THE COMPLETE POETICAL

WORKS OF

JAMES RUSSELL

LOWELL

Cabinet Edition

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

THE RIVERSIDE PRESS, CAMBRIDGE

M DCCCC II

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Mr. Lowell, the year before he died, edited a definitive edition of his

works, known as the Riverside edition. Subsequently, his literary

executor, Mr. C.E. Norton, issued a final posthumous collection, and the

Cambridge edition followed, including all the poems in the Riverside

edition, and the poems edited by Mr. Norton. The present Cabinet edition

contains all the poems in the Cambridge edition. It is made from new

plates, and for the convenience of the student the longer poems have

their lines numbered, and indexes of titles and first lines are added.

\_Autumn, 1899\_.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EARLIER POEMS.

THRENODIA

THE SIRENS

IRENÃ

SERENADE

WITH A PRESSED FLOWER

THE BEGGAR

MY LOVE

SUMMER STORM

LOVE

TO PERDITA, SINGING

THE MOON

REMEMBERED MUSIC

SONG. TO M.L.

ALLEGRA

THE FOUNTAIN

ODE

THE FATHERLAND

THE FORLORN

MIDNIGHT

A PRAYER

THE HERITAGE

THE ROSE: A BALLAD

SONG, 'VIOLET! SWEET VIOLET!'

ROSALINE

A REQUIEM

A PARABLE

SONG, 'O MOONLIGHT DEEP AND TENDER'

SONNETS.

I. TO A.C.L.

II. 'WHAT WERE I, LOVE, IF I WERE STRIPPED OF THEE?'

III. 'I WOULD NOT HAVE THIS PERFECT LOVE OF OURS'

IV. 'FOR THIS TRUE NOBLENESS I SEEK IN VAIN'

V. TO THE SPIRIT OF KEATS

VI. 'GREAT TRUTHS ARE PORTIONS OF THE SOUL OF MAN'

VII. 'I ASK NOT FOR THOSE THOUGHTS, THAT SUDDEN LEAP'

VIII. TO M.W., ON HER BIRTHDAY

IX. 'MY LOVE, I HAVE NO FEAR THAT THOU SHOULDST DIE'

X. 'I CANNOT THINK THAT THOU SHOULDST PASS AWAY'

XI. 'THERE NEVER YET WAS FLOWER FAIR IN VAIN'

XII. SUB PONDERE CRESCIT

XIII. 'BELOVED, IN THE NOISY CITY HERE'

XIV. ON READING WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS IN DEFENCE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

XV. THE SAME CONTINUED.

XVI. THE SAME CONTINUED.

XVII. THE SAME CONTINUED.

XVIII. THE SAME CONTINUED.

XIX. THE SAME CONCLUDED.

XX. TO M.O.S.

XXI. 'OUR LOVE IS NOT A FADING, EARTHLY FLOWER'

XXII. IN ABSENCE

XXIII. WENDELL PHILLIPS

XXIV. THE STREET

XXV. 'I GRIEVE NOT THAT RIPE KNOWLEDGE TAKES AWAY'

XXVI. TO J.R. GIDDINGS

XXVII. 'I THOUGHT OUR LOVE AT FULL, BUT I DID ERR'

L'ENVOI

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

A LEGEND OF BRITTANY

PROMETHEUS

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

THE TOKEN

AN INCIDENT IN A RAILROAD CAR

RHOECUS

THE FALCON

TRIAL

A GLANCE BEHIMD THE CURTAIN

A CHIPPEWA LEGEND

STANZAS ON FREEDOM

COLUMBUS

AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG

THE SOWER

HUNGER AND COLD

THE LANDLORD

TO A PINE-TREE

SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES

TO THE PAST

TO THE FUTURE

HEBE

THE SEARCH

THE PRESENT CRISIS

AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE

THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND

A CONTRAST

EXTREME UNCTION

THE OAK

AMBROSE

ABOVE AND BELOW

THE CAPTIVE

THE BIRCH-TREE

AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH

ON THE CAPTURE OF FUGITIVE SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON

TO THE DANDELION

THE GHOST-SEER

STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS

ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD

EURYDICE

SHE CAME AND WENT

THE CHANGELING

THE PIONEER

LONGING

ODE TO FRANCE. February, 1848

ANTI-APIS

A PARABLE

ODE WRITTEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COCHITUATE

WATER INTO THE CITY OF BOSTON

LINES SUGGESTED BY THE GRAVES OF TWO ENGLISH SOLDIERS ON CONCORD

BATTLE-GROUND

TO----

FREEDOM

BIBLIOLATRES

BEAVER BROOK

MEMORIAL VERSES.

KOSSUTH

TO LAMARTINE. 1848

TO JOHN GORHAM PALFREY

TO W.L. GARRISON

ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES TURNER TORREY

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF DR. CHANNING

TO THE MEMORY OF HOOD

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

LETTER FROM BOSTON. December, 1846

A FABLE FOR CRITICS

THE UNHAPPY LOT OF MR. KNOTT

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED POEM

AN ORIENTAL APOLOGUE

THE BIGLOW PAPERS.

FIRST SERIES.

NOTICES OF AN INDEPENDENT PRESS

NOTE TO TITLE-PAGE

INTRODUCTION

NO. I. A LETTER FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW OF JAALAM TO THE HON.

JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM

NO. II. A LETTER FROM MR. HOSEA BIGLOW TO THE HON. J.T.

BUCKINGHAM

NO. III. WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

NO. IV. REMARKS OF INCREASE D. O'PHACE, ESQ.

NO. V. THE DEBATE IN THE SENNIT

NO. VI. THE PIOUS EDITOR'S CREED

NO. VII. A LETTER FROM A CANDIDATE IN THE PRESIDENCY IN ANSWER

TO SUTTIN QUESTIONS PROPOSED BY Mr. HOSEA BIGLOW

NO. VIII. A SECOND LETTER FROM B. SAWIN, ESQ.

NO. IX. A THIRD LETTER FROM B. SAWIN, ESQ.

SECOND SERIES.

THE COURTIN'

NO. I. BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN ESQ., TO MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

NO. II. MASON AND SLIDELL: A YANKEE IDYLL

JONATHAN TO JOHN

NO. III. BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN, ESQ., TO MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

NO. IV. A MESSAGE OF JEFF DAVIS IN SECRET SESSION

NO. V. SPEECH OF HONOURABLE PRESERVED DOE IN SECRET CAUCUS

NO. VI. SUNTHIN' IN THE PASTORAL LINE

NO. VII. LATEST VIEWS OF MR. BIGLOW

NO. VIII. KETTELOPOTOMACHIA

NO. IX. SOME MEMORIALS OF THE LATE REVEREND H. WILBUR

NO. X. MR. HOSEA BIGLOW TO THE EDITOR OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

NO. XI. MR. HOSEA BIGLOW'S SPEECH IN MARCH MEETING

UNDER THE WILLOWS AND OTHER POEMS.

TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

UNDER THE WILLOWS

DARA

THE FIRST SNOW-FALL

THE SINGING LEAVES

SEAWEED

THE FINDING OF THE LYRE

NEW-YEAR'S EVE, 1850

FOR AN AUTOGRAPH

AL FRESCO

MASACCIO

WITHOUT AND WITHIN

GODMINSTER CHIMES

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

ALADDIN

AN INVITATION. TO JOHN FRANCIS HEATH

THE NOMADES

SELF-STUDY

PICTURES FROM APPLEDORE

THE WIND-HARP

AUF WIEDERSEHEN

PALINODE

AFTER THE BURIAL

THE DEAD HOUSE

A MOOD

THE VOYAGE TO VINLAND

MAHMOOD THE IMAGE-BREAKER

INVITA MINERVA

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

YUSSOUF

THE DARKENED MIND

WHAT RABBI JEHOSHA SAID

ALL-SAINTS

A WINTER-EVENING HYMN TO MY FIRE

FANCY'S CASUISTRY

TO MR. JOHN BARTLETT

ODE TO HAPPINESS

VILLA FRANCA. 1859

THE MINER

GOLD EGG: A DREAM-FANTASY

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE TO A FRIEND

AN EMBER PICTURE

TO H.W.L.

THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE STUDY

IN THE TWILIGHT

THE FOOT-PATH

POEMS OF THE WAR.

THE WASHERS OF THE SHROUD

TWO SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF BLONDEL

MEMORIAE POSITUM

ON BOARD THE '76

ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION

L'ENVOI: TO THE MUSE

THE CATHEDRAL

THREE MEMORIAL POEMS.

ONE READ AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIGHT AT

CONCORD BRIDGE

UNDER THE OLD ELM

AN ODE FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1876

HEARTSEASE AND RUE.

I. FRIENDSHIP.

AGASSIZ

TO HOLMES, ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

IN A COPY OF OMAR KHAYYÃM

ON RECEIVING A COPY OF MR. AUSTIN DOBSON'S 'OLD WORLD IDYLLS'

TO C.F. BRADFORD

BANKSIDE

JOSEPH WINLOCK

SONNET, TO FANNY ALEXANDER

JEFFRIES WYMAN

TO A FRIEND

WITH AN ARMCHAIR

E.G. DE R.

BON VOYAGE

TO WHITTIER, ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

ON AN AUTUMN SKETCH OF H.G. WILD

TO MISS D.T.

WITH A COPY OF AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE

ON PLANTING A TREE AT INVERARAY

AN EPISTLE TO GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

II. SENTIMENT.

ENDYMION

THE BLACK PREACHER

ARCADIA REDIVIVA

THE NEST

A YOUTHFUL EXPERIMENT IN ENGLISH HEXAMETERS

BIRTHDAY VERSES

ESTRANGEMENT

PHOEBE

DAS EWIG-WEIBLICHE

THE RECALL

ABSENCE

MONNA LISA

THE OPTIMIST

ON BURNING SOME OLD LETTERS

THE PROTEST

THE PETITION

FACT OR FANCY?

AGRO-DOLCE

THE BROKEN TRYST

CASA SIN ALMA

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

MY PORTRAIT GALLERY

PAOLO TO FRANCESCA

SONNET, SCOTTISH BORDER

SONNET, ON BEING ASKED FOR AN AUTOGRAPH IN VENICE

THE DANCING BEAR

THE MAPLE

NIGHTWATCHES

DEATH OF QUEEN MERCEDES

PRISON OF CERVANTES

TO A LADY PLAYING ON THE CITHERN

THE EYE'S TREASURY

PESSIMOPTIMISM

THE BRAKES

A FOREBODING

III. FANCY

UNDER THE OCTOBER MAPLES

LOVE'S CLOCK

ELEANOR MAKES MACAROONS

TELEPATHY

SCHERZO

'FRANCISCUS DE VERULAMIO SIC COGITAVIT'

AUSPEX

THE PREGNANT COMMENT

THE LESSON

SCIENCE AND POETRY

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING

THE DISCOVERY

WITH A SEASHELL

THE SECRET

IV. HUMOR AND SATIRE.

FITZ ADAM'S STORY

THE ORIGIN OF DIDACTIC POETRY

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

CREDIDIMUS JOVEM REGNARE

TEMPORA MUTANTUR

IN THE HALF-WAY HOUSE

AT THE BURNS CENTENNIAL

IN AN ALBUM

AT THE COMMENCEMENT DINNER, 1866

A PARABLE

V. EPIGRAMS.

SAYINGS

INSCRIPTIONS

A MISCONCEPTION

THE BOSS

SUN-WORSHIP

CHANGED PERSPECTIVE

WITH A PAIR OF GLOVES LOST IN A WAGER

SIXTY-EIGHTH BIRTHDAY

INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT

LAST POEMS.

HOW I CONSULTED THE ORACLE OF THE GOLDFISHES

TURNER'S OLD TÃMÃRAIRE

ST. MICHAEL THE WEIGHER

A VALENTINE

AN APRIL BIRTHDAY--AT SEA

LOVE AND THOUGHT

THE NOBLER LOVER

ON HEARING A SONATA OF BEETHOVEN'S PLAYED IN THE NEXT ROOM

VERSES, INTENDED TO GO WITH A POSSET DISH

ON A BUST OF GENERAL GRANT

APPENDIX.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND SERIES OF BIGLOW PAPERS

II. GLOSSARY TO THE BIGLOW PAPERS

III. INDEX TO BIGLOW PAPERS

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

INDEX OF TITLES

EARLIER POEMS

THRENODIA

Gone, gone from us! and shall we see

Those sibyl-leaves of destiny,

Those calm eyes, nevermore?

Those deep, dark eyes so warm and bright,

Wherein the fortunes of the man

Lay slumbering in prophetic light,

In characters a child might scan?

So bright, and gone forth utterly!

Oh stern word--Nevermore!

The stars of those two gentle eyes 10

Will shine no more on earth;

Quenched are the hopes that had their birth,

As we watched them slowly rise,

Stars of a mother's fate;

And she would read them o'er and o'er,

Pondering, as she sate,

Over their dear astrology,

Which she had conned and conned before,

Deeming she needs must read aright 19

What was writ so passing bright.

And yet, alas! she knew not why.

Her voice would falter in its song,

And tears would slide from out her eye,

Silent, as they were doing wrong.

Oh stern word--Nevermore!

The tongue that scarce had learned to claim

An entrance to a mother's heart

By that dear talisman, a mother's name,

Sleeps all forgetful of its art!

I loved to see the infant soul 30

(How mighty in the weakness

Of its untutored meekness!)

Peep timidly from out its nest,

His lips, the while,

Fluttering with half-fledged words,

Or hushing to a smile

That more than words expressed,

When his glad mother on him stole

And snatched him to her breast!

Oh, thoughts were brooding in those eyes, 40

That would have soared like strong-winged birds

Far, far into the skies,

Gladding the earth with song,

And gushing harmonies,

Had he but tarried with us long!

Oh stern word--Nevermore!

How peacefully they rest,

Crossfolded there

Upon his little breast,

Those small, white hands that ne'er were still before, 50

But ever sported with his mother's hair,

Or the plain cross that on her breast she wore!

Her heart no more will beat

To feel the touch of that soft palm,

That ever seemed a new surprise

Sending glad thoughts up to her eyes

To bless him with their holy calm,--

Sweet thoughts! they made her eyes as sweet.

How quiet are the hands

That wove those pleasant bands!

But that they do not rise and sink 61

With his calm breathing, I should think

That he were dropped asleep.

Alas! too deep, too deep

Is this his slumber!

Time scarce can number

The years ere he shall wake again.

Oh, may we see his eyelids open then!

Oh stern word--Nevermore!

As the airy gossamere, 70

Floating in the sunlight clear,

Where'er it toucheth clingeth tightly,

Bound glossy leal or stump unsightly,

So from his spirit wandered out

Tendrils spreading all about,

Knitting all things to its thrall

With a perfect love of all:

Oh stern word--Nevermore!

He did but float a little way

Adown the stream of time, 80

With dreamy eyes watching the ripples play,

Or hearkening their fairy chime;

His slender sail

Ne'er felt the gale;

He did but float a little way,

And, putting to the shore

While yet 't was early day,

Went calmly on his way,

To dwell with us no more!

No jarring did he feel, 90

No grating on his shallop's keel;

A strip of silver sand

Mingled the waters with the land

Where he was seen no more:

Oh stern word--Nevermore!

Full short his journey was; no dust

Of earth unto his sandals clave;

The weary weight that old men must,

He bore not to the grave.

He seemed a cherub who had lost his way 100

And wandered hither, so his stay

With us was short, and 't was most meet

That he should be no delver in earth's clod,

Nor need to pause and cleanse his feet

To stand before his God:

Oh blest word--Evermore!

THE SIRENS

The sea is lonely, the sea is dreary,

The sea is restless and uneasy;

Thou seekest quiet, thou art weary,

Wandering thou knowest not whither;--

Our little isle is green and breezy,

Come and rest thee! Oh come hither,

Come to this peaceful home of ours,

Where evermore

The low west-wind creeps panting up the shore 9

To be at rest among the flowers;

Full of rest, the green moss lifts,

As the dark waves of the sea

Draw in and out of rocky rifts,

Calling solemnly to thee

With voices deep and hollow,--

'To the shore

Follow! Oh, follow!

To be at rest forevermore!

Forevermore!'

Look how the gray old Ocean 20

From the depth of his heart rejoices,

Heaving with a gentle motion,

When he hears our restful voices;

List how he sings in an undertone,

Chiming with our melody;

And all sweet sounds of earth and air

Melt into one low voice alone,

That murmurs over the weary sea,

And seems to sing from everywhere,--

'Here mayst thou harbor peacefully, 30

Here mayst thou rest from the aching oar;

Turn thy curved prow ashore,

And in our green isle rest forevermore!

Forevermore!'

And Echo half wakes in the wooded hill,

And, to her heart so calm and deep,

Murmurs over in her sleep,

Doubtfully pausing and murmuring still,

'Evermore!'

Thus, on Life's weary sea, 40

Heareth the marinere

Voices sweet, from far and near,

Ever singing low and clear,

Ever singing longingly.

Is it not better here to be,

Than to be toiling late and soon?

In the dreary night to see

Nothing but the blood-red moon

Go up and down into the sea;

Or, in the loneliness of day, 50

To see the still seals only

Solemnly lift their faces gray,

Making it yet more lonely?

Is it not better than to hear

Only the sliding of the wave

Beneath the plank, and feel so near

A cold and lonely grave,

A restless grave, where thou shalt lie

Even in death unquietly?

Look down beneath thy wave-worn bark, 60

Lean over the side and see

The leaden eye of the sidelong shark

UpturnÃ¨d patiently,

Ever waiting there for thee:

Look down and see those shapeless forms,

Which ever keep their dreamless sleep

Far down within the gloomy deep,

And only stir themselves in storms,

Rising like islands from beneath,

And snorting through the angry spray, 70

As the frail vessel perisheth

In the whirls of their unwieldy play;

Look down! Look down!

Upon the seaweed, slimy and dark,

That waves its arms so lank and brown,

Beckoning for thee!

Look down beneath thy wave-worn bark

Into the cold depth of the sea!

Look down! Look down!

Thus, on Life's lonely sea, 80

Heareth the marinere

Voices sad, from far and near,

Ever singing full of fear,

Ever singing drearfully.

Here all is pleasant as a dream;

The wind scarce shaketh down the dew,

The green grass floweth like a stream

Into the ocean's blue;

Listen! Oh, listen!

Here is a gush of many streams,

A song of many birds, 91

And every wish and longing seems

Lulled to a numbered flow of words,--

Listen! Oh, listen!

Here ever hum the golden bees

Underneath full-blossomed trees,

At once with glowing fruit and flowers crowned;--

So smooth the sand, the yellow sand,

That thy keel will not grate as it touches the land;

All around with a slumberous sound, 100

The singing waves slide up the strand,

And there, where the smooth, wet pebbles be,

The waters gurgle longingly,

As If they fain would seek the shore,

To be at rest from the ceaseless roar,

To be at rest forevermore,--

Forevermore.

Thus, on Life's gloomy sea,

Heareth the marinere

Voices sweet, from far and near, 110

Ever singing in his ear,

'Here is rest and peace for thee!'

IRENÃ

Hers is a spirit deep, and crystal-clear;

Calmly beneath her earnest face it lies,

Free without boldness, meek without a fear,

Quicker to look than speak its sympathies;

Far down into her large and patient eyes

I gaze, deep-drinking of the infinite,

As, in the mid-watch of a clear, still night,

I look into the fathomless blue skies.

So circled lives she with Love's holy light,

That from the shade of self she walketh free; 10

The garden of her soul still keepeth she

An Eden where the snake did never enter;

She hath a natural, wise sincerity,

A simple truthfulness, and these have lent her

A dignity as moveless as the centre;

So that no influence of our earth can stir

Her steadfast courage, nor can take away

The holy peacefulness, which night and day,

Unto her queenly soul doth minister.

Most gentle is she; her large charity 20

(An all unwitting, childlike gift in her)

Not freer is to give than meek to bear;

And, though herself not unacquaint with care,

Hath in her heart wide room for all that be,--

Her heart that hath no secrets of its own,

But open is as eglantine full blown.

Cloudless forever is her brow serene,

Speaking calm hope and trust within her, whence

Welleth a noiseless spring of patience,

That keepeth all her life so fresh, so green 30

And full of holiness, that every look,

The greatness of her woman's soul revealing,

Unto me bringeth blessing, and a feeling

As when I read in God's own holy book.

A graciousness in giving that doth make

The small'st gift greatest, and a sense most meek

Of worthiness, that doth not fear to take

From others, but which always fears to speak

Its thanks in utterance, for the giver's sake;--

The deep religion of a thankful heart, 40

Which rests instinctively in Heaven's clear law

With a full peace, that never can depart

From its own steadfastness;--a holy awe

For holy things,--not those which men call holy,

But such as are revealÃ¨d to the eyes

Of a true woman's soul bent down and lowly

Before the face of daily mysteries;--

A love that blossoms soon, but ripens slowly

To the full goldenness of fruitful prime,

Enduring with a firmness that defies 50

All shallow tricks of circumstance and time,

By a sure insight knowing where to cling,

And where it clingeth never withering;--

These are IrenÃ©'s dowry, which no fate

Can shake from their serene, deep-builded state.

In-seeing sympathy is hers, which chasteneth

No less than loveth, scorning to be bound

With fear of blame, and yet which ever hasteneth

To pour the balm of kind looks on the wound,

If they be wounds which such sweet teaching makes, 60

Giving itself a pang for others' sakes;

No want of faith, that chills with sidelong eye,

Hath she; no jealousy, no Levite pride

That passeth by upon the other side;

For in her soul there never dwelt a lie.

Right from the hand of God her spirit came

Unstained, and she hath ne'er forgotten whence

It came, nor wandered far from thence,

But laboreth to keep her still the same,

Near to her place of birth, that she may not 70

Soil her white raiment with an earthly spot.

Yet sets she not her soul so steadily

Above, that she forgets her ties to earth,

But her whole thought would almost seem to be

How to make glad one lowly human hearth;

For with a gentle courage she doth strive

In thought and word and feeling so to live

As to make earth next heaven; and her heart

Herein doth show its most exceeding worth,

That, bearing in our frailty her just part, 80

She hath not shrunk from evils of this life,

But hath gone calmly forth into the strife,

And all its sins and sorrows hath withstood

With lofty strength of patient womanhood:

For this I love her great soul more than all,

That, being bound, like us, with earthly thrall,

She walks so bright and heaven-like therein,--

Too wise, too meek, too womanly, to sin.

Like a lone star through riven storm-clouds seen

By sailors, tempest-tost upon the sea, 90

Telling of rest and peaceful heavens nigh,

Unto my soul her star-like soul hath been,

Her sight as full of hope and calm to me;--

For she unto herself hath builded high

A home serene, wherein to lay her head,

Earth's noblest thing, a Woman perfected.

SERENADE

From the close-shut windows gleams no spark,

The night is chilly, the night is dark,

The poplars shiver, the pine-trees moan,

My hair by the autumn breeze is blown,

Under thy window I sing alone,

Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

The darkness is pressing coldly around,

The windows shake with a lonely sound,

The stars are hid and the night is drear,

The heart of silence throbs in thine ear,

In thy chamber thou sittest alone,

Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

The world is happy, the world is wide.

Kind hearts are beating on every side;

Ah, why should we lie so coldly curled

Alone in the shell of this great world?

Why should we any more be alone?

Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

Oh, 'tis a bitter and dreary word,

The saddest by man's ear ever heard!

We each are young, we each have a heart,

Why stand we ever coldly apart?

Must we forever, then, be alone?

Alone, alone, ah woe! alone!

WITH A PRESSED FLOWER

This little blossom from afar

Hath come from other lands to thine;

For, once, its white and drooping star

Could see its shadow in the Rhine.

Perchance some fair-haired German maid

Hath plucked one from the selfsame stalk,

And numbered over, half afraid,

Its petals in her evening walk.

'He loves me, loves me not,' she cries;

'He loves me more than earth or heaven!'

And then glad tears have filled her eyes

To find the number was uneven.

And thou must count its petals well,

Because it is a gift from me;

And the last one of all shall tell

Something I've often told to thee.

But here at home, where we were born,

Thou wilt find blossoms just as true,

Down-bending every summer morn,

With freshness of New England dew.

For Nature, ever kind to love,

Hath granted them the same sweet tongue,

Whether with German skies above,

Or here our granite rocks among.

THE BEGGAR

A beggar through the world am I,

From place to place I wander by.

Fill up my pilgrim's scrip for me,

For Christ's sweet sake and charity!

A little of thy steadfastness,

Bounded with leafy gracefulness,

Old oak, give me,

That the world's blasts may round me blow,

And I yield gently to and fro,

While my stout-hearted trunk below

And firm-set roots unshaken be.

Some of thy stern, unyielding might,

Enduring still through day and night

Rude tempest-shock and withering blight,

That I may keep at bay

The changeful April sky of chance

And the strong tide of circumstance,--

Give me, old granite gray.

Some of thy pensiveness serene,

Some of thy never-dying green,

Put in this scrip of mine,

That griefs may fall like snowflakes light,

And deck me in a robe of white,

Ready to be an angel bright,

O sweetly mournful pine.

A little of thy merriment,

Of thy sparkling, light content,

Give me, my cheerful brook,

That I may still be full of glee

And gladsomeness, where'er I be,

Though fickle fate hath prisoned me

In some neglected nook.

Ye have been very kind and good

To me, since I've been in the wood;

Ye have gone nigh to fill my heart;

But good-by, kind friends, every one,

I've far to go ere set of sun;

Of all good things I would have part,

The day was high ere I could start,

And so my journey's scarce begun.

Heaven help me! how could I forget

To beg of thee, dear violet!

Some of thy modesty,

That blossoms here as well, unseen,

As if before the world thou'dst been,

Oh, give, to strengthen me.

MY LOVE

Not as all other women are

Is she that to my soul is dear;

Her glorious fancies come from far,

Beneath the silver evening-star,

And yet her heart is ever near.

Great feelings hath she of her own,

Which lesser souls may never know;

God giveth them to her alone,

And sweet they are as any tone

Wherewith the wind may choose to blow.

Yet in herself she dwelleth not.

Although no home were half so fair;

No simplest duty is forgot,

Life hath no dim and lowly spot

That doth not in her sunshine share.

She doeth little kindnesses,

Which most leave undone, or despise:

For naught that sets one heart at ease,

And giveth happiness or peace,

Is low-esteemÃ¨d in her eyes.

She hath no scorn of common things,

And, though she seem of other birth,

Round us her heart intwines and clings,

And patiently she folds her wings

To tread the humble paths of earth.

Blessing she is: God made her so,

And deeds of week-day holiness

Fall from her noiseless as the snow,

Nor hath she ever chanced to know

That aught were easier than to bless.

She is most fair, and thereunto

Her life doth rightly harmonize;

Feeling or thought that was not true

Ne'er made less beautiful the blue

Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

She is a woman: one in whom

The spring-time of her childish years

Hath never lost its fresh perfume,

Though knowing well that life hath room

For many blights and many tears.

I love her with a love as still

As a broad river's peaceful might,

Which, by high tower and lowly mill,

Seems following its own wayward will,

And yet doth ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,

Like quiet isles my duties lie;

It flows around them and between,

And makes them fresh and fair and green,

Sweet homes wherein to live and die.

SUMMER STORM

Untremulous in the river clear,

Toward the sky's image, hangs the imaged bridge;

So still the air that I can hear

The slender clarion of the unseen midge;

Out of the stillness, with a gathering creep,

Like rising wind in leaves, which now decreases,

Now lulls, now swells, and all the while increases,

The huddling trample of a drove of sheep

Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradually ceases

In dust on the other side; life's emblem deep, 10

A confused noise between two silences,

Finding at last in dust precarious peace.

On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed grasses

Soak up the sunshine; sleeps the brimming tide,

Save when the wedge-shaped wake in silence passes

Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous glide

Wavers the sedge's emerald shade from side to side;

But up the west, like a rock-shivered surge,

Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-whitened spray;

Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its verge, 20

And falling still it seems, and yet it climbs alway.

Suddenly all the sky is hid

As with the shutting of a lid,

One by one great drops are falling

Doubtful and slow,

Down the pane they are crookedly crawling,

And the wind breathes low;

Slowly the circles widen on the river,

Widen and mingle, one and all;

Here and there the slenderer flowers shiver, 30

Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,

The wind is gathering in the west;

The upturned leaves first whiten and flutter,

Then droop to a fitful rest;

Up from the stream with sluggish flap

Struggles the gull and floats away;

Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap,--

We shall not see the sun go down to-day:

Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh, 40

And tramples the grass with terrified feet,

The startled river turns leaden and harsh,

You can hear the quick heart of the tempest beat.

Look! look! that livid flash!

And instantly follows the rattling thunder,

As if some cloud-crag, split asunder,

Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,

On the Earth, which crouches in silence under;

And now a solid gray wall of rain

Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile; 50

For a breath's space I see the blue wood again,

And ere the next heart-beat, the wind-hurled pile,

That seemed but now a league aloof,

Bursts crackling o'er the sun-parched roof;

Against the windows the storm comes dashing,

Through tattered foliage the hail tears crashing,

The blue lightning flashes,

The rapid hail clashes,

The white waves are tumbling,

And, in one baffled roar, 60

Like the toothless sea mumbling

A rock-bristled shore,

The thunder is rumbling

And crashing and crumbling,--

Will silence return nevermore?

Hush! Still as death,

The tempest holds his breath

As from a sudden will;

The rain stops short, but from the eaves

You see it drop, and hear it from the leaves, 70

All is so bodingly still;

Again, now, now, again

Plashes the rain in heavy gouts,

The crinkled lightning

Seems ever brightening,

And loud and long

Again the thunder shouts

His battle-song,--

One quivering flash,

One wildering crash, 80

Followed by silence dead and dull,

As if the cloud, let go,

Leapt bodily below

To whelm the earth in one mad overthrow.

And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon!

No more my half-dazed fancy there,

Can shape a giant In the air,

No more I see his streaming hair,

The writhing portent of his form;-- 90

The pale and quiet moon

Makes her calm forehead bare,

And the last fragments of the storm,

Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,

Silent and few, are drifting over me.

LOVE

True Love is but a humble, low-born thing,

And hath its food served up in earthen ware;

It is a thing to walk with, hand in hand,

Through the everydayness of this workday world,

Baring its tender feet to every flint,

Yet letting not one heart-beat go astray

From Beauty's law of plainness and content;

A simple, fireside thing, whose quiet smile

Can warm earth's poorest hovel to a home;

Which, when our autumn cometh, as it must,

And life in the chill wind shivers bare and leafless,

Shall still be blest with Indian-summer youth

In bleak November, and, with thankful heart,

Smile on its ample stores of garnered fruit,

As full of sunshine to our aged eyes

As when it nursed the blossoms of our spring.

Such is true Love, which steals into the heart

With feet as silent as the lightsome dawn

That kisses smooth the rough brows of the dark,

And hath its will through blissful gentleness,

Not like a rocket, which, with passionate glare,

Whirs suddenly up, then bursts, and leaves the night

Painfully quivering on the dazÃ¨d eyes;

A love that gives and takes, that seeth faults,

Not with flaw-seeking eyes like needle points,

But loving-kindly ever looks them down

With the o'ercoming faith that still forgives;

A love that shall be new and fresh each hour,

As is the sunset's golden mystery,

Or the sweet coming of the evening-star,

Alike, and yet most unlike, every day,

And seeming ever best and fairest \_now\_;

A love that doth not kneel for what it seeks,

But faces Truth and Beauty as their peer,

Showing its worthiness of noble thoughts

By a clear sense of inward nobleness;

A love that in its object findeth not

All grace and beauty, and enough to sate

Its thirst of blessing, but, in all of good

Found there, sees but the Heaven-implanted types

Of good and beauty in the soul of man,

And traces, in the simplest heart that beats,

A family-likeness to its chosen one,

That claims of it the rights of brotherhood.

For love is blind but with the fleshly eye,

That so its inner sight may be more clear;

And outward shows of beauty only so

Are needful at the first, as is a hand

To guide and to uphold an infant's steps:

Fine natures need them not: their earnest look

Pierces the body's mask of thin disguise,

And beauty ever is to them revealed,

Behind the unshapeliest, meanest lump of clay,

With arms outstretched and eager face ablaze,

Yearning to be but understood and loved.

TO PERDITA, SINGING

Thy voice is like a fountain,

Leaping up in clear moonshine;

Silver, silver, ever mounting,

Ever sinking,

Without thinking,

To that brimful heart of thine.

Every sad and happy feeling,

Thou hast had in bygone years,

Through thy lips comes stealing, stealing,

Clear and low; 10

All thy smiles and all thy tears

In thy voice awaken,

And sweetness, wove of joy and woe,

From their teaching it hath taken:

Feeling and music move together,

Like a swan and shadow ever

Floating on a sky-blue river

In a day of cloudless weather.

It hath caught a touch of sadness,

Yet it is not sad; 20

It hath tones of clearest gladness,

Yet it is not glad;

A dim, sweet twilight voice it is

Where to-day's accustomed blue

Is over-grayed with memories,

With starry feelings quivered through.

Thy voice is like a fountain

Leaping up in sunshine bright,

And I never weary counting

Its clear droppings, lone and single, 30

Or when in one full gush they mingle,

Shooting in melodious light.

Thine is music such as yields

Feelings of old brooks and fields,

And, around this pent-up room,

Sheds a woodland, free perfume;

Oh, thus forever sing to me!

Oh, thus forever!

The green, bright grass of childhood bring to me, 39

Flowing like an emerald river,

And the bright blue skies above!

Oh, sing them back, as fresh as ever,

Into the bosom of my love,--

The sunshine and the merriment,

The unsought, evergreen content,

Of that never cold time,

The joy, that, like a clear breeze, went

Through and through the old time!

Peace sits within thine eyes,

With white hands crossed in joyful rest, 50

While, through thy lips and face, arise

The melodies from out thy breast;

She sits and sings,

With folded wings

And white arms crost,

'Weep not for bygone things,

They are not lost:

The beauty which the summer time

O'er thine opening spirit shed,

The forest oracles sublime 60

That filled thy soul with joyous dread,

The scent of every smallest flower

That made thy heart sweet for an hour,

Yea, every holy influence,

Flowing to thee, thou knewest not whence,

In thine eyes to-day is seen,

Fresh as it hath ever been;

Promptings of Nature, beckonings sweet,

Whatever led thy childish feet,

Still will linger unawares 70

The guiders of thy silver hairs;

Every look and every word

Which thou givest forth to-day,

Tell of the singing of the bird

Whose music stilled thy boyish play.'

Thy voice is like a fountain,

Twinkling up in sharp starlight,

When the moon behind the mountain

Dims the low East with faintest white,

Ever darkling, 80

Ever sparkling,

We know not if 'tis dark or bright;

But, when the great moon hath rolled round,

And, sudden-slow, its solemn power

Grows from behind its black, clear-edgÃ¨d bound,

No spot of dark the fountain keepeth,

But, swift as opening eyelids, leapeth

Into a waving silver flower.

THE MOON

My soul was like the sea.

Before the moon was made,

Moaning in vague immensity,

Of its own strength afraid,

Unresful and unstaid.

Through every rift it foamed in vain,

About its earthly prison,

Seeking some unknown thing in pain,

And sinking restless back again,

For yet no moon had risen:

Its only voice a vast dumb moan,

Of utterless anguish speaking,

It lay unhopefully alone,

And lived but in an aimless seeking.

So was my soul; but when 'twas full

Of unrest to o'erloading,

A voice of something beautiful

Whispered a dim foreboding,

And yet so soft, so sweet, so low,

It had not more of joy than woe;

And, as the sea doth oft lie still,

Making its waters meet,

As if by an unconscious will,

For the moon's silver feet,

So lay my soul within mine eyes

When thou, its guardian moon, didst rise.

And now, howe'er its waves above

May toss and seem uneaseful,

One strong, eternal law of Love,

With guidance sure and peaceful,

As calm and natural as breath,

Moves its great deeps through life and death.

REMEMBERED MUSIC

A FRAGMENT

Thick-rushing, like an ocean vast

Of bisons the far prairie shaking,

The notes crowd heavily and fast

As surfs, one plunging while the last

Draws seaward from its foamy breaking.

Or in low murmurs they began,

Rising and rising momently,

As o'er a harp Ãolian

A fitful breeze, until they ran

Up to a sudden ecstasy.

And then, like minute-drops of rain

Ringing in water silvery,

They lingering dropped and dropped again,

Till it was almost like a pain

To listen when the next would be.

SONG

TO M.L.

A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,

A lily-bud not opened quite,

That hourly grew more pure and white,

By morning, and noontide, and evening nursed:

In all of nature thou hadst thy share;

Thou wast waited on

By the wind and sun;

The rain and the dew for thee took care;

It seemed thou never couldst be more fair.

A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,

A lily-bud; but oh, how strange,

How full of wonder was the change,

When, ripe with all sweetness, thy full bloom burst!

How did the tears to my glad eyes start,

When the woman-flower

Reached its blossoming hour,

And I saw the warm deeps of thy golden heart!

Glad death may pluck thee, but never before

The gold dust of thy bloom divine

Hath dropped from thy heart into mine,

To quicken its faint germs of heavenly lore;

For no breeze comes nigh thee but carries away

Some impulses bright

Of fragrance and light,

Which fall upon souls that are lone and astray,

To plant fruitful hopes of the flower of day.

ALLEGRA

I would more natures were like thine,

That never casts a glance before,

Thou Hebe, who thy heart's bright wine

So lavishly to all dost pour,

That we who drink forget to pine,

And can but dream of bliss in store.

Thou canst not see a shade in life;

With sunward instinct thou dost rise,

And, leaving clouds below at strife,

Gazest undazzled at the skies,

With all their blazing splendors rife,

A songful lark with eagle's eyes.

Thou wast some foundling whom the Hours

Nursed, laughing, with the milk of Mirth;

Some influence more gay than ours

Hath ruled thy nature from its birth,

As if thy natal stars were flowers

That shook their seeds round thee on earth.

And thou, to lull thine infant rest,

Wast cradled like an Indian child;

All pleasant winds from south and west

With lullabies thine ears beguiled,

Rocking thee in thine oriole's nest,

Till Nature looked at thee and smiled.

Thine every fancy seems to borrow

A sunlight from thy childish years,

Making a golden cloud of sorrow,

A hope-lit rainbow out of tears,--

Thy heart is certain of to-morrow,

Though 'yond to-day it never peers.

I would more natures were like thine,

So innocently wild and free,

Whose sad thoughts, even, leap and shine,

Like sunny wavelets in the sea,

Making us mindless of the brine,

In gazing on the brilliancy.

THE FOUNTAIN

Into the sunshine,

Full of the light,

Leaping and flashing

From morn till night;

Into the moonlight,

Whiter than snow,

Waving so flower-like

When the winds blow;

Into the starlight

Rushing in spray,

Happy at midnight,

Happy by day;

Ever in motion,

Blithesome and cheery,

Still climbing heavenward,

Never aweary;

Glad of all weathers,

Still seeming best,

Upward or downward.

Motion thy rest;

Full of a nature

Nothing can tame,

Changed every moment,

Ever the same;

Ceaseless aspiring,

Ceaseless content,

Darkness or sunshine

Thy element;

Glorious fountain.

Let my heart be

Fresh, changeful, constant,

Upward, like thee!

ODE

I

In the old days of awe and keen-eyed wonder,

The Poet's song with blood-warm truth was rife;

He saw the mysteries which circle under

The outward shell and skin of daily life.

Nothing to him were fleeting time and fashion,

His soul was led by the eternal law;

There was in him no hope of fame, no passion,

But with calm, godlike eyes he only saw.

He did not sigh o'er heroes dead and buried,

Chief-mourner at the Golden Age's hearse, 10

Nor deem that souls whom Charon grim had ferried

Alone were fitting themes of epic verse:

He could believe the promise of to-morrow,

And feel the wondrous meaning of to-day;

He had a deeper faith in holy sorrow

Than the world's seeming loss could take away.

To know the heart of all things was his duty,

All things did sing to him to make him wise,

And, with a sorrowful and conquering beauty,

The soul of all looked grandly from his eyes. 20

He gazed on all within him and without him,

He watched the flowing of Time's steady tide,

And shapes of glory floated all about him

And whispered to him, and he prophesied.

Than all men he more fearless was and freer,

And all his brethren cried with one accord,--

'Behold the holy man! Behold the Seer!

Him who hath spoken with the unseen Lord!'

He to his heart with large embrace had taken

The universal sorrow of mankind, 30

And, from that root, a shelter never shaken,

The tree of wisdom grew with sturdy rind.

He could interpret well the wondrous voices

Which to the calm and silent spirit come;

He knew that the One Soul no more rejoices

In the star's anthem than the insect's hum.

He in his heart was ever meek and humble.

And yet with kingly pomp his numbers ran,

As he foresaw how all things false should crumble

Before the free, uplifted soul of man; 40

And, when he was made full to overflowing

With all the loveliness of heaven and earth,

Out rushed his song, like molten iron glowing,

To show God sitting by the humblest hearth.

With calmest courage he was ever ready

To teach that action was the truth of thought,

And, with strong arm and purpose firm and steady,

An anchor for the drifting world he wrought.

So did he make the meanest man partaker

Of all his brother-gods unto him gave; 50

All souls did reverence him and name him Maker,

And when he died heaped temples on his grave.

And still his deathless words of light are swimming

Serene throughout the great deep infinite

Of human soul, unwaning and undimming,

To cheer and guide the mariner at night.

II

But now the Poet is an empty rhymer

Who lies with idle elbow on the grass,

And fits his singing, like a cunning timer,

To all men's prides and fancies as they pass. 60

Not his the song, which, in its metre holy,

Chimes with the music of the eternal stars,

Humbling the tyrant, lifting up the lowly,

And sending sun through the soul's prison-bars.

Maker no more,--oh no! unmaker rather,

For he unmakes who doth not all put forth

The power given freely by our loving Father

To show the body's dross, the spirit's worth.

Awake! great spirit of the ages olden!

Shiver the mists that hide thy starry lyre, 70

And let man's soul be yet again beholden

To thee for wings to soar to her desire.

Oh, prophesy no more to-morrow's splendor,

Be no more shamefaced to speak out for Truth,

Lay on her altar all the gushings tender,

The hope, the fire, the loving faith of youth!

Oh, prophesy no more the Maker's coming,

Say not his onward footsteps thou canst hear

In the dim void, like to the awful humming

Of the great wings of some new-lighted sphere! 80

Oh, prophesy no more, but be the Poet!

This longing was but granted unto thee

That, when all beauty thou couldst feel and know it,

That beauty in its highest thou shouldst be.

O thou who moanest tost with sealike longings,

Who dimly hearest voices call on thee,

Whose soul is overfilled with mighty throngings

Of love, and fear, and glorious agony.

Thou of the toil-strung hands and iron sinews

And soul by Mother Earth with freedom fed, 90

In whom the hero-spirit yet continues,

The old free nature is not chained or dead,

Arouse! let thy soul break in music-thunder,

Let loose the ocean that is in thee pent,

Pour forth thy hope, thy fear, thy love, thy wonder,

And tell the age what all its signs have meant.

Where'er thy wildered crowd of brethren jostles,

Where'er there lingers but a shadow of wrong,

There still is need of martyrs and apostles,

There still are texts for never-dying song: 100

From age to age man's still aspiring spirit

Finds wider scope and sees with clearer eyes,

And thou in larger measure dost inherit

What made thy great forerunners free and wise.

Sit thou enthronÃ¨d where the Poet's mountain

Above the thunder lifts its silent peak,

And roll thy songs down like a gathering fountain,

They all may drink and find the rest they seek.

Sing! there shall silence grow in earth and heaven,

A silence of deep awe and wondering; 110

For, listening gladly, bend the angels, even,

To hear a mortal like an angel sing.

III

Among the toil-worn poor my soul is seeking

For who shall bring the Maker's name to light,

To be the voice of that almighty speaking

Which every age demands to do it right.

Proprieties our silken bards environ;

He who would be the tongue of this wide land

Must string his harp with chords of sturdy iron

And strike it with a toil-imbrownÃ¨d hand; 120

One who hath dwelt with Nature well attended,

Who hath learnt wisdom from her mystic books,

Whose soul with all her countless lives hath blended,

So that all beauty awes us in his looks:

Who not with body's waste his soul hath pampered,

Who as the clear northwestern wind is free,

Who walks with Form's observances unhampered,

And follows the One Will obediently;

Whose eyes, like windows on a breezy summit,

Control a lovely prospect every way; 130

Who doth not sound God's sea with earthly plummet,

And find a bottom still of worthless clay;

Who heeds not how the lower gusts are working,

Knowing that one sure wind blows on above,

And sees, beneath the foulest faces lurking,

One God-built shrine of reverence and love;

Who sees all stars that wheel their shining marches

Around the centre fixed of Destiny,

Where the encircling soul serene o'erarches

The moving globe of being like a sky; 140

Who feels that God and Heaven's great deeps are nearer

Him to whose heart his fellow-man is nigh,

Who doth not hold his soul's own freedom dearer

Than that of all his brethren, low or high;

Who to the Right can feel himself the truer

For being gently patient with the wrong,

Who sees a brother in the evildoer,

And finds in Love the heart's-blood of his song;--

This, this is he for whom the world is waiting

To sing the beatings of its mighty heart, 150

Too long hath it been patient with the grating

Of scrannel-pipes, and heard it misnamed Art.

To him the smiling soul of man shall listen,

Laying awhile its crown of thorns aside,

And once again in every eye shall glisten

The glory of a nature satisfied.

His verse shall have a great commanding motion,

Heaving and swelling with a melody

Learnt of the sky, the river, and the ocean,

And all the pure, majestic things that be. 160

Awake, then, thou! we pine for thy great presence

To make us feel the soul once more sublime,

We are of far too infinite an essence

To rest contented with the lies of Time.

Speak out! and lo! a hush of deepest wonder

Shall sink o'er all this many-voicÃ¨d scene,

As when a sudden burst of rattling thunder

Shatters the blueness of a sky serene.

THE FATHERLAND

Where is the true man's fatherland?

Is it where he by chance is born?

Doth not the yearning spirit scorn

In such scant borders to be spanned?

Oh yes! his fatherland must be

As the blue heaven wide and free!

Is it alone where freedom is,

Where God is God and man is man?

Doth he not claim a broader span

For the soul's love of home than this?

Oh yes! his fatherland must be

As the blue heaven wide and free!

Where'er a human heart doth wear

Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,

Where'er a human spirit strives

After a life more true and fair,

There is the true man's birthplace grand,

His is a world-wide fatherland!

Where'er a single slave doth pine,

Where'er one man may help another,--

Thank God for such a birthright, brother,--

That spot of earth is thine and mine!

There is the true man's birthplace grand,

His is a world-wide fatherland!

THE FORLORN

The night is dark, the stinging sleet,

Swept by the bitter gusts of air,

Drives whistling down the lonely street,

And glazes on the pavement bare.

The street-lamps flare and struggle dim

Through the gray sleet-clouds as they pass,

Or, governed by a boisterous whim,

Drop down and rustle on the glass.

One poor, heart-broken, outcast girl

Faces the east-wind's searching flaws,

And, as about her heart they whirl,

Her tattered cloak more tightly draws.

The flat brick walls look cold and bleak,

Her bare feet to the sidewalk freeze;

Yet dares she not a shelter seek,

Though faint with hunger and disease.

The sharp storm cuts her forehead bare,

And, piercing through her garments thin,

Beats on her shrunken breast, and there

Makes colder the cold heart within.

She lingers where a ruddy glow

Streams outward through an open shutter,

Adding more bitterness to woe,

More loneliness to desertion utter.

One half the cold she had not felt

Until she saw this gush of light

Spread warmly forth, and seem to melt

Its slow way through the deadening night.

She hears a woman's voice within,

Singing sweet words her childhood knew,

And years of misery and sin

Furl off, and leave her heaven blue.

Her freezing heart, like one who sinks

Outwearied in the drifting snow.

Drowses to deadly sleep and thinks

No longer of its hopeless woe;

Old fields, and clear blue summer days,

Old meadows, green with grass, and trees

That shimmer through the trembling haze

And whiten in the western breeze.

Old faces, all the friendly past

Rises within her heart again,

And sunshine from her childhood cast

Makes summer of the icy rain.

Enhaloed by a mild, warm glow,

From man's humanity apart,

She hears old footsteps wandering slow

Through the lone chambers of the heart.

Outside the porch before the door,

Her cheek upon the cold, hard stone,

She lies, no longer foul and poor,

No longer dreary and alone.

Next morning something heavily

Against the opening door did weigh,

And there, from sin and sorrow free,

A woman on the threshold lay.

A smile upon the wan lips told

That she had found a calm release,

And that, from out the want and cold,

The song had borne her soul in peace.

For, whom the heart of man shuts out,

Sometimes the heart of God takes in,

And fences them all round about

With silence mid the world's loud din;

And one of his great charities

Is Music, and it doth not scorn

To close the lids upon the eyes

Of the polluted and forlorn;

Far was she from her childhood's home,

Farther in guilt had wandered thence,

Yet thither it had bid her come

To die in maiden innocence.

MIDNIGHT

The moon shines white and silent

On the mist, which, like a tide

Of some enchanted ocean,

O'er the wide marsh doth glide,

Spreading its ghost-like billows

Silently far and wide.

A vague and starry magic

Makes all things mysteries,

And lures the earth's dumb spirit

Up to the longing skies:

I seem to hear dim whispers,

And tremulous replies.

The fireflies o'er the meadow

In pulses come and go;

The elm-trees' heavy shadow

Weighs on the grass below;

And faintly from the distance

The dreaming cock doth crow.

All things look strange and mystic,

The very bushes swell

And take wild shapes and motions,

As if beneath a spell;

They seem not the same lilacs

From childhood known so well.

The snow of deepest silence

O'er everything doth fall,

So beautiful and quiet,

And yet so like a pall;

As if all life were ended,

And rest were come to all.

O wild and wondrous midnight,

There is a might in thee

To make the charmÃ¨d body

Almost like spirit be,

And give it some faint glimpses

Of immortality!

A PRAYER

God! do not let my loved one die,

But rather wait until the time

That I am grown in purity

Enough to enter thy pure clime,

Then take me, I will gladly go,

So that my love remain below!

Oh, let her stay! She is by birth

What I through death must learn to be;

We need her more on our poor earth

Than thou canst need in heaven with thee:

She hath her wings already, I

Must burst this earth-shell ere I fly.

Then, God, take me! We shall be near,

More near than ever, each to each:

Her angel ears will find more clear

My heavenly than my earthly speech;

And still, as I draw nigh to thee,

Her soul and mine shall closer be.

THE HERITAGE

The rich man's son inherits lands,

And piles of brick and stone, and gold,

And he inherits soft white hands,

And tender flesh that fears the cold,

Nor dares to wear a garment old;

A heritage, it seems to me,

One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits cares;

The bank may break, the factory burn,

A breath may burst his bubble shares,

And soft white hands could hardly earn

A living that would serve his turn;

A heritage, it seems to me,

One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits wants,

His stomach craves for dainty fare;

With sated heart, he hears the pants

Of toiling hinds with brown arms bare,

And wearies in his easy-chair;

A heritage, it seems to me,

One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?

Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,

A hardy frame, a hardier spirit;

King of two hands, he does his part

In every useful toil and art;

A heritage, it seems to me,

A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?

Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,

A rank adjudged by toil-won merit,

Content that from employment springs,

A heart that in his labor sings;

A heritage, it seems to me,

A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?

A patience learned of being poor,

Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,

A fellow-feeling that is sure

To make the outcast bless his door;

A heritage, it seems to me,

A king might wish to hold in fee.

O rich man's son! there is a toil

That with all others level stands:

Large charity doth never soil,

But only whiten, soft white hands:

This is the best crop from thy lands,

A heritage, it seems to me,

Worth being rich to hold in fee.

O poor man's son! scorn not thy state;

There is worse weariness than thine,

In merely being rich and great;

Toil only gives the soul to shine,

And make rest fragrant and benign;

A heritage, it seems to me,

Worth being poor to hold in fee.

Both, heirs to some six feet of sod,

Are equal in the earth at last;

Both, children of the same dear God,

Prove title to your heirship vast

By record of a well-filled past;

A heritage, it seems to me,

Well worth a life to hold in fee.

THE ROSE: A BALLAD

I

In his tower sat the poet

Gazing on the roaring sea,

'Take this rose,' he sighed, 'and throw it

Where there's none that loveth me.

On the rock the billow bursteth

And sinks back into the seas,

But in vain my spirit thirsteth

So to burst and be at ease.

Take, O sea! the tender blossom

That hath lain against my breast;

On thy black and angry bosom

It will find a surer rest.

Life is vain, and love is hollow,

Ugly death stands there behind,

Hate and scorn and hunger follow

Him that toileth for his kind.'

Forth into the night he hurled it,

And with bitter smile did mark

How the surly tempest whirled it

Swift into the hungry dark.

Foam and spray drive back to leeward,

And the gale, with dreary moan,

Drifts the helpless blossom seaward,

Through the breakers all alone.

II

Stands a maiden, on the morrow,

Musing by the wave-beat strand,

Half in hope and half in sorrow,

Tracing words upon the sand:

'Shall I ever then behold him

Who hath been my life so long,

Ever to this sick heart told him,

Be the spirit of his song?

Touch not, sea, the blessed letters

I have traced upon thy shore,

Spare his name whose spirit fetters

Mine with love forevermore!'

Swells the tide and overflows it,

But, with omen pure and meet,

Brings a little rose, and throws it

Humbly at the maiden's feet.

Full of bliss she takes the token,

And, upon her snowy breast,

Soothes the ruffled petals broken

With the ocean's fierce unrest.

'Love is thine, O heart! and surely

Peace shall also be thine own,

For the heart that trusteth purely

Never long can pine alone.'

III

In his tower sits the poet,

Blisses new and strange to him

Fill his heart and overflow it

With a wonder sweet and dim.

Up the beach the ocean slideth

With a whisper of delight,

And the moon in silence glideth

Through the peaceful blue of night.

Rippling o'er the poet's shoulder

Flows a maiden's golden hair,

Maiden lips, with love grown bolder,

Kiss his moon-lit forehead bare.

'Life is joy, and love is power,

Death all fetters doth unbind,

Strength and wisdom only flower

When we toil for all our kind.

Hope is truth,--the future giveth

More than present takes away,

And the soul forever liveth

Nearer God from day to day.'

Not a word the maiden uttered,

Fullest hearts are slow to speak,

But a withered rose-leaf fluttered

Down upon the poet's cheek.

SONG

Violet! sweet violet!

Thine eyes are full of tears;

Are they wet

Even yet

With the thought of other years?

Or with gladness are they full,

For the night so beautiful,

And longing for those far-off spheres?

Loved one of my youth thou wast,

Of my merry youth,

And I see,

Tearfully,

All the fair and sunny past,

All its openness and truth,

Ever fresh and green in thee

As the moss is in the sea.

Thy little heart, that hath with love

Grown colored like the sky above,

On which thou lookest ever,--

Can it know

All the woe

Of hope for what returneth never,

All the sorrow and the longing

To these hearts of ours belonging?

Out on it! no foolish pining

For the sky

Dims thine eye,

Or for the stars so calmly shining;

Like thee let this soul of mine

Take hue from that wherefor I long,

Self-stayed and high, serene and strong,

Not satisfied with hoping--but divine.

Violet! dear violet!

Thy blue eyes are only wet

With joy and love of Him who sent thee,

And for the fulfilling sense

Of that glad obedience

Which made thee all that Nature meant thee!

ROSALINE

Thou look'dst on me all yesternight,

Thine eyes were blue, thy hair was bright

As when we murmured our troth-plight

Beneath the thick stars, Rosaline!

Thy hair was braided on thy head,

As on the day we two were wed,

Mine eyes scarce knew if thou wert dead,

But my shrunk heart knew, Rosaline!

The death-watch ticked behind the wall,

The blackness rustled like a pall, 10

The moaning wind did rise and fall

Among the bleak pines, Rosaline!

My heart beat thickly in mine ears:

The lids may shut out fleshly fears,

But still the spirit sees and hears.

Its eyes are lidless, Rosaline!

A wildness rushing suddenly,

A knowing some ill shape is nigh,

A wish for death, a fear to die,

Is not this vengeance, Rosaline? 20

A loneliness that is not lone,

A love quite withered up and gone,

A strong soul ousted from its throne,

What wouldst thou further, Rosaline?

'Tis drear such moonless nights as these,

Strange sounds are out upon the breeze,

And the leaves shiver in the trees,

And then thou comest, Rosaline!

I seem to hear the mourners go,

With long black garments trailing slow, 30

And plumes anodding to and fro,

As once I heard them, Rosaline!

Thy shroud is all of snowy white,

And, in the middle of the night,

Thou standest moveless and upright,

Gazing upon me, Rosaline!

There is no sorrow in thine eyes,

But evermore that meek surprise,--

O God! thy gentle spirit tries

To deem me guiltless, Rosaline! 40

Above thy grave the robin sings,

And swarms of bright and happy things

Flit all about with sunlit wings,

But I am cheerless, Rosaline!

The violets in the hillock toss,

The gravestone is o'ergrown with moss;

For nature feels not any loss,

But I am cheerless, Rosaline!

I did not know when thou wast dead;

A blackbird whistling overhead 50

Thrilled through my brain; I would have fled,

But dared not leave thee, Rosaline!

The sun rolled down, and very soon,

Like a great fire, the awful moon

Rose, stained with blood, and then a swoon

Crept chilly o'er me, Rosaline!

The stars came out; and, one by one,

Each angel from his silver throne

Looked down and saw what I had done:

I dared not hide me, Rosaline! 60

I crouched; I feared thy corpse would cry

Against me to God's silent sky,

I thought I saw the blue lips try

To utter something, Rosaline!

I waited with a maddened grin

To hear that voice all icy thin

Slide forth and tell my deadly sin

To hell and heaven, Rosaline!

But no voice came, and then it seemed,

That, if the very corpse had screamed, 70

The sound like sunshine glad had streamed

Through that dark stillness, Rosaline!

And then, amid the silent night,

I screamed with horrible delight,

And in my brain an awful light

Did seem to crackle, Rosaline!

It is my curse! sweet memories fall

From me like snow, and only all

Of that one night, like cold worms, crawl

My doomed heart over, Rosaline! 80

Why wilt thou haunt me with thine eyes,

Wherein such blessed memories,

Such pitying forgiveness lies,

Than hate more bitter, Rosaline!

Woe's me! I know that love so high

As thine, true soul, could never die,

And with mean clay in churchyard lie,--

Would it might be so, Rosaline!

A REQUIEM

Ay, pale and silent maiden,

Cold as thou liest there,

Thine was the sunniest nature

That ever drew the air;

The wildest and most wayward,

And yet so gently kind,

Thou seemedst but to body

A breath of summer wind.

Into the eternal shadow

That girds our life around,

Into the infinite silence

Wherewith Death's shore is bound,

Thou hast gone forth, beloved!

And I were mean to weep,

That thou hast left Life's shallows

And dost possess the Deep.

Thou liest low and silent,

Thy heart is cold and still.

Thine eyes are shut forever,

And Death hath had his will;

He loved and would have taken;

I loved and would have kept.

We strove,--and he was stronger,

And I have never wept.

Let him possess thy body,

Thy soul is still with me,

More sunny and more gladsome

Than it was wont to be:

Thy body was a fetter

That bound me to the flesh,

Thank God that it is broken,

And now I live afresh!

Now I can see thee clearly;

The dusky cloud of clay,

That hid thy starry spirit,

Is rent and blown away:

To earth I give thy body,

Thy spirit to the sky,

I saw its bright wings growing,

And knew that thou must fly.

Now I can love thee truly,

For nothing comes between

The senses and the spirit,

The seen and the unseen;

Lifts the eternal shadow,

The silence bursts apart,

And the soul's boundless future

Is present in my heart.

A PARABLE

Worn and footsore was the Prophet,

When he gained the holy hill;

'God has left the earth,' he murmured,

'Here his presence lingers still.

'God of all the olden prophets,

Wilt thou speak with men no more?

Have I not as truly served thee

As thy chosen ones of yore?

'Hear me, guider of my fathers,

Lo! a humble heart is mine;

By thy mercy I beseech thee

Grant thy servant but a sign!'

Bowing then his head, he listened

For an answer to his prayer;

No loud burst of thunder followed,

Not a murmur stirred the air:

But the tuft of moss before him

Opened while he waited yet,

And, from out the rock's hard bosom,

Sprang a tender violet.

'God! I thank thee,' said the Prophet;

'Hard of heart and blind was I,

Looking to the holy mountain

For the gift of prophecy.

'Still thou speakest with thy children

Freely as in eld sublime;

Humbleness, and love, and patience,

Still give empire over time.

'Had I trusted in my nature,

And had faith in lowly things,

Thou thyself wouldst then have sought me.

And set free my spirit's wings.

'But I looked for signs and wonders,

That o'er men should give me sway;

Thirsting to be more than mortal,

I was even less than clay.

'Ere I entered on my journey,

As I girt my loins to start,

Ran to me my little daughter,

The beloved of my heart;

'In her hand she held a flower,

Like to this as like may be,

Which, beside my very threshold,

She had plucked and brought to me.'

SONG

O moonlight deep and tender,

A year and more agone,

Your mist of golden splendor

Round my betrothal shone!

O elm-leaves dark and dewy,

The very same ye seem,

The low wind trembles through ye,

Ye murmur in my dream!

O river, dim with distance,

Flow thus forever by,

A part of my existence

Within your heart doth lie!

O stars, ye saw our meeting,

Two beings and one soul,

Two hearts so madly beating

To mingle and be whole!

O happy night, deliver

Her kisses back to me,

Or keep them all, and give her

A blisslul dream of me!

SONNETS

I

TO A.C.L.

Through suffering and sorrow thou hast passed

To show us what a woman true may be:

They have not taken sympathy from thee,

Nor made thee any other than thou wast,

Save as some tree, which, in a sudden blast,

Sheddeth those blossoms, that are weakly grown,

Upon the air, but keepeth every one

Whose strength gives warrant of good fruit at last:

So thou hast shed some blooms of gayety,

But never one of steadfast cheerfulness;

Nor hath thy knowledge of adversity

Robbed thee of any faith in happiness,

But rather cleared thine inner eyes to see

How many simple ways there are to bless.

II

What were I, Love, if I were stripped of thee,

If thine eyes shut me out whereby I live.

Thou, who unto my calmer soul dost give

Knowledge, and Truth, and holy Mystery,

Wherein Truth mainly lies for those who see

Beyond the earthly and the fugitive,

Who in the grandeur of the soul believe,

And only in the Infinite are free?

Without thee I were naked, bleak, and bare

As yon dead cedar on the sea-cliff's brow;

And Nature's teachings, which come to me now,

Common and beautiful as light and air,

Would be as fruitless as a stream which still

Slips through the wheel of some old ruined mill.

III

I would not have this perfect love of ours

Grow from a single root, a single stem,

Bearing no goodly fruit, but only flowers

That idly hide life's iron diadem:

It should grow alway like that Eastern tree

Whose limbs take root and spread forth constantly;

That love for one, from which there doth not spring

Wide love for all, is but a worthless thing.

Not in another world, as poets prate,

Dwell we apart above the tide of things,

High floating o'er earth's clouds on faery wings;

But our pure love doth ever elevate

Into a holy bond of brotherhood

All earthly things, making them pure and good.

IV

'For this true nobleness I seek in vain,

In woman and in man I find it not;

I almost weary of my earthly lot,

My life-springs are dried up with burning pain.'

Thou find'st it not? I pray thee look again,

Look \_inward\_ through the depths of thine own soul.

How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?

Doth narrow search show thee no earthly stain?

BE NOBLE! and the nobleness that lies

In other men, sleeping, but never dead,

Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;

Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,

Then will pure light around thy path be shed,

And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone.

V

TO THE SPIRIT OF KEATS

Great soul, thou sittest with me in my room,

Uplifting me with thy vast, quiet eyes,

On whose full orbs, with kindly lustre, lies

The twilight warmth of ruddy ember-gloom:

Thy clear, strong tones will oft bring sudden bloom

Of hope secure, to him who lonely cries,

Wrestling with the young poet's agonies,

Neglect and scorn, which seem a certain doom:

Yes! the few words which, like great thunder-drops,

Thy large heart down to earth shook doubtfully,

Thrilled by the inward lightning of its might,

Serene and pure, like gushing joy of light,

Shall track the eternal chords of Destiny,

After the moon-led pulse of ocean stops.

VI

Great Truths are portions of the soul of man;

Great souls are portions of Eternity;

Each drop of blood that e'er through true heart ran

With lofty message, ran for thee and me;

For God's law, since the starry song began,

Hath been, and still forevermore must be,

That every deed which shall outlast Time's span

Must spur the soul to be erect and free;

Slave is no word of deathless lineage sprung;

Too many noble souls have thought and died,

Too many mighty poets lived and sung,

And our good Saxon, from lips purified

With martyr-fire, throughout the world hath rung

Too long to have God's holy cause denied.

VII

I ask not for those thoughts, that sudden leap

From being's sea, like the isle-seeming Kraken,

With whose great rise the ocean all is shaken

And a heart-tremble quivers through the deep;

Give me that growth which some perchance deem sleep,

Wherewith the steadfast coral-stems uprise,

Which, by the toil of gathering energies,

Their upward way into clear sunshine keep,

Until, by Heaven's sweetest influences,

Slowly and slowly spreads a speck of green

Into a pleasant island in the seas,

Where, mid fall palms, the cane-roofed home is seen,

And wearied men shall sit at sunset's hour,

Hearing the leaves and loving God's dear power.

VIII

TO M.W., ON HER BIRTHDAY

Maiden, when such a soul as thine is born,

The morning-stars their ancient music make,

And, joyful, once again their song awake,

Long silent now with melancholy scorn;

And thou, not mindless of so blest a morn,

By no least deed its harmony shalt break,

But shalt to that high chime thy footsteps take,

Through life's most darksome passes unforlorn;

Therefore from thy pure faith thou shalt not fall,

Therefore shalt thou be ever fair and free,

And in thine every motion musical

As summer air, majestic as the sea,

A mystery to those who creep and crawl

Through Time, and part it from Eternity.

IX

My Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die;

Albeit I ask no fairer life than this,

Whose numbering-clock is still thy gentle kiss,

While Time and Peace with hands enlockÃ¨d fly;

Yet care I not where in Eternity

We live and love, well knowing that there is

No backward step for those who feel the bliss

Of Faith as their most lofty yearnings high:

Love hath so purified my being's core,

Meseems I scarcely should be startled even,

To find, some morn, that thou hadst gone before;

Since, with thy love, this knowledge too was given,

Which each calm day doth strengthen more and more,

That they who love are but one step from Heaven.

X

I cannot think that thou shouldst pass away,

Whose life to mine is an eternal law,

A piece of nature that can have no flaw,

A new and certain sunrise every day:

But, if thou art to be another ray

About the Sun of Life, and art to live

Free from what part of thee was fugitive,

The debt of Love I will more fully pay,

Not downcast with the thought of thee so high,

But rather raised to be a nobler man,

And more divine in my humanity,

As knowing that the waiting eyes which scan

My life are lighted by a purer being,

And ask high, calm-browed deeds, with it agreeing.

XI

There never yet was flower fair in vain,

Let classic poets rhyme it as they will;

The seasons toil that it may blow again,

And summer's heart doth feel its every ill;

Nor is a true soul ever born for naught;

Wherever any such hath lived and died,

There hath been something for true freedom wrought,

Some bulwark levelled on the evil side:

Toil on, then, Greatness! thou art in the right,

However narrow souls may call thee wrong;

Be as thou wouldst be in thine own clear sight,

And so thou shalt be in the world's erelong;

For worldlings cannot, struggle as they may,

From man's great soul one great thought hide away.

XII

SUB PONDERE CRESCIT

The hope of Truth grows stronger, day by day;

I hear the soul of Man around me waking,

Like a great sea, its frozen fetters breaking,

And flinging up to heaven its sunlit spray,

Tossing huge continents in scornful play,

And crushing them, with din of grinding thunder,

That makes old emptinesses stare in wonder;

The memory of a glory passed away

Lingers in every heart, as, in the shell,

Resounds the bygone freedom of the sea,

And every hour new signs of promise tell,

That the great soul shall once again be free,

For high, and yet more high, the murmurs swell

Of inward strife for truth and liberty.

XIII

Beloved, in the noisy city here,

The thought of thee can make all turmoil cease;

Around my spirit, folds thy spirit clear

Its still, soft arms, and circles it with peace;

There is no room for any doubt or fear

In souls so overfilled with love's increase,

There is no memory of the bygone year

But growth in heart's and spirit's perfect ease:

How hath our love, half nebulous at first,

Rounded itself into a full-orbed sun!

How have our lives and wills (as haply erst

They were, ere this forgetfulness begun)

Through all their earthly distances outburst,

And melted, like two rays of light in one!

XIV

ON READING WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS IN DEFENCE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

As the broad ocean endlessly upheaveth,

With the majestic beating of his heart,

The mighty tides, whereof its rightful part

Each sea-wide bay and little weed receiveth.

So, through his soul who earnestly believeth,

Life from the universal Heart doth flow,

Whereby some conquest of the eternal Woe,

By instinct of God's nature, he achieveth;

A fuller pulse of this all-powerful beauty

Into the poet's gulf-like heart doth tide,

And he more keenly feels the glorious duty

Of serving Truth, despised and crucified,--

Happy, unknowing sect or creed, to rest,

And feel God flow forever through his breast.

