite parental streams, is mine old familiar. So with a pine grove, where one can watch the tardiest star arise, and the earliest daybeam break over its dark summits. But these everlasting downs and scrubby wildernesses, these formal, vacant pastures, with little white houses at chilling distances! it is not in me, by -85-
nature or by grace, to take kindly to the things. The spirit moveth me to look down on cows, hens, and cabbages, and to question the beauty of that manner of life where there is scarce a ratio of one fellow-creature to an acre. How shall your country folk learn to jostle and be jostled? Do they know a pick-pocket when they see him? Are they easy in their minds when street-bands are due? Have their unhappy progeny never spelled out a circus-bill's gorgeous charactery of blue and red, nor leaped into the jaws of a watering-cart, nor licked a lamp-post for a wager on a frosty night?

No, my masters: let Damætas and Daphnis sing at each other, over the heads of their woolly cohorts; I yearn for the whoop of the contemporaneous newsboy, and for the soul-satisfying thunder of wagons. I hasten back to the knee of mine illustrious mother-city, as a Peri to Paradise, or as a convict (we must have comparisons to suit all tastes) to that agreeable castle in which the State formerly entertained him. I am let loose anew on her historic thoroughfares. For -86-
her sake, I subsist, in no gastronomical sense, on dates, and pay court to hoary tombs and spectres of long-supplanted buildings. Her story is the kaleidoscope to charm my idle hours. Her ancient magistrates I behold in their portentous wigs. Her little maids rustle by in stomacher and kirtle. Jovial laughter floats out from the unlatched door of the Green Dragon; the aroma of venison betrays itself at the Cromwell's Head. I look upon sorrowful Quakers boarding the transportation ships, or at the beacon-light flaring out upon the bay; at Paddock, planting his memorial trees; at Mather Byles jesting among a crowd, under the Province House eaves; at Philemon Pormort shaking the birch at little Ben Franklin on the sunny side of School Street; at the chivalry of France riding twenty deep behind the drawn sword in thy gallant hand, Vioménil! Over all the shifting and confused panorama the great bells of Christ's—"Abel Rudhall cast them all"—are ringing the remembered chimes of home.

"The things to be seen and observed," said Bacon, "are the courts of princes, the -87-
courts of justice, consistories ecclesiastic, churches, monasteries, monuments; walls and fortifications, havens, harbors, antiquities, ruins, libraries, colleges, shipping, gardens, arsenals, burses." Rather than sigh for Cisalpine revelations, shall I not gloriously disport myself in following the fortunes of a local Punch and Judy show, such as our kind civic nurse hath provided for us? Perhaps elsewhere I should miss the white-bearded orange-vender dozing in the sun, and the sparrows fighting on the sombre steps of St. Paul's, and seedy students migrating from stack to stack of Elizabethan books in the tranquil lane that Uriah Cotting built. Dearer than coffers of gold are the old cherished places from which my rooted affections cannot stray. Their inviolate memories and their hopes are mine; and the city of my content is the loop-hole through which I gaze and wonder at the universe.

I wear out my restlessness circling round about her shining height, and breaking ever and anon momentarily from her fostering hand, to cling to it again with -88-
laughter, and so move on. Is it a braver sentiment to fret after reported continents? I would follow the moon around the untried earth, for the asking; and yet, and yet, O "three-hilled rebel town"! hate my own free spirit did it not

thirst for thee on a ship that sailed against the Golden Horn, between Caucasus and the pinnacles of Greece.

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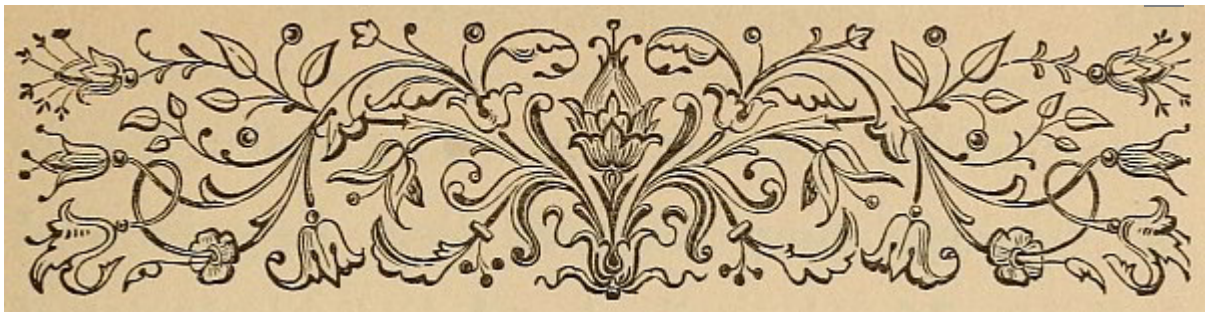

FREE THOUGHTS ON BOOKS.

THE passion for collecting books, beginning with the Greeks, passed to the Roman senators and patriots, and thence to every corner of the civilized earth. A philosopher might sigh, like Omar at Alexandria, over the thousand thousand superfluities, whose survival embitters the thought of the lost volumes of Varro and Livy, the wellnigh inaccessible tomes of Al Farabi of Farab ("who knew or wrote so much as he?"), of Berni, of Martorell; or of those princely libraries instanced by Irish antiquarians, which were swept away by Noah's flood!

A line of shelves, throne by throne, filled with illustrious figures, what else is that but a presence-chamber kinglier than a king's, the Temple of Wisdom, more reverend than the altars of Pallas? Men have lived and died, like motes of the air, hovering about this hoarded preciousness of ages, and forgetful ever of the awakened world, with its exquisite outlook into the future. In the pathetic companionship of books lived Southey, long after their beauty was shut out from him, passing his trembling hand up and down their ranks, and taking comfort in the certainty that they had not forsaken him.

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Remembering a bibliopole's sincere care in gathering his treasures, the taste and tenderness he spends upon them, the actual individuality of the owner of which they partake, and which they proclaim with startling fidelity so long as they are together, an auctioneer's sale of a private library seems one of the cruelest things in the daily annals of a city. Yet if not transferred, in numbers or in the mass, to some benign shelter, the darlings of bygone hours are sure to be launched friendless on the rough chances of trade. A second-hand book is verily a pitiful thing. It is broken down by adversity, and ready to meet your advances half-way. It appreciates care of any sort, poor waif that it is! lacking attention so long in the dingy precincts of a shop. Nothing is more gratifying to the eye searching for tokens of humanity, like a shipwrecked sailor along the sands of a lonely island, than its curled edges, "bethumbed horribly," especially if the author thereof be dear to you. What a precious, homely tribute! What delicater flattery, than to catch sight of a modest volume, supposing you take some parental interest in it, in a condition which, *à posteriori*, does *not* suggest soap and water?

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Certain books, which we handle for the first time, we cannot for the life of us lay down again, without vehement infringements on that edict forbidding envy

and covetousness. We yearn for such a bit of property. Our pocket seems predestined to filch it. We love it much better than its proprietor, who never had the spirit to give it cordial abuse. We would not endure that paper cover veiling its genial face. We would scorn to divorce it from any dusty nook it chose to -92- frequent. If we abduct it, it would be a great deal happier. On the same principle, it requires an impulse of Spartan righteousness to return a book to the civic library with the proper dispositions. It is heart-rending to make over a used and shaken veteran to the custody of the public, anew. We know well enough that it shall collapse utterly ere we shall have the virtue to borrow it a second time. Or we speculate on an inestimable octavo, readerless on the shelf for scores of years, till our mark is set over against it, and doomed to deeper than Abyssinian solitude when we loosen its clinging hold; and wonder if what a townsman and a wit called "bookaneering" would not be a chivalric pursuit for us to follow.

Uniform sets of any author, save a historian, are terrors to the discriminating eye. When we buy the Works even of one C. Dickens, we shall stipulate that the "Tale of Two Cities" (never to be named without reverence) shall get its just due of difference in size and hue, from any of its admirable kindred. Who wants -93- Beaumont and Fletcher in sombre cloth, or in anything out of folio, or Jeremy Taylor in red morocco and gilt? Prefaces are not ill things in their places; but what has a preface got to do with jolly, self-explanatory Pepys; or a table of notes with Walton the Angler; or a glossary—fancy the pert thing!—with Philip Sidney's sonnets? Illustrations to some tales are insufferable. Picture a menagerie let loose on the seventh or eighth page of Rasselas, to bear out the diverting Johnsonian description of the sprightly kid bounding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking among the trees, the solemn elephant reposing in the shade!

"A big book," said Myles Davis, "is a scarecrow to the head and pocket of author, student, buyer, and seller." That depends. The virile poets, like Burns, cannot be got into sylph-like draperies. Nobody could abide a prose Milton less than three and a half inches thick. Froissart, even, must be taken solid. We own up to loving our stumpy Don Quixote, with its print of beauteous Dorothea laving her impossible feet, although it be egregiously fat, and elbow its comelier -94- neighbors right and left.

The fashion of including the productions of two or three contemporaneous writers in one volume is happily past, and may not revive. What dreary comradeship! like that of the ghosts driven together on the blast, in Dante's wonderful fifth canto. Why should Coleridge the dreamer, and Campbell the planner, be lashed so, wrist to wrist; or Waller's sweet dallying verse classed with Denham's sagacious strophes? What joint mundane sin warranted this posthumous halving of their immortal fortunes? If the trade must economize, and readers must needs get their literature in bunches, let the coupling be done on a saner basis, and arise from the affiliations, not of time or place, but of genius solely. We confess we should like to see Sheridan and Farquhar amicably sharing applause, within the compass of one lively-colored quarto; some of the singing-birds of the second and third Stuart courts caged with Gay, Matt Prior, and a few modern bardlings; Keats close to his loved Spenser; and Irving -95- familiarly fixed by Addison and Goldsmith, the barriers of centuries between them broken down.

Family traits, like murder, will out. Nature has but so many moulds; and however unique and quaint a writer may be to his own circle, look up his intellectual pedigree, and you shall recognize the ancestral quality astray in him,

on an altered world; the voice of Jacob, indeed, appealing through all disguises. What should Poe be like,—Poe the one and only,—but a blended brief echo of Marlowe and of Dryden? Whence came Charles Lamb, even, in great part (and Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt besides, in the collateral line), but from golden-hearted Sidney and Sir Thomas Browne? Pages and pages of his that recall them! every tone of their old sedater voices prophetic of his sweet laughter, his fine, grave reasonings to be!