XV

THE SAME CONTINUED

Once hardly in a cycle blossometh

A flower-like soul ripe with the seeds of song,

A spirit foreordained to cope with wrong,

Whose divine thoughts are natural as breath,

Who the old Darkness thickly scattereth

With starry words, that shoot prevailing light

Into the deeps, and wither, with the blight

Of serene Truth, the coward heart of Death:

Woe, if such spirit thwart its errand high,

And mock with lies the longing soul of man!

Yet one age longer must true Culture lie,

Soothing her bitter fetters as she can,

Until new messages of love out-start

At the next beating of the infinite Heart.

XVI

THE SAME CONTINUED

The love of all things springs from love of one;

Wider the soul's horizon hourly grows,

And over it with fuller glory flows

The sky-like spirit of God; a hope begun

In doubt and darkness 'neath a fairer sun

Cometh to fruitage, if it be of Truth:

And to the law of meekness, faith, and ruth,

By inward sympathy, shall all be won:

This thou shouldst know, who, from the painted feature

Of shifting Fashion, couldst thy brethren turn

Unto the love of ever-youthful Nature,

And of a beauty fadeless and eterne;

And always 'tis the saddest sight to see

An old man faithless in Humanity.

XVII

THE SAME CONTINUED

A poet cannot strive for despotism;

His harp falls shattered; for it still must be

The instinct of great spirits to be free,

And the sworn foes of cunning barbarism:

He who has deepest searched the wide abysm

Of that life-giving Soul which men call fate,

Knows that to put more faith in lies and hate

Than truth and love is the true atheism:

Upward the soul forever turns her eyes:

The next hour always shames the hour before;

One beauty, at its highest, prophesies

That by whose side it shall seem mean and poor;

No Godlike thing knows aught of less and less,

But widens to the boundless Perfectness.

XVIII

THE SAME CONTINUED

Therefore think not the Past is wise alone,

For Yesterday knows nothing of the Best,

And thou shalt love it only as the nest

Whence glory-wingÃ¨d things to Heaven have flown:

To the great Soul only are all things known;

Present and future are to her as past,

While she in glorious madness doth forecast

That perfect bud, which seems a flower full-blown

To each new Prophet, and yet always opes

Fuller and fuller with each day and hour,

Heartening the soul with odor of fresh hopes,

And longings high, and gushings of wide power,

Yet never is or shall be fully blown

Save in the forethought of the Eternal One.

XIX

THE SAME CONCLUDED

Far 'yond this narrow parapet of Time,

With eyes uplift, the poet's soul should look

Into the Endless Promise, nor should brook

One prying doubt to shake his faith sublime;

To him the earth is ever in her prime

And dewiness of morning; he can see

Good lying hid, from all eternity,

Within the teeming womb of sin and crime;

His soul should not be cramped by any bar,

His nobleness should be so Godlike high,

That his least deed is perfect as a star,

His common look majestic as the sky,

And all o'erflooded with a light from far,

Undimmed by clouds of weak mortality.

XX

TO M.O.S.

Mary, since first I knew thee, to this hour,

My love hath deepened, with my wiser sense

Of what in Woman is to reverence;

Thy clear heart, fresh as e'er was forest-flower,

Still opens more to me its beauteous dower;--

But let praise hush,--Love asks no evidence

To prove itself well-placed: we know not whence

It gleans the straws that thatch its humble bower:

We can but say we found it in the heart,

Spring of all sweetest thoughts, arch foe of blame,

Sower of flowers in the dusty mart,

Pure vestal of the poet's holy flame,--

This is enough, and we have done our part

If we but keep it spotless as it came.

XXI

Our love is not a fading, earthly flower:

Its wingÃ¨d seed dropped down from Paradise,

And, nursed by day and night, by sun and shower,

Doth momently to fresher beauty rise:

To us the leafless autumn is not bare,

Nor winter's rattling boughs lack lusty green.

Our summer hearts make summer's fulness, where

No leaf, or bud, or blossom may be seen:

For nature's life in love's deep life doth lie,

Love,--whose forgetfulness is beauty's death,

Whose mystic key these cells of Thou and I

Into the infinite freedom openeth,

And makes the body's dark and narrow grate

The wide-flung leaves of Heaven's own palace-gate.

XXII

IN ABSENCE

These rugged, wintry days I scarce could bear,

Did I not know that, in the early spring,

When wild March winds upon their errands sing,

Thou wouldst return, bursting on this still air,

Like those same winds, when, startled from their lair,

They hunt up violets, and free swift brooks

From icy cares, even as thy clear looks

Bid my heart bloom, and sing, and break all care;

When drops with welcome rain the April day,

My flowers shall find their April in thine eyes,

Save there the rain in dreamy clouds doth stay,

As loath to fall out of those happy skies;

Yet sure, my love, thou art most like to May,

That comes with steady sun when April dies.

XXIII

WENDELL PHILLIPS

He stood upon the world's broad threshold; wide

The din of tattle and of slaughter rose;

He saw God stand upon the weaker side,

That sank in seeming loss before its foes:

Many there were who made great haste and sold

Unto the cunning enemy their swords,

He scorned their gifts of fame, and power, and gold,

And, underneath their soft and flowery words,

Heard the cold serpent hiss; therefore he went

And humbly joined him to the weaker part,

Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content

So he could he the nearer to God's heart,

And feel its solemn pulses sending blood

Through all the widespread veins of endless good.

XXIV

THE STREET

They pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,

Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,

Hugging their bodies round them like thin shrouds

Wherein their souls were buried long ago:

They trampled on their youth, and faith, and love,

They cast their hope of human kind away,

With Heaven's clear messages they madly strove,

And conquered,--and their spirits turned to clay:

Lo! how they wander round the world, their grave,

Whose ever-gaping maw by such is fed,

Gibbering at living men, and idly rave,

'We only truly live, but ye are dead.'

Alas! poor fools, the anointed eye may trace

A dead soul's epitaph in every face!

XXV

I grieve not that ripe Knowledge takes away

The charm that Nature to my childhood wore,

For, with that insight, cometh, day by day,

A greater bliss than wonder was before;

The real doth not clip the poet's wings,--

To win the secret of a weed's plain heart

Reveals some clue to spiritual things,

And stumbling guess becomes firm-footed art:

Flowers are not flowers unto the poet's eyes,

Their beauty thrills him by an inward sense;

He knows that outward seemings are but lies,

Or, at the most, but earthly shadows, whence

The soul that looks within for truth may guess

The presence of some wondrous heavenliness.

XXVI

TO J.R. GIDDINGS

Giddings, far rougher names than thine have grown

Smoother than honey on the lips of men;

And thou shalt aye be honorably known,

As one who bravely used his tongue and pen.

As best befits a freeman,--even for those

To whom our Law's unblushing front denies

A right to plead against the lifelong woes

Which are the Negro's glimpse of Freedom's skies:

Fear nothing, and hope all things, as the Right

Alone may do securely; every hour

The thrones of Ignorance and ancient Night

Lose somewhat of their long-usurpÃ¨d power,

And Freedom's lightest word can make them shiver

With a base dread that clings to them forever.

XXVII

I thought our love at full, but I did err;

Joy's wreath drooped o'er mine eyes; I could not see

That sorrow in our happy world must be

Love's deepest spokesman and interpreter;

But, as a mother feels her child first stir

Under her heart, so felt I instantly

Deep in my soul another bond to thee

Thrill with that life we saw depart from her;

O mother of our angel child! twice dear!

Death knits as well as parts, and still, I wis,

Her tender radiance shall infold us here,

Even as the light, borne up by inward bliss,

Threads the void glooms of space without a fear,

To print on farthest stars her pitying kiss.

L'ENVOI

Whether my heart hath wiser grown or not,

In these three years, since I to thee inscribed,

Mine own betrothed, the firstlings of my muse.--

Poor windfalls of unripe experience,

Young buds plucked hastily by childish hands

Not patient to await more full-blown flowers,--

At least it hath seen more of life and men,

And pondered more, and grown a shade more sad;

Yet with no loss of hope or settled trust

In the benignness of that Providence 10

Which shapes from out our elements awry

The grace and order that we wonder at,

The mystic harmony of right and wrong,

Both working out his wisdom and our good:

A trust, Beloved, chiefly learned of thee,

Who hast that gift of patient tenderness,

The instinctive wisdom of a woman's heart.

They tell us that our land was made for song,

With its huge rivers and sky-piercing peaks,

Its sealike lakes and mighty cataracts, 20

Its forests vast and hoar, and prairies wide,

And mounds that tell of wondrous tribes extinct.

But Poesy springs not from rocks and woods;

Her womb and cradle are the human heart,

And she can find a nobler theme for song

In the most loathsome man that blasts the sight

Than in the broad expanse of sea and shore

Between the frozen deserts of the poles.

All nations have their message from on high,

Each the messiah of some central thought, 30

For the fulfilment and delight of Man:

One has to teach that labor is divine;

Another Freedom; and another Mind;

And all, that God is open-eyed and just,

The happy centre and calm heart of all.

Are, then, our woods, our mountains, and our streams,

Needful to teach our poets how to sing?

O maiden rare, far other thoughts were ours,

When we have sat by ocean's foaming marge,

And watched the waves leap roaring on the rocks, 40

Than young Leander and his Hero had,

Gazing from Sestos to the other shore.

The moon looks down and ocean worships her,

Stars rise and set, and seasons come and go

Even as they did in Homer's elder time,

But we behold them not with Grecian eyes:

Then they were types of beauty and of strength,

But now of freedom, unconflned and pure,

Subject alone to Order's higher law.

What cares the Russian serf or Southern slave 50

Though we should speak as man spake never yet

Of gleaming Hudson's broad magnificence,

Or green Niagara's never-ending roar?

Our country hath a gospel of her own

To preach and practise before all the world,--

The freedom and divinity of man,

The glorious claims of human brotherhood,--

Which to pay nobly, as a freeman should,

Gains the sole wealth that will not fly away,--

And the soul's fealty to none but God. 60

These are realities, which make the shows

Of outward Nature, be they ne'er so grand,

Seem small, and worthless, and contemptible.

These are the mountain-summits for our bards,

Which stretch far upward into heaven itself,

And give such widespread and exulting view

Of hope, and faith, and onward destiny,

That shrunk Parnassus to a molehill dwindles.

Our new Atlantis, like a morning-star,

Silvers the mirk face of slow-yielding Night, 70

The herald of a fuller truth than yet

Hath gleamed upon the upraised face of Man

Since the earth glittered in her stainless prime,--

Of a more glorious sunrise than of old

Drew wondrous melodies from Memnon huge,

Yea, draws them still, though now he sit waist-deep

In the ingulfing flood of whirling sand,

And look across the wastes of endless gray,

Sole wreck, where once his hundred-gated Thebes

Pained with her mighty hum the calm, blue heaven: 80

Shall the dull stone pay grateful orisons,

And we till noonday bar the splendor out,

Lest it reproach and chide our sluggard hearts,

Warm-nestled in the down of Prejudice,

And be content, though clad with angel-wings,

Close-clipped, to hop about from perch to perch,

In paltry cages of dead men's dead thoughts?

Oh, rather, like the skylark, soar and sing,

And let our gushing songs befit the dawn

And sunrise, and the yet unshaken dew 90

Brimming the chalice of each full-blown hope,

Whose blithe front turns to greet the growing day!

Never had poets such high call before,

Never can poets hope for higher one,

And, if they be but faithful to their trust,

Earth will remember them with love and joy,

And oh, far better, God will not forget.

For he who settles Freedom's principles

Writes the death-warrant of all tyranny;

Who speaks the truth stabs Falsehood to the heart, 100

And his mere word makes despots tremble more

Than ever Brutus with his dagger could.

Wait for no hints from waterfalls or woods,

Nor dream that tales of red men, brute and fierce,

Repay the finding of this Western World,

Or needed half the globe to give them birth:

Spirit supreme of Freedom! not for this

Did great Columbus tame his eagle soul

To jostle with the daws that perch in courts;

Not for this, friendless, on an unknown sea, 110

Coping with mad waves and more mutinous spirits,

Battled he with the dreadful ache at heart

Which tempts, with devilish subtleties of doubt,

The hermit, of that loneliest solitude,

The silent desert of a great New Thought;

Though loud Niagara were to-day struck dumb,

Yet would this cataract of boiling life

Rush plunging on and on to endless deeps,

And utter thunder till the world shall cease,--

A thunder worthy of the poet's song, 120

And which alone can fill it with true life.

The high evangel to our country granted

Could make apostles, yea, with tongues of fire,

Of hearts half-darkened back again to clay!

'Tis the soul only that is national,

And he who pays true loyalty to that

Alone can claim the wreath of patriotism.

Beloved! if I wander far and oft

From that which I believe, and feel, and know,

Thou wilt forgive, not with a sorrowing heart, 130

But with a strengthened hope of better things;

Knowing that I, though often blind and false

To those I love, and oh, more false than all

Unto myself, have been most true to thee,

And that whoso in one thing hath been true

Can be as true in all. Therefore thy hope

May yet not prove unfruitful, and thy love

Meet, day by day, with less unworthy thanks,

Whether, as now, we journey hand in hand,

Or, parted in the body, yet are one 140

In spirit and the love of holy things.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

A LEGEND OF BRITTANY

PART FIRST

I

Fair as a summer dream was Margaret,

Such dream as in a poet's soul might start,

Musing of old loves while the moon doth set:

Her hair was not more sunny than her heart,

Though like a natural golden coronet

It circled her dear head with careless art,

Mocking the sunshine, that would fain have lent

To its frank grace a richer ornament.

II

His loved one's eyes could poet ever speak,

So kind, so dewy, and so deep were hers,-- 10

But, while he strives, the choicest phrase, too weak,

Their glad reflection in his spirit blurs;

As one may see a dream dissolve and break

Out of his grasp when he to tell it stirs,

Like that sad Dryad doomed no more to bless

The mortal who revealed her loveliness.

III

She dwelt forever in a region bright,

Peopled with living fancies of her own,

Where naught could come but visions of delight,

Far, far aloof from earth's eternal moan: 20

A summer cloud thrilled through with rosy light,

Floating beneath the blue sky all alone,

Her spirit wandered by itself, and won

A golden edge from some unsetting sun.

IV

The heart grows richer that its lot is poor,

God blesses want with larger sympathies,

Love enters gladliest at the humble door,

And makes the cot a palace with his eyes;

So Margaret's heart a softer beauty wore,

And grew in gentleness and patience wise, 30

For she was but a simple herdsman's child,

A lily chance-sown in the rugged wild.

V

There was no beauty of the wood or field

But she its fragrant bosom-secret knew,

Nor any but to her would freely yield

Some grace that in her soul took root and grew;

Nature to her shone as but now revealed,

All rosy-fresh with innocent morning dew,

And looked into her heart with dim, sweet eyes

That left it full of sylvan memories. 40

VI

Oh, what a face was hers to brighten light,

And give back sunshine with an added glow,

To wile each moment with a fresh delight,

And part of memory's best contentment grow!

Oh, how her voice, as with an inmate's right,

Into the strangest heart would welcome go,

And make it sweet, and ready to become

Of white and gracious thoughts the chosen home!

VII

None looked upon her but he straightway thought

Of all the greenest depths of country cheer, 50

And into each one's heart was freshly brought

What was to him the sweetest time of year,

So was her every look and motion fraught

With out-of-door delights and forest lere;

Not the first violet on a woodland lea

Seemed a more visible gift of Spring than she.

VIII

Is love learned only out of poets' books?

Is there not somewhat in the dropping flood,

And in the nunneries of silent nooks,

And in the murmured longing of the wood, 60

That could make Margaret dream of lovelorn looks,

And stir a thrilling mystery in her blood

More trembly secret than Aurora's tear

Shed in the bosom of an eglatere?

IX

Full many a sweet forewarning hath the mind,

Full many a whispering of vague desire,

Ere comes the nature destined to unbind

Its virgin zone, and all its deeps inspire,-- 70

Low stirrings in the leaves, before the wind

Wake all the green strings of the forest lyre,

Faint heatings in the calyx, ere the rose

Its warm voluptuous breast doth all unclose.

X

Long in its dim recesses pines the spirit,

Wildered and dark, despairingly alone;

Though many a shape of beauty wander near it,

And many a wild and half-remembered tone

Tremble from the divine abyss to cheer it,

Yet still it knows that there is only one

Before whom it can kneel and tribute bring.

At once a happy vassal and a king. 80

XI

To feel a want, yet scarce know what it is,

To seek one nature that is always new,

Whose glance is warmer than another's kiss,

Whom we can bare our inmost beauty to,

Nor feel deserted afterwards,--for this

But with our destined co-mate we can do,--

Such longing instinct fills the mighty scope

Of the young soul with one mysterious hope.

XII

So Margaret's heart grew brimming with the lore

Of love's enticing secrets; and although 90

She had found none to cast it down before,

Yet oft to Fancy's chapel she would go

To pay her vows--and count the rosary o'er

Of her love's promised graces:--haply so

Miranda's hope had pictured Ferdinand

Long ere the gaunt wave tossed him on the strand.

XIII

A new-made star that swims the lonely gloom,

Unwedded yet and longing for the sun,

Whose beams, the bride-gifts of the lavish groom,

Blithely to crown the virgin planet run, 100

Her being was, watching to see the bloom

Of love's fresh sunrise roofing one by one

Its clouds with gold, a triumph-arch to be

For him who came to hold her heart in fee.

XIV

Not far from Margaret's cottage dwelt a knight

Of the proud Templars, a sworn celibate,

Whose heart in secret fed upon the light

And dew of her ripe beauty, through the grate

Of his close vow catching what gleams he might

Of the free heaven, and cursing all too late 110

The cruel faith whose black walls hemmed him in

And turned life's crowning bliss to deadly sin.

XV

For he had met her in the wood by chance,

And, having drunk her beauty's wildering spell,

His heart shook like the pennon of a lance

That quivers in a breeze's sudden swell,

And thenceforth, in a close-infolded trance,

From mistily golden deep to deep he fell;

Till earth did waver and fade far away

Beneath the hope in whose warm arms he lay. 120

XVI

A dark, proud man he was, whose half-blown youth

Had shed its blossoms even in opening,

Leaving a few that with more winning ruth

Trembling around grave manhood's stem might cling,

More sad than cheery, making, in good sooth,

Like the fringed gentian, a late autumn spring:

A twilight nature, braided light and gloom,

A youth half-smiling by an open tomb.

XVII

Fair as an angel, who yet inly wore

A wrinkled heart foreboding his near fall; 130

Who saw him alway wished to know him more,

As if he were some fate's defiant thrall

And nursed a dreaded secret at his core;

Little he loved, but power the most of all,

And that he seemed to scorn, as one who knew

By what foul paths men choose to crawl thereto.

XVIII

He had been noble, but some great deceit

Had turned his better instinct to a vice:

He strove to think the world was all a cheat,

That power and fame were cheap at any price, 140

That the sure way of being shortly great

Was even to play life's game with loaded dice,

Since he had tried the honest play and found

That vice and virtue differed but in sound.

XIX

Yet Margaret's sight redeemed him for a space

From his own thraldom; man could never be

A hypocrite when first such maiden grace

Smiled in upon his heart; the agony

Of wearing all day long a lying face

Fell lightly from him, and, a moment free, 150

Erect with wakened faith his spirit stood

And scorned the weakness of his demon-mood.

XX

Like a sweet wind-harp to him was her thought,

Which would not let the common air come near,

Till from its dim enchantment it had caught

A musical tenderness that brimmed his ear

With sweetness more ethereal than aught

Save silver-dropping snatches that whilere

Rained down from some sad angel's faithful harp

To cool her fallen lover's anguish sharp. 160

XXI

Deep in the forest was a little dell

High overarchÃ¨d with the leafy sweep

Of a broad oak, through whose gnarled roots there fell

A slender rill that sung itself to sleep,

Where its continuous toil had scooped a well

To please the fairy folk; breathlessly deep

The stillness was, save when the dreaming brook

From its small urn a drizzly murmur shook.

XXII

The wooded hills sloped upward all around

With gradual rise, and made an even rim, 170

So that it seemed a mighty casque unbound

From some huge Titan's brow to lighten him,

Ages ago, and left upon the ground.

Where the slow soil had mossed it to the brim,

Till after countless centuries it grew

Into this dell, the haunt of noontide dew.

XXIII

Dim vistas, sprinkled o'er with sun-flecked green,

Wound through the thickset trunks on every side,

And, toward the west, in fancy might be seen

A Gothic window in its blazing pride, 180

When the low sun, two arching elms between,

Lit up the leaves beyond, which, autumn-dyed

With lavish hues, would into splendor start,

Shaming the labored panes of richest art.

XXIV

Here, leaning once against the old oak's trunk,

Mordred, for such was the young Templar's name,

Saw Margaret come; unseen, the falcon shrunk

From the meek dove; sharp thrills of tingling flame

Made him forget that he was vowed a monk,

And all the outworks of his pride o'ercame: 190

Flooded he seemed with bright delicious pain,

As if a star had burst within his brain.

XXV

Such power hath beauty and frank innocence:

A flower bloomed forth, that sunshine glad to bless,

Even from his love's long leafless stem; the sense

Of exile from Hope's happy realm grew less,

And thoughts of childish peace, he knew not whence,

Thronged round his heart with many an old caress,

Melting the frost there into pearly dew

That mirrored back his nature's morning-blue. 200

XXVI

She turned and saw him, but she felt no dread,

Her purity, like adamantine mail.

Did so encircle her; and yet her head

She drooped, and made her golden hair her veil,

Through which a glow of rosiest lustre spread,

Then faded, and anon she stood all pale,

As snow o'er which a blush of northern light

Suddenly reddens, and as soon grows white.

XXVII

She thought of Tristrem and of Lancilot,

Of all her dreams, and of kind fairies' might, 210

And how that dell was deemed a haunted spot,

Until there grew a mist before her sight.

And where the present was she half forgot,

Borne backward through the realms of old delight,--

Then, starting up awake, she would have gone,

Yet almost wished it might not be alone.

XXVIII

How they went home together through the wood,

And how all life seemed focussed into one

Thought-dazzling spot that set ablaze the blood,

What need to tell? Fit language there is none 220

For the heart's deepest things. Who ever wooed

As in his boyish hope he would have done?

For, when the soul is fullest, the hushed tongue

Voicelessly trembles like a lute unstrung.

XXIX

But all things carry the heart's messages

And know it not, nor doth the heart well know,

But Nature hath her will; even as the bees,

Blithe go-betweens, fly singing to and fro

With the fruit-quickening pollen;--hard if these

Found not some all unthought-of way to show 230

Their secret each to each; and so they did,

And one heart's flower-dust into the other slid.

XXX

Young hearts are free; the selfish world it is

That turns them miserly and cold as stone,

And makes them clutch their fingers on the bliss

Which but in giving truly is their own;--

She had no dreams of barter, asked not his,

But gave hers freely as she would have thrown

A rose to him, or as that rose gives forth

Its generous fragrance, thoughtless of its worth. 240

XXXI

Her summer nature felt a need to bless,

And a like longing to be blest again;

So, from her sky-like spirit, gentleness

Dropt ever like a sunlit fall of rain,

And his beneath drank in the bright caress

As thirstily as would a parched plain,

That long hath watched the showers of sloping gray

For ever, ever, falling far away.

XXXII

How should she dream of ill? the heart filled quite

With sunshine, like the shepherd's-clock at noon, 250

Closes its leaves around its warm delight;

Whate'er in life is harsh or out of tune

Is all shut out, no boding shade of blight

Can pierce the opiate ether of its swoon:

Love is but blind as thoughtful justice is,

But naught can be so wanton-blind as bliss.

XXXIII

All beauty and all life he was to her;

She questioned not his love, she only knew

That she loved him, and not a pulse could stir

In her whole frame but quivered through and through 260

With this glad thought, and was a minister

To do him fealty and service true,

Like golden ripples hasting to the land

To wreck their freight of sunshine on the strand.

XXXIV

O dewy dawn of love! that are

Hung high, like the cliff-swallow's perilous nest,

Most like to fall when fullest, and that jar

With every heavier billow! O unrest

Than balmiest deeps of quiet sweeter far!

How did ye triumph now in Margaret's breast, 270

Making it readier to shrink and start

Than quivering gold of the pond-lily's heart!

XXXV

Here let us pause: oh, would the soul might ever

Achieve its immortality in youth,

When nothing yet hath damped its high endeavor

After the starry energy of truth!

Here let us pause, and for a moment sever

This gleam of sunshine from the sad unruth

That sometime comes to all, for it is good

To lengthen to the last a sunny mood. 280

PART SECOND

I

As one who, from the sunshine and the green,

Enters the solid darkness of a cave,

Nor knows what precipice or pit unseen

May yawn before him with its sudden grave,

And, with hushed breath, doth often forward lean,

Dreaming he hears the plashing of a wave

Dimly below, or feels a damper air

From out some dreary chasm, he knows not where;

II

So, from the sunshine and the green of love,

We enter on our story's darker part; 290

And, though the horror of it well may move

An impulse of repugnance in the heart,

Yet let us think, that, as there's naught above

The all-embracing atmosphere of Art,

So also there is naught that falls below

Her generous reach, though grimed with guilt and woe.

III

Her fittest triumph is to show that good

Lurks in the heart of evil evermore,

That love, though scorned, and outcast, and withstood,

Can without end forgive, and yet have store; 300

God's love and man's are of the selfsame blood,

And He can see that always at the door

Of foulest hearts the angel-nature yet

Knocks to return and cancel all its debt.

IV

It ever is weak falsehood's destiny

That her thick mask turns crystal to let through

The unsuspicious eyes of honesty;

But Margaret's heart was too sincere and true

Aught but plain truth and faithfulness to see,

And Mordred's for a time a little grew 310

To be like hers, won by the mild reproof

Of those kind eyes that kept all doubt aloof.

V

Full oft they met, as dawn and twilight meet

In northern climes; she full of growing day

As he of darkness, which before her feet

Shrank gradual, and faded quite away,

Soon to return; for power had made love sweet

To him, and when his will had gained full sway,

The taste began to pall; for never power

Can sate the hungry soul beyond an hour. 320

VI

He fell as doth the tempter ever fall,

Even in the gaining of his loathsome end;

God doth not work as man works, but makes all

The crooked paths of ill to goodness tend;

Let Him judge Margaret! If to be the thrall

Of love, and faith too generous to defend

Its very life from him she loved, be sin,

What hope of grace may the seducer win?

VII

Grim-hearted world, that look'st with Levite eyes

On those poor fallen by too much faith in man, 330

She that upon thy freezing threshold lies,

Starved to more sinning by thy savage ban,

Seeking that refuge because foulest vice

More godlike than thy virtue is, whose span

Shuts out the wretched only, is more free

To enter heaven than thou shalt ever be!

VIII

Thou wilt not let her wash thy dainty feet

With such salt things as tears, or with rude hair

Dry them, soft Pharisee, that sit'st at meat

With him who made her such, and speak'st him fair. 340

Leaving God's wandering lamb the while to bleat

Unheeded, shivering in the pitiless air:

Thou hast made prisoned virtue show more wan

And haggard than a vice to look upon.

IX

Now many months flew by, and weary grew

To Margaret the sight of happy things;

Blight fell on all her flowers, instead of dew;

Shut round her heart were now the joyous wings

Wherewith it wont to soar; yet not untrue,

Though tempted much, her woman's nature clings 350

To its first pure belief, and with sad eyes

Looks backward o'er the gate of Paradise.

X

And so, though altered Mordred came less oft,

And winter frowned where spring had laughed before

In his strange eyes, yet half her sadness doffed,

And in her silent patience loved him more:

Sorrow had made her soft heart yet more soft,

And a new life within her own she bore

Which made her tenderer, as she felt it move

Beneath her breast, a refuge for her love. 360

XI

This babe, she thought, would surely bring him back,

And be a bond forever them between;

Before its eyes the sullen tempest-rack

Would fade, and leave the face of heaven serene;

And love's return doth more than fill the lack,

Which in his absence withered the heart's green:

And yet a dim foreboding still would flit

Between her and her hope to darken it.

XII

She could not figure forth a happy fate,

Even for this life from heaven so newly come; 370

The earth must needs be doubly desolate

To him scarce parted from a fairer home:

Such boding heavier on her bosom sate

One night, as, standing in the twilight gloam,

She strained her eyes beyond that dizzy verge

At whose foot faintly breaks the future's surge.

XIII

Poor little spirit! naught but shame and woe

Nurse the sick heart whose life-blood nurses thine:

Yet not those only; love hath triumphed so,

As for thy sake makes sorrow more divine: 380

And yet, though thou be pure, the world is foe

To purity, if born in such a shrine;

And, having trampled it for struggling thence,

Smiles to itself, and calls it Providence.

XIV

As thus she mused, a shadow seemed to rise

From out her thought, and turn to dreariness

All blissful hopes and sunny memories,

And the quick blood would curdle up and press

About her heart, which seemed to shut its eyes

And hush itself, as who with shuddering guess 390

Harks through the gloom and dreads e'en now to feel

Through his hot breast the icy slide of steel.

XV

But, at that heart-beat, while in dread she was,

In the low wind the honeysuckles gleam,

A dewy thrill flits through the heavy grass,

And, looking forth, she saw, as in a dream,

Within the wood the moonlight's shadowy mass:

Night's starry heart yearning to hers doth seem,

And the deep sky, full-hearted with the moon,

Folds round her all the happiness of June. 400

XVI

What fear could face a heaven and earth like this?

What silveriest cloud could hang 'neath such a sky?

A tide of wondrous and unwonted bliss

Rolls back through all her pulses suddenly,

As if some seraph, who had learned to kiss

From the fair daughters of the world gone by,

Had wedded so his fallen light with hers,

Such sweet, strange joy through soul and body stirs.

XVII

Now seek we Mordred; he who did not fear

The crime, yet fears the latent consequence: 410

If it should reach a brother Templar's ear,

It haply might be made a good pretence

To cheat him of the hope he held most dear;

For he had spared no thought's or deed's expense,

That by and by might help his wish to clip

Its darling bride,--the high grandmastership.

XVIII

The apathy, ere a crime resolved is done,

Is scarce less dreadful than remorse for crime;

By no allurement can the soul be won

From brooding o'er the weary creep of time: 420

Mordred stole forth into the happy sun,

Striving to hum a scrap of Breton rhyme,

But the sky struck him speechless, and he tried

In vain to summon up his callous pride.

XIX

In the courtyard a fountain leaped alway,

A Triton blowing jewels through his shell

Into the sunshine; Mordred turned away,

Weary because the stone face did not tell

Of weariness, nor could he bear to-day,

Heartsick, to hear the patient sink and swell 430

Of winds among the leaves, or golden bees

Drowsily humming in the orange-trees.

XX

All happy sights and sounds now came to him

Like a reproach: he wandered far and wide,

Following the lead of his unquiet whim,

But still there went a something at his side

That made the cool breeze hot, the sunshine dim;

It would not flee, it could not be defied,

He could not see it, but he felt it there,

By the damp chill that crept among his hair. 440

XXI

Day wore at last; the evening-star arose,

And throbbing in the sky grew red and set;

Then with a guilty, wavering step he goes

To the hid nook where they so oft had met

In happier season, for his heart well knows

That he is sure to find poor Margaret

Watching and waiting there with love-lorn breast

Around her young dream's rudely scattered nest.

XXII

Why follow here that grim old chronicle

Which counts the dagger-strokes and drops of blood? 450

Enough that Margaret by his mad steel fell,

Unmoved by murder from her trusting mood,

Smiling on him as Heaven smiles on Hell,

With a sad love, remembering when he stood

Not fallen yet, the unsealer of her heart,

Of all her holy dreams the holiest part.

XXIII

His crime complete, scarce knowing what he did,

(So goes the tale,) beneath the altar there

In the high church the stiffening corpse he hid,

And then, to 'scape that suffocating air, 460

Like a scared ghoul out of the porch he slid;

But his strained eyes saw blood-spots everywhere,

And ghastly faces thrust themselves between

His soul and hopes of peace with blasting mien.

XXIV

His heart went out within him like a spark

Dropt in the sea; wherever he made bold

To turn his eyes, he saw, all stiff and stark,

Pale Margaret lying dead; the lavish gold

Of her loose hair seemed in the cloudy dark

To spread a glory, and a thousand-fold 470

More strangely pale and beautiful she grew:

Her silence stabbed his conscience through and through.

XXV

Or visions of past days,--a mother's eyes

That smiled down on the fair boy at her knee,

Whose happy upturned face to hers replies.--

He saw sometimes: or Margaret mournfully

Gazed on him full of doubt, as one who tries

To crush belief that does love injury;

Then she would wring her hands, but soon again

Love's patience glimmered out through cloudy pain. 480

XXVI

Meanwhile he dared, not go and steal away

The silent, dead-cold witness of his sin;

He had not feared the life, but that dull clay,

Those open eyes that showed the death within,

Would surely stare him mad; yet all the day

A dreadful impulse, whence his will could win

No refuge, made him linger in the aisle,

Freezing with his wan look each greeting smile.

XXVII

Now, on the second day there was to be

A festival in church: from far and near 490

Came flocking in the sunburnt peasantry,

And knights and dames with stately antique cheer,

Blazing with pomp, as if all faerie

Had emptied her quaint halls, or, as it were,

The illuminated marge of some old book,

While we were gazing, life and motion took.

XXVIII

When all were entered, and the roving eyes

Of all were stayed, some upon faces bright,

Some on the priests, some on the traceries

That decked the slumber of a marble knight, 500

And all the rustlings over that arise

From recognizing tokens of delight,

When friendly glances meet,--then silent ease

Spread o'er the multitude by slow degrees.

XXIX

Then swelled the organ: up through choir and nave

The music trembled with an inward thrill

Of bliss at its own grandeur; wave on wave

Its flood of mellow thunder rose, until

The hushed air shivered with the throb it gave,

Then, poising for a moment, it stood still, 510

And sank and rose again, to burst in spray

That wandered into silence far away.

XXX

Like to a mighty heart the music seemed,

That yearns with melodies it cannot speak,

Until, in grand despair of what it dreamed,

In the agony of effort it doth break,

Yet triumphs breaking; on it rushed and streamed

And wantoned in its might, as when a lake,

Long pent among the mountains, bursts its walls

And in one crowding gash leaps forth and falls. 520

XXXI

Deeper and deeper shudders shook the air,

As the huge bass kept gathering heavily,

Like thunder when it rouses in its lair,

And with its hoarse growl shakes the low-hung sky,

It grew up like a darkness everywhere,

Filling the vast cathedral;--suddenly,

From the dense mass a boy's clear treble broke

Like lightning, and the full-toned choir awoke.

XXXII

Through gorgeous windows shone the sun aslant,

Brimming the church with gold and purple mist, 530

Meet atmosphere to bosom that rich chant.

Where fifty voices in one strand did twist

Their varicolored tones, and left no want

To the delighted soul, which sank abyssed

In the warm music cloud, while, far below,

The organ heaved its surges to and fro.

XXXIII

As if a lark should suddenly drop dead

While the blue air yet trembled with its song,

So snapped at once that music's golden thread,

Struck by a nameless fear that leapt along 540

From heart to heart, and like a shadow spread

With instantaneous shiver through the throng,

So that some glanced behind, as half aware

A hideous shape of dread were standing there.

XXXIV

As when a crowd of pale men gather round,

Watching an eddy in the leaden deep,

From which they deem the body of one drowned

Will be cast forth, from face to face doth creep

An eager dread that holds all tongues fast bound

Until the horror, with a ghastly leap, 550

Starts up, its dead blue arms stretched aimlessly,

Heaved with the swinging of the careless sea,--

XXXV

So in the faces of all these there grew,

As by one impulse, a dark, freezing awe,

Which with a fearful fascination drew

All eyes toward the altar; damp and raw

The air grew suddenly, and no man knew

Whether perchance his silent neighbor saw

The dreadful thing which all were sure would rise

To scare the strained lids wider from their eyes. 560

XXXVI

The incense trembled as it upward sent

Its slow, uncertain thread of wandering blue,

As't were the only living element

In all the church, so deep the stillness grew;

It seemed one might have heard it, as it went,

Give out an audible rustle, curling through

The midnight silence of that awestruck air,

More hushed than death, though so much life was there.

XXXVII

Nothing they saw, but a low voice was heard

Threading the ominous silence of that fear, 570

Gentle and terrorless as if a bird,

Wakened by some volcano's glare, should cheer

The murk air with his song; yet every word

In the cathedral's farthest arch seemed near,

As if it spoke to every one apart,

Like the clear voice of conscience in each heart.

XXXVIII

'O Rest, to weary hearts thou art most dear!

O Silence, after life's bewildering din,

Thou art most welcome, whether in the sear

Days of our age thou comest, or we win 580

Thy poppy-wreath in youth! then wherefore here

Linger I yet, once free to enter in

At that wished gate which gentle Death doth ope,

Into the boundless realm of strength and hope?

XXXIX

'Think not in death my love could ever cease;

If thou wast false, more need there is for me

Still to be true; that slumber were not peace,

If't were unvisited with dreams of thee:

And thou hadst never heard such words as these,

Save that in heaven I must forever be 590

Most comfortless and wretched, seeing this

Our unbaptized babe shut out from bliss.

XL

'This little spirit with imploring eyes

Wanders alone the dreary wild of space;

The shadow of his pain forever lies

Upon my soul in this new dwelling-place;

His loneliness makes me in Paradise

More lonely, and, unless I see his face,

Even here for grief could I lie down and die, 599

Save for my curse of immortality.

XLI

'World after world he sees around him swim

Crowded with happy souls, that take no heed

Of the sad eyes that from the night's faint rim

Gaze sick with longing on them as they speed

With golden gates, that only shut on him;

And shapes sometimes from hell's abysses freed

Flap darkly by him, with enormous sweep

Of wings that roughen wide the pitchy deep.

XLII

'I am a mother,--spirits do not shake

This much of earth from them,--and I must pine 610

Till I can feel his little hands, and take

His weary head upon this heart of mine;

And, might it be, full gladly for his sake

Would I this solitude of bliss resign

And be shut out of heaven to dwell with him

Forever in that silence drear and dim.

XLIII

'I strove to hush my soul, and would not speak

At first, for thy dear sake; a woman's love

Is mighty, but a mother's heart is weak,

And by its weakness overcomes; I strove 620

To smother bitter thoughts with patience meek,

But still in the abyss my soul would rove,

Seeking my child, and drove me here to claim

The rite that gives him peace in Christ's dear name.

XLIV

'I sit and weep while blessed spirits sing;

I can but long and pine the while they praise,

And, leaning o'er the wall of heaven, I fling

My voice to where I deem my infant strays,

Like a robbed bird that cries in vain to bring

Her nestlings back beneath her wings' embrace; 630

But still he answers not, and I but know

That heaven and earth are both alike in woe.'

XLV

Then the pale priests, with ceremony due,

Baptized the child within its dreadful tomb

Beneath that mother's heart, whose instinct true

Star-like had battled down the triple gloom

Of sorrow, love, and death: young maidens, too.

Strewed the pale corpse with many a milkwhite bloom,

And parted the bright hair, and on the breast

Crossed the unconscious hands in sign of rest. 640

XLVI

Some said, that, when the priest had sprinkled o'er

The consecrated drops, they seemed to hear

A sigh, as of some heart from travail sore

Released, and then two voices singing clear,

\_Misereatur Deus\_, more and more

Fading far upward, and their ghastly fear

Fell from them with that sound, as bodies fall

From souls upspringing to celestial hall.

PROMETHEUS

One after one the stars have risen and set,

Sparkling upon the hoarfrost on my chain:

The Bear, that prowled all night about the fold

Of the North-star, hath shrunk into his den.

Scared by the blithesome footsteps of the Dawn,

Whose blushing smile floods all the Orient;

And now bright Lucifer grows less and less,

Into the heaven's blue quiet deep-withdrawn.

Sunless and starless all, the desert sky

Arches above me, empty as this heart 10

For ages hath been empty of all joy,

Except to brood upon its silent hope,

As o'er its hope of day the sky doth now.

All night have I heard voices: deeper yet

The deep low breathing of the silence grew,

While all about, muffled in awe, there stood

Shadows, or forms, or both, clear-felt at heart,

But, when I turned to front them, far along

Only a shudder through the midnight ran,

And the dense stillness walled me closer round. 20

But still I heard them wander up and down

That solitude, and flappings of dusk wings

Did mingle with them, whether of those hags

Let slip upon me once from Hades deep,

Or of yet direr torments, if such be,

I could but guess; and then toward me came

A shape as of a woman: very pale

It was, and calm; its cold eyes did not move,

And mine moved not, but only stared on them.

Their fixed awe went through my brain like ice; 30

A skeleton hand seemed clutching at my heart,

And a sharp chill, as if a dank night fog

Suddenly closed me in, was all I felt:

And then, methought, I heard a freezing sigh,

A long, deep, shivering sigh, as from blue lips

Stiffening in death, close to mine ear. I thought

Some doom was close upon me, and I looked

And saw the red moon through the heavy mist,

Just setting, and it seemed as it were falling,

Or reeling to its fall, so dim and dead 40

And palsy-struck it looked. Then all sounds merged

Into the rising surges of the pines,

Which, leagues below me, clothing the gaunt loins

Of ancient Caucasus with hairy strength,

Sent up a murmur in the morning wind,

Sad as the wail that from the populous earth

All day and night to high Olympus soars.

Fit incense to thy wicked throne, O Jove!

Thy hated name is tossed once more in scorn

From off my lips, for I will tell thy doom. 50

And are these tears? Nay, do not triumph, Jove!

They are wrung from me but by the agonies

Of prophecy, like those sparse drops which fall

From clouds in travail of the lightning, when

The great wave of the storm high-curled and black

Rolls steadily onward to its thunderous break.

Why art thou made a god of, thou poor type

Of anger, and revenge, and cunning force?

True Power was never born of brutish Strength,

Nor sweet Truth suckled at the shaggy dugs 60

Of that old she-wolf. Are thy thunderbolts,

That quell the darkness for a space, so strong

As the prevailing patience of meek Light,

Who, with the invincible tenderness of peace,

Wins it to be a portion of herself?

Why art thou made a god of, thou, who hast

The never-sleeping terror at thy heart,

That birthright of all tyrants, worse to bear

Than this thy ravening bird on which I smile?

Thou swear'st to free me, if I will unfold 70

What kind of doom it is whose omen flits

Across thy heart, as o'er a troop of doves

The fearful shadow of the kite. What need

To know that truth whose knowledge cannot save?

Evil its errand hath, as well as Good;

When thine is finished, thou art known no more:

There is a higher purity than thou,

And higher purity is greater strength;

Thy nature is thy doom, at which thy heart

Trembles behind the thick wall of thy might. 80

Let man but hope, and thou art straightway chilled

With thought of that drear silence and deep night

Which, like a dream, shall swallow thee and thine:

Let man but will, and thou art god no more,

More capable of ruin than the gold

And ivory that image thee on earth.

He who hurled down the monstrous Titan-brood

Blinded with lightnings, with rough thunders stunned,

Is weaker than a simple human thought.

My slender voice can shake thee, as the breeze, 90

That seems but apt to stir a maiden's hair,

Sways huge Oceanus from pole to pole;

For I am still Prometheus, and foreknow

In my wise heart the end and doom of all.

Yes, I am still Prometheus, wiser grown

By years of solitude,--that holds apart

The past and future, giving the soul room

To search into itself,--and long commune

With this eternal silence;--more a god,

In my long-suffering and strength to meet 100

With equal front the direst shafts of fate,

Than thou in thy faint-hearted despotism,

Girt with thy baby-toys of force and wrath.

Yes, I am that Prometheus who brought down

The light to man, which thou, in selfish fear,

Hadst to thy self usurped,--his by sole right,

For Man hath right to all save Tyranny,--

And which shall free him yet from thy frail throne.

Tyrants are but the spawn of Ignorance,

Begotten by the slaves they trample on, 110

Who, could they win a glimmer of the light,

And see that Tyranny is always weakness,

Or Fear with its own bosom ill at ease,

Would laugh away in scorn the sand-wove chain

Which their own blindness feigned for adamant.

Wrong ever builds on quicksands, but the Right

To the firm centre lays its moveless base.

The tyrant trembles, if the air but stir

The innocent ringlets of a child's free hair,

And crouches, when the thought of some great spirit, 120

With world-wide murmur, like a rising gale.

Over men's hearts, as over standing corn,

Rushes, and bends them to its own strong will.

So shall some thought of mine yet circle earth,

And puff away thy crumbling altars, Jove!

And, wouldst thou know of my supreme revenge,

Poor tyrant, even now dethroned in heart,

Realmless in soul, as tyrants ever are,

Listen! and tell me if this bitter peak,

This never-glutted vulture, and these chains 130

Shrink not before it; for it shall befit

A sorrow-taught, unconquered Titan-heart.

Men, when their death is on them, seem to stand

On a precipitous crag that overhangs

The abyss of doom, and in that depth to see,

As in a glass, the features dim and vast

Of things to come, the shadows, as it seems,

Of what have been. Death ever fronts the wise;

Not fearfully, but with clear promises

Of larger life, on whose broad vans upborne, 140

Their outlook widens, and they see beyond

The horizon of the Present and the Past,

Even to the very source and end of things.

Such am I now: immortal woe hath made

My heart a seer, and my soul a judge

Between the substance and the shadow of Truth.

The sure supremeness of the Beautiful,

By all the martyrdoms made doubly sure

Of such as I am, this is my revenge,

Which of my wrongs builds a triumphal arch, 150

Through which I see a sceptre and a throne.

The pipings of glad shepherds on the hills,

Tending the flocks no more to bleed for thee;

The songs of maidens pressing with white feet

The vintage on thine altars poured no more;

The murmurous bliss of lovers underneath

Dim grapevine bowers whose rosy bunches press

Not half so closely their warm cheeks, unpaled

By thoughts of thy brute lust; the hive-like hum

Of peaceful commonwealths, where sunburnt Toil 160

Reaps for itself the rich earth made its own

By its own labor, lightened with glad hymns

To an omnipotence which thy mad bolts

Would cope with as a spark with the vast sea,--

Even the spirit of free love and peace,

Duty's sure recompense through life and death,--

These are such harvests as all master-spirits

Reap, haply not on earth, but reap no less

Because the sheaves are bound by hands not theirs;

These are the bloodless daggers wherewithal 170

They stab fallen tyrants, this their high revenge:

For their best part of life on earth is when,

Long after death, prisoned and pent no more,

Their thoughts, their wild dreams even, have become

Part of the necessary air men breathe:

When, like the moon, herself behind a cloud,

They shed down light before us on life's sea,

That cheers us to steer onward still in hope.

Earth with her twining memories ivies o'er

Their holy sepulchres; the chainless sea, 180

In tempest or wide calm, repeats their thoughts;

The lightning and the thunder, all free things,

Have legends of them for the ears of men.

All other glories are as falling stars,

But universal Nature watches theirs:

Such strength is won by love of humankind.

Not that I feel that hunger after fame,

Which souls of a half-greatness are beset with;

But that the memory of noble deeds

Cries shame upon the idle and the vile, 190

And keeps the heart of Man forever up

To the heroic level of old time.

To be forgot at first is little pain

To a heart conscious of such high intent

As must be deathless on the lips of men;

But, having been a name, to sink and be

A something which the world can do without,

Which, having been or not, would never change

The lightest pulse of fate,--this is indeed

A cup of bitterness the worst to taste, 200

And this thy heart shall empty to the dregs.

Endless despair shall be thy Caucasus,

And memory thy vulture; thou wilt find

Oblivion far lonelier than this peak.

Behold thy destiny! Thou think'st it much

That I should brave thee, miserable god!

But I have braved a mightier than thou,

Even the sharp tempting of this soaring heart,

Which might have made me, scarcely less than thou,

A god among my brethren weak and blind, 210

Scarce less than thou, a pitiable thing

To be down-trodden into darkness soon.

But now I am above thee, for thou art

The bungling workmanship of fear, the block

That awes the swart Barbarian; but I

Am what myself have made,--a nature wise

With finding in itself the types of all,

With watching from the dim verge of the time

What things to be are visible in the gleams

Thrown forward on them from the luminous past, 220

Wise with the history of its own frail heart,

With reverence and with sorrow, and with love,

Broad as the world, for freedom and for man.

Thou and all strength shall crumble, except Love,

By whom, and for whose glory, ye shall cease:

And, when thou'rt but a weary moaning heard

From out the pitiless gloom of Chaos, I

Shall be a power and a memory,

A name to fright all tyrants with, a light

Unsetting as the pole-star, a great voice 230

Heard in the breathless pauses of the fight

By truth and freedom ever waged with wrong,

Clear as a silver trumpet, to awake

Far echoes that from age to age live on

In kindred spirits, giving them a sense

Of boundless power from boundless suffering wrung:

And many a glazing eye shall smile to see

The memory of my triumph (for to meet

Wrong with endurance, and to overcome

The present with a heart that looks beyond, 240

Are triumph), like a prophet eagle, perch

Upon the sacred banner of the Right.

Evil springs up, and flowers, and bears no seed,

And feeds the green earth with its swift decay,

Leaving it richer for the growth of truth;

But Good, once put in action or in thought,

Like a strong oak, doth from its boughs shed down

The ripe germs of a forest. Thou, weak god,

Shalt fade and be forgotten! but this soul,

Fresh-living still in the serene abyss, 250

In every heaving shall partake, that grows

From heart to heart among the sons of men,--

As the ominous hum before the earthquake runs

Far through the Ãgean from roused isle to isle,--

Foreboding wreck to palaces and shrines,

And mighty rents in many a cavernous error

That darkens the free light to man:--This heart,

Unscarred by thy grim vulture, as the truth

Grows but more lovely 'neath the beaks and claws

Of Harpies blind that fain would soil it, shall 260

In all the throbbing exultations, share

That wait on freedom's triumphs, and in all

The glorious agonies of martyr-spirits,

Sharp lightning-throes to split the jagged clouds

That veil the future, snowing them the end,

Pain's thorny crown for constancy and truth,

Girding the temples like a wreath of stars.

This is a thought, that, like the fabled laurel,

Makes my faith thunder-proof; and thy dread bolts

Fall on me like the silent flakes of snow 270

On the hoar brows of aged Caucasus:

But, oh, thought far more blissful, they can rend

This cloud of flesh, and make my soul a star!

Unleash thy crouching thunders now, O Jove!

Free this high heart, which, a poor captive long,

Doth knock to be let forth, this heart which still,

In its invincible manhood, overtops

Thy puny godship, as this mountain doth

The pines that moss its roots. Oh, even now,

While from my peak of suffering I look down, 280

Beholding with a far-spread gush of hope

The sunrise of that Beauty, in whose face,

Shone all around with love, no man shall look

But straightway like a god he be uplift

Unto the throne long empty for his sake,

And clearly oft foreshadowed in brave dreams

By his free inward nature, which nor thou,

Nor any anarch after thee, can bind

From working its great doom,--now, now set free

This essence, not to die, but to become 290

Part of that awful Presence which doth haunt

The palaces of tyrants, to scare off,

With its grim eyes and fearful whisperings

And hideous sense of utter loneliness,

All hope of safety, all desire of peace,

All but the loathed forefeeling of blank death,--

Part of that spirit which doth ever brood

In patient calm on the unpilfered nest

Of man's deep heart, till mighty thoughts grow fledged

To sail with darkening shadow o'er the world, 300

Filling with dread such souls as dare not trust

In the unfailing energy of Good,

Until they swoop, and their pale quarry make

Of some o'erbloated wrong,--that spirit which

Scatters great hopes in the seed-field of man,

Like acorns among grain, to grow and be

A roof for freedom in all coming time!

But no, this cannot be; for ages yet,

In solitude unbroken, shall I hear

The angry Caspian to the Euxine shout, 310

And Euxine answer with a muffled roar,

On either side storming the giant walls

Of Caucasus with leagues of climbing foam

(Less, from my height, than flakes of downy snow),

That draw back baffled but to hurl again,

Snatched up in wrath and horrible turmoil,

Mountain on mountain, as the Titans erst,

My brethren, scaling the high seat of Jove,

Heaved Pelion upon Ossa's shoulders broad

In vain emprise. The moon will come and go 320

With her monotonous vicissitude;

Once beautiful, when I was free to walk

Among my fellows, and to interchange

The influence benign of loving eyes,

But now by aged use grows wearisome;--

False thought! most false! for how could I endure

These crawling centuries of lonely woe

Unshamed by weak complaining, but for thee,

Loneliest, save me, of all created things,

Mild-eyed Astarte, my best comforter, 330

With thy pale smile of sad benignity?

Year after year will pass away and seem

To me, in mine eternal agony,

But as the shadows of dumb summer clouds,

Which I have watched so often darkening o'er

The vast Sarmatian plain, league-wide at first,

But, with still swiftness, lessening on and on

Till cloud and shadow meet and mingle where

The gray horizon fades into the sky,

Far, far to northward. Yes, for ages yet 340

Must I lie here upon my altar huge,

A sacrifice for man. Sorrow will be,

As it hath been, his portion; endless doom,

While the immortal with the mortal linked

Dreams of its wings and pines for what it dreams,

With upward yearn unceasing. Better so:

For wisdom is stern sorrow's patient child,

And empire over self, and all the deep

Strong charities that make men seem like gods;

And love, that makes them be gods, from her breasts 350

Sucks in the milk that makes mankind one blood.

Good never comes unmixed, or so it seems,

Having two faces, as some images

Are carved, of foolish gods; one face is ill;

But one heart lies beneath, and that is good,

As are all hearts, when we explore their depths.

Therefore, great heart, bear up; thou art but type

Of what all lofty spirits endure, that fain

Would win men back to strength and peace through love:

Each hath his lonely peak, and on each heart 360

Envy, or scorn, or hatred, tears lifelong

With vulture beak; yet the high soul is left;

And faith, which is but hope grown wise, and love

And patience which at last shall overcome.

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

There came a youth upon the earth,

Some thousand years ago,

Whose slender hands were nothing worth,

Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell

He stretched some chords, and drew

Music that made men's bosoms swell

Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had

Pure taste by right divine,

Decreed his singing not too bad

To hear between the cups of wine:

And so, well pleased with being soothed

Into a sweet half-sleep,

Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,

And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,

And yet he used them so,

That what in other mouths was rough

In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,

In whom no good they saw;

And yet, unwittingly, in truth,

They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,

For idly, hour by hour,

He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,

Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things

Did teach him all their use,

For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,

He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,

But, when a glance they caught

Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,

They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,

And e'en his memory dim,

Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,

More full of love, because of him.

And day by day more holy grew

Each spot where he had trod,

Till after-poets only knew

Their first-born brother as a god.

THE TOKEN

It is a mere wild rosebud,

Quite sallow now, and dry,

Yet there's something wondrous in it,

Some gleams of days gone by,

Dear sights and sounds that are to me

The very moons of memory,

And stir my heart's blood far below

Its short-lived waves of joy and woe.

Lips must fade and roses wither,

All sweet times be o'er;

They only smile, and, murmuring 'Thither!'

Stay with us no more:

And yet ofttimes a look or smile,

Forgotten in a kiss's while,

Years after from the dark will start,

And flash across the trembling heart.

Thou hast given me many roses,

But never one, like this,

O'erfloods both sense and spirit

With such a deep, wild bliss;

We must have instincts that glean up

Sparse drops of this life in the cup,

Whose taste shall give us all that we

Can prove of immortality.

Earth's stablest things are shadows,

And, in the life to come.

Haply some chance-saved trifle

May tell of this old home:

As now sometimes we seem to find,

In a dark crevice of the mind,

Some relic, which, long pondered o'er,

Hints faintly at a life before.

AN INCIDENT IN A RAILROAD CAR

He spoke of Burns: men rude and rough

Pressed round to hear the praise of one

Whose heart was made of manly, simple stuff,

As homespun as their own.

And, when he read, they forward leaned,

Drinking, with thirsty hearts and ears,

His brook-like songs whom glory never weaned

From humble smiles and tears.

Slowly there grew a tender awe,

Sun-like, o'er faces brown and hard,

As if in him who read they felt and saw

Some presence of the bard.

It was a sight for sin and wrong

And slavish tyranny to see,

A sight to make our faith more pure and strong

In high humanity.

I thought, these men will carry hence

Promptings their former life above,

And something of a finer reverence

For beauty, truth, and love.

God scatters love on every side

Freely among his children all,

And always hearts are lying open wide,

Wherein some grains may fall.

There is no wind but soweth seeds

Of a more true and open life,

Which burst, unlooked for, into high-souled deeds,

With wayside beauty rife.

We find within these souls of ours

Some wild germs of a higher birth,

Which in the poet's tropic heart bear flowers

Whose fragrance fills the earth.

Within the hearts of all men lie

These promises of wider bliss,

Which blossom into hopes that cannot die,

In sunny hours like this.

All that hath been majestical

In life or death, since time began,

Is native in the simple heart of all,

The angel heart of man.

And thus, among the untaught poor,

Great deeds and feelings find a home,

That cast in shadow all the golden lore

Of classic Greece and Rome.

O mighty brother-soul of man,

Where'er thou art, in low or high,

Thy skyey arches with exulting span

O'er-roof infinity!

All thoughts that mould the age begin

Deep down within the primitive soul,

And from the many slowly upward win

To one who grasps the whole:

In his wide brain the feeling deep

That struggled on the many's tongue

Swells to a tide of thought, whose surges leap

O'er the weak thrones of wrong.

All thought begins in feeling,--wide

In the great mass its base is hid,

And, narrowing up to thought, stands glorified,

A moveless pyramid.

Nor is he far astray, who deems

That every hope, which rises and grows broad

In the world's heart, by ordered impulse streams

From the great heart of God.

God wills, man hopes: in common souls

Hope is but vague and undefined,

Till from the poet's tongue the message rolls

A blessing to his kind.

Never did Poesy appear

So full of heaven to me, as when

I saw how it would pierce through pride and fear

To the lives of coarsest men.

It may be glorious to write

Thoughts that shall glad the two or three

High souls, like those far stars that come in sight

Once in a century;--

But better far it is to speak

One simple word, which now and then

Shall waken their free nature in the weak

And friendless sons of men;

To write some earnest verse or line,

Which, seeking not the praise of art,

Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine

In the untutored heart.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,

May be forgotten in his day,

But surely shall be crowned at last with those

Who live and speak for aye.

RHOECUS

God sends his teachers unto every age,

To every clime, and every race of men,

With revelations fitted to their growth

And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth

Into the selfish rule of one sole race:

Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed

The life of man, and given it to grasp

The master-key of knowledge, reverence,

Infolds some germs of goodness and of right;

Else never had the eager soul, which loathes 10

The slothful down of pampered ignorance,

Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart

Which makes that all the fables it hath coined,

To justify the reign of its belief

And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,

Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,

Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful hands,

Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.

For, as in nature naught is made in vain, 20

But all things have within their hull of use

A wisdom and a meaning which may speak

Of spiritual secrets to the ear

Of spirit; so, in whatsoe'er the heart

Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,

To make its inspirations suit its creed,

And from the niggard hands of falsehood wring

Its needful food of truth, there ever is

A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,

Not less than her own works, pure gleams of light 30

And earnest parables of inward lore.

Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,

As full of gracious youth, and beauty still

As the immortal freshness of that grace

Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

A youth named Rhoecus, wandering in the wood,

Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,

And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,

He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,

And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on. 40

But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind

That murmured 'Rhoecus!' 'Twas as if the leaves,

Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it,

And, while he paused bewildered, yet again

It murmured 'Rhoecus!' softer than a breeze.

He started and beheld with dizzy eyes

What seemed the substance of a happy dream

Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow

Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak.

It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too fair 50

To be a woman, and with eyes too meek

For any that were wont to mate with gods.

All naked like a goddess stood she there,

And like a goddess all too beautiful

To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.

'Rhoecus, I am the Dryad of this tree,'

Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words

Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,

'And with it I am doomed to live and die;

The rain and sunshine are my caterers, 60

Nor have I other bliss than simple life;

Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,

And with a thankful joy it shall be thine.'

Then Rhoecus, with a flutter at the heart,

Yet by the prompting of such beauty bold,

Answered: 'What is there that can satisfy

The endless craving of the soul but love?

Give me thy love, or but the hope of that

Which must be evermore my nature's goal.'

After a little pause she said again,

But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone, 71

'I give it, Rhoecus, though a perilous gift;

An hour before the sunset meet me here.'

And straightway there was nothing he could see

But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak,

And not a sound came to his straining ears

But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,

And far away upon an emerald slope

The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and faith, 80

Men did not think that happy things were dreams

Because they overstepped the narrow bourn

Of likelihood, but reverently deemed

Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful

To be the guerdon of a daring heart.

So Rhoecus made no doubt that he was blest,

And all along unto the city's gate

Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked,

The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,

And he could scarce believe he had not wings, 90

Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins

Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.

Young Rhoecus had a faithful heart enough,

But one that in the present dwelt too much,

And, taking with blithe welcome whatsoe'er

Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that,

Like the contented peasant of a vale,

Deemed it the world, and never looked beyond.

So, haply meeting in the afternoon

Some comrades who were playing at the dice, 100

He joined them, and forgot all else beside.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,

And Rhoecus, who had met but sorry luck,

Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,

When through the room there hummed a yellow bee

That buzzed about his ear with down-dropped legs

As if to light. And Rhoecus laughed and said,

Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss,

'By Venus! does he take me for a rose?'

And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand. 110

But still the bee came back, and thrice again

Rhoecus did beat him off with growing wrath.

Then through the window flew the wounded bee,

And Rhoecus, tracking him with angry eyes,

Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly

Against the red disk of the setting sun,--

And instantly the blood sank from his heart,

As if its very walls had caved away.

Without a word he turned, and, rushing forth,

Ran madly through the city and the gate, 120

And o'er the plain, which now the wood's long shade,

By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,

Darkened wellnigh unto the city's wall.

Quite spent and out of breath he reached the tree,

And, listening fearfully, he heard once more

The low voice murmur 'Rhoecus!' close at hand:

Whereat he looked around him, but could see

Naught but the deepening glooms beneath the oak.

Then sighed the voice, 'O Rhoecus! nevermore

Shalt thou behold me or by day or night, 130

Me, who would fain have blessed thee with a love

More ripe and bounteous than ever yet

Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:

But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,

And sent'st him back to me with bruised wings,

We spirits only show to gentle eyes,

We ever ask an undivided love,

And he who scorns the least of Nature's works

Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.

Farewell! for thou canst never see me more.' 140

Then Rhoecus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,

And cried, 'Be pitiful! forgive me yet

This once, and I shall never need it more!'

'Alas!' the voice returned, 'tis thou art blind,

Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,

But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;

Only the soul hath power o'er itself.'

With that again there murmured 'Nevermore!'

And Rhoecus after heard no other sound,

Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves, 150

Like the long surf upon a distant shore,

Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.

The night had gathered round him: o'er the plain

The city sparkled with its thousand lights,

And sounds of revel fell upon his ear

Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,

With all its bright sublimity of stars,

Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze:

Beauty was all around him and delight,

But from that eve he was alone on earth. 160

THE FALCON

I know a falcon swift and peerless

As e'er was cradled In the pine;

No bird had ever eye so fearless,

Or wing so strong as this of mine.

The winds not better love to pilot

A cloud with molten gold o'er run,

Than him, a little burning islet,

A star above the coming sun.

For with a lark's heart he doth tower,

By a glorious upward instinct drawn;

No bee nestles deeper in the flower

Than he in the bursting rose of dawn.

No harmless dove, no bird that singeth,

Shudders to see him overhead;

The rush of his fierce swooping bringeth

To innocent hearts no thrill of dread.

Let fraud and wrong and baseness shiver,

For still between them and the sky

The falcon Truth hangs poised forever

And marks them with his vengeful eye.

TRIAL

I

Whether the idle prisoner through his grate

Watches the waving of the grass-tuft small,

Which, having colonized its rift i' th' wall,

Accepts God's dole of good or evil fate,

And from the sky's just helmet draws its lot

Daily of shower or sunshine, cold or hot;--

Whether the closer captive of a creed,

Cooped up from birth to grind out endless chaff,

Sees through his treadmill-bars the noonday laugh,

And feels in vain, his crumpled pinions breed;--

Whether the Georgian slave look up and mark,

With bellying sails puffed full, the tall cloud-bark

Sink northward slowly,--thou alone seem'st good,

Fair only thou, O Freedom, whose desire

Can light in muddiest souls quick seeds of fire,

And strain life's chords to the old heroic mood.

II

Yet are there other gifts more fair than thine,

Nor can I count him happiest who has never

Been forced with his own hand his chains to sever,

And for himself find out the way divine;

He never knew the aspirer's glorious pains,

He never earned the struggle's priceless gains.

Oh, block by block, with sore and sharp endeavor,

Lifelong we build these human natures up

Into a temple fit for Freedom's shrine,

And, Trial ever consecrates the cup

Wherefrom we pour her sacrificial wine.

A GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAIN

We see but half the causes of our deeds,

Seeking them wholly in the outer life,

And heedless of the encircling spirit-world,

Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us

All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.

From one stage of our being to the next

We pass unconscious o'er a slender bridge,

The momentary work of unseen hands,

Which crumbles down behind us; looking back,

We see the other shore, the gulf between, 10

And, marvelling how we won to where we stand,

Content ourselves to call the builder Chance.

We trace the wisdom to the apple's fall,

Not to the birth-throes of a mighty Truth

Which, for long ages in blank Chaos dumb,

Yet yearned to be incarnate, and had found

At last a spirit meet to be the womb

From which it might be born to bless mankind,--

Not to the soul of Newton, ripe with all

The hoarded thoughtfulness of earnest years, 20

And waiting but one ray of sunlight more

To blossom fully.

But whence came that ray?

We call our sorrows Destiny, but ought

Rather to name our high successes so.

Only the instincts of great souls are Fate,

And have predestined sway: all other things,

Except by leave of us, could never be.

For Destiny is but the breath of God

Still moving in us, the last fragment left

Of our unfallen nature, waking oft 30

Within our thought, to beckon us beyond

The narrow circle of the seen and known,

And always tending to a noble end,

As all things must that overrule the soul,

And for a space unseat the helmsman, Will.

The fate of England and of freedom once

Seemed wavering in the heart of one plain man:

One step of his, and the great dial-hand,

That marks the destined progress of the world

In the eternal round from wisdom on 40

To higher wisdom, had been made to pause

A hundred years. That step he did not take,--

He knew not why, nor we, but only God,--

And lived to make his simple oaken chair

More terrible and soberly august,

More full of majesty than any throne,

Before or after, of a British king.

Upon the pier stood two stern-visaged men,

Looking to where a little craft lay moored,

Swayed by the lazy current of the Thames, 50

Which weltered by in muddy listlessness.

Grave men they were, and battlings of fierce thought

Had trampled out all softness from their brows,

And ploughed rough furrows there before their time,

For other crop than such as home-bred Peace

Sows broadcast in the willing soil of Youth.

Care, not of self, but for the common-weal,

Had robbed their eyes of youth, and left instead

A look of patient power and iron will,

And something fiercer, too, that gave broad hint 60

Of the plain weapons girded at their sides.

The younger had an aspect of command,--

Not such as trickles down, a slender stream,

In the shrunk channel of a great descent,

But such as lies entowered in heart and head,

And an arm prompt to do the 'hests of both.

His was a brow where gold were out of place,

And yet it seemed right worthy of a crown

(Though he despised such), were it only made

Of iron, or some serviceable stuff

That would have matched his brownly rugged face 71

The elder, although such he hardly seemed

(Care makes so little of some five short years),

Had a clear, honest face, whose rough-hewn strength

Was mildened by the scholar's wiser heart

To sober courage, such as best befits

The unsullied temper of a well-taught mind,

Yet so remained that one could plainly guess

The hushed volcano smouldering underneath.

He spoke: the other, hearing, kept his gaze 80

Still fixed, as on some problem in the sky.

'O CROMWELL we are fallen on evil times!

There was a day when England had a wide room

For honest men as well as foolish kings:

But now the uneasy stomach of the time

Turns squeamish at them both. Therefore let us

Seek out that savage clime, where men as yet

Are free: there sleeps the vessel on the tide,

Her languid canvas drooping for the wind;

Give us but that, and what need we to fear 90

This Order of the Council? The free waves

Will not say No to please a wayward king,

Nor will the winds turn traitors at his beck:

All things are fitly cared for, and the Lord

Will watch us kindly o'er the exodus

Of us his servants now, as in old time.

We have no cloud or fire, and haply we

May not pass dry-shod through the ocean-stream;

But, saved or lost, all things are in His hand.'

So spake he, and meantime the other stood 100

With wide gray eyes still reading the blank air.

As if upon the sky's blue wall he saw

Some mystic sentence, written by a hand,

Such as of old made pale the Assyrian king,

Girt with his satraps in the blazing feast.

'HAMPDEN! a moment since, my purpose was

To fly with thee,--for I will call it flight,

Nor flatter it with any smoother name,--

But something in me bids me not to go;

And I am one, thou knowest, who, unmoved 110

By what the weak deem omens, yet give heed

And reverence due to whatsoe'er my soul

Whispers of warning to the inner ear.

Moreover, as I know that God brings round

His purposes in ways undreamed by us,

And makes the wicked but his instruments

To hasten their own swift and sudden fall,

I see the beauty of his providence

In the King's order: blind, he will not let

His doom part from him, but must bid it stay 120

As 't were a cricket, whose enlivening chirp

He loved to hear beneath his very hearth.

Why should we fly? Nay, why not rather stay

And rear again our Zion's crumbled walls,

Not, as of old the walls of Thebes were built,

By minstrel twanging, but, if need should be,

With the more potent music of our swords?

Think'st thou that score of men beyond the sea

Claim more God's care than all of England here?

No; when He moves his arm, it is to aid 130

Whole peoples, heedless if a few be crushed,

As some are ever, when the destiny

Of man takes one stride onward nearer home.

Believe me, 'tis the mass of men He loves;

And, where there is most sorrow and most want,

Where the high heart of man is trodden down

The most, 'tis not because He hides his face

From them in wrath, as purblind teachers prate:

Not so: there most is He, for there is He

Most needed. Men who seek for Fate abroad 140

Are not so near his heart as they who dare

Frankly to face her where she faces them,

On their own threshold, where their souls are strong

To grapple with and throw her; as I once,

Being yet a boy, did cast this puny king,

Who now has grown so dotard as to deem

That he can wrestle with an angry realm,

And throw the brawned AntÃ¦us of men's rights.

No, Hampden! they have half-way conquered Fate

Who go half-way to meet her,--as will I. 150

Freedom hath yet a work for me to do;

So speaks that inward voice which never yet

Spake falsely, when it urged the spirit on

To noble emprise for country and mankind.

And, for success, I ask no more than this,--

To bear unflinching witness to the truth.

All true whole men succeed; for what is worth

Success's name, unless it be the thought,

The inward surety, to have carried out

A noble purpose to a noble end, 160

Although it be the gallows or the block?

'Tis only Falsehood that doth ever need

These outward shows of gain to bolster her.

Be it we prove the weaker with our swords;

Truth only needs to be for once spoke out,

And there's such music in her, such strange rhythm,

As makes men's memories her joyous slaves,

And clings around the soul, as the sky clings

Round the mute earth, forever beautiful,

And, if o'erclouded, only to burst forth 170

More all-embracingly divine and clear:

Get but the truth once uttered, and 'tis like

A star new-born, that drops into its place,

And which, once circling in its placid round,

Not all the tumult of the earth can shake.

'What should we do in that small colony

Of pinched fanatics, who would rather choose

Freedom to clip an inch more from their hair,

Than the great chance of setting England free?

Not there, amid the stormy wilderness, 180

Should we learn wisdom; or if learned, what room

To put it into act,--else worse than naught?

We learn our souls more, tossing for an hour

Upon this huge and ever-vexed sea

Of human thought, where kingdoms go to wreck

Like fragile bubbles yonder in the stream,

Than in a cycle of New England sloth,

Broke only by a petty Indian war,

Or quarrel for a letter more or less

In some hard word, which, spelt in either way, 190

Not their most learned clerks can understand.

New times demand new measures and new men;

The world advances, and in time outgrows

The laws that in our fathers' day were best;

And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme

Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,

Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.

We cannot hale Utopia on by force;

But better, almost, be at work in sin,

Than in a brute inaction browse and sleep. 200

No man is born into the world whose work

Is not born with him; there is always work,

And tools to work withal, for those who will;

And blessed are the horny hands of toil!

The busy world stoves angrily aside

The man who stands with arms akimbo set,

Until occasion tells him what to do;

And he who waits to have his task marked out

Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled.

Our time is one that calls for earnest deeds; 210

Season and Government, like two broad seas,

Yearn for each other with outstretched arms

Across this narrow isthmus of the throne,

And roll their white surf higher every day.

One age moves onward, and the next builds up

Cities and gorgeous palaces, where stood

The rude log-huts of those who tamed the wild,

Rearing from out the forests they had felled

The goodly framework of a fairer state;

The builder's trowel and the settler's axe 220

Are seldom wielded by the selfsame hand;

Ours is the harder task, yet not the less

Shall we receive the blessing for our toil

From the choice spirits of the aftertime.

My soul is not a palace of the past,

Where outworn creeds, like Rome's gray senate, quake,

Hearing afar the Vandal's trumpet hoarse,

That shakes old systems with a thunder-fit.

That time is ripe, and rotten-ripe, for change;

Then let it come: I have no dread of what 230

Is called for by the instinct of mankind;

Nor think I that God's world will fall apart

Because we tear a parchment more or less.

Truth Is eternal, but her effluence,

With endless change, is fitted to the hour;

Her mirror is turned forward to reflect

The promise of the future, not the past.

He who would win the name of truly great

Must understand his own age and the next,

And make the present ready to fulfil 240

Its prophecy, and with the future merge

Gently and peacefully, as wave with wave.

The future works out great men's purposes;

The present is enough, for common souls,

Who, never looking forward, are indeed

Mere clay, wherein the footprints of their age

Are petrified forever; better those

Who lead the blind old giant by the hand

From out the pathless desert where he gropes,

And set him onward in his darksome way, 250

I do not fear to follow out the truth,

Albeit along the precipice's edge.

Let us speak plain: there is more force in names

Than most men dream of; and a lie may keep

Its throne a whole age longer, if it skulk

Behind the shield of some fair-seeming name.

Let us call tyrants \_tyrants\_, and maintain

That only freedom comes by grace of God,

And all that comes not by his grace must fail;

For men in earnest have no time to waste 260

In patching fig-leaves for the naked truth.

'I will have one more grapple with the man

Charles Stuart: whom the boy o'ercame,

The man stands not in awe of. I, perchance,

Am one raised up by the Almighty arm

To witness some great truth to all the world.

Souls destined to o'erleap the vulgar lot,

And mould the world unto the scheme of God,

Have a fore-consciousness of their high doom,

As men are known to shiver at the heart 270

When the cold shadow of some coming ill

Creeps slowly o'er their spirits unawares.

Hath Good less power of prophecy than Ill?

How else could men whom God hath called to sway

Earth's rudder, and to steer the bark of Truth,

Beating against the tempest tow'rd her port,

Bear all the mean and buzzing grievances,

The petty martyrdoms, wherewith Sin strives

To weary out the tethered hope of Faith?

The sneers, the unrecognizing look of friends, 280

Who worship the dead corpse of old king Custom,

Where it doth lie In state within the Church,

Striving to cover up the mighty ocean

With a man's palm, and making even the truth

Lie for them, holding up the glass reversed,

To make the hope of man seem farther off?

My God! when I read o'er the bitter lives

Of men whose eager heart's were quite too great

To beat beneath the cramped mode of the day,

And see them mocked at by the world they love, 290

Haggling with prejudice for pennyworths

Of that reform which their hard toil will make

The common birthright of the age to come,--

When I see this, spite of my faith in God,

I marvel how their hearts bear up so long;

Nor could they but for this same prophecy,

This inward feeling of the glorious end.

'Deem me not fond; but in my warmer youth,

Ere my heart's bloom was soiled and brushed away,

I had great dreams of mighty things to come; 300

Of conquest, whether by the sword or pen

I knew not; but some Conquest I would have,

Or else swift death: now wiser grown in years,

I find youth's dreams are but the flutterings

Of those strong wings whereon the soul shall soar

In after time to win a starry throne;

And so I cherish them, for they were lots,

Which I, a boy, cast in the helm of Fate.

Now will I draw them, since a man's right hand,

A right hand guided by an earnest soul, 310

With a true instinct, takes the golden prize

From out a thousand blanks. What men call luck

Is the prerogative of valiant souls,

The fealty life pays its rightful kings.

The helm is shaking now, and I will stay

To pluck my lot forth; it were sin to flee!'

So they two turned together; one to die,

Fighting for freedom on the bloody field;

The other, far more happy, to become

A name earth wears forever next her heart; 320

One of the few that have a right to rank

With the true Makers: for his spirit wrought

Order from Chaos; proved that right divine

Dwelt only in the excellence of truth;

And far within old Darkness' hostile lines

Advanced and pitched the shining tents of Light.

Nor shall the grateful Muse forget to tell,

That--not the least among his many claims

To deathless honor--he was MILTON'S friend,

A man not second among those who lived 330

To show us that the poet's lyre demands

An arm of tougher sinew than the sword.

A CHIPPEWA LEGEND

[Greek: algeina men moi kaalegein estin tade, algos de sigan.]

AESCHYLUS, \_Prom. Vinct.\_ 197, 198.

For the leading incidents in this tale I am indebted to the very

valuable \_Algic Researches\_ of Henry R. Schoolcraft, Esq. J.R.L.

The old Chief, feeling now wellnigh his end,

Called his two eldest children to his side,

And gave them, in few words, his parting charge!

'My son and daughter, me ye see no more;

The happy hunting-grounds await me, green

With change of spring and summer through the year:

But, for remembrance, after I am gone,

Be kind to little Sheemah for my sake:

Weakling he is and young, and knows not yet

To set the trap, or draw the seasoned bow; 10

Therefore of both your loves he hath more need,

And he, who needeth love, to love hath right;

It is not like our furs and stores of corn,

Whereto we claim sole title by our toil,

But the Great Spirit plants it in our hearts,

And waters it, and gives it sun, to be

The common stock and heritage of all:

Therefore be kind to Sheemah, that yourselves

May not be left deserted in your need.'

Alone, beside a lake, their wigwam stood, 20

Far from the other dwellings of their tribe:

And, after many moons, the loneliness

Wearied the elder brother, and he said,

'Why should I dwell here far from men, shut out

From the free, natural joys that fit my age?

Lo, I am tall and strong, well skilled to hunt,

Patient of toil and hunger, and not yet

Have seen the danger which I dared not look

Full in the face; what hinders me to be

A mighty Brave and Chief among my kin?' 30

So, taking up his arrows and his bow,

As if to hunt, he journeyed swiftly on,

Until he gained the wigwams of his tribe,

Where, choosing out a bride, he soon forgot,

In all the fret and bustle of new life,

The little Sheemah and his father's charge.

Now when the sister found her brother gone,

And that, for many days, he came not back,

She wept for Sheemah more than for herself;

For Love bides longest in a woman's heart, 40

And flutters many times before he flies,

And then doth perch so nearly, that a word

May lure him back to his accustomed nest;

And Duty lingers even when Love is gone,

Oft looking out in hope of his return;

And, after Duty hath been driven forth,

Then Selfishness creeps in the last of all,

Warming her lean hands at the lonely hearth,

And crouching o'er the embers, to shut out

Whatever paltry warmth and light are left, 50

With avaricious greed, from all beside.

So, for long months, the sister hunted wide,

And cared for little Sheemah tenderly;

But, daily more and more, the loneliness

Grew wearisome, and to herself she sighed,

'Am I not fair? at least the glassy pool,

That hath no cause to flatter, tells me so;

But, oh, how flat and meaningless the tale,

Unless it tremble on a lover's tongue!

Beauty hath no true glass, except it be 60

In the sweet privacy of loving eyes.'

Thus deemed she idly, and forgot the lore

Which she had learned of nature and the woods,

That beauty's chief reward is to itself,

And that Love's mirror holds no image long

Save of the inward fairness, blurred and lost

Unless kept clear and white by Duty's care.

So she went forth and sought the haunts of men,

And, being wedded, in her household cares,

Soon, like the elder brother, quite forgot 70

The little Sheemah and her father's charge.

But Sheemah, left alone within the lodge,

Waited and waited, with a shrinking heart,

Thinking each rustle was his sister's step,

Till hope grew less and less, and then went out,

And every sound was changed from hope to fear.

Few sounds there were:--the dropping of a nut,

The squirrel's chirrup, and the jay's harsh scream,

Autumn's sad remnants of blithe Summer's cheer,

Heard at long intervals, seemed but to make 80

The dreadful void of silence silenter.

Soon what small store his sister left was gone,

And, through the Autumn, he made shift to live

On roots and berries, gathered in much fear

Of wolves, whose ghastly howl he heard ofttimes,

Hollow and hungry, at the dead of night.

But Winter came at last, and, when the snow,

Thick-heaped for gleaming leagues o'er hill and plain,

Spread its unbroken silence over all,

Made bold by hunger, he was fain to glean 90

(More sick at heart than Ruth, and all alone)

After the harvest of the merciless wolf,

Grim Boaz, who, sharp-ribbed and gaunt, yet feared

A thing more wild and starving than himself;

Till, by degrees, the wolf and he grew friends,

And shared together all the winter through.

Late in the Spring, when all the ice was gone,

The elder brother, fishing in the lake,

Upon whose edge his father's wigwam stood,

Heard a low moaning noise upon the shore: 100

Half like a child it seemed, half like a wolf,

And straightway there was something in his heart

That said, 'It is thy brother Sheemah's voice.'

So, paddling swiftly to the bank, he saw,

Within a little thicket close at hand,

A child that seemed fast clinging to a wolf,

From the neck downward, gray with shaggy hair,

That still crept on and upward as he looked.

The face was turned away, but well he knew

That it was Sheemah's, even his brother's face. 110

Then with his trembling hands he hid his eyes,

And bowed his head, so that he might not see

The first look of his brother's eyes, and cried,

'O Sheemah! O my brother, speak to me!

Dost thou not know me, that I am thy brother?

Come to me, little Sheemah, thou shall dwell

With me henceforth, and know no care or want!'

Sheemah was silent for a space, as if

'T were hard to summon up a human voice,

And, when he spake, the voice was as a wolf's: 120

'I know thee not, nor art thou what thou say'st;

I have none other brethren than the wolves,

And, till thy heart be changed from what it is,

Thou art not worthy to be called their kin.'

Then groaned the other, with a choking tongue,

'Alas! my heart is changed right bitterly;

'Tis shrunk and parched within me even now!'

And, looking upward fearfully, he saw

Only a wolf that shrank away, and ran,

Ugly and fierce, to hide among the woods. 130

STANZAS ON FREEDOM

Men! whose boast it is that ye

Come of fathers brave and free,

If there breathe on earth a slave,

Are ye truly free and brave?

If ye do not feel the chain,

When it works a brother's pain,

Are ye not base slaves indeed,

Slaves unworthy to be freed?

Women! who shall one day bear

Sons to breathe New England air,

If ye hear, without a blush,

Deeds to make the roused blood rush

Like red lava through your veins,

For your sisters now in chains,--

Answer! are ye fit to be

Mothers of the brave and free?

Is true Freedom but to break

Fetters for our own dear sake,

And, with leathern hearts, forget

That we owe mankind a debt?

No! true freedom is to share

All the chains our brothers wear

And, with heart and hand, to be

Earnest to make others free!

They are slaves who fear to speak

For the fallen and the weak;

They are slaves who will not choose

Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,

Rather than in silence shrink

From the truth they needs must think;

They are slaves who dare not be

In the right with two or three.

COLUMBUS

The cordage creaks and rattles in the wind,

With whims of sudden hush; the reeling sea

Now thumps like solid rock beneath the stern,

Now leaps with clumsy wrath, strikes short, and, falling

Crumbled to whispery foam, slips rustling down

The broad backs of the waves, which jostle and crowd

To fling themselves upon that unknown shore.

Their used familiar since the dawn of time,

Whither this foredoomed life is guided on

To sway on triumph's hushed, aspiring poise 10

One glittering moment, then to break fulfilled.

How lonely is the sea's perpetual swing,

The melancholy wash of endless waves,

The sigh of some grim monster undescried,

Fear-painted on the canvas of the dark,

Shifting on his uneasy pillow of brine!

Yet, night brings more companions than the day

To this drear waste; new constellations burn,

And fairer stars, with whose calm height my soul

Finds nearer sympathy than with my herd 20

Of earthen souls, whose vision's scanty ring

Makes me its prisoner to beat my wings

Against the cold bars of their unbelief,

Knowing in vain my own free heaven beyond.

O God! this world, so crammed with eager life,

That comes and goes and wanders back to silence

Like the idle wind, which yet man's shaping mind

Can make his drudge to swell the longing sails

Of highest endeavor,--this mad, unthrift world,

Which, every hour, throws life enough away 30

To make her deserts kind and hospitable,

Lets her great destinies be waved aside

By smooth, lip-reverent, formal infidels,

Who weigh the God they not believe with gold,

And find no spot in Judas, save that he,

Driving a duller bargain than he ought,

Saddled his guild with too cheap precedent.

O Faith! if thou art strong, thine opposite

Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer

Hath ofttimes shot chill palsy through the arm 40

Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed,

And made the firm-based heart, that would have quailed

The rack or fagot, shudder like a leaf

Wrinkled with frost, and loose upon its stem,

The wicked and the weak, by some dark law,

Have a strange power to shut and rivet down

Their own horizon round us, to unwing

Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur

With surly clouds the Future's gleaming peaks,

Far seen across the brine of thankless years. 50

If the chosen soul could never be alone

In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,

No greatness ever had been dreamed or done;

Among dull hearts a prophet never grew;

The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

The old world is effete; there man with man

Jostles, and, in the brawl for means to live,

Life is trod underfoot,--Life, the one block

Of marble that's vouchsafed wherefrom to carve

Our great thoughts, white and godlike, to shine down 60

The future, Life, the irredeemable block,

Which one o'er-hasty chisel-dint oft mars,

Scanting our room to cut the features out

Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown

With a mean head the perfect limbs, or leave

The god's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk,

Failure's brief epitaph.

Yes, Europe's world

Reels on to judgment; there the common need,

Losing God's sacred use, to be a bond

'Twixt Me and Thee, sets each one scowlingly 70

O'er his own selfish hoard at bay; no state,

Knit strongly with eternal fibres up

Of all men's separate and united weals,

Self-poised and sole as stars, yet one as light,

Holds up a shape of large Humanity

To which by natural instinct every man

Pays loyalty exulting, by which all

Mould their own lives, and feel their pulses filled

With the red, fiery blood of the general life,

Making them mighty in peace, as now in war 80

They are, even in the flush of victory, weak,

Conquering that manhood which should them subdue.

And what gift bring I to this untried world?

Shall the same tragedy be played anew,

And the same lurid curtain drop at last

On one dread desolation, one fierce crash

Of that recoil which on its makers God

Lets Ignorance and Sin and Hunger make,

Early or late? Or shall that commonwealth

Whose potent unity and concentric force 90

Can draw these scattered joints and parts of men

Into a whole ideal man once more,

Which sucks not from its limbs the life away,

But sends it flood-tide and creates itself

Over again in every citizen,

Be there built up? For me, I have no choice;

I might turn back to other destinies,

For one sincere key opes all Fortune's doors;

But whoso answers not God's earliest call

Forfeits or dulls that faculty supreme 100

Of lying open to his genius

Which makes the wise heart certain of its ends.

Here am I; for what end God knows, not I;

Westward still points the inexorable soul:

Here am I, with no friend but the sad sea,

The beating heart of this great enterprise,

Which, without me, would stiffen in swift death;

This have I mused on, since mine eye could first

Among the stars distinguish and with joy

Rest on that God-fed Pharos of the north, 110

On some blue promontory of heaven lighted

That juts far out into the upper sea;

To this one hope my heart hath clung for years,

As would a foundling to the talisman

Hung round his neck by hands he knew not whose;

A poor, vile thing and dross to all beside,

Yet he therein can feel a virtue left

By the sad pressure of a mother's hand,

And unto him it still is tremulous

With palpitating haste and wet with tears, 120

The key to him of hope and humanness,

The coarse shell of life's pearl, Expectancy.

This hope hath been to me for love and fame,

Hath made me wholly lonely on the earth,

Building me up as in a thick-ribbed tower,

Wherewith enwalled my watching spirit burned,

Conquering its little island from the Dark,

Sole as a scholar's lamp, and heard men's steps,

In the far hurry of the outward world,

Pass dimly forth and back, sounds heard in dream, 130

As Ganymede by the eagle was snatched up

From the gross sod to be Jove's cup-bearer,

So was I lifted by my great design:

And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye

Fades not that broader outlook of the gods;

His life's low valleys overbrow earth's clouds,

And that Olympian spectre of the past

Looms towering up in sovereign memory,

Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of doom.

Had but the shadow of the Thunderer's bird, 140

Flashing athwart my spirit, made of me

A swift-betraying vision's Ganymede,

Yet to have greatly dreamed precludes low ends;

Great days have ever such a morning-red,

On such a base great futures are built up,

And aspiration, though not put in act,

Comes back to ask its plighted troth again,

Still watches round its grave the unlaid ghost

Of a dead virtue, and makes other hopes,

Save that implacable one, seem thin and bleak 150

As shadows of bare trees upon the snow,

Bound freezing there by the unpitying moon.

While other youths perplexed their mandolins,

Praying that Thetis would her fingers twine

In the loose glories of her lover's hair,

And wile another kiss to keep back day,

I, stretched beneath the many-centuried shade

Of some writhed oak, the wood's LaocoÃ¶n,

Did of my hope a dryad mistress make,

Whom I would woo to meet me privily, 160

Or underneath the stars, or when the moon

Flecked all the forest floor with scattered pearls.

O days whose memory tames to fawning down

The surly fell of Ocean's bristled neck!

I know not when this hope enthralled me first,

But from my boyhood up I loved to hear

The tall pine-forests of the Apennine

Murmur their hoary legends of the sea,

Which hearing, I in vision clear beheld

The sudden dark of tropic night shut down 170

O'er the huge whisper of great watery wastes,

The while a pair of herons trailingly

Flapped inland, where some league-wide river hurled

The yellow spoil of unconjectured realms

Far through a gulf's green silence, never scarred,

By any but the Northwind's hurrying keels.

And not the pines alone; all sights and sounds

To my world-seeking heart paid fealty,

And catered for it as the Cretan bees

Brought honey to the baby Jupiter,

Who in his soft hand crushed a violet, 181

Godlike foremusing the rough thunder's gripe;

Then did I entertain the poet's song,

My great Idea's guest, and, passing o'er

That iron bridge the Tuscan built to hell,

I heard Ulysses tell of mountain-chains

Whose adamantine links, his manacles,

The western main shook growling, and still gnawed.

I brooded on the wise Athenian's tale.

Of happy Atlantis, and heard BjÃ¶rne's keel 190

Crunch the gray pebbles of the Vinland shore:

I listened, musing, to the prophecy

Of Nero's tutor-victim; lo, the birds

Sing darkling, conscious of the climbing dawn.

And I believed the poets; it is they

Who utter wisdom from the central deep,

And, listening to the inner flow of things,

Speak to the age out of eternity.

Ah me! old hermits sought for solitude

In caves and desert places of the earth, 200

Where their own heart-beat was the only stir

Of living thing that comforted the year;

But the bald pillar-top of Simeon,

In midnight's blankest waste, were populous,

Matched with the isolation drear and deep

Of him who pines among the swarm of men,

At once a new thought's king and prisoner,

Feeling the truer life within his life,

The fountain of his spirit's prophecy,

Sinking away and wasting, drop by drop, 210

In the ungrateful sands of sceptic ears.

He in the palace-aisles of untrod woods

Doth walk a king; for him the pent-up cell

Widens beyond the circles of the stars,

And all the sceptred spirits of the past

Come thronging in to greet him as their peer;

But in the market-place's glare and throng

He sits apart, an exile, and his brow

Aches with the mocking memory of its crown.

Yet to the spirit select there is no choice; 220

He cannot say, This will I do, or that,

For the cheap means putting Heaven's ends in pawn,

And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold stern

Of destiny's first-born, for smoother fields

That yield no crop of self-denying will;

A hand is stretched to him from out the dark,

Which grasping without question, he is led

Where there is work that he must do for God.

The trial still is the strength's complement,

And the uncertain, dizzy path that scales 230

The sheer heights of supremest purposes

Is steeper to the angel than the child.

Chances have laws as fixed as planets have,

And disappointment's dry and bitter root,

Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool

Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-milk

To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind,

And break a pathway to those unknown realms

That in the earth's broad shadow lie enthralled; 239

Endurance is the crowning quality,

And patience all the passion of great hearts;

These are their stay, and when the leaden world

Sets its hard face against their fateful thought,

And brute strength, like the Gaulish conqueror,

Clangs his huge glaive down in the other scale,

The inspired soul but flings his patience in,

And slowly that outweighs the ponderous globe,--

One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,

One soul against the flesh of all mankind.

Thus ever seems it when my soul can hear 250

The voice that errs not; then my triumph gleams,

O'er the blank ocean beckoning, and all night

My heart flies on before me as I sail;

Far on I see my lifelong enterprise.

That rose like Ganges mid the freezing snows

Of a world's solitude, sweep broadening down,

And, gathering to itself a thousand streams,

Grow sacred ere it mingle with the sea;

I see the ungated wall of chaos old,

With blocks Cyclopean hewn of solid night, 260

Fade like a wreath of unreturning mist

Before the irreversible feet of light;--

And lo, with what clear omen in the east

On day's gray threshold stands the eager dawn,

Like young Leander rosy from the sea

Glowing at Hero's lattice!

One day more

These muttering shoalbrains leave the helm to me:

God, let me not in their dull ooze be stranded:

Let not this one frail bark, to hollow which

I have dug out the pith and sinewy heart 270

Of my aspiring life's fair trunk, be so

Cast up to warp and blacken in the sun,

Just as the opposing wind 'gins whistle off

His cheek-swollen pack, and from the leaning mast

Fortune's full sail strains forward!

One poor day!--

Remember whose and not how short it is!

It is God's day, it is Columbus's.

A lavish day! One day, with life and heart,

Is more than time enough to find a world.

AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG

The tower of old Saint Nicholas soared upward to the skies,

Like some huge piece of Nature's make, the growth of centuries;

You could not deem its crowding spires a work of human art,

They seemed to struggle lightward from a sturdy living heart.

Not Nature's self more freely speaks in crystal or in oak,

Than, through the pious builder's hand, in that gray pile she spoke;

And as from acorn springs the oak, so, freely and alone,

Sprang from his heart this hymn to God, sung in obedient stone.

It seemed a wondrous freak of chance, so perfect, yet so rough,

A whim of Nature crystallized slowly in granite tough;

The thick spires yearned towards the sky in quaint harmonious lines,

And in broad sunlight basked and slept, like a grove of blasted pines.

Never did rock or stream or tree lay claim with better right

To all the adorning sympathies of shadow and of light;

And, in that forest petrified, as forester there dwells

Stout Herman, the old sacristan, sole lord of all its bells.

Surge leaping after surge, the fire roared onward red as blood,

Till half of Hamburg lay engulfed beneath the eddying flood;

For miles away the fiery spray poured down its deadly rain,

And back and forth the billows sucked, and paused, and burst again.

From square to square with tiger leaps panted the lustful fire,

The air to leeward shuddered with the gasps of its desire;

And church and palace, which even now stood whelmed but to the knee.

Lift their black roofs like breakers lone amid the whirling sea.

Up in his tower old Herman sat and watched with quiet look;

His soul had trusted God too long to be at last forsook;

He could not fear, for surely God a pathway would unfold

Through this red sea for faithful hearts, as once He did of old.

But scarcely can he cross himself, or on his good saint call,

Before the sacrilegious flood o'erleaped the churchyard wall;

And, ere a \_pater\_ half was said, mid smoke and crackling glare,

His island tower scarce juts its head above the wide despair.

Upon the peril's desperate peak his heart stood up sublime;

His first thought was for God above, his next was for his chime;

'Sing now and make your voices heard in hymns of praise,' cried he,

'As did the Israelites of old, safe walking through the sea!

'Through this red sea our God hath made the pathway safe to shore;

Our promised land stands full in sight; shout now as ne'er before!

And as the tower came crashing down, the bells, in clear accord,

Pealed forth the grand old German hymn,--'All good souls, praise the

Lord!'

THE SOWER

I saw a Sower walking slow

Across the earth, from east to west;

His hair was white as mountain snow,

His head drooped forward on his breast.

With shrivelled hands he flung his seed,

Nor ever turned to look behind;

Of sight or sound he took no heed;

It seemed, he was both deaf and blind.

His dim face showed no soul beneath,

Yet in my heart I felt a stir,

As if I looked upon the sheath,

That once had held Excalibur.

I heard, as still the seed he cast,

How, crooning to himself, he sung.

'I sow again the holy Past,

The happy days when I was young.

'Then all was wheat without a tare,

Then all was righteous, fair, and true;

And I am he whose thoughtful care

Shall plant the Old World in the New.

'The fruitful germs I scatter free,

With busy hand, while all men sleep;

In Europe now, from sea to sea,

The nations bless me as they reap.'

Then I looked back along his path.

And heard the clash of steel on steel,

Where man faced man, in deadly wrath,

While clanged the tocsin's hurrying peal.

The sky with burning towns flared red,

Nearer the noise of fighting rolled.

And brothers' blood, by brothers shed,

Crept curdling over pavements cold.

Then marked I how each germ of truth

Which through the dotard's fingers ran

Was mated with a dragon's tooth

Whence there sprang up an armÃ¨d man.

I shouted, but he could not hear;

Made signs, but these he could not see;

And still, without a doubt or fear,

Broadcast he scattered anarchy.

Long to my straining ears the blast

Brought faintly back the words he sung:

'I sow again the holy Past,

The happy days when I was young.'

HUNGER AND COLD

Sisters two, all praise to you,

With your faces pinched and blue;

To the poor man you've been true

From of old:

You can speak the keenest word,

You are sure of being heard,

From the point you're never stirred,

Hunger and Cold!

Let sleek statesmen temporize;

Palsied are their shifts and lies

When they meet your bloodshot eyes,

Grim and bold;

Policy you set at naught,

In their traps you'll not be caught,

You're too honest to be bought,

Hunger and Cold!

Bolt and bar the palace door;

While the mass of men are poor,

Naked truth grows more and more

Uncontrolled;

You had never yet, I guess,

Any praise for bashfulness,

You can visit sans court-dress,

Hunger and Cold!

While the music fell and rose,

And the dance reeled to its close,

Where her round of costly woes

Fashion strolled,

I beheld with shuddering fear

Wolves' eyes through the windows peer;

Little dream they you are near,

Hunger and Cold!

When the toiler's heart you clutch,

Conscience is not valued much,

He recks not a bloody smutch

On his gold:

Everything to you defers,

You are potent reasoners,

At your whisper Treason stirs,

Hunger and Cold!

Rude comparisons you draw,

Words refuse to sate your maw,

Your gaunt limbs the cobweb law

Cannot hold:

You're not clogged with foolish pride,

But can seize a right denied:

Somehow God is on your side,

Hunger and Cold!

You respect no hoary wrong

More for having triumphed long;

Its past victims, haggard throng,

From the mould

You unbury: swords and spears

Weaker are than poor men's tears,

Weaker than your silent years,

Hunger and Cold!

Let them guard both hall and bower;

Through the window you will glower,

Patient till your reckoning hour

Shall be tolled;

Cheeks are pale, but hands are red,

Guiltless blood may chance be shed,

But ye must and will be fed,

Hunger and Cold!

God has plans man must not spoil,

Some were made to starve and toil,

Some to share the wine and oil,

We are told:

Devil's theories are these,

Stifling hope and love and peace,

Framed your hideous lusts to please,

Hunger and Cold!

Scatter ashes on thy head,

Tears of burning sorrow shed,

Earth! and be by Pity led

To Love's fold;

Ere they block the very door

With lean corpses of the poor,

And will hush for naught but gore,

Hunger and Cold!

THE LANDLORD

What boot your houses and your lands?

In spite of close-drawn deed and fence,

Like water, twixt your cheated hands,

They slip into the graveyard's sands,

And mock your ownership's pretence.

How shall you speak to urge your right,

Choked with that soil for which you lust?

The bit of clay, for whose delight

You grasp, is mortgaged, too; Death might

Foreclose this very day in dust.

Fence as you please, this plain poor man,

Whose only fields are in his wit,

Who shapes the world, as best he can,

According to God's higher plan,

Owns you, and fences as is fit.

Though yours the rents, his incomes wax

By right of eminent domain;

From factory tall to woodman's axe,

All things on earth must pay their tax,

To feed his hungry heart and brain.

He takes you from your easy-chair,

And what he plans that you must do;

You sleep in down, eat dainty fare,--

He mounts his crazy garret-stair

And starves, the landlord over you.

Feeding the clods your idlesse drains,

You make more green six feet of soil;

His fruitful word, like suns and rains,

Partakes the seasons' bounteous pains,

And toils to lighten human toil.

Your lands, with force or cunning got,

Shrink to the measure of the grave;

But Death himself abridges not

The tenures of almighty thought,

The titles of the wise and brave.

TO A PINE-TREE

Far up on Katahdin thou towerest,

Purple-blue with the distance and vast;

Like a cloud o'er the lowlands thou lowerest,

That hangs poised on a lull in the blast,

To its fall leaning awful.

In the storm, like a prophet o'er-maddened,

Thou singest and tossest thy branches;

Thy heart with the terror is gladdened,

Thou forebodest the dread avalanches,

When whole mountains swoop valeward.

In the calm thou o'erstretchest the valleys

With thine arms, as if blessings imploring,

Like an old king led forth from his palace,

When his people to battle are pouring

From the city beneath him.

To the lumberer asleep 'neath thy glooming

Thou dost sing of wild billows in motion,

Till he longs to be swung mid their booming

In the tents of the Arabs of ocean,

Whose finned isles are their cattle.

For the gale snatches thee for his lyre,

With mad hand crashing melody frantic,

While he pours forth his mighty desire

To leap down on the eager Atlantic,

Whose arms stretch to his playmate.

The wild storm makes his lair in thy branches,

Swooping thence on the continent under;

Like a lion, crouched close on his haunches,

There awaiteth his leap the fierce thunder,

Growling low with impatience.

Spite of winter, thou keep'st thy green glory,

Lusty father of Titans past number!

The snow-flakes alone make thee hoary,

Nestling close to thy branches in slumber,

And thee mantling with silence.

Thou alone know'st the splendor of winter,

Mid thy snow-silvered, hushed precipices,

Hearing crags of green ice groan and splinter,

And then plunge down the muffled abysses

In the quiet of midnight.

Thou alone know'st the glory of summer

Gazing down on thy broad seas of forest,

On thy subjects that send a proud murmur

Up to thee, to their sachem, who towerest

From thy bleak throne to heaven.

SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES

O wandering dim on the extremest edge

Of God's bright providence, whose spirits sigh

Drearily in you, like the winter sedge

That shivers o'er the dead pool stiff and dry,

A thin, sad voice, when the bold wind roars by

From the clear North of Duty,--

Still by cracked arch and broken shaft I trace

That here was once a shrine and holy place

Of the supernal Beauty,

A child's play-altar reared of stones and moss,

With wilted flowers for offering laid across,

Mute recognition of the all-ruling Grace.

How far are ye from the innocent, from those

Whose hearts are as a little lane serene,

Smooth-heaped from wall to wall with unbroke snows,

Or in the summer blithe with lamb-cropped green,

Save the one track, where naught more rude is seen

Than the plump wain at even

Bringing home four months' sunshine bound in sheaves!

How far are ye from those! yet who believes

That ye can shut out heaven?

Your souls partake its influence, not in vain

Nor all unconscious, as that silent lane

Its drift of noiseless apple-blooms receives.

Looking within myself, I note how thin

A plank of station, chance, or prosperous fate,

Doth fence me from the clutching waves of sin;

In my own heart I find the worst man's mate,

And see not dimly the smooth-hingÃ¨d gate

That opes to those abysses

Where ye grope darkly,--ye who never knew

On your young hearts love's consecrating dew,

Or felt a mother's kisses,

Or home's restraining tendrils round you curled;

Ah, side by side with heart's-ease in this world

The fatal nightshade grows and bitter rue!

One band ye cannot break,--the force that clips

And grasps your circles to the central light;

Yours is the prodigal comet's long ellipse,

Self-exiled to the farthest verge of night;

Yet strives with you no less that inward might

No sin hath e'er imbruted;

The god in you the creed-dimmed eye eludes;

The Law brooks not to have its solitudes

By bigot feet polluted;

Yet they who watch your God-compelled return

May see your happy perihelion burn

Where the calm sun his unfledged planets broods.

TO THE PAST

Wondrous and awful are thy silent halls,

O kingdom of the past!

There lie the bygone ages in their palls,

Guarded by shadows vast;

There all is hushed and breathless,

Save when some image of old error falls

Earth worshipped once as deathless.

There sits drear Egypt, mid beleaguering sands,

Half woman and half beast,

The burnt-out torch within her mouldering hands 10

That once lit all the East;

A dotard bleared and hoary,

There Asser crouches o'er the blackened brands

Of Asia's long-quenched glory.

Still as a city buried 'neath the sea

Thy courts and temples stand;

Idle as forms on wind-waved tapestry

Of saints and heroes grand,

Thy phantasms grope and shiver,

Or watch the loose shores crumbling silently 20

Into Time's gnawing river.

Titanic shapes with faces blank and dun,

Of their old godhead lorn,

Gaze on the embers of the sunken sun,

Which they misdeem for morn;

And yet the eternal sorrow

In their unmonarched eyes says day is done

Without the hope of morrow.

O realm of silence and of swart eclipse,

The shapes that haunt thy gloom 30

Make signs to us and move their withered lips

Across the gulf of doom;

Yet all their sound and motion

Bring no more freight to us than wraiths of ships

On the mirage's ocean.

And if sometimes a moaning wandereth

From out thy desolate halls,

If some grim shadow of thy living death

Across our sunshine falls

And scares the world to error, 40

The eternal life sends forth melodious breath

To chase the misty terror.

Thy mighty clamors, wars, and world-noised deeds

Are silent now in dust,

Gone like a tremble of the huddling reeds

Beneath some sudden gust;

Thy forms and creeds have vanished,

Tossed out to wither like unsightly weeds

From the world's garden banished.

Whatever of true life there was in thee 50

Leaps in our age's veins;

Wield still thy bent and wrinkled empery,

And shake thine idle chains;--

To thee thy dross is clinging,

For us thy martyrs die, thy prophets see,

Thy poets still are singing.

Here, mid the bleak waves of our strife and care,

Float the green Fortunate Isles

Where all thy hero-spirits dwell, and share

Our martyrdoms and toils; 60

The present moves attended

With all of brave and excellent and fair

That made the old time splendid.

TO THE FUTURE

O Land of Promise! from what Pisgah's height

Can I behold thy stretch of peaceful bowers,

Thy golden harvests flowing out of sight,

Thy nestled homes and sun-illumined towers?

Gazing upon the sunset's high-heaped gold,

Its crags of opal and of chrysolite,

Its deeps on deeps of glory, that unfold

Still brightening abysses,

And blazing precipices,

Whence but a scanty leap it seems to heaven, 10

Sometimes a glimpse is given

Of thy more gorgeous realm, thy more unstinted blisses.

O Land of Quiet! to thy shore the surf

Of the perturbÃ¨d Present rolls and sleeps;

Our storms breathe soft as June upon thy turf

And lure out blossoms; to thy bosom leaps,

As to a mother's, the o'erwearied heart,

Hearing far off and dim the toiling mart,

The hurrying feet, the curses without number,

And, circled with the glow Elysian 20

Of thine exulting vision,

Out of its very cares wooes charms for peace and slumber.

To thee the earth lifts up her fettered hands

And cries for vengeance; with a pitying smile

Thou blessest her, and she forgets her bands,

And her old woe-worn face a little while

Grows young and noble; unto thee the Oppressor

Looks, and is dumb with awe;

The eternal law,

Which makes the crime its own blindfold redresser, 30

Shadows his heart with perilous foreboding,

And he can see the grim-eyed Doom

From out the trembling gloom

Its silent-footed steeds towards his palace goading.

What promises hast thou for Poets' eyes,

A-weary of the turmoil and the wrong!

To all their hopes what overjoyed replies!

What undreamed ecstasies for blissful song!

Thy happy plains no war-trump's brawling clangor

Disturbs, and fools the poor to hate the poor; 40

The humble glares not on the high with anger;

Love leaves no grudge at less, no greed for more;

In vain strives Self the godlike sense to smother;

From the soul's deeps

It throbs and leaps;

The noble 'neath foul rags beholds his long-lost brother.

To thee the Martyr looketh, and his fires

Unlock their fangs and leave his spirit free;

To thee the Poet mid his toil aspires,

And grief and hunger climb about his knee, 50

Welcome as children; thou upholdest

The lone Inventor by his demon haunted;

The Prophet cries to thee when hearts are coldest,

And gazing o'er the midnight's bleak abyss,

Sees the drowsed soul awaken at thy kiss,

And stretch its happy arms and leap up disenchanted.

Thou bringest vengeance, but so loving-kindly

The guilty thinks it pity; taught by thee,

Fierce tyrants drop the scourges wherewith blindly

Their own souls they were scarring; conquerors see 60

With horror in their hands the accursed spear

That tore the meek One's side on Calvary,

And from their trophies shrink with ghastly fear;

Thou, too, art the Forgiver,

The beauty of man's soul to man revealing;

The arrows from thy quiver

Pierce Error's guilty heart, but only pierce for healing.

Oh, whither, whither, glory-wingÃ¨d dreams,

From out Life's, sweat and turmoil would ye bear me?

Shut, gates of Fancy, on your golden gleams,-- 70

This agony of hopeless contrast spare me!

Fade, cheating glow, and leave me to my night!

He is a coward, who would borrow

A charm against the present sorrow

From the vague Future's promise of delight:

As life's alarums nearer roll,

The ancestral buckler calls,

Self-clanging from the walls

In the high temple of the soul;

Where are most sorrows, there the poet's sphere is, 80

To feed the soul with patience,

To heal its desolations

With words of unshorn truth, with love that never wearies.

HEBE

I saw the twinkle of white feet,

I saw the flush of robes descending;

Before her ran an influence fleet,

That bowed my heart like barley bending.

As, in bare fields, the searching bees

Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,

It led me on, by sweet degrees

Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim Fates;

With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me;

The long-sought Secret's golden gates

On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp

Thrilling with godhood; like a lover

I sprang the proffered life to clasp;--

The beaker fell; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up;

What boots it patch the goblet's splinters?

Can Summer fill the icy cup,

Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's?

O spendthrift haste! await the Gods;

The nectar crowns the lips of Patience;

Haste scatters on unthankful sods

The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,

And shuns the hands would seize upon her;

Follow thy life, and she will sue

To pour for thee the cup of honor.

THE SEARCH

I went to seek for Christ,

And Nature seemed so fair

That first the woods and fields my youth enticed,

And I was sure to find him there:

The temple I forsook,

And to the solitude

Allegiance paid; but winter came and shook

The crown and purple from my wood;

His snows, like desert sands, with scornful drift,

Besieged the columned aisle and palace-gate;

My Thebes, cut deep with many a solemn rift,

But epitaphed her own sepulchered state:

Then I remembered whom I went to seek,

And blessed blunt Winter for his counsel bleak.

Back to the world I turned,

For Christ, I said, is King;

So the cramped alley and the hut I spurned,

As far beneath his sojourning:

Mid power and wealth I sought,

But found no trace of him,

And all the costly offerings I had brought

With sudden rust and mould grew dim:

I found his tomb, indeed, where, by their laws,

All must on stated days themselves imprison,

Mocking with bread a dead creed's grinning jaws,

Witless how long the life had thence arisen;

Due sacrifice to this they set apart,

Prizing it more than Christ's own living heart.

So from my feet the dust

Of the proud World I shook;

Then came dear Love and shared with me his crust.

And half my sorrow's burden took.

After the World's soft bed,

Its rich and dainty fare,

Like down seemed Love's coarse pillow to my head,

His cheap food seemed as manna rare;

Fresh-trodden prints of bare and bleeding feet,

Turned to the heedless city whence I came,

Hard by I saw, and springs of worship sweet

Gushed from my cleft heart smitten by the same;

Love looked me in the face and spake no words,

But straight I knew those footprints were the Lord's.

I followed where they led,

And in a hovel rude,

With naught to fence the weather from his head,

The King I sought for meekly stood;

A naked, hungry child

Clung round his gracious knee,

And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled

To bless the smile that set him free:

New miracles I saw his presence do,--

No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,

The gathered chips into a woodpile grew,

The broken morsel swelled to goodly store;

I knelt and wept: my Christ no more I seek,

His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

THE PRESENT CRISIS

When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast

Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,

And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him climb

To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime

Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instantaneous throe,

When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to and fro;

At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing start,

Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips apart,

And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath the Future's

heart. 10

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a terror and a chill,

Under continent to continent, the sense of coming ill,

And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels his sympathies with God

In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be drunk up by the sod,

Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delving in the nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,

Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong;

Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame

Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame;--

In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim. 20

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;

Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,

Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,

And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,

Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?

Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,

And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng

Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong. 30

Backward look across the ages and the beacon-moments see,

That, like peaks of some sunk continent, jut through Oblivion's sea;

Not an ear in court or market for the low foreboding cry

Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers, from whose feet earth's chaff

must fly;

Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment hath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record

One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;

Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,--

Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own. 40

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great.

Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate,

But the soul is still oracular; amid the market's din.

List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave within,--

'They enslave their children's children who make compromise with sin.'

Slavery, the earth-born Cyclops, fellest of the giant brood,

Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who have drenched the earth with

blood,

Famished in his self-made desert, blinded by our purer day,

Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his miserable prey;--

Shall we guide his gory fingers where our helpless children play? 50

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,

Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;

Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,

Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,

And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes,--they were souls that stood alone,

While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,

Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline

To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,

By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design. 60

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,

Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back,

And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned

One new word of that grand Credo which in prophet-hearts hath burned

Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-day the martyr stands,

On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;

Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,

While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return

To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn. 70

'Tis as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle slaves

Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers' graves,

Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light a crime;--

Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by men behind their time?

Turn those tracks toward Past or Future that make Plymouth Rock sublime?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,

Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the Past's;

But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath made us free.

Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender spirits flee 70

The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them; we are traitors to our sires,

Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar-fires;

Shall we make their creed our jailer? Shall we, in our haste to slay,

From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps away

To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of to-day?

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;

They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;

Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,

Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,

Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key. 90

AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE

What visionary tints the year puts on,

When falling leaves falter through motionless air

Or humbly cling and shiver to be gone!

How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,

As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills

The bowl between me and those distant hills,

And smiles and shakes abroad her misty, tremulous hair!

No more the landscape holds its wealth apart,

Making me poorer in my poverty,

But mingles with my senses and my heart; 10

My own projected spirit seems to me

In her own reverie the world to steep;

'Tis she that waves to sympathetic sleep,

Moving, as she is moved, each field and hill and tree.

How fuse and mix, with what unfelt degrees,

Clasped by the faint horizon's languid arms,

Each into each, the hazy distances!

The softened season all the landscape charms;

Those hills, my native village that embay,

In waves of dreamier purple roll away, 20

And floating in mirage seem all the glimmering farms.

Far distant sounds the hidden chickadee

Close at my side; far distant sound the leaves;

The fields seem fields of dream, where Memory

Wanders like gleaning Ruth; and as the sheaves

Of wheat and barley wavered in the eye

Of Boaz as the maiden's glow went by,

So tremble and seem remote all things the sense receives.

The cock's shrill trump that tells of scattered corn,

Passed breezily on by all his flapping mates, 30

Faint and more faint, from barn to barn is borne,

Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's Straits;

Dimly I catch the throb of distant flails;

Silently overhead the hen-hawk sails,

With watchful, measuring eye, and for his quarry waits.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now.

Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn cheer;

The chipmunk, on the shingly shag-bark's bough

Now saws, now lists with downward eye and ear,

Then drops his nut, and, cheeping, with a bound 40

Whisks to his winding fastness underground;

The clouds like swans drift down the streaming atmosphere.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar shadows

Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the ploughman's call

Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed meadows;

The single crow a single caw lets fall;

And all around me every bush and tree

Says Autumn's here, and Winter soon will be,

Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

The birch, most shy and ladylike of trees, 50

Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,

And hints at her foregone gentilities

With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves;

The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,

Glares red as blood across the sinking sun,

As one who proudlier to a falling fortune cleaves.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapt,

Who, mid some council of the sad-garbed whites,

Erect and stern, in his own memories lapt,

With distant eye broods over other sights, 60

Sees the hushed wood the city's flare replace,

The wounded turf heal o'er the railway's trace,

And roams the savage Past of his undwindled rights.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all for lost,

And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and dry,

After the first betrayal of the frost,

Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky;

The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid gold,

To the faint Summer, beggared now and old,

Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her favoring eye. 70

The ash her purple drops forgivingly

And sadly, breaking not the general hush;

The maple-swamps glow like a sunset sea,

Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush;

All round the wood's edge creeps the skirting blaze

Of bushes low, as when, on cloudy days,

Ere the rain fall, the cautious farmer burns his brush.

O'er yon low wall, which guards one unkempt zone,

Where vines and weeds and scrub-oaks intertwine

Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone 80

Is massed to one soft gray by lichens fine,

The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed, weaves

A prickly network of ensanguined leaves;

Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alders shine.

Pillaring with flame this crumbling boundary,

Whose loose blocks topple 'neath the ploughboy's foot,

Who, with each sense shut fast except the eye,

Creeps close and scares the jay he hoped to shoot,

The woodbine up the elm's straight stem aspires,

Coiling it, harmless, with autumnal fires; 90

In the ivy's paler blaze the martyr oak stands mute.

Below, the Charles, a stripe of nether sky,

Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,

Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps bellying by,

Now flickering golden through a woodland screen,

Then spreading out, at his next turn beyond,

A silver circle like an inland pond--

Slips seaward silently through marshes purple and green.

Dear marshes! vain to him the gift of sight

Who cannot in their various incomes share, 100

From every season drawn, of shade and light,

Who sees in them but levels brown and bare;

Each change of storm or sunshine scatters free

On them its largess of variety,

For Nature with cheap means still works her wonders rare.

In Spring they lie one broad expanse of green,

O'er which the light winds run with glimmering feet:

Here, yellower stripes track out the creek unseen,

There, darker growths o'er hidden ditches meet;

And purpler stains show where the blossoms crowd, 110

As if the silent shadow of a cloud

Hung there becalmed, with the next breath to fleet.

All round, upon the river's slippery edge,

Witching to deeper calm the drowsy tide,

Whispers and leans the breeze-entangling sedge;

Through emerald glooms the lingering waters slide,

Or, sometimes wavering, throw back the sun,

And the stiff banks in eddies melt and run

Of dimpling light, and with the current seem to glide.

In Summer 'tis a blithesome sight to see, 120

As, step by step, with measured swing, they pass,

The wide-ranked mowers wading to the knee,

Their sharp scythes panting through the wiry grass;

Then, stretched beneath a rick's shade in a ring,

Their nooning take, while one begins to sing

A stave that droops and dies 'neath the close sky of brass.

Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobolink,

Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops

Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremulous brink.

And 'twixt the winrows most demurely drops, 130

A decorous bird of business, who provides

For his brown mate and fledglings six besides,

And looks from right to left, a farmer mid his crops.

Another change subdues them in the Fall,

But saddens not; they still show merrier tints,

Though sober russet seems to cover all;

When the first sunshine through their dew-drops glints,

Look how the yellow clearness, streamed across,

Redeems with rarer hues the season's loss,

As Dawn's feet there had touched and left their rosy prints. 140

Or come when sunset gives its freshened zest,

Lean o'er the bridge and let the ruddy thrill,

While the shorn sun swells down the hazy west,

Glow opposite;--the marshes drink their fill

And swoon with purple veins, then slowly fade

Through pink to brown, as eastward moves the shade,

Lengthening with stealthy creep, of Simonds' darkening hill.

Later, and yet ere Winter wholly shuts,

Ere through the first dry snow the runner grates,

And the loath cart-wheel screams in slippery ruts, 150

While firmer ice the eager boy awaits,

Trying each buckle and strap beside the fire,

And until bedtime plays with his desire,

Twenty times putting on and off his new-bought skates;--

Then, every morn, the river's banks shine bright

With smooth plate-armor, treacherous and frail,

By the frost's clinking hammers forged at night,

'Gainst which the lances of the sun prevail,

Giving a pretty emblem of the day

When guiltier arms in light shall melt away, 160

And states shall move free-limbed, loosed from war's cramping mail.

And now those waterfalls the ebbing river

Twice every day creates on either side

Tinkle, as through their fresh-sparred grots they shiver

In grass-arched channels to the sun denied;

High flaps in sparkling blue the far-heard crow,

The silvered flats gleam frostily below,

Suddenly drops the gull and breaks the glassy tide.

But crowned in turn by vying seasons three,

Their winter halo hath a fuller ring; 170

This glory seems to rest immovably,--

The others were too fleet and vanishing;

When the hid tide is at its highest flow.

O'er marsh and stream one breathless trance of snow

With brooding fulness awes and hushes everything.

The sunshine seems blown off by the bleak wind,

As pale as formal candles lit by day;

Gropes to the sea the river dumb and blind;

The brown ricks, snow-thatched by the storm in play,

Show pearly breakers combing o'er their lee, 180

White crests as of some just enchanted sea,

Checked in their maddest leap and hanging poised midway.

But when the eastern blow, with rain aslant,

From mid-sea's prairies green and rolling plains

Drives in his wallowing herds of billows gaunt,

And the roused Charles remembers in his veins

Old Ocean's blood and snaps his gyves of frost,

That tyrannous silence on the shores is tost

In dreary wreck, and crumbling desolation reigns.

Edgewise or flat, in Druid-like device, 190

With leaden pools between or gullies bare,

The blocks lie strewn, a bleak Stonehenge of ice;

No life, no sound, to break the grim despair,

Save sullen plunge, as through the sedges stiff

Down crackles riverward some thaw-sapped cliff,

Or when the close-wedged fields of ice crunch here and there.

But let me turn from fancy-pictured scenes

To that whose pastoral calm before me lies:

Here nothing harsh or rugged intervenes;

The early evening with her misty dyes 200

Smooths off the ravelled edges of the nigh,

Relieves the distant with her cooler sky,

And tones the landscape down, and soothes the wearied eyes.

There gleams my native village, dear to me,

Though higher change's waves each day are seen,

Whelming fields famed in boyhood's history,

Sanding with houses the diminished green;

There, in red brick, which softening time defies,

Stand square and stiff the Muses' factories:--

How with my life knit up is every well-known scene! 210

Flow on, dear river! not alone you flow

To outward sight, and through your marshes wind;

Fed from the mystic springs of long-ago,

Your twin flows silent through my world of mind:

Grow dim, dear marshes, in the evening's gray!

Before my inner sight ye stretch away,

And will forever, though these fleshly eyes grow blind.

Beyond the hillock's house-bespotted swell,

Where Gothic chapels house the horse and chaise,

Where quiet cits in Grecian temples dwell, 220

Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer and praise,

Where dust and mud the equal year divide,

There gentle Allston lived, and wrought, and died,

Transfiguring street and shop with his illumined gaze.

\_Virgilium vidi tantum\_,--I have seen

But as a boy, who looks alike on all,

That misty hair, that fine Undine-like mien,

Tremulous as down to feeling's faintest call;--

Ah, dear old homestead! count it to thy fame

That thither many times the Painter came;-- 230

One elm yet bears his name, a feathery tree and tall.

Swiftly the present fades in memory's glow,--

Our only sure possession is the past;

The village blacksmith died a month ago,

And dim to me the forge's roaring blast;

Soon fire-new mediÃ¦vals we shall see

Oust the black smithy from its chestnut-tree,

And that hewn down, perhaps, the beehive green and vast.

How many times, prouder than king on throne,

Loosed from the village school-dame's A's and B's, 240

Panting have I the creaky bellows blown,

And watched the pent volcano's red increase,

Then paused to see the ponderous sledge, brought down

By that hard arm voluminous and brown,

From the white iron swarm its golden vanishing bees.

Dear native town! whose choking elms each year

With eddying dust before their time turn gray,

Pining for rain,--to me thy dust is dear;

It glorifies the eve of summer day,

And when the westering sun half sunken burns, 250

The mote-thick air to deepest orange turns,

The westward horseman rides through clouds of gold away.

So palpable, I've seen those unshorn few,

The six old willows at the causey's end

(Such trees Paul Potter never dreamed nor drew),

Through this dry mist their checkering shadows send,

Striped, here and there, with many a long-drawn thread,

Where streamed through leafy chinks the trembling red,

Past which, in one bright trail, the hangbird's flashes blend.

Yes, dearer far thy dust than all that e'er, 260

Beneath the awarded crown of victory,

Gilded the blown Olympic charioteer;

Though lightly prized the ribboned parchments three,

Yet \_collegisse juvat\_, I am glad

That here what colleging was mine I had,--

It linked another tie, dear native town, with thee!

Nearer art thou than simply native earth,

My dust with thine concedes a deeper tie;

A closer claim thy soil may well put forth,

Something of kindred more than sympathy; 270

For in thy bounds I reverently laid away

That blinding anguish of forsaken clay,

That title I seemed to have in earth and sea and sky,

That portion of my life more choice to me

(Though brief, yet in itself so round and whole)

Than all the imperfect residue can be;--

The Artist saw his statue of the soul

Was perfect; so, with one regretful stroke,

The earthen model into fragments broke,

And without her the impoverished seasons roll. 280

THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND

A FRAGMENT

A legend that grew in the forest's hush

Slowly as tear-drops gather and gush,

When a word some poet chanced to say

Ages ago, in his careless way,

Brings our youth back to us out of its shroud

Clearly as under yon thunder-cloud

I see that white sea-gull. It grew and grew,

From the pine-trees gathering a sombre hue,

Till it seems a mere murmur out of the vast

Norwegian forests of the past; 10

And it grew itself like a true Northern pine,

First a little slender line,

Like a mermaid's green eyelash, and then anon

A stem that a tower might rest upon,

Standing spear-straight in the waist-deep moss,

Its bony roots clutching around and across,

As if they would tear up earth's heart in their grasp

Ere the storm should uproot them or make them unclasp;

Its cloudy boughs singing, as suiteth the pine,

To snow-bearded sea-kings old songs of the brine, 20

Till they straightened and let their staves fall to the floor,

Hearing waves moan again on the perilous shore

Of Vinland, perhaps, while their prow groped its way

'Twixt the frothed gnashing tusks of some ship-crunching bay.

So, pine-like, the legend grew, strong-limbed and tall,

As the Gypsy child grows that eats crusts in the hall;

It sucked the whole strength of the earth and the sky,

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, all brought it supply;

'Twas a natural growth, and stood fearlessly there,

True part of the landscape as sea, land, and air; 30

For it grew in good times, ere the fashion it was

To force these wild births of the woods under glass,

And so, if 'tis told as it should be told,

Though 'twere sung under Venice's moonlight of gold,

You would hear the old voice of its mother, the pine,

Murmur sealike and northern through every line,

And the verses should grow, self-sustained and free,

Round the vibrating stem of the melody,

Like the lithe moonlit limbs of the parent tree.

Yes, the pine is the mother of legends; what food 40

For their grim roots is left when the thousand-yeared wood,

The dim-aisled cathedral, whose tall arches spring

Light, sinewy, graceful, firm-set as the wing

From Michael's white shoulder, is hewn and defaced

By iconoclast axes in desperate waste,

And its wrecks seek the ocean it prophesied long,

Cassandra-like, crooning its mystical song?

Then the legends go with them,--even yet on the sea

A wild virtue is left in the touch of the tree,

And the sailor's night-watches are thrilled to the core 50

With the lineal offspring of Odin and Thor.

Yes, wherever the pine-wood has never let in,

Since the day of creation, the light and the din

Of manifold life, but has safely conveyed

From the midnight primeval its armful of shade,

And has kept the weird Past with its child-faith alive

Mid the hum and the stir of To-day's busy hive.

There the legend takes root in the age-gathered gloom,

And its murmurous boughs for their sagas find room.

Where Aroostook, far-heard, seems to sob as he goes 60

Groping down to the sea 'neath his mountainous snows;

Where the lake's frore Sahara of never-tracked white,

When the crack shoots across it, complains to the night

With a long, lonely moan, that leagues northward is lost,

As the ice shrinks away from the tread of the frost;

Where the lumberers sit by the log-fires that throw

Their own threatening shadows far round o'er the snow,

When the wolf howls aloof, and the wavering glare

Flashes out from the blackness the eyes of the bear,

When the wood's huge recesses, half-lighted, supply 70

A canvas where Fancy her mad brush may try,

Blotting in giant Horrors that venture not down

Through the right-angled streets of the brisk, whitewashed town,

But skulk in the depths of the measureless wood

Mid the Dark's creeping whispers that curdle the blood,

When the eye, glanced in dread o'er the shoulder, may dream,

Ere it shrinks to the camp-fire's companioning gleam,

That it saw the fierce ghost of the Red Man crouch back

To the shroud of the tree-trunk's invincible black;

There the old shapes crowd thick round the pine-shadowed camp, 80

Which shun the keen gleam of the scholarly lamp,

And the seed of the legend finds true Norland ground,

While the border-tale's told and the canteen flits round.

A CONTRAST

Thy love thou sendest oft to me,

And still as oft I thrust it back;

Thy messengers I could not see

In those who everything did lack,

The poor, the outcast and the black.

Pride held his hand before mine eyes,

The world with flattery stuffed mine ears;

I looked to see a monarch's guise,

Nor dreamed thy love would knock for years,

Poor, naked, fettered, full of tears.

Yet, when I sent my love to thee,

Thou with a smile didst take it in,

And entertain'dst it royally,

Though grimed with earth, with hunger thin,

And leprous with the taint of sin.

Now every day thy love I meet,

As o'er the earth it wanders wide,

With weary step and bleeding feet,

Still knocking at the heart of pride

And offering grace, though still denied.

EXTREME UNCTION

Go! leave me, Priest; my soul would be

Alone with the consoler, Death;

Far sadder eyes than thine will see

This crumbling clay yield up its breath;

These shrivelled hands have deeper stains

Than holy oil can cleanse away,

Hands that have plucked the world's coarse gains

As erst they plucked the flowers of May.

Call, if thou canst, to these gray eyes

Some faith from youth's traditions wrung; 10

This fruitless husk which dustward dries

Hath been a heart once, hath been young;

On this bowed head the awful Past

Once laid its consecrating hands;

The Future in its purpose vast

Paused, waiting my supreme commands.

But look! whose shadows block the door?

Who are those two that stand aloof?

See! on my hands this freshening gore

Writes o'er again its crimson proof! 20

My looked-for death-bed guests are met;

There my dead Youth doth wring its hands,

And there, with eyes that goad me yet,

The ghost of my Ideal stands!

God bends from out the deep and says,

'I gave thee the great gift of life;

Wast thou not called in many ways?

Are not my earth and heaven at strife?

I gave thee of my seed to sow,

Bringest thou me my hundredfold?' 30

Can I look up with face aglow,

And answer, 'Father, here is gold'?

I have been innocent; God knows

When first this wasted life began,

Not grape with grape more kindly grows,

Than I with every brother-man:

Now here I gasp; what lose my kind,

When this fast ebbing breath shall part?

What bands of love and service bind

This being to a brother heart? 40

Christ still was wandering o'er the earth

Without a place to lay his head;

He found free welcome at my hearth,

He shared my cup and broke my bread:

Now, when I hear those steps sublime,

That bring the other world to this,

My snake-turned nature, sunk in slime,

Starts sideway with defiant hiss.

Upon the hour when I was born,

God said, 'Another man shall be,' 50

And the great Maker did not scorn

Out of himself to fashion me:

He sunned me with his ripening looks,

And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,

As effortless as woodland nooks

Send violets up and paint them blue.

Yes, I who now, with angry tears,

Am exiled back to brutish clod,

Have borne unqueached for fourscore years

A spark of the eternal God; 60

And to what end? How yield I back

The trust for such high uses given?

Heaven's light hath but revealed a track

Whereby to crawl away from heaven.

Men think it is an awful sight

To see a soul just set adrift

On that drear voyage from whose night

The ominous shadows never lift;

But 'tis more awful to behold

A helpless infant newly born, 70

Whose little hands unconscious hold

The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once; I flung away

Those keys that might have open set

The golden sluices of the day,

But clutch the keys of darkness yet;

I hear the reapers singing go

Into God's harvest; I, that might

With them have chosen, here below

Grope shuddering at the gates of night. 80

O glorious Youth, that once wast mine!

O high Ideal! all in vain

Ye enter at this ruined shrine

Whence worship ne'er shall rise again;

The bat and owl inhabit here,

The snake nests in the altar-stone,

The sacred vessels moulder near,

The image of the God is gone.

THE OAK

What gnarlÃ¨d stretch, what depth of shade, is his!

There needs no crown to mark the forest's king;

How in his leaves outshines full summer's bliss!

Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their tribute bring,

Which he with such benignant royalty

Accepts, as overpayeth what is lent;

All nature seems his vassal proud to be,

And cunning only for his ornament.

How towers he, too, amid the billowed snows,

An unquelled exile from the summer's throne,

Whose plain, uncinctured front more kingly shows,

Now that the obscuring courtier leaves are flown.

His boughs make music of the winter air,

Jewelled with sleet, like some cathedral front

Where clinging snow-flakes with quaint art repair

The dints and furrows of time's envious brunt.

How doth his patient strength the rude March wind

Persuade to seem glad breaths of summer breeze,

And win the soil that fain would be unkind,

To swell his revenues with proud increase!

He is the gem; and all the landscape wide

(So doth his grandeur isolate the sense)

Seems but the setting, worthless all beside,

An empty socket, were he fallen thence.

So, from oft converse with life's wintry gales,

Should man learn how to clasp with tougher roots

The inspiring earth; how otherwise avails

The leaf-creating sap that sunward shoots?

So every year that falls with noiseless flake

Should fill old scars up on the stormward side,

And make hoar age revered for age's sake,

Not for traditions of youth's leafy pride.

So, from the pinched soil of a churlish fate,

True hearts compel the sap of sturdier growth,

So between earth and heaven stand simply great,

That these shall seem but their attendants both;

For nature's forces with obedient zeal

Wait on the rooted faith and oaken will;

As quickly the pretender's cheat they feel,

And turn mad Pucks to flout and mock him still.

Lord! all thy works are lessons; each contains

Some emblem of man's all-containing soul;

Shall he make fruitless all thy glorious pains,

Delving within thy grace an eyeless mole?

Make me the least of thy Dodona-grove,

Cause me some message of thy truth to bring,

Speak but a word through me, nor let thy love

Among my boughs disdain to perch and sing.

AMBROSE

Never, surely, was holier man

Than Ambrose, since the world began;

With diet spare and raiment thin

He shielded himself from the father of sin;

With bed of iron and scourgings oft,

His heart to God's hand as wax made soft.

Through earnest prayer and watchings long

He sought to know 'tween right and wrong,

Much wrestling with the blessed Word

To make it yield the sense of the Lord, 10

That he might build a storm-proof creed

To fold the flock in at their need.

At last he builded a perfect faith,

Fenced round about with \_The Lord thus saith\_;

To himself he fitted the doorway's size,

Meted the light to the need of his eyes,

And knew, by a sure and inward sign,

That the work of his fingers was divine.

Then Ambrose said, 'All those shall die

The eternal death who believe not as I;' 20

And some were boiled, some burned in fire,

Some sawn in twain, that his heart's desire,

For the good of men's souls might be satisfied

By the drawing of all to the righteous side.

One day, as Ambrose was seeking the truth

In his lonely walk, he saw a youth

Resting himself in the shade of a tree;

It had never been granted him to see

So shining a face, and the good man thought

'Twere pity he should not believe as he ought. 30

So he set himself by the young man's side,

And the state of his soul with questions tried;

But the heart of the stranger was hardened indeed,

Nor received the stamp of the one true creed;

And the spirit of Ambrose waxed sore to find

Such features the porch of so narrow a mind.

'As each beholds in cloud and fire

The shape that answers his own desire,

So each,' said the youth, 'in the Law shall find

The figure and fashion of his mind; 40

And to each in his mercy hath God allowed

His several pillar of fire and cloud.'

The soul of Ambrose burned with zeal

And holy wrath for the young man's weal:

'Believest thou then, most wretched youth,'

Cried he, 'a dividual essence in Truth?

I fear me thy heart is too cramped with sin

To take the Lord in his glory in.'

Now there bubbled beside them where they stood

A fountain of waters sweet and good: 50

The youth to the streamlet's brink drew near

Saying, 'Ambrose, thou maker of creeds, look here!'

Six vases of crystal then he took,

And set them along the edge of the brook.

'As into these vessels the water I pour,

There shall one hold less, another more,

And the water unchanged, in every case,

Shall put on the figure of the vase;

O thou, who wouldst unity make through strife,

Canst thou fit this sign to the Water of Life?' 60

When Ambrose looked up, he stood alone,

The youth and the stream and the vases were gone;

But he knew, by a sense of humbled grace,

He had talked with an angel face to face,

And felt his heart change inwardly,

As he fell on his knees beneath the tree.

ABOVE AND BELOW

I

O dwellers in the valley-land,

Who in deep twilight grope and cower,

Till the slow mountain's dial-hand

Shorten to noon's triumphal hour,

While ye sit idle, do ye think

The Lord's great work sits idle too?

That light dare not o'erleap the brink

Of morn, because 'tis dark with you?

Though yet your valleys skulk in night,

In God's ripe fields the day is cried,

And reapers, with their sickles bright,

Troop, singing, down the mountain-side:

Come up, and feel what health there is

In the frank Dawn's delighted eyes,

As, bending with a pitying kiss,

The night-shed tears of Earth she dries!

The Lord wants reapers: oh, mount up,

Before night comes, and says, 'Too late!'

Stay not for taking scrip or cup,

The Master hungers while ye wait;

'Tis from these heights alone your eyes

The advancing spears of day can see,

That o'er the eastern hill-tops rise,

To break your long captivity.

II

Lone watcher on the mountain-height,

It is right precious to behold

The first long surf of climbing light

Flood all the thirsty east with gold;

But we, who in the shadow sit,

Know also when the day is nigh,

Seeing thy shining forehead lit

With his inspiring prophecy.

Thou hast thine office; we have ours;

God lacks not early service here,

But what are thine eleventh hours

He counts with us for morning cheer;

Our day, for Him, is long enough,

And when He giveth work to do,

The bruisÃ¨d reed is amply tough

To pierce the shield of error, through.

But not the less do thou aspire

Light's earlier messages to preach;

Keep back no syllable of fire,

Plunge deep the rowels of thy speech.