My young lord is spirited, but unlike his father or mother in feature, as in character: ah! go to the remotest corner of the portrait-gallery, and brush away the damp from the dark face of that Henry who fell at Crécy, and you shall read -96-
the mystery of transmission. A poet tries his morning lay, to a continent's delight, and after years of joy and triumph it shall be revealed to him how the self-same music fell from long-silent lips in a land across the sea. The unaltered radiance of an inspiration streams yesterday on one, to-morrow on another, as moving sunshine visits the hundred panes of a cathedral window; and that elusive thing which we name the originality of any artist resembles little else but the kaleidoscopic newness of color thrown hourly along the aisles.

So much have books wrought, to the confusion of the proud. The child's early, unconscious preference for authors of his choosing, urges itself upon him when he, too, shall write, and softly hoodwinks his imagination. Has he a sensitive pen, jealous of its rectitude, true as the magnet-lured steel to what he believes to be his frank, unshared fancies? How shall that affect the immutable law? For the very blood in his veins is not all his own; and though, for honor's sake, he would -97-
change the erect port, the persuasive speech, the innermost personal charm which was called his, and which he finds, later, to have been but a legacy,—yet, in places where his detecting conscience cannot follow, the hereditary principle will grow to blossom, and bespeak him, blamelessly, to be what the centuries have made him.

It was feelingly said by one of the gentle English essayists last named: "How pleasant is the thought that such lovers of books have themselves become books!" and do so become evermore, beginning and ending with a secluded library shelf, planting the seed of kindly influences close to the noble shade which sheltered them in youth, and under which they slumbered many a summer's day.

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A NOVEMBER FESTIVAL.

HERE it is, the old bright day, the day fragrant of home, brought about once again by the whirligig of time. The New England snows are deep beneath the windows in the house where I was born, and iridescent icicles hang over the door; the city that is beyond is given up to joy and plenty,

"And all that mighty heart is lying still."

I sit quite solitary among you in a far-away corner, forgetfully turning the pages of a book, and letting my thoughts take wing for other scenes and other years. In memory there arises a succession of Thanksgivings, long gone into dust and ashes, so different from this, so careless and kind and merry, that it seems like wronging them to be sad for them even at this distance. Then all the world was golden, and our wilful, loving lives were jewels set in the heart of it. Then the air tingled, and the sun was jolly as Harlequin. Then there was a little brook in those familiar fields, delicately sheathed in ice every Thanksgiving morning, and lending itself to a childish holiday frolic just in the nick of time; and a stone, squirted along its surface, made the daintiest bird-like sound imaginable, and died into silence so delightfully that you sent innumerable pebbles after it, to see if they could sing as sweetly as the first. Then everybody was so considerate and tender that poor people could not want or suffer on that day, if they tried; then grown people were indulgent, and wee people docile and frisky as lambs. Then we used to have pop-corn and ginger-snaps and chestnuts and ruddy apples—and turkey! Well, we can have turkey yet, on any Thanksgiving, a sort of *in memoriam* turkey, eaten in foreign lands, and made melancholy with recollections and vain wishes; so, of course, it is not the same turkey at all.

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What a hospitable, social old festival it was! How gentle we tried to be, that not one harsh word should spoil it! We were taught to make out of the severely pious Thanksgiving of the Puritans, their dismal, unpicturesque opposition-Christmas, a day lovely and blithe and helpful beyond any in the calendar. There was a great halloo going on the whole time in the cheerful rambling old house, quartering an army of children: merry-making in the pantry, in the corridors, in the porches, where hungry sparrows gathered to squabble over hundreds of crumbs; and in the lively fire that winked and sputtered, and tossed the pans and kettles, and nearly burst a-laughing over the fat plum-pudding. As for the other Lords and Ladies of Misrule, you could not swing your arm anywhere without

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brushing a little boy or a little girl. You heard the patter of their tireless feet, the noise of their drums and doll-carriages, and the echo of their shrill voices upstairs and down,—some of them rolling about on the rugs in the sunny room, where the bare elms, with their battered nests, rattled against the pane on windy days; some strumming on the venerable piano in the hall, just at the balustrade's -101- foot, and singing a little Tyrolese catch they had learned together; some grouped in the shadowy and quiet library (where the ceiling shone blue with its myriad stars, like a real summer's sky), telling over how good a king King Arthur was, or how queer was the Old Man of the Sea, or how sad and strange were the adventures of dear Sintram, ever and ever so long ago. Now other children fill those neglected places, and beautify the hours with associations fresh and fair as ours,—

"And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills!"

I must not forget the races, and the games, and ninepins on the frosty balcony; the ice-forts, puny for lack of material, and the Trojan war, re-fought in snow-balls; and the dinner! The table-cloth was very pretty, with sprays of evergreen festooning it here and there. Silver mugs looked particularly shiny. I can see yet, beyond the great steaming dishes, the celery towering with its delicate green; -102- cider sparkling; grapes and oranges crowding one another over the rim; olives floating in colored bottles; jelly clearer than crystal; funny little crackers in funnier shapes, and the ring of hearty faces framing the picture in. Near the end, the majestic pudding made his appearance, crowned with blue flame; and blazed away so pompously for a minute that the youngest baby cried, and the boys clapped their hands, and curly-haired Helen leaned over against Bessy to get out of its way. Then came the final jingling of the water-glasses, when the household drank Grandmother Drapow's health, amid enthusiasm and tears and laughter and rustle of words. It was quite in order to wear your tissue-paper cap, which fell out of the candy-packet, whether it was quaint and odd as could be, or conventional as a beaver. When presently, with all conceivable glee, the whole twenty-six rose to their feet, the chairs and stools made volcanic noises, and the scene looked precisely like the Carnival. Then a sudden hush fell; and one of the several tall gentlemen who answered to the name of Papa, glanced at a certain -103- child at the other end of the table. So the child dropped its bonbons, and gravely took off its gay cocked hat, and folded its brown hands, and lisped the words of the grace, while Eugene and little Georgie bobbed their innocent heads in cadence at its shoulder. Everybody answered "Amen!" very loud and clear. And everybody slipped forthwith through the door, like the tide, and left the sunny dining-room deserted.

Those Thanksgivings will never return. The caps are torn now, and the heads that wore them would fit them no more. We could not meet to be happy again, if we tried, because of the vacant places. The rogue who was made parson would not be present either,—which of us, outside Paradise, is quite the same after so many years?—having vanished just as surely as the old friends, and the dear kindred, who have died. For, in your own phrase, little folk, that was *me*. At least, I like to think it was. Perhaps this is all a make-believe story; but if you doubt it, go and ask somebody else who was there.

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VAGABONDIANA.

CERTAIN words sound like caresses. "Thou vagabond!" must have been at some time or other a gentler appellation than our rude transition would make it. Why not? "Rogue" and "truant" have yet their playful uses. Though we translate illy such endearments of antiquity, we may read in Gascoigne:—

"O Abraham's *brats*! O brood of blessèd seed!"

The "goodly and virtuous young imps" of old citation, we should also construe but saucily. Besides, "vagabond" lendeth itself gracefully to the affectionate diminutives of alien tongues, which, to a philologist, may be as good as an argument: what can be tenderer than *vagaböndchen*, *vagabondellino*, and a like musical play of syllables over the solid English rock?

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The vagabond is the modern representative of the knight-errant, shorn of his romance, inasmuch as both fall neatly under the definition of a stroller, a free lance, whom the domestic Lar does not allure or attach to any one fireside. The immortal Don of la Mancha, revived in this age, should figure as a tramp in the police station, before he had adorned public life twenty-four hours. But the vagabond proper has an Asiatic cousin, who gets princelier treatment. The Rônin of chivalrous Japan is a gentleman of leisure, who, not averse to a chance of seasonable employment, roams at large, settling his private differences, and serving Heaven unmolested, according to his lights. Vagabonds are legally denominated "such as wake on the night, and sleep on the day; and haunt customable taverns and ale-houses, and rout about; and no man wots whence they come nor whither they go:" a comprehensive statement in three parts, which has, moreover, a covert whimsical reference categorically to actors, politicians, and bank-clerks. A vagabond, primarily, was merely an idle person;

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and if his name has come to imply variations of decorum, and a questionable standing in polite circles, it is to be accounted for only on the worn adage that Satan takes personal care of undedicated energies.

Our friend is vagrant as the swallow, "born in the eighth climate, and framed and constellated unto all." He is the world's freeman. He strays at his fancy, sign-boards and mile-stones his only ritual, and changes of weather the sole political economy of his study, by which he abides. Everybody's property is his in fief.

Terminus and his stakes were never set up for him. He has no particular reason for moving on the first of May, nor for passing the winter in warm quarters. When he is very weary, since he has no tent to strike, nor bed to make, he unconcernedly "lays his neck on the lap of his mother." Neither landlord nor tenant is he; and never has he known a spring-cleaning, nor packed a trunk, nor priced a door-plate. He trolls out that joyful strophe which Richard Brome wrote for his forefathers, as he swings past inland villages:

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"Come away! why do we stay?
We have no debt or rent to pay,
No bargains or accompts to make,
Nor land nor lease, to let or take:
Or if we had, should that remore us,
When all the world's our own before us,
And where we pass and make resort,
There is our kingdom and our court!"

He has his choice of professions: he may have a natural disposition to beg, yet, on the whole, consider it genteeler to steal. He is exempt from Adam's curse. Nobody expects him to work, save in a moment of inspiration. When he has no funds, he travels on his dignity. There is that in his eye which awes the merchantman, and mesmerizes the maid at the hostel gate.

The vagabond, "extravagant and erring spirit," as Horatio would call him, has had his court-painter, who took the portraits of several of his eccentric family in the year of Waterloo, and exposed them for sale in Covent Garden under the title: "Etchings of Remarkable Beggars, Itinerant Traders, and other persons of Notoriety," drawn from the life in London town. There glisten perennially the seraphic upturned eyes of "Hot Peas!" there you may see the Hogarthian face -108-
and attitude of the one-armed vender of gasping "Live Haddock!" the pastoral cousin offering "Young (toy) Lambs!" the dealer in pickled cucumbers, his arms akimbo, a fork stuck in the dish on his head, and a surreptitious wink in his well-conducted eye; the flying pie-man, smirking like Malvolio, and starched and skirted like a dignitary of bluff Hal's; the reduced beau, sweeping crossings, with his yet fastidious air; and the humble bespectacled painter, his own drayman, changing quarters on holy Luke's day, so festooned with torsos, casts, brushes, phials, easels, that he seems a perambulating studio.

The vagabondistic sect is of exceedingly mutable nature. It distends, it contracts; it swears in, now a person of probity, not of wealth; now a sinner, like the rest of us, who seldom moves in good society: an odd congregation, comprising dozens that have no business among the elect, and lacking a proportionate number who stray untethered into other folds. On this showing, not only all mendicants, -109-
pedlers, street-singers, pick-pockets, and uneasy minds are accepted rascals, but poor queer B., who wrote poetry, and went veiled like the great Mokanna, distraught to know whether the aggregate stare of her fellow-citizens was attributable to her renown, or to her scarce Hellenic beauty, falls into the same category; and the venerable campaigner, who tacks on to her hurdy-gurdy a certificate of army membership signed by Napoleon (presumably to be referred to her fighting spouse, deceased),—that wrinkled and taciturn spook of what was once French vivacity and grace, faithfully grinding "*Partant pour la Syrie*," in snow and sun, within a fixed radius of Boston Common,—even she must emerge, despite the music of Austerlitz and Jena, nothing short of a naturalized

Yankee vagabond! There are laws yet unrepealed, Céleste! for thy suppression; prices set on the innocuous heads of "minstrels and useless persons."

We could wish that a new Plutarch should write up the patron-saint of vagabonds,—one Bampfylde Moore Carew, a Devonshire celebrity born under -110-
William and Mary, a most conscientious, well-bred person, and of good parts, who became a gentleman at large only under irresistible conviction; and who, after a series of adventures before which an Arabian tale covers its head, rose to be king of the gypsies, and Great High Joss of beggars and mimics, henceforward: a pleasant, adroit creature, familiar with the wildernesses of what were not yet the Atlantic States, reckless enough to be kindly-disposed towards his fellows, and successful in everything he undertook, living, "gray as a wharf-rat, and supple as the devil," to a consistent and edifying old age.

We have a sneaking kindness for him and his votaries. A congenital affinity softens us towards suspicious characters. We were early aware that we startled shop-keepers with our roving thumb, how or whence we know not; but we have come to love the indiscreet something in us which calls forth Puritan vigilance, and we should violently resent a change of tactics. More than once a jeweller (who might have made a mad wag if he had not been so choked with virtue) -111-
refused to give back our repaired watch, eying us with grewsome distrust, and absolutely disclaimed having beheld our cockney countenance before! We enter a warehouse, only to await identification, as they are pleased to call it, from Tom, Dick, and Harry, and only by force of eloquence, or by literal making of faces (honest, ingenuous, reliable, unevasive faces, out of use, but quite as good as new, and triumphantly effective), do we succeed in securing the household necessities. Reading once, of a windy day, seated on the sea-wall of the Charles, through a chance waiting-hour, in cloistral privacy, we were accosted across lots by a sombre policeman, and mysteriously lured back to the confines of civilization; whereupon the misguided creature, scanning our cheerful lineaments,—cheerful from the pages of "Travels with a Donkey,"—burst into uncanny laughter, and presently explained that he had been detailed to save yon despondent crank from plunging into the hungry river!

Our career of vagabond by brevet had wellnigh closed. Seriously, sir or madam, -112-
you may stand by that harbor-mouth, and have an inkling into the tragedies of the strollers of whom "men wot not whence they come, nor whither they go." But, to keep you on the liberal side of compassion, you who are not of the faith must also be made aware that Aldebaran is a gracious star to his own; and that "wild and noble sights" are vouchsafed to the outer and inner eye of shabbiest Bohemianism, "such as they that sit in parlors never dream of."

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MATHEMATICS.

RHADAMANTHUS is so old by this time, and so hardened into his own way of thinking, that I suppose it is useless to wish he were of my mind. What I look upon as justice, he may, moreover, call spitefulness, or worse. But I dearly desire to sit enthroned by Styx in his stead, that I might adjudge dire reparative torments to old Euclid and to Eaton, that modern figurative fiend, and to the entire tribe of evil-inventing Arabs. What hope is there in this world for redress? Such creatures have been lauded as friends of civilization and of human progress. Tens of thousands, mostly helpless minors, and stray rebels of all ages, among whom I am but a meek atom, make passionate protest. We go about, with an ancient school-rhyme for our Marseillaise:—

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"Multiplication's a vexation,
Subtraction's just as bad;
The Rule of Three, it puzzles me,
And Fractions drive me mad."

We aspire to be moderate. We handle a slate and pencil forgivingly. We consider that history is somewhat against us; for Cæsar believed doggedly in addition; and the generals of the great Alexander were fond of division all their days. We try to get over our distrust of the Book of Numbers, and to think it quite canonical; vainly, vainly. We are still the army of the disaffected; and your numeric blood, which was transfused into us by main force, seethes and hisses in our unproselytized veins.

Mine antipathy to a unit, like an ancestral prejudice, developed in infancy. I cannot reconcile myself to that persistent squandering of my capabilities—and nothing shall persuade me that they were not fine, primarily—on insufferable jargon of twice two, and thirteen times twenty-seven; on angles, polygons, hypothenuses, and roots of diabolic cubes; on halving and cancelling everything Solomon in his wisdom had never heard of, save the growing, intact, substantial aversion outlasting all else. What glory and honor did it bring me? The singular privilege of taking and giving money on faith; of confusing ounces, yards, and quarts, and of being "circumvented," as Burton scornfully put it, "by every base tradesman."

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The Vallais cretins, it is confidently asserted, cannot be taught mathematics. If so, the Vallais cretin is my cousin-german. My heart warms to him. I am his transatlantic affinity. He is the happier, inasmuch as his little eccentricity is recognized, and no tampering follows; whereas I fell heir to years of crazy importunities. I bethink me with anguish of so many precious hours spent between sunrise and sunset, in compulsory handling of snaky arithmetical characters, when I might have mastered the literature of Timbuctoo, or successfully dug out, in a mellower land, the hoary toy-pistols of little child Astyanax. It is drilled into my younger brethren and sistren (such is their venerable and true English title!) that a cipher to right of them, or a cipher to left of them, under certain circumstances which happily I forget, make vast differences with silly figures. Not one of the unfortunates is a stranger to such dogmas. A visitor of classrooms, with a proper dash of vinegar in him, knows nevertheless that the tender geometric parrot-prodigy shall scarce be taught some more curious problems: why political bribery is not a state-prison crime, nor oppression of dumb beasts, nor marriage—*O tempora!*—without love. Therefore the cretin wears his rue with a difference, and is enviable. He is not chained up (simply because it is the general barbaric custom) to "the hard-grained muses of the cube and square;" that is, not unless he gets astray on the educational world, and finds it quite useless to proclaim his identity.

If any one take kindly to the Black Art (as he might to the small-pox), he must, of course, be humored. Believe him sincerely mistaken. Perhaps he may not ripen into a college professor whose business it is to disseminate his evil lore. Perhaps, Heaven assoil him! he may.

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A CHILD IN CAMP.

LIKE the royal personages in the drama, I was ushered on the stage of life, literally, with flourish of trumpets. The Civil War was at its bursting-point, the President calling for recruits: it was impertinent of me, but in that solemn hour I came a-crowing into the world. And since I was born under allegiance, a lady whom I learned to love with incredible quickness,

"O bella Libertà! O bella!"—

rocked my fortunate cradle. She gave me a little flag for toy, instead of coral-and-bells; and filled my virginal ear with the classic strains of "John Brown's Body," ere yet I had heard a secular lullaby. She it was who dyed my infant mind in her own tri-color, and whose exciting companionship roused me -118- surprisingly early into wide-awake consciousness and speculation. In laughing recognition of her old, old favor, these confused twilight memories (Impressions of America, as it were, *ab ovo*) may be recorded.

A young person some twenty-four years my senior, for whom I had a violent liking, had preceded me "to the warres." I saw his ship sail away, at that exceedingly tender age when a human being is involved in mummy-like cerements, and cannot properly be said to exist at all. In the winter of 1864—he had been away during that long interval—I enlisted and went South to visit him. I had thrived at home through the distended agony of those days. I had a general idea that my cue in life was to fight; and I would smile endearingly over a colored plate of the Battle of Trafalgar, whose smoky glare, and indications of turmoil and slaughter, were supremely to my mind. Red, however, by some process of mistaken zeal, I came to regard as inimical to the party to which, as -119- catechumen, I belonged. I had not then a very copious vocabulary at my command; but I soon indicated my convictions by screeching like a young eagle at the most innocent auction-flag that ever floated out of a Boston door of a sunny morning, or flushing with unmistakable wrath at a casual visitor who bore a trace of that outrageous color in anything worn or carried. It was long, indeed, before I was persuaded to transfer my misguided sentiment to A.D. 1775, and to believe that the neighboring rebel had no especial affinity with the hue in question. Prior to my memorable journey to Virginia, I had spent a few months in camp the year before. A slight epidemic ran the rounds of the tents, and took in ours. The only recollection which survives is a vivid one of neighboring trees, and a distant hill, visible as I lay facing the narrow door; a view which included the ever-flitting figure of the sentinel, his steady, silent tread, musket on

shoulder, and the kind rustic face in profile, which turned, ever and anon, smilingly about, like the moon at her merriest. That welcome shadow which fell -120- before him in the broad light was cut down in the ranks at Malvern Hill.