Yet God deems not thine aeried sight

More worthy than our twilight dim;

For meek Obedience, too, is Light,

And following that is finding Him.

THE CAPTIVE

It was past the hour of trysting,

But she lingered for him still;

Like a child, the eager streamlet

Leaped and laughed adown the hill,

Happy to be free at twilight

From its toiling at the mill.

Then the great moon on a sudden

Ominous, and red as blood,

Startling as a new creation,

O'er the eastern hilltop stood,

Casting deep and deeper shadows

Through the mystery of the wood.

Dread closed fast and vague about her,

And her thoughts turned fearfully

To her heart, if there some shelter

From the silence there might be,

Like bare cedars leaning inland

From the blighting of the sea.

Yet he came not, and the stillness

Dampened round her like a tomb;

She could feel cold eyes of spirits

Looking on her through the gloom,

She could hear the groping footsteps

Of some blind, gigantic doom.

Suddenly the silence wavered

Like a light mist in the wind,

For a voice broke gently through it,

Felt like sunshine by the blind,

And the dread, like mist in sunshine,

Furled serenely from her mind.

'Once my love, my love forever,

Flesh or spirit, still the same,

If I failed at time of trysting,

Deem then not my faith to blame;

I, alas, was made a captive,

As from Holy Land I came.

'On a green spot in the desert,

Gleaming like an emerald star,

Where a palm-tree, in lone silence,

Yearning for its mate afar,

Droops above a silver runnel,

Slender as a scimitar,

'There thou'lt find the humble postern

To the castle of my foe;

If thy love burn clear and faithful,

Strike the gateway, green and low,

Ask to enter, and the warder

Surely will not say thee no.'

Slept again the aspen silence,

But her loneliness was o'er;

Bound her soul a motherly patience

Clasped its arms forevermore;

From her heart ebbed back the sorrow,

Leaving smooth the golden shore.

Donned she now the pilgrim scallop,

Took the pilgrim staff in hand;

Like a cloud-shade flitting eastward,

Wandered she o'er sea and land;

And her footsteps in the desert

Fell like cool rain on the sand.

Soon, beneath the palm-tree's shadow,

Knelt she at the postern low;

And thereat she knocked full gently,

Fearing much the warder's no;

All her heart stood still and listened,

As the door swung backward slow.

There she saw no surly warder

With an eye like bolt and bar;

Through her soul a sense of music

Throbbed, and, like a guardian Lar,

On the threshold stood an angel,

Bright and silent as a star.

Fairest seemed he of God's seraphs,

And her spirit, lily-wise,

Opened when he turned upon her

The deep welcome of his eyes,

Sending upward to that sunlight

All its dew for sacrifice.

Then she heard a voice come onward

Singing with a rapture new,

As Eve heard the songs in Eden,

Dropping earthward with the dew;

Well she knew the happy singer,

Well the happy song she knew.

Forward leaped she o'er the threshold,

Eager as a glancing surf;

Fell from her the spirit's languor,

Fell from her the body's scurf;

'Neath the palm next day some Arabs

Found a corpse upon the turf.

THE BIRCH-TREE

Rippling through thy branches goes the sunshine,

Among thy leaves that palpitate forever;

Ovid in thee a pining Nymph had prisoned,

The soul once of some tremulous inland river,

Quivering to tell her woe, but, ah! dumb, dumb forever!

While all the forest, witched with slumberous moonshine,

Holds up its leaves in happy, happy stillness,

Waiting the dew, with breath and pulse suspended,

I hear afar thy whispering, gleamy islands,

And track thee wakeful still amid the wide-hung silence.

On the brink of some wood-nestled lakelet,

Thy foliage, like the tresses of a Dryad,

Dripping round thy slim white stem, whose shadow

Slopes quivering down the water's dusky quiet,

Thou shrink'st as on her bath's edge would some startled Naiad.

Thou art the go-between of rustic lovers;

Thy white bark has their secrets in its keeping;

Reuben writes here the happy name of Patience,

And thy lithe boughs hang murmuring and weeping

Above her, as she steals the mystery from thy keeping.

Thou art to me like my beloved maiden,

So frankly coy, so full of trembly confidences;

Thy shadow scarce seems shade, thy pattering leaflets

Sprinkle their gathered sunshine o'er my senses,

And Nature gives me all her summer confidences.

Whether my heart with hope or sorrow tremble,

Thou sympathizest still; wild and unquiet,

I fling me down; thy ripple, like a river,

Flows valleyward, where calmness is, and by it

My heart is floated down into the land of quiet.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH

I sat one evening in my room,

In that sweet hour of twilight

When blended thoughts, half light, half gloom,

Throng through the spirit's skylight;

The flames by fits curled round the bars,

Or up the chimney crinkled,

While embers dropped like falling stars,

And in the ashes tinkled.

I sat, and mused; the fire burned low,

And, o'er my senses stealing, 10

Crept something of the ruddy glow

That bloomed on wall and ceiling;

My pictures (they are very few,

The heads of ancient wise men)

Smoothed down their knotted fronts, and grew

As rosy as excisemen.

My antique high-backed Spanish chair

Felt thrills through wood and leather,

That had been strangers since whilere,

Mid Andaluslan heather, 20

The oak that built its sturdy frame

His happy arms stretched over

The ox whose fortunate hide became

The bottom's polished cover.

It came out in that famous bark,

That brought our sires intrepid,

Capacious as another ark

For furniture decrepit;

For, as that saved of bird and beast

A pair for propagation, 30

So has the seed of these increased

And furnished half the nation.

Kings sit, they say, in slippery seats;

But those slant precipices

Of ice the northern voyager meets

Less slippery are than this is;

To cling therein would pass the wit

Of royal man or woman,

And whatsoe'er can stay in it

Is more or less than human. 40

I offer to all bores this perch,

Dear well-intentioned people

With heads as void as week-day church,

Tongues longer than the steeple;

To folks with missions, whose gaunt eyes

See golden ages rising,--

Salt of the earth! in what queer Guys

Thou'rt fond of crystallizing!

My wonder, then, was not unmixed

With merciful suggestion, 50

When, as my roving eyes grew fixed

Upon the chair in question,

I saw its trembling arms enclose

A figure grim and rusty,

Whose doublet plain and plainer hose

Were something worn and dusty.

Now even such men as Nature forms

Merely to fill the street with,

Once turned to ghosts by hungry worms, 59

Are serious things to meet with;

Your penitent spirits are no jokes,

And, though I'm not averse to

A quiet shade, even they are folks

One cares not to speak first to.

Who knows, thought I, but he has come,

By Charon kindly ferried,

To tell me of a mighty sum

Behind my wainscot buried?

There is a buccaneerish air

About that garb outlandish-- 70

Just then the ghost drew up his chair

And said, 'My name is Standish.

'I come from Plymouth, deadly bored

With toasts, and songs, and speeches,

As long and flat as my old sword,

As threadbare as my breeches:

\_They\_ understand us Pilgrims! they,

Smooth men with rosy faces.

Strength's knots and gnarls all pared away,

And varnish in their places! 80

'We had some toughness in our grain,

The eye to rightly see us is

Not just the one that lights the brain

Of drawing-room TyrtÃ¦uses:

\_They\_ talk about their Pilgrim blood,

Their birthright high and holy!

A mountain-stream that ends in mud

Methinks is melancholy.

'He had stiff knees, the Puritan,

That were not good at bending;

The homespun dignity of man 91

He thought was worth defending;

He did not, with his pinchbeck ore,

His country's shame forgotten,

Gild Freedom's coffin o'er and o'er,

When all within was rotten.

'These loud ancestral boasts of yours,

How can they else than vex us?

Where were your dinner orators

When slavery grasped at Texas? 100

Dumb on his knees was every one

That now is bold as CÃ¦sar;

Mere pegs to hang an office on

Such stalwart men as these are.'

'Good sir,' I said, 'you seem much stirred;

The sacred compromises'--

'Now God confound the dastard word!

My gall thereat arises:

Northward it hath this sense alone

That you, your conscience blinding, 110

Shall bow your fool's nose to the stone,

When slavery feels like grinding.

''Tis shame to see such painted sticks

In Vane's and Winthrop's places,

To see your spirit of Seventy-Six

Drag humbly in the traces,

With slavery's lash upon her back,

And herds, of office-holders

To shout applause, as, with a crack, 119

It peels her patient shoulders.

'\_We\_ forefathers to such a rout!--

No, by my faith in God's word!'

Half rose the ghost, and half drew out

The ghost of his old broadsword,

Then thrust it slowly back again,

And said, with reverent gesture,

'No, Freedom, no! blood should not stain

The hem of thy white vesture.

'I feel the soul in me draw near

The mount of prophesying; 130

In this bleak wilderness I hear

A John the Baptist crying;

Far in the east I see upleap

The streaks of first forewarning,

And they who sowed the light shall reap

The golden sheaves of morning.

'Child of our travail and our woe,

Light in our day of sorrow,

Through my rapt spirit I foreknow

The glory of thy morrow; 140

I hear great steps, that through the shade

Draw nigher still and nigher,

And voices call like that which bade

The prophet come up higher.'

I looked, no form mine eyes could find,

I heard the red cock crowing,

And through my window-chinks the wind

A dismal tune was blowing;

Thought I, My neighbor Buckingham

Hath somewhat in him gritty, 150

Some Pilgrim-stuff that hates all sham,

And he will print my ditty.

ON THE CAPTURE OF FUGITIVE SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON

Look on who will in apathy, and stifle they who can,

The sympathies, the hopes, the words, that make man truly man;

Let those whose hearts are dungeoned up with interest or with ease

Consent to hear with quiet pulse of loathsome deeds like these!

I first drew in New England's air, and from her hardy breast

Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will not let me rest;

And if my words seem treason to the dullard and the tame,

'Tis but my Bay-State dialect,--our fathers spake the same!

Shame on the costly mockery of piling stone on stone

To those who won our liberty, the heroes dead and gone,

While we look coldly on and see law-shielded ruffians slay

The men who fain would win their own, the heroes of to-day!

Are we pledged to craven silence? Oh, fling it to the wind,

The parchment wall that bars us from the least of human kind,

That makes us cringe and temporize, and dumbly stand at rest,

While Pity's burning flood of words is red-hot in the breast!

Though we break our fathers' promise, we have nobler duties first;

The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most accursed;

Man is more than Constitutions; better rot beneath the sod,

Than be true to Church and State while we are doubly false to God!

We owe allegiance to the State; but deeper, truer, more,

To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirit's core;

Our country claims our fealty; we grant it so, but then

Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.

He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done,

To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,

That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base,

Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope of being free

With parallels of latitude, with mountain-range or sea.

Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye will,

From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps one electric thrill.

Chain down your slaves with ignorance, ye cannot keep apart,

With all your craft of tyranny, the human heart from heart:

When first the Pilgrims landed on the Bay State's iron shore,

The word went forth that slavery should one day be no more.

Out from the land of bondage 'tis decreed our slaves shall go,

And signs to us are offered, as erst to Pharaoh;

If we are blind, their exodus, like Israel's of yore,

Through a Red Sea is doomed to be, whose surges are of gore.

'Tis ours to save our brethren, with peace and love to win

Their darkened hearts from error, ere they harden it to sin;

But if before his duty man with listless spirit stands,

Erelong the Great Avenger takes the work from out his hands.

TO THE DANDELION

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,

Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,

First pledge of blithesome May,

Which children pluck, and, full of pride uphold,

High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they

An Eldorado in the grass have found,

Which not the rich earth's ample round

May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me

Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow

Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,

Nor wrinkled the lean brow

Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;

'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now

To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,

Though most hearts never understand

To take it at God's value, but pass by

The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;

To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;

The eyes thou givest me

Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:

Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee

Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment

In the white lily's breezy tent,

His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first

From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,

Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,

Where, as the breezes pass,

The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,

Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,

Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue

That from the distance sparkle through

Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,

Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;

The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,

Who, from the dark old tree

Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,

And I, secure in childish piety,

Listened as if I heard an angel sing

With news from heaven, which he could bring

Fresh every day to my untainted ears

When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,

When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!

Thou teachest me to deem

More sacredly of every human heart,

Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam

Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,

Did we but pay the love we owe,

And with a child's undoubting wisdom look

On all these living pages of God's book.

THE GHOST-SEER

Ye who, passing graves by night,

Glance not to the left or right,

Lest a spirit should arise,

Cold and white, to freeze your eyes,

Some weak phantom, which your doubt

Shapes upon the dark without

From the dark within, a guess

At the spirit's deathlessness,

Which ye entertain with fear

In your self-built dungeon here, 10

Where ye sell your God-given lives

Just for gold to buy you gyves,--

Ye without a shudder meet

In the city's noonday street,

Spirits sadder and more dread

Than from out the clay have fled,

Buried, beyond hope of light,

In the body's haunted night!

See ye not that woman pale?

There are bloodhounds on her trail! 20

Bloodhounds two, all gaunt and lean,

(For the soul their scent is keen,)

Want and Sin, and Sin is last.

They have followed far and fast;

Want gave tongue, and, at her howl,

Sin awakened with a growl.

Ah, poor girl! she had a right

To a blessing from the light;

Title-deeds to sky and earth

God gave to her at her birth; 30

But, before they were enjoyed,

Poverty had made them void,

And had drunk the sunshine up

From all nature's ample cup,

Leaving her a first-born's share

In the dregs of darkness there.

Often, on the sidewalk bleak,

Hungry, all alone, and weak,

She has seen, in night and storm,

Rooms o'erflow with firelight warm, 40

Which, outside the window-glass,

Doubled all the cold, alas!

Till each ray that on her fell

Stabbed her like an icicle,

And she almost loved the wail

Of the bloodhounds on her trail.

Till the floor becomes her bier,

She shall feel their pantings near,

Close upon her very heels,

Spite of all the din of wheels; 50

Shivering on her pallet poor,

She shall hear them at the door

Whine and scratch to be let in,

Sister bloodhounds, Want and Sin!

Hark! that rustle of a dress,

Stiff with lavish costliness!

Here comes one whose cheek would flush

But to have her garment brush

'Gainst the girl whose fingers thin

Wove the weary broidery in, 60

Bending backward from her toil,

Lest her tears the silk might soil,

And, in midnights chill and murk,

Stitched her life into the work,

Shaping from her bitter thought

Heart's-ease and forget-me-not,

Satirizing her despair

With the emblems woven there.

Little doth the wearer heed

Of the heart-break in the brede; 70

A hyena by her side

Skulks, down-looking,--it is Pride.

He digs for her in the earth,

Where lie all her claims of birth,

With his foul paws rooting o'er

Some long-buried ancestor,

Who perhaps a statue won

By the ill deeds he had done,

By the innocent blood he shed,

By the desolation spread 80

Over happy villages,

Blotting out the smile of peace.

There walks Judas, he who sold

Yesterday his Lord for gold,

Sold God's presence in his heart

For a proud step in the mart;

He hath dealt in flesh and blood:

At the bank his name is good;

At the bank, and only there,

'Tis a marketable ware. 90

In his eyes that stealthy gleam

Was not learned of sky or stream,

But it has the cold, hard glint

Of new dollars from the mint.

Open now your spirit's eyes,

Look through that poor clay disguise

Which has thickened, day by day,

Till it keeps all light at bay,

And his soul in pitchy gloom

Gropes about its narrow tomb, 100

From whose dank and slimy walls

Drop by drop the horror falls.

Look! a serpent lank and cold

Hugs his spirit fold on fold;

From his heart, all day and night,

It doth suck God's blessed light.

Drink it will, and drink it must,

Till the cup holds naught but dust;

All day long he hears it hiss,

Writhing in its fiendish bliss; 110

All night long he sees its eyes

Flicker with foul ecstasies,

As the spirit ebbs away

Into the absorbing clay.

Who is he that skulks, afraid

Of the trust he has betrayed,

Shuddering if perchance a gleam

Of old nobleness should stream

Through the pent, unwholesome room,

Where his shrunk soul cowers in gloom, 120

Spirit sad beyond the rest

By more Instinct for the best?

'Tis a poet who was sent

For a bad world's punishment,

By compelling it to see

Golden glimpses of To Be,

By compelling it to hear

Songs that prove the angels near;

Who was sent to be the tongue

Of the weak and spirit-wrung, 130

Whence the fiery-winged Despair

In men's shrinking eyes might flare.

'Tis our hope doth fashion us

To base use or glorious:

He who might have been a lark

Of Truth's morning, from the dark

Raining down melodious hope

Of a freer, broader scope,

Aspirations, prophecies,

Of the spirit's full sunrise, 140

Chose to be a bird of night,

That, with eyes refusing light,

Hooted from some hollow tree

Of the world's idolatry.

'Tis his punishment to hear

Sweep of eager pinions near,

And his own vain wings to feel

Drooping downward to his heel,

All their grace and import lost,

Burdening his weary ghost: 150

Ever walking by his side

He must see his angel guide,

Who at intervals doth turn

Looks on him so sadly stern,

With such ever-new surprise

Of hushed anguish in her eyes,

That it seems the light of day

From around him shrinks away,

Or drops blunted from the wall

Built around him by his fall. 160

Then the mountains, whose white peaks

Catch the morning's earliest streaks,

He must see, where prophets sit,

Turning east their faces lit,

Whence, with footsteps beautiful,

To the earth, yet dim and dull,

They the gladsome tidings bring

Of the sunlight's hastening:

Never can these hills of bliss 169

Be o'erclimbed by feet like his!

But enough! Oh, do not dare

From the next the veil to tear,

Woven of station, trade, or dress,

More obscene than nakedness,

Wherewith plausible culture drapes

Fallen Nature's myriad shapes!

Let us rather love to mark

How the unextingnished spark

Still gleams through the thin disguise 179

Of our customs, pomps, and lies,

And, not seldom blown to flame,

Vindicates its ancient claim.

STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS

I

Some sort of heart I know is hers,--

I chanced to feel her pulse one night;

A brain she has that never errs,

And yet is never nobly right;

It does not leap to great results,

But, in some corner out of sight

Suspects a spot of latent blight,

And, o'er the impatient infinite,

She hargains, haggles, and consults.

Her eye,--it seems a chemic test

And drops upon you like an acid; 11

It bites you with unconscious zest,

So clear and bright, so coldly placid;

It holds you quietly aloof,

It holds,--and yet it does not win you;

It merely puts you to the proof

And sorts what qualities are in you:

It smiles, but never brings you nearer,

It lights,--her nature draws not nigh;

'Tis but that yours is growing clearer 20

To her assays;--yes, try and try,

You'll get no deeper than her eye.

There, you are classified: she's gone

Far, far away into herself;

Each with its Latin label on,

Your poor components, one by one,

Are laid upon their proper shelf

In her compact and ordered mind,

And what of you is left behind

Is no more to her than the wind;

In that clear brain, which, day and night, 31

No movement of the heart e'er jostles,

Her friends are ranged on left and right,--

Here, silex, hornblende, sienite;

There, animal remains and fossils.

And yet, O subtile analyst,

That canst each property detect

Of mood or grain, that canst untwist

Each tangled skein of intellect,

And with thy scalpel eyes lay bare 40

Each mental nerve more fine than air,--

O brain exact, that in thy scales

Canst weigh the sun and never err,

For once thy patient science fails,

One problem still defies thy art;--

Thou never canst compute for her

The distance and diameter

Of any simple human heart.

II

Hear him but speak, and you will feel

The shadows of the Portico 50

Over your tranquil spirit steal,

To modulate all joy and woe

To one subdued, subduing glow;

Above our squabbling business-hours,

Like Phidian Jove's, his beauty lowers,

His nature satirizes ours;

A form and front of Attic grace,

He shames the higgling market-place,

And dwarfs our more mechanic powers.

What throbbing verse can fitly render 60

That face so pure, so trembling-tender?

Sensation glimmers through its rest,

It speaks unmanacled by words,

As full of motion as a nest

That palpitates with unfledged birds;

'Tis likest to Bethesda's stream,

Forewarned through all its thrilling springs,

White with the angel's coming gleam,

And rippled with his fanning wings.

Hear him unfold his plots and plans, 70

And larger destinies seem man's;

You conjure from his glowing face

The omen of a fairer race;

With one grand trope he boldly spans

The gulf wherein so many fall,

'Twixt possible and actual;

His first swift word, talaria-shod,

Exuberant with conscious God,

Out of the choir of planets blots

The present earth with all its spots. 80

Himself unshaken as the sky,

His words, like whirlwinds, spin on high

Systems and creeds pellmell together;

'Tis strange as to a deaf man's eye,

While trees uprooted splinter by,

The dumb turmoil of stormy weather;

Less of iconoclast than shaper,

His spirit, safe behind the reach

Of the tornado of his speech,

Burns calmly as a glowworm's taper. 90

So great in speech, but, ah! in act

So overrun with vermin troubles,

The coarse, sharp-cornered, ugly fact

Of life collapses all his bubbles:

Had he but lived in Plato's day,

He might, unless my fancy errs,

Have shared that golden voice's sway

O'er barefooted philosophers.

Our nipping climate hardly suits

The ripening of ideal fruits: 100

His theories vanquish us all summer,

But winter makes him dumb and dumber;

To see him mid life's needful things

Is something painfully bewildering;

He seems an angel with clipt wings

Tied to a mortal wife and children,

And by a brother seraph taken

In the act of eating eggs and bacon.

Like a clear fountain, his desire

Exults and leaps toward the light, 110

In every drop it says 'Aspire!'

Striving for more ideal height;

And as the fountain, falling thence,

Crawls baffled through the common gutter,

So, from his speech's eminence,

He shrinks into the present tense,

Unkinged by foolish bread and butter.

Yet smile not, worldling, for in deeds

Not all of life that's brave and wise is;

He strews an ampler future's seeds, 120

'Tis your fault if no harvest rises;

Smooth back the sneer; for is it naught

That all he is and has is Beauty's?

By soul the soul's gains must be wrought,

The Actual claims our coarser thought,

The Ideal hath its higher duties.

ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO

Can this be thou who, lean and pale,

With such immitigable eye

Didst look upon those writhing souls in bale,

And note each vengeance, and pass by

Unmoved, save when thy heart by chance

Cast backward one forbidden glance,

And saw Francesca, with child's glee,

Subdue and mount thy wild-horse knee

And with proud hands control its fiery prance?

With half-drooped lids, and smooth, round brow,

And eye remote, that inly sees

Fair Beatrice's spirit wandering now

In some sea-lulled Hesperides,

Thou movest through the jarring street,

Secluded from the noise of feet

By her gift-blossom in thy hand,

Thy branch of palm from Holy Land;--

No trace is here of ruin's fiery sleet.

Yet there is something round thy lips

That prophesies the coming doom,

The soft, gray herald-shadow ere the eclipse

Notches the perfect disk with gloom;

A something that would banish thee,

And thine untamed pursuer be,

From men and their unworthy fates,

Though Florence had not shut her gates,

And Grief had loosed her clutch and let thee free.

Ah! he who follows fearlessly

The beckonings of a poet-heart

Shall wander, and without the world's decree,

A banished man in field and mart;

Harder than Florence' walls the bar

Which with deaf sternness holds him far

From home and friends, till death's release,

And makes his only prayer for peace,

Like thine, scarred veteran of a lifelong war!

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD

Death never came so nigh to me before,

Nor showed me his mild face: oft had I mused

Of calm and peace and safe forgetfulness,

Of folded hands, closed eyes, and heart at rest,

And slumber sound beneath a flowery turf,

Of faults forgotten, and an inner place

Kept sacred for us in the heart of friends;

But these were idle fancies, satisfied

With the mere husk of this great mystery,

And dwelling in the outward shows of things. 10

Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams,

Nor doth the unthankful happiness of youth

Aim thitherward, but floats from bloom to bloom,

With earth's warm patch of sunshine well content:

'Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up,

Whose golden rounds are our calamities,

Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God

The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed.

True is it that Death's face seems stern and cold,

When he is sent to summon those we love, 20

But all God's angels come to us disguised;

Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,

One after other lift their frowning masks,

And we behold the seraph's face beneath,

All radiant with the glory and the calm

Of having looked upon the front of God.

With every anguish of our earthly part

The spirit's sight grows clearer; this was meant

When Jesus touched the blind man's lids with clay.

Life is the jailer, Death the angel sent 30

To draw the unwilling bolts and set us free.

He flings not ope the ivory gate of Rest,--

Only the fallen spirit knocks at that,--

But to benigner regions beckons us,

To destinies of more rewarded toil.

In the hushed chamber, sitting by the dead,

It grates on us to hear the flood of life

Whirl rustling onward, senseless of our loss.

The bee hums on; around the blossomed vine

Whirs the light humming-bird; the cricket chirps; 40

The locust's shrill alarum stings the ear;

Hard by, the cock shouts lustily; from farm to farm,

His cheery brothers, telling of the sun,

Answer, till far away the joyance dies:

We never knew before how God had filled

The summer air with happy living sounds;

All round us seems an overplus of life,

And yet the one dear heart lies cold and still.

It is most strange, when the great miracle

Hath for our sakes been done, when we have had 50

Our inwardest experience of God,

When with his presence still the room expands,

And is awed after him, that naught is changed,

That Nature's face looks unacknowledging,

And the mad world still dances heedless on

After its butterflies, and gives no sign.

'Tis hard at first to see it all aright:

In vain Faith blows her trump to summon back

Her scattered troop: yet, through the clouded glass

Of our own bitter tears, we learn to look 60

Undazzled on the kindness of God's face;

Earth is too dark, and Heaven alone shines through.

It is no little thing, when a fresh soul

And a fresh heart, with their unmeasured scope

For good, not gravitating earthward yet,

But circling in diviner periods,

Are sent into the world,--no little thing,

When this unbounded possibility

Into the outer silence is withdrawn.

Ah, in this world, where every guiding thread 70

Ends suddenly in the one sure centre, death,

The visionary hand of Might-have-been

Alone can fill Desire's cup to the brim!

How changed, dear friend, are thy part and thy child's!

He bends above \_thy\_ cradle now, or holds

His warning finger out to be thy guide;

Thou art the nursling now; he watches thee

Slow learning, one by one, the secret things

Which are to him used sights of every day;

He smiles to see thy wondering glances con 80

The grass and pebbles of the spirit-world,

To thee miraculous; and he will teach

Thy knees their due observances of prayer.

Children are God's apostles, day by day

Sent forth to preach of love, and hope, and peace;

Nor hath thy babe his mission left undone.

To me, at least, his going hence hath given

Serener thoughts and nearer to the skies,

And opened a new fountain in my heart

For thee, my friend, and all: and oh, if Death 90

More near approaches meditates, and clasps

Even now some dearer, more reluctant hand,

God, strengthen thou my faith, that I may see

That 'tis thine angel, who, with loving haste,

Unto the service of the inner shrine,

Doth waken thy beloved with a kiss.

EURYDICE

Heaven's cup held down to me I drain,

The sunshine mounts and spurs my brain;

Bathing in grass, with thirsty eye

I suck the last drop of the sky;

With each hot sense I draw to the lees

The quickening out-door influences,

And empty to each radiant comer

A supernaculum of summer:

Not, Bacchus, all thy grosser juice

Could bring enchantment so profuse, 10

Though for its press each grape-bunch had

The white feet of an Oread.

Through our coarse art gleam, now and then,

The features of angelic men:

'Neath the lewd Satyr's veiling paint

Glows forth the Sibyl, Muse, or Saint;

The dauber's botch no more obscures

The mighty master's portraitures.

And who can say what luckier beam

The hidden glory shall redeem, 20

For what chance clod the soul may wait

To stumble on its nobler fate,

Or why, to his unwarned abode,

Still by surprises comes the God?

Some moment, nailed on sorrow's cross,

May meditate a whole youth's loss,

Some windfall joy, we know not whence,

Redeem a lifetime's rash expense,

And, suddenly wise, the soul may mark, 29

Stripped of their simulated dark,

Mountains of gold that pierce the sky,

Girdling its valleyed poverty.

I feel ye, childhood's hopes, return,

With olden heats my pulses burn,--

Mine be the self-forgetting sweep,

The torrent impulse swift and wild,

Wherewith Taghkanic's rockborn child

Dares gloriously the dangerous leap.

And, in his sky-descended mood,

Transmutes each drop of sluggish blood, 40

By touch of bravery's simple wand,

To amethyst and diamond,

Proving himself no bastard slip,

But the true granite-cradled one,

Nursed with the rock's primeval drip,

The cloud-embracing mountain's son!

Prayer breathed in vain I no wish's sway

Rebuilds the vanished yesterday;

For plated wares of Sheffield stamp

We gave the old Aladdin's lamp;

'Tis we are changed; ah, whither went 51

That undesigned abandonment,

That wise, unquestioning content,

Which could erect its microcosm

Out of a weed's neglected blossom,

Could call up Arthur and his peers

By a low moss's clump of spears,

Or, in its shingle trireme launched,

Where Charles in some green inlet-branched,

Could venture for the golden fleece 60

And dragon-watched Hesperides,

Or, from its ripple-shattered fate,

Ulysses' chances re-create?

When, heralding life's every phase,

There glowed a goddess-veiling haze,

A plenteous, forewarning grace,

Like that more tender dawn that flies

Before the full moon's ample rise?

Methinks thy parting glory shines

Through yonder grove of singing pines; 70

At that elm-vista's end I trace

Dimly thy sad leave-taking face,

Eurydice! Eurydice!

The tremulous leaves repeat to me

Eurydice! Eurydice!

No gloomier Orcus swallows thee

Than the unclouded sunset's glow;

Thine is at least Elysian woe;

Thou hast Good's natural decay,

And fadest like a star away 80

Into an atmosphere whose shine

With fuller day o'ermasters thine,

Entering defeat as 't were a shrine;

For us,--we turn life's diary o'er

To find but one word,--Nevermore.

SHE CAME AND WENT

As a twig trembles, which a bird

Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,

So is my memory thrilled and stirred;--

I only know she came and went.

As clasps some lake, by gusts unriven,

The blue dome's measureless content,--

So my soul held, that moment's heaven;--

I only know she came and went.

As, at one bound, our swift spring heaps

The orchards full of bloom and scent,

So clove her May my wintry sleeps;--

I only know she came and went.

An angel stood and met my gaze,

Through the low doorway of my tent;

The tent is struck, the vision stays;--

I only know she came and went

Oh, when the room grows slowly dim,

And life's last oil is nearly spent,

One gush of light these eyes will brim,

Only to think she came and went.

THE CHANGELING

I had a little daughter,

And she was given to me

To lead me gently backward

To the Heavenly Father's knee,

That I, by the force of nature.

Might in some dim wise divine

The depth of his infinite patience

To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,

But to me she was wholly fair,

And the light of the heaven she came from

Still lingered and gleamed in her hair;

For it was as wavy and golden,

And as many changes took,

As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples

On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling

Upon me, her kneeling lover,

How it leaped from her lips to her eyelids,

And dimpled her wholly over,

Till her outstretched hands smiled also,

And I almost seemed to see

The very heart of her mother

Sending sun through her veins to me!

She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth,

And it hardly seemed a day,

When a troop of wandering angels

Stole my little daughter away;

Or perhaps those heavenly Zingari

But loosed the hampering strings,

And when they had opened her cage-door.

My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling

A little angel child,

That seems like her bud in full blossom,

And smiles as she never smiled:

When I wake in the morning, I see it

Where she always used to lie,

And I feel as weak as a violet

Alone 'neath the awful sky.

As weak, yet as trustful also;

For the whole year long I see

All the wonders of faithful Nature

Still worked for the love of me;

Winds wander, and dews drip earthward,

Rain falls, suns rise and set,

Earth whirls, and all but to prosper

A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,

I cannot sing it to rest,

I cannot lift it up fatherly

And bliss it upon my breast:

Yet it lies in my little one's cradle

And sits in my little one's chair,

And the light of the heaven she's gone to

Transfigures its golden hair.

THE PIONEER

What man would live coffined with brick and stone,

Imprisoned from the healing touch of air,

And cramped with selfish landmarks everywhere,

When all before him stretches, furrowless and lone,

The unmapped prairie none can fence or own?

What man would read and read the self-same faces,

And, like the marbles which the windmill grinds,

Rub smooth forever with the same smooth minds,

This year retracing last year's, every year's, dull traces,

When there are woods and unpenfolded spaces?

What man o'er one old thought would pore and pore,

Shut like a book between its covers thin

For every fool to leave his dog's ears in,

When solitude is his, and God forevermore,

Just for the opening of a paltry door?

What man would watch life's oozy element

Creep Letheward forever, when he might

Down some great river drift beyond men's sight,

To where the undethroned forest's royal tent

Broods with its hush o'er half a continent?

What man with men would push and altercate,

Piecing out crooked means to crooked ends,

When he can have the skies and woods for friends,

Snatch back the rudder of his undismantled fate,

And in himself be ruler, church, and state?

Cast leaves and feathers rot in last year's nest,

The wingÃ¨d brood, flown thence, new dwellings plan;

The serf of his own Past is not a man;

To change and change is life, to move and never rest;--

Not what we are, but what we hope, is best.

The wild, free woods make no man halt or blind;

Cities rob men of eyes and hands and feet,

Patching one whole of many incomplete;

The general preys upon the individual mind,

And each alone is helpless as the wind.

Each man is some man's servant; every soul

Is by some other's presence quite discrowned;

Each owes the next through all the imperfect round,

Yet not with mutual help; each man is his own goal,

And the whole earth must stop to pay him toll.

Here, life the undiminished man demands;

New faculties stretch out to meet new wants;

What Nature asks, that Nature also grants;

Here man is lord, not drudge, of eyes and feet and hands,

And to his life is knit with hourly bands.

Come out, then, from the old thoughts and old ways,

Before you harden to a crystal cold

Which the new life can shatter, but not mould;

Freedom for you still waits, still looking backward, stays,

But widens still the irretrievable space.

LONGING

Of all the myriad moods of mind

That through the soul come thronging,

Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,

So beautiful as Longing?

The thing we long for, that we are

For one transcendent moment,

Before the Present poor and bare

Can make its sneering comment.

Still, through our paltry stir and strife,

Glows down the wished ideal,

And Longing moulds in clay what Life

Carves in the marble Real;

To let the new life in, we know,

Desire must ope the portal;

Perhaps the longing to be so

Helps make the soul immortal.

Longing is God's fresh heavenward will.

With our poor earthward striving;

We quench it that we may be still

Content with merely living;

But, would we learn that heart's full scope

Which we are hourly wronging,

Our lives must climb from hope to hope

And realize our longing.

Ah! let us hope that to our praise

Good God not only reckons

The moments when we tread his ways,

But when the spirit beckons,--

That some slight good is also wrought

Beyond self-satisfaction,

When we are simply good in thought,

Howe'er we fail in action.

ODE TO FRANCE

FEBRUARY, 1848

I

As, flake by flake, the beetling avalanches

Build up their imminent crags of noiseless snow,

Till some chance thrill the loosened ruin launches

In unwarned havoc on the roofs below,

So grew and gathered through the silent years

The madness of a People, wrong by wrong.

There seemed no strength in the dumb toiler's tears,

No strength in suffering; but the Past was strong:

The brute despair of trampled centuries

Leaped up with one hoarse yell and snapped its bands, 10

Groped for its right with horny, callous hands,

And stared around for God with bloodshot eyes.

What wonder if those palms were all too hard

For nice distinctions,--if that mÃ¦nad throng--

They whose thick atmosphere no bard

Had shivered with the lightning of his song,

Brutes with the memories and desires of men,

Whose chronicles were writ with iron pen,

In the crooked shoulder and the forehead low,

Set wrong to balance wrong, 20

And physicked woe with woe?

II

They did as they were taught; not theirs the blame,

If men who scattered firebrands reaped the flame:

They trampled Peace beneath their savage feet,

And by her golden tresses drew

Mercy along the pavement of the street.

O Freedom! Freedom! is thy morning-dew

So gory red? Alas, thy light had ne'er

Shone in upon the chaos of their lair!

They reared to thee such symbol as they knew, 30

And worshipped it with flame and blood,

A Vengeance, axe in hand, that stood

Holding a tyrant's head up by the clotted hair.

III

What wrongs the Oppressor suffered, these we know;

These have found piteous voice in song and prose;

But for the Oppressed, their darkness and their woe,

Their grinding centuries,--what Muse had those?

Though hall and palace had nor eyes nor ears,

Hardening a people's heart to senseless stone,

Thou knewest them, O Earth, that drank their tears, 40

O Heaven, that heard their inarticulate moan!

They noted down their fetters, link by link;

Coarse was the hand that scrawled, and red the ink;

Rude was their score, as suits unlettered men,

Notched with a headsman's axe upon a block:

What marvel if, when came the avenging shock,

'Twas AtÃ«, not Urania, held the pen?

IV

With eye averted, and an anguished frown,

Loathingly glides the Muse through scenes of strife,

Where, like the heart of Vengeance up and down, 50

Throbs in its framework the blood-muffled knife;

Slow are the steps of Freedom, but her feet

Turn never backward: hers no bloody glare;

Her light is calm, and innocent, and sweet,

And where it enters there is no despair:

Not first on palace and cathedral spire

Quivers and gleams that unconsuming fire;

While these stand black against her morning skies,

The peasant sees it leap from peak to peak

Along his hills; the craftsman's burning eyes 60

Own with cool tears its influence mother-meek;

It lights the poet's heart up like a star;

Ah! while the tyrant deemed it still afar,

And twined with golden threads his futile snare.

That swift, convicting glow all round him ran;

'Twas close beside him there,

Sunrise whose Memnon is the soul of man.

V

O Broker-King, is this thy wisdom's fruit?

A dynasty plucked out as 't were a weed

Grown rankly in a night, that leaves no seed! 70

Could eighteen years strike down no deeper root?

But now thy vulture eye was turned on Spain;

A shout from Paris, and thy crown falls off,

Thy race has ceased to reign,

And thou become a fugitive and scoff:

Slippery the feet that mount by stairs of gold,

And weakest of all fences one of steel;

Go and keep school again like him of old,

The Syracusan tyrant;--thou mayst feel

Royal amid a birch-swayed commonweal! 80

VI

Not long can he be ruler who allows

His time to run before him; thou wast naught

Soon as the strip of gold about thy brows

Was no more emblem of the People's thought:

Vain were thy bayonets against the foe

Thou hadst to cope with; thou didst wage

War not with Frenchmen merely;--no,

Thy strife was with the Spirit of the Age,

The invisible Spirit whose first breath divine 89

Scattered thy frail endeavor,

And, like poor last year's leaves, whirled thee and thine

Into the Dark forever!

VII

Is here no triumph? Nay, what though

The yellow blood of Trade meanwhile should pour

Along its arteries a shrunken flow,

And the idle canvas droop around the shore?

These do not make a state,

Nor keep it great;

I think God made

The earth for man, not trade; 100

And where each humblest human creature

Can stand, no more suspicious or afraid,

Erect and kingly in his right of nature,

To heaven and earth knit with harmonious ties,--

Where I behold the exultation

Of manhood glowing in those eyes

That had been dark for ages,

Or only lit with bestial loves and rages,

There I behold a Nation:

The France which lies 110

Between the Pyrenees and Rhine

Is the least part of France;

I see her rather in the soul whose shine

Burns through the craftsman's grimy countenance,

In the new energy divine

Of Toil's enfranchised glance.

VIII

And if it be a dream,

If the great Future be the little Past

'Neath a new mask, which drops and shows at last

The same weird, mocking face to balk and blast, 120

Yet, Muse, a gladder measure suits the theme,

And the TyrtÃ¦an harp

Loves notes more resolute and sharp,

Throbbing, as throbs the bosom, hot and fast:

Such visions are of morning,

Theirs is no vague forewarning,

The dreams which nations dream come true.

And shape the world anew;

If this be a sleep, 129

Make it long, make it deep,

O Father, who-sendest the harvests men reap!

While Labor so sleepeth,

His sorrow is gone,

No longer he weepeth,

But smileth and steepeth

His thoughts in the dawn;

He heareth Hope yonder

Rain, lark-like, her fancies,

His dreaming hands wander

Mid heart's-ease and pansies; 140

''Tis a dream! 'Tis a vision!'

Shrieks Mammon aghast;

'The day's broad derision

Will chase it at last;

Ye are mad, ye have taken

A slumbering kraken

For firm land of the Past!'

Ah! if he awaken,

God shield us all then, 149

If this dream rudely shaken

Shall cheat him again!

IX

Since first I heard our Northwind blow,

Since first I saw Atlantic throw

On our grim rocks his thunderous snow,

I loved thee, Freedom; as a boy

The rattle of thy shield at Marathon

Did with a Grecian joy

Through all my pulses run;

But I have learned to love thee now

Without the helm upon thy gleaming brow, 160

A maiden mild and undefiled

Like her who bore the world's redeeming child;

And surely never did thine altars glance

With purer fires than now in France;

While, in their clear white flashes,

Wrong's shadow, backward cast,

Waves cowering o'er the ashes

Of the dead, blaspheming Past,

O'er the shapes of fallen giants,

His own unburied brood, 170

Whose dead hands clench defiance

At the overpowering Good:

And down the happy future runs a flood

Of prophesying light;

It shows an Earth no longer stained with blood,

Blossom and fruit where now we see the bud

Of Brotherhood and Right.

ANTI-APIS

Praisest Law, friend? We, too, love it much as they that love it best;

'Tis the deep, august foundation, whereon Peace and Justice rest;

On the rock primeval, hidden in the Past its bases be,

Block by block the endeavoring Ages built it up to what we see.

But dig down: the Old unbury; thou shalt find on every stone

That each Age hath carved the symbol of what god to them was known,

Ugly shapes and brutish sometimes, but the fairest that they knew;

If their sight were dim and earthward, yet their hope and aim were true.

Surely as the unconscious needle feels the far-off loadstar draw,

So strives every gracious nature to at-one itself with law; 10

And the elder Saints and Sages laid their pious framework right

By a theocratic instinct covered from the people's sight.

As their gods were, so their laws were; Thor the strong could reave and

steal,

So through many a peaceful inlet tore the Norseman's eager keel;

But a new law came when Christ came, and not blameless, as before,

Can we, paying him our lip-tithes, give our lives and faiths to Thor.

Law is holy: ay, but what law? Is there nothing more divine

Than the patched-up broils of Congress, venal, full of meat and wine?

Is there, say you, nothing higher? Naught, God save us! that transcends

Laws of cotton texture, wove by vulgar men for vulgar ends? 20

Did Jehovah ask their counsel, or submit to them a plan,

Ere He filled with loves, hopes, longings, this aspiring heart of man?

For their edict does the soul wait, ere it swing round to the pole

Of the true, the free, the God-willed, all that makes it be a soul?

Law is holy; but not your law, ye who keep the tablets whole

While ye dash the Law to pieces, shatter it in life and soul;

Bearing up the Ark is lightsome, golden Apis hid within,

While we Levites share the offerings, richer by the people's sin.

Give to CÃ¦sar what is CÃ¦sar's? yes, but tell me, if you can,

Is this superscription CÃ¦sar's here upon our brother man? 30

Is not here some other's image, dark and sullied though it be,

In this fellow-soul that worships, struggles Godward even as we?

It was not to such a future that the Mayflower's prow was turned,

Not to such a faith the martyrs clung, exulting as they burned;

Not by such laws are men fashioned, earnest, simple, valiant, great

In the household virtues whereon rests the unconquerable state.

Ah! there is a higher gospel, overhead the God-roof springs,

And each glad, obedient planet like a golden shuttle sings

Through the web which Time is weaving in his never-resting loom,

Weaving seasons many-colored, bringing prophecy to doom. 40

Think you Truth a farthing rushlight, to be pinched out when you will

With your deft official fingers, and your politicians' skill?

Is your God a wooden fetish, to be hidden out of sight

That his block eyes may not see you do the thing that is not right?

But the Destinies think not so; to their judgment-chamber lone

Comes no noise of popular clamor, there Fame's trumpet is not blown;

Your majorities they reck not; that you grant, but then you say

That you differ with them somewhat,--which is stronger, you or they?

Patient are they as the insects that build islands in the deep;

They hurl not the bolted thunder, but their silent way they keep; 50

Where they have been that we know; where empires towered that were

not just;

Lo! the skulking wild fox scratches in a little heap of dust.

A PARABLE

Said Christ our Lord, 'I will go and see

How the men, my brethren, believe in me.'

He passed not again through the gate of birth,

But made himself known to the children of earth.

Then said the chief priests, and rulers, and kings,

'Behold, now, the Giver of all good things;

Go to, let us welcome with pomp and state

Him who alone is mighty and great.'

With carpets of gold the ground they spread

Wherever the Son of Man should tread,

And in palace-chambers lofty and rare

They lodged him, and served him with kingly fare.

Great organs surged through arches dim

Their jubilant floods in praise of him;

And in church, and palace, and judgment-hall,

He saw his own image high over all.

But still, wherever his steps they led,

The Lord in sorrow bent down his head,

And from under the heavy foundation-stones,

The son of Mary heard bitter groans.

And in church, and palace, and judgment-hall,

He marked great fissures that rent the wall,

And opened wider and yet more wide

As the living foundation heaved and sighed.

'Have ye founded your thrones and altars, then,

On the bodies and souls of living men?

And think ye that building shall endure,

Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor?

'With gates of silver and bars of gold

Ye have fenced my sheep from their Father's fold;

I have heard the dropping of their tears

In heaven these eighteen hundred years.'

'O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt,

We build but as our fathers built;

Behold thine images, how they stand,

Sovereign and sole, through all our land.

'Our task is hard,--with sword and flame

To hold thine earth forever the same,

And with sharp crooks of steel to keep

Still, as thou leftest them, thy sheep.'

Then Christ sought out an artisan,

A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,

And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin

Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set he in the midst of them,

And as they drew back their garment-hem,

For fear of defilement, 'Lo, here,' said he,

'The images ye have made of me!'

ODE

WRITTEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COCHITUATE

WATER INTO THE CITY OF BOSTON

My name is Water: I have sped

Through strange, dark ways, untried before,

By pure desire of friendship led,

Cochituate's ambassador;

He sends four royal gifts by me:

Long life, health, peace, and purity.

I'm Ceres' cup-bearer; I pour,

For flowers and fruits and all their kin,

Her crystal vintage, from of yore

Stored in old Earth's selectest bin,

Flora's Falernian ripe, since God

The wine-press of the deluge trod.

In that far isle whence, iron-willed,

The New World's sires their bark unmoored,

The fairies' acorn-cups I filled

Upon the toadstool's silver board,

And, 'neath Herne's oak, for Shakespeare's sight,

Strewed moss and grass with diamonds bright.

No fairies in the Mayflower came,

And, lightsome as I sparkle here,

For Mother Bay State, busy dame,

I've toiled and drudged this many a year,

Throbbed in her engines' iron veins,

Twirled myriad spindles for her gains.

I, too, can weave: the warp I set

Through which the sun his shuttle throws,

And, bright as Noah saw it, yet

For you the arching rainbow glows,

A sight in Paradise denied

To unfallen Adam and his bride.

When Winter held me in his grip,

You seized and sent me o'er the wave,

Ungrateful! in a prison-ship;

But I forgive, not long a slave,

For, soon as summer south-winds blew,

Homeward I fled, disguised as dew.

For countless services I'm fit,

Of use, of pleasure, and of gain,

But lightly from all bonds I flit,

Nor lose my mirth, nor feel a stain;

From mill and wash-tub I escape,

And take in heaven my proper shape.

So, free myself, to-day, elate

I come from far o'er hill and mead,

And here, Cochituate's envoy, wait

To be your blithesome Ganymede,

And brim your cups with nectar true

That never will make slaves of you.

LINES

SUGGESTED BY THE GRAVES OF TWO ENGLISH SOLDIERS ON CONCORD BATTLE-GROUND

The same good blood that now refills

The dotard Orient's shrunken veins,

The same whose vigor westward thrills,

Bursting Nevada's silver chains,

Poured here upon the April grass,

Freckled with red the herbage new;

On reeled the battle's trampling mass,

Back to the ash the bluebird flew.

Poured here in vain;--that sturdy blood

Was meant to make the earth more green,

But in a higher, gentler mood

Than broke this April noon serene;

Two graves are here: to mark the place,

At head and foot, an unhewn stone,

O'er which the herald lichens trace

The blazon of Oblivion.

These men were brave enough, and true

To the hired soldier's bull-dog creed;

What brought them here they never knew,

They fought as suits the English breed:

They came three thousand miles, and died,

To keep the Past upon its throne:

Unheard, beyond the ocean tide,

Their English mother made her moan.

The turf that covers them no thrill

Sends up to fire the heart and brain;

No stronger purpose nerves the will,

No hope renews its youth again:

From farm to farm the Concord glides,

And trails my fancy with its flow;

O'erhead the balanced hen-hawk slides,

Twinned in the river's heaven below.

But go, whose Bay State bosom stirs,

Proud of thy birth and neighbor's right,

Where sleep the heroic villagers

Borne red and stiff from Concord fight;

Thought Reuben, snatching down his gun,

Or Seth, as ebbed the life away,

What earthquake rifts would shoot and run

World-wide from that short April fray?

What then? With heart and hand they wrought,

According to their village light;

'Twas for the Future that they fought,

Their rustic faith in what was right.

Upon earth's tragic stage they burst

Unsummoned, in the humble sock;

Theirs the fifth act; the curtain first

Rose long ago on Charles's block.

Their graves have voices; if they threw

Dice charged with fates beyond their ken,

Yet to their instincts they were true,

And had the genius to be men.

Fine privilege of Freedom's host,

Of humblest soldiers for the Right!--

Age after age ye hold your post,

Your graves send courage forth, and might.

TO----

We, too, have autumns, when our leaves

Drop loosely through the dampened air,

When all our good seems bound in sheaves,

And we stand reaped and bare.

Our seasons have no fixed returns,

Without our will they come and go;

At noon our sudden summer burns,

Ere sunset all is snow.

But each day brings less summer cheer,

Crimps more our ineffectual spring,

And something earlier every year

Our singing birds take wing.

As less the olden glow abides,

And less the chillier heart aspires,

With drift-wood beached in past spring-tides

We light our sullen fires.

By the pinched rushlight's starving beam

We cower and strain our wasted sight,

To stitch youth's shroud up, seam by seam,

In the long arctic night.

It was not so--we once were young

When Spring, to womanly Summer turning,

Her dew-drops on each grass-blade strung,

In the red sunrise burning.

We trusted then, aspired, believed

That earth could be remade to-morrow;

Ah, why be ever undeceived?

Why give up faith for sorrow?

O thou, whose days are yet all spring,

Faith, blighted one, is past retrieving;

Experience is a dumb, dead thing;

The victory's in believing.

FREEDOM

Are we, then, wholly fallen? Can it be

That thou, North wind, that from thy mountains bringest

Their spirit to our plains, and thou, blue sea,

Who on our rocks thy wreaths of freedom flingest,

As on an altar,--can it be that ye

Have wasted inspiration on dead ears,

Dulled with the too familiar clank of chains?

The people's heart is like a harp for years

Hung where some petrifying torrent rains

Its slow-incrusting spray: the stiffened chords 10

Faint and more faint make answer to the tears

That drip upon them: idle are all words:

Only a golden plectrum wakes the tone

Deep buried 'neath that ever-thickening stone.

We are not free: doth Freedom, then, consist

In musing with our faces toward the Past,

While petty cares and crawling interests twist

Their spider-threads about us, which at last

Grow strong as iron chains, to cramp and bind

In formal narrowness heart, soul and mind? 20

Freedom is re-created year by year,

In hearts wide open on the Godward side,

In souls calm-cadenced as the whirling sphere,

In minds that sway the future like a tide.

He broadest creeds can hold her, and no codes;

She chooses men for her august abodes,

Building them fair and fronting to the dawn;

Yet, when we seek her, we but find a few

Light footprints, leading mornward through the dew:

Before the day had risen, she was gone. 30

And we must follow: swiftly runs she on,

And, if our steps should slacken in despair,

Half turns her face, half smiles through golden hair,

Forever yielding, never wholly won:

That is not love which pauses in the race

Two close-linked names on fleeting sand to trace;

Freedom gained yesterday is no more ours;

Men gather but dry seeds of last year's flowers;

Still there's a charm uugranted, still a grace,

Still rosy Hope, the free, the unattained, 40

Makes us Possession's languid hand let fall;

'Tis but a fragment of ourselves is gained,

The Future brings us more, but never all.

And, as the finder of some unknown realm,

Mounting a summit whence he thinks to see

On either side of him the imprisoning sea,

Beholds, above the clouds that overwhelm

The valley-land, peak after snowy peak

Stretch out of sight, each like a silver helm

Beneath its plume of smoke, sublime and bleak, 50

And what he thought an island finds to be

A continent to him first oped,--so we

Can from our height of Freedom look along

A boundless future, ours if we be strong;

Or if we shrink, better remount our ships

And, fleeing God's express design, trace back

The hero-freighted Mayflower's prophet-track

To Europe entering her blood-red eclipse.

\* \* \* \* \*

Therefore of Europe now I will not doubt,

For the broad foreheads surely win the day, 60

And brains, not crowns or soul-gelt armies, weigh

In Fortune's scales: such dust she brushes out.

Most gracious are the conquests of the Word,

Gradual and silent as a flower's increase,

And the best guide from old to new is Peace--

Yet, Freedom, than canst sanctify the sword!

Bravely to do whate'er the time demands,

Whether with pen or sword, and not to flinch,

This is the task that fits heroic hands;

So are Truth's boundaries widened inch by inch. 70

I do not love the Peace which tyrants make;

The calm she breeds let the sword's lightning break!

It is the tyrants who have beaten out

Ploughshares and pruning-hooks to spears and swords,

And shall I pause and moralize and doubt?

Whose veins run water let him mete his words!

Each fetter sundered is the whole world's gain!

And rather than humanity remain

A pearl beneath the feet of Austrian swine,

Welcome to me whatever breaks a chain. 80

\_That\_ surely is of God, and all divine!

BIBLIOLATRES

Bowing thyself in dust before a Book,

And thinking the great God is thine alone,

O rash iconoclast, thou wilt not brook

What gods the heathen carves in wood and stone,

As if the Shepherd who from the outer cold

Leads all his shivering lambs to one sure fold

Were careful for the fashion of his crook.

There is no broken reed so poor and base,

No rush, the bending tilt of swamp-fly blue,

But He therewith the ravening wolf can chase,

And guide his flock to springs and pastures new;

Through ways unloosed for, and through many lands,

Far from the rich folds built with human hands,

The gracious footprints of his love I trace.

And what art thou, own brother of the clod,

That from his hand the crook wouldst snatch away

And shake instead thy dry and sapless rod,

To scare the sheep out of the wholesome day?

Yea, what art thou, blind, unconverted Jew,

That with thy idol-volume's covers two

Wouldst make a jail to coop the living God?

Thou hear'st not well the mountain organ-tone

By prophet ears from Hor and Sinai caught,

Thinking the cisterns of those Hebrew brains

Drew dry the springs of the All-knower's thought,

Nor shall thy lips be touched with living fire,

Who blow'st old altar-coals with sole desire

To weld anew the spirit's broken chains.

God is not dumb, that He should speak no more;

If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness

And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor;

There towers the Mountain of the Voice no less,

Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends,

Intent on manna still and mortal ends,

Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,

And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;

Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,

Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.

While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,

While thunder's surges burst on cliffs and cloud,

Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit.

BEAVER BROOK

Hushed with broad sunlight lies the hill,

And, minuting the long day's loss,

The cedar's shadow, slow and still,

Creeps o'er its dial of gray moss.

Warm noon brims full the valley's cup,

The aspen's leaves are scarce astir;

Only the little mill sends up

Its busy, never-ceasing burr.

Climbing the loose-piled wall that hems

The road along the mill-pond's brink,

From 'neath the arching barberry-stems,

My footstep scares the shy chewink.

Beneath a bony buttonwood

The mill's red door lets forth the din;

The whitened miller, dust-imbued,

Flits past the square of dark within.

No mountain torrent's strength is here;

Sweet Beaver, child of forest still,

Heaps its small pitcher to the ear,

And gently waits the miller's will.

Swift slips Undine along the race

Unheard, and then, with flashing bound,

Floods the dull wheel with light and grace,

And, laughing, hunts the loath drudge round.

The miller dreams not at what cost

The quivering millstones hum and whirl,

Nor how for every turn are tost

Armfuls of diamond and of pearl.

But Summer cleared my happier eyes

With drops of some celestial juice,

To see how Beauty underlies

Forevermore each form of use.

And more; methought I saw that flood,

Which now so dull and darkling steals,

Thick, here and there, with human blood,

To turn the world's laborious wheels.

No more than doth the miller there,

Shut in our several cells, do we

Know with what waste of beauty rare

Moves every day's machinery.

Surely the wiser time shall come

When this fine overplus of might,

No longer sullen, slow, and dumb,

Shall leap to music and to light.

In that new childhood of the Earth

Life of itself shall dance and play,

Fresh blood in Time's shrunk veins make mirth,

And labor meet delight halfway.

MEMORIAL VERSES

KOSSUTH

A race of nobles may die out,

A royal line may leave no heir;

Wise Nature sets no guards about

Her pewter plate and wooden ware.

But they fail not, the kinglier breed,

Who starry diadems attain;

To dungeon, axe, and stake succeed

Heirs of the old heroic strain.

The zeal of Nature never cools,

Nor is she thwarted of her ends;

When gapped and dulled her cheaper tools,

Then she a saint and prophet spends.

Land of the Magyars! though it be

The tyrant may relink his chain,

Already thine the victory,

As the just Future measures gain.

Thou hast succeeded, thou hast won

The deathly travail's amplest worth;

A nation's duty thou hast done,

Giving a hero to our earth.

And he, let come what will of woe

Hath saved the land he strove to save;

No Cossack hordes, no traitor's blow,

Can quench the voice shall haunt his grave.

'I Kossuth am: O Future, thou

That clear'st the just and blott'st the vile,

O'er this small dust in reverence bow,

Remembering what I was erewhile.

'I was the chosen trump wherethrough

Our God sent forth awakening breath;

Came chains? Came death? The strain He blew

Sounds on, outliving chains and death.'

TO LAMARTINE

1848

I did not praise thee when the crowd,

'Witched with the moment's inspiration,

Vexed thy still ether with hosannas loud,

And stamped their dusty adoration;

I but looked upward with the rest,

And, when they shouted Greatest, whispered Best.

They raised thee not, but rose to thee,

Their fickle wreaths about thee flinging;

So on some marble Phoebus the swol'n sea

Might leave his worthless seaweed clinging,

But pious hands, with reverent care,

Make the pure limbs once more sublimely bare.

Now thou'rt thy plain, grand self again,

Thou art secure from panegyric,

Thou who gav'st politics an epic strain,

And actedst Freedom's noblest lyric;

This side the Blessed Isles, no tree

Grows green enough to make a wreath for thee.

Nor can blame cling to thee; the snow

From swinish footprints takes no staining,

But, leaving the gross soils of earth below,

Its spirit mounts, the skies regaining,

And unresentful falls again,

To beautify the world with dews and rain.

The highest duty to mere man vouchsafed

Was laid on thee,--out of wild chaos,

When the roused popular ocean foamed and chafed

And vulture War from his Imaus

Snuffed blood, to summon homely Peace,

And show that only order is release.

To carve thy fullest thought, what though

Time was not granted? Aye in history,

Like that Dawn's face which baffled Angelo

Left shapeless, grander for its mystery,

Thy great Design shall stand, and day

Flood its blind front from Orients far away.

Who says thy day is o'er? Control,

My heart, that bitter first emotion;

While men shall reverence the steadfast soul,

The heart in silent self-devotion

Breaking, the mild, heroic mien,

Thou'lt need no prop of marble, Lamartine.

If France reject thee, 'tis not thine,

But her own, exile that she utters;

Ideal France, the deathless, the divine,

Will be where thy white pennon flutters,

As once the nobler Athens went

With Aristides into banishment.

No fitting metewand hath To-day

For measuring spirits of thy stature;

Only the Future can reach up to lay

The laurel on that lofty nature,

Bard, who with some diviner art

Hast touched the bard's true lyre, a nation's heart.

Swept by thy hand, the gladdened chords,

Crashed now in discords fierce by others,

Gave forth one note beyond all skill of words,

And chimed together, We are brothers.

O poem unsurpassed! it ran

All round the world, unlocking man to man.

France is too poor to pay alone

The service of that ample spirit;

Paltry seem low dictatorship and throne,

Weighed with thy self-renouncing merit;

They had to thee been rust and loss;

Thy aim was higher,--thou hast climbed a Cross!

TO JOHN GORHAM PALFREY

There are who triumph in a losing cause,

Who can put on defeat, as 'twere a wreath

Unwithering in the adverse popular breath,

Safe from the blasting demagogue's applause;

'Tis they who stand for Freedom and God's laws.

And so stands Palfrey now, as Marvell stood,

Loyal to Truth dethroned, nor could be wooed

To trust the playful tiger's velvet paws:

And if the second Charles brought in decay

Of ancient virtue, if it well might wring

Souls that had broadened 'neath a nobler day,

To see a losel, marketable king

Fearfully watering with his realm's best blood

Cromwell's quenched bolts, that erst had cracked and flamed,

Scaring, through all their depths of courtier mud,

Europe's crowned bloodsuckers,--how more ashamed

Ought we to be, who see Corruption's flood

Still rise o'er last year's mark, to mine away

Our brazen idol's feet of treacherous clay!

O utter degradation! Freedom turned

Slavery's vile bawd, to cozen and betray

To the old lecher's clutch a maiden prey,

If so a loathsome pander's fee be earned!

And we are silent,--we who daily tread

A soil sublime, at least, with heroes' graves!--

Beckon no more, shades of the noble dead!

Be dumb, ye heaven-touched lips of winds and waves!

Or hope to rouse some Coptic dullard, hid

Ages ago, wrapt stiffly, fold on fold,

With cerements close, to wither in the cold,

Forever hushed, and sunless pyramid!

Beauty and Truth, and all that these contain,

Drop not like ripened fruit about our feet;

We climb to them through years of sweat and pain;

Without long struggle, none did e'er attain

The downward look from Quiet's blissful seat:

Though present loss may be the hero's part,

Yet none can rob him of the victor heart

Whereby the broad-realmed future is subdued,

And Wrong, which now insults from triumph's car,

Sending her vulture hope to raven far,

Is made unwilling tributary of Good.

O Mother State, how quenched thy Sinai fires!

Is there none left of thy stanch Mayflower breed?

No spark among the ashes of thy sires,

Of Virtue's altar-flame the kindling seed?

Are these thy great men, these that cringe and creep,

And writhe through slimy ways to place and power?--

How long, O Lord, before thy wrath shall reap

Our frail-stemmed summer prosperings in their flower?

Oh for one hour of that undaunted stock

That went with Vane and Sidney to the block!

Oh for a whiff of Naseby, that would sweep,

With its stern Puritan besom, all this chaff

From the Lord's threshing-floor! Yet more than half

The victory is attained, when one or two,

Through the fool's laughter and the traitor's scorn,

Beside thy sepulchre can bide the morn,

Crucified Truth, when thou shalt rise anew.

TO W.L. GARRISON

'Some time afterward, it was reported to me by the city officers that

they had ferreted out the paper and its editor; that his office was an

obscure hole, his only visible auxiliary a negro boy, and his supporters

a few very insignificant persons of all colors.'--\_Letter of H.G.

Otis\_.

In a small chamber, friendless and unseen,

Toiled o'er his types one poor, unlearned young man;

The place was dark, unfurnitured, and mean;

Yet there the freedom of a race began.

Help came but slowly; surely no man yet

Put lever to the heavy world with less:

What need of help? He knew how types were set,

He had a dauntless spirit, and a press.

Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,

The compact nucleus, round which systems grow;

Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,

And whirls impregnate with the central glow.

O Truth! O Freedom! how are ye still born

In the rude stable, in the manger nurst!

What humble hands unbar those gates of morn

Through which the splendors of the New Day burst!

What! shall one monk, scarce known beyond his cell,

Front Rome's far-reaching bolts, and scorn her frown?

Brave Luther answered YES; that thunder's swell

Rocked Europe, and discharmed the triple crown.

Whatever can be known of earth we know,

Sneered Europe's wise men, in their snail-shells curled;

No! said one man in Genoa, and that No

Out of the darkness summoned this New World.

Who is it will not dare himself to trust?

Who is it hath not strength to stand alone?

Who is it thwarts and bilks the inward MUST?

He and his works, like sand, from earth are blown.

Men of a thousand shifts and wiles, look here!

See one straightforward conscience put in pawn

To win a world; see the obedient sphere

By bravery's simple gravitation drawn!

Shall we not heed the lesson taught of old,

And by the Present's lips repeated still,

In our own single manhood to be bold,

Fortressed in conscience and impregnable will?

We stride the river daily at its spring,

Nor, in our childless thoughtlessness, foresee

What myriad vassal streams shall tribute bring,

How like an equal it shall greet the sea.

O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,

Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain!

Ye build the future fair, ye conquer wrong,

Ye earn the crown, and wear it not in vain.

ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES TURNER TORREY

Woe worth the hour when it is crime

To plead the poor dumb bondman's cause,

When all that makes the heart sublime,

The glorious throbs that conquer time,

Are traitors to our cruel laws!

He strove among God's suffering poor

One gleam of brotherhood to send;

The dungeon oped its hungry door

To give the truth one martyr more,

Then shut,--and here behold the end!

O Mother State! when this was done,

No pitying throe thy bosom gave;

Silent thou saw'st the death-shroud spun,

And now thou givest to thy son

The stranger's charity,--a grave.

Must it be thus forever? No!

The hand of God sows not in vain,

Long sleeps the darkling seed below,

The seasons come, and change, and go,

And all the fields are deep with grain.

Although our brother lie asleep,

Man's heart still struggles, still aspires;

His grave shall quiver yet, while deep

Through the brave Bay State's pulses leap

Her ancient energies and fires.

When hours like this the senses' gush

Have stilled, and left the spirit room,

It hears amid the eternal hush

The swooping pinions' dreadful rush,

That bring the vengeance and the doom;--

Not man's brute vengeance, such as rends

What rivets man to man apart,--

God doth not so bring round his ends,

But waits the ripened time, and sends

His mercy to the oppressor's heart.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF DR. CHANNING

I do not come to weep above thy pall,

And mourn the dying-out of noble powers,

The poet's clearer eye should see, in all

Earth's seeming woe, seed of immortal flowers.

Truth needs no champions: in the infinite deep

Of everlasting Soul her strength abides,

From Nature's heart her mighty pulses leap,

Through Nature's veins her strength, undying, tides.

Peace is more strong than war, and gentleness,

Where force were vain, makes conquest o'er the wave; 10

And love lives on and hath a power to bless,

When they who loved are hidden in the grave.

The sculptured marble brags of deathstrewn fields,

And Glory's epitaph is writ in blood;

But Alexander now to Plato yields,

Clarkson will stand where Wellington hath stood.

I watch the circle of the eternal years,

And read forever in the storied page

One lengthened roll of blood, and wrong, and tears,

One onward step of Truth from age to age. 20

The poor are crushed: the tyrants link their chain;

The poet sings through narrow dungeon-grates;

Man's hope lies quenched; and, lo! with steadfast gain

Freedom doth forge her mail of adverse fates.

Men slay the prophets; fagot, rack, and cross

Make up the groaning record of the past;

But Evil's triumphs are her endless loss,

And sovereign Beauty wins the soul at last.

No power can die that ever wrought for Truth;

Thereby a law of Nature it became, 30

And lives unwithered in its blithesome youth,

When he who called it forth is but a name.

Therefore I cannot think thee wholly gone;

The better part of thee is with us still;

Thy soul its hampering clay aside hath thrown,

And only freer wrestles with the ill.

Thou livest in the life of all good things;

What words thou spak'st for Freedom shall not die;

Thou sleepest not, for now thy Love hath wings

To soar where hence thy Hope could hardly fly. 40

And often, from that other world, on this

Some gleams from great souls gone before may shine,

To shed on struggling hearts a clearer bliss,

And clothe the Right with lustre more divine.

Thou art not idle: in thy higher sphere

Thy spirit bends itself to loving tasks,

And strength to perfect what it dreamed of here

Is all the crown and glory that it asks.

For sure, in Heaven's wide chambers, there is room

For love and pity, and for helpful deeds; 50

Else were our summons thither but a doom

To life more vain than this in clayey weeds.

From off the starry mountain-peak of song,

Thy spirit shows me, in the coming time,

An earth unwithered by the foot of wrong,

A race revering its own soul sublime.

What wars, what martyrdoms, what crimes, may come,

Thou knowest not, nor I; but God will lead

The prodigal soul from want and sorrow home,

And Eden ope her gates to Adam's seed. 60

Farewell! good man, good angel now! this hand

Soon, like thine own, shall lose its cunning too;

Soon shall this soul, like thine, bewildered stand,

Then leap to thread the free, unfathomed blue:

When that day comes, oh, may this hand grow cold,

Busy, like thine, for Freedom and the Right;

Oh, may this soul, like thine, be ever bold

To face dark Slavery's encroaching blight!

This laurel-leaf I cast upon thy bier;

Let worthier hands than these thy wreath intwine; 70

Upon thy hearse I shed no useless tear,--

For us weep rather thou in calm divine!

TO THE MEMORY OF HOOD

Another star 'neath Time's horizon dropped,

To gleam o'er unknown lands and seas;

Another heart that beat for freedom stopped,--

What mournful words are these!

O Love Divine, that claspest our tired earth,

And lullest it upon thy heart,

Thou knowest how much a gentle soul is worth

To teach men what thou art!

His was a spirit that to all thy poor

Was kind as slumber after pain:

Why ope so soon thy heaven-deep Quiet's door

And call him home again?