But my earliest real experiences began in '64. Hostilities had been some weeks suspended; yet the headquarters of a Southern regiment lay within gun-shot, and thither my delighted terrors reverted. Was Jeff Davis lurking on the other bank of the stream? Might they creep over by night and fall upon us? If I should be allowed to venture alone into the thicket, would the fiery eyes of the "reb" glare upon me? Please could I settle difficulties with any little boy in the opposing camp? in the admirable Roman fashion, of whose precedent I was yet ignorant.

How they would laugh, those bearded and epauletted guests of our exceptionally elegant log-house! And how uproariously they often planted me, regardless of ink and paper, on the table, and toasted me in some cordial beverage until I pranced in glee!

Be it humbly admitted that the freedom I enjoyed among officers and men of -121- several organizations, and the indulgence which they showed, tended not to improve my scarce seraphic disposition. More than once was I called to order for some breach of discipline, the most venial of which were cutting the tent-strings, hanging about the sentry and impeding his progress with efforts to relieve him of his musket, or concealing the drum-sticks to postpone an anticipated signal. The dark-eyed young man to whom I owed allegiance—

"Ay me! while life did last that league was tender,"

—would exclaim, with the awful sense of a newly acquired dignity: "Disobey a colonel if you dare!" and threaten me, not with vulgar deprivations of supper, or trivial captivity in closets, but with a veritable court-martial for my predestined doom, when I should be so bad again.

Our family retinue consisted of a cook of jolly and rubicund exterior, and a pleasant lad, who, among his other duties, cared for my glossy-coated Arabian, -122- and led him about like a circus-master, while I "snatched a fearful joy" upon his back. The memory of the former personage is embalmed in the fragrance of roast beef and mashed potatoes, edibles which he announced frequently with a melodramatic flourish and intonation never to be forgotten. Burly old Bush! He had a quaint way of delivering his best things, *stans pede in uno*, with a sidelong light of the eye to let you into the secret of his rich hyperboles.

Another favorite of mine was an adjutant, owner of two sociable King Charles spaniels, which I was permitted to endow with portions of my supper, and which I visited as regularly as a country lover his sweetheart, when the general evening relaxation set in. Captain J., too, stern, reticent, and little popular with his men, was strangely gentle to one that rode on his arm, and fell asleep, many a time, at his knee. He was a fascinating story-teller, and held my fancy longer than any soldier-playmate of his day. He had the absolute confidence of my infallible -123- young man. The old figure, "true as steel," was made for him. They forbore to tell me till long afterwards, that he fell, shot through and through, at the Wilderness, with his face to the foe.

He had a brother, a mere boy, whose sunny hair I can remember under the military cap. But him I may come across any hour, prosperous and sunny-haired still. The only other figures plain to my mind's eye are F., the sweet-mannered gentleman who took care of me in a long railway journey; S., the surgeon, maker of jokes and of whistles; W., who used to sing "Malbrook s'en va-t en

guerre," with immense satisfaction to himself, at least; and C., an inveterate patriot, who gave his good right arm for the asking, at touch of a cannon-ball.

During that stay there was much gayety and little mishap. My elders rode off to many a hunt, or held tournaments with all the tilting and fair ladies' smiles incidental, nay, essential, to their success. Twice, in the midst of less serious -124-
things, the men were called to sleep under arms. I can very well remember, another time, ominous talk of Mosby and his guerillas, and a cloud of dust on the horizon which seemed to betoken his restless squadron. But these were variations on a winter full of pastime, and uncommonly clement and merry. The campaign that followed was so arduous, and involved such heavy losses, that it is cheering to remember the hearty voices of old play-fellows during that genial holiday, to take down the books they used to read from their anchorage on a shelf, and to treasure up the gay incidents that brightened their tragic story.

I recall a waiter of exceeding blackness who impressed me in a Washington hotel, and a sandwich, uncommonly sharp with mustard, obtained on the homeward journey at the Baltimore station, where the city seemed to turn out to feed the very hungry in my person; and nothing at all further, beyond these unspiritual details, till the war drew to a close. For then my best-beloved soldier came home. He was terribly shattered with suffering and fatigue,—how -125-
irrevocably hurt I knew not. If "the stars had fallen from heaven to light upon his shoulders," the thunderbolt had fallen too; and the general's insignia was sealed with a minie-ball. After a series of escapes thrilling enough for a dime novel, after a plunge, horse and man, into a ravine, a solitary stampede in a swamp, the loss of a scabbard and a patch of clothing by the familiar brushing of a bomb, and a hole through a cap neatly made by an attentive sharp-shooter, the charmed bullets had hit at last. It was my earliest glimpse of the painful side of the war, when he stood worn, pale, drooping, waiting recognition with a weary smile, at the door of the sunny little house we all loved. Instantly, heedless of any persuasive arms or voices, I slipped headlong, like a startled seal from the rocks, and disappeared under the table. Such was my common mode of receiving strangers; and here, indeed, was a most bewildering and appalling stranger. In vain my soldier called me by the most endearing names; even the whimsical -126-
nomenclature of camp-life failed to convince me that this was no imposition. I shut my disbelieving eyes, and crouched on the carpet. For two long hours I did not capitulate, and then but warily. What was this spectre with whom I must not frolic, on whose shoulders I must not perch, whose head, bound in bandages, I must not handle? What was he, in place of my old-time comrade, blithe and boyish, and how could he expect to inherit the confidence I had given to quite another sort of person? Unhallowed Dixie! How it had cozened me out of what I prized most!

The wound that jarred upon me, I quickly came to consider as an admirable distinction, and altogether proper and desirable. I longed to be shot, in the interests of my native land; and presently, "by the foot of Pharaoh!" so I was, thanks to a pistol in the hands of a maladroit little neighbor. I underwent the ether-sponge and the knife, and my chubby cheek displayed with pride the reduced fac-simile of the parental scar. It was my day of jubilee, ere the cicatrice -127-
had vanished, when I might lean against that elder veteran's knee, and recount Munchausen-like tales of "our" prowess in the war.

I remember the shock of national loss when the President was assassinated; and, after that, the coming and going of army-faces,—some strange, some familiar. It was like Virginia once more, to hear the band march, serenading, up the quiet

street; to recognize hearty voices at the garden gate; to command my most dutiful to "shoulder arms!" and "right wheel!" and, waking from slumber, to creep to the head of the stairs, and surreptitiously greet dear M. and B. and broad-shouldered A., as they passed below.

Not only these my childish fancy saw, but there seemed to gather with them many, many others, bearing names that sometime had been cited in my presence from the bright annals of Massachusetts; and out of their syllables I framed a ghostly pageant, following ever, like a breath of wind, close on the footsteps of their living peers. The dream-cohorts, too, smiled up at me, and swept by. -128- "Trenmor came, the tall form of vanished years, his blue hosts behind him."

I went to camp several times thereafter, though never with my own brigade; but having outlived its enchantment, inasmuch as I were now conscious of "playing soldier" merely, I took a stand on my war record, and decided to withdraw from the militia. That was long ago. But the old prepossessions are immortal. The smell of powder is sweeter to me than Oriental lilies. I resent the doctrine of absorption into the restful bosom of Brahma. An it please you, I aspire to Mars.

I used to love the sight of those shabby warriors, dolefully bewailing their forlorn condition, and mildly suggesting their eligibility to a bounteous dinner, who prowled, in long succession, about our side door. I thrilled with indignation at their counterfeited wrongs. I brought them my sweetmeats, to throw a halo about their sober meal. Do I not take kindly yet to the battered coat bedizened -129- with bright buttons, on the back of M., grimy vender of coal? Do I not encourage the handsome charges of our grocer, solely because I know his antecedents, and can trace his limp to Ball's Bluff?

It was an article of belief, in my Utopian childhood, that a soldier could do no wrong. It went hard with me, in my eleventh year, to catch a glimpse of the silver Maltese cross, the badge of the impeccable Fifth Corps, on the breast of a scowling state prisoner, the hero "shorn of his beams." His arm no longer rested on a howitzer; he wielded a crowbar. He might have hallowed Libby or Andersonville with his passing, and now,—O Absalom!

The warden, the benignant warden, himself of the "trade of war," did he know what he was doing, when he assured me that the cells were peopled with ex-Federal knights? Men have tried vainly to restore the lost completeness of the glorious statue of Melos. Even so with a broken faith. What it might have been is out of the province of diviners.

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ON GRAVEYARDS.

A KINDNESS for graveyards, and a superadded leaning to the old, battered, weed-grown ones, are not incompatible with the cheeriest spirit. A marked distinction is to be drawn between the amateur and the professional haunter of the *cœmetrion*, the place of sleep. If the pilgrimage among marbles cannot be an impersonal matter, pray, sweet reader, keep to the courts of the living. The intolerable pain of meeting with some clear-cut beloved name; the chance of stumbling on some parody of the departed, under a glass case, or of brushing against the clayey sexton, fresh from his delving,—these are things whose risk one would not willingly run. Therefore stick to antiquities, and let thy fastidious eye look with favor at no carven -131- mortuary date that was cut later than under the third of the Georges. If there be a suspicion of Scotch granite, or of landscape gardening in any God's acre as thou passest by, turn thee about to windward. But where there stand, in honest slate, armorial ensigns, gaping cherubs, and cheerful scythes and hour-glasses, labelled (as a child labels his drawing, "This is a cow") with "Memento mori," or the scarcely less admirable truism, "Fugit hora," then enter in, and read that chronicle, with its grassy margin, which the centuries have written.

Here is the great dormitory; here sits the little god Harpocrates, swinging on the lotos-leaf, his finger on his lips.

"No noyse here
But the toning of a teare."

Thousands possess the earth in peace. Are not Spurius Cassius and the Gracchi vindicated, when the Agrarian law prevails at last?

How paltry a thing is a monument to the dead, save as expressing the affection of survivors! Cannot the liberal soil absorb, without comment, the vast number -132- of lives so sadly inessential to the world's growth and beauty? It must needs forever be placarded to the stranger, who would fain not be critical concerning the failings of these old hearts, where John Smith lies. It is not the chisel which keeps a memory alive. An inscription is superfluous for him whose deeds are graven in the book of life. Many another, who has but elbowed his way selfishly through the world, is laid under all the figures of rhetoric, and is beholden to nothing better than an obelisk to speak him fair. "To be but pyramidally extant,"

says Sir Thomas Browne, "is a fallacy in duration." A monument, "a stone to a bone," shows the terminus of the corporeal journey, and serves merely to mark the gateway through which something perishable, that was dear, has passed away.