Freedom needs all her poets: it is they

Who give her aspirations wings,

And to the wiser law of music sway

Her wild imaginings.

Yet thou hast called him, nor art thou unkind,

O Love Divine, for 'tis thy will

That gracious natures leave their love behind

To work for Mercy still.

Let laurelled marbles weigh on other tombs,

Let anthems peal for other dead,

Rustling the bannered depth of minster-glooms

With their exulting spread.

His epitaph shall mock the short-lived stone,

No lichen shall its lines efface,

He needs these few and simple lines alone

To mark his resting-place:

'Here lies a Poet. Stranger, if to thee

His claim to memory be obscure,

If thou wouldst learn how truly great was he,

Go, ask it of the poor.'

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

According to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy

Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with

his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and

remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in

the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who

had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the

keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From

that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court

to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it,

as may be read in the seventeenth book of the Romance of King Arthur.

Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite

of his poems.

The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the

following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged

the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a

manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the

Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the supposed date

of King Arthur's reign.

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST

Over his keys the musing organist,

Beginning doubtfully and far away,

First lets his fingers wander as they list,

And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:

Then, as the touch of his loved instrument

Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,

First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent

Along the wavering vista of his dream.

\* \* \* \* \*

Not only around our infancy

Doth heaven with all its splendors lie; 10

Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,

We Sinais climb and know it not.

Over our manhood bend the skies;

Against our fallen and traitor lives

The great winds utter prophecies;

With our faint hearts the mountain strives;

Its arms outstretched, the druid wood

Waits with its benedicite;

And to our age's drowsy Wood

Still shouts the inspiring sea. 20

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;

The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,

The priest hath his lee who comes and shrives us,

We bargain for the graves we lie in;

At the devil's booth are all things sold,

Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;

For a cap and bells our lives we pay,

Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:

'Tis heaven alone that is given away,

'Tis only God may be had for the asking 30

No price is set on the lavish summer;

June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?

Then, if ever, come perfect days;

Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,

And over it softly her warm ear lays;

Whether we look, or whether we listen,

We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;

Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and towers, 40

And, groping blindly above it for light,

Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;

The flush of life may well be seen

Thrilling back over hills and valleys;

The cowslip startles in meadows green,

The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,

And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean

To be some happy creature's palace;

The little bird sits at his door in the sun,

Atilt like a blossom among the leaves, 50

And lets his illumined being o'errun

With the deluge of summer it receives;

His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,

And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;

He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,--

In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,

And whatever of life hath ebbed away

Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,

Into every bare inlet and creek and bay; 60

Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,

We are happy now because God wills it;

No matter how barren the past may have been,

'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;

We sit in the warm shade and feel right well

How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;

We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing

That skies are clear and grass is growing;

The breeze comes whispering in our ear,

That dandelions are blossoming near, 70

That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,

That the river is bluer than the sky,

That the robin is plastering his house hard by;

And if the breeze kept the good news back,

For other couriers we should not lack;

We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,--

And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,

Warmed with the new wine of the year,

Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how; 80

Everything is happy now,

Everything is upward striving;

'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true

As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,--

'Tis the natural way of living:

Who knows whither the clouds have fled?

In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;

And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,

The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;

The soul partakes the season's youth, 90

And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe

Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,

Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.

What wonder if Sir Launfal now

Remembered the keeping of his vow?

PART FIRST

I

'My golden spurs now bring to me,

And bring to me my richest mail,

For to-morrow I go over land and sea

In search of the Holy Grail;

Shall never a bed for me be spread, 100

Nor shall a pillow be under my head,

Till I begin my vow to keep;

Here on the rushes will I sleep,

And perchance there may come a vision true

Ere day create the world anew.'

Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,

Slumber fell like a cloud on him,

And into his soul the vision flew.

II

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,

In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees, 110

The little birds sang as if it were

The one day of summer in all the year,

And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:

The castle alone in the landscape lay

Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray:

'Twas the proudest hall in the North Countree,

And never its gates might opened be,

Save to lord or lady of high degree;

Summer besieged it on every side,

But the churlish stone her assaults defied; 120

She could not scale the chilly wall,

Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall

Stretched left and right,

Over the hills and out of sight;

Green and broad was every tent,

And out of each a murmur went

Till the breeze fell off at night.

III

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,

And through the dark arch a charger sprang,

Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight, 130

In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright

It seemed the dark castle had gathered all

Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall

In his siege of three hundred summers long,

And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,

Had cast them forth: so, young and strong,

And lightsome as a locust-leaf,

Sir Launfal flashed forth in his maiden mail,

To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV

It was morning on hill and stream and tree, 140

And morning in the young knight's heart;

Only the castle moodily

Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,

And gloomed by itself apart;

The season brimmed all other things up

Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

V

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,

He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,

Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;

And a loathing over Sir Launfal came; 150

The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,

The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink and crawl,

And midway its leap his heart stood still

Like a frozen waterfall;

For this man, so foul and bent of stature,

Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,

And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,--

So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:

'Better to me the poor man's crust, 160

Better the blessing of the poor,

Though I turn me empty from his door;

That is no true alms which the hand can hold;

He gives only the worthless gold

Who gives from a sense of duty;

But he who gives but a slender mite,

And gives to that which is out of sight,

That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty

Which runs through all and doth all unite,--

The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms, 170

The heart outstretches its eager palms,

For a god goes with it and makes it store

To the soul that was starving in darkness before.'

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,

From the snow five thousand summers old;

On open wold and hilltop bleak

It had gathered all the cold,

And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;

It carried a shiver everywhere

From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare; 180

The little brook heard it and built a roof

'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;

All night by the white stars' frosty gleams

He groined his arches and matched his beams;

Slender and clear were his crystal spars

As the lashes of light that trim the stars:

He sculptured every summer delight

In his halls and chambers out of sight;

Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt

Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt, 190

Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees

Bending to counterfeit a breeze;

Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew

But silvery mosses that downward grew;

Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief

With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;

Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear

For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here

He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops

And hung them thickly with diamond drops, 200

That crystalled the beams of moon and sun,

And made a star of every one:

No mortal builder's most rare device

Could match this winter-palace of ice;

'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay

In his depths serene through the summer day,

Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,

Lest the happy model should be lost,

Had been mimicked in fairy masonry

By the elfin builders of the frost. 210

Within the hall are song and laughter,

The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,

And sprouting is every corbel and rafter

With lightsome green of ivy and holly;

Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide

Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;

The broad flame-pennons droop and flap

And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;

Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,

Hunted to death in its galleries blind; 220

And swift little troops of silent sparks,

Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,

Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks

Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,

Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,

And rattles and wrings

The icy strings,

Singing, in dreary monotone,

A Christmas carol of its own, 230

Whose burden still, as he might guess,

Was 'Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!'

The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch

As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,

And he sat in the gateway and saw all night

The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,

Through the window-slits of the castle old,

Build out its piers of ruddy light

Against the drift of the cold.

PART SECOND

I

There was never a leaf on bush or tree, 240

The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;

The river was dumb and could not speak,

For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;

A single crow on the tree-top bleak

From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;

Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,

As if her veins were sapless and old,

And she rose up decrepitly

For a last dim look at earth and sea.

II

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate, 250

For another heir in his earldom sate;

An old, bent man, worn out and frail,

He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;

Little he recked of his earldom's loss,

No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,

But deep in his soul the sign he wore,

The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare

Was idle mail 'gainst the barbÃ¨d air,

For it was just at the Christmas time; 260

So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,

And sought for a shelter from cold and snow

In the light and warmth of long-ago;

He sees the snake-like caravan crawl

O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,

Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,

He can count the camels in the sun,

As over the red-hot sands they pass

To where, in its slender necklace of grass,

The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade, 270

And with its own self like an infant played,

And waved its signal of palms.

IV

'For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;'

The happy camels may reach the spring,

But Sir Launfal sees only the grewsome thing,

The leper, lank as the rain-blanched bone,

That cowers beside him, a thing as lone

And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas

In the desolate horror of his disease.

V

And Sir Launfal said, 'I behold in thee 280

An image of Him who died on the tree;

Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,

Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,

And to thy life were not denied

The wounds in the hands and feet and side:

Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;

Behold, through him, I give to thee!'

VI

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes

And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he

Remembered in what a haughtier guise 290

He had flung an alms to leprosie,

When he girt his young life up in gilded mail

And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.

The heart within him was ashes and dust;

He parted in twain his single crust,

He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,

And gave the leper to eat and drink.

'Twas a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,

'Twas water out of a wooden bowl,--

Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed, 300

And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,

A light shone round about the place;

The leper no longer crouched at his side,

But stood before him glorified,

Shining and tall and fair and straight

As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,--

Himself the Gate whereby men can

Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine, 310

And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,

That mingle their softness and quiet in one

With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;

And the voice that was softer than silence said,

'Lo, it is I, be not afraid!

In many climes, without avail,

Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;

Behold, it is here,--this cup which thou

Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;

This crust is my body broken for thee, 320

This water his blood that died on the tree;

The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,

In whatso we share with another's need;

Not what we give, but what we share,

For the gift without the giver is bare;

Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,

Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.'

IX

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swound:

'The Grail in my castle here is found!

Hang my idle armor up on the wall, 330

Let it be the spider's banquet hall;

He must be fenced with stronger mail

Who would seek and find the Holy Grail.'

X

The castle gate stands open now,

And the wanderer is welcome to the hall

As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;

No longer scowl the turrets tall,

The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;

When the first poor outcast went in at the door,

She entered with him in disguise,

And mastered the fortress by surprise; 341

There is no spot she loves so well on ground,

She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;

The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land

Has hall and bower at his command;

And there's no poor man in the North Countree

But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

LETTER FROM BOSTON

\_December, 1846.\_

Dear M----

By way of saving time,

I'll do this letter up in rhyme,

Whose slim stream through four pages flows

Ere one is packed with tight-screwed prose,

Threading the tube of an epistle,

Smooth as a child's breath through a whistle.

The great attraction now of all

Is the 'Bazaar' at Faneuil Hall,

Where swarm the anti-slavery folks

As thick, dear Miller, as your jokes. 10

There's GARRISON, his features very

Benign for an incendiary,

Beaming forth sunshine through his glasses

On the surrounding lads and lasses,

(No bee could blither be, or brisker,)--

A Pickwick somehow turned John Ziska,

His bump of firmness swelling up

Like a rye cupcake from its cup.

And there, too, was his English tea-set, 19

Which in his ear a kind of flea set,

His Uncle Samuel for its beauty

Demanding sixty dollars duty,

('Twas natural Sam should serve his trunk ill;

For G., you know, has cut his uncle,)

Whereas, had he but once made tea in't,

His uncle's ear had had the flea in't,

There being not a cent of duty

On any pot that ever drew tea.

There was MARIA CHAPMAN, too,

With her swift eyes of clear steel-blue, 30

The coiled-up mainspring of the Fair,

Originating everywhere

The expansive force without a sound

That whirls a hundred wheels around,

Herself meanwhile as calm and still

As the bare crown of Prospect Hill;

A noble woman, brave and apt,

CumÃ¦an sibyl not more rapt,

Who might, with those fair tresses shorn,

The Maid of Orleans' casque have worn, 40

Herself the Joan of our Ark,

For every shaft a shining mark.

And there, too, was ELIZA FOLLEN,

Who scatters fruit-creating pollen

Where'er a blossom she can find

Hardy enough for Truth's north wind,

Each several point of all her face

Tremblingly bright with the inward grace,

As if all motion gave it light

Like phosphorescent seas at night.

There jokes our EDMUND, plainly son 51

Of him who bearded Jefferson,

A non-resistant by conviction,

But with a bump in contradiction,

So that whene'er it gets a chance

His pen delights to play the lance,

And--you may doubt it, or believe it--

Full at the head of Joshua Leavitt

The very calumet he'd launch,

And scourge him with the olive branch. 60

A master with the foils of wit,

'Tis natural he should love a hit;

A gentleman, withal, and scholar,

Only base things excite his choler,

And then his satire's keen and thin

As the lithe blade of Saladin.

Good letters are a gift apart,

And his are gems of Flemish art,

True offspring of the fireside Muse,

Not a rag-gathering of news 70

Like a new hopfield which is all poles,

But of one blood with Horace Walpole's.

There, with cue hand behind his back,

Stands PHILLIPS buttoned in a sack,

Our Attic orator, our Chatham;

Old fogies, when he lightens at 'em,

Shrivel like leaves; to him 'tis granted

Always to say the word that's wanted,

So that he seems but speaking clearer

The tiptop thought of every hearer; 80

Each flash his brooding heart lets fall

Fires what's combustible in all,

And sends the applauses bursting in

Like an exploded magazine.

His eloquence no frothy show,

The gutter's street-polluted flow,

No Mississippi's yellow flood

Whose shoalness can't be seen for mud;--

So simply clear, serenely deep, 89

So silent-strong its graceful sweep,

None measures its unrippling force

Who has not striven to stem its course;

How fare their barques who think to play

With smooth Niagara's mane of spray,

Let Austin's total shipwreck say.

He never spoke a word too much--

Except of Story, or some such,

Whom, though condemned by ethics strict,

The heart refuses to convict.

Beyond; a crater in each eye, 100

Sways brown, broad-shouldered PILLSBURY,

Who tears up words like trees by the roots,

A Theseus in stout cow-hide boots,

The wager of eternal war

Against that loathsome Minotaur

To whom we sacrifice each year

The best blood of our Athens here,

(Dear M., pray brush up your Lempriere.)

A terrible denouncer he,

Old Sinai burns unquenchably 110

Upon his lips; he well might be a

Hot-blazing soul from fierce Judea,

Habakkuk, Ezra, or Hosea.

His words are red hot iron searers,

And nightmare-like he mounts his hearers,

Spurring them like avenging Fate, or

As Waterton his alligator.

Hard by, as calm as summer even,

Smiles the reviled and pelted STEPHEN,

The unappeasable Boanerges 120

To all the Churches and the Clergies,

The grim \_savant\_ who, to complete

His own peculiar cabinet,

Contrived to label 'mong his kicks

One from the followers of Hicks;

Who studied mineralogy

Not with soft book upon the knee,

But learned the properties of stones

By contact sharp of flesh and bones,

And made the \_experimentum crucis\_ 130

With his own body's vital juices;

A man with caoutchouc endurance,

A perfect gem for life insurance,

A kind of maddened John the Baptist,

To whom the harshest word comes aptest,

Who, struck by stone or brick ill-starred,

Hurls back an epithet as hard,

Which, deadlier than stone or brick,

Has a propensity to stick.

His oratory is like the scream 140

Of the iron-horse's frenzied steam

Which warns the world to leave wide space

For the black engine's swerveless race.

Ye men with neckcloths white, I warn you--

\_Habet\_ a whole haymow \_in cornu\_.

A Judith, there, turned Quakeress,

Sits ABBY in her modest dress,

Serving a table quietly,

As if that mild and downcast eye

Flashed never, with its scorn intense, 150

More than Medea's eloquence.

So the same force which shakes its dread

Far-blazing blocks o'er Ãtna's head,

Along the wires in silence fares

And messages of commerce bears.

No nobler gift of heart and brain,

No life more white from spot or stain,

Was e'er on Freedom's altar laid

Than hers, the simple Quaker maid.

These last three (leaving in the lurch 160

Some other themes) assault the Church,

Who therefore writes them in her lists

As Satan's limbs and atheists;

For each sect has one argument

Whereby the rest to hell are sent,

Which serve them like the GraiÃ¦'s tooth,

Passed round in turn from mouth to mouth;--

If any \_ism\_ should arise,

Then look on it with constable's eyes, 169

Tie round its neck a heavy \_athe-\_,

And give it kittens' hydropathy.

This trick with other (useful very) tricks

Is laid to the Babylonian \_meretrix\_,

But 'twas in vogue before her day

Wherever priesthoods had their way,

And Buddha's Popes with this struck dumb

The followers of Fi and Fum.

Well, if the world, with prudent fear

Pay God a seventh of the year,

And as a Farmer, who would pack

All his religion in one stack, 181

For this world works six days in seven

And idles on the seventh for Heaven,

Expecting, for his Sunday's sowing,

In the next world to go a-mowing

The crop of all his meeting-going;--

If the poor Church, by power enticed,

Finds none so infidel as Christ,

Quite backward reads his Gospel meek,

(As 'twere in Hebrew writ, not Greek,) 190

Fencing the gallows and the sword

With conscripts drafted from his word,

And makes one gate of Heaven so wide

That the rich orthodox might ride

Through on their camels, while the poor

Squirm through the scant, unyielding door,

Which, of the Gospel's straitest size,

Is narrower than bead-needles' eyes,

What wonder World and Church should call

The true faith atheistical? 200

Yet, after all, 'twixt you and me,

Dear Miller, I could never see

That Sin's and Error's ugly smirch

Stained the walls only of the Church;

There are good priests, and men who take

Freedom's torn cloak for lucre's sake;

I can't believe the Church so strong,

As some men do, for Right or Wrong,

But, for this subject (long and vext)

I must refer you to my next, 210

As also for a list exact

Of goods with which the Hall was packed.

READER! \_walk up at once (it will soon be too late), and buy

at a perfectly ruinous rate.\_

A FABLE FOR CRITICS;

OR, BETTER--

\_I like, as a thing that the reader's first fancy may strike,

an old fashioned title-page,

such as presents a tabular view of the volumes contents\_,--

A GLANCE AT A FEW OF OUR LITERARY PROGENIES

(Mrs. Malaprop's Word)

FROM THE TUB OF DIOGENES;

A VOCAL AND MUSICAL MEDLEY,

THAT IS,

A SERIES OF JOKES

BY A WONDERFUL QUIZ

\_Who accompanies himself with a rub-a-dub-dub, full of spirit and grace,

on the top of the tub.\_

SET FORTH IN

\_October, the 21st day, in the year '48.\_

G.P. PUTNAM, BROADWAY.

It being the commonest mode of procedure, I premise a few candid remarks

TO THE READER:--

This trifle, begun to please only myself and my own private fancy, was

laid on the shelf. But some friends, who had seen it, induced me, by

dint of saying they liked it, to put it in print. That is, having come

to that very conclusion, I asked their advice when 'twould make no

confusion. For though (in the gentlest of ways) they had hinted it was

scarce worth the while, I should doubtless have printed it.

I began it, intending a Fable, a frail, slender thing, rhymeywinged,

with a sting in its tail. But, by addings and alterings not previously

planned, digressions chance-hatched, like birds' eggs in the sand, and

dawdlings to suit every whimsey's demand (always freeing the bird which

I held In my hand, for the two perched, perhaps out of reach, in the

tree),--it grew by degrees to the size which you see. I was like the old

woman that carried the calf, and my neighbors, like hers, no doubt,

wonder and laugh; and when, my strained arms with their grown burthen

full, I call it my Fable, they call it a bull.

Having scrawled at full gallop (as far as that goes) in a style that is

neither good verse nor bad prose, and being a person whom nobody knows,

some people will say I am rather more free with my readers than it is

becoming to be, that I seem to expect them to wait on my leisure in

following wherever I wander at pleasure, that, in short, I take more

than a young author's lawful ease, and laugh in a queer way so like

Mephistopheles, that the Public will doubt, as they grope through my

rhythm, if in truth I am making fun \_of\_ them or \_with\_ them.

So the excellent Public is hereby assured that the sale of my book is

already secured. For there is not a poet throughout the whole land but

will purchase a copy or two out of hand, in the fond expectation of

being amused in it, by seeing his betters cut up and abused in it. Now,

I find, by a pretty exact calculation, there are something like ten

thousand bards in the nation, of that special variety whom the Review

and Magazine critics call \_lofty\_ and \_true\_, and about thirty

thousand (\_this\_ tribe is increasing) of the kinds who are termed

\_full of promise\_ and \_pleasing\_. The Public will see by a glance

at this schedule, that they cannot expect me to be over-sedulous about

courting \_them\_, since it seems I have got enough fuel made sure of

for boiling my pot.

As for such of our poets as find not their names mentioned once in my

pages, with praises or blames, let them SEND IN THEIR CARDS, without

further DELAY, to my friend G.P. PUTNAM, Esquire, in Broadway, where a

LIST will be kept with the strictest regard to the day and the hour of

receiving the card. Then, taking them up as I chance to have time (that

is, if their names can be twisted in rhyme), I will honestly give each

his PROPER POSITION, at the rate of ONE AUTHOR to each NEW EDITION. Thus

a PREMIUM is offered sufficiently HIGH (as the magazines say when they

tell their best lie) to induce bards to CLUB their resources and buy the

balance of every edition, until they have all of them fairly been run

through the mill.

One word to such readers (judicious and wise) as read books with

something behind the mere eyes, of whom in the country, perhaps, there

are two, including myself, gentle reader, and you. All the characters

sketched in this slight \_jeu d'esprit\_, though, it may be, they seem,

here and there, rather free, and drawn from a somewhat too cynical

standpoint, are \_meant\_ to be faithful, for that is the grand point,

and none but an owl would feel sore at a rub from a jester who tells you,

without any subterfuge, that he sits in Diogenes' tub.

A PRELIMINARY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Though it well may be reckoned, of all composition, the species at once

most delightful and healthy, is a thing which an author, unless he be

wealthy and willing to pay for that kind of delight, is not, in all

instances, called on to write, though there are, it is said, who, their

spirits to cheer, slip in a new title-page three times a year, and in

this way snuff up an imaginary savor of that sweetest of dishes, the

popular favor,--much as if a starved painter should fall to and treat

the Ugolino inside to a picture of meat.

You remember (if not, pray turn, backward and look) that, in writing the

preface which ushered my book, I treated you, excellent Public, not

merely with a cool disregard, but downright cavalierly. Now I would not

take back the least thing I then said, though I thereby could butter

both sides of my bread, for I never could see that an author owed aught

to the people he solaced, diverted, or taught; and, as for mere fame, I

have long ago learned that the persons by whom it is finally earned are

those with whom \_your\_ verdict weighed not a pin, unsustained by the

higher court sitting within.

But I wander from what I intended to say,--that you have, namely, shown

such a liberal way of thinking, and so much Ã¦sthetic perception of

anonymous worth in the handsome reception you gave to my book, spite of

some private piques (having bought the first thousand in barely two

weeks), that I think, past a doubt, if you measured the phiz of yours

most devotedly, Wonderful Quiz, you would find that its vertical section

was shorter, by an inch and two tenths, or 'twixt that and a quarter.

You have watched a child playing--in those wondrous years when belief is

not bound to the eyes and the ears, and the vision divine is so clear

and unmarred, that each baker of pies in the dirt is a bard? Give a

knife and a shingle, he fits out a fleet, and, on that little mud-puddle

over the street, his fancy, in purest good faith, will make sail round

the globe with a puff of his breath for a gale, will visit, in barely

ten minutes, all climes, and do the Columbus-feat hundreds of times. Or,

suppose the young poet fresh stored with delights from that Bible of

childhood, the Arabian Nights, he will turn to a crony and cry, 'Jack,

let's play that I am a Genius!' Jacky straightway makes Aladdin's lamp

out of a stone, and, for hours, they enjoy each his own supernatural

powers. This is all very pretty and pleasant, but then suppose our two

urchins, have grown into men, and both have turned authors,--one says to

his brother, 'Let's play we're the American somethings or other,--say

Homer or Sophocles, Goethe or Scott (only let them be big enough, no

matter what). Come, you shall be Byron or Pope, which you choose: I'll

be Coleridge, and both shall write mutual reviews.' So they both (as

mere strangers) before many days send each other a cord of anonymous

bays. Each piling his epithets, smiles in his sleeve to see what his

friend can be made to believe; each, reading the other's unbiased

review, thinks--Here's pretty high praise, but no more than my due.

Well, we laugh at them both, and yet make no great fuss when the same

farce is acted to benefit us. Even I, who, it asked, scarce a month

since, what Fudge meant, should have answered, the dear Public's

critical judgment, begin to think sharp-witted Horace spoke sooth when

he said that the Public \_sometimes\_ hit the truth.

In reading these lines, you perhaps have a vision of a person in pretty

good health and condition; and yet, since I put forth my primary

edition, I have been crushed, scorched, withered, used up and put down

(by Smith with the cordial assistance of Brown), in all, if you put any

faith in my rhymes, to the number of ninety-five several times, and,

while I am writing,--I tremble to think of it, for I may at this moment

be just on the brink of it,--Molybdostom, angry at being omitted, has

begun a critique,--am I not to be pitied?[1]

Now I shall not crush \_them\_ since, indeed, for that matter, no pressure

I know of could render them flatter; nor wither, nor scorch them,--no

action of fire could make either them or their articles drier; nor waste

time in putting them down--I am thinking not their own self-inflation

will keep them from sinking; for there's this contradiction about the

whole bevy,--though without the least weight, they are awfully heavy.

No, my dear honest bore, \_surdo fabulam narras\_, they are no more to me

than a rat in the arras. I can walk with the Doctor, get facts from the

Don, or draw out the Lambish quintessence of John, and feel nothing more

than a half-comic sorrow, to think that they all will be lying to-morrow

tossed carelessly up on the waste-paper shelves, and forgotten by all

but their half-dozen selves. Once snug in my attic, my fire in a roar, I

leave the whole pack of them outside the door. With Hakluyt or Purchas I

wander away to the black northern seas or barbaric Cathay; get \_fou\_

with O'Shanter, and sober me then with that builder of brick-kilnish

dramas, rare Ben; snuff Herbert, as holy as a flower on a grave; with

Fletcher wax tender, o'er Chapman grow brave; with Marlowe or Kyd take a

fine poet-rave; in Very, most Hebrew of Saxons, find peace; with Lycidas

welter on vext Irish seas; with Webster grow wild, and climb earthward

again, down by mystical Browne's Jacob's-ladder-like brain, to that

spiritual Pepys (Cotton's version) Montaigne; find a new depth in

Wordsworth, undreamed of before, that marvel, a poet divine who can

bore. Or, out of my study, the scholar thrown off, Nature holds up her

shield 'gainst the sneer and the scoff; the landscape, forever consoling

and kind, pours her wine and her oil on the smarts of the mind. The

waterfall, scattering its vanishing gems; the tall grove of hemlocks,

with moss on their stems, like plashes of sunlight; the pond in the

woods, where no foot but mine and the bittern's intrudes, where

pitcher-plants purple and gentians hard by recall to September the blue

of June's sky; these are all my kind neighbors, and leave me no wish to

say aught to you all, my poor critics, but--pish! I've buried the

hatchet: I'm twisting an allumette out of one of you now, and relighting

my calumet. In your private capacities, come when you please, I will

give you my hand and a fresh pipe apiece.

As I ran through the leaves of my poor little book, to take a fond

author's first tremulous look, it was quite an excitement to hunt the

\_errata\_, sprawled in as birds' tracks are in some kinds of strata (only

these made things crookeder). Fancy an heir that a father had seen born

well-featured and fair, turning suddenly wry-nosed, club-footed,

squint-eyed, hair-lipped, wapper-jawed, carrot-haired, from a pride

become an aversion,--my case was yet worse. A club-foot (by way of a

change) in a verse, I might have forgiven, an \_o\_'s being wry, a limp in

an \_e\_, or a cock in an \_i\_,--but to have the sweet babe of my brain

served in \_pi!\_ I am not queasy-stomached, but such a Thyestean banquet

as that was quite out of the question.

In the edition now issued no pains are neglected, and my verses, as

orators say, stand corrected. Yet some blunders remain of the public's

own make, which I wish to correct for my personal sake. For instance, a

character drawn in pure fun and condensing the traits of a dozen in one,

has been, as I hear, by some persons applied to a good friend of mine,

whom to stab in the side, as we walked along chatting and joking

together, would not be \_my\_ way. I can hardly tell whether a

question will ever arise in which he and I should by any strange fortune

agree, but meanwhile my esteem for him grows as I know him, and, though

not the best judge on earth of a poem, he knows what it is he is saying

and why, and is honest and fearless, two good points which I have not

found so rife I can easily smother my love for them, whether on my side

or t'other.

For my other \_anonymi\_, you may be sure that I know what is meant by a

caricature, and what by a portrait. There \_are\_ those who think it is

capital fun to be spattering their ink on quiet, unquarrelsome folk, but

the minute the game changes sides and the others begin it, they see

something savage and horrible in it. As for me I respect neither women

nor men for their gender, nor own any sex in a pen. I choose just to

hint to some causeless unfriends that, as far as I know, there are

always two ends (and one of them heaviest, too) to a staff, and two

parties also to every good laugh.

A FABLE FOR CRITICS

Phoebus, sitting one day in a laurel-tree's shade,

Was reminded of Daphne, of whom it was made,

For the god being one day too warm in his wooing,

She took to the tree to escape his pursuing;

Be the cause what it might, from his offers she shrunk,

And, Ginevra-like, shut herself up in a trunk;

And, though 'twas a step into which he had driven her,

He somehow or other had never forgiven her;

Her memory he nursed as a kind of a tonic,

Something bitter to chew when he'd play the Byronic, 10

And I can't count the obstinate nymphs that he brought over

By a strange kind of smile he put on when he thought of her.

'My case is like Dido's,' he sometimes remarked;

'When I last saw my love, she was fairly embarked

In a laurel, as \_she\_ thought--but (ah, how Fate mocks!)

She has found it by this time a very bad box;

Let hunters from me take this saw when they need it,--

You're not always sure of your game when you've treed it.

Just conceive such a change taking place in one's mistress!

What romance would be left?--who can flatter or kiss trees? 20

And, for mercy's sake, how could one keep up a dialogue

With a dull wooden thing that will live and will die a log,--

Not to say that the thought would forever intrude

That you've less chance to win her the more she is wood?

Ah! it went to my heart, and the memory still grieves,

To see those loved graces all taking their leaves;

Those charms beyond speech, so enchanting but now,

As they left me forever, each making its bough!

If her tongue \_had\_ a tang sometimes more than was right,

Her new bark is worse than ten times her old bite.' 30

Now, Daphne--before she was happily treeified--

Over all other blossoms the lily had deified,

And when she expected the god on a visit

('Twas before he had made his intentions explicit),

Some buds she arranged with a vast deal of care,

To look as if artlessly twined in her hair,

Where they seemed, as he said, when he paid his addresses,

Like the day breaking through, the long night of her tresses;

So whenever he wished to be quite irresistible,

Like a man with eight trumps in his hand at a whist-table 40

(I feared me at first that the rhyme was untwistable,

Though I might have lugged in an allusion to Cristabel),--

He would take up a lily, and gloomily look in it,

As I shall at the----, when they cut up my book in it.

Well, here, after all the bad rhyme I've been spinning,

I've got back at last to my story's beginning:

Sitting there, as I say, in the shade of his mistress,

As dull as a volume of old Chester mysteries,

Or as those puzzling specimens which, in old histories,

We read of his verses--the Oracles, namely,-- 50

(I wonder the Greeks should have swallowed them tamely,

For one might bet safely whatever he has to risk,

They were laid at his door by some ancient Miss Asterisk,

And so dull that the men who retailed them out-doors

Got the ill name of augurs, because they were bores,--)

First, he mused what the animal substance or herb is

Would induce a mustache, for you know he's \_imberbis;\_

Then he shuddered to think how his youthful position

Was assailed by the age of his son the physician;

At some poems he glanced, had been sent to him lately, 60

And the metre and sentiment puzzled him greatly;

'Mehercle! I'd make such proceeding felonious,--

Have they all of them slept in the cave of Trophonius?

Look well to your seat, 'tis like taking an airing

On a corduroy road, and that out of repairing;

It leads one, 'tis true, through the primitive forest,

Grand natural features, but then one has no rest;

You just catch a glimpse of some ravishing distance,

When a jolt puts the whole of it out of existence,--

Why not use their ears, if they happen to have any?' 70

--Here the laurel leaves murmured the name of poor Daphne.

'Oh, weep with me, Daphne,' he sighed, 'for you know it's

A terrible thing to be pestered with poets!

But, alas, she is dumb, and the proverb holds good,

She never will cry till she's out of the wood!

What wouldn't I give if I never had known of her?

'Twere a kind of relief had I something to groan over:

If I had but some letters of hers, now, to toss over,

I might turn for the nonce a Byronic philosopher,

And bewitch all the flats by bemoaning the loss of her. 80

One needs something tangible, though, to begin on,--

A loom, as it were, for the fancy to spin on;

What boots all your grist? it can never be ground

Till a breeze makes the arms of the windmill go round;

(Or, if 'tis a water-mill, alter the metaphor,

And say it won't stir, save the wheel be well wet afore,

Or lug in some stuff about water "so dreamily,"--

It is not a metaphor, though, 'tis a simile);

A lily, perhaps, would set \_my\_ mill a-going,

For just at this season, I think, they are blowing. 90

Here, somebody, fetch one; not very far hence

They're in bloom by the score, 'tis but climbing a fence;

There's a poet hard by, who does nothing but fill his

Whole garden, from one end to t'other, with lilies;

A very good plan, were it not for satiety,

One longs for a weed here and there, for variety;

Though a weed is no more than a flower in disguise,

Which is seen through at once, if love give a man eyes.'

Now there happened to be among Phoebus's followers,

A gentleman, one of the omnivorous swallowers, 100

Who bolt every book that comes out of the press,

Without the least question of larger or less,

Whose stomachs are strong at the expense of their head,--

For reading new books is like eating new bread,

One can bear it at first, but by gradual steps he

Is brought to death's door of a mental dyspepsy.

On a previous stage of existence, our Hero

Had ridden outside, with the glass below zero;

He had been, 'tis a fact you may safely rely on,

Of a very old stock a most eminent scion,-- 110

A stock all fresh quacks their fierce boluses ply on,

Who stretch the new boots Earth's unwilling to try on,

Whom humbugs of all shapes and sorts keep their eye on,

Whose hair's in the mortar of every new Zion,

Who, when whistles are dear, go directly and buy one,

Who think slavery a crime that we must not say fie on,

Who hunt, if they e'er hunt at all, with the lion

(Though they hunt lions also, whenever they spy one),

Who contrive to make every good fortune a wry one,

And at last choose the hard bed of honor to die on, 120

Whose pedigree, traced to earth's earliest years,

Is longer than anything else but their ears,--

In short, he was sent into life with the wrong key,

He unlocked the door, and stept forth a poor donkey.

Though kicked and abused by his bipedal betters

Yet he filled no mean place in the kingdom of letters;

Far happier than many a literary hack,

He bore only paper-mill rags on his back

(For It makes a vast difference which side the mill

One expends on the paper his labor and skill); 130

So, when his soul waited a new transmigration,

And Destiny balanced 'twixt this and that station,

Not having much time to expend upon bothers,

Remembering he'd had some connection with authors,

And considering his four legs had grown paralytic,--

She set him on two, and he came forth a critic.

Through his babyhood no kind of pleasure he took

In any amusement but tearing a book;

For him there was no intermediate stage

From babyhood up to straight-laced middle age; 140

There were years when he didn't wear coat-tails behind,

But a boy he could never be rightly defined;

like the Irish Good Folk, though in length scarce a span,

From the womb he came gravely, a little old man;

While other boys' trousers demanded the toil

Of the motherly fingers on all kinds of soil,

Red, yellow, brown, black, clayey, gravelly, loamy,

He sat in the corner and read Viri RomÃ¦.

He never was known to unbend or to revel once

In base, marbles, hockey, or kick up the devil once; 150

He was just one of those who excite the benevolence

Of your old prigs who sound the soul's depths with a ledger,

And are on the lookout for some young men to 'edger-

cate,' as they call it, who won't be too costly,

And who'll afterward take to the ministry mostly;

Who always wear spectacles, always look bilious,

Always keep on good terms with each \_mater-familias\_

Throughout the whole parish, and manage to rear

Ten boys like themselves, on four hundred a year:

Who, fulfilling in turn the same fearful conditions, 160

Either preach through their noses, or go upon missions.

In this way our Hero got safely to college,

Where he bolted alike both his commons and knowledge;

A reading-machine, always wound up and going,

He mastered whatever was not worth the knowing,

Appeared in a gown, with black waistcoat of satin,

To spout such a Gothic oration in Latin

That Tully could never have made out a word in it

(Though himself was the model the author preferred in it),

And grasping the parchment which gave him in fee 170

All the mystic and-so-forths contained in A.B.,

He was launched (life is always compared to a sea)

With just enough learning, and skill for the using it,

To prove he'd a brain, by forever confusing it.

So worthy St. Benedict, piously burning

With the holiest zeal against secular learning,

\_Nesciensque scienter\_, as writers express it,

\_Indoctusque sapienter a Roma recessit\_.

'Twould be endless to tell you the things that he knew,

Each a separate fact, undeniably true, 180

But with him or each other they'd nothing to do;

No power of combining, arranging, discerning,

Digested the masses he learned into learning;

There was one thing in life he had practical knowledge for

(And this, you will think, he need scarce go to college for),--

Not a deed would he do, nor a word would he utter,

Till he'd weighed its relations to plain bread and butter.

When he left Alma Mater, he practised his wits

In compiling the journals' historical bits,--

Of shops broken open, men falling in fits, 190

Great fortunes in England bequeathed to poor printers,

And cold spells, the coldest for many past winters,--

Then, rising by industry, knack, and address,

Got notices up for an unbiased press,

With a mind so well poised, it seemed equally made for

Applause or abuse, just which chanced to be paid for:

From this point his progress was rapid and sure,

To the post of a regular heavy reviewer.

And here I must say he wrote excellent articles

On Hebraical points, or the force of Greek particles; 200

They filled up the space nothing else was prepared for,

And nobody read that which nobody cared for;

If any old book reached a fiftieth edition,

He could fill forty pages with safe erudition:

He could gauge the old books by the old set of rules,

And his very old nothings pleased very old fools;

But give him a new book, fresh out of the heart,

And you put him at sea without compass or chart,--

His blunders aspired to the rank of an art;

For his lore was engraft, something foreign that grew in him, 210

Exhausting the sap of the native and true in him,

So that when a man came with a soul that was new in him,

Carving new forms of truth out of Nature's old granite,

New and old at their birth, like Le Verrier's planet,

Which, to get a true judgment, themselves must create

In the soul of their critic the measure and weight,

Being rather themselves a fresh standard of grace,

To compute their own judge, and assign him his place,

Our reviewer would crawl all about it and round it,

And, reporting each circumstance just as he found it, 220

Without the least malice,--his record would be

Profoundly Ã¦sthetic as that of a flea,

Which, supping on Wordsworth, should print for our sakes,

Recollections of nights with the Bard of the Lakes,

Or, lodged by an Arab guide, ventured to render a

Comprehensive account of the ruins at Denderah.

As I said, he was never precisely unkind.

The defect in his brain was just absence of mind;

If he boasted, 'twas simply that he was self-made,

A position which I, for one, never gainsaid, 230

My respect for my Maker supposing a skill

In his works which our Hero would answer but ill;

And I trust that the mould which he used may be cracked, or he,

Made bold by success, may enlarge his phylactery,

And set up a kind of a man-manufactory,--

An event which I shudder to think about, seeing

That Man is a moral, accountable being.

He meant well enough, but was still in the way,

As dunces still are, let them be where they may;

Indeed, they appear to come into existence 240

To impede other folks with their awkward assistance;

If you set up a dunce on the very North pole

All alone with himself, I believe, on my soul,

He'd manage to get betwixt somebody's shins,

And pitch him down bodily, all in his sins,

To the grave polar bears sitting round on the ice,

All shortening their grace, to be in for a slice;

Or, if he found nobody else there to pother,

Why, one of his legs would just trip up the other,

For there's nothing we read of in torture's inventions, 250

Like a well-meaning dunce, with the best of intentions.

A terrible fellow to meet in society,

Not the toast that he buttered was ever so dry at tea;

There he'd sit at the table and stir in his sugar,

Crouching close for a spring, all the while, like a cougar;

Be sure of your facts, of your measures and weights,

Of your time,--he's as fond as an Arab of dates;

You'll be telling, perhaps, in your comical way,

Of something you've seen in the course of the day;

And, just as you're tapering out the conclusion, 260

You venture an ill-fated classic allusion,--

The girls have all got their laughs ready, when, whack!

The cougar comes down on your thunderstruck back!

You had left out a comma,--your Greek's put in joint,

And pointed at cost of your story's whole point.

In the course of the evening, you find chance for certain

Soft speeches to Anne, in the shade of the curtain:

You tell her your heart can be likened to \_one\_ flower,

'And that, O most charming of women, 's the sunflower,

Which turns'--here a clear nasal voice, to your terror, 270

From outside the curtain, says, 'That's all an error.'

As for him, he's--no matter, he never grew tender,

Sitting after a ball, with his feet on the fender,

Shaping somebody's sweet features out of cigar smoke

(Though he'd willingly grant you that such doings are smoke);

All women he damns with \_mutabile semper\_,

And if ever he felt something like love's distemper,

'Twas tow'rds a young lady who spoke ancient Mexican,

And assisted her father in making a lexicon;

Though I recollect hearing him get quite ferocious 280

About Mary Clausum, the mistress of Grotius,

Or something of that sort,--but, no more to bore ye

With character-painting, I'll turn to my story.

Now, Apollo, who finds it convenient sometimes

To get his court clear of the makers of rhymes,

The \_genus\_, I think it is called, \_irritabile\_,

Every one of whom thinks himself treated most shabbily,

And nurses a--what is it?--\_immedicabile\_,

Which keeps him at boiling-point, hot for a quarrel,

As bitter as wormwood, and sourer than sorrel, 290

If any poor devil but look at a laurel;--

Apollo, I say, being sick of their rioting

(Though he sometimes acknowledged their verse had a quieting

Effect after dinner, and seemed to suggest a

Retreat to the shrine of a tranquil siesta),

Kept our Hero at hand, who, by means of a bray,

Which he gave to the life, drove the rabble away;

And if that wouldn't do, he was sure to succeed,

If he took his review out and offered to read;

Or, failing in plans of this milder description, 300

He would ask for their aid to get up a subscription,

Considering that authorship wasn't a rich craft,

To print the 'American drama of Witchcraft.'

'Stay, I'll read you a scene,'--but he hardly began,

Ere Apollo shrieked 'Help!' and the authors all ran:

And once, when these purgatives acted with less spirit,

And the desperate case asked a remedy desperate,

He drew from his pocket a foolscap epistle

As calmly as if 'twere a nine-barrelled pistol,

And threatened them all with the judgment to come, 310

Of 'A wandering Star's first impressions of Rome.'

'Stop! stop!' with their hands o'er their ears, screamed the Muses,

'He may go off and murder himself, if he chooses,

'Twas a means self-defence only sanctioned his trying,

'Tis mere massacre now that the enemy's flying;

If he's forced to 't again, and we happen to be there,

Give us each a large handkerchief soaked in strong ether.'

I called this a 'Fable for Critics;' you think it's

More like a display of my rhythmical trinkets;

My plot, like an icicle's slender and slippery, 320

Every moment more slender, and likely to slip awry,

And the reader unwilling \_in loco desipere\_

Is free to jump over as much of my frippery

As he fancies, and, if he's a provident skipper, he

May have like Odysseus control of the gales,

And get safe to port, ere his patience quite fails;

Moreover, although 'tis a slender return

For your toil and expense, yet my paper will burn,

And, if you have manfully struggled thus far with me,

You may e'en twist me up, and just light your cigar with me: 330

If too angry for that, you can tear me in pieces,

And my \_membra disjecta\_ consign to the breezes,

A fate like great Ratzau's, whom one of those bores,

Who beflead with bad verses poor Louis Quatorze,

Describes (the first verse somehow ends with \_victoire\_),

As \_dispersant partout et ses membres et sa gloire;\_

Or, if I were over-desirous of earning

A repute among noodles for classical learning,

I could pick you a score of allusions, i-wis,

As new as the jests of \_Didaskalos tis;\_ 340

Better still, I could make out a good solid list

From authors recondite who do not exist,--

But that would be naughty: at least, I could twist

Something out of Absyrtus, or turn your inquiries

After Milton's prose metaphor, drawn from Osiris;

But, as Cicero says he won't say this or that

(A fetch, I must say, most transparent and flat),

After saying whate'er he could possibly think of,--

I simply will state that I pause on the brink of

A mire, ankle-deep, of deliberate confusion, 350

Made up of old jumbles of classic allusion:

So, when you were thinking yourselves to be pitied,

Just conceive how much harder your teeth you'd have gritted,

An 'twere not for the dulness I've kindly omitted.

I'd apologize here for my many digressions.

Were it not that I'm certain to trip into fresh ones

('Tis so hard to escape if you get in their mesh once);

Just reflect, if you please, how 'tis said by Horatius,

That MÃ¦onides nods now and then, and, my gracious!

It certainly does look a little bit ominous 360

When he gets under way with \_ton d'apameibomenos\_.

(Here a something occurs which I'll just clap a rhyme to,

And say it myself, ere a Zoilus have time to,--

Any author a nap like Van Winkle's may take,

If he only contrive to keep readers awake,

But he'll very soon find himself laid on the shelf,

If \_they\_ fall a-nodding when he nods himself.)

Once for all, to return, and to stay, will I, nill I--

When Phoebus expressed his desire for a lily,

Our Hero, whose homoeopathic sagacity 370

With an ocean of zeal mixed his drop of capacity,

Set off for the garden as fast as the wind

(Or, to take a comparison more to my mind,

As a sound politician leaves conscience behind).

And leaped the low fence, as a party hack jumps

O'er his principles, when something else turns up trumps.

He was gone a long time, and Apollo, meanwhile,

Went over some sonnets of his with a file,

For, of all compositions, he thought that the sonnet

Best repaid all the toil you expended upon it; 380

It should reach with one impulse the end of its course,

And for one final blow collect all of its force;

Not a verse should be salient, but each one should tend

With a wave-like up-gathering to break at the end;

So, condensing the strength here, there smoothing a wry kink,

He was killing the time, when up walked Mr. D----,

At a few steps behind him, a small man in glasses

Went dodging about, muttering, 'Murderers! asses!'

From out of his pocket a paper he'd take,

With a proud look of martyrdom tied to its stake, 390

And, reading a squib at himself, he'd say, 'Here I see

'Gainst American letters a bloody conspiracy,

They are all by my personal enemies written;

I must post an anonymous letter to Britain,

And show that this gall is the merest suggestion

Of spite at my zeal on the Copyright question,

For, on this side the water, 'tis prudent to pull

O'er the eyes of the public their national wool,

By accusing of slavish respect to John Bull

All American authors who have more or less 400

Of that anti-American humbug--success,

While in private we're always embracing the knees

Of some twopenny editor over the seas,

And licking his critical shoes, for you know 'tis

The whole aim of our lives to get one English notice;

My American puffs I would willingly burn all

(They're all from one source, monthly, weekly, diurnal)

To get but a kick from a transmarine journal!'

So, culling the gibes of each critical scorner

As if they were plums, and himself were Jack Horner, 410

He came cautiously on, peeping round every corner,

And into each hole where a weasel might pass in,

Expecting the knife of some critic assassin,

Who stabs to the heart with a caricature.

Not so bad as those daubs of the Sun, to be sure,

Yet done with a dagger-o'-type, whose vile portraits

Disperse all one's good and condense all one's poor traits.

Apollo looked up, hearing footsteps approaching,

And slipped out of sight the new rhymes he was broaching,--

'Good day, Mr. D----, I'm happy to meet 420

With a scholar so ripe, and a critic so neat,

Who through Grub Street the soul of a gentleman carries;

What news from that suburb of London and Paris

Which latterly makes such shrill claims to monopolize

The credit of being the New World's metropolis?'

'Why, nothing of consequence, save this attack

On my friend there, behind, by some pitiful hack,

Who thinks every national author a poor one,

That isn't a copy of something that's foreign, 429

And assaults the American Dick--'

Nay, 'tis clear

That your Damon there's fond of a flea in his ear,

And, if no one else furnished them gratis, on tick

He would buy some himself, just to hear the old click;

Why, I honestly think, if some fool in Japan

Should turn up his nose at the "Poems on Man,"

(Which contain many verses as fine, by the bye,

As any that lately came under my eye,)

Your friend there by some inward instinct would know it,

Would get it translated, reprinted, and show it;

As a man might take off a high stock to exhibit 440

The autograph round his own neck of the gibbet;

Nor would let it rest so, but fire column after column,

Signed Cato, or Brutus, or something as solemn,

By way of displaying his critical crosses,

And tweaking that poor transatlantic proboscis,

His broadsides resulting (this last there's no doubt of)

In successively sinking the craft they're fired out of.

Now nobody knows when an author is hit,

If he have not a public hysterical fit;

Let him only keep close in his snug garret's dim ether, 450

And nobody'd think of his foes--or of him either;

If an author have any least fibre of worth in him,

Abuse would but tickle the organ of mirth in him;

All the critics on earth cannot crush with their ban

One word that's in tune with the nature of man.'

'Well, perhaps so; meanwhile I have brought you a book,

Into which if you'll just have the goodness to look,

You may feel so delighted (when once you are through it)

As to deem it not unworth your while to review it,

And I think I can promise your thoughts, if you do, 460

A place in the next Democratic Review.'

'The most thankless of gods you must surely have thought me,

For this is the forty-fourth copy you've brought me;

I have given them away, or at least I have tried,

But I've forty-two left, standing all side by side

(The man who accepted that one copy died),--

From one end of a shelf to the other they reach,

"With the author's respects" neatly written in each.

The publisher, sure, will proclaim a Te Deum,

When he hears of that order the British Museum 470

Has sent for one set of what books were first printed

In America, little or big,--for 'tis hinted

That this is the first truly tangible hope he

Has ever had raised for the sale of a copy.

I've thought very often 'twould be a good thing

In all public collections of books, if a wing

Were set off by itself, like the seas from the dry lands,

Marked \_Literature suited to desolate islands\_,

And filled with such books as could never be read

Save by readers of proofs, forced to do it for bread,-- 480

Such books as one's wrecked on in small country taverns,

Such as hermits might mortify over in caverns,

Such as Satan, if printing had then been invented,

As the climax of woe, would to Job have presented.

Such as Crusoe might dip in, although there are few so

Outrageously cornered by fate as poor Crusoe;

And since the philanthropists just now are banging

And gibbeting all who're in favor of hanging

(Though Cheever has proved that the Bible and Altar

Were let down from Heaven at the end of a halter. 490

And that vital religion would dull and grow callous,

Unrefreshed, now and then, with a sniff of the gallows),--

And folks are beginning to think it looks odd,

To choke a poor scamp for the glory of God;

And that He who esteems the Virginia reel

A bait to draw saints from their spiritual weal,

And regards the quadrille as a far greater knavery

Than crushing his African children with slavery,--

Since all who take part in a waltz or cotillon

Are mounted for hell on the Devil's own pillion, 500

Who, as every true orthodox Christian well knows,

Approaches the heart through the door of the toes,--

That He, I was saying, whose judgments are stored

For such as take steps in despite of his word,

Should look with delight on the agonized prancing

Of a wretch who has not the least ground for his dancing,

While the State, standing by, sings a verse from the Psalter

About offering to God on his favorite halter,

And, when the legs droop from their twitching divergence,

Sells the clothes to a Jew, and the corpse to the surgeons;--

Now, instead of all this, I think I can direct you all 511

To a criminal code both humane and effectual;--

I propose to shut up every doer of wrong

With these desperate books, for such term, short or long,

As, by statute in such cases made and provided,

Shall be by your wise legislators decided:

Thus: Let murderers be shut, to grow wiser and cooler,

At hard labor for life on the works of Miss----;

Petty thieves, kept from flagranter crimes by their fears,

Shall peruse Yankee Doodle a blank term of years,-- 520

That American Punch, like the English, no doubt,--

Just the sugar and lemons and spirit left out.

'But stay, here comes Tityrus Griswold, and leads on

The flocks whom he first plucks alive, and then feeds on,--

A loud-cackling swarm, in whose leathers warm drest,

He goes for as perfect a--swan as the rest.

'There comes Emerson first, whose rich words, every one,

Are like gold nails in temples to hang trophies on,

Whose prose is grand verse, while his verse, the Lord knows,

Is some of it pr---- No, 'tis not even prose; 530

I'm speaking of metres; some poems have welled

From those rare depths of soul that have ne'er been excelled;

They're not epics, but that doesn't matter a pin,

In creating, the only hard thing's to begin;

A grass-blade's no easier to make than an oak;

If you've once found the way, you've achieved the grand stroke;

In the worst of his poems are mines of rich matter,

But thrown in a heap with a crash and a clatter;

Now it is not one thing nor another alone

Makes a poem, but rather the general tone, 540

The something pervading, uniting the whole,

The before unconceived, unconceivable soul,

So that just in removing this trifle or that, you

Take away, as it were, a chief limb of the statue;

Roots, wood, bark, and leaves singly perfect may be,

But, clapt hodge-podge together, they don't make a tree.

'But, to come back to Emerson (whom, by the way,

I believe we left waiting),--his is, we may say,

A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders, whose range

Has Olympus for one pole, for t'other the Exchange; 550

He seems, to my thinking (although I'm afraid

The comparison must, long ere this, have been made),

A Plotinus-Montaigne, where the Egyptian's gold mist

And the Gascon's shrewd wit cheek-by-jowl coexist;

All admire, and yet scarcely six converts he's got

To I don't (nor they either) exactly know what;

For though he builds glorious temples, 'tis odd

He leaves never a doorway to get in a god.

'Tis refreshing to old-fashioned people like me

To meet such a primitive Pagan as he, 560

In whose mind all creation is duly respected

As parts of himself--just a little projected;

And who's willing to worship the stars and the sun,

A convert to--nothing but Emerson.

So perfect a balance there is in his head,

That he talks of things sometimes as if they were dead;

Life, nature, love, God, and affairs of that sort,

He looks at as merely ideas; in short,

As if they were fossils stuck round in a cabinet,

Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere dab in it; 570

Composed just as he is inclined to conjecture her,

Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine parts pure lecturer;

You are filled with delight at his clear demonstration,

Each figure, word, gesture, just fits the occasion,

With the quiet precision of science he'll sort 'em,

But you can't help suspecting the whole a \_post mortem\_.

'There are persons, mole-blind to the soul's make and style,

Who insist on a likeness 'twixt him and Carlyle;

To compare him with Plato would be vastly fairer,

Carlyle's the more burly, but E. is the rarer; 580

He sees fewer objects, but clearlier, truelier,

If C.'s as original, E.'s more peculiar;

That he's more of a man you might say of the one,

Of the other he's more of an Emerson;

C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of limb,--

E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and slim;

The one's two thirds Norseman, the other half Greek,

Where the one's most abounding, the other's to seek;

C.'s generals require to be seen in the mass,--

E.'s specialties gain if enlarged by the glass; 590

C. gives nature and God his own fits of the blues,

And rims common-sense things with mystical hues,--

E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,

And looks coolly around him with sharp common-sense;

C. shows you how every-day matters unite

With the dim transdiurnal recesses of night,--

While E., in a plain, preternatural way,

Makes mysteries matters of mere every day;

C. draws all his characters quite \_Ã  la\_ Fuseli,--

Not sketching their bundles of muscles and thews illy, 600

He paints with a brush so untamed and profuse,

They seem nothing but bundles of muscles and thews;

E. is rather like Flaxman, lines strait and severe,

And a colorless outline, but full, round, and clear;--

To the men he thinks worthy he frankly accords

The design of a white marble statue in words.

C. labors to get at the centre, and then

Take a reckoning from there of his actions and men;

E. calmly assumes the said centre as granted,

And, given himself, has whatever is wanted. 610

'He has imitators in scores, who omit

No part of the man but his wisdom and wit,--

Who go carefully o'er the sky-blue of his brain,

And when he has skimmed it once, skim it again;

If at all they resemble him, you may be sure it is

Because their shoals mirror his mists and obscurities,

As a mud-puddle seems deep as heaven for a minute,

While a cloud that floats o'er is reflected within it.

'There comes----, for instance; to see him's rare sport,

Tread in Emerson's tracks with legs painfully short; 620

How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the face.

To keep step with the mystagogue's natural pace!

He follows as close as a stick to a rocket,

His fingers exploring the prophet's each pocket.

Fie, for shame, brother bard; with good fruit of your own,

Can't you let Neighbor Emerson's orchards alone?

Besides, 'tis no use, you'll not find e'en a core,--

---- has picked up all the windfalls before.

They might strip every tree, and E. never would catch 'em,

His Hesperides have no rude dragon to watch 'em; 630

When they send him a dishful, and ask him to try 'em,

He never suspects how the sly rogues came by 'em;

He wonders why 'tis there are none such his trees on,

And thinks 'em the best he has tasted this season.

'Yonder, calm as a cloud, Alcott stalks in a dream,

And fancies himself in thy groves, Academe,

With the Parthenon nigh, and the olive-trees o'er him,

And never a fact to perplex him or bore him,

With a snug room at Plato's when night comes, to walk to,

And people from morning till midnight to talk to, 640

And from midnight till morning, nor snore in their listening;--

So he muses, his face with the joy of it glistening,

For his highest conceit of a happiest state is

Where they'd live upon acorns, and hear him talk gratis;

And indeed, I believe, no man ever talked better,--

Each sentence hangs perfectly poised to a letter;

He seems piling words, but there's royal dust hid

In the heart of each sky-piercing pyramid.

While he talks he is great, but goes out like a taper,

If you shut him up closely with pen, ink, and paper; 650

Yet his fingers itch for 'em from morning till night,

And he thinks he does wrong if he don't always write;

In this, as in all things, a lamb among men,

He goes to sure death when he goes to his pen.

'Close behind him is Brownson, his mouth very full

With attempting to gulp a Gregorian bull;

Who contrives, spite of that, to pour out as he goes

A stream of transparent and forcible prose;

He shifts quite about, then proceeds to expound

That 'tis merely the earth, not himself, that turns round,

And wishes it clearly impressed on your mind 661

That the weathercock rules and not follows the wind;

Proving first, then as deftly confuting each side,

With no doctrine pleased that's not somewhere denied,

He lays the denier away on the shelf,

And then--down beside him lies gravely himself.

He's the Salt River boatman, who always stands willing

To convey friend or foe without charging a shilling,

And so fond of the trip that, when leisure's to spare,

He'll row himself up, if he can't get a fare. 670

The worst of it is, that his logic's so strong,

That of two sides he commonly chooses the wrong;

If there is only one, why, he'll split it in two,

And first pummel this half, then that, black and blue.

That white's white needs no proof, but it takes a deep fellow

To prove it jet-black, and that jet-black is yellow.

He offers the true faith to drink in a sieve,--

When it reaches your lips there's naught left to believe

But a few silly-(syllo-, I mean,)-gisms that squat 'em

Like tadpoles, o'erjoyed with the mud at the bottom. 680

'There is Willis, all \_natty\_ and jaunty and gay,

Who says his best things in so foppish a way,

With conceits and pet phrases so thickly o'erlaying 'em,

That one hardly knows whether to thank him for saying 'em;

Over-ornament ruins both poem and prose,

Just conceive of a Muse with a ring in her nose!

His prose had a natural grace of its own,

And enough of it, too, if he'd let it alone;

But he twitches and jerks so, one fairly gets tired,

And is forced to forgive where one might have admired; 690

Yet whenever it slips away free and unlaced,

It runs like a stream with a musical waste,

And gurgles along with the liquidest sweep;--

'Tis not deep as a river, but who'd have it deep?

In a country where scarcely a village is found

That has not its author sublime and profound,

For some one to be slightly shallow's a duty,

And Willis's shallowness makes half his beauty.

His prose winds along with a blithe, gurgling error,

And reflects all of Heaven it can see in its mirror: 700

'Tis a narrowish strip, but it is not an artifice;

'Tis the true out-of-doors with its genuine hearty phiz;

It is Nature herself, and there's something in that,

Since most brains reflect but the crown of a hat.

Few volumes I know to read under a tree,

More truly delightful than his A l'Abri,

With the shadows of leaves flowing over your book,

Like ripple-shades netting the bed of a brook;

With June coming softly your shoulder to look over,

Breezes waiting to turn every leaf of your book over, 710

And Nature to criticise still as you read,--

The page that bears that is a rare one indeed.

'He's so innate a cockney, that had he been born

Where plain bare-skin's the only full-dress that is worn,

He'd have given his own such an air that you'd say

'T had been made by a tailor to lounge in Broadway.

His nature's a glass of champagne with the foam on 't,

As tender as Fletcher, as witty as Beaumont;

So his best things are done in the flush of the moment;

If he wait, all is spoiled; he may stir it and shake it, 720

But, the fixed air once gone, he can never re-make it.

He might be a marvel of easy delightfulness,

If he would not sometimes leave the \_r\_ out of sprightfulness;

And he ought to let Scripture alone--'tis self-slaughter,

For nobody likes inspiration-and-water.

He'd have been just the fellow to sup at the Mermaid,

Cracking jokes at rare Ben, with an eye to the barmaid,

His wit running up as Canary ran down,--

The topmost bright bubble on the wave of The Town.

'Here comes Parker, the Orson of parsons, a man 730

Whom the Church undertook to put under her ban

(The Church of Socinus, I mean),--his opinions

Being So-(ultra)-cinian, they shocked the Socinians:

They believed--faith, I'm puzzled--I think I may call

Their belief a believing in nothing at all,

Or something of that sort; I know they all went

For a general union of total dissent:

He went a step farther; without cough or hem,

He frankly avowed he believed not in them;

And, before he could be jumbled up or prevented, 740

From their orthodox kind of dissent he dissented.

There was heresy here, you perceive, for the right

Of privately judging means simply that light

Has been granted to \_me\_, for deciding on \_you;\_

And in happier times, before Atheism grew,

The deed contained clauses for cooking you too:

Now at Xerxes and Knut we all laugh, yet our foot

With the same wave is wet that mocked Xerxes and Knut,

And we all entertain a secure private notion,

That our \_Thus far!\_ will have a great weight with the ocean,

'Twas so with our liberal Christians: they bore 751

With sincerest conviction their chairs to the shore;

They brandished their worn theological birches,

Bade natural progress keep out of the Churches,

And expected the lines they had drawn to prevail

With the fast-rising tide to keep out of their pale;

They had formerly dammed the Pontifical See,

And the same thing, they thought, would do nicely for P.;

But he turned up his nose at their mumming and shamming,

And cared (shall I say?) not a d---- for their damming; 760

So they first read him out of their church, and next minute

Turned round and declared he had never been in it.

But the ban was too small or the man was too big,

For he recks not their bells, books, and candles a fig

(He scarce looks like a man who would \_stay\_ treated shabbily,

Sophroniscus' son's head o'er the features of Rabelais);--

He bangs and bethwacks them,--their backs he salutes

With the whole tree of knowledge torn up by the roots;

His sermons with satire are plenteously verjuiced,

And he talks in one breath of Confutzee, Cass, Zerduscht, 770

Jack Robinson, Peter the Hermit, Strap, Dathan,

Cush, Pitt (not the bottomless, \_that\_ he's no faith in),

Pan, Pillicock, Shakespeare, Paul, Toots, Monsieur Tonson,

Aldebaran, Alcander, Ben Khorat, Ben Jonson,

Thoth, Richter, Joe Smith, Father Paul, Judah Monis,

MusÃ¦us, Muretus, \_hem\_,--[Greek: m] Scorpionis,

Maccabee, Maccaboy, Mac--Mac--ah! Machiavelli,

Condorcet, Count d'Orsay, Conder, Say, Ganganelli,

Orion, O'Connell, the Chevalier D'O,

(See the Memoirs of Sully,) [Greek: to pan], the great toe 780

Of the statue of Jupiter, now made to pass

For that of Jew Peter by good Romish brass,

(You may add for yourselves, for I find it a bore,

All the names you have ever, or not, heard before,

And when you've done that--why, invent a few more).

His hearers can't tell you on Sunday beforehand,

If in that day's discourse they'll be Bibled or Koraned,

For he's seized the idea (by his martyrdom fired)

That all men (not orthodox) \_may be\_ inspired;

Yet though wisdom profane with his creed he may weave in,

He makes it quite clear what he \_doesn't\_ believe in, 791

While some, who decry him, think all Kingdom Come

Is a sort of a, kind of a, species of Hum,

Of which, as it were, so to speak, not a crumb

Would be left, if we didn't keep carefully mum,

And, to make a clean breast, that 'tis perfectly plain

That \_all\_ kinds of wisdom are somewhat profane;

Now P.'s creed than this may be lighter or darker,

But in one thing, 'tis clear, he has faith, namely--Parker;

And this is what makes him the crowd-drawing preacher, 800

There's a background of god to each hard-working feature,

Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnaced

In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest:

There he stands, looking more like a ploughman than priest,

If not dreadfully awkward, not graceful at least,

His gestures all downright and same, if you will,

As of brown-fisted Hobnail in hoeing a drill;

But his periods fall on you, stroke after stroke,

Like the blows of a lumberer felling an oak,

You forget the man wholly, you're thankful to meet 810

With a preacher who smacks of the field and the street,

And to hear, you're not over-particular whence,

Almost Taylor's profusion, quite Latimer's sense.

'There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,

As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignified,

Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights

With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights.

He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard of your nation

(There's no doubt that he stands in supreme iceolation),

Your topmost Parnassus he may set his heel on, 820

But no warm applauses come, peal following peal on,--

He's too smooth and too polished to hang any zeal on:

Unqualified merits, I'll grant, if you choose, he has 'em,

But he lacks the one merit of kindling enthusiasm;

If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,

Like being stirred up with the very North Pole.

'He is very nice reading in summer, but \_inter

Nos\_, we don't want \_extra\_ freezing in winter;

Take him up in the depth of July, my advice is,

When you feel an Egyptian devotion to ices. 830

But, deduct all you can, there's enough that's right good in him,

He has a true soul for field, river, and wood in him;

And his heart, in the midst of brick walls, or where'er it is,

Glows, softens, and thrills with the tenderest charities--

To you mortals that delve in this trade-ridden planet?

No, to old Berkshire's hills, with their limestone and granite.

If you're one who \_in loco\_ (add \_foco\_ here) \_desipis\_,

You will get out of his outermost heart (as I guess) a piece;

But you'd get deeper down if you came as a precipice,

And would break the last seal of its inwardest fountain, 840

If you only could palm yourself off for a mountain.

Mr. Quivis, or somebody quite as discerning,

Some scholar who's hourly expecting his learning,

Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but Wordsworth

May be rated at more than your whole tuneful herd's worth.

No, don't be absurd, he's an excellent Bryant;

But, my friends, you'll endanger the life of your client,

By attempting to stretch him up into a giant;

If you choose to compare him, I think there are two per-

-sons fit for a parallel--Thomson and Cowper;[2] 850

I don't mean exactly,--there's something of each,

There's T.'s love of nature, C.'s penchant to preach;

Just mix up their minds so that C.'s spice of craziness

Shall balance and neutralize T.'s turn for laziness,

And it gives you a brain cool, quite frictionless, quiet,

Whose internal police nips the buds of all riot,--

A brain like a permanent strait-jacket put on

The heart that strives vainly to burst off a button,--

A brain which, without being slow or mechanic,

Does more than a larger less drilled, more volcanic; 860

He's a Cowper condensed, with no craziness bitten,

And the advantage that Wordsworth before him had written.

'But, my dear little bardlings, don't prick up your ears

Nor suppose I would rank you and Bryant as peers;

If I call him an iceberg, I don't mean to say

There is nothing in that which is grand in its way;

He is almost the one of your poets that knows

How much grace, strength, and dignity lie in Repose;

If he sometimes fall short, he is too wise to mar

His thought's modest fulness by going too far; 870

'T would be well if your authors should all make a trial

Of what virtue there is in severe self-denial,

And measure their writings by Hesiod's staff,

Which teaches that all has less value than half.

'There is Whittier, whose swelling and vehement heart

Strains the strait-breasted drab of the Quaker apart,

And reveals the live Man, still supreme and erect,

Underneath the bemummying wrappers of sect;

There was ne'er a man born who had more of the swing

Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of thing; 880

And his failures arise (though he seem not to know it)

From the very same cause that has made him a poet,--

A fervor of mind which knows no separation

'Twixt simple excitement and pure inspiration,

As my Pythoness erst sometimes erred from not knowing

If 'twere I or mere wind through her tripod was blowing;

Let his mind once get head in its favorite direction

And the torrent of verse bursts the dams of reflection,

While, borne with the rush of the metre along,

The poet may chance to go right or go wrong, 890

Content with the whirl and delirium of song;

Then his grammar's not always correct, nor his rhymes,

And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics sometimes,

Not his best, though, for those are struck off at white-heats

When the heart in his breast like a trip-hammer beats,

And can ne'er be repeated again any more

Than they could have been carefully plotted before:

Like old what's-his-name there at the battle of Hastings

(Who, however, gave more than mere rhythmical bastings),

Our Quaker leads off metaphorical fights 900

For reform and whatever they call human rights,

Both singing and striking in front of the war,

And hitting his foes with the mallet of Thor;

\_Anne haec\_, one exclaims, on beholding his knocks,

\_Vestis filii tui\_, O leather-clad Fox?

Can that be thy son, in the battle's mid din,

Preaching brotherly love and then driving it in

To the brain of the tough old Goliath of sin,

With the smoothest of pebbles from Castaly's spring

Impressed on his hard moral sense with a sling? 910

'All honor and praise to the right-hearted bard

Who was true to The Voice when such service was hard,

Who himself was so free he dared sing for the slave

When to look but a protest in silence was brave;

All honor and praise to the women and men

Who spoke out for the dumb and the down-trodden then!

It needs not to name them, already for each

I see History preparing the statue and niche;

They were harsh, but shall \_you\_ be so shocked at hard words

Who have beaten your pruning-hooks up into swords, 920

Whose rewards and hurrahs men are surer to gain

By the reaping of men and of women than grain?

Why should \_you\_ stand aghast at their fierce wordy war, if

You scalp one another for Bank or for Tariff?

Your calling them cut-throats and knaves all day long

Doesn't prove that the use of hard language is wrong;

While the World's heart beats quicker to think of such men

As signed Tyranny's doom with a bloody steel-pen,

While on Fourth-of-Julys beardless orators fright one

With hints at Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 930

You need not look shy at your sisters and brothers

Who stab with sharp words for the freedom of others;--

No, a wreath, twine a wreath for the loyal and true

Who, for sake of the many, dared stand with the few,

Not of blood-spattered laurel for enemies braved,

But of broad, peaceful oak-leaves for citizens saved!

'Here comes Dana, abstractedly loitering along,

Involved in a paulo-post-future of song,

Who'll be going to write what'll never be written

Till the Muse, ere he think of it, gives him the mitten,-- 940

Who is so well aware of how things should be done,

That his own works displease him before they're begun,--

Who so well all that makes up good poetry knows,

That the best of his poems is written in prose;

All saddled and bridled stood Pegasus waiting,

He was booted and spurred, but he loitered debating;

In a very grave question his soul was immersed,--

Which foot in the stirrup he ought to put first:

And, while this point and that he judicially dwelt on,

He, somehow or other, had written Paul Felton, 950

Whose beauties or faults, whichsoever you see there,

You'll allow only genius could hit upon either.

That he once was the Idle Man none will deplore,

But I fear he will never be anything more;

The ocean of song heaves and glitters before him,

The depth and the vastness and longing sweep o'er him.

He knows every breaker and shoal on the chart,

He has the Coast Pilot and so on by heart,

Yet he spends his whole life, like the man in the fable,

In learning to swim on his library table. 960

'There swaggers John Neal, who has wasted in Maine

The sinews and cords of his pugilist brain,

Who might have been poet, but that, in its stead, he

Preferred to believe that he was so already;

Too hasty to wait till Art's ripe fruit should drop,

He must pelt down an unripe and colicky crop;

Who took to the law, and had this sterling plea for it,

It required him to quarrel, and paid him a fee for it;

A man who's made less than he might have, because

He always has thought himself more than he was,-- 970

Who, with very good natural gifts as a bard,

Broke the strings of his lyre out by striking too hard,

And cracked half the notes of a truly fine voice,

Because song drew less instant attention than noise.

Ah, men do not know how much strength is in poise,

That he goes the farthest who goes far enough,

And that all beyond that is just bother and stuff.

No vain man matures, he makes too much new wood;

His blooms are too thick for the fruit to be good;

'Tis the modest man ripens, 'tis he that achieves, 980

Just what's needed of sunshine and shade he receives;

Grapes, to mellow, require the cool dark of their leaves;

Neal wants balance; he throws his mind always too far,

Whisking out flocks of comets, but never a star;

He has so much muscle, and loves so to show it,

That he strips himself naked to prove he's a poet,

And, to show he could leap Art's wide ditch, if he tried,

Jumps clean o'er it, and into the hedge t'other side.

He has strength, but there's nothing about him in keeping;

One gets surelier onward by walking than leaping; 990

He has used his own sinews himself to distress,

And had done vastly more had he done vastly less;

In letters, too soon is as bad as too late;

Could he only have waited he might have been great;

But he plumped into Helicon up to the waist,

And muddied the stream ere he took his first taste.

'There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare

That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;

A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,

So earnest, so graceful, so lithe and so fleet, 1000

Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet;

'Tis as if a rough oak that for ages had stood,

With his gnarled bony branches like ribs of the wood,

Should bloom, after cycles of struggle and scathe,

With a single anemone trembly and rathe;

His strength is so tender, his wildness so meek,

That a suitable parallel sets one to seek,--

He's a John Bunyan Fouque, a Puritan Tieck;

When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted

For making so full-sized a man as she wanted, 1010

So, to fill out her model, a little she spared

From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared,

And she could not have hit a more excellent plan

For making him fully and perfectly man.

The success of her scheme gave her so much delight,

That she tried it again, shortly after, in Dwight;

Only, while she was kneading and shaping the clay,

She sang to her work in her sweet childish way,

And found, when she'd put the last touch to his soul,

That the music had somehow got mixed with the whole. 1020

'Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show

He's as good as a lord: well, let's grant that he's so;

If a person prefer that description of praise,

Why, a coronet's certainly cheaper than bays;

But he need take no pains to convince us he's not

(As his enemies say) the American Scott.

Choose any twelve men, and let C. read aloud

That one of his novels of which he's most proud,

And I'd lay any bet that, without ever quitting

Their box, they'd be all, to a man, for acquitting. 1030

He has drawn you one character, though, that is new,

One wildflower he's plucked that is wet with the dew

Of this fresh Western world, and, the thing not to mince,

He has done naught but copy it ill ever since;

His Indians, with proper respect be it said,

Are just Natty Bumppo, daubed over with red,

And his very Long Toms are the same useful Nat,

Rigged up in duck pants and a sou'wester hat

(Though once in a Coffin, a good chance was found

To have slipped the old fellow away underground). 1040

All his other men-figures are clothes upon sticks,

The \_derniÃ¨re chemise\_ of a man in a fix

(As a captain besieged, when his garrison's small,

Sets up caps upon poles to be seen o'er the wall);

And the women he draws from one model don't vary.

All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie.

When a character's wanted, he goes to the task

As a cooper would do in composing a cask;

He picks out the staves, of their qualities heedful,

Just hoops them together as tight as is needful, 1050

And, if the best fortune should crown the attempt, he

Has made at the most something wooden and empty.

'Don't suppose I would underrate Cooper's abilities;

If I thought you'd do that, I should feel very ill at ease;

The men who have given to \_one\_ character life

And objective existence are not very rife;

You may number them all, both prose-writers and singers,

Without overrunning the bounds of your fingers,

And Natty won't go to oblivion quicker

Than Adams the parson or Primrose the vicar. 1060

'There is one thing in Cooper I like, too, and that is

That on manners he lectures his countrymen gratis;

Not precisely so either, because, for a rarity,

He is paid for his tickets in unpopularity.

Now he may overcharge his American pictures,

But you'll grant there's a good deal of truth in his strictures;

And I honor the man who is willing to sink

Half his present repute for the freedom to think,

And, when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,

Will risk t'other half for the freedom to speak, 1070

Caring naught for what vengeance the mob has in store,

Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or lower.

'There are truths you Americans need to be told,

And it never'll refute them to swagger and scold;

John Bull, looking o'er the Atlantic, in choler

At your aptness for trade, says you worship the dollar;

But to scorn such eye-dollar-try's what very few do,

And John goes to that church as often as you do,

No matter what John says, don't try to outcrow him,

'Tis enough to go quietly on and outgrow him; 1080

Like most fathers, Bull hates to see Number One

Displacing himself in the mind of his son,

And detests the same faults in himself he'd neglected

When he sees them again in his child's glass reflected;

To love one another you're too like by half;

If he is a bull, you're a pretty stout calf,

And tear your own pasture for naught but to show

What a nice pair of horns you're beginning to grow.

'There are one or two things I should just like to hint,

For you don't often get the truth told you in print; 1090

The most of you (this is what strikes all beholders)

Have a mental and physical stoop in the shoulders;

Though you ought to be free as the winds and the waves,

You've the gait and the manners of runaway slaves;

Though you brag of your New World, you don't half believe in it;

And as much of the Old as is possible weave in it;

Your goddess of freedom, a tight, buxom girl,

With lips like a cherry and teeth like a pearl,

With eyes bold as HerÃ«'s, and hair floating free,

And full of the sun as the spray of the sea, 1100

Who can sing at a husking or romp at a shearing,

Who can trip through the forests alone without fearing,

Who can drive home the cows with a song through the grass,

Keeps glancing aside into Europe's cracked glass.

Hides her red hands in gloves, pinches up her lithe waist,

And makes herself wretched with transmarine taste;

She loses her fresh country charm when she takes

Any mirror except her own rivers and lakes.

'You steal Englishmen's books and think Englishmen's thought,

With their salt on her tail your wild eagle is caught; 1110

Your literature suits its each whisper and motion

To what will be thought of it over the ocean;

The cast clothes of Europe your statesmanship tries

And mumbles again the old blarneys and lies;--

Forget Europe wholly, your veins throb with blood,

To which the dull current in hers is but mud:

Let her sneer, let her say your experiment fails,

In her voice there's a tremble e'en now while she rails,

And your shore will soon be in the nature of things

Covered thick with gilt drift-wood of castaway kings, 1120

Where alone, as it were in a Longfellow's Waif,

Her fugitive pieces will find themselves safe.

O my friends, thank your god, if you have one, that he

'Twixt the Old World and you set the gulf of a sea;

Be strong-backed, brown-handed, upright as your pines,

By the scale of a hemisphere shape your designs,

Be true to yourselves and this new nineteenth age,

As a statue by Powers, or a picture by Page,

Plough, sail, forge, build, carve, paint, make all over new,

To your own New-World instincts contrive to be true, 1130

Keep your ears open wide to the Future's first call,

Be whatever you will, but yourselves first of all,

Stand fronting the dawn on Toil's heaven-scaling peaks,

And become my new race of more practical Greeks.--

Hem! your likeness at present, I shudder to tell o't,

Is that you have your slaves, and the Greek had his helot.'

Here a gentleman present, who had in his attic

More pepper than brains, shrieked, 'The man's a fanatic,

I'm a capital tailor with warm tar and feathers,

And will make him a suit that'll serve in all weathers; 1140

But we'll argue the point first, I'm willing to reason 't,

Palaver before condemnation's but decent:

So, through my humble person, Humanity begs

Of the friends of true freedom a loan of bad eggs.'

But Apollo let one such a look of his show forth

As when [Greek: aeie nukti eoikios], and so forth,

And the gentleman somehow slunk out of the way,

But, as he was going, gained courage to say,--

'At slavery in the abstract my whole soul rebels,

I am as strongly opposed to 't as any one else.' 1150

'Ay, no doubt, but whenever I've happened to meet

With a wrong or a crime, it is always concrete,'

Answered Phoebus severely; then turning to us,

'The mistake of such fellows as just made the fuss

Is only in taking a great busy nation

For a part of their pitiful cotton-plantation.--

But there comes Miranda, Zeus! where shall I flee to?

She has such a penchant for bothering me too!

She always keeps asking if I don't observe a

Particular likeness 'twixt her and Minerva; 1160

She tells me my efforts in verse are quite clever;--

She's been travelling now, and will be worse than ever;

One would think, though, a sharp-sighted noter she'd be

Of all that's worth mentioning over the sea,

For a woman must surely see well, if she try,

The whole of whose being's a capital I:

She will take an old notion, and make it her own,

By saying it o'er in her Sibylline tone,

Or persuade you 'tis something tremendously deep,

By repeating it so as to put you to sleep; 1170

And she well may defy any mortal to see through it,

When once she has mixed up her infinite \_me\_ through it.

There is one thing she owns in her own single right,

It is native and genuine--namely, her spite;

Though, when acting as censor, she privately blows

A censer of vanity 'neath her own nose.'

Here Miranda came up, and said, 'Phoebus! you know

That the Infinite Soul has its infinite woe,

As I ought to know, having lived cheek by jowl,

Since the day I was born, with the Infinite Soul; 1180

I myself introduced, I myself, I alone,

To my Land's better life authors solely my own,

Who the sad heart of earth on their shoulders have taken,

Whose works sound a depth by Life's quiet unshaken,

Such as Shakespeare, for instance, the Bible, and Bacon,

Not to mention my own works; Time's nadir is fleet,

And, as for myself, I'm quite out of conceit'--

'Quite out of conceit! I'm enchanted to hear it,'

Cried Apollo aside. 'Who'd have thought she was near it?

To be sure, one is apt to exhaust those commodities 1190

One uses too fast, yet in this case as odd it is

As if Neptune should say to his turbots and whitings,

"I'm as much out of salt as Miranda's own writings"

(Which, as she in her own happy manner has said,

Sound a depth, for 'tis one of the functions of lead).

She often has asked me if I could not find

A place somewhere near me that suited her mind;

I know but a single one vacant, which she,

With her rare talent that way, would fit to a T.

And it would not imply any pause or cessation 1200

In the work she esteems her peculiar vocation,--

She may enter on duty to-day, if she chooses,

And remain Tiring-woman for life to the Muses.'

Miranda meanwhile has succeeded in driving

Up into a corner, in spite of their striving,

A small flock of terrified victims, and there,

With an I-turn-the-crank-of-the-Universe air

And a tone which, at least to \_my\_ fancy, appears

Not so much to be entering as boxing your ears,

Is unfolding a tale (of herself, I surmise, 1210

For 'tis dotted as thick as a peacock's with I's),

\_Apropos\_ of Miranda, I'll rest on my oars

And drift through a trifling digression on bores,

For, though not wearing ear-rings \_in more majorum\_,

Our ears are kept bored just as if we still wore 'em.

There was one feudal custom worth keeping, at least,

Roasted bores made a part of each well-ordered feast,

And of all quiet pleasures the very \_ne plus\_

Was in hunting wild bores as the tame ones hunt us.

ArchÃ¦ologians, I know, who have personal fears 1220

Of this wise application of hounds and of spears,

Have tried to make out, with a zeal more than wonted,

'Twas a kind of wild swine that our ancestors hunted;

But I'll never believe that the age which has strewn

Europe o'er with cathedrals, and otherwise shown

That it knew what was what, could by chance not have known

(Spending, too, its chief time with its buff on, no doubt)

Which beast 'twould improve the world most to thin out.

I divide bores myself, in the manner of rifles,

Into two great divisions, regardless of trifles:-- 1230

There's your smooth-bore and screw-bore, who do not much vary

In the weight of cold lead they respectively carry.

The smooth-bore is one in whose essence the mind

Not a corner nor cranny to cling by can find;

You feel as in nightmares sometimes, when you slip

Down a steep slated roof, where there's nothing to grip;

You slide and you slide, the blank horror increases,--

You had rather by far be at once smashed to pieces;

You fancy a whirlpool below white and frothing,

And finally drop off and light upon--nothing. 1240

The screw-bore has twists in him, faint predilections

For going just wrong in the tritest directions;

When he's wrong he is flat, when he's right he can't show it,

He'll tell you what Snooks said about the new poet,[3]

Or how Fogrum was outraged by Tennyson's Princess;

He has spent all his spare time and intellect since his

Birth in perusing, on each art and science,

Just the books in which no one puts any reliance,

And though \_nemo\_, we're told, \_horis omnibus sapit\_,

The rule will not fit him, however you shape it, 1250

For he has a perennial foison of sappiness;

He has just enough force to spoil half your day's happiness,

And to make him a sort of mosquito to be with,

But just not enough to dispute or agree with.

These sketches I made (not to be too explicit)

From two honest fellows who made me a visit,

And broke, like the tale of the Bear and the Fiddle,

My reflections on Halleck short off by the middle;

I sha'n't now go into the subject more deeply,

For I notice that some of my readers look sleep'ly; 1260

I will barely remark that, 'mongst civilized nations,

There's none that displays more exemplary patience

Under all sorts of boring, at all sorts of hours,

From all sorts of desperate persons, than ours.

Not to speak of our papers, our State legislatures,

And other such trials for sensitive natures,

Just look for a moment at Congress,--appalled,

My fancy shrinks back from the phantom it called;

Why, there's scarcely a member unworthy to frown

'Neath what Fourier nicknames the Boreal crown; 1270

Only think what that infinite bore-pow'r could do

If applied with a utilitarian view;

Suppose, for example, we shipped it with care

To Sahara's great desert and let it bore there;

If they held one short session and did nothing else,

They'd fill the whole waste with Artesian wells.

But 'tis time now with pen phonographic to follow

Through some more of his sketches our laughing Apollo:--

'There comes Harry Franco, and, as he draws near,

You find that's a smile which you took for a sneer; 1280

One half of him contradicts t'other; his wont

Is to say very sharp things and do very blunt;

His manner's as hard as his feelings are tender,

And a \_sortie\_ he'll make when he means to surrender;

He's in joke half the time when he seems to be sternest,

When he seems to be joking, be sure he's in earnest;

He has common sense in a way that's uncommon,

Hates humbug and cant, loves his friends like a woman,

Builds his dislikes of cards and his friendships of oak,

Loves a prejudice better than aught but a joke, 1290

Is half upright Quaker, half downright Come-outer,

Loves Freedom too well to go stark mad about her,

Quite artless himself, is a lover of Art,

Shuts you out of his secrets, and into his heart,

And though not a poet, yet all must admire

In his letters of Pinto his skill on the liar.

'There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby Rudge,

Three fifths of him genius and two fifths sheer fudge,

Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,

In a way to make people of common sense damn metres, 1300

Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,

But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind,

Who--But hey-day! What's this? Messieurs Mathews and Poe,

You mustn't fling mud-balls at Longfellow so,

Does it make a man worse that his character's such

As to make his friends love him (as you think) too much?

Why, there is not a bard at this moment alive

More willing than he that his fellows should thrive;

While you are abusing him thus, even now

He would help either one of you out of a slough; 1310

You may say that he's smooth and all that till you're hoarse,

But remember that elegance also is force;

After polishing granite as much as you will,

The heart keeps its tough old persistency still;

Deduct all you can, \_that\_ still keeps you at bay;

Why, he'll live till men weary of Collins and Gray.

I'm not over-fond of Greek metres in English,

To me rhyme's a gain, so it be not too jinglish,

And your modern hexameter verses are no more

Like Greek ones than sleek Mr. Pope is like Homer; 1320

As the roar of the sea to the coo of a pigeon is,

So, compared to your moderns, sounds old Melesigenes;

I may be too partial, the reason, perhaps, o't is

That I've heard the old blind man recite his own rhapsodies,

And my ear with that music impregnate may be,

Like the poor exiled shell with the soul of the sea,

Or as one can't bear Strauss when his nature is cloven

To its deeps within deeps by the stroke of Beethoven;

But, set that aside, and 'tis truth that I speak,

Had Theocritus written in English, not Greek, 1330

I believe that his exquisite sense would scarce change a line

In that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral Evangeline.

That's not ancient nor modern, its place is apart

Where time has no sway, in the realm of pure Art,

'Tis a shrine of retreat from Earth's hubbub and strife

As quiet and chaste as the author's own life.

There comes Philothea, her face all aglow,

She has just been dividing some poor creature's woe,

And can't tell which pleases her most, to relieve

His want, or his story to hear and believe; 1340

No doubt against many deep griefs she prevails,

For her ear is the refuge of destitute tales;

She knows well that silence is sorrow's best food,

And that talking draws off from the heart its black blood,

So she'll listen with patience and let you unfold

Your bundle of rags as 'twere pure cloth of gold,

Which, indeed, it all turns to as soon as she's touched it,

And (to borrow a phrase from the nursery) \_muched\_ it;

She has such a musical taste, she will go

Any distance to hear one who draws a long bow; 1350

She will swallow a wonder by mere might and main,

And thinks it Geometry's fault if she's fain

To consider things flat, inasmuch as they're plain;

Facts with her are accomplished, as Frenchmen would say--

They will prove all she wishes them to either way,--

And, as fact lies on this side or that, we must try,

If we're seeking the truth, to find where it don't lie;

I was telling her once of a marvellous aloe

That for thousands of years had looked spindling and sallow,

And, though nursed by the fruitfullest powers of mud, 1360

Had never vouchsafed e'en so much as a bud,

Till its owner remarked (as a sailor, you know,

Often will in a calm) that it never would blow,

For he wished to exhibit the plant, and designed

That its blowing should help him in raising the wind;

At last it was told him that if he should water

Its roots with the blood of his unmarried daughter

(Who was born, as her mother, a Calvinist, said,

With William Law's serious caul on her head),

It would blow as the obstinate breeze did when by a 1370

Like decree of her father died Iphigenia;

At first he declared he himself would be blowed

Ere his conscience with such a foul crime he would load,

But the thought, coming oft, grew less dark than before,

And he mused, as each creditor knocked at his door,

If \_this\_ were but done they would dun me no more;

I told Philothea his struggles and doubts,

And how he considered the ins and the outs

Of the visions he had, and the dreadful dyspepsy,

How he went to the seÃ«r that lives at Po'keepsie, 1380

How the seÃ«r advised him to sleep on it first,

And to read his big volume in case of the worst,

And further advised he should pay him five dollars

For writing [Old English: Hum Hum] on his wristbands and collars;

Three years and ten days these dark words he had studied

When the daughter was missed, and the aloe had budded;

I told how he watched it grow large and more large,

And wondered how much for the show he should charge,--

She had listened with utter indifference to this, till

I told how it bloomed, and, discharging its pistil 1390

With an aim the Eumenides dictated, shot

The botanical filicide dead on the spot;

It had blown, but he reaped not his horrible gains,

For it blew with such force as to blow out his brains,

And the crime was blown also, because on the wad,

Which was paper, was writ "Visitation of God,"

As well as a thrilling account of the deed

Which the coroner kindly allowed me to read.

'Well, my friend took this story up just, to be sure, 1399

As one might a poor foundling that's laid at one's door;

She combed it and washed it and clothed it and fed it,

And as if 'twere her own child most tenderly bred it,

Laid the scene (of the legend, I mean) far away a-

-mong the green vales underneath Himalaya,

And by artist-like touches, laid on here and there,

Made the whole thing so touching, I frankly declare

I have read it all thrice, and, perhaps I am weak,

But I found every time there were tears on my cheek.

'The pole, science tells us, the magnet controls,

But she is a magnet to emigrant Poles, 1410

And folks with a mission that nobody knows

Throng thickly about her as bees round a rose;

She can fill up the \_carets\_ in such, make their scope

Converge to some focus of rational hope,

And, with sympathies fresh as the morning, their gall

Can transmute into honey,--but this is not all;

Not only for those she has solace, oh say,

Vice's desperate nursling adrift in Broadway,

Who clingest, with all that is left of thee human,

To the last slender spar from the wreck of the woman, 1420

Hast thou not found one shore where those tired drooping feet

Could reach firm mother-earth, one full heart on whose beat

The soothed head in silence reposing could hear

The chimes of far childhood throb back on the ear?

Ah, there's many a beam from the fountain of day

That, to reach us unclouded, must pass, on its way,

Through the soul of a woman, and hers is wide ope

To the influence of Heaven as the blue eyes of Hope;

Yes, a great heart is hers, one that dares to go in

To the prison, the slave-hut, the alleys of sin, 1430

And to bring into each, or to find there, some line

Of the never completely out-trampled divine;

If her heart at high floods swamps her brain now and then,

'Tis but richer for that when the tide ebbs agen,

As, after old Nile has subsided, his plain

Overflows with a second broad deluge of grain;

What a wealth would it tiring to the narrow and sour

Could they be as a Child but for one little hour!

'What! Irving? thrice welcome, warm heart and fine brain,

You bring back the happiest spirit from Spain, 1440

And the gravest sweet humor, that ever were there

Since Cervantes met death in his gentle despair;

Nay, don't be embarrassed, nor look so beseeching,

I sha'n't run directly against my own preaching,

And, having just laughed at their Raphaels and Dantes,

Go to setting you up beside matchless Cervantes;

But allow me to speak what I honestly feel,--

To a true poet-heart add the fun of Dick Steele,

Throw in all of Addison, \_minus\_ the chill, 1449

With the whole of that partnership's stock and good-will,

Mix well, and while stirring, hum o'er, as a spell,

The fine \_old\_ English Gentleman, simmer it well,

Sweeten just to your own private liking, then strain,

That only the finest and clearest remain,

Let it stand out of doors till a soul it receives

From the warm lazy sun loitering down through green leaves,

And you'll find a choice nature, not wholly deserving

A name either English or Yankee,--just Irving.

'There goes,--but \_stet nominis umbra\_,--his name

You'll be glad enough, some day or other, to claim, 1460

And will all crowd about him and swear that you knew him

If some English critic should chance to review him.

The old \_porcos ante ne projiciatis\_

MARGARITAS, for him you have verified gratis;

What matters his name? Why, it may be Sylvester,

Judd, Junior, or Junius, Ulysses, or Nestor,

For aught \_I\_ know or care; 'tis enough that I look

On the author of "Margaret," the first Yankee book

With the \_soul\_ of Down East in 't, and things farther East,

As far as the threshold of morning, at least, 1470

Where awaits the fair dawn of the simple and true,

Of the day that comes slowly to make all things new.

'T has a smack of pine woods, of bare field and bleak hill,

Such as only the breed of the Mayflower could till;

The Puritan's shown in it, tough to the core,

Such as prayed, smiting Agag on red Marston Moor:

With an unwilling humor, half choked by the drouth

In brown hollows about the inhospitable mouth;

With a soul full of poetry, though it has qualms

About finding a happiness out of the Psalms; 1480

Full of tenderness, too, though it shrinks in the dark,

Hamadryad-like, under the coarse, shaggy bark;

That sees visions, knows wrestlings of God with the Will,

And has its own Sinais and thunderings still.'

Here, 'Forgive me, Apollo,' I cried, 'while I pour

My heart out to my birthplace: O loved more and more

Dear Baystate, from whose rocky bosom thy sons

Should suck milk, strong-will-giving, brave, such as runs

In the veins of old Greylock--who is it that dares 1489

Call thee pedler, a soul wrapped in bank-books and shares?

It is false! She's a Poet! I see, as I write,

Along the far railroad the steam-snake glide white,

The cataract-throb of her mill-hearts, I hear,

The swift strokes of trip-hammers weary my ear,

Sledges ring upon anvils, through logs the saw screams,

Blocks swing to their place, beetles drive home the beams:--

It is songs such as these that she croons to the din

Of her fast-flying shuttles, year out and year in,

While from earth's farthest corner there comes not a breeze

But wafts her the buzz of her gold-gleaning bees: 1500

What though those horn hands have as yet found small time

For painting and sculpture and music and rhyme?

These will come in due order; the need that pressed sorest

Was to vanquish the seasons, the ocean, the forest,

To bridle and harness the rivers, the steam,

Making those whirl her mill-wheels, this tug in her team,

To vassalize old tyrant Winter, and make

Him delve surlily for her on river and lake;--

When this New World was parted, she strove not to shirk

Her lot in the heirdom, the tough, silent Work, 1510

The hero-share ever from Herakles down

To Odin, the Earth's iron sceptre and crown:

Yes, thou dear, noble Mother! if ever men's praise

Could be claimed for creating heroical lays,

Thou hast won it; if ever the laurel divine

Crowned the Maker and Builder, that glory is thine!

Thy songs are right epic, they tell how this rude

Rock-rib of our earth here was tamed and subdued;

Thou hast written them plain on the face of the planet

In brave, deathless letters of iron and granite; 1520

Thou hast printed them deep for all time; they are set

From the same runic type-fount and alphabet

With thy stout Berkshire hills and the arms of thy Bay,--

They are staves from the burly old Mayflower lay.

If the drones of the Old World, in querulous ease,

Ask thy Art and thy Letters, point proudly to these,

Or, if they deny these are Letters and Art,

Toil on with the same old invincible heart;

Thou art rearing the pedestal broad-based and grand

Whereon the fair shapes of the Artist shall stand, 1530

And creating, through labors undaunted and long,

The theme for all Sculpture and Painting and Song!

'But my good mother Baystate wants no praise of mine,

She learned from \_her\_ mother a precept divine

About something that butters no parsnips, her \_forte\_

In another direction lies, work is her sport

(Though she'll curtsey and set her cap straight, that she will,

If you talk about Plymouth and red Bunker's hill).

Dear, notable goodwife! by this time of night,

Her hearth is swept neatly, her fire burning bright, 1540

And she sits in a chair (of home plan and make) rocking,

Musing much, all the while, as she darns on a stocking,

Whether turkeys will come pretty high next Thanksgiving,

Whether flour'll be so dear, for, as sure as she's living,

She will use rye-and-injun then, whether the pig

By this time ain't got pretty tolerable big,

And whether to sell it outright will be best,

Or to smoke hams and shoulders and salt down the rest,--

At this minute, she'd swop all my verses, ah, cruel!

For the last patent stove that is saving of fuel; 1550

So I'll just let Apollo go on, for his phiz

Shows I've kept him awaiting too long as it is.'

'If our friend, there, who seems a reporter, is done

With his burst of emotion, why, I will go on,'

Said Apollo; some smiled, and, indeed, I must own

There was something sarcastic, perhaps, in his tone;--

'There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit;

A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit

The electrical tingles of hit after hit;

In long poems 'tis painful sometimes, and invites 1560

A thought of the way the new Telegraph writes,

Which pricks down its little sharp sentences spitefully

As if you got more than you'd title to rightfully,

And you find yourself hoping its wild father Lightning

Would flame in for a second and give you a fright'ning.

He has perfect sway of what I call a sham metre,

But many admire it, the English pentameter,

And Campbell, I think, wrote most commonly worse,

With less nerve, swing, and fire in the same kind of verse,

Nor e'er achieved aught in't so worthy of praise 1570

As the tribute of Holmes to the grand \_Marseillaise\_.

You went crazy last year over Bulwer's New Timon;--

Why, if B., to the day of his dying, should rhyme on,

Heaping verses on verses and tomes upon tomes,

He could ne'er reach the best point and vigor of Holmes.

His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a lyric

Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satiric

In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes

That are trodden upon are your own or your foes'.

'There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb 1580

With a whole bale of \_isms\_ tied together with rhyme,

He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,

But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders,

The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching

Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;

His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,

But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,

And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,

At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem. 1589

'There goes Halleck, whose Fanny's a pseudo Don Juan,

With the wickedness out that gave salt to the true one,

He's a wit, though, I hear, of the very first order,

And once made a pun on the words soft Recorder;

More than this, he's a very great poet, I'm told,

And has had his works published in crimson and gold,

With something they call "Illustrations," to wit,

Like those with which Chapman obscured Holy Writ,[4]

Which are said to illustrate, because, as I view it,

Like \_lucus a non\_, they precisely don't do it;

Let a man who can write what himself understands 1600

Keep clear, if he can, of designing men's hands,

Who bury the sense, if there's any worth having,

And then very honestly call it engraving,

But, to quit \_badinage\_, which there isn't much wit in,

Halleck's better, I doubt not, than all he has written;

In his verse a clear glimpse you will frequently find,

If not of a great, of a fortunate mind,

Which contrives to be true to its natural loves

In a world of back-offices, ledgers, and stoves.

When his heart breaks away from the brokers and banks, 1610

And kneels in his own private shrine to give thanks,

There's a genial manliness in him that earns

Our sincerest respect (read, for instance, his "Burns"),

And we can't but regret (seek excuse where we may)

That so much of a man has been peddled away.

'But what's that? a mass-meeting? No, there come in lots

The American Bulwers, Disraelis, and Scotts,

And in short the American everything elses,

Each charging the others with envies and jealousies;--

By the way, 'tis a fact that displays what profusions 1620

Of all kinds of greatness bless free institutions,

That while the Old World has produced barely eight

Of such poets as all men agree to call great,

And of other great characters hardly a score

(One might safely say less than that rather than more),

With you every year a whole crop is begotten,

They're as much of a staple as corn is, or cotton;

Why, there's scarcely a huddle of log-huts and shanties

That has not brought forth its own Miltons and Dantes; 1629

I myself know ten Byrons, one Coleridge, three Shelleys,

Two Raphaels, six Titians (I think), one Apelles,

Leonardos and Rubenses plenty as lichens,

One (but that one is plenty) American Dickens,

A whole flock of Lambs, any number of Tennysons,--

In short, if a man has the luck to have any sons,

He may feel pretty certain that one out of twain

Will be some very great person over again.

There is one inconvenience in all this, which lies

In the fact that by contrast we estimate size,[5]

And, where there are none except Titans, great stature 1640

Is only the normal proceeding of nature.

What puff the strained sails of your praise will you furl at, if

The calmest degree that you know is superlative?

At Rome, all whom Charon took into his wherry must,

As a matter of course, be well \_issimust\_ and \_errimust\_,

A Greek, too, could feel, while in that famous boat he tost,

That his friends would take care he was [Greek: istost] and

[Greek: otatost],

And formerly we, as through graveyards we past,

Thought the world went from bad to worst fearfully fast;

Let us glance for a moment, 'tis well worth the pains, 1650

And note what an average graveyard contains;

There lie levellers levelled, duns done up themselves,

There are booksellers finally laid on their shelves,

Horizontally there lie upright politicians,

Dose-a-dose with their patients sleep faultless physicians,

There are slave-drivers quietly whipped under ground,

There bookbinders, done up in boards, are fast bound,

There card-players wait till the last trump be played,

There all the choice spirits get finally laid,

There the babe that's unborn is supplied with a berth, 1660

There men without legs get their six feet of earth,

There lawyers repose, each wrapped up in his case,

There seekers of office are sure of a place,

There defendant and plaintiff get equally cast,

There shoemakers quietly stick to the last,

There brokers at length become silent as stocks,

There stage-drivers sleep without quitting their box,

And so forth and so forth and so forth and so on,

With this kind of stuff one might endlessly go on;

To come to the point, I may safely assert you 1670

Will find in each yard every cardinal virtue;[6]

Each has six truest patriots: four discoverers of ether,

Who never had thought on 't nor mentioned it either;

Ten poets, the greatest who ever wrote rhyme:

Two hundred and forty first men of their time:

One person whose portrait just gave the least hint

Its original had a most horrible squint:

One critic, most (what do they call it?) reflective,

Who never had used the phrase ob-or subjective:

Forty fathers of Freedom, of whom twenty bred 1680

Their sons for the rice-swamps, at so much a head,

And their daughters for--faugh! thirty mothers of Gracchi:

Non-resistants who gave many a spiritual blackeye:

Eight true friends of their kind, one of whom was a jailer:

Four captains almost as astounding as Taylor:

Two dozen of Italy's exiles who shoot us his

Kaisership daily, stern pen-and-ink Brutuses,

Who, in Yankee back-parlors, with crucified smile,[7]

Mount serenely their country's funereal pile:

Ninety-nine Irish heroes, ferocious rebellers 1690

'Gainst the Saxon in cis-marine garrets and cellars,

Who shake their dread fists o'er the sea and all that,--

As long as a copper drops into the hat:

Nine hundred Teutonic republicans stark

From Vaterland's battle just won--in the Park,

Who the happy profession of martyrdom take

Whenever it gives them a chance at a steak;

Sixty-two second Washingtons: two or three Jacksons:

And so many everythings else that it racks one's

Poor memory too much to continue the list, 1700

Especially now they no longer exist;--

I would merely observe that you've taken to giving

The puffs that belong to the dead to the living,

And that somehow your trump-of-contemporary-doom's tones

Is tuned after old dedications and tombstones.'

Here the critic came in and a thistle presented--[8]

From a frown to a smile the god's features relented,

As he stared at his envoy, who, swelling with pride,

To the god's asking look, nothing daunted, replied,--

'You're surprised, I suppose, I was absent so long, 1710

But your godship respecting the lilies was wrong;

I hunted the garden from one end to t'other,

And got no reward but vexation and bother,

Till, tossed out with weeds in a corner to wither,

This one lily I found and made haste to bring hither.'

'Did he think I had given him a book to review?

I ought to have known what the fellow would do,'

Muttered Phoebus aside, 'for a thistle will pass

Beyond doubt for the queen of all flowers with an ass;

He has chosen in just the same way as he'd choose 1720

His specimens out of the books he reviews;

And now, as this offers an excellent text,

I'll give 'em some brief hints on criticism next.'

So, musing a moment, he turned to the crowd,

And, clearing his voice, spoke as follows aloud:--

'My friends, in the happier days of the muse,

We were luckily free from such things as reviews;

Then naught came between with its fog to make clearer

The heart of the poet to that of his hearer;

Then the poet brought heaven to the people, and they 1730

Felt that they, too, were poets in hearing his lay;

Then the poet was prophet, the past in his soul

Precreated the future, both parts of one whole;

Then for him there was nothing too great or too small,

For one natural deity sanctified all;

Then the bard owned no clipper and meter of moods

Save the spirit of silence that hovers and broods

O'er the seas and the mountains, the rivers and woods;

He asked not earth's verdict, forgetting the clods,

His soul soared and sang to an audience of gods; 1740

'Twas for them that he measured the thought and the line,

And shaped for their vision the perfect design,

With as glorious a foresight, a balance as true,

As swung out the worlds in the infinite blue;

Then a glory and greatness invested man's heart,

The universal, which now stands estranged and apart,

In the free individual moulded, was Art;

Then the forms of the Artist seemed thrilled with desire

For something as yet unattained, fuller, higher,

As once with her lips, lifted hands, and eyes listening, 1750

And her whole upward soul in her countenance glistening,

Eurydice stood--like a beacon unfired,

Which, once touched with flame, will leap heav'nward inspired--

And waited with answering kindle to mark

The first gleam of Orpheus that pained the red Dark.

Then painting, song, sculpture did more than relieve

The need that men feel to create and believe,

And as, in all beauty, who listens with love

Hears these words oft repeated--"beyond and above,"

So these seemed to be but the visible sign 1760

Of the grasp of the soul after things more divine;

They were ladders the Artist erected to climb

O'er the narrow horizon of space and of time,

And we see there the footsteps by which men had gained

To the one rapturous glimpse of the never-attained,

As shepherds could erst sometimes trace in the sod

The last spurning print of a sky-cleaving god.

'But now, on the poet's dis-privacied moods

With \_do this\_ and \_do that\_ the pert critic intrudes;

While he thinks he's been barely fulfilling his duty 1770

To interpret 'twixt men and their own sense of beauty.

And has striven, while others sought honor or pelf,

To make his kind happy as he was himself,

He finds he's been guilty of horrid offences

In all kinds of moods, numbers, genders, and tenses;

He's been \_ob\_ and \_sub\_jective, what Kettle calls Pot,

Precisely, at all events, what he ought not,

\_You have done this,\_ says one judge; \_done that,\_ says another;

\_You should have done this,\_ grumbles one; \_that,\_ says t'other;

Never mind what he touches, one shrieks out \_Taboo!\_ 1780

And while he is wondering what he shall do,

Since each suggests opposite topics for song,

They all shout together \_you're right!\_ and \_you're wrong!\_

'Nature fits all her children with something to do,

He who would write and can't write can surely review,

Can set up a small booth as critic and sell us his

Petty conceit and his pettier jealousies;

Thus a lawyer's apprentice, just out of his teens,

Will do for the Jeffrey of six magazines;

Having read Johnson's lives of the poets half through, 1790

There's nothing on earth he's not competent to;

He reviews with as much nonchalance as he whistles,--

He goes through a book and just picks out the thistles;

It matters not whether he blame or commend,

If he's bad as a foe, he's far worse as a friend:

Let an author but write what's above his poor scope,

He goes to work gravely and twists up a rope,

And, inviting the world to see punishment done,

Hangs himself up to bleach in the wind and the sun;

'Tis delightful to see, when a man comes along 1800

Who has anything in him peculiar and strong,

Every cockboat that swims clear its fierce (pop) gundeck at him,

And make as he passes its ludicrous Peck at him--'

Here Miranda came up and began, 'As to that--'

Apollo at once seized his gloves, cane, and hat,

And, seeing the place getting rapidly cleared,

I too snatched my notes and forthwith disappeared.

THE UNHAPPY LOT OF MR. KNOTT

PART I

SHOWING HOW HE BUILT HIS HOUSE AND HIS WIFE MOVED INTO IT

My worthy friend, A. Gordon Knott,

From business snug withdrawn,

Was much contented with a lot

That would contain a Tudor cot

'Twixt twelve feet square of garden-plot,

And twelve feet more of lawn.

He had laid business on the shelf

To give his taste expansion,

And, since no man, retired with pelf,

The building mania can shun, 10

Knott, being middle-aged himself,

Resolved to build (unhappy elf!)

A mediÃ¦val mansion.

He called an architect in counsel;

'I want,' said he, 'a--you know what,

(You are a builder, I am Knott)

A thing complete from chimney-pot

Down to the very grounsel;

Here's a half-acre of good land;

Just have it nicely mapped and planned 20

And make your workmen drive on;

Meadow there is, and upland too,

And I should like a water-view,

D'you think you could contrive one?

(Perhaps the pump and trough would do,

If painted a judicious blue?)

The woodland I've attended to;'

[He meant three pines stuck up askew,

Two dead ones and a live one.]

'A pocket-full of rocks 'twould take 30

To build a house of freestone,

But then it is not hard to make

What nowadays is \_the\_ stone;

The cunning painter in a trice

Your house's outside petrifies,

And people think it very gneiss

Without inquiring deeper;

\_My\_ money never shall be thrown

Away on such a deal of stone,

When stone of deal is cheaper.' 40

And so the greenest of antiques

Was reared for Knott to dwell in:

The architect worked hard for weeks

In venting all his private peaks

Upon the roof, whose crop of leaks

Had satisfied Fluellen;

Whatever anybody had

Out of the common, good or bad,

Knott had it all worked well in;

A donjon-keep, where clothes might dry, 50

A porter's lodge that was a sty,

A campanile slim and high,

Too small to hang a bell in;

All up and down and here and there,

With Lord-knows-whats of round and square

Stuck on at random everywhere,--

It was a house to make one stare,

All corners and all gables;

Like dogs let loose upon a bear,

Ten emulous styles \_staboyed\_ with care, 60

The whole among them seemed to tear,

And all the oddities to spare

Were set upon the stables.

Knott was delighted with a pile

Approved by fashion's leaders:

(Only he made the builder smile,

By asking every little while,

Why that was called the Twodoor style,

Which certainly had \_three\_ doors?)

Yet better for this luckless man 70

If he had put a downright ban

Upon the thing \_in limine;\_

For, though to quit affairs his plan,

Ere many days, poor Knott began

Perforce accepting draughts, that ran

All ways--except up chimney;

The house, though painted stone to mock,

With nice white lines round every block,

Some trepidation stood in,

When tempests (with petrific shock, 80

So to speak,) made it really rock,

Though not a whit less wooden;

And painted stone, howe'er well done,

Will not take in the prodigal sun

Whose beams are never quite at one

With our terrestrial lumber;

So the wood shrank around the knots,

And gaped in disconcerting spots,

And there were lots of dots and rots

And crannies without number, 90

Wherethrough, as you may well presume,

The wind, like water through a flume,

Came rushing in ecstatic,

Leaving, in all three floors, no room

That was not a rheumatic;

And, what with points and squares and rounds

Grown shaky on their poises,

The house at nights was full of pounds,

Thumps, bumps, creaks, scratchings, raps--till--'Zounds!'

Cried Knott, 'this goes beyond all bounds; 100

I do not deal in tongues and sounds,

Nor have I let my house and grounds

To a family of Noyeses!'

But, though Knott's house was full of airs,

\_He\_ had but one,--a daughter;

And, as he owned much stocks and shares,

Many who wished to render theirs

Such vain, unsatisfying cares,

And needed wives to sew their tears,

In matrimony sought her; 110

They vowed her gold they wanted not,

Their faith would never falter,

They longed to tie this single Knott

In the Hymeneal halter;

So daily at the door they rang,

Cards for the belle delivering,

Or in the choir at her they sang,

Achieving such a rapturous twang

As set her nerves ashivering.

Now Knott had quite made up his mind 120

That Colonel Jones should have her;

No beauty he, but oft we find

Sweet kernels 'neath a roughish rind,

So hoped his Jenny'd be resigned

And make no more palaver;

Glanced at the fact that love was blind,

That girls were ratherish inclined

To pet their little crosses,

Then nosologically defined

The rate at which the system pined 130

In those unfortunates who dined

Upon that metaphoric kind

Of dish--their own proboscis.

But she, with many tears and moans,

Besought him not to mock her.

Said 'twas too much for flesh and bones

To marry mortgages and loans,

That fathers' hearts were stocks and stones.

And that she'd go, when Mrs. Jones,

To Davy Jones's locker; 140

Then gave her head a little toss

That said as plain as ever was,

If men are always at a loss

Mere womankind to bridle--

To try the thing on woman cross

Were fifty times as idle;

For she a strict resolve had made

And registered in private,

That either she would die a maid,

Or else be Mrs. Doctor Slade, 150

If a woman could contrive it;

And, though the wedding-day was set,

Jenny was more so, rather,

Declaring, in a pretty pet,

That, howsoe'er they spread their net,

She would out-Jennyral them yet,

The colonel and her father.

Just at this time the Public's eyes

Were keenly on the watch, a stir

Beginning slowly to arise 160

About those questions and replies.

Those raps that unwrapped mysteries

So rapidly at Rochester,

And Knott, already nervous grown

By lying much awake alone.

And listening, sometimes to a moan,

And sometimes to a clatter,

Whene'er the wind at night would rouse

The gingerbread-work on his house,

Or when some, hasty-tempered mouse, 170

Behind the plastering, made a towse

About a family matter,

Began to wonder if his wife,

A paralytic half her life.

Which made it more surprising,

Might not, to rule him from her urn,

Have taken a peripatetic turn

For want of exorcising.

This thought, once nestled in his head,

Erelong contagious grew, and spread 180

Infecting all his mind with dread,

Until at last he lay in bed

And heard his wife, with well-known tread,

Entering the kitchen through the shed,

(Or was't his fancy, mocking?)

Opening the pantry, cutting bread,

And then (she'd been some ten years dead)

Closets and drawers unlocking;

Or, in his room (his breath grew thick) 189

He heard the long-familiar click

Of slender needles flying quick,

As if she knit a stocking;

For whom?--he prayed that years might flit

With pains rheumatic shooting,

Before those ghostly things she knit

Upon his unfleshed sole might fit,

He did not fancy it a bit,

To stand upon that footing:

At other times, his frightened hairs 199

Above the bedclothes trusting,

He heard her, full of household cares,

(No dream entrapped in supper's snares,

The foal of horrible nightmares,

But broad awake, as he declares),

Go bustling up and down the stairs,

Or setting back last evening's chairs,

Or with the poker thrusting

The raked-up sea-coal's hardened crust--

And--what! impossible! it must!

He knew she had returned to dust, 210

And yet could scarce his senses trust,

Hearing her as she poked and fussed

About the parlor, dusting!

Night after night he strove to sleep

And take his ease in spite of it;

But still his flesh would chill and creep,

And, though two night-lamps he might keep,

He could not so make light of it.

At last, quite desperate, he goes

And tells his neighbors all his woes, 220

Which did but their amount enhance;

They made such mockery of his fears

That soon his days were of all jeers.

His nights of the rueful countenance;

'I thought most folks,' one neighbor said,

'Gave up the ghost when they were dead?'

Another gravely shook his head,

Adding, 'From all we hear, it's

Quite plain poor Knott is going mad--

For how can he at once be sad 230

And think he's full of spirits?'

A third declared he knew a knife

Would cut this Knott much quicker,

'The surest way to end all strife,

And lay the spirit of a wife,

Is just to take and lick her!'

A temperance man caught up the word,

'Ah yes,' he groaned, 'I've always heard

Our poor friend somewhat slanted 239

Tow'rd taking liquor overmuch;

I fear these spirits may be Dutch,

(A sort of gins, or something such,)

With which his house is haunted;

I see the thing as clear as light,--

If Knott would give up getting tight,

Naught farther would be wanted:'

So all his neighbors stood aloof

And, that the spirits 'neath his roof

Were not entirely up to proof,

Unanimously granted. 250

Knott knew that cocks and sprites were foes,

And so bought up, Heaven only knows

How many, for he wanted crows

To give ghosts caws, as I suppose,

To think that day was breaking;

Moreover what he called his park,

He turned into a kind of ark

For dogs, because a little bark

Is a good tonic in the dark,

If one is given to waking; 260

But things went on from bad to worse,

His curs were nothing but a curse,

And, what was still more shocking,

Foul ghosts of living fowl made scoff

And would not think of going off

In spite of all his cocking.

Shanghais, Bucks-counties, Dominiques,

Malays (that didn't lay for weeks),

Polanders, Bantams, Dorkings,

(Waiving the cost, no trifling ill,

Since each brought in his little bill,) 271

By day or night were never still,

But every thought of rest would kill

With cacklings and with quorkings;

Henry the Eighth of wives got free

By a way he had of axing;

But poor Knott's Tudor henery

Was not so fortunate, and he

Still found his trouble waxing;

As for the dogs, the rows they made, 280

And how they howled, snarled, barked and bayed,

Beyond all human knowledge is;

All night, as wide awake as gnats,

The terriers rumpused after rats,

Or, just for practice, taught their brats

To worry cast-off shoes and hats,

The bull-dogs settled private spats,

All chased imaginary cats,

Or raved behind the fence's slats

At real ones, or, from their mats,

With friends, miles off, held pleasant chats, 291

Or, like some folks in white cravats,

Contemptuous of sharps and flats,

Sat up and sang dogsologies.

Meanwhile the cats set up a squall,

And, safe upon the garden-wall,

All night kept cat-a-walling,

As if the feline race were all.

In one wild cataleptic sprawl,

Into love's tortures falling. 300

PART II

SHOWING WHAT IS MEANT BY A FLOW OF SPIRITS

At first the ghosts were somewhat shy,

Coming when none but Knott was nigh,

And people said 'twas all their eye,

(Or rather his) a flam, the sly

Digestion's machination:

Some recommended a wet sheet,

Some a nice broth of pounded peat,

Some a cold flat-iron to the feet,

Some a decoction of lamb's-bleat,

Some a southwesterly grain of wheat; 310

Meat was by some pronounced unmeet,

Others thought fish most indiscreet,

And that 'twas worse than all to eat

Of vegetables, sour or sweet,

(Except, perhaps, the skin of beet,)

In such a concatenation:

One quack his button gently plucks

And murmurs, 'Biliary ducks!'

Says Knott, 'I never ate one;'

But all, though brimming full of wrath, 320

Homoeo, Allo, Hydropath,

Concurred in this--that t'other's path

To death's door was the straight one.

Still, spite of medical advice,

The ghosts came thicker, and a spice

Of mischief grew apparent;

Nor did they only come at night,

But seemed to fancy broad daylight,

Till Knott, in horror and affright,

His unoffending hair rent; 330

Whene'er with handkerchief on lap,

He made his elbow-chair a trap,

To catch an after-dinner nap,

The spirits, always on the tap,

Would make a sudden \_rap, rap, rap,\_

The half-spun cord of sleep to snap,

(And what is life without its nap

But threadbareness and mere mishap?) 338

As 'twere with a percussion cap

The trouble's climax capping;

It seemed a party dried and grim

Of mummies had come to visit him,

Each getting off from every limb

Its multitudinous wrapping;

Scratchings sometimes the walls ran round,

The merest penny-weights of sound;

Sometimes 'twas only by the pound

They carried on their dealing,

A thumping 'neath the parlor floor,

Thump-bump-thump-bumping o'er and o'er, 350

As if the vegetables in store

(Quiet and orderly before)

Were all together peeling;

You would have thought the thing was done

By the spirit of some son of a gun,

And that a forty-two-pounder,

Or that the ghost which made such sounds

Could be none other than John Pounds,

Of Ragged Schools the founder.

Through three gradations of affright, 360

The awful noises reached their height;

At first they knocked nocturnally,

Then, for some reason, changing quite,

(As mourners, after six months' flight,

Turn suddenly from dark to light,)

Began to knock diurnally,

And last, combining all their stocks,

(Scotland was ne'er so full of Knox,)

Into one Chaos (father of Nox,)

\_Nocte pluit\_--they showered knocks, 370

And knocked, knocked, knocked, eternally;

Ever upon the go, like buoys,

(Wooden sea-urchins,) all Knott's joys,

They turned to troubles and a noise

That preyed on him internally.

Soon they grew wider in their scope;

Whenever Knott a door would ope,

It would ope not, or else elope

And fly back (curbless as a trope

Once started down a stanza's slope 380

By a bard that gave it too much rope--)

Like a clap of thunder slamming:

And, when kind Jenny brought his hat,

(She always, when he walked, did that,)

Just as upon his heart it sat,

Submitting to his settling pat,

Some unseen hand would jam it flat,

Or give it such a furious bat

That eyes and nose went cramming

Up out of sight, and consequently, 390

As when in life it paddled free,

His beaver caused much damning;

If these things seem o'erstrained to be,

Read the account of Doctor Dee,

'Tis in our college library:

Read Wesley's circumstantial plea,

And Mrs. Crowe, more like a bee,

Sucking the nightshade's honeyed fee,

And Stilling's Pneumatology;

Consult Scot, Glanvil, grave Wie- 400

rus and both Mathers; further see,

Webster, Casaubon, James First's trea-

tise, a right royal Q.E.D.

Writ with the moon in perigee,

Bodin de la Demonomanie--

(Accent that last line gingerly)

All full of learning as the sea

Of fishes, and all disagree,

Save in \_Sathanas apage!\_

Or, what will surely put a flea 410

In unbelieving ears--with glee,

Out of a paper (sent to me

By some friend who forgot to P ...

A ... Y ...--I use cryptography

Lest I his vengeful pen should dree--

His P ...O ...S ...T ...A ...G ...E ...)

Things to the same effect I cut,

About the tantrums of a ghost,

Not more than three weeks since, at most,

Near Stratford, in Connecticut. 420

Knott's Upas daily spread its roots,

Sent up on all sides livelier shoots,

And bore more pestilential fruits;

The ghosts behaved like downright brutes,

They snipped holes in his Sunday suits,

Practised all night on octave flutes,

Put peas (not peace) into his boots,

Whereof grew corns in season,

They scotched his sheets, and, what was worse,

Stuck his silk nightcap full of burrs, 430

Till he, in language plain and terse,

(But much unlike a Bible verse,)

Swore he should lose his reason.

The tables took to spinning, too,

Perpetual yarns, and arm-chairs grew

To prophets and apostles;

One footstool vowed that only he

Of law and gospel held the key,

That teachers of whate'er degree

To whom opinion bows the knee 440

Weren't fit to teach Truth's \_a b c\_,

And were (the whole lot) to a T

Mere fogies all and fossils;

A teapoy, late the property

Of Knox's Aunt Keziah,

(Whom Jenny most irreverently

Had nicknamed her aunt-tipathy)

With tips emphatic claimed to be

The prophet Jeremiah;

The tins upon the kitchen-wall, 450

Turned tintinnabulators all,

And things that used to come to call

For simple household services

Began to hop and whirl and prance,

Fit to put out of countenance

The \_CommÃ­s\_ and \_Grisettes\_ of France

Or Turkey's dancing Dervises.

Of course such doings, far and wide,

With rumors filled the countryside,

And (as it is our nation's pride 460

To think a Truth not verified

Till with majorities allied)

Parties sprung up, affirmed, denied,

And candidates with questions plied,

Who, like the circus-riders, tried

At once both hobbies to bestride,

And each with his opponent vied

In being inexplicit.

Earnest inquirers multiplied;

Folks, whose tenth cousins lately died, 470

Wrote letters long, and Knott replied;

All who could either walk or ride

Gathered to wonder or deride,

And paid the house a visit;

Horses were to his pine-trees tied,

Mourners in every corner sighed,

Widows brought children there that cried.

Swarms of lean Seekers, eager-eyed,

(People Knott never could abide,)

Into each hole and cranny pried 480

With strings of questions cut and dried

From the Devout Inquirer's Guide,

For the wise spirits to decide--

As, for example, is it

True that the damned are fried or boiled?

Was the Earth's axis greased or oiled?

Who cleaned the moon when it was soiled?

How baldness might be cured or foiled?

How heal diseased potatoes?

Did spirits have the sense of smell? 490

Where would departed spinsters dwell?

If the late Zenas Smith were well?

If Earth were solid or a shell?

Were spirits fond of Doctor Fell?

\_Did\_ the bull toll Cock-Robin's knell?

What remedy would bugs expel?

If Paine's invention were a sell?

Did spirits by Webster's system spell?

Was it a sin to be a belle?

Did dancing sentence folks to hell? 500

If so, then where most torture fell?

On little toes or great toes?

If life's true seat were in the brain?

Did Ensign mean to marry Jane?

By whom, in fact, was Morgan slain?

Could matter ever suffer pain?

What would take out a cherry-stain?

Who picked the pocket of Seth Crane,

Of Waldo precinct, State, of Maine?

Was Sir John Franklin sought in vain? 510

Did primitive Christians ever train?

What was the family-name of Cain?

Them spoons, were they by Betty ta'en?

Would earth-worm poultice cure a sprain?

Was Socrates so dreadful plain?

What teamster guided Charles's wain?

Was Uncle Ethan mad or sane,

And could his will in force remain?

If not, what counsel to retain?

Did Le Sage steal Gil Blas from Spain? 520

Was Junius writ by Thomas Paine?

Were ducks discomforted by rain?

\_How\_ did Britannia rule the main?

Was Jonas coming back again?

Was vital truth upon the wane?

Did ghosts, to scare folks, drag a chain?

Who was our Huldah's chosen swain?

Did none have teeth pulled without payin',

Ere ether was invented?

Whether mankind would not agree, 530

If the universe were tuned in C?

What was it ailed Lucindy's knee?

Whether folks eat folks in Feejee?

Whether \_his\_ name would end with T?

If Saturn's rings were two or three,

And what bump in Phrenology

They truly represented?

These problems dark, wherein they groped,

Wherewith man's reason vainly coped,

Now that the spirit-world was oped, 540

In all humility they hoped

Would be resolved \_instanter\_;

Each of the miscellaneous rout

Brought his, or her, own little doubt.

And wished to pump the spirits out,

Through his or her own private spout,

Into his or her decanter.

PART III

WHEREIN IT IS SHOWN THAT THE MOST ARDENT SPIRITS ARE MORE

ORNAMENTAL THAN USEFUL

Many a speculating wight

Came by express-trains, day and night,

To see if Knott would 'sell his right,' 550

Meaning to make the ghosts a sight--

What they call a 'meenaygerie;'

One threatened, if he would not 'trade,'

His run of custom to invade,

(He could not these sharp folks persuade

That he was not, in some way, paid,)

And stamp him as a plagiary,

By coming down, at one fell swoop,

With THE ORIGINAL KNOCKING TROUPE,

Come recently from Hades, 560

Who (for a quarter-dollar heard)

Would ne'er rap out a hasty word

Whence any blame might be incurred

From the most fastidious ladies;

The late lamented Jesse Soule,

To stir the ghosts up with a pole

And be director of the whole,

Who was engaged the rather

For the rare merits he'd combine,

Having been in the spirit line, 570

Which trade he only did resign,

With general applause, to shine,

Awful in mail of cotton fine,

As ghost of Hamlet's father!

Another a fair plan reveals

Never yet hit on, which, he feels,

To Knott's religious sense appeals--

'We'll have your house set up on wheels,

A speculation pious;

For music, we can shortly find 580

A barrel-organ that will grind

Psalm-tunes--an instrument designed

For the New England tour--refined

From secular drosses, and inclined

To an unworldly turn, (combined

With no sectarian bias;)

Then, travelling by stages slow,

Under the style of Knott & Co.,

I would accompany the show

As moral lecturer, the foe 590

Of Rationalism; while you could throw

The rappings in, and make them go

Strict Puritan principles, you know,

(How \_do\_ you make 'em? with your toe?)

And the receipts which thence might flow,

We could divide between us;

Still more attractions to combine,

Beside these services of mine,

I will throw in a very fine

(It would do nicely for a sign) 600

Original Titian's Venus.'

Another offered handsome fees

If Knott would get Demosthenes

(Nay, his mere knuckles, for more ease)

To rap a few short sentences;

Or if, for want of proper keys,

His Greek might make confusion,

Then just to get a rap from Burke,

To recommend a little work

On Public Elocution. 610

Meanwhile, the spirits made replies

To all the reverent \_whats\_ and \_whys\_,

Resolving doubts of every size,

And giving seekers grave and wise,

Who came to know their destinies,

A rap-turous reception;

When unbelievers void of grace

Came to investigate the place,

(Creatures of Sadducistic race,

With grovelling intellects and base,) 620

They could not find the slightest trace

To indicate deception;

Indeed, it is declared by some

That spirits (of this sort) are glum,

Almost, or wholly, deaf and dumb,

And (out of self-respect) quite mum

To skeptic natures cold and numb

Who of \_this\_ kind of Kingdom Come

Have not a just conception:

True, there were people who demurred 630

That, though the raps no doubt were heard

Both under them and o'er them,

Yet, somehow, when a search they made,

They found Miss Jenny sore afraid,

Or Jenny's lover, Doctor Slade,

Equally awestruck and dismayed,

Or Deborah, the chambermaid,

Whose terrors not to be gainsaid

In laughs hysteric were displayed,

Was always there before them;

This had its due effect with some

Who straight departed, muttering, Hum! 642

Transparent hoax! and Gammon!

But these were few: believing souls,

Came, day by day, in larger shoals,

As the ancients to the windy holes

'Neath Delphi's tripod brought their doles,

Or to the shrine of Ammon.

The spirits seemed exceeding tame,

Call whom you fancied, and he came; 650

The shades august of eldest fame

You summoned with an awful ease;

As grosser spirits gurgled out

From chair and table with a spout,

In Auerbach's cellar once, to flout

The senses of the rabble rout,

Where'er the gimlet twirled about

Of cunning Mephistopheles,

So did these spirits seem in store,

Behind the wainscot or the door,

Ready to thrill the being's core

Of every enterprising bore 662

With their astounding glamour;

Whatever ghost one wished to hear,

By strange coincidence, was near

To make the past or future clear

(Sometimes in shocking grammar)

By raps and taps, now there, now here--

It seemed as if the spirit queer

Of some departed auctioneer 670

Were doomed to practise by the year

With the spirit of his hammer:

Whate'er you asked was answered, yet

One could not very deeply get

Into the obliging spirits' debt,

Because they used the alphabet

In all communications,

And new revealings (though sublime)

Rapped out, one letter at a time,

With boggles, hesitations, 680

Stoppings, beginnings o'er again,

And getting matters into train,

Could hardly overload the brain

With too excessive rations,

Since just to ask \_if two and two

Really make four? or, How d' ye do\_?

And get the fit replies thereto

In the tramundane rat-tat-too,

Might ask a whole day's patience.

'Twas strange ('mongst other things) to find 690

In what odd sets the ghosts combined,

Happy forthwith to thump any

Piece of intelligence inspired,

The truth whereof had been inquired

By some one of the company;

For instance, Fielding, Mirabeau,

Orator Henley, Cicero,

Paley, John Ziska, Marivaux,

Melancthon, Robertson, Junot, 699

Scaliger, Chesterfield, Rousseau,

Hakluyt, Boccaccio, South, De Foe,

Diaz, Josephus, Richard Roe,

Odin, Arminius, Charles \_le gros\_,

Tiresias, the late James Crow,

Casabianca, Grose, Prideaux,

Old Grimes, Young Norval, Swift, Brissot,

Malmonides, the Chevalier D'O,

Socrates, FÃ©nelon, Job, Stow.

The inventor of \_Elixir pro\_,

Euripides, Spinoza, Poe, 710

Confucius, Hiram Smith, and Fo,

Came (as it seemed, somewhat \_de trop\_)

With a disembodied Esquimaux,

To say that it was so and so,

With Franklin's expedition;

One testified to ice and snow,

One that the mercury was low,

One that his progress was quite slow,

One that he much desired to go,

One that the cook had frozen his toe, 720

(Dissented from by Dandolo,

Wordsworth, Cynaegirus, Boileau,

La Hontan, and Sir Thomas Roe,)

One saw twelve white bears in a row,

One saw eleven and a crow,

With other things we could not know

(Of great statistic value, though,)

By our mere mortal vision.

Sometimes the spirits made mistakes,

And seemed to play at ducks and drakes. 730

With bold inquiry's heaviest stakes

In science or in mystery:

They knew so little (and that wrong)

Yet rapped it out so bold and strong,

One would have said the unnumbered throng

Had been Professors of History;

What made it odder was, that those

Who, you would naturally suppose,

Could solve a question, if they chose,

As easily as count their toes, 740

Were just the ones that blundered;

One day, Ulysses happening down,

A reader of Sir Thomas Browne

And who (with him) had wondered

What song it was the Sirens sang,

Asked the shrewd Ithacan--\_bang! bang!\_

With this response the chamber rang,

'I guess it was Old Hundred.'

And Franklin, being asked to name

The reason why the lightning came, 750

Replied, 'Because it thundered.'

On one sole point the ghosts agreed

One fearful point, than which, indeed,

Nothing could seem absurder;

Poor Colonel Jones they all abused

And finally downright accused

The poor old man of murder;

'Twas thus; by dreadful raps was shown

Some spirit's longing to make known

A bloody fact, which he alone 760

Was privy to, (such ghosts more prone

In Earth's affairs to meddle are;)

\_Who are you?\_ with awe-stricken looks,

All ask: his airy knuckles he crooks,

And raps, 'I \_was\_ Eliab Snooks,

That used to be a pedler;

Some on ye still are on my books!'

Whereat, to inconspicuous nooks,

(More fearing this than common spooks)

Shrank each indebted meddler;

Further the vengeful ghost declared 771

That while his earthly life was spared,

About the country he had fared,

A duly licensed follower

Of that much-wandering trade that wins

Slow profit from the sale of tins

And various kinds of hollow-ware;

That Colonel Jones enticed him in,

Pretending that he wanted tin,

There slew him with a rolling-pin,

Hid him in a potato-bin, 781

And (the same night) him ferried

Across Great Pond to t'other shore,

And there, on land of Widow Moore,

Just where you turn to Larkin's store,

Under a rock him buried;

Some friends (who happened to be by)

He called upon to testify

That what he said was not a lie,

And that he did not stir this 790

Foul matter, out of any spite

But from a simple love of right;--

Which statements the Nine Worthies,

Rabbi Akiba, Charlemagne,

Seth, Golley Gibber, General Wayne,

Cambyses, Tasso, Tubal-Cain,

The owner of a castle in Spain,

Jehanghire, and the Widow of Nain,

(The friends aforesaid,) made more plain

And by loud raps attested; 800

To the same purport testified

Plato, John Wilkes, and Colonel Pride

Who knew said Snooks before he died,

Had in his wares invested,

Thought him entitled to belief

And freely could concur, in brief,

In everything the rest did.

Eliab this occasion seized,

(Distinctly here the spirit sneezed,)

To say that he should ne'er be eased 810

Till Jenny married whom she pleased,

Free from all checks and urgin's,

(This spirit dropt his final g's)

And that, unless Knott quickly sees

This done, the spirits to appease,

They would come back his life to tease,

As thick as mites in ancient cheese,

And let his house on an endless lease

To the ghosts (terrific rappers these

And veritable Eumenides) 820

Of the Eleven Thousand Virgins!

Knott was perplexed and shook his head,

He did not wish his child to wed

With a suspected murderer,

(For, true or false, the rumor spread,)

But as for this roiled life he led,

'It would not answer,' so he said,

'To have it go no furderer.'

At last, scarce knowing what it meant,

Reluctantly he gave consent 830

That Jenny, since 'twas evident

That she \_would\_ follow her own bent,

Should make her own election;

For that appeared the only way

These frightful noises to allay

Which had already turned him gray

And plunged him in dejection.

Accordingly, this artless maid

Her father's ordinance obeyed, 839

And, all in whitest crape arrayed,

(Miss Pulsifer the dresses made

And wishes here the fact displayed

That she still carries on the trade,

The third door south from Bagg's Arcade,)

A very faint 'I do' essayed

And gave her hand to Hiram Slade,

From which time forth, the ghosts were laid,

And ne'er gave trouble after;

But the Selectmen, be it known,

Dug underneath the aforesaid stone, 850

Where the poor pedler's corpse was thrown,

And found thereunder a jaw-bone,

Though, when the crowner sat thereon,

He nothing hatched, except alone

Successive broods of laughter;

It was a frail and dingy thing,

In which a grinder or two did cling,

In color like molasses,

Which surgeons, called from far and wide.

Upon the horror to decide, 860

Having put on their glasses,

Reported thus: 'To judge by looks,

These bones, by some queer hooks or crooks,

May have belonged to Mr. Snooks,

But, as men deepest read in books

Are perfectly aware, bones,

If buried fifty years or so,

Lose their identity and grow

From human bones to bare bones.'

Still, if to Jaalam you go down,

You'll find two parties in the town, 871

One headed by Benaiah Brown,

And one by Perez Tinkham;

The first believe the ghosts all through

And vow that they shall never rue

The happy chance by which they knew

That people in Jupiter are blue,

And very fond of Irish stew,

Two curious facts which Prince Lee Boo 879

Rapped clearly to a chosen few--

Whereas the others think 'em

A trick got up by Doctor Slade

With Deborah the chambermaid

And that sly cretur Jinny.

That all the revelations wise,

At which the Brownites made big eyes,

Might have been given by Jared Keyes,

A natural fool and ninny,

And, last week, didn't Eliab Snooks

Come back with never better looks, 890

As sharp as new-bought mackerel hooks,

And bright as a new pin, eh?

Good Parson Wilbur, too, avers

(Though to be mixed in parish stirs

Is worse than handling chestnut-burrs)

That no case to his mind occurs

Where spirits ever did converse,

Save in a kind of guttural Erse,

(So say the best authorities;)

And that a charge by raps conveyed 900

Should be most scrupulously weighed

And searched into, before it is

Made public, since it may give pain

That cannot soon be cured again,

And one word may infix a stain

Which ten cannot gloss over,

Though speaking for his private part,

He is rejoiced with all his heart

Miss Knott missed not her lover.