Think of the gloomy, pessimistic habit of the Puritan colonists, surmounting every grave with a grinning skull, in tracery, when the benighted pagans, ages before, crushed out the material aspects of death beneath chaplets of roses, amaranth, and myrtle; imagery of the liberated insect, leaping to the sun with -133- impetuous wings; poesy full of hopefulness and cheer; and the symbolic figure of an inverted torch over the burial pile! It might disparage the acrid sanctity of the forefathers to ask which of the two seemed worthiest to inherit immortality.

Cotton Mather, after his whimsical fashion, pronounces it as the best eulogy of Ralph Partridge, the first shepherd of the old Duxborough flock, that being distressed at home by the ecclesiastical setters, he had no defence, neither beak nor claw, but flight over the ocean; that now being a bird of Paradise, it may be written of him, that he had the loftiness of the eagle and the innocency of the dove. His epitaph is: AVOLAVIT.

The most exquisite epitaph I ever saw was one of an infant of German extraction, who died, at the notable age of sixteen months: "Beloved and respected by all who knew him." Wellnigh as pompous and as plausible is an obituary in favor of a similar lambkin, yet to be deciphered at Copp's Hill: "He bore a Lingering sicknesse with Patience, and met ye King of Terrors with a -134- Smile." One Abigail Dudley sleeps in a New England village under a white stone, professionally indicative "of her moral character;" a widow droops in effigy over a Plymouth tomb, and states in large capitals that she has lost "an agreeable companion." Near by is the harrowing script: "Father. Parted Below;" and its sequel a yard's length off: "Mother. United Above." It flashes across your brain like a revelation of Vandal atrocities.

What wondrously sweet lines old English poets wrote over the graves of women and children! Think of Carew's "darling in an urn;" of Ben Jonson's "Elizabeth;" of "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;" of Drummond's "Margaret;" of Herrick's "On a Maid," every word precious as a pearl; and of the wholly startling pathos wherewith one now without a name bewailed his friend:—

> "If such goodness live 'mongst men,
> Bring me it! I shall know then
> She is come from Heaven again."

General Charles Lee, that sad Revolutionary rogue, wrote in his last will and -135- testament: "I do earnestly desire that I may not be buried in any church or churchyard, or within a mile of any Presbyterian or Anabaptist meeting-house; for since I have resided in this country, I have kept so much bad company while living that I do not choose to continue it when dead."

Of Roger Williams, who was also granted solitary sepulture, a strange tale is told. There was question, some years back, of transplanting him from his sequestered resting-place to a stately mausoleum. The diggers dug, and the beholders beheld—what? Not any received version of that which was he, but the roots of an adjacent apple-tree formed into a netted oval, indented with punctures not wholly unlike human features; parallel branches lying perpendicularly on either side; fibres intertwined over a central area; and lastly,

two long sprouts, knotted half-way down, and terminating in a pediform excrescence wonderful to see. It was plain, thought the *savants* of P., that the apple-tree had eaten of ancient Roger; now who had eaten of the fruit of that apple-tree? Verily, "to what base uses may we return!" -136-

It was said of old by the English Chrysostom: "A man shall read a sermon, the best and most passionate that ever was preached, will he but enter into the sepulchre of kings." Let a tourist go through Europe, from town to town, pausing in the porches of burial-grounds: shall he not touch the naked candor of governments and follow the hoary chronicle of ages backward with his Hebraic eye? To him, the graveyard moss that eats out the charactery of proud names, is a sage commentator on mundane fame; and the humble mound to which genius and virtue have lent their blessed association inspires him with precepts beyond all philosophy. For history is not a clear scroll, but a palimpsest; and he who is versed only in the autography of his contemporaries misses half the opportunity and half the gladness of life.

The habit of providing for personal comfort anticipates an easy couch and a fair prospect for us at the end. How many men, from the royal warriors of yore who willed their ashes to be carried into a far-away country, have chosen, and jealously guarded in thought, their to-morrow's place of rest? A superfluous care, when the unawaited waves of ocean have cradled thousands, and every battle-field opens to receive the staunch and strong! Even for the sake of mysterious beauty such as hath thy holy hill, Concordia! alert youth itself might harbor a not ungentle welcoming thought of death. Yet that head which is confident of quiet sleep is scarce solicitous of its pillow. One last assurance vibrates, like triumphant music, in ears impatient of much speech upon a text so sacred. "To live indeed," it echoes, "is to be again ourselves, which being not only a hope, but an evidence in noble believers, it is all one to lie in St. Innocent's churchyard as in the sands of Egypt: ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six feet as with the moles of Adrianus." -137-

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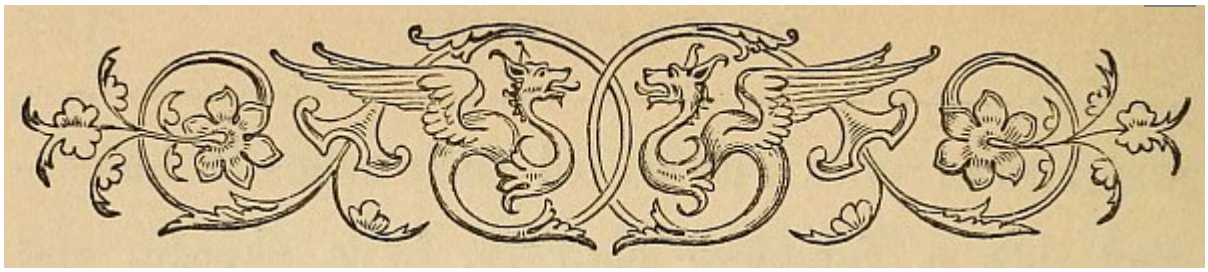

SOME GARDEN-FOLK.

THE snail is a kind-hearted, happy-go-lucky creature. Carrying his house with him, he leaves no cares at home. He is *otium cum dignitate*. He is the moral antipode of the ant. He shirks responsibilities, and turns the cold shoulder on labor and fret. Deliberation, calmness of intellect, consciousness of superiority, are in his slow, majestic tread. So that he gets to the place in mind, it is of no possible consequence how long the journey may be. The crystal day is all his own. He is a Nabob, a gentleman of leisure, and considers haste vulgar, and proper only to grasshoppers and miserable sparrows.

Rose-bugs are impertinent. Humming-birds, bright and beautiful, come too seldom amongst our flowers of June, but the bees come instead, and burden the -139-
air with their soothing baritone. Yet the bees have a way of pressing personal souvenirs upon you. Pray you, avoid it! as Hamlet tells the players.

Caterpillars fascinate a spectator. They are full of mysterious interest, berthed in their soft cocoons, deftly caught on to the jagged edges of stone walls, or bent on travelling from leaf to leaf, with their "many twinkling feet" in full motion. A caterpillar, however varied and attractive his coloring, is not a favorite with society, or with that branch of it which goes about in bonnets and high-heeled boots. Moralists, rather, shall befriend him, the kind little creeper, and treat him with that reverence which the knowledge of his coming glories inspires.

The earth-worm is the Pariah of garden-folk. His appearance, primarily, is against him; he looks like an intriguer, an uneasy, officious sinner, wriggling his crooked way through the world. The "inadvertent step," which Cowper would fain spare him, ends too often our groundling's peregrinations. He is born to be disregarded and abused; a child, whose protective instincts are yet dormant, will -140-
decimate him for the pleasure of seeing his posthumous remnants take up their separate lives, and unconcernedly disperse. Worm is a reputed political exile. With his greater cousin, the snake, he shares the popular odium of Erin's isle. I have heard an old fellow, mowing grass, turn about to tell an incredulous companion that if, by any chance, one could put a bit of Irish soil, nay, so small a thing as a shamrock, under a "Yankee wurrum," that instant would be the death of him.

The legend is given in that very quaint "Lives of the Saints," which Warton thinks was written in the twelfth century:—

"Seyn Pateryck com thoru Goddes grace to preche in Irelonde,
To teche men ther ryt believe Jehu Cryste to onderstonde;
So fil of worms that londe he found that no man in myghte gon,
In som stede for worms that he nas wenemyd anon;
Seyn Pateryck bade our lord Cryste that the londe delyvered were
Of thilke foul wormis that none ne com ther!"

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HOSPITALITIES.

IT does the heart good to read of some light-footed troubadour or reverend pilgrim trudging from gate to gate, all the way across a strange country, everywhere welcome as an expected guest, and given the liberty of the host's kingdom. Chroniclers give us pretty pictures of the household sitting about the dusty palmer, listening to his pious and spirited homily; of the errant singer, wrapped in his worn velvet cloak, delighting young maids and children with the old burden of Roncesvalles, or with the tale of that dreamer Rudel who crossed seas to find his unseen lady-love at Tripoli, and to die, satisfactorily, in her arms. Whether the master of the castle had subsequent cause to regret the shelter proffered to his birds of passage, posterity shall never learn. For those were the days of chivalry; and the -142-
brave bounty which accepted the wayfarers without question was able to overlook a deficiency, if such there were, in the family silver. Of this best sort, too, was the hospitality of Alcinoüs to Ulysses, treating him like a king, and dreaming not of his hidden kingliness. Spanish courtesy yet keeps a show of heart-whole giving: "This is thy house," an Andalusian tells his visitor. An Indian, in his forest wigwam, does yet better. If he abide you at all, with your scalp at its accustomed altitude, he tenders whatsoever he calls his, and would scorn to conceal from you the innermost recesses of his savage larder.

"Is he not hospitable," quaintly asks one of our American essayists, "who entertains thoughts?"

Think of the unlicensed generosity of the Roberds-men, dealing out what had but just become theirs by right of might, and of our niggardly modern dispensation! of that Duke of Newcastle, the lavish splendor of whose receptions bewildered all England; or of another social peer, Edward, Earl of -143-
Derby, "in whose grave, since 1572," said Thomas Fuller, "hospitality hath in a manner been laid asleep." Timon began as bravely as any of these. Waiving all formal recognition of his royal liberality, he made his frank exordium in the banquet-hall:—

——"My lords! ceremony
Was but devised at first to set a gloss
On faint deeds, hollow welcomes,
Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown;
But where there is true friendship, there needs none;
Pray sit...."