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED POEM

I am a man of forty, sirs, a native of East Haddam,

And have some reason to surmise that I descend from Adam;

But what's my pedigree to you? That I will soon unravel;

I've sucked my Haddam-Eden dry, therefore desire to travel,

And, as a natural consequence, presume I needn't say,

I wish to write some letters home and have those letters p----

[I spare the word suggestive of those grim Next Morns that mount

\_Clump, Clump\_, the stairways of the brain with--'\_Sir, my small

account\_,'

And, after every good we gain--Love, Fame, Wealth, Wisdom--still,

As punctual as a cuckoo clock, hold up their little bill, 10

The \_garÃ§ons\_ in our CafÃ© of Life, by dreaming us forgot--

Sitting, like Homer's heroes, full and musing God knows what,--

Till they say, bowing, \_S'il vous plait, voila, Messieurs, la note!\_]

I would not hint at this so soon, but in our callous day,

The Tollman Debt, who drops his bar across the world's highway,

Great CÃ¦sar in mid-march would stop, if CÃ¦sar could not pay;

Pilgriming's dearer than it was: men cannot travel now

Scot-free from Dan to Beersheba upon a simple vow;

Nay, as long back as Bess's time,--when Walsingham went over

Ambassador to Cousin France, at Canterbury and Dover 20

He was so fleeced by innkeepers that, ere he quitted land,

He wrote to the Prime Minister to take the knaves in hand.

If I with staff and scallop-shell should try my way to win,

Would Bonifaces quarrel as to who should take me in?

Or would my pilgrim's progress end where Bunyan started his on,

And my grand tour be round and round the backyard of a prison?

I give you here a saying deep and therefore, haply true;

'Tis out of Merlin's prophecies, but quite as good as new:

The question boath for men and meates longe voyages yt beginne

Lyes in a notshell, rather saye lyes in a case of tinne. 20

But, though men may not travel now, as in the Middle Ages,

With self-sustaining retinues of little gilt-edged pages,

Yet one may manage pleasantly, where'er he likes to roam,

By sending his small pages (at so much per small page) home;

And if a staff and scallop-shell won't serve so well as then,

Our outlay is about as small--just paper, ink, and pen.

Be thankful! Humbugs never die, more than the wandering Jew;

Bankrupt, they publish their own deaths, slink for a while from view,

Then take an \_alias\_, change the sign, and the old trade renew;

Indeed, 'tis wondrous how each Age, though laughing at the Past, 40

Insists on having its tight shoe made on the same old last;

How it is sure its system would break up at once without

The bunion which it \_will\_ believe hereditary gout;

How it takes all its swans for geese, nay, stranger yet and sadder,

Sees in its treadmill's fruitless jog a heavenward Jacob's-ladder,

Shouts, \_Lo, the Shining Heights are reached! One moment, more aspire!\_

Trots into cramps its poor, dear legs, gets never an inch the higher,

And like the others, ends with pipe and mug beside the fire.

There, 'tween each doze, it whiffs and sips and watches with a sneer

The green recruits that trudge and sweat where it had swinked

whilere, 50

And sighs to think this soon spent zeal should be in simple truth,

The only interval between old Fogyhood and Youth:

'Well,' thus it muses, 'well, what odds? 'Tis not for us to warn;

'Twill be the same when we are dead, and was ere we were born;

Without the Treadmill, too, how grind our store of winter's corn?

Had we no stock, nor twelve per cent received from Treadmill shares,

We might ... but these poor devils at last will get our easy chairs.

High aims and hopes have great rewards, they, too, serene and snug,

Shall one day have their soothing pipe and their enlivening mug;

From Adam, empty-handed Youth hath always heard the hum 60

Of Good Times Coming, and will hear until the last day come;

Young ears Hear forward, old ones back, and, while the earth rolls on,

Full-handed Eld shall hear recede the steps of Good Times Gone;

Ah what a cackle we set up whene'er an egg was laid!

\_Cack-cack-cack-cackle!\_ rang around, the scratch for worms was stayed,

\_Cut-cut-ca-dah-cut!\_ from \_this\_ egg the coming cock shall stalk!

The great New Era dawns, the age of Deeds and not of Talk!

And every stupid hen of us hugged close his egg of chalk,

Thought,--sure, I feel life stir within, each day with greater strength,

When lo, the chick! from former chicks he differed not a jot, 70

But grew and crew and scratched and went, like those before, to pot!'

So muse the dim \_Emeriti\_, and, mournful though it be,

I must confess a kindred thought hath sometimes come to me,

Who, though but just of forty turned, have heard the rumorous fame

Of nine and ninety Coming Men, all--coming till they came.

Pure Mephistopheles all this? the vulgar nature jeers?

Good friend, while I was writing it, my eyes were dim with tears;

Thrice happy he who cannot see, or who his eyes can shut,

Life's deepest sorrow is contained in that small word there--But!

\* \* \* \* \*

We're pretty nearly crazy here with change and go ahead, 80

With flinging our caught bird away for two i' th' bush instead,

With butting 'gainst the wall which we declare \_shall\_ be a portal,

And questioning Deeps that never yet have oped their lips to mortal;

We're growing pale and hollow-eyed, and out of all condition,

With \_mediums\_ and prophetic chairs, and crickets with a mission,

(The most astounding oracles since Balaam's donkey spoke,--

'Twould seem our furniture was all of Dodonean oak.)

Make but the public laugh, be sure 'twill take you to be somebody;

'Twill wrench its button from your clutch, my densely earnest glum body;

'Tis good, this noble earnestness, good in its place, but why 90

Make great Achilles' shield the pan to bake a penny pie?

Why, when we have a kitchen-range, insist that we shall stop,

And bore clear down to central fires to broil our daily chop?

Excalibur and Durandart are swords of price, but then

Why draw them sternly when you wish to trim your nails or pen?

Small gulf between the ape and man; you bridge it with your staff;

But it will be impassable until the ape can laugh;--

No, no, be common now and then, be sensible, be funny,

And, as Siberians bait their traps for bears with pots of honey,

From which ere they'll withdraw their snouts, they'll suffer many a

club-lick, 100

So bait your moral figure-of-fours to catch the Orson public.

Look how the dead leaves melt their way down through deep-drifted snow;

They take the sun-warmth down with them--pearls could not conquer so;

There \_is\_ a moral here, you see: if you would preach, you must

Steep all your truths in sunshine would you have them pierce the crust;

Brave Jeremiah, you are grand and terrible, a sign

And wonder, but were never quite a popular divine;

Fancy the figure you would cut among the nuts and wine!

I, on occasion, too, could preach, but hold it wiser far

To give the public sermons it will take with its cigar, 110

And morals fugitive, and vague as are these smoke-wreaths light

In which ... I trace ... a ... let me see--bless me! 'tis out of sight.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are some goodish things at sea; for instance, one can feel

A grandeur in the silent man forever at the wheel,

That bit of two-legged intellect, that particle of drill,

Who the huge floundering hulk inspires with reason, brain, and will,

And makes the ship, though skies are black and headwinds whistle loud,

Obey her conscience there which feels the loadstar through the cloud;

And when by lusty western gales the full-sailed barque is hurled,

Towards the great moon which, setting on, the silent underworld, 120

Rounds luridly up to look on ours, and shoots a broadening line,

Of palpitant light from crest to crest across the ridgy brine,

Then from the bows look back and feel a thrill that never stales,

In that full-bosomed, swan-white pomp of onward-yearning sails;

Ah, when dear cousin Bull laments that you can't make a poem,

Take him aboard a clipper-ship, young Jonathan, and show him

A work of art that in its grace and grandeur may compare

With any thing that any race has fashioned any where;

'Tis not a statue, grumbles John; nay, if you come to that,

We think of Hyde Park Corner, and concede you beat us flat 130

With your equestrian statue to a Nose and a Cocked hat;

But 'tis not a cathedral; well, e'en that we will allow,

Both statues and cathedrals are anachronistic now;

Your minsters, coz, the monuments of men who conquered you,

You'd sell a bargain, if we'd take the deans and chapters too;

No; mortal men build nowadays, as always heretofore,

Good temples to the gods which they in very truth adore;

The shepherds of this Broker Age, with all their willing flocks,

Although they bow to stones no more, do bend the knee to stocks,

And churches can't be beautiful though crowded, floor and gallery, 140

If people worship preacher, and if preacher worship salary;

'Tis well to look things in the face, the god o' the modern universe,

Hermes, cares naught for halls of art and libraries of puny verse,

If they don't sell, he notes them thus upon his ledger--say, \_per

Contra\_ to a loss of so much stone, best Russia duck and paper;

And, after all, about this Art men talk a deal of fudge,

Each nation has its path marked out, from which it must not budge;

The Romans had as little art as Noah in his ark,

Yet somehow on this globe contrived to make an epic mark; 149

Religion, painting, sculpture, song--for these they ran up jolly ticks

With Greece and Egypt, but they were great artists in their politics,

And if we make no minsters, John, nor epics, yet the Fates

Are not entirely deaf to men who \_can\_ build ships and states;

The arts are never pioneers, but men have strength and health

Who, called on suddenly, can improvise a commonwealth,

Nay, can more easily go on and frame them by the dozen,

Than you can make a dinner-speech, dear sympathizing cousin;

And, though our restless Jonathan have not your graver bent, sure he

Does represent this hand-to-mouth, pert, rapid nineteenth century;

This is the Age of Scramble; men move faster than they did 160

When they pried up the imperial Past's deep-dusted coffin-lid,

Searching for scrolls of precedent; the wire-leashed lightning now

Replaces Delphos--men don't leave the steamer for the scow;

What public, were they new to-day, would ever stop to read

The Iliad, the ShanÃ meh, or the Nibelungenlied?

\_Their\_ public's gone, the artist Greek, the lettered Shah,

the hairy Graf--

Folio and plesiosaur sleep well; \_we\_ weary o'er a paragraph;

The mind moves planet-like no more, it fizzes, cracks, and bustles;

From end to end with journals dry the land o'ershadowed rustles,

As with dead leaves a winter-beech, and, with their breath-roused

jars 170

Amused, we care not if they hide the eternal skies and stars;

Down to the general level of the Board of Brokers sinking,

The Age takes in the newspapers, or, to say sooth unshrinking,

The newspapers take in the Age, and stocks do all the thinking.

AN ORIENTAL APOLOGUE

Somewhere in India, upon a time,

(Read it not Injah, or you spoil the verse,)

There dwelt two saints whose privilege sublime

It was to sit and watch the world grow worse,

Their only care (in that delicious clime)

At proper intervals to pray and curse;

Pracrit the dialect each prudent brother

Used for himself, Damnonian for the other.

One half the time of each was spent in praying

For blessings on his own unworthy head, 10

The other half in fearfully portraying

Where certain folks would go when they were dead;

This system of exchanges--there's no saying

To what more solid barter 'twould have led,

But that a river, vext with boils and swellings

At rainy times, kept peace between their dwellings.

So they two played at wordy battledore

And kept a curse forever in the air,

Flying this way or that from shore to shore;

Nor other labor did this holy pair, 20

Clothed and supported from the lavish store

Which crowds lanigerous brought with daily care;

They toiled not, neither did they spin; their bias

Was tow'rd the harder task of being pious.

Each from his hut rushed six score times a day,

Like a great canon of the Church full-rammed

With cartridge theologic, (so to say,)

Touched himself off, and then, recoiling, slammed

His hovel's door behind him in away

That to his foe said plainly,--\_you'll\_ be damned; 30

And so like Potts and Wainwright, shrill and strong

The two D---- D'd each other all day long.

One was a dancing Dervise, a Mohammedan,

The other was a Hindoo, a gymnosophist;

One kept his whatd'yecallit and his Ramadan,

Laughing to scorn the sacred rites and laws of his

Transfluvial rival, who, in turn, called Ahmed an

Old top, and, as a clincher, shook across a fist

With nails six inches long, yet lifted not

His eyes from off his navel's mystic knot. 40

'Who whirls not round six thousand times an hour

Will go,' screamed Ahmed, 'to the evil place;

May he eat dirt, and may the dog and Giaour

Defile the graves of him and all his race;

Allah loves faithful souls and gives them power

To spin till they are purple in the face;

Some folks get you know what, but he that pure is

Earns Paradise and ninety thousand houris.'

'Upon the silver mountain, South by East,

Sits Brahma fed upon the sacred bean; 30

He loves those men whose nails are still increased,

Who all their lives keep ugly, foul, and lean;

'Tis of his grace that not a bird or beast

Adorned with claws like mine was ever seen;

The suns and stars are Brahma's thoughts divine,

Even as these trees I seem to see are mine.'

'Thou seem'st to see, indeed!' roared Ahmed back;

'Were I but once across this plaguy stream,

With a stout sapling in my hand, one whack

On those lank ribs would rid thee of that dream! 60

Thy Brahma-blasphemy is ipecac

To my soul's stomach; couldst thou grasp the scheme

Of true redemption, thou wouldst know that Deity

Whirls by a kind of blessed spontaneity.

'And this it is which keeps our earth here going

With all the stars.'--'Oh, vile! but there's a place

Prepared for such; to think of Brahma throwing

Worlds like a juggler's balls up into Space!

Why, not so much as a smooth lotos blowing

Is e'er allowed that silence to efface 70

Which broods round Brahma, and our earth, 'tis known,

Rests on a tortoise, moveless as this stone.'

So they kept up their banning amoebÃ¦an,

When suddenly came floating down the stream

A youth whose face like an incarnate pÃ¦an

Glowed, 'twas so full of grandeur and of gleam;

'If there \_be\_ gods, then, doubtless, this must be one,'

Thought both at once, and then began to scream,

'Surely, whate'er immortals know, thou knowest,

Decide between us twain before thou goest!' 80

The youth was drifting in a slim canoe

Most like a huge white water-lily's petal,

But neither of our theologians knew

Whereof 'twas made; whether of heavenly metal

Seldseen, or of a vast pearl split in two

And hollowed, was a point they could not settle;

'Twas good debate-seed, though, and bore large fruit

In after years of many a tart dispute.

There were no wings upon the stranger's shoulders.

And yet he seemed so capable of rising 90

That, had he soared like thistle-down, beholders

Had thought the circumstance noways surprising;

Enough that he remained, and, when the scolders

Hailed him as umpire in their vocal prize-ring,

The painter of his boat he lightly threw

Around a lotos-stem, and brought her to.

The strange youth had a look as if he might

Have trod far planets where the atmosphere

(Of nobler temper) steeps the face with light,

Just as our skins are tanned and freckled here; 100

His air was that of a cosmopolite

In the wide universe from sphere to sphere;

Perhaps he was (his face had such grave beauty)

An officer of Saturn's guards off duty.

Both saints began to unfold their tales at once,

Both wished their tales, like simial ones, prehensile,

That they might seize his ear; \_fool! knave!\_ and \_dunce!\_

Flew zigzag back and forth, like strokes of pencil

In a child's fingers; voluble as duns,

They jabbered like the stones on that immense hill 110

In the Arabian Nights; until the stranger

Began to think his ear-drums in some danger.

In general those who nothing have to say

Contrive to spend the longest time in doing it;

They turn and vary it in every way,

Hashing it, stewing it, mincing it, \_ragouting\_ it;

Sometimes they keep it purposely at bay,

Then let it slip to be again pursuing it;

They drone it, groan it, whisper it and shout it,

Refute it, flout it, swear to 't, prove it, doubt it. 120

Our saints had practised for some thirty years;

Their talk, beginning with a single stem,

Spread like a banyan, sending down live piers,

Colonies of digression, and, in them,

Germs of yet new dispersion; once by the ears,

They could convey damnation in a hem,

And blow the pinch of premise-priming off

Long syllogistic batteries, with a cough.

Each had a theory that the human ear

A providential tunnel was, which led 130

To a huge vacuum (and surely here

They showed some knowledge of the general head,)

For cant to be decanted through, a mere

Auricular canal or mill-race fed

All day and night, in sunshine and in shower,

From their vast heads of milk-and-water-power.

The present being a peculiar case,

Each with unwonted zeal the other scouted,

Put his spurred hobby through its every pace, 139

Pished, pshawed, poohed, horribled, bahed, jeered, sneered, flouted,

Sniffed, nonsensed, infideled, fudged, with his face

Looked scorn too nicely shaded to be shouted,

And, with each inch of person and of vesture,

Contrived to hint some most disdainful gesture.

At length, when their breath's end was come about,

And both could now and then just gasp 'impostor!'

Holding their heads thrust menacingly out,

As staggering cocks keep up their fighting posture,

The stranger smiled and said, 'Beyond a doubt

'Tis fortunate, my friends, that you have lost your 150

United parts of speech, or it had been

Impossible for me to get between.

'Produce! says Nature,--what have you produced?

A new strait-waistcoat for the human mind;

Are you not limbed, nerved, jointed, arteried, juiced,

As other men? yet, faithless to your kind,

Rather like noxious insects you are used

To puncture life's fair fruit, beneath the rind

Laying your creed-eggs, whence in time there spring

Consumers new to eat and buzz and sting. 160

'Work! you have no conception how 'twill sweeten

Your views of Life and Nature, God and Man;

Had you been forced to earn what you have eaten,

Your heaven had shown a less dyspeptic plan;

At present your whole function is to eat ten

And talk ten times as rapidly as you can;

Were your shape true to cosmogonic laws,

You would be nothing but a pair of jaws.

'Of all the useless beings in creation

The earth could spare most easily you bakers 170

Of little clay gods, formed in shape and fashion

Precisely in the image of their makers;

Why it would almost move a saint to passion,

To see these blind and deaf, the hourly breakers

Of God's own image in their brother men,

Set themselves up to tell the how, where, when,

'Of God's existence; one's digestion's worse--

So makes a god of vengeance and of blood;

Another,--but no matter, they reverse

Creation's plan, out of their own vile mud 180

Pat up a god, and burn, drown, hang, or curse

Whoever worships not; each keeps his stud

Of texts which wait with saddle on and bridle

To hunt down atheists to their ugly idol.

'This, I perceive, has been your occupation;

You should have been more usefully employed;

All men are bound to earn their daily ration,

Where States make not that primal contract void

By cramps and limits; simple devastation

Is the worm's task, and what he has destroyed 190

His monument; creating is man's work,

And that, too, something more than mist and murk.'

So having said, the youth was seen no more,

And straightway our sage Brahmin, the philosopher,

Cried, 'That was aimed at thee, thou endless bore,

Idle and useless as the growth of moss over

A rotting tree-trunk!' 'I would square that score

Full soon,' replied the Dervise, 'could I cross over

And catch thee by the beard. Thy nails I'd trim

And make thee work, as was advised by him. 200

'Work? Am I not at work from morn till night

Sounding the deeps of oracles umbilical

Which for man's guidance never come to light,

With all their various aptitudes, until I call?'

'And I, do I not twirl from left to right

For conscience' sake? Is that no work? Thou silly gull,

He had thee in his eye; 'twas Gabriel

Sent to reward my faith, I know him well.'

'Twas Vishnu, thou vile whirligig!' and so

The good old quarrel was begun anew; 210

One would have sworn the sky was black as sloe,

Had but the other dared to call it blue;

Nor were the followers who fed them slow

To treat each other with their curses, too,

Each hating t'other (moves it tears or laughter?)

Because he thought him sure of hell hereafter.

At last some genius built a bridge of boats

Over the stream, and Ahmed's zealots filed

Across, upon a mission to (cut throats

And) spread religion pure and undefiled; 220

They sowed the propagandist's wildest oats,

Cutting off all, down to the smallest child,

And came back, giving thanks for such fat mercies,

To find their harvest gone past prayers or curses.

All gone except their saint's religious hops,

Which he kept up with more than common flourish;

But these, however satisfying crops

For the inner man, were not enough to nourish

The body politic, which quickly drops

Reserve in such sad junctures, and turns currish; 230

So Ahmed soon got cursed for all the famine

Where'er the popular voice could edge a damn in.

At first he pledged a miracle quite boldly.

And, for a day or two, they growled and waited;

But, finding that this kind of manna coldly

Sat on their stomachs, they erelong berated

The saint for still persisting in that old lie,

Till soon the whole machine of saintship grated,

Ran slow, creaked, stopped, and, wishing him in Tophet,

They gathered strength enough to stone the prophet. 240

Some stronger ones contrived (by eatting leather,

Their weaker friends, and one thing or another)

The winter months of scarcity to weather;

Among these was the late saint's younger brother,

Who, in the spring, collecting them together,

Persuaded them that Ahmed's holy pother

Had wrought in their behalf, and that the place

Of Saint should be continued to his race.

Accordingly, 'twas settled on the spot

That Allah favored that peculiar breed; 250

Beside, as all were satisfied, 'twould not

Be quite respectable to have the need

Of public spiritual food forgot;

And so the tribe, with proper forms, decreed

That he, and, failing him, his next of kin,

Forever for the people's good should spin.

THE BIGLOW PAPERS

FIRST SERIES

NOTICES OF AN INDEPENDENT PRESS

[I have observed, reader (bene-or male-volent, as it may happen), that

it is customary to append to the second editions of books, and to the

second works of authors, short sentences commendatory of the first,

under the title of \_Notices of the Press\_. These, I have been given to

understand, are procurable at certain established rates, payment being

made either in money or advertising patronage by the publisher, or by an

adequate outlay of servility on the part of the author. Considering

these things with myself, and also that such notices are neither

intended, nor generally believed, to convey any real opinions, being a

purely ceremonial accompaniment of literature, and resembling

certificates to the virtues of various morbiferal panaceas, I conceived

that it would be not only more economical to prepare a sufficient number

of such myself, but also more immediately subservient to the end in view

to prefix them to this our primary edition rather than to await the

contingency of a second, when they would seem to be of small utility. To

delay attaching the \_bobs\_ until the second attempt at flying the kite

would indicate but a slender experience in that useful art. Neither has

it escaped my notice nor failed to afford me matter of reflection, that,

when a circus or a caravan is about to visit Jaalam, the initial step is

to send forward large and highly ornamented bills of performance, to be

hung in the bar-room and the post-office. These having been sufficiently

gazed at, and beginning to lose their attractiveness except for the

flies, and, truly, the boys also (in whom I find it impossible to

repress, even during school-hours, certain oral and telegraphic

communications concerning the expected show), upon some fine morning the

band enters in a gayly painted wagon, or triumphal chariot, and with

noisy advertisement, by means of brass, wood, and sheepskin, makes the

circuit of our startled village streets. Then, as the exciting sounds

draw nearer and nearer, do I desiderate those eyes of Aristarchus,

'whose looks were as a breeching to a boy.' Then do I perceive, with

vain regret of wasted opportunities, the advantage of a pancratic or

pantechnic education, since he is most reverenced by my little subjects

who can throw the cleanest summerset or walk most securely upon the

revolving cask. The story of the Pied Piper becomes for the first time

credible to me (albeit confirmed by the Hameliners dating their legal

instruments from the period of his exit), as I behold how those strains,

without pretence of magical potency, bewitch the pupillary legs, nor

leave to the pedagogic an entire self-control. For these reasons, lest

my kingly prerogative should suffer diminution, I prorogue my restless

commons, whom I follow into the street, chiefly lest some mischief may

chance befall them. After the manner of such a band, I send forward the

following notices of domestic manufacture, to make brazen proclamation,

not unconscious of the advantage which will accrue, if our little craft,

\_cymbula sutilis\_, shall seem to leave port with a clipping breeze, and

to carry, in nautical phrase, a bone in her mouth. Nevertheless, I have

chosen, as being more equitable, to prepare some also sufficiently

objurgatory, that readers of every taste may find a dish to their

palate. I have modelled them upon actually existing specimens, preserved

in my own cabinet of natural curiosities. One, in particular, I had

copied with tolerable exactness from a notice of one of my own

discourses, which, from its superior tone and appearance of vast

experience, I concluded to have been written by a man at least three

hundred years of age, though I recollected no existing instance of such

antediluvian longevity. Nevertheless, I afterwards discovered the author

to be a young gentleman preparing for the ministry under the direction

of one of my brethren in a neighboring town, and whom I had once

instinctively corrected in a Latin quantity. But this I have been

forced to omit, from its too great length.--H.W.]

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the Universal Littery Universe\_.

Full of passages which rivet the attention of the reader.... Under a

rustic garb, sentiments are conveyed which should be committed to the

memory and engraven on the heart of every moral and social being.... We

consider this a \_unique\_ performance.... We hope to see it soon

introduced into our common schools.... Mr. Wilbur has performed his

duties as editor with excellent taste and judgment.... This is a vein

which we hope to see successfully prosecuted.... We hail the appearance

of this work as a long stride toward the formation of a purely

aboriginal, indigenous, native, and American literature. We rejoice to

meet with an author national enough to break away from the slavish

deference, too common among us, to English grammar and orthography....

Where all is so good, we are at a loss how to make extracts.... On the

whole, we may call it a volume which no library, pretending to entire

completeness, should fail to place upon its shelves.

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the Higginbottomopolis Snapping-turtle\_.

A collection of the merest balderdash and doggerel that it was ever our

bad fortune to lay eyes on. The author is a vulgar buffoon, and the

editor a talkative, tedious old fool. We use strong language, but should

any of our readers peruse the book, (from which calamity Heaven preserve

them!) they will find reasons for it thick as the leaves of

Vallum-brozer, or, to use a still more expressive comparison, as the

combined heads of author and editor. The work is wretchedly got up....

We should like to know how much \_British gold\_ was pocketed by this

libeller of our country and her purest patriots.

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the Oldfogrumville Mentor\_.

We have not had time to do more than glance through this handsomely

printed volume, but the name of its respectable editor, the Rev. Mr.

Wilbur, of Jaalam, will afford a sufficient guaranty for the worth of

its contents.... The paper is white, the type clear, and the volume of a

convenient and attractive size.... In reading this elegantly executed

work, it has seemed to us that a passage or two might have been

retrenched with advantage, and that the general style of diction was

susceptible of a higher polish.... On the whole, we may safely leave the

ungrateful task of criticism to the reader. We will barely suggest, that

in volumes intended, as this is, for the illustration of a provincial

dialect and turns of expression, a dash of humor or satire might be

thrown in with advantage.... The work is admirably got up.... This work

will form an appropriate ornament to the centre table. It is beautifully

printed, on paper of an excellent quality.

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the Dekay Bulwark\_.

We should be wanting in our duty as the conductor of that tremendous

engine, a public press, as an American, and as a man, did we allow such

an opportunity as is presented to us by 'The Biglow Papers' to pass by

without entering our earnest protest against such attempts (now, alas!

too common) at demoralizing the public sentiment. Under a wretched mask

of stupid drollery, slavery, war, the social glass, and, in short, all

the valuable and time-honored institutions justly dear to our common

humanity and especially to republicans, are made the butt of coarse and

senseless ribaldry by this low-minded scribbler. It is time that the

respectable and religious portion of our community should be aroused to

the alarming inroads of foreign Jacobinism, sansculottism, and

infidelity. It is a fearful proof of the widespread nature of this

contagion, that these secret stabs at religion and virtue are given from

under the cloak (\_credite, posteri!\_) of a clergyman. It is a mournful

spectacle indeed to the patriot and Christian to see liberality and new

ideas (falsely so called,--they are as old as Eden) invading the sacred

precincts of the pulpit.... On the whole, we consider this volume as one

of the first shocking results which we predicted would spring out of the

late French 'Revolution' (!)

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the Bungtown Copper and Comprehensive Tocsin (a try-weakly family

journal)\_.

Altogether an admirable work.... Full of humor, boisterous, but

delicate,--of wit withering and scorching, yet combined with a pathos

cool as morning dew,--of satire ponderous as the mace of Richard, yet

keen as the scymitar of Saladin.... A work full of 'mountain-mirth,'

mischievous as Puck, and lightsome as Ariel.... We know not whether to

admire most the genial, fresh, and discursive concinnity of the author,

or his playful fancy, weird imagination, and compass of style, at once

both objective and subjective.... We might indulge in some criticisms,

but, were the author other than he is, he would be a different being. As

it is, he has a wonderful \_pose\_, which flits from flower to flower, and

bears the reader irresistibly along on its eagle pinions (like Ganymede)

to the 'highest heaven of invention.' ... We love a book so purely

objective ... Many of his pictures of natural scenery have an

extraordinary subjective clearness and fidelity.... In fine, we consider

this as one of the most extraordinary volumes of this or any age. We

know of no English author who could have written it. It is a work to

which the proud genius of our country, standing with one foot on the

Aroostook and the other on the Rio Grande, and holding up the

star-spangled banner amid the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds,

may point with bewildering scorn of the punier efforts of enslaved

Europe.... We hope soon to encounter our author among those higher walks

of literature in which he is evidently capable of achieving enduring

fame. Already we should be inclined to assign him a high position in the

bright galaxy of our American bards.

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the Saltriver Pilot and Flag of Freedom.\_

A volume in bad grammar and worse taste.... While the pieces here

collected were confined to their appropriate sphere in the corners of

obscure newspapers, we considered them wholly beneath contempt, but, as

the author has chosen to come forward in this public manner, he must

expect the lash he so richly merits.... Contemptible slanders.... Vilest

Billingsgate.... Has raked all the gutters of our language.... The most

pure, upright, and consistent politicians not safe from his malignant

venom.... General Cushing comes in for a share of his vile calumnies....

The \_Reverend\_ Homer Wilbur is a disgrace to his cloth....

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the World-Harmonic-Ãolian-Attachment\_.

Speech is silver: silence is golden. No utterance more Orphic than this.

While, therefore, as highest author, we reverence him whose works

continue heroically unwritten, we have also our hopeful word for those

who with pen (from wing of goose loud-cackling, or seraph

God-commissioned) record the thing that is revealed.... Under mask of

quaintest irony, we detect here the deep, storm-tost (nigh ship-wracked)

soul, thunder-scarred, semi-articulate, but ever climbing hopefully

toward the peaceful summits of an Infinite Sorrow.... Yes, thou poor,

forlorn Hosea, with Hebrew fire-flaming soul in thee, for thee also this

life of ours has not been without its aspects of heavenliest pity and

laughingest mirth. Conceivable enough! Through coarse Thersites-cloak,

we have revelation of the heart, wild-glowing, world-clasping, that is

in him. Bravely he grapples with the life-problem as it presents itself

to him, uncombed, shaggy, careless of the 'nicer proprieties,' inexpert

of 'elegant diction,' yet with voice audible enough to whoso hath ears,

up there on the gravelly side-hills, or down on the splashy,

indiarubber-like salt-marshes of native Jaalam. To this soul also the

\_Necessity of Creating\_ somewhat has unveiled its awful front. If not

Oedipuses and Electras and Alcestises, then in God's name Birdofredum

Sawins! These also shall get born into the world, and filch (if so need)

a Zingali subsistence therein, these lank, omnivorous Yankees of his. He

shall paint the Seen, since the Unseen will not sit to him. Yet in him

also are Nibelungen-lays, and Iliads, and Ulysses-wanderings, and Divine

Comedies,--if only once he could come at them! Therein lies much, nay

all; for what truly is this which we name \_All\_, but that which we do

\_not\_ possess?... Glimpses also are given us of an old father Ezekiel,

not without paternal pride, as is the wont of such. A brown,

parchment-hided old man of the geoponic or bucolic species, gray-eyed,

we fancy, \_queued\_ perhaps, with much weather-cunning and plentiful

September-gale memories, bidding fair in good time to become the Oldest

Inhabitant. After such hasty apparition, he vanishes and is seen no

more.... Of 'Rev. Homer Wilbur, A.M., Pastor of the First Church in

Jaalam,' we have small care to speak here. Spare touch in him of his

Melesigenes namesake, save, haply, the--blindness! A tolerably

caliginose, nephelegeretous elderly gentleman, with infinite faculty of

sermonizing, muscularized by long practice and excellent digestive

apparatus, and, for the rest, well-meaning enough, and with small

private illuminations (somewhat tallowy, it is to be feared) of his own.

To him, there, 'Pastor of the First Church in Jaalam,' our Hosea

presents himself as a quite inexplicable Sphinx-riddle. A rich poverty

of Latin and Greek,--so far is clear enough, even to eyes peering myopic

through horn-lensed editorial spectacles,--but naught farther? O

purblind, well-meaning, altogether fuscous Melesigenes-Wilbur, there are

things in him incommunicable by stroke of birch! Did it ever enter that

old bewildered head of thine that there was the \_Possibility of the

Infinite\_ in him? To thee, quite wingless (and even featherless) biped,

has not so much even as a dream of wings ever come? 'Talented young

parishioner'? Among the Arts whereof thou art \_Magister\_, does that of

\_seeing\_ happen to be one? Unhappy \_Artium Magister!\_ Somehow a Nemean

lion, fulvous, torrid-eyed, dry-nursed in broad-howling

sand-wildernesses of a sufficiently rare spirit-Libya (it may be

supposed) has got whelped among the sheep. Already he stands

wild-glaring, with feet clutching the ground as with oak-roots,

gathering for a Remus-spring over the walls of thy little fold. In

heaven's name, go not near him with that flybite crook of thine! In good

time, thou painful preacher, thou wilt go to the appointed place of

departed Artillery-Election Sermons, Right-hands of Fellowship, and

Results of Councils, gathered to thy spiritual fathers with much Latin

of the Epitaphial sort; thou too, shalt have thy reward; but on him the

Eumenides have looked, not Xantippes of the pit, snake-tressed,

finger-threatening, but radiantly calm as on antique gems; for him paws

impatient the winged courser of the gods, champing unwelcome bit; him

the starry deeps, the empyrean glooms, and far-flashing splendors await.

\* \* \* \* \*

\_From the Onion Grove Phoenix.\_

A talented young townsman of ours, recently returned from a Continental

tour, and who is already favorably known to our readers by his sprightly

letters from abroad which have graced our columns, called at our office

yesterday. We learn from him, that, having enjoyed the distinguished

privilege, while in Germany, of an introduction to the celebrated Von

Humbug, he took the opportunity to present that eminent man with a copy

of the 'Biglow Papers.' The next morning he received the following note,

which he has kindly furnished us for publication. We prefer to print it

\_verbatim\_, knowing that our readers will readily forgive the few errors

into which the lllustrious writer has fallen, through ignorance of our

language.

'HIGH-WORTHY MISTER!

'I shall also now especially happy starve, because I have more or less a

work of one those aboriginal Red-Men seen in which have I so deaf an

interest ever taken full-worthy on the self shelf with our Gottsched to

be upset.

'Pardon my in the English-speech un-practice!

'Von Humbug.'

He also sent with the above note a copy of his famous work on

'Cosmetics,' to be presented to Mr. Biglow; but this was taken from our

friend by the English custom-house officers, probably through a petty

national spite. No doubt, it has by this time found its way into the

British Museum. We trust this outrage will be exposed in all our

American papers. We shall do our best to bring it to the notice of the

State Department. Our numerous readers will share in the pleasure we

experience at seeing our young and vigorous national literature thus

encouragingly patted on the head by this venerable and world-renowned

German. We love to see these reciprocations of good-feeling between the

different branches of the great Anglo-Saxon race.

[The following genuine 'notice' having met my eye, I gladly insert a

portion of it here, the more especially as it contains one of Mr.

Biglow's poems not elsewhere printed.--H.W.]

\_From the Jaalam Independent Blunderbuss.\_

... But, while we lament to see our young townsman thus mingling in the

heated contests of party politics, we think we detect in him the

presence of talents which, if properly directed, might give an innocent

pleasure to many. As a proof that he is competent to the production of

other kinds of poetry, we copy for our readers a short fragment of a

pastoral by him, the manuscript of which was loaned us by a friend. The

title of it is 'The Courtin'.'

Zekle crep' up, quite unbeknown,

An' peeked in thru the winder,

An' there sot Huldy all alone,

'ith no one nigh to hender.

Agin' the chimbly crooknecks hung,

An' in amongst 'em rusted

The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young

Fetched back frum Concord busted.

The wannut logs shot sparkles out

Towards the pootiest, bless her!

An' leetle fires danced all about

The chlny on the dresser.

The very room, coz she wuz in,

Looked warm frum floor to ceilin',

An' she looked full ez rosy agin

Ez th' apples she wuz peelin'.

She heerd a foot an' knowed it, tu,

Araspin' on the scraper,--

All ways to once her feelins flew

Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,

Some doubtfle o' the seekle;

His heart kep' goin' pitypat,

But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yet she gin her cheer a jerk

Ez though she wished him furder,

An' on her apples kep' to work

Ez ef a wager spurred her.

'You want to see my Pa, I spose?'

'Wall, no; I come designin'--'

'To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es

Agin to-morrow's i'nin'.'

He stood a spell on one foot fust,

Then stood a spell on tother,

An' on which one he felt the wust

He couldn't ha' told ye, nuther.

Sez he, 'I'd better call agin;'

Sez she,'Think likely, \_Mister;\_'

The last word pricked him like a pin,

An'--wal, he up and kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,

Huldy sot pale ez ashes,

All kind o'smily round the lips

An' teary round the lashes.

Her blood riz quick, though, like the tide

Down to the Bay o' Fundy,

An' all I know is they wuz cried

In meetin', come nex Sunday.

SATIS multis sese emptores futuros libri professis, Georgius Nichols,

Cantabrigiensis, opus emittet de parte gravi sed adhuc neglecta

historiÃ¦ naturalis, cum titulo sequente, videlicet:

\_Conatus ad Delineationem naturalem nonnihil perfectiorem ScarabÃ¦i

Bombilatoris, vulgo dicti\_ HUMBUG, ab HOMERO WILBUR, Artium Magistro,

Societatis historico-naturalis Jaalamensis PrÃ¦side (Secretario,

Socioque (eheu!) singulo), multarumque aliarum Societatum eruditarum

(sive ineruditarum) tam domesticarum quam transmarinarum Socio--forsitan

futuro.

PROEMIUM

LECTORI BENEVOLO S.

Toga scholastica nondum deposita, quum systemata varia entomologica, a

viris ejus scientiÃ¦ cultoribus studiosissimis summa diligentia

Ã¦dificata, penitus indagassem, non fuit quin luctuose omnibus in iis,

quamvis aliter laude dignissimis, hiatum magni momenti perciperem. Tunc,

nescio quo motu superiore impulsus, aut qua captus dulcedine operis, ad

eum implendum (Curtius alter) me solemniter devovi. Nec ab isto labore,

[Greek: daimonios] imposito, abstinui antequam tractatulum sufficienter

inconcinnum lingua vernacula perfeceram. Inde, juveniliter tumefactus,

et barathro ineptiÃ¦ [Greek: ton bibliopolon] (necnon 'Publici

Legentis') nusquam explorato, me composuisse quod quasi placentas

prÃ¦fervidas (ut sic dicam) homines ingurgitarent credidi. Sed, quum

huic et alio bibliopolÃ¦ MSS. mea submisissem et nihil solidius

responsione valde negativa in MusÃ¦um meum retulissem, horror ingens

atque misericordia, ob crassitudinem Lambertianam in cerebris

homunculorum istius muneris coelesti quadam ira infixam, me invasere.

Extemplo mei solius impensis librum edere decrevi, nihil omnino dubitans

quin 'Mundus Scientificus' (ut aiunt) crumenam meam ampliter repleret.

Nullam, attamen, ex agro illo meo parvulo segetem demessui prÃ¦ter

gaudium vacuum bene de Republica merendi. Iste panis meus pretiosus

super aquas literarias fÃ¦culentas prÃ¦fidenter jactus, quasi Harpyiaram

quarundam (scilicet bibliopolarum istorum facinorosorum supradictorum)

tactu rancidus, intra perpaucos dies mihi domum rediit. Et, quum ipse

tali victu ali non tolerarem, primum in mentem venit pistori (typographo

nempe) nihilominus solvendum esse. Animum non idcirco demisi, imo Ã¦que

ac pueri naviculas suas penes se lino retinent (eo ut e recto cursu

delapsas ad ripam retrahant), sic ego ArgÃ¢ meam chartaceam fluctibus

laborantem a quÃ¦situ velleris aurei, ipse potius tonsus pelleque

exutus, mente solida revocavi. Metaphoram ut mutem, \_boomarangam\_ meam a

scopo aberrantem, retraxi, dum majore vi, occasione ministrante,

adversus Fortunam intorquerem. Ast mihi, talia volventi, et, sicut

Saturnus ille [Greek: paidoboros], liberos intellectÃ»s mei depascere

fidenti, casus miserandus, nec antea inauditus, supervenit. Nam, ut

ferunt Scythas pietatis causa et parsimoniÃ¦, parentes suos mortuos

devorÃ¢sse, sic filius hic meus primogenitus, Scythis ipsis minus

mansuetus, patrem vivum totum et calcitrantem exsorbere enixus est. Nec

tamen hac de causa sobolem meam esurientem exheredavi. Sed famem istam

pro valido testimonio virilitatis roborisque potius habui, cibumque ad

eam satiandam, salva paterna mea carne, petii. Et quia bilem illam

scaturientem ad Ã¦s etiam concoquendum idoneam esse estimabam, unde Ã¦s

alienum, ut minoris pretii, haberem, circumspexi. Rebus ita se

habentibus, ab avunculo meo Johanne Doolittie, Armigero, impetravi ut

pecunias necessarias suppeditaret, ne opus esset mihi universitatem

relinquendi antequam ad gradum primum in artibus pervenissem. Tune ego,

salvum facere patronum meum munificum maxime cupiens, omnes libros

primÃ¦ editionis operis mei non venditos una cum privilegio in omne

Ã¦vum ejusdem imprimendi et edendi avunculo meo dicto pigneravi. Ex illo

die, atro lapide notando, curÃ¦ vociferantes familiÃ¦ singulis annis

crescentis eo usque insultabant ut nunquam tam carum pignus e vinculis

istis aheneis solvere possem.

Avunculo vero nuper mortuo, quum inter alios consanguineos testamenti

ejus lectionem audiendi causa advenissem, erectis auribus verba talia

sequentia accepi: 'Quoniam persuasum habeo meum dilectum nepotem

Homerum, longa et intima rerum angustarum domi experientia, aptissimum

esse qui divitias tueatur, beneficenterque ac prudenter iis divinis

creditis utatur,--ergo, motus hisce cogitationibus, exque amore meo in

illum magno, do, legoque nepoti caro meo supranominato omnes

singularesque istas possessiones nec ponderabiles nec computabiles meas

quÃ¦ sequuntur, scilicet: quingentos libros quos mihi pigneravit dictus

Homerus, anno lucis 1792, cum privilegio edendi et repetendi opus istud

"scientificum" (quod dicunt) suum, si sic elegerit. Tamen D.O.M, precor

oculos Homeri nepotis mei ita aperiat eumque moveat, ut libros istos in

bibliotheca unius e plurimis castellis suis Hispaniensibus tuto

abscondat.'

His verbis vix credibilibus, auditis, cor meum in pectore exsultavit.

Deinde, quoniam tractatus Anglice scriptus spem auctoris fefellerat,

quippe quum studium HistoriÃ¦ Naturalis in Republica nostra inter

factionis strepitum languescat, Latine versum edere statui, et eo potius

quia nescio quomodo disciplina academica et duo diplomata proficiant,

nisi quod peritos linguarum omnino mortuarum (et damnandarum, ut dicebat

iste [Greek: panourgos] Guilielmus Cobbett) nos faciant.

Et mihi adhue superstes est tota illa editio prima, quam quasi

crepitaculum per quod dentes caninos dentibam retineo.

\* \* \* \* \*

OPERIS SPECIMEN

(\_Ad exemplum Johannis Physiophili speciminis MonachologiÃ¦\_)

12. S.B. \_Militaris\_, WILBUR. \_Carnifex\_, JABLONSK. \_Profanus\_, DESFONT.

[Male hanece speciem \_Cyclopem\_ Fabricius vocat, ut qui singulo oculo ad

quod sui interest distinguitur. Melius vero Isaacus Outis nullum inter

S. milit. S. que Belzebul (Fabric. 152) discrimen esse defendit]

Habitat civitat. Americ. austral.

Aureis lineis splendidus; plerumque tamen sordidus, utpote lanienas

valde frequentans, foetore sanguinis allectus. Amat quoque insuper septa

apricari, neque inde, nisi maxima conatione detruditur. \_Candidatus\_

ergo populariter vocatus. Caput cristam quasi pennarum ostendit. Pro

cibo vaccam publicam callide mulget; abdomen enorme; facultas suctus

haud facile estimanda. Otiosus, fatuus; ferox nihilominus, semperque

dimicare paratus. Tortuose repit.

Capite sÃ¦pe maxima cum cura dissecto, ne illud rudimentum etiam cerebri

commune omnibus prope insectis detegere poteram.

Unam de hoc S. milit. rem singularem notavi; nam S. Guineens. (Fabric.

143) servos facit, et idcirco a multis summa in reverentia habitus,

quasi scintillas rationis pÃ¦ne humanÃ¦ demonstrans.

24. S.B. \_Criticus\_, WILBUR. \_Zoilus\_, FABRIC. \_PygmÃ¦us\_, CARLSEN.

[Stultissime Johannes Stryx cum S. punctato (Fabric. 64-109) confundit.

Specimina quamplurima scrutationi microscopicÃ¦ subjeci, nunquam tamen

unum ulla indicia puncti cujusvis prorsus ostendentem inveni.]

PrÃ¦cipue formidolosus, insectatusque, in proxima rima anonyma sese

abscondit, \_we, we\_, creberrime stridens. Ineptus, segnipes.

Habitat ubique gentium; in sicco; nidum suum terebratione indefessa

Ã¦dificans. Cibus. Libros depascit; siccos prÃ¦cipue.

MELIBOEUS-HIPPONAX

\* \* \* \* \*

THE

Biglow Papers

EDITED,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, NOTES, GLOSSARY, AND COPIOUS INDEX,

BY

HOMER WILBUR, A.M.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN JAALAM, AND (PROSPECTIVE) MEMBER OF

MANY LITERARY, LEARNED, AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES,

(\_for which see page 227\_.)

The ploughman's whistle, or the trivial flute,

Finds more respect than great Apollo's lute.

\_Quarles's Emblems\_, B. ii. E. 8.

Margaritas, munde porcine, calcasti: en, siliquas accipe.

\_Jac. Car. Fil. ad Pub. Leg.\_ Section 1.

NOTE TO TITLE-PAGE

It will not have escaped the attentive eye, that I have, on the

title-page, omitted those honorary appendages to the editorial name

which not only add greatly to the value of every book, but whet and

exacerbate the appetite of the reader. For not only does he surmise that

an honorary membership of literary and scientific societies implies a

certain amount of necessary distinction on the part of the recipient of

such decorations, but he is willing to trust himself more entirely to an

author who writes under the fearful responsibility of involving the

reputation of such bodies as the \_S. ArchÃ¦ol. Dahom.\_ or the \_Acad.

Lit. et Scient. Kamtschat\_. I cannot but think that the early editions

of Shakespeare and Milton would have met with more rapid and general

acceptance, but for the barrenness of their respective title-pages; and

I believe that, even now, a publisher of the works of either of those

justly distinguished men would find his account in procuring their

admission to the membership of learned bodies on the Continent,--a

proceeding no whit more incongruous than the reversal of the judgment

against Socrates, when he was already more than twenty centuries beyond

the reach of antidotes, and when his memory had acquired a deserved

respectability. I conceive that it was a feeling of the importance of

this precaution which induced Mr. Locke to style himself 'Gent.' on the

title-page of his Essay, as who should say to his readers that they

could receive his metaphysics on the honor of a gentleman.

Nevertheless, finding that, without descending to a smaller size of type

than would have been compatible with the dignity of the several

societies to be named, I could not compress my intended list within the

limits of a single page, and thinking, moreover, that the act would

carry with it an air of decorous modesty, I have chosen to take the

reader aside, as it were, into my private closet, and there not only

exhibit to him the diplomas which I already possess, but also to furnish

him with a prophetic vision of those which I may, without undue

presumption, hope for, as not beyond the reach of human ambition and

attainment. And I am the rather induced to this from the fact that my

name has been unaccountably dropped from the last triennial catalogue of

our beloved \_Alma Mater\_. Whether this is to be attributed to the

difficulty of Latinizing any of those honorary adjuncts (with a complete

list of which I took care to furnish the proper persons nearly a year

beforehand), or whether it had its origin in any more culpable motives,

I forbear to consider in this place, the matter being in course of

painful investigation. But, however this may be, I felt the omission the

more keenly, as I had, in expectation of the new catalogue, enriched the

library of the Jaalam AthenÃ¦um with the old one then in my possession,

by which means it has come about that my children will be deprived of a

never-wearying winter evening's amusement in looking out the name of

their parent in that distinguished roll. Those harmless innocents had at

least committed no--but I forbear, having intrusted my reflections and

animadversions on this painful topic to the safe-keeping of my private

diary, intended for posthumous publication. I state this fact here, in

order that certain nameless individuals, who are, perhaps, overmuch

congratulating themselves upon my silence, may know that a rod is in

pickle which the vigorous hand of a justly incensed posterity will apply

to their memories.

The careful reader will note that, in the list which I have prepared, I

have included the names of several Cisatlantic societies to which a

place is not commonly assigned in processions of this nature. I have

ventured to do this, not only to encourage native ambition and genius,

but also because I have never been able to perceive in what way distance

(unless we suppose them at the end of a lever) could increase the weight

of learned bodies. As far as I have been able to extend my researches

among such stuffed specimens as occasionally reach America, I have

discovered no generic difference between the antipodal \_Fogrum

Japonicum\_ and the \_F. Americanum\_, sufficiently common in our own

immediate neighborhood. Yet, with a becoming deference to the popular

belief that distinctions of this sort are enhanced in value by every

additional mile they travel, I have intermixed the names of some

tolerably distant literary and other associations with the rest.

I add here, also, an advertisement, which, that it may be the more

readily understood by those persons especially interested therein, I

have written in that curtailed and otherwise maltreated canine Latin, to

the writing and reading of which they are accustomed.

OMNIB. PER TOT. ORB. TERRAR. CATALOG. ACADEM, EDD.

Minim. gent, diplom. ab inclytiss. acad. vest. orans, vir. honorand.

operosiss., at sol. ut sciat. quant. glor. nom. meum (dipl. fort.

concess.) catal. vest. temp. futur. affer., ill. subjec., addit. omnib.

titul. honorar. qu. adh. non tant. opt. quam probab. put.

\*\*\* \_Litt. Uncial, distinx. ut PrÃ¦s. S. Hist. Nat. Jaal\_.

HOMERUS WILBUR, Mr., Episc. Jaalam, S.T.D. 1850, et Yal. 1849, et

Neo-CÃ¦s. et Brun. et Gulielm. 1852, et Gul. et Mar. et Bowd. et

Georgiop. et Viridimont. et Columb. Nov. Ebor. 1853, et Amherst. et

Watervill. et S. Jarlath. Hib. et S. Mar. et S. Joseph, et S. And. Scot.

1854. et Nashvill. et Dart. et Dickins. et Concord. et Wash. et

Columbian. et Charlest. et Jeff. et Dubl. et Oxon. et Cantab. et CÃ¦t.

1855. P.U.N.C.H. et J.U.D. Gott. et Osnab. et Heidelb. 1860, et Acad.

BORE US. Berolin. Soc., et SS. RR. Lugd. Bat. et Patav. et Lond. et

Edinb. et Ins. Feejee. et Null. Terr. et Pekin. Soc. Hon. et S.H.S et

S.P.A. et A.A.S. et S. Humb. Univ. et S. Omn. Rer. Quarund. q. Aliar.

Promov. Passamaquod. et H.P.C. et I.O.H, et [Greek: A.D.Ph.] et

[Greek: P.K.P.] et [Greek: Ph.B.K.] et Peucin. et Erosoph. et

Philadelph. et Frat. in Unit. et [Greek: S.T.] et S. ArchÃ¦olog.

Athen. et Acad. Scient, et Lit. Panorm. et SS.R.H. Matrit. et

Beeloochist. et Caffrar. et Caribb. et M.S. Reg. Paris, et S. Am.

Antiserv. Soc. Hon. et P.D. Gott. et LL.D. 1852, et D.C.L. et Mus. Doc.

Oxon. 1860, et M.M.S.S. et M.D. 1854, et Med. Fac. Univ. Harv. Soc. et

S. pro Convers. Pollywog. Soc. Hon. et Higgl. Piggl. et LL.B. 1853, et

S. pro Christianiz. Moschet. Soc. et SS. Ante-Diluv. ubiq. Gent. Soc.

Hon. et Civit. Cleric. Jaalam. et S. pro Diffus. General. Tenebr.

Secret. Corr.

INTRODUCTION

When, more than three years ago, my talented young parishioner, Mr.

Biglow, came to me and submitted to my animadversions the first of his

poems which he intended to commit to the more hazardous trial of a city

newspaper, it never so much as entered my imagination to conceive that

his productions would ever be gathered into a fair volume, and ushered

into the august presence of the reading public by myself.

So little are we short-sighted mortals able to predict the event! I

confess that there is to me a quite new satisfaction in being associated

(though only as sleeping partner) in a book which can stand by itself in

an independent unity on the shelves of libraries. For there is always

this drawback from the pleasure of printing a sermon, that, whereas the

queasy stomach of this generation will not bear a discourse long enough

to make a separate volume, those religious and godly-minded children

(those Samuels, if I may call them so) of the brain must at first be

buried in an undistinguished heap, and then get such resurrection as is

vouchsafed to them, mummy-wrapped with a score of others in a cheap

binding, with no other mark of distinction than the word

'\_Miscellaneous\_' printed upon the back. Far be it from me to claim any

credit for the quite unexpected popularity which I am pleased to find

these bucolic strains have attained unto. If I know myself, I am

measurably free from the itch of vanity; yet I may be allowed to say

that I was not backward to recognize in them a certain wild, puckery,

acidulous (sometimes even verging toward that point which, in our rustic

phrase, is termed \_shut-eyed\_) flavor, not wholly unpleasing, nor

unwholesome, to palates cloyed with the sugariness of tamed and

cultivated fruit. It may be, also, that some touches of my own, here and

there, may have led to their wider acceptance, albeit solely from my

larger experience of literature and authorship.[9]

I was at first inclined to discourage Mr. Biglow's attempts, as knowing

that the desire to poetize is one of the diseases naturally incident to

adolescence, which, if the fitting remedies be not at once and with a

bold hand applied, may become chronic, and render one, who might else

have become in due time an ornament of the social circle, a painful

object even to nearest friends and relatives. But thinking, on a further

experience that there was a germ of promise in him which required only

culture and the pulling up of weeds from about it, I thought it best to

set before him the acknowledged examples of English composition in

verse, and leave the rest to natural emulation. With this view, I

accordingly lent him some volumes of Pope and Goldsmith, to the

assiduous study of which he promised to devote his evenings. Not long

afterward, he brought me some verses written upon that model, a specimen

of which I subjoin, having changed some phrases of less elegancy, and a

few rhymes objectionable to the cultivated ear. The poem consisted of

childish reminiscences, and the sketches which follow will not seem

destitute of truth to those whose fortunate education began in a country

village. And, first, let us hang up his charcoal portrait of the

school-dame.

'Propped on the marsh, a dwelling now, I see

The humble school-house of my A, B, C,

Where well-drilled urchins, each behind his tire,

Waited in ranks the wished command to fire,

Then all together, when the signal came,

Discharged their \_a-b abs\_ against the dame.

Daughter of Danaus, who could daily pour

In treacherous pipkins her Pierian store,

She, mid the volleyed learning firm and calm,

Patted the furloughed ferule on her palm,

And, to our wonder, could divine at once

Who flashed the pan, and who was downright dunce.

'There young Devotion learned to climb with ease

The gnarly limbs of Scripture family-trees,

And he was most commended and admired

Who soonest to the topmost twig perspired;

Each name was called as many various ways

As pleased the reader's ear on different days,

So that the weather, or the ferule's stings,

Colds in the head, or fifty other things,

Transformed the helpless Hebrew thrice a week

To guttural Pequot or resounding Greek,

The vibrant accent skipping here and there,

Just as it pleased invention or despair;

No controversial Hebraist was the Dame;

With or without the points pleased her the same;

If any tyro found a name too tough.

And looked at her, pride furnished skill enough;

She nerved her larynx for the desperate thing,

And cleared the five-barred syllables at a spring.

'Ah, dear old times! there once it was my hap,

Perched on a stool, to wear the long-eared cap;

From books degraded, there I sat at ease,

A drone, the envy of compulsory bees;

Rewards of merit, too, full many a time,

Each with its woodcut and its moral rhyme,

And pierced half-dollars hung on ribbons gay

About my neck (to be restored next day)

I carried home, rewards as shining then

As those that deck the lifelong pains of men,

More solid than the redemanded praise

With which the world beribbons later days.

'Ah, dear old times! how brightly ye return!

How, rubbed afresh, your phosphor traces burn!

The ramble schoolward through dewsparkling meads,

The willow-wands turned Cinderella steeds,

The impromptu pin-bent hook, the deep remorse

O'er the chance-captured minnow's inchlong corse;

The pockets, plethoric with marbles round,

That still a space for ball and peg-top found,

Nor satiate yet, could manage to confine

Horsechestnuts, flagroot, and the kite's wound twine,

Nay, like the prophet's carpet could take in,

Enlarging still, the popgun's magazine;

The dinner carried in the small tin pail,

Shared with some dog, whose most beseeching tail

And dripping tongue and eager ears belied

The assumed indifference of canine pride;

The caper homeward, shortened if the cart

Of Neighbor Pomeroy, trundling from the mart,

O'ertook me,--then, translated to the seat

I praised the steed, how stanch he was and fleet,

While the bluff farmer, with superior grin,

Explained where horses should be thick, where thin,

And warned me (joke he always had in store)

To shun a beast that four white stockings wore.

What a fine natural courtesy was his!

His nod was pleasure, and his full bow bliss;

How did his well-thumbed hat, with ardor rapt,

Its curve decorous to each rank adapt!

How did it graduate with a courtly ease

The whole long scale of social differences,

Yet so gave each his measure running o'er,

None thought his own was less, his neighbor's more;

The squire was flattered, and the pauper knew

Old times acknowledged 'neath the threadbare blue!

Dropped at the corner of the embowered lane,

Whistling I wade the knee-deep leaves again,

While eager Argus, who has missed all day

The sharer of his condescending play,

Comes leaping onward with a bark elate

And boisterous tail to greet me at the gate;

That I was true in absence to our love

Let the thick dog's-ears in my primer prove.'

I add only one further extract, which will possess a melancholy interest

to all such as have endeavored to glean the materials of revolutionary

history from the lips of aged persons, who took a part in the actual

making of it, and, finding the manufacture profitable, continued the

supply in an adequate proportion to the demand.

'Old Joe is gone, who saw hot Percy goad

His slow artillery lip the Concord road,

A tale which grew in wonder, year by year,

As, every time he told it, Joe drew near

To the main fight, till, faded and grown gray,

The original scene to bolder tints gave way;

Then Joe had heard the foe's scared double-quick

Beat on stove drum with one un-captured stick,

And, ere death came the lengthening tale to lop,

Himself had fired, and seen a redcoat drop;

Had Joe lived long enough, that scrambling fight

Had squared more nearly with his sense of right,

And vanquished Percy, to complete the tale,

Had hammered stone for life in Concord jail.'

I do not know that the foregoing extracts ought not to be called my own

rather than Mr. Biglow's, as, indeed, he maintained stoutly that my file

had left nothing of his in them. I should not, perhaps, have felt

entitled to take so great liberties with them, had I not more than

suspected an hereditary vein of poetry in myself, a very near ancestor

having written a Latin poem in the Harvard \_Gratulatio\_ on the accession

of George the Third. Suffice it to say, that, whether not satisfied with

such limited approbation as I could conscientiously bestow, or from a

sense of natural inaptitude, certain it is that my young friend could

never be induced to any further essays in this kind. He affirmed that it

was to him like writing in a foreign tongue,--that Mr. Pope's

versification was like the regular ticking of one of Willard's clocks,

in which one could fancy, after long listening, a certain kind of rhythm

or tune, but which yet was only a poverty-stricken \_tick, tick\_, after

all,--and that he had never seen a sweet-water on a trellis growing so

fairly, or in forms so pleasing to his eye, as a fox-grape over a

scrub-oak in a swamp. He added I know not what, to the effect that the

sweet-water would only be the more disfigured by having its leaves

starched and ironed out, and that Pegasus (so he called him) hardly

looked right with his mane and tail in curl-papers. These and other such

opinions I did not long strive to eradicate, attributing them rather to

a defective education and senses untuned by too long familiarity with

purely natural objects, than to a perverted moral sense. I was the more

inclined to this leniency since sufficient evidence was not to seek,

that his verses, wanting as they certainly were in classic polish and

point, had somehow taken hold of the public ear in a surprising manner.

So, only setting him right as to the quantity of the proper name

Pegasus, I left him to follow the bent of his natural genius.

Yet could I not surrender him wholly to the tutelage of the pagan

(which, literally interpreted, signifies village) muse without yet a

further effort for his conversion, and to this end I resolved that

whatever of poetic fire yet burned in myself, aided by the assiduous

bellows of correct models, should be put in requisition. Accordingly,

when my ingenious young parishioner brought to my study a copy of verses

which he had written touching the acquisition of territory resulting

from the Mexican war, and the folly of leaving the question of slavery

or freedom to the adjudication of chance, I did myself indite a short

fable or apologue after the manner of Gay and Prior, to the end that he

might see how easily even such subjects as he treated of were capable of

a more refined style and more elegant expression. Mr. Biglow's

production was as follows:--

THE TWO GUNNERS

A FABLE

Two fellers, Isrel named and Joe,

One Sundy mornin' 'greed to go

Agunnin' soon 'z the bells wuz done

And meetin' finally begun,

So'st no one wouldn't be about

Ther Sabbath-breakin' to spy out.

Joe didn't want to go a mite;

He felt ez though 'twarn't skeercely right,

But, when his doubts he went to speak on,

Isrel he up and called him Deacon,

An' kep' apokin' fun like sin

An' then arubbin' on it in,

Till Joe, less skeered o' doin' wrong

Than bein' laughed at, went along.

Past noontime they went trampin' round

An' nary thing to pop at found,

Till, fairly tired o' their spree,

They leaned their guns agin a tree,

An' jest ez they wuz settin' down

To take their noonin', Joe looked roun'

And see (acrost lots in a pond

That warn't mor'n twenty rod beyond)

A goose that on the water sot

Ez ef awaitin' to be shot.

Isrel he ups and grabs his gun;

Sez he, 'By ginger, here's some fun!'

'Don't fire,' sez Joe, 'it ain't no use,

Thet's Deacon Peleg's tame wil'-goose:'

Sez Isrel, 'I don't care a cent.

I've sighted an' I'll let her went;'

\_Bang!\_ went queen's-arm, ole gander flopped

His wings a spell, an' quorked, an' dropped.

Sez Joe, 'I wouldn't ha' been hired

At that poor critter to ha' fired,

But since it's clean gin up the ghost,

We'll hev the tallest kind o' roast;

I guess our waistbands'll be tight

'Fore it comes ten o'clock ternight.'

'I won't agree to no such bender,'

Sez Isrel; 'keep it tell it's tender;

'Tain't wuth a snap afore it's ripe.'

Sez Joe, 'I'd jest ez lives eat tripe;

You \_air\_ a buster ter suppose

I'd eat what makes me hol' my nose!'

So they disputed to an' fro

Till cunnin' Isrel sez to Joe,

'Don't le's stay here an' play the fool,

Le's wait till both on us git cool,

Jest for a day or two le's hide it,

An' then toss up an' so decide it.'

'Agreed!' sez Joe, an' so they did,

An' the ole goose wuz safely hid.

Now 'twuz the hottest kind o' weather,

An' when at last they come together,

It didn't signify which won,

Fer all the mischief hed been done:

The goose wuz there, but, fer his soul,

Joe wouldn't ha' tetched it with a pole;

But Isrel kind o' liked the smell on 't

An' made \_his\_ dinner very well on 't.

My own humble attempt was in manner and form following, and I print it

here, I sincerely trust, out of no vainglory, but solely with the hope

of doing good.

LEAVING THE MATTER OPEN

A TALE

BY HOMER WILBUR, A.M.

Two brothers once, an ill-matched pair,

Together dwelt (no matter where),

To whom an Uncle Sam, or some one,

Had left a house and farm in common.

The two in principles and habits

Were different as rats from rabbits;

Stout Farmer North, with frugal care,

Laid up provision for his heir,

Not scorning with hard sun-browned hands

To scrape acquaintance with his lands;

Whatever thing he had to do

He did, and made it pay him, too;

He sold his waste stone by the pound,

His drains made water-wheels spin round,

His ice in summer-time he sold,

His wood brought profit when 'twas cold,

He dug and delved from morn till night,

Strove to make profit square with right,

Lived on his means, cut no great dash,

And paid his debts in honest cash.

On tother hand, his brother South

Lived very much from hand to mouth.

Played gentleman, nursed dainty hands,

Borrowed North's money on his lands,

And culled his morals and his graces

From cock-pits, bar-rooms, fights, and races;

His sole work in the farming line

Was keeping droves of long-legged swine,

Which brought great bothers and expenses

To North in looking after fences,

And, when they happened to break through,

Cost him both time and temper too,

For South insisted it was plain

He ought to drive them home again,

And North consented to the work

Because he loved to buy cheap pork.

Meanwhile, South's swine increasing fast;

His farm became too small at last;

So, having thought the matter over,

And feeling bound to live in clover

And never pay the clover's worth,

He said one day to Brother North:--

'Our families are both increasing,

And, though we labor without ceasing,

Our produce soon will be too scant

To keep our children out of want;

They who wish fortune to be lasting

Must be both prudent and forecasting;

We soon shall need more land; a lot

I know, that cheaply can be bo't;

You lend the cash, I'll buy the acres.

And we'll be equally partakers.'

Poor North, whose Anglo-Saxon blood

Gave him a hankering after mud,

Wavered a moment, then consented,

And, when the cash was paid, repented;

To make the new land worth a pin,

Thought he, it must be all fenced in,

For, if South's swine once get the run on 't

No kind of farming can be done on 't;

If that don't suit the other side,

'Tis best we instantly divide.'

But somehow South could ne'er incline

This way or that to run the line,

And always found some new pretence

'Gainst setting the division fence;

At last he said:--

'For peace's sake,

Liberal concessions I will make;

Though I believe, upon my soul,

I've a just title to the whole,

I'll make an offer which I call

Gen'rous,--we'll have no fence at all;

Then both of us, whene'er we choose,

Can take what part we want to use;

If you should chance to need it first,

Pick you the best, I'll take the worst.'

'Agreed!' cried North; thought he, This fall

With wheat and rye I'll sow it all;

In that way I shall get the start,

And South may whistle for his part.

So thought, so done, the field was sown,

And, winter haying come and gone,

Sly North walked blithely forth to spy,

The progress of his wheat and rye;

Heavens, what a sight! his brother's swine

Had asked themselves all out to dine;

Such grunting, munching, rooting, shoving,

The soil seemed all alive and moving,

As for his grain, such work they'd made on 't,

He couldn't spy a single blade on 't.

Off in a rage he rushed to South,

'My wheat and rye'--grief choked his mouth:

'Pray don't mind me,' said South, 'but plant

All of the new land that you want;'

'Yes, but your hogs,' cried North;

'The grain

Won't hurt them,' answered South again;

'But they destroy my crop;'

'No doubt;

'Tis fortunate you've found it out;

Misfortunes teach, and only they,

You must not sow it in their way;'

'Nay, you,' says North, 'must keep them out;'

'Did I create them with a snout?'

Asked South demurely; 'as agreed,

The land is open to your seed,

And would you fain prevent my pigs

From running there their harmless rigs?

God knows I view this compromise

With not the most approving eyes;

I gave up my unquestioned rights

For sake of quiet days and nights;

I offered then, you know 'tis true,

To cut the piece of land in two.'

'Then cut it now,' growls North;

'Abate

Your heat,' says South, 'tis now too late;

I offered you the rocky corner,

But you, of your own good the scorner,

Refused to take it: I am sorry;

No doubt you might have found a quarry,

Perhaps a gold-mine, for aught I know,

Containing heaps of native rhino;

You can't expect me to resign

My rights'--

'But where,' quoth North, 'are mine?'

'\_Your\_ rights,' says tother, 'well, that's funny,

\_I\_ bought the land'--

'\_I\_ paid the money;'

'That,' answered South, 'is from the point,

The ownership, you'll grant, is joint;

I'm sure my only hope and trust is

Not law so much as abstract justice,

Though, you remember, 'twas agreed

That so and so--consult the deed;

Objections now are out of date,

They might have answered once, but Fate

Quashes them at the point we've got to;

\_Obsta principiis\_ that's my motto.'

So saying, South began to whistle

And looked as obstinate as gristle,

While North went homeward, each brown paw

Clenched like a knot of natural law,

And all the while, in either ear,

Heard something clicking wondrous clear.

To turn now to other matters, there are two things upon which it should

seem fitting to dilate somewhat more largely in this place,--the Yankee

character and the Yankee dialect. And, first, of the Yankee character,

which has wanted neither open maligners, nor even more dangerous enemies

in the persons of those unskilful painters who have given to it that

hardness, angularity, and want of proper perspective, which, in truth,

belonged, not to their subject, but to their own niggard and unskilful

pencil.

New England was not so much the colony of a mother country, as a Hagar

driven forth into the wilderness. The little self-exiled band which came

hither in 1620 came, not to seek gold, but to found a democracy. They

came that they might have the privilege to work and pray, to sit upon

hard benches and listen to painful preachers as long as they would, yea,

even unto thirty-seventhly, if the spirit so willed it. And surely, if

the Greek might boast his ThermopylÃ¦, where three hundred men fell in

resisting the Persian, we may well be proud of our Plymouth Rock, where

a handful of men, women, and children not merely faced, but vanquished,

winter, famine, the wilderness, and the yet more invincible \_storge\_

that drew them back to the green island far away. These found no lotus

growing upon the surly shore, the taste of which could make them forget

their little native Ithaca; nor were they so wanting to themselves in

faith as to burn their ship, but could see the fair west-wind belly the

homeward sail, and then turn unrepining to grapple with the terrible

Unknown.