Hospitality hath been called threefold: for one's family, of necessity; for strangers, of courtesy; for the poor, of charity. Friendship pushes its privilege to the broad extreme, and loses its sense of ownership.

"Cot or cabin have I none,
And sing the more that thou hast one."

The twin playwrights of the reign of Queen Bess set up their tent "on the Bankside;" alternately wearing "the same cloathes and clokes," and having but one bench of the house between them, which the twain "did so much admire"! -144-

A guest should be permitted to graze, as it were, in the pastures of his host's kindness, left even to his own devices, like a rational being, and handsomely neglected. Our merry friend, T., has been known to beat his breast and groan while passing a certain suburban house, whose inmates consider themselves his devoted friends. It seems that on his last visit he found only the ladies of the establishment at home,—ardent, solicitous creatures, whose good manners were nearly the death of him. He had a mind to await their brother's return, and while the fair Araminta was gathering roses on the terrace, and her sister had momentarily vanished in-doors, our tender innocent, pleased with the landscape, and not averse to bodily comfort, incontinently got into the hammock. He had barely begun to sway to and fro, in his idle fashion, when delicate expostulations smote his incredulous ear. He learned, with respectful awe, that he was liable to headache, to sea-sickness, to certain and sudden thuds on the floor of the piazza, -145-
and, lastly, to influenza and kindred ills, by facing the formidable summer atmosphere, in a recumbent position, without wrap or shawl. The climax was capped by the wheeling forward of a portly arm-chair, and the persuasive order to "take that," and be "comfortable." T. was too dazed, or too shy, to protest. When he sought a cool seat in the bay-window, down came the sash, "for fear of a draught;" he made bold to caress the dog, and Nero was led away and chained to his kennel, because he was "apt to bite;" he fell in, to his infinite diversion, with the junior member of the household, and master was marched off to bed, with the stern bidding to "be a good boy," and not "trouble the gentleman." Like sorrows hovered over him till the blessed hour of release. B. was back at seven, and wondered why his old classmate had gone.

Who does not envy them that knew Henry Wotton, "a very great lover of his neighbors, a bountiful entertainer of them very often at his table, where his meat was *choice*, and his discourse *better*;" or the Bohemian spirits of 4 Inner Temple -146-
Lane, with "the card-tables drawn out, the fire crackling, the long-sixes lit, the snuff-boxes ready for any one's handling, the kettle singing on the hob, glasses and bottles and cold viands within reach, books lying about, familiar guests doing what they pleased, chatting, reading, coming, going,—veritable At Homes, with a sense of slippered, almost of slip-shod ease"? But hold! are we to indite a disquisition on the Decay of Hospitality? Are there no open hearts above ground, nor any houses where the elected comer may still hold the key to every

room, with no direful Blue-beard exclusions? Leaving Dives to the practice or omission of a virtue eminently appropriate to his coffers, what of the very poor? For there is a paradoxical extravagance in their way of life; a glorious communism between one that is needy and one whom he discovers, day on day, to be needier than himself. Where have they learned that sweet readiness of succor? The churl, with them, is he who withholds his little superfluity from a more miserable brother. In the close kinship of suffering, their souls grow mutually pitying, mutually helpful, clinging each to the rest, as a coral atom is moored to the patient island, built from the incalculable depths of the sea. If the wealth that is gracious and thoughtful should vanish to-morrow from the earth, generous giving should find its home in the thin, kind hands of poverty; and then, as now, should some bright-eyed student arise to deny the asseveration of history that the noble old Hospitallers are no more.

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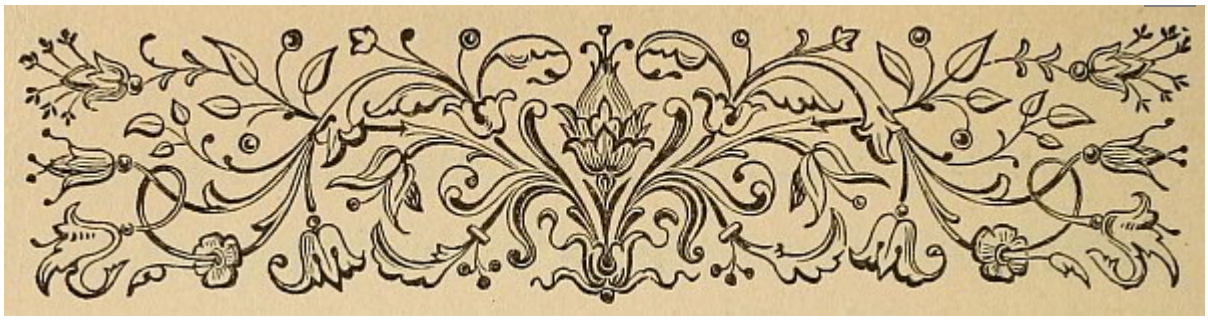

THE TWO VOICES.

DOWN a tranquil country road, I walked in a reverie, one April Sabbath afternoon. I seemed to be in a strange land, and pictures and fancies of Maiano and the Tyrol were floating in my brain; yet I was unconsciously moving, like a drowsy star, in the old, old orbit, whence I had never strayed, within brief distance of the spot where I was born, and where for years my life had worked itself into so dear a bondage, that the desire of journeying gladly elsewhere, save in the spirit, had become a sort of treason. The air was laden with the moist delicious fragrance of early spring, which comes as yet from nothing but the ground, as if the persuasive showers had stirred and awakened the very clods and roots and buried fragments of -149-
leaves into something like hope and aspiration. This is the advent-time of Nature, far more touching and suggestive than the imminent beauty whereof it is the fore-runner. As I ventured onward, wrapped in solitary thought, and resolved, as it were, into the sweet indolent joy of living, I stooped to pick up a branch, silvered with thick buds, which the wind had blown across my path. At that moment, distracted from the invisible world, and in the transition-state between dreaming and alert attention, I was saluted with a strain of exquisite music, such as one can conceive of as floating ever in Jeremy Taylor's "blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and whence a friend never went away." I raised my head to listen, and immediately perceived ahead of me, back from the highway, and embowered in trees, a gray church porch, out of which were ushered the interlacing harmonies which had charmed my wandering ear. The door stood open, and no idlers were in sight; no late wheel-marks were betrayed on the soft, fine dust of the road. Yet by the many-colored sunlight, filtered -150-
through the costly windows of the nave, I saw that a number of people were gathered together in the cool and quiet edifice. A single glance showed me that the interior was of extreme beauty, and of precisely that delicacy and airiness of design most unlikely to be coupled with massive granite walls. Yet there it was, impregnably grim without, peaceful and assuring within, like a kindly heroic heart beating under armor. From it, and about it, and through it, floated the siren voices of my search. In an illusion-loving mood, I sought not to pluck out the heart of my mystery, nor to rob it of its soft promise by vain questionings. I slipped into a deserted seat in the shadow of the choir-stairs, and gave myself up to this sole delight: as to prayers and sermons, either they were already over, or else they went past in the lapses of melody, as the swallows by the window

above me, beating their shining way upward, utterly without my knowledge or furtherance.

I heard, above the rest, and sometimes intertwined only with each other, a brave, -151-
jubilant voice, and a voice steadfast and tender. Neither know I which was the fairer, so ministrant were both, so helpful and unfailing. The soft, starlit voice might touch an over-eager soul with calm; to the soul distressed, the strong voice would come like a great noon-tide wind, impelling it towards the height where the sun dwelt, and all the fountains of the day. Clear as thought was the bright voice, striving, surmounting, and instinct with truth; but like the first sigh of passion was the sad voice, thrilling, too, with memories of yesterdays that cannot return forever; fond, sensitive, dedicated to the deep recesses of the heart, where there is search after hidden meanings, and mourning over the inscrutable laws through which not even Love's anointed eyes can see. I recognized the battle-call, the rush of the wings of the morning, the pæan of young ambition in the victor-voice, whose very petition was a conquest, in the irresistible faith and strength of its asking; but the lowly voice sang with unspeakable pathos, in -152-
whose every plea the greater grief of rejection was already apprehended. A grateful spirit would fain bestow on the glorious voice an ardent welcome, and on the gentle voice a lingering caress. Both I loved, and unto both my soul hearkened; for they were the voices of angels, and one was Joy, and one was Peace.

Then, as in a vision, I beheld a fair prospect before me, and in the centre of its green beauty arose two hills, from whose separate summits the voices ruled perennially, showering blessings, healing sorrow, banishing care, cheering and solacing the earth. Now the weak needed not to rely on the strong; and pity and protection were scarcely asked or given; for music, "the most divine striker of the senses,"—music alone was the arbitress of the world. And all day, past twilight into the deep gloom, were the voices singing, not incapable of being wearied, but revivified forever by the smiles and tears of pilgrims who departed from the hill-top with hearts made whole.

I marked that the little children were drawn frequently to the abode of the -153-
melancholy voice, because it was soft and weird, like a gypsy mother's lullaby, or the rustle of aspens in serene weather. Thither also came youth, nursing its first grief with wilful indulgence, and manhood, yearning for summer melodies that should soothe all unrest, and close "tired eyelids over tired eyes." But I knew the babes were there only because of the sweet, curious affinity of childhood with sombre influences; and the young palmers, through some sophistry of love and honor; and the strong workers, overwrought, since there was no courage left for self-invigoration, and no guide to help them towards the city of the cordial voice, whither they should have turned. One I saw coming forth from the field, with a scroll under his arm, pale and worn with "glimpses of incomprehensibles, and thoughts of things which thoughts do but tenderly touch," who stood a moment, rapt in rash delight at the voice which betokened tears and infinite longing and regret; and who, straightway remembering that the poet's mission is gladness, incessant belief and prophecy of good, betook him, -154-
albeit with a sigh, to that other abiding-place, where he might learn of the happy voice. All the afflicted, with wild and doleful steps, sought to climb the dolorous mountain towards the setting sun; and often a friend's strong hand intervened, and led them, rather, with inspiring speech, into the land of healing. I watched, time on time, soldiers marching to the wars, sustained by the glad voice, and hastening forwards with its spell upon them like a consecration; and again, the weary troops returning, with tattered colors and broken ranks, pausing in the

lovely courts of the grave voice, to chant with it a song of memory and reparation and thanksgiving. I came to understand, though but slowly and confusedly, that the entire universe was swayed by these voices; and that, while each was best in its holy office, the strong voice was that which nerved us to our duty, and the kind voice that which rewarded us for duty done. Always within hearing of them, we travel towards the ampler day, loyal to one until we have merited the loving offices of the other; holding them sweetly correlative, even as are labor and repose, or life and death.

So soon as I was filled with the glory and significance of the voices, they faded imperceptibly away, and I heard them no longer. Moreover, I found my lifted eye resting anew on the village church, where the dying light fell across the aisles, and the bare clematis-vine waved at the near window; and whence the last worshipper had departed. Had I indeed been on a strange road, and among strange sounds? It may be that even in my day-dream I might have called my beloved singers by their earthly names; and that so I might this hour, were it not for a clinging scruple. For I have been made wiser, and know verily that both are angels, and that one is Joy, and one is Peace.

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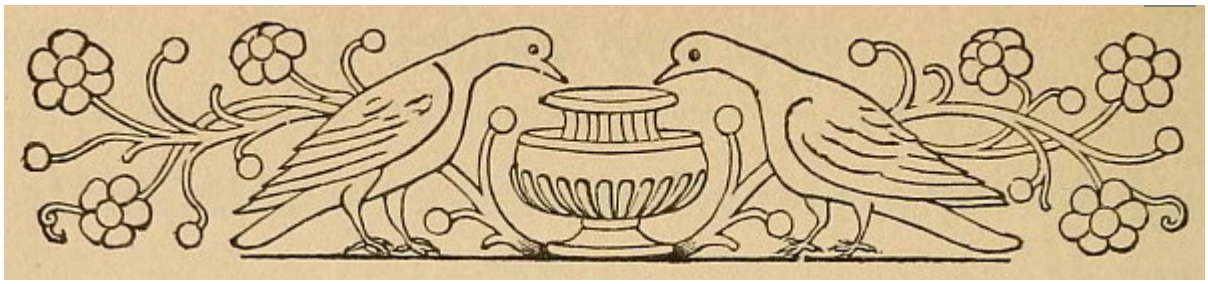

SWEETHEART.

IN a mood made half of tenderness, and half of laughter, I begin to speak of her: in tenderness, since to name her is a joy; and in laughter, for that I cannot for sheer inability keep the knowledge of her to myself; partly because she had many liegemen and lovers who sung of her aloud to the tell-tale winds before I found my way to her blessed door, but most of all because it would strangely savor of injustice to appropriate so sweet a thing as her favor, without sharing it with the first comer found worthy. Therefore this delight of mine is no more mine than thine, and his, and theirs, and ours; and who would have it otherwise?

She dwelt of old in a tranquil vale apart from villages, with little society save that of the scarlet tanager and the periwinkle-blossom. Such visitors as entered -157-
the "piny aisles" that led into her presence, were those only who reverenced her truly. She could not abide harshness and scorn, and they were always gentle; she sat in her fragrant solitude as one that broods on mysteries, and they, in sympathy, sat beside her, one by one, and spake ever after with the enthusiasm and the unworldliness of children. But the immaculate stillness which she chose for her dwelling has long been assailed. Revellers came from the city to riot in her gardens, and to disport themselves in her halls. Railway trains thundered hourly over against her hallowed threshold. Often and often, in passing by, you may yet hear the sound of inharmonious voices, and catch a glimpse of her fair downcast brow, as she looks mutely out upon the invaders.

Amid this "heavy change" she is unchanged and unchangeable. Her pure serenity was a sharp rebuke to our doubting, when we first gathered around her, after the dread of missing the charm which had made her dear. We had known -158-
many of her kindred, and each of them, howsoever lovely, seemed coarsened and cheapened to the sensitive eye, by over-much familiarity with crowds. But our celestial lady moves like Penelope, amid throngs of her false suitors, with thoughts disentangled from their clamor, in forbearance and patience and hope and honor, the ineffable depths of her nature evermore unjarred. Long ago, and in the beginning of our affection for her, we twain found her asleep in the flooded noonday sunshine, having at her feet and at her head a sombre guard of pines; and behind them, the vagrant "glad light green" of spring; and again, above their topmost pennon, irregular amethystine clouds, visionary mountain-ranges, that climbed, peak on peak, to front

"Thee, Lincoln, on thy sovereign hill."

We flung ourselves in the young grass, and delayed there, lest our footsteps should break that exquisite slumber; and so awed, and so rejoicing, looked upon her whom we had travelled far to see. It was her exceeding comeliness that -159- made the responsive gleam dance from eye to eye; but it was her sanctity, virginal as when the Spirit first breathed upon it and bade it be, that held our lips hushed then, our memory secure and deferent ever after. Over this unforgotten glory of ours, Saint Francis of Assisi might have breathed his soft hymn of thanksgiving for "my sister, who is very humble, useful, precious, and chaste." Crime should be wary of her bright presence; weariness should forget its landmarks, dreaming beside her; nobleness overwrought and embittered should take courage, and trust the world anew, as by a miracle, for her sake.

Many, many times, but especially at the breaking of the frosts, when sap begins to thrill in the naked boughs, comes the desire to approach her peaceful abiding-place, and learn, by moon or sun, what more of winsomeness or splendor one year hath brought her. What more can it ever bring? For her soul is crystalline and candid, and on her forehead shines perpetual youth. She is one of the touch-stones of our finer selves. Verily, with this secluded friend of friends, "in -160- profanity, we are absent; in holiness, near; in sin, estranged; in innocence, reconciled." Her history is in hearts rather than in books; her unprofanable beauty is the special care of heaven; and we New Englanders that love her, and sometimes come about her, harping her praises with sweet extravagance, have no name for her which men shall recognize but that of WALDEN WATER.

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ON THE BEAUTY OF IDLENESS.

IDLENESS is harder to distinguish than the philosopher's stone. Stupidity you can put your finger on; and so with sullenness, day-dreaming, or bovine lassitude. But idleness may link itself with any, all, or none of these. It is the will-o'-the-wisp among human characteristics. You avoid it, being hoodwinked as to its presence in your vicinage; you bear with it in others, when your tolerance is veritably bestowed on something very different. Small wonder if you wax so wise and so finical that you shall swear, sooner or later, in the phrase of a certain friend of ours, that "there never was no sich" a thing!

What astronomy is to astrology, or chemistry to the alchemy of old times, that is idleness, so called, the most useful and edifying spectacle in the world, to -162-
idleness criminal. Idleness, simon-pure, from which all manner of good springs like seed from a fallow soil, is sure to be misnamed and misconstrued, even when it is stuck, like a bill-post, in the public eye. A thinking person, the schoolmaster will allow you, is barely to be called idle; but for that exaggeration of thought, the almost tidal stand-still between activities, which belongs to Dunce on the back bench, he has no more respect than can fit in the circumference of his rod. Dunce, nevertheless, may grow up to be called Oliver Goldsmith, or Arthur, Duke of Wellington. Tommy, who stops on his way to market, to sit on a stone wall and plan a nest-robbing, indulgent passers-by shall consider busy, though misguided; but young Galileo or Columbus, planning nothing whatsoever, drifting into the mental hush and stillness whence astonishing ideas arise, are sure to be set up as a couple of intolerable wool-gatherers. A boy may crouch before the fire, looking through the kettle steam at "one far-off divine event," and be complimented on his prospective value to -163-
society, or ironically offered a penny for the contents of his ridiculous head.

Thoreau put his own case, in the illustration of the man who roves all day through a pine-forest, rejoicing in its height and shade and fragrance, and is heralded far and wide as a lazy good-for-nought, as opposed to the sober and industrious citizen who betakes himself, axe in hand, to hew the giants down. Every township has its business men, but Mr. Henry Thoreau was, without exception, the best American idleness-man on record. He floated about in his dory, the breathing reflection of Nature in its wealth of detail, inflated with pride because he had not ever chosen to stand behind a counter! Yet he "got his living by loving," and may be suspected of having grained his name, diamond-like, on

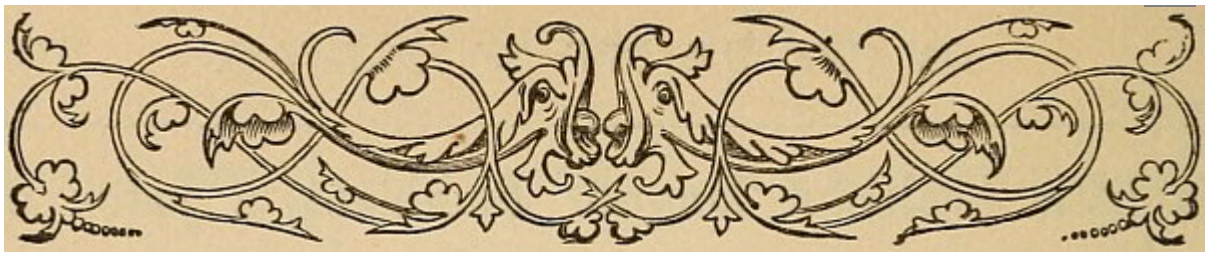
that window which looks out eastward on the Atlantic. How else was half the wisdom of the Orient cradled, but in the solemn Buddhist, coiled up, with his sealed eyelids, his shut teeth, and parted lips, contemplating nothing with tremendous suavity? The secret of handsome leisure is a fast secret now, indeed. The ancients have not transmitted it. Who can think of a breathless Athenian, save in the hour of battle, or of manly sport? Pericles laid the fold of his garment, so, deliberately over his arm, and steadied himself against some calm assurance, "marchyng," as the old chronicler said of Queen Bess, "with leysure." Repose is stamped on every statue the Greeks left us. It is in their lyrics, however joyous; in their large drama; in their golden history. They did nothing in feverish haste. Perhaps it may not be rash to acknowledge that they were reasonably clever, and managed their terrene concerns with some intelligence. There is over-much stir around us: mountains heaving, cities building, seasons racing by, governments shifting and turning at the four corners of the earth. It is the modern miracle that the contemporaneous growing lilies have not lost their blessedness, in striving to toil and spin.

Wherever a soul keeps energy in reserve, and a little healthful languor dominant, a patch of Arcadia is yet to be found.

"Oblivion here thy wisdom is,
  Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;
For a proud idleness like this
  Crowns all thy mean affairs!"

When the familiar Yankee angel, Nervous Prostration, brushes you with his wing, Arcadia withers away. Your holiday siesta, after that, is not genuine. Of idleness you cannot be conscious, even as innocence is no longer itself when it knows its name. Therefore no week-day preacher need exhort you to be idle, ladies and gentlemen, as often as you can afford it. He can only cast an eye along your ranks, and discovering one or two of the elect, who shall remind him of boats swinging gently at their moorings, piously hold his tongue and go on his way with thanksgiving.

-166-



DE MOSQUITONE.

IF the Bruce loved his instructive spider, for which history does not vouch, why should not the public mosquito be dear to desponding minds, as a yet more victorious exponent of the value of perseverance and a set purpose? Who hath circumvented her? She laughs at all dissuasion. She evades the soldier's gun, the physician's potion; the Sophi with his fleet cannot drive her away, nor the Czar impale her in any dungeon. What the mosquito came hitherward to do, that she does. The "moral runs at large."

It is all very well to abuse her; one gets a poor, childish satisfaction out of such terms of endearment as can be readily bestowed: unfledged Tamerlane! disturber of the sanctities of night! Satan of summer joys!—and so on. What avails all that? We have to bow our necks, and endure her diabolics. She is an evil which the Constitution cannot remedy; and as we are given to understand that she does not speak English, no protest formulated in that tongue can pierce her horny and tyrannical heart.

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The believing soul may picture her primarily in some sweet, decorous frolic through the glades of Eden (for charity would even accord to her the possibility of a state of first innocence), frisking airily with birds-of-Paradise, and given wholly to honorable practices. Ah! but what man is proof against violent thoughts of Father Noah, who, when she had already entered on her vein-glorious, flesh-loving, back-biting, and peace-disturbing career, gave her the shelter of his house through troublous days, and, like the short-sighted philanthropist that he was, cursed the four continents in befriending two obstreperous insects?

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I cannot consider any cosmic force more eminently practical. The poet lauds a river-bank, and sheds on a grove the starry fascinations of rhetoric; it is none other than Mosquito who induces you to hate and shun what you would fain be persuaded to consider fair. She it is who can make the greenest landscape odious, and the calm haunts of trees vociferous as if all Bedlam were let loose under their outspread arms. She is your best circumnavigator. I cannot picture to my wildest speculations a place where she is not. Nowhere is she an exile, but hath her native bog all over Christendom. She holds her cannibalistic orgies wherever human foot hath trodden. In that Land which, geographically, is No Man's, methinks she prowleth still, looking for him. Howsoever arrant a folly it be to ignore so great an influence on our personal behavior, so huge a factor in the reckoning of men's woes, little enough is recorded of this wretched

anthropophaginian. Dante did weakly, inasmuch as she figured not as chief tormentor among his perpetually condemned. The cricket, the glow-worm, the ant, the mole, long since found their bards, but no prophetic malediction has fallen from Parnassus on their evil-minded cousin. There must needs be a greater than Milton to pronounce her anathema. -169-

The immense malignity of her disposition is, with superlative cunning, cloaked under her bodily slenderness and aerial grace. What monstrous discrepancy betwixt her and her doings! By what unheard-of perverseness in the natural order is she framed delicately as a kind sunbeam, or a fragment of sea-foam? On the theory of physical degeneracy, we may consider her in the archetypal plan to have been a grim enormity, like Regulus's Bagrada serpent, a candidate of yore for the attentions of some Jack-the-Giant-Killer, who, should he arise to-day, might prove but a clumsy blunderer in face of her impish agilities.

Helpless victim that I am, I look at Mosquito with unmixed awe. I harbor grotesque superstitions, and build up romances in her name. Why not metempsychosis? This marvellous restlessness,—might it not once have been a human thing? What if some world-scourge, like Attila, were pent in these narrow bounds, and sent whirring through space again, on the old, colossal mission of annoyance? Involuntarily I scan Mosquito with no humbler glass than a telescope. Even to the dignity of a malignant planet hath she attained in mine unjaundiced eye. Straightway, as fear building on fear, mount my fancies, memories, speculations, till on their topmost pinnacle flashes the saying of the liberal philosophers, that the immortal principle may not be lacking in the "meanest thing that feels;" and my sole, honest, overwhelming impulse is to forswear the pious Sunday-school hope of becoming an angel, that is, a winged creature, lest in any phase of untried being, Mosquito! I should bear affinity to that which thou art. -170-

——"Execrable shape,
That dar'st, tho' grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front across my way!"

Is it not an apostrophe to thee? What fiend was it yesterday moved my shuddering lips to quote that gentlest strophe over thy flattened corpusculum, meant, peradventure, for a kindlier spirit?— -171-

"My sprightly neighbor! gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet as heretofore
Some summer morning?"

Such is the irony of revenge.

Dread Reminiscence! appalling Probability! disconcerting and inescapable Fact! thou art the Inscrutable, the Unattainable, the Never-Reached, I take it, of the metaphysical circle. In deference to thee, I salute the hem of a mosquito-net.

In the watches of the night, my soul shall rejoice to behold thy wrathful eye outside.

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ON THE GARRET.

"I scorn your land,
So far it lies below me; here I see
How all the sacred stars do circle me."
HENRY VAUGHAN.

THERE survives in certain men a climbing instinct, a persistence, dating from Babel days, which keeps them to the belief that they were meant to be, in Spenser's phrase, "neighbors to the sky." Put them down in a city, and they mount, by choice, as by force of circumstances, oil-like, over the gross mass. These are the garret-dwellers, disburdened, for the most part, of the money-bags of capitalists. Surely, the more a creature is denuded of riches and responsibilities, the lighter his spiritual weight, the fitter he is for nearing the unembarrassed planets. He is no underling. His poverty literally raises him up. He marches, like a conqueror towards some fine, deserted city, into the high places; his castle is over against the morning; and his bare forehead is reared above the hereditary crowns of Europe.

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That the rich should be the groundlings, after all, is one of the diverting sarcasms and counter-turns of society. Who would not, rather, stand play-fellow to the sun, and consider the moon's light nothing less familiar than a beneficent household elf, and suffer the companionship of the rainbow and of snows? Distant and faint sounds the thunder of the streets; Teufelsdröckh, and such as he, "sit above it, alone with the stars." Nethermost darkness cannot overtake the denizen of the garret. His matins are over and done while candles still flicker below. The wail of the Banshee reaches not his far-removed ear. No flood in civic highways appalls him; the tramp of armies, likewise, is beneath him, and he overlooks revolutions, undisturbed. For him, perpetually, are ultra-mundane joys, the *choragium* of the spheres, and the revelations of the shifting air.

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The conjurer and the astronomer alike love the "high lonely tower." The painter goes thither for light, the student for contemplation. There, according to international traditions, is the Poor Author perennially to be found,—

"Lulled by soft zephyrs thro' the broken pane."

The Poor Author! The saving leaven of literature! Here is his native heather, and not elsewhere. Here his latitude must be taken. If ghosts revisit their whilom kingdoms, here Otway, Addison, Dryden, Chatterton, Hood, Béranger, flock some time or other. Here you shall brush against the shade of Marvell, who dwelt thus high and thus solitary, when the king's deputies came with unavailing gifts in their hands, to buy his favor; and presently dear Oliver Goldsmith shall turn his homely face upon you, and tell you, in his delightful voice, as he once blurted it out before the elegant circles at Sir Joshua's, how he lived happily among the beggars in Axe Lane! In a garret sat Tasso, whimsically beseeching his cat to lend to his nocturnal labors the guiding radiance of her eyes, having no -175- candle whereby to write his verses. Dickens, who was never a Poor Author, caught, at least, something of his privilege in his "sky-nest," with the clouds and the birds shadowing his study windows in their passage.

As the dwellers in the Happy Valley were daily entertained with tales and songs which treated of their own felicity therein, so we know of nothing more judicious than to sound the praises of the ever-noble garret to the Poor Author, who has an eternal patent on its worth and beauty. The least that can be said of it is that it engenders the philosophy of comment. Its kind soil fosters the spectator and the observer, in default of commoner weed. The Muse, traditionally coy, can be caught there, if anywhere. She has been known to neglect her votaries in proportion to the fattening of their purses and their proximity to the first-floor drawing-room. A poet himself has marked it as a warning:—

"A man must live in a garret aloof ...
To keep the goddess constant and glad."

Long residence in its precincts, howbeit, may tend to produce a haughty -176- disregard of the brethren acclimated to lower levels. Your roof-perching hermit, whose lungs are inflated with rude health, scoffs at the genteel ailments accruing below from the largesses of carbonic acid gas. His own dais-like elevation breeds arrogance in him, and patrician scorn; his descent to the vantage-ground of the majority is palpable indeed. He cannot, at most, walk their paths, save, metaphorically, on stilts, like the shepherds of the Landes. He is accustomed to live cheek-by-jowl with Arcturus. A kite or a balloon he acknowledges, but no terrene mail-service or horse-car. Valleys and cellars distress him. He cannot lie on the grass of a summer's day, to watch a colony of ants. He is of a loftier cast of mind, and sighs rather for the shining motes of the Milky Way, "scattered unregarded upon the floor of heaven." We have known him to refuse a June cherry, plucked only amidmost of the tree. What is such a bigot to do, but thrust his tall head back, out of alien air, into his sixth-story Arcady where the Muse -177- sits, waiting for him, on a collapsing chair?

"Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!"

So have we sought the heights, and clove unto them, in orthodox privacy, though lacking our just deserts of the aforesaid lady's favor. Yet do we in nothing reproach thee, eyry of our youth! with thy beloved townish outlook and undusted shelves, save that the tutelary pages born of thee are scarce of so Attic a flavor as our sense of the due sequence of things hath led us to desire.

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