As Want was the prime foe these hardy exodists had to fortress

themselves against, so it is little wonder if that traditional feud be

long in wearing out of the stock. The wounds of the old warfare were

long a-healing, and an east-wind of hard times puts a new ache into

every one of them. Thrift was the first lesson in their horn-book,

pointed out, letter after letter, by the lean finger of the hard

schoolmistress, Necessity. Neither were those plump, rosy-gilled

Englishmen that came hither, but a hard-faced, atrabilious, earnest-eyed

race, stiff from long wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and who had

taught Satan to dread the new Puritan hug. Add two hundred years'

influence of soil, climate, and exposure, with its necessary result of

idiosyncrasies, and we have the present Yankee, full of expedients,

half-master of all trades, inventive in all but the beautiful, full of

shifts, not yet capable of comfort, armed at all points against the old

enemy Hunger, longanimous, good at patching, not so careful for what is

best as for what will \_do\_, with a clasp to his purse and a button to

his pocket, not skilled to build against Time, as in old countries, but

against sore-pressing Need, accustomed to move the world with no [Greek:

pou sto] but his own two feet, and no lever but his own long forecast. A

strange hybrid, indeed, did circumstance beget, here in the New World,

upon the old Puritan stock, and the earth never before saw such

mystic-practicalism, such niggard-geniality, such

calculating-fanaticism, such cast-iron-enthusiasm, such

sour-faced-humor, such close-fisted-generosity. This new \_GrÃ¦culus

esuriens\_ will make a living out of anything. He will invent new trades

as well as tools. His brain is his capital, and he will get education at

all risks. Put him on Juan Fernandez, and he would make a spelling-book

first, and a salt-pan afterward. \_In coelum, jusseris, ibit\_,--or the

other way either,--it is all one, so anything is to be got by it. Yet,

after all, thin, speculative Jonathan is more like the Englishman of two

centuries ago than John Bull himself is. He has lost somewhat in

solidity, has become fluent and adaptable, but more of the original

groundwork of character remains. He feels more at home with Fulke

Greville, Herbert of Cherbury, Quarles, George Herbert, and Browne, than

with his modern English cousins. He is nearer than John, by at least a

hundred years, to Naseby, Marston Moor, Worcester, and the time when, if

ever, there were true Englishmen. John Bull has suffered the idea of the

Invisible to be very much fattened out of him. Jonathan is conscious

still that he lives in the world of the Unseen as well as of the Seen.

To move John you must make your fulcrum of solid beef and pudding; an

abstract idea will do for Jonathan.

\* \* \* \* \*

\*\*\* TO THE INDULGENT READER

My friend, the Rev. Mr. Wilbur, having been seized with a dangerous fit

of illness, before this Introduction had passed through the press, and

being incapacitated for all literary exertion, sent to me his notes,

memoranda, &c., and requested me to fashion them into some shape more

fitting for the general eye. This, owing to the fragmentary and

disjointed state of his manuscripts, I have felt wholly unable to do;

yet being unwilling that the reader should be deprived of such parts of

his lucubrations as seemed more finished, and not well discerning how to

segregate these from the rest, I have concluded to send them all to the

press precisely as they are.

COLUMBUS NYE,

\_Pastor of a Church in Bungtown Corner.\_

It remains to speak of the Yankee dialect. And, first, it may be

premised, in a general way, that any one much read in the writings of

the early colonists need not be told that the far greater share of the

words and phrases now esteemed peculiar to New England, and local there,

were brought from the mother country. A person familiar with the

dialect of certain portions of Massachusetts will not fail to recognize,

in ordinary discourse, many words now noted in English vocabularies as

archaic, the greater part of which were in common use about the time of

the King James translation of the Bible. Shakespeare stands less in need

of a glossary to most New-Englanders than to many a native of the Old

Country. The peculiarities of our speech, however, are rapidly wearing

out. As there is no country where reading is so universal and newspapers

are so multitudinous, so no phrase remains long local, but is

transplanted in the mail-bags to every remotest corner of the land.

Consequently our dialect approaches nearer to uniformity than that of

any other nation.

The English have complained of us for coining new words. Many of those

so stigmatized were old ones by them forgotten, and all make now an

unquestioned part of the currency, wherever English is spoken.

Undoubtedly, we have a right to make new words, as they are needed by

the fresh aspects under which life presents itself here in the New

World; and, indeed, wherever a language is alive, it grows. It might be

questioned whether we could not establish a stronger title to the

ownership of the English tongue than the mother-islanders themselves.

Here, past all question, is to be its great home and centre. And not

only is it already spoken here by greater numbers, but with a far higher

popular average of correctness than in Britain. The great writers of it,

too, we might claim as ours, were ownership to be settled by the number

of readers and lovers.

As regards the provincialisms to be met with in this volume, I may say

that the reader will not find one which is not (as I believe) either

native or imported with the early settlers, nor one which I have not,

with my own ears, heard in familiar use. In the metrical portion of the

book, I have endeavored to adapt the spelling as nearly as possible to

the ordinary mode of pronunciation. Let the reader who deems me

over-particular remember this caution of Martial:--

'Quem recitas, meus est, O Fidentine, libellus;

Sed male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.'

A few further explanatory remarks will not be impertinent.

I shall barely lay down a few general rules for the reader's guidance.

1. The genuine Yankee never gives the rough sound to the \_r\_ when he can

help it, and often displays considerable ingenuity in avoiding it even

before a vowel.

2. He seldom sounds the final \_g\_, a piece of self-denial, if we

consider his partiality for nasals. The same of the final \_d\_, as \_han'\_

and \_stan'\_ for \_hand\_ and \_stand\_.

3. The \_h\_ in such words as \_while, when, where,\_ he omits altogether.

4. In regard to \_a\_, he shows some inconsistency, sometimes giving a

close and obscure sound, as \_hev\_ for \_have, hendy\_ for \_handy, ez\_ for

\_as, thet\_ for \_that\_, and again giving it the broad sound it has in

\_father\_, as \_hÃ¢nsome\_ for \_handsome.\_

5. To the sound \_ou\_ he prefixes an \_e\_ (hard to exemplify otherwise

than orally).

The following passage in Shakespeare he would recite thus:--

'Neow is the winta uv eour discontent

Med glorious summa by this sun o'Yock,

An' all the cleouds thet leowered upun eour heouse

In the deep buzzum o' the oshin buried;

Neow air eour breows beound 'ith victorious wreaths;

Eour breused arms hung up fer monimunce;

Eour starn alarums changed to merry meetins,

Eour dreffle marches to delighfle masures.

Grim-visaged war heth smeuthed his wrinkled front,

An' neow, instid o' mountin' bare-bid steeds

To fright the souls o' ferfle edverseries,

He capers nimly in a lady's ch[)a]mber,

To the lascivious pleasin' uv a loot.'

6. \_Au\_, in such words as \_daughter\_ and \_slaughter\_, he pronounces

\_ah\_.

7. To the dish thus seasoned add a drawl \_ad libitum\_.

[Mr. Wilbur's notes here become entirely fragmentary.--C.N.]

[Greek: a]. Unable to procure a likeness of Mr. Biglow, I thought the

curious reader might be gratified with a sight of the editorial

effigies. And here a choice between two was offered,--the one a profile

(entirely black) cut by Doyle, the other a portrait painted by a native

artist of much promise. The first of these seemed wanting in expression,

and in the second a slight obliquity of the visual organs has been

heightened (perhaps from an over-desire of force on the part of the

artist) into too close an approach to actual \_strabismus\_. This slight

divergence in my optical apparatus from the ordinary model--however I

may have been taught to regard it in the light of a mercy rather than a

cross, since it enabled me to give as much of directness and personal

application to my discourses as met the wants of my congregation,

without risk of offending any by being supposed to have him or her in my

eye (as the saying is)--seemed yet to Mrs. Wilbur a sufficient objection

to the engraving of the aforesaid painting. We read of many who either

absolutely refused to allow the copying of their features, as especially

did Plotinus and Agesilaus among the ancients, not to mention the more

modern instances of Scioppius, PalÃ¦ottus, Pinellus, Velserus, Gataker,

and others, or were indifferent thereto, as Cromwell.

[Greek: b.] Yet was CÃ¦sar desirous of concealing his baldness. \_Per

contra\_, my Lord Protector's carefulness in the matter of his wart might

be cited. Men generally more desirous of being \_improved\_ in their

portraits than characters. Shall probably find very unflattered

likenesses of ourselves in Recording Angel's gallery.

[Greek: g.] Whether any of our national peculiarities may be traced to

our use of stoves, as a certain closeness of the lips in pronunciation,

and a smothered smoulderingness of disposition seldom roused to open

flame? An unrestrained intercourse with fire probably conducive to

generosity and hospitality of soul. Ancient Mexicans used stoves, as the

friar Augustin Ruiz reports, Hakluyt, III. 468,--but Popish priests not

always reliable authority.

To-day picked my Isabella grapes. Crop injured by attacks of rose-bug in

the spring. Whether Noah was justifiable in preserving this class of

insects?

[Greek: d]. Concerning Mr. Biglow's pedigree. Tolerably certain that

there was never a poet among his ancestors. An ordination hymn

attributed to a maternal uncle, but perhaps a sort of production not

demanding the creative faculty.

His grandfather a painter of the grandiose or Michael Angelo school.

Seldom painted objects smaller than houses or barns, and these with

uncommon expression.

[Greek: e]. Of the Wilburs no complete pedigree. The crest said to be a

\_wild boar\_, whence, perhaps, the name. (?) A connection with the Earls

of Wilbraham (\_quasi\_ wild boar ham) might be made out. This suggestion

worth following up. In 1677, John W.m. Expect----, had issue, 1. John,

2. Haggai, 3. Expect, 4. Ruhamah, 5. Desire.

'Here lyes y'e bodye of Mrs. Expect Wilber,

Ye crewell salvages they kil'd her

Together w'th other Christian soles eleaven,

October y'e ix daye, 1707.

Y'e stream of Jordan sh' as crost ore

And now expeacts me on y'e other shore:

I live in hope her soon to join;

Her earthlye yeeres were forty and nine.'

\_From Gravestone in Pekussett, North Parish.\_

This is unquestionably the same John who afterward (1711) married

Tabitha Hagg or Ragg.

But if this were the case, she seems to have died early; for only three

years after, namely, 1714, we have evidence that he married Winifred,

daughter of Lieutenant Tipping.

He seems to have been a man of substance, for we find him in 1696

conveying 'one undivided eightieth part of a salt-meadow' in Yabbok, and

he commanded a sloop in 1702.

Those who doubt the importance of genealogical studies \_fuste potius

quam argumento erudiendi\_.

I trace him as far as 1723, and there lose him. In that year he was

chosen selectman.

No gravestone. Perhaps overthrown when new hearse-house was built, 1802.

He was probably the son of John, who came from Bilham Comit. Salop.

circa 1642.

This first John was a man of considerable importance, being twice

mentioned with the honorable prefix of \_Mr.\_ in the town records. Name

spelt with two \_l-s\_.

'Hear lyeth y'e bod [\_stone unhappily broken\_.]

Mr. Ihon Wilber [Esq.] [\_I inclose this in brackets as doubtful.

To me it seems clear\_.]

Ob't die [\_illegible; looks like xviii\_.].... iii [\_prob. 1693\_.]

... paynt

... deseased seinte:

A friend and [fath]er untoe all y'e opreast,

Hee gave y'e wicked familists noe reast,

When Sat[an bl]ewe his Antinomian blaste.

Wee clong to [Willber as a steadf]ast maste.

[A]gaynst y'e horrid Qua[kers] ...'

It is greatly to be lamented that this curious epitaph is mutilated. It

is said that the sacrilegious British soldiers made a target of the

stone during the war of Independence. How odious an animosity which

pauses not at the grave! How brutal that which spares not the monuments

of authentic history! This is not improbably from the pen of Rev. Moody

Pyram, who is mentioned by Hubbard as having been noted for a silver

vein of poetry. If his papers be still extant, a copy might possibly be

recovered.

THE BIGLOW PAPERS

No. I

A LETTER

FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW OF JAALAM TO THE HON. JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM,

EDITOR OF THE BOSTON COURIER, INCLOSING A POEM OF HIS SON, MR. HOSEA

BIGLOW

JAYLEM, june 1846.

MISTER EDDYTER:--Our Hosea wuz down to Boston last week, and he see a

cruetin Sarjunt a struttin round as popler as a hen with 1 chicking,

with 2 fellers a drummin and fifin arter him like all nater. the sarjunt

he thout Hosea hedn't gut his i teeth cut cos he looked a kindo 's

though he'd jest com down, so he cal'lated to hook him in, but Hosy

woodn't take none o' his sarse for all he hed much as 20 Rooster's tales

stuck onto his hat and eenamost enuf brass a bobbin up and down on his

shoulders and figureed onto his coat and trousis, let alone wut nater

hed sot in his featers, to make a 6 pounder out on.

wal, Hosea he com home considerabal riled, and arter I'd gone to bed I

heern Him a thrashin round like a short-tailed Bull in fli-time. The old

Woman ses she to me ses she, Zekle, ses she, our Hosee's gut the

chollery or suthin anuther ses she, don't you Bee skeered, ses I, he's

oney amakin pottery[10] ses i, he's ollers on hand at that ere busynes

like Da & martin, and shure enuf, cum mornin, Hosy he cum down stares

full chizzle, hare on eend and cote tales flyin, and sot rite of to go

reed his varses to Parson Wilbur bein he haint aney grate shows o' book

larnin himself, bimeby he cum back and sed the parson wuz dreffle

tickled with 'em as i hoop you will Be, and said they wuz True grit.

Hosea ses taint hardly fair to call 'em hisn now, cos the parson kind o'

slicked off sum o' the last varses, but he told Hosee he didn't want to

put his ore in to tetch to the Rest on 'em, bein they wuz verry well As

thay wuz, and then Hosy ses he sed suthin a nuther about Simplex

Mundishes or sum sech feller, but I guess Hosea kind o' didn't hear him,

for I never hearn o' nobody o' that name in this villadge, and I've

lived here man and boy 76 year cum next tater diggin, and thair aint no

wheres a kitting spryer 'n I be.

If you print 'em I wish you'd jest let folks know who hosy's father is,

cos my ant Keziah used to say it's nater to be curus ses she, she aint

livin though and he's a likely kind o' lad.

EZEKIEL BIGLOW.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thrash away, you'll \_hev\_ to rattle

On them kittle-drums o' yourn,--

'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle

Thet is ketched with mouldy corn;

Put in stiff, you fifer feller,

Let folks see how spry you be,--

Guess you'll toot till you are yeller

'Fore you git ahold o' me!

Thet air flag's a leetle rotten,

Hope it aint your Sunday's best;-- 10

Fact! it takes a sight o' cotton

To stuff out a soger's chest:

Sence we farmers hev to pay fer't,

Ef you must wear humps like these,

S'posin' you should try salt hay fer't,

It would du ez slick ez grease.

'Twouldn't suit them Southun fellers,

They're a dreffle graspin' set,

We must ollers blow the bellers

Wen they want their irons het; 20

May be it's all right ez preachin',

But \_my\_ narves it kind o' grates,

Wen I see the overreachin'

O' them nigger-drivin' States.

Them thet rule us, them slave-traders,

Haint they cut a thunderin' swarth

(Helped by Yankee renegaders),

Thru the vartu o' the North!

We begin to think it's nater

To take sarse an' not be riled;-- 30

Who'd expect to see a tater

All on eend at bein' biled?

Ez fer war, I call it murder,--

There you hev it plain an' flat;

I don't want to go no furder

Than my Testyment fer that;

God hez sed so plump an' fairly,

It's ez long ez it is broad,

An' you've gut to git up airly

Ef you want to take in God. 40

'Taint your eppyletts an' feathers

Make the thing a grain more right;

'Taint afollerin' your bell-wethers

Will excuse ye in His sight;

Ef you take a sword an' dror it,

An' go stick a feller thru,

Guv'ment aint to answer for it,

God'll send the bill to you.

Wut's the use o' meetin'-goin'

Every Sabbath, wet or dry, 50

Ef it's right to go amowin'

Feller-men like oats an' rye?

I dunno but wut it's pooty

Trainin' round in bobtail coats,--

But it's curus Christian dooty

This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

They may talk o' Freedom's airy

Tell they're pupple in the face,--

It's a grand gret cemetary

Fer the barthrights of our race; 60

They jest want this Californy

So's to lug new slave-states in

To abuse ye, an' to scorn ye,

An' to plunder ye like sin.

Aint it cute to see a Yankee

Take sech everlastin' pains,

All to get the Devil's thankee

Helpin' on 'em weld their chains?

Wy, it's jest ez clear ez figgers,

Clear ez one an' one make two, 70

Chaps thet make black slaves o' niggers

Want to make wite slaves o' you.

Tell ye jest the eend I've come to

Arter cipherin' plaguy smart,

An' it makes a handy sum, tu.

Any gump could larn by heart;

Laborin' man an' laborin' woman

Hev one glory an' one shame.

Ev'y thin' thet's done inhuman

Injers all on 'em the same. 80

'Taint by turnln' out to hack folks

You're agoin' to git your right,

Nor by lookin' down on black folks

Coz you're put upon by wite;

Slavery aint o' nary color,

'Taint the hide thet makes it wus,

All it keers fer in a feller

'S jest to make him fill its pus.

Want to tackle \_me\_ in, du ye?

I expect you'll hev to wait; 90

Wen cold lead puts daylight thru ye

You'll begin to kal'late;

S'pose the crows wun't fall to pickin'

All the carkiss from your bones,

Coz you helped to give a lickin'

To them poor half-Spanish drones?

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy

Wether I'd be sech a goose

Ez to jine ye,--guess you'd fancy

The etarnal bung wuz loose! 100

She wants me fer home consumption,

Let alone the hay's to mow,--

Ef you're arter folks o' gumption,

You've a darned long row to hoe.

Take them editors thet's crowin'

Like a cockerel three months old,--

Don't ketch any on 'em goin

Though they \_be\_ so blasted bold;

\_Aint\_ they a prime lot o' fellers?

'Fore they think on 't guess they'll sprout 110

(Like a peach thet's got the yellers),

With the meanness bustin' out.

Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'

Bigger pens to cram with slaves,

Help the men thet's ollers dealin'

Insults on your fathers' graves;

Help the strong to grind the feeble,

Help the many agin the few,

Help the men thet call your people

Witewashed slaves an' peddlin' crew! 120

Massachusetts, God forgive her,

She's akneelin' with the rest,

She, thet ough' to ha' clung ferever

In her grand old eagle-nest;

She thet ough' to stand so fearless

W'ile the wracks are round her hurled,

Holdin' up a beacon peerless

To the oppressed of all the world!

Ha'n't they sold your colored seamen?

Ha'n't they made your env'ys w'iz? 130

\_Wut\_'ll make ye act like freemen?

\_Wut\_'ll git your dander riz?

Come, I'll tell ye wut I'm thinkin'

Is our dooty in this fix.

They'd ha' done 't ez quick ez winkin'

In the days o' seventy-six.

Clang the bells in every steeple,

Call all true men to disown

The tradoocers of our people,

The enslavers o' their own; 140

Let our dear old Bay State proudly

Put the trumpet to her mouth,

Let her ring this messidge loudly

In the ears of all the South:--

'I'll return ye good fer evil

Much ez we frail mortils can,

But I wun't go help the Devil

Makin' man the cuss o' man;

Call me coward, call me traiter,

Jest ez suits your mean idees,--

Here I stand a tyrant hater, 151

An' the friend o' God an' Peace!'

Ef I'd \_my\_ way I hed ruther

We should go to work an part,

They take one way, we take t'other,

Guess it wouldn't break my heart;

Man hed ough' to put asunder

Them thet God has noways jined;

An' I shouldn't gretly wonder

Ef there's thousands o' my mind. 160

[The first recruiting sergeant on record I conceive to have been that

individual who is mentioned in the Book of Job as \_going to and fro in

the earth, and walking up and down in it.\_ Bishop Latimer will have him

to have been a bishop, but to me that other calling would appear more

congenial. The sect of Cainites is not yet extinct, who esteemed the

first-born of Adam to be the most worthy, not only because of that

privilege of primogeniture, but inasmuch as he was able to overcome and

slay his younger brother. That was a wise saying of the famous Marquis

Pescara to the Papal Legate, that \_it was impossible for men to serve

Mars and Christ at the same time\_. Yet in time past the profession of

arms was judged to be [Greek: kat exochaen] that of a gentleman, nor

does this opinion want for strenuous upholders even in our day. Must we

suppose, then, that the profession of Christianity was only intended for

losels, or, at best, to afford an opening for plebeian ambition? Or

shall we hold with that nicely metaphysical Pomeranian, Captain Vratz,

who was Count KÃ¶nigsmark's chief instrument in the murder of Mr. Thynne,

that the Scheme of Salvation has been arranged with an especial eye to

the necessities of the upper classes, and that 'God would consider a

\_gentleman\_ and deal with him suitably to the condition and profession

he had placed him in'? It may be said of us all, \_Exemplo plus quam

ratione vivimus\_.--H.W.]

No. II

A LETTER

FROM MR. HOSEA BIGLOW TO THE HON. J.T. BUCKINGHAM, EDITOR OF THE BOSTON

COURIER, COVERING A LETTER FROM MR. B. SAWIN, PRIVATE IN THE

MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT

[This letter of Mr. Sawin's was not originally written in verse. Mr.

Biglow, thinking it peculiarly susceptible of metrical adornment,

translated it, so to speak, into his own vernacular tongue. This is not

the time to consider the question, whether rhyme be a mode of expression

natural to the human race. If leisure from other and more important

avocations be granted, I will handle the matter more at large in an

appendix to the present volume. In this place I will barely remark, that

I have sometimes noticed in the unlanguaged prattlings of infants a

fondness for alliteration, assonance, and even rhyme, in which natural

predisposition we may trace the three degrees through which our

Anglo-Saxon verse rose to its culmination in the poetry of Pope. I would

not be understood as questioning in these remarks that pious theory

which supposes that children, if left entirely to themselves, would

naturally discourse in Hebrew. For this the authority of one experiment

is claimed, and I could, with Sir Thomas Browne, desire its

establishment, inasmuch as the acquirement of that sacred tongue would

thereby be facilitated. I am aware that Herodotus states the conclusion

of Psammetieus to have been in favor of a dialect of the Phrygian. But,

beside the chance that a trial of this importance would hardly be

blessed to a Pagan monarch whose only motive was curiosity, we have on

the Hebrew side the comparatively recent investigation of James the

Fourth of Scotland. I will add to this prefatory remark, that Mr. Sawin,

though a native of Jaalam, has never been a stated attendant on the

religious exercises of my congregation. I consider my humble efforts

prospered in that not one of my sheep hath ever indued the wolf's

clothing of war, save for the comparatively innocent diversion of a

militia training. Not that my flock are backward to undergo the

hardships of \_defensive\_ warfare. They serve cheerfully in the great

army which fights, even unto death \_pro aris et focis\_, accoutred with

the spade, the axe, the plane, the sledge, the spelling-book, and other

such effectual weapons against want and ignorance and unthrift. I have

taught them (under God) to esteem our human institutions as but tents of

a night, to be stricken whenever Truth puts the bugle to her lips and

sounds a march to the heights of wider-viewed intelligence and more

perfect organization.--H.W.]

MISTER BUCKINUM, the follerin Billet was writ hum by a Yung feller of

our town that wuz cussed fool enuff to goe atrottin inter Miss Chiff

arter a Drum and fife, it ain't Nater for a feller to let on that he's

sick o' any bizness that He went intu off his own free will and a Cord,

but I rather cal'late he's middlin tired o' voluntearin By this Time. I

bleeve u may put dependunts on his statemence. For I never heered nothin

bad on him let Alone his havin what Parson Wilbur cals a \_pong shong\_

for cocktales, and he ses it wuz a soshiashun of idees sot him agoin

arter the Crootin Sargient cos he wore a cocktale onto his hat.

his Folks gin the letter to me and i shew it to parson Wilbur and he ses

it oughter Bee printed. send It to mister Buckinum, ses he, i don't

ollers agree with him, ses he, but by Time,[11] ses he, I \_du\_ like a

feller that aint a Feared.

I have intusspussed a Few refleckshuns hear and thar. We're a kind

o'prest with Hayin.

Ewers respecfly

HOSEA BIGLOW.

This kind o' sogerin' aint a mite like our October trainin',

A chap could clear right out from there ef 't only looked like rainin',

An' th' Cunnles, tu, could kiver up their shappoes with bandanners,

An' send the insines skootin' to the bar-room with their banners

(Fear o' gittin' on 'em spotted), an' a feller could cry quarter

Ef he fired away his ramrod arter tu much rum an' water.

Recollect wut fun we hed, you 'n' I an' Ezry Hollis,

Up there to Waltham plain last fall, along o' the Cornwallis?[12]

This sort o' thing aint \_jest\_ like thet,--I wish thet I wuz furder,[13]--

Ninepunce a day fer killin' folks comes kind o' low fer murder, 10

(Wy I've worked out to slarterin' some fer Deacon Cephas Billins,

An' in the hardest times there wuz I ollers tetched ten shillins.)

There's sutthin' gits into my throat thet makes it hard to swaller,

It comes so naturel to think about a hempen collar;

It's glory,--but, in spite o' all my tryin' to git callous,

I feel a kind o' in a cart, aridin' to the gallus.

But wen it comes to \_bein'\_ killed,--I tell ye I felt streaked

The fust time 't ever I found out wy baggonets wuz peaked;

Here's how it wuz: I started out to go to a fandango,

The sentinul he ups an' sez, 'Thet's furder 'an you can go.' 20

'None o' your sarse,' sez I; sez he, 'Stan' back!' 'Aint you a buster?'

Sez I, 'I'm up to all thet air, I guess I've ben to muster;

I know wy sentinuls air sot; you aint agoin' to eat us;

Caleb haint no monopoly to court the seenorcetas;

My folks to hum air full ez good ez his'n be, by golly!'

An' so ez I wuz goin' by, not thinkin' wut would folly,

The everlastin' cus he stuck his one-pronged pitchfork in me

An' made a hole right thru my close ez ef I wuz an in'my.

Wal, it beats all how big I felt hoorawin' in ole Funnel

Wen Mister Bolles he gin the sword to our Leftenant Cunnle, 30

(It's Mister Secondary Bolles,[14] thet writ the prize peace essay.

Thet's wy he didn't list himself along o' us, I dessay,)

An' Rantoul, tu, talked pooty loud, but don't put \_his\_ foot in it,

Coz human life's so sacred thet he's principled agin it,--

Though I myself can't rightly see it's any wus achokin' on 'em;

Than puttin' bullets thru their lights, or with a bagnet pokin' on 'em;

How dreffle slick he reeled it off (like Blitz at our lyceum

Ahaulin' ribbins from his chops so quick you skeercely see 'em),

About the Anglo-Saxon race (an' saxons would be handy

To du the buryin' down here upon the Rio Grandy), 40

About our patriotic pas an' our star-spangled banner,

Our country's bird alookin' on an' singin' out hosanner,

An' how he (Mister B. himself) wuz happy fer Ameriky,--

I felt, ez sister Patience sez, a leetle mite histericky.

I felt, I swon, ez though it wuz a dreffle kind o' privilege

Atrampin' round thru Boston streets among the gutter's drivelage;

I act'lly thought it wuz a treat to hear a little drummin',

An' it did bonyfidy seem millanyum wuz acomin'

Wen all on us got suits (darned like them wore in the state prison)

An' every feller felt ez though all Mexico wuz hisn.[15] 50

This 'ere's about the meanest place a skunk could wal dlskiver

(Saltillo's Mexican, I b'lieve, fer wut we call Salt-river);

The sort o' trash a feller gits to eat doos beat all nater,

I'd give a year's pay fer a smell o' one good blue-nose tater,

The country here thet Mister Bolles declared to be so charmin'

Throughout is swarmin' with the most alarmin' kind o' varmin.

He talked about delishis froots, but then it wuz a wopper all,

The holl on 't 's mud an' prickly pears, with here an' there a chapparal;

You see a feller peekin' out, an', fust you know, a lariat

Is round your throat an' you a copse, 'fore you can say, 'Wut air ye

at?'[16] 60

You never see sech darned gret bugs (it may not be irrelevant

To say I've seen a \_scarabÃ¦us pilularius\_[17] big ez a year old elephant),

The rigiment come up one day in time to stop a red bug

From runnin off with Cunnle Wright,--'twuz jest a common \_cimex

lectularius.\_

One night I started up on eend an' thought I wuz to hum agin,

I heern a horn, thinks I it's Sol the fisherman hez come agin,

\_His\_ bellowses is sound enough,--ez I'm a livin' creeter,

I felt a thing go thru my leg--'twuz nothin' more 'n a skeeter!

Then there's the yaller fever, tu, they call it here el vomito,--

(Come, thet wun't du, you landcrab there, I tell ye to le' \_go\_ my

toe! 70

My gracious! it's a scorpion thet's took a shine to play with 't,

I darsn't skeer the tarnal thing fer fear he'd run away with 't,)

Afore I come away from hum I hed a strong persuasion

Thet Mexicans worn't human beans,[18]--an ourang outang nation,

A sort o' folks a chap could kill an' never dream on 't arter,

No more 'n a feller'd dream o' pigs thet he hed hed to slarter;

I'd an idee thet they were built arter the darkie fashion all,

An' kickin' colored folks about, you know 's a kind o' national;

But wen I jined I worn't so wise ez thet air queen o' Sheby,

Fer, come to look at 'em, they aint much diff'rent from wut we be, 80

An' here we air ascrougin' 'em out o' thir own dominions,

Ashelterin' 'em, ez Caleb sez, under our eagle's pinions,

Wich means to take a feller up jest by the slack o' 's trowsis

An' walk him Spanish clean right out o' all his homes an' houses;

Wal, it doos seem a curus way, but then hooraw fer Jackson!

It must be right, fer Caleb sez it's reg'lar Anglo-Saxon,

The Mex'cans don't fight fair, they say, they piz'n all the water,

An' du amazin' lots o' things thet isn't wut they ough' to;

Bein' they haint no lead, they make their bullets out o' copper

An' shoot the darned things at us, tu, wich Caleb sez ain

proper; 90

He sez they'd ough' to stan' right up an' let us pop 'em fairly

(Guess wen he ketches 'em at thet he'll hev to git up airly),

Thet our nation's bigger 'n theirn an' so its rights air bigger,

An' thet it's all to make 'em free thet we air pullin' trigger,

Thet Anglo Saxondom's idee's abreakin' 'em to pieces,

An' thet idee's thet every man doos jest wut he damn pleases;

Ef I don't make his meanin' clear, perhaps in some respex I can,

I know thet 'every man' don't mean a nigger or a Mexican;

An' there's another thing I know, an' thet is, ef these creeters,

Thet stick an Anglosaxon mask onto State-prison feeturs, 100

Should come to Jaalam Centre fer to argify an' spout on 't,

The gals 'ould count the silver spoons the minnit they cleared out on 't.

This goin' ware glory waits ye haint one agreeable feetur,

An' ef it worn't fer wakin' snakes, I'd home agin short meter;

O, wouldn't I be off, quick time, ef 't worn't thet I wuz sartin

They'd let the daylight into me to pay me fer desartin!

I don't approve o' tellin' tales, but jest to you I may state

Our ossifers aiut wut they wuz afore they left the Bay-state;

Then it wuz 'Mister Sawin, sir, you're middlin' well now, be ye?

Step up an' take a nipper, sir; I'm dreffle glad to see ye:' 110

But now it's 'Ware's my eppylet? here, Sawin, step an' fetch it!

An' mind your eye, be thund'rin' spry, or, damn ye, you shall ketch it!'

Wal, ez the Doctor sez, some pork will bile so, but by mighty,

Ef I hed some on 'em to hum, I'd give 'em linkum vity,

I'd play the rogue's march on their hides an' other music follerin'--

But I must close my letter here, fer one on 'em 's ahollerin',

These Anglosaxon ossifers,--wal, taint no use ajawin',

I'm safe enlisted fer the war,

Yourn,

BIRDOFREDOM SAWIN.

[Those have not been wanting (as, indeed, when hath Satan been to seek

for attorneys?) who have maintained that our late inroad upon Mexico was

undertaken not so much for the avenging of any national quarrel, as for

the spreading of free institutions and of Protestantism. \_Capita vix

duabus Anticyris medenda!\_ Verily I admire that no pious sergeant among

these new Crusaders beheld Martin Luther riding at the front of the host

upon a tamed pontifical bull, as, in that former invasion of Mexico, the

zealous Gomara (spawn though he were of the Scarlet Woman) was favored

with a vision of St. James of Compostella, skewering the infidels upon

his apostolical lance. We read, also, that Richard of the lion heart,

having gone to Palestine on a similar errand of mercy, was divinely

encouraged to cut the throats of such Paynims as refused to swallow the

bread of life (doubtless that they might be thereafter incapacitated for

swallowing the filthy gobbets of Mahound) by angels of heaven, who cried

to the king and his knights,\_--Seigneurs, tuez! tuez!\_ providentially

using the French tongue, as being the only one understood by their

auditors. This would argue for the pantoglottism of these celestial

intelligences, while, on the other hand, the Devil, \_teste\_ Cotton

Mather, is unversed in certain of the Indian dialects. Yet must he be a

semeiologist the most expert, making himself intelligible to every

people and kindred by signs; no other discourse, indeed, being needful,

than such as the mackerel-fisher holds with his finned quarry, who, if

other bait be wanting, can by a bare bit of white rag at the end of a

string captivate those foolish fishes. Such piscatorial persuasion is

Satan cunning in. Before one he trails a hat and feather, or a bare

feather without a hat; before another, a Presidential chair or a

tide-waiter's stool, or a pulpit in the city, no matter what. To us,

dangling there over our heads, they seem junkets dropped out of the

seventh heaven, sops dipped in nectar, but, once in our mouths, they are

all one, bits of fuzzy cotton.

This, however, by the way. It is time now \_revocare gradum\_. While so

many miracles of this sort, vouched by eye-witnesses, have encouraged

the arms of Papists, not to speak of EchetlÃ¦us at Marathon and those

\_Dioscuri\_ (whom we must conclude imps of the pit) who sundry times

captained the pagan Roman soldiery, it is strange that our first

American crusade was not in some such wise also signalized. Yet it is

said that the Lord hath manifestly prospered our armies. This opens the

question, whether, when our hands are strengthened to make great

slaughter of our enemies, it be absolutely and demonstratively certain

that this might is added to us from above, or whether some Potentate

from an opposite quarter may not have a finger in it, as there are few

pies into which his meddling digits are not thrust. Would the Sanctifier

and Setter-apart of the seventh day have assisted in a victory gained on

the Sabbath, as was one in the late war? Do we not know from Josephus,

that, careful of His decree, a certain river in Judaea abstained from

flowing on the day of Rest? Or has that day become less an object of His

especial care since the year 1697, when so manifest a providence

occurred to Mr. William Trowbridge, in answer to whose prayers, when he

and all on shipboard with him were starving, a dolphin was sent daily,

'which was enough to serve 'em; only on \_Saturdays\_ they still catched a

couple, and on the \_Lord's Days\_ they could catch none at all'? Haply

they might have been permitted, by way of mortification, to take some

few sculpins (those banes of the salt-water angler), which unseemly fish

would, moreover, have conveyed to them a symbolical reproof for their

breach of the day, being known in the rude dialect of our mariners as

\_Cape Cod Clergymen\_.

It has been a refreshment to many nice consciences to know that our

Chief Magistrate would not regard with eyes of approval the (by many

esteemed) sinful pastime of dancing, and I own myseif to be so far of

that mind, that I could not but set my face against this Mexican Polka,

though danced to the Presidential piping with a Gubernatorial second. If

ever the country should be seized with another such mania \_pro

propaganda fide\_, I think it would be wise to fill our bombshells with

alternate copies of the Cambridge Platform and the Thirty-nine Articles,

which would produce a mixture of the highest explosive power, and to

wrap every one of our cannon-balls in a leaf of the New Testament, the

reading of which is denied to those who sit in the darkness of Popery.

Those iron evangelists would thus be able to disseminate vital religion

and Gospel truth in quarters inaccessible to the ordinary missionary. I

have seen lads, unimpregnate with the more sublimated punctiliousness of

Walton, secure pickerel, taking their unwary \_siesta\_ beneath the

lily-pads too nigh the surface, with a gun and small shot. Why not,

then, since gunpowder was unknown in the time of the Apostles (not to

enter here upon the question whether it were discovered before that

period by the Chinese), suit our metaphor to the age in which we live,

and say \_shooters\_ as well as \_fishers\_ of men?

I do much fear that we shall be seized now and then with a Protestant

fervor, as long as we have neighbor Naboths whose wallowings in

Papistical mire excite our horror in exact proportion to the size and

desirableness of their vineyards. Yet I rejoice that some earnest

Protestants have been made by this war,--I mean those who protested

against it. Fewer they were than I could wish, for one might imagine

America to have been colonized by a tribe of those nondescript African

animals the Aye-Ayes, so difficult a word is \_No\_ to us all. There is

some malformation or defect of the vocal organs, which either prevents

our uttering it at all, or gives it so thick a pronunciation as to be

unintelligible. A mouth filled with the national pudding, or watering in

expectation thereof, is wholly incompetent to this refractory

monosyllable. An abject and herpetic Public Opinion is the Pope, the

Anti-Christ, for us to protest against \_e corde cordium\_. And by what

College of Cardinals is this our God's-vicar, our binder and looser,

elected? Very like, by the sacred conclave of Tag, Rag, and Bobtail, in

the gracious atmosphere of the grog-shop. Yet it is of this that we must

all be puppets. This thumps the pulpit-cushion, this guides the editor's

pen, this wags the senator's tongue. This decides what Scriptures are

canonical, and shuffles Christ away into the Apocrypha. According to

that sentence fathered upon Solon, [Greek: Onto daemosion kakon erchetai

oikad ekasto] This unclean spirit is skilful to assume various shapes. I

have known it to enter my own study and nudge my elbow of a Saturday,

under the semblance of a wealthy member of my congregation. It were a

great blessing, if every particular of what in the sum we call popular

sentiment could carry about the name of its manufacturer stamped legibly

upon it. I gave a stab under the fifth rib to that pestilent

fallacy,--'Our country, right or wrong,'--by tracing its original to a

speech of Ensign Cilley at a dinner of the Bungtown Fencibles.--H.W.]

No. III

WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

[A few remarks on the following verses will not be out of place. The

satire in them was not meant to have any personal, but only a general,

application. Of the gentleman upon whose letter they were intended as a

commentary Mr. Biglow had never heard, till he saw the letter itself.

The position of the satirist is oftentimes one which he would not have

chosen, had the election been left to himself. In attacking bad

principles, he is obliged to select some individual who has made himself

their exponent, and in whom they are impersonate, to the end that what

he says may not, through ambiguity, be dissipated \_tenues in auras.\_ For

what says Seneca? \_Longum iter per prÃ¦cepta, breve et efficace per

exempla\_. A bad principle is comparatively harmless while it continues

to be an abstraction, nor can the general mind comprehend it fully till

it is printed in that large type which all men can read at sight,

namely, the life and character, the sayings and doings, of particular

persons. It is one of the cunningest fetches of Satan, that he never

exposes himself directly to our arrows, but, still dodging behind this

neighbor or that acquaintance, compels us to wound him through them, if

at all. He holds our affections as hostages, the while he patches up a

truce with our conscience.

Meanwhile, let us not forget that the aim of the true satirist is not to

be severe upon persons, but only upon falsehood, and, as Truth and

Falsehood start from the same point, and sometimes even go along

together for a little way, his business is to follow the path of the

latter after it diverges, and to show her floundering in the bog at the

end of it. Truth is quite beyond the reach of satire. There is so brave

a simplicity in her, that she can no more be made ridiculous than an oak

or a pine. The danger of the satirist is, that continual use may deaden

his sensibility to the force of language. He becomes more and more

liable to strike harder than he knows or intends. He may be careful to

put on his boxing-gloves, and yet forget that, the older they grow, the

more plainly may the knuckles inside be felt. Moreover, in the heat of

contest, the eye is insensibly drawn to the crown of victory, whose

tawdry tinsel glitters through that dust of the ring which obscures

Truth's wreath of simple leaves. I have sometimes thought that my young

friend, Mr. Biglow, needed a monitory hand laid on his arm,--\_aliquid

sufflaminandus erat\_. I have never thought it good husbandry to water

the tender plants of reform with \_aqua fortis\_, yet, where so much is to

do in the beds, he were a sorry gardener who should wage a whole day's

war with an iron scuffle on those ill weeds that make the garden-walks

of life unsightly, when a sprinkle of Attic salt will wither them up.

\_Est ars etiam maledicendi\_, says Scaliger, and truly it is a hard thing

to say where the graceful gentleness of the lamb merges in downright

sheepishness. We may conclude with worthy and wise Dr. Fuller, that 'one

may be a lamb in private wrongs, but in hearing general affronts to

goodness they are asses which are not lions.'--H.W.]

Guvener B. is a sensible man;

He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;

He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,

An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez be wunt vote fer Guvener B.

My! aint it terrible? Wut shall we du?

We can't never choose him o' course,--thet's flat;

Guess we shall hev to come round, (don't you?)

An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;

Fer John P.

Robinson he

Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

Gineral C. is a dreffle smart man:

He's ben on all sides thet gives places or pelf;

But consistency still wuz a part of his plan,--

He's ben true to \_one\_ party,--an' thet is himself;--

So John P.

Robinson he

Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

Gineral C. he goes in fer the war;

He don't vally princerple more'n an old cud;

Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,

But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood?

So John P.

Robinson he

Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,

With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut aint,

We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,

An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,

An' Presidunt Polk, you know, \_he\_ is our country.

An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book

Puts the \_debit\_ to him, an' to us the \_per contry;\_

An' John P.

Robinson he

Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;

Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest \_fee, faw, fum;\_

An' thet all this big talk of our destinies

Is half on it ign'ance, an' t'other half rum;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez it aint no sech thing: an' of course, so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez \_he\_ never heerd in his life

Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats,

An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,

To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us

The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I vow,--

God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fellers,

To start the world's team wen it gits in a slough;

Fer John P.

Robinson he

Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Gee!

[The attentive reader will doubtless have perceived in the foregoing

poem an allusion to that pernicious sentiment,--'Our country, right or

wrong.' It is an abuse of language to call a certain portion of land,

much more, certain personages, elevated for the time being to high

station, our country. I would not sever nor loosen a single one of those

ties by which we are united to the spot of our birth, nor minish by a

tittle the respect due to the Magistrate. I love our own Bay State too

well to do the one, and as for the other, I have myself for nigh forty

years exercised, however unworthily, the function of Justice of the

Peace, having been called thereto by the unsolicited kindness of that

most excellent man and upright patriot, Caleb Strong. \_PatriÃ¦ fumus

igne alieno luculentior\_ is best qualified with this,--\_Ubi libertas, ibi

patria\_. We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, but not a

divided, allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth

exacts a certain loyalty of us, while, in our capacity as spirits, we

are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. There is a

patriotism of the soul whose claim absolves us from our other and

terrene fealty. Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent

to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like. Our

terrestrial organizations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model,

and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert

them from this their original intendment. When, therefore, one would

have us to fling up our caps and shout with the multitude,--'\_Our

country, however bounded!\_' he demands of us that we sacrifice the

larger to the less, the higher to the lower, and that we yield to the

imaginary claims of a few acres of soil our duty and privilege as

liegemen of Truth. Our true country is bounded on the north and the

south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that

invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair's-breadth, she ceases to be

our mother, and chooses rather to be looked upon \_quasi noverca\_. That

is a hard choice when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread

one path and our duty points us to another. We must make as noble and

becoming an election as did Penelope between Icarius and Ulysses.

Veiling our faces, we must take silently the hand of Duty to follow her.

Shortly after the publication of the foregoing poem, there appeared some

comments upon it in one of the public prints which seemed to call for

animadversion. I accordingly addressed to Mr. Buckingham, of the Boston

Courier, the following letter.

JAALAM, November 4, 1847.

'\_To the Editor of the Courier:\_

'RESPECTED SIR,--Calling at the post-office this morning, our worthy and

efficient postmaster offered for my perusal a paragraph in the Boston

Morning Post of the 3d instant, wherein certain effusions of the

pastoral muse are attributed to the pen of Mr. James Russell Lowell. For

aught I know or can affirm to the contrary, this Mr. Lowell may be a

very deserving person and a youth of parts (though I have seen verses of

his which I could never rightly understand); and if he be such, he, I am

certain, as well as I, would be free from any proclivity to appropriate

to himself whatever of credit (or discredit) may honestly belong to

another. I am confident, that, in penning these few lines, I am only

forestalling a disclaimer from that young gentleman, whose silence

hitherto, when rumor pointed to himward, has excited in my bosom mingled

emotions of sorrow and surprise. Well may my young parishioner, Mr.

Biglow, exclaim with the poet,

"Sic vos non vobis," &c.;

though, in saying this, I would not convey the impression that he is a

proficient in the Latin tongue,--the tongue, I might add, of a Horace

and a Tully.

'Mr. B. does not employ his pen, I can safely say, for any lucre of

worldly gain, or to be exalted by the carnal plaudits of men, \_digito

monstrari, &c\_. He does not wait upon Providence for mercies, and in his

heart mean \_merces\_. But I should esteem myself as verily deficient in

my duty (who am his friend and in some unworthy sort his spiritual

\_fidus Achates\_, &c.), if I did not step forward to claim for him

whatever measure of applause might be assigned to him by the judicious.

'If this were a fitting occasion, I might venture here a brief

dissertation touching the manner and kind of my young friend's poetry.

But I dubitate whether this abstruser sort of speculation (though

enlivened by some apposite instances from Aristophanes) would

sufficiently interest your oppidan readers. As regards their satirical

tone, and their plainness of speech, I will only say, that, in my

pastoral experience, I have found that the Arch-Enemy loves nothing

better than to be treated as a religious, moral, and intellectual being,

and that there is no \_apage Sathanas!\_ so potent as ridicule. But it is

a kind of weapon that must have a button of good-nature on the point of

it.

'The productions of Mr. B. have been stigmatized in some quarters as

unpatriotic; but I can vouch that he loves his native soil with that

hearty, though discriminating, attachment which springs from an intimate

social intercourse of many years' standing. In the ploughing season, no

one has a deeper share in the well-being of the country than he. If Dean

Swift were right in saying that he who makes two blades of grass grow

where one grew before confers a greater benefit on the state than he who

taketh a city, Mr. B. might exhibit a fairer claim to the Presidency

than General Scott himself. I think that some of those disinterested

lovers of the hard-handed democracy, whose fingers have never touched

anything rougher than the dollars of our common country, would hesitate

to compare palms with him. It would do your heart good, respected Sir,

to see that young man mow. He cuts a cleaner and wider swath than any in

this town.

'But it is time for me to be at my Post. It is very clear that my young

friend's shot has struck the lintel, for the Post is shaken (Amos ix.

1). The editor of that paper is a strenuous advocate of the Mexican war,

and a colonel, as I am given to understand. I presume, that, being

necessarily absent in Mexico, he has left his journal in some less

judicious hands. At any rate, the Post has been too swift on this

occasion. It could hardly have cited a more incontrovertible line from

any poem than that which it has selected for animadversion, namely,--

"We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage."

'If the Post maintains the converse of this proposition, it can hardly

be considered as a safe guide-post for the moral and religious portions

of its party, however many other excellent qualities of a post it may be

blessed with. There is a sign in London on which is painted,--"The Green

Man." It would do very well as a portrait of any individual who should

support so unscriptural a thesis. As regards the language of the line

in question, I am bold to say that He who readeth the hearts of men will

not account any dialect unseemly which conveys a sound, and pious

sentiment. I could wish that such sentiments were more common, however

uncouthly expressed. Saint Ambrose affirms, that \_veritas a quocunque\_

(why not, then, \_quomodocunque?) dicatur, a, spiritu sancto est\_. Digest

also this of Baxter: "The plainest words are the most profitable oratory

in the weightiest matters."

'When the paragraph in question was shown to Mr. Biglow, the only part

of it which seemed to give him any dissatisfaction was that which

classed him with the Whig party. He says, that, if resolutions are a

nourishing kind of diet, that party must be in a very hearty and

flourishing condition; for that they have quietly eaten more good ones

of their own baking than he could have conceived to be possible without

repletion. He has been for some years past (I regret to say) an ardent

opponent of those sound doctrines of protective policy which form so

prominent a portion of the creed of that party. I confess, that, in some

discussions which I have had with him on this point in my study, he has

displayed a vein of obstinacy which I had not hitherto detected in his

composition. He is also (\_horresco referens\_) infected in no small

measure with the peculiar notions of a print called the Liberator, whose

heresies I take every proper opportunity of combating, and of which, I

thank God, I have never read a single line.

'I did not see Mr. B.'s verses until they appeared in print, and there

\_is\_ certainly one thing in them which I consider highly improper. I

allude to the personal references to myself by name. To confer notoriety

on an humble individual who is laboring quietly in his vocation, and who

keeps his cloth as free as he can from the dust of the political arena

(though \_voe mihi si non evangelizavero\_), is no doubt an indecorum. The

sentiments which he attributes to me I will not deny to be mine. They

were embodied, though in a different form, in a discourse preached upon

the last day of public fasting, and were acceptable to my entire people

(of whatever political views), except the postmaster, who dissented \_ex

officio\_. I observe that you sometimes devote a portion of your paper to

a religious summary. I should be well pleased to furnish a copy of my

discourse for insertion in this department of your instructive journal.

By omitting the advertisements, it might easily be got within the limits

of a single number, and I venture to insure you the sale of some scores

of copies in this town. I will cheerfully render myself responsible for

ten. It might possibly be advantageous to issue it as an \_extra\_. But

perhaps you will not esteem it an object, and I will not press it. My

offer does not spring from any weak desire of seeing my name in print;

for I can enjoy this satisfaction at any time by turning to the

Triennial Catalogue of the University, where it also possesses that

added emphasis of Italics with which those of my calling are

distinguished.

'I would simply add, that I continue to fit ingenuous youth for college,

and that I have two spacious and airy sleeping apartments at this moment

unoccupied. \_Ingenuas didicisse\_, &c. Terms, which vary according to the

circumstances of the parents, may be known on application to me by

letter, post-paid. In all cases the lad will be expected to fetch his

own towels. This rule, Mrs. W. desires me to add, has no exceptions.

'Respectfully, your obedient servant,

'HOMER WILBUR, A.M.

'P.S. Perhaps the last paragraph may look like an attempt to obtain the

insertion of my circular gratuitously. If it should appear to you in

that light, I desire that you would erase it, or charge for it at the

usual rates, and deduct the amount from the proceeds in your hands from

the sale of my discourse, when it shall be printed. My circular is much

longer and more explicit, and will be forwarded without charge to any

who may desire it. It has been very neatly executed on a letter sheet,

by a very deserving printer, who attends upon my ministry, and is a

creditable specimen of the typographic art. I have one hung over my

mantelpiece in a neat frame, where it makes a beautiful and appropriate

ornament, and balances the profile of Mrs. W., cut with her toes by the

young lady born without arms.

'H.W.'

I have in the foregoing letter mentioned General Scott in connection

with the Presidency, because I have been given to understand that he has

blown to pieces and otherwise caused to be destroyed more Mexicans than

any other commander. His claim would therefore be deservedly considered

the strongest. Until accurate returns of the Mexicans killed, wounded,

and maimed be obtained, it will be difficult to settle these nice points

of precedence. Should it prove that any other officer has been more

meritorious and destructive than General S., and has thereby rendered

himself more worthy of the confidence and support of the conservative

portion of our community, I shall cheerfully insert his name, instead of

that of General S., in a future edition. It may be thought, likewise,

that General S. has invalidated his claims by too much attention to the

decencies of apparel, and the habits belonging to a gentleman. These

abstruser points of statesmanship are beyond my scope. I wonder not that

successful military achievement should attract the admiration of the

multitude. Rather do I rejoice with wonder to behold how rapidly this

sentiment is losing its hold upon the popular mind. It is related of

Thomas Warton, the second of that honored name who held the office of

Poetry Professor at Oxford, that, when one wished to find him, being

absconded, as was his wont, in some obscure alehouse, he was counselled

to traverse the city with a drum and fife, the sound of which inspiring

music would be sure to draw the Doctor from his retirement into the

street. We are all more or less bitten with this martial insanity.

\_Nescio qua dulcedine ... cunctos ducit\_. I confess to some infection of

that itch myself. When I see a Brigadier-General maintaining his

insecure elevation in the saddle under the severe fire of the

training-field, and when I remember that some military enthusiasts,

through haste, inexperience, or an over-desire to lend reality to those

fictitious combats, will sometimes discharge their ramrods, I cannot but

admire, while I deplore, the mistaken devotion of those heroic officers.

\_Semel insanivimus omnes\_. I was myself, during the late war with Great

Britain, chaplain of a regiment, which was fortunately never called to

active military duty. I mention this circumstance with regret rather

than pride. Had I been summoned to actual warfare, I trust that I might

have been strengthened to bear myself after the manner of that reverend

father in our New England Israel, Dr. Benjamin Colman, who, as we are

told in Turell's life of him, when the vessel in which he had taken

passage for England was attacked by a French privateer, 'fought like a

philosopher and a Christian, ... and prayed all the while he charged and

fired.' As this note is already long, I shall not here enter upon a

discussion of the question, whether Christians may lawfully be soldiers.

I think it sufficiently evident, that, during the first two centuries of

the Christian era, at least, the two professions were esteemed

incompatible. Consult Jortin on this head,--H.W.]

No. IV

REMARKS OF INCREASE D. O'PHACE, ESQUIRE,

AT AN EXTRUMPERY CAUCUS IN STATE STREET, REPORTED BY MR. H. BIGLOW

[The ingenious reader will at once understand that no such speech as the

following was ever \_totidem verbis\_ pronounced. But there are simpler

and less guarded wits, for the satisfying of which such an explanation

may be needful. For there are certain invisible lines, which as Truth

successively overpasses, she becomes Untruth to one and another of us,

as a large river, flowing from one kingdom into another, sometimes takes

a new name, albeit the waters undergo no change, how small soever. There

is, moreover, a truth of fiction more veracious than the truth of fact,

as that of the Poet, which represents to us things and events as they

ought to be, rather than servilely copies them as they are imperfectly

imaged in the crooked and smoky glass of our mundane affairs. It is this

which makes the speech of Antonius, though originally spoken in no wider

a forum than the brain of Shakespeare, more historically valuable than

that other which Appian has reported, by as much as the understanding of

the Englishman was more comprehensive than that of the Alexandrian. Mr.

Biglow, in the present instance, has only made use of a license assumed

by all the historians of antiquity, who put into the mouths of various

characters such words as seem to them most fitting to the occasion and

to the speaker. If it be objected that no such oration could ever have

been delivered, I answer, that there are few assemblages for

speech-making which do not better deserve the title of \_Parliamentum

Indoctorum\_ than did the sixth Parliament of Henry the Fourth, and that

men still continue to have as much faith in the Oracle of Fools as ever

Pantagruel had. Howell, in his letters, recounts a merry tale of a

certain ambassador of Queen Elizabeth, who, having written two

letters,--one to her Majesty, and the other to his wife,--directed them

at cross-purposes, so that the Queen was beducked and bedeared and

requested to send a change of hose, and the wife was beprincessed and

otherwise unwontedly besuperlatived, till the one feared for the wits of

her ambassador, and the other for those of her husband. In like manner

it may be presumed that our speaker has misdirected some of his

thoughts, and given to the whole theatre what he would have wished to

confide only to a select auditory at the back of the curtain. For it is

seldom that we can get any frank utterance from men, who address, for

the most part, a Buncombe either in this world or the next. As for their

audiences, it may be truly said of our people, that they enjoy one

political institution in common with the ancient Athenians: I mean a

certain profitless kind of, \_ostracism\_, wherewith, nevertheless, they

seem hitherto well enough content. For in Presidential elections, and

other affairs of the sort, whereas I observe that the \_oysters\_ fall to

the lot of comparatively few, the \_shells\_ (such as the privileges of

voting as they are told to do by the \_ostrivori\_ aforesaid, and of

huzzaing at public meetings) are very liberally distributed among the

people, as being their prescriptive and quite sufficient portion.

The occasion of the speech is supposed to be Mr. Palfrey's refusal to

vote for the Whig candidate for the Speakership.--H.W.]

No? Hez he? He haint, though? Wut? Voted agin him?

Ef the bird of our country could ketch him, she'd skin him;

I seem 's though I see her, with wrath in each quill,

Like a chancery lawyer, afilin' her bill,

An' grindin' her talents ez sharp ez all nater,

To pounce like a writ on the back o' the traitor.

Forgive me, my friends, ef I seem to be het,

But a crisis like this must with vigor be met;

Wen an Arnold the star-spangled banner bestains,

Holl Fourth o' Julys seem to bile in my veins. 10

Who ever'd ha' thought sech a pisonous rig

Would be run by a chap thet wuz chose fer a Wig?

'We knowed wut his princerples wuz 'fore we sent him'?

Wut wuz there in them from this vote to prevent him?

A marciful Providunce fashioned us holler

O' purpose thet we might our princerples swaller;

It can hold any quantity on 'em, the belly can,

An' bring 'em up ready fer use like the pelican,

Or more like the kangaroo, who (wich is stranger)

Puts her family into her pouch wen there's danger. 20

Aint princerple precious? then, who's goin' to use it

Wen there's resk o' some chap's gittin' up to abuse it?

I can't tell the wy on 't, but nothin' is so sure

Ez thet princerple kind o' gits spiled by exposure;[19]

A man that lets all sorts o' folks git a sight on 't

Ough' to hev it all took right away, every mite on 't;

Ef he cant keep it all to himself wen it's wise to,

He aint one it's fit to trust nothin' so nice to.

Besides, ther's a wonderful power in latitude

To shift a man's morril relations an' attitude; 30

Some flossifers think thet a fakkilty's granted

The minnit it's proved to be thoroughly wanted,

Thet a change o' demand makes a change o' condition,

An' thet everythin' 's nothin' except by position;

Ez, for instance, thet rubber-trees fust begun bearin'

Wen p'litikle conshunces come into wearin',

Thet the fears of a monkey, whose holt chanced to fail,

Drawed the vertibry out to a prehensile tail;

So, wen one's chose to Congriss, ez soon ez he's in it,

A collar grows right round his neck in a minnit, 40

An' sartin it is thet a man cannot be strict

In bein' himself, when he gits to the Deestrict,

Fer a coat thet sets wal here in ole Massachusetts,

Wen it gits on to Washinton, somehow askew sets.

Resolves, do you say, o' the Springfield Convention?

Thet's precisely the pint I was goin' to mention;

Resolves air a thing we most gen'ally keep ill,

They're a cheap kind o' dust fer the eyes o' the people;

A parcel o' delligits jest git together

An' chat fer a spell o' the crops an' the weather, 50

Then, comin' to order, they squabble awile

An' let off the speeches they're ferful'll spile;

Then--Resolve,--Thet we wunt hev an inch o' slave territory;

Thet President Polk's holl perceedins air very tory;

Thet the war is a damned war, an' them thet enlist in it

Should hev a cravat with a dreffle tight twist in it;

Thet the war is a war fer the spreadin' o' slavery;

Thet our army desarves our best thanks fer their bravery;

Thet we're the original friends o' the nation,

All the rest air a paltry an' base fabrication; 60

Thet we highly respect Messrs. A, B, an' C,

An' ez deeply despise Messrs. E, F, an' G.

In this way they go to the eend o' the chapter,

An' then they bust out in a kind of a raptur

About their own vartoo, an' folks's stone-blindness

To the men thet 'ould actilly do 'em a kindness,--

The American eagle,--the Pilgrims thet landed,--

Till on ole Plymouth Rock they git finally stranded.

Wal, the people they listen an' say, 'Thet's the ticket;

Ez fer Mexico, 'taint no great glory to lick it, 70

But 'twould be a darned shame to go pullin' o' triggers

To extend the aree of abusin' the niggers.'

So they march in percession, an' git up hooraws,

An' tramp thru the mud far the good o' the cause,

An' think they're a kind o' fulfillin' the prophecies,

Wen they're on'y jest changin' the holders of offices;

Ware A sot afore, B is comf'tably seated,

One humbug's victor'ous an' t' other defeated,

Each honnable doughface gits jest wut he axes,

An' the people,--their annooal soft-sodder an' taxes. 80

Now, to keep unimpaired all these glorious feeturs

Thet characterize morril an' reasonin' creeturs,

Thet give every paytriot all he can cram,

Thet oust the untrustworthy Presidunt Flam,

An' stick honest Presidunt Sham in his place,

To the manifest gain o' the holl human race,

An' to some indervidgewals on 't in partickler,

Who love Public Opinion an' know how to tickle her,--

I say thet a party with gret aims like these

Must stick jest ez close ez a hive full o' bees. 90

I'm willin' a man should go tollable strong

Agin wrong in the abstract, fer thet kind o' wrong

Is ollers unpop'lar an' never gits pitied,

Because it's a crime no one never committed;

But he mus'n't be hard on partickler sins,

Coz then he'll be kickin' the people's own shins;

On'y look at the Demmercrats, see wut they've done

Jest simply by stickin' together like fun;

They've sucked us right into a mis'able war

Thet no one on airth aint responsible for; 100

They've run us a hundred cool millions in debt

(An' fer Demmercrat Horners there's good plums left yet);

They talk agin tayriffs, but act fer a high one,

An' so coax all parties to build up their Zion;

To the people they're ollers ez slick ez molasses,

An' butter their bread on both sides with The Masses,

Half o' whom they've persuaded, by way of a joke,

Thet Washinton's mantlepiece fell upon Polk.

Now all o' these blessin's the Wigs might enjoy,

Ef they'd gumption enough the right means to imploy;[20] 110

Fer the silver spoon born in Dermoc'acy's mouth

Is a kind of a scringe thet they hev to the South;

Their masters can cuss 'em an' kick 'em an' wale 'em.

An' they notice it less 'an the ass did to Balaam;

In this way they screw into second-rate offices

Wich the slaveholder thinks 'ould substract too much off his ease;

The file-leaders, I mean, du, fer they, by their wiles,

Unlike the old viper, grow fat on their files.

Wal, the Wigs hev been tryin' to grab all this prey frum 'em

An' to hook this nice spoon o' good fortin' away frum 'em, 120

An' they might ha' succeeded, ez likely ez not,

In lickin' the Demmercrats all round the lot,

Ef it warn't thet, wile all faithful Wigs were their knees on,

Some stuffy old codger would holler out,--'Treason!

You must keep a sharp eye on a dog thet hez bit you once,

An' \_I\_ aint agoin' to cheat my constitoounts,'--

Wen every fool knows thet a man represents

Not the fellers thet sent him, but them on the fence,--

Impartially ready to jump either side

An' make the fust use of a turn o' the tide,-- 130

The waiters on Providunce here in the city,

Who compose wut they call a State Centerl Committy,

Constitoounts air hendy to help a man in,

But arterwards don't weigh the heft of a pin,

Wy, the people can't all live on Uncle Sam's pus,

So they've nothin' to du with 't fer better or wus;

It's the folks thet air kind o' brought up to depend on 't

Thet hev any consarn in 't, an' thet is the end on 't.

Now here wuz New England ahevin' the honor

Of a chance at the Speakership showered upon her;-- 140

Do you say, 'She don't want no more Speakers, but fewer;

She's hed plenty o' them, wut she wants is a \_doer'\_?

Fer the matter o' thet, it's notorous in town

Thet her own representatives du her quite brown.

But thet's nothin' to du with it; wut right hed Palfrey

To mix himself up with fanatical small fry?

Warn't we gittin' on prime with our hot an' cold blowin',

Acondemnin' the war wilst we kep' it agoin'?

We'd assumed with gret skill a commandin' position.

On this side or thet, no one couldn't tell wich one, 150

So, wutever side wipped, we'd a chance at the plunder

An' could sue fer infringin' our paytented thunder;

We were ready to vote fer whoever wuz eligible,

Ef on all pints at issoo he'd stay unintelligible.

Wal, sposin' we hed to gulp down our perfessions.

We were ready to come out next mornin' with fresh ones;

Besides, ef we did, 'twas our business alone,

Fer couldn't we du wut we would with our own?

An' ef a man can, wen pervisions hev riz so,

Eat up his own words, it's a marcy it is so. 160

Wy, these chaps frum the North, with back-bones to 'em, darn 'em,

'Ould be wuth more 'an Gennle Tom Thumb is to Barnum:

Ther's enough thet to office on this very plan grow,

By exhibitin' how very small a man can grow;

But an M.C. frum here ollers hastens to state he

Belongs to the order called invertebraty,

Wence some gret filologists judge primy fashy

Thet M.C. is M.T. by paronomashy;

An' these few exceptions air \_loosus naytury\_

Folks 'ould put down their quarters to stare at, like fury. 170

It's no use to open the door o' success,

Ef a member can bolt so fer nothin' or less;

Wy, all o' them grand constitootional pillers

Our fore-fathers fetched with 'em over the billers,

Them pillers the people so soundly hev slep' on,

Wile to slav'ry, invasion, an' debt they were swep' on,

Wile our Destiny higher an' higher kep' mountin'

(Though I guess folks'll stare wen she hends her account in),

Ef members in this way go kickin' agin 'em,

They wunt hev so much ez a feather left in 'em. 180

An', ez fer this Palfrey,[21] we thought wen we'd gut him in,

He'd go kindly in wutever harness we put him in;

Supposin' we \_did\_ know thet he wuz a peace man?

Does he think he can be Uncle Sammle's policeman,

An' wen Sam gits tipsy an' kicks up a riot,

Lead him off to the lockup to snooze till he's quiet?

Wy, the war is a war thet true paytriots can bear, ef

It leads to the fat promised land of a tayriff;

\_We\_ don't go an' fight it, nor aint to be driv on,

Nor Demmercrats nuther, thet hev wut to live on; 190

Ef it aint jest the thing thet's well pleasin' to God,

It makes us thought highly on elsewhere abroad;

The Rooshian black eagle looks blue in his eerie

An' shakes both his heads wen he hears o' Monteery;

In the Tower Victory sets, all of a fluster,

An' reads, with locked doors, how we won Cherry Buster;

An' old Philip Lewis--thet come an' kep' school here

Fer the mere sake o' scorin his ryalist ruler

On the tenderest part of our kings \_in futuro\_--

Hides his crown underneath an old shut in his bureau, 200

Breaks off in his brags to a suckle o' merry kings,

How he often hed hided young native Amerrikins,

An' turnin' quite faint in the midst of his fooleries,

Sneaks down stairs to bolt the front door o' the Tooleries.[22]

You say, 'We'd ha' seared 'em by growin' in peace,

A plaguy sight more then by bobberies like these'?

Who is it dares say thet our naytional eagle

Won't much longer be classed with the birds thet air regal,

Coz theirn be hooked beaks, an' she, arter this slaughter,

'll bring back a bill ten times longer 'n she'd ough' to? 210

Wut's your name? Come, I see ye, you up-country feller,

You've put me out severil times with your beller;

Out with it! Wut? Biglow? I say nothin' furder,

Thet feller would like nothin' better 'n a murder;

He's a traiter, blasphemer, an' wut ruther worse is,

He puts all his ath'ism in dreffle bad verses;

Socity aint safe till sech monsters air out on it,

Refer to the Post, ef you hev the least doubt on it;

Wy, he goes agin war, agin indirect taxes,

Agin sellin' wild lands 'cept to settlers with axes, 220

Agin holdin' o' slaves, though he knows it's the corner

Our libbaty rests on, the mis'able scorner!

In short, he would wholly upset with his ravages

All thet keeps us above the brute critters an' savages,

An' pitch into all kinds o' briles an' confusions

The holl of our civerlized, free institutions;

He writes fer thet ruther unsafe print, the Courier,

An' likely ez not hez a squintin' to Foorier;

I'll be----, thet is, I mean I'll be blest,

Ef I hark to a word frum so noted a pest; 230

I sha'nt talk with \_him\_, my religion's too fervent.

Good mornin', my friends, I'm your most humble servant.

[Into the question whether the ability to express ourselves in

articulate language has been productive of more good or evil, I shall

not here enter at large. The two faculties of speech and of

speech-making are wholly diverse in their natures. By the first we make

ourselves intelligible, by the last unintelligible, to our fellows. It

has not seldom occurred to me (noting how in our national legislature

everything runs to talk, as lettuces, if the season or the soil be

unpropitious, shoot up lankly to seed, instead of forming handsome

heads) that Babel was the first Congress, the earliest mill erected for

the manufacture of gabble. In these days, what with Town Meetings,

School Committees, Boards (lumber) of one kind and another, Congresses,

Parliaments, Diets, Indian Councils, Palavers, and the like, there is

scarce a village which has not its factories of this description driven

by milk-and-water power. I cannot conceive the confusion of tongues to

have been the curse of Babel, since I esteem my ignorance of other

languages as a kind of Martello-tower, in which I am safe from the

furious bombardments of foreign garrulity. For this reason I have ever

preferred the study of the dead languages, those primitive formations

being Ararats upon whose silent peaks I sit secure and watch this new

deluge without fear, though it rain figures (\_simulacra\_, semblances) of

speech forty days and nights together, as it not uncommonly happens.

Thus is my coat, as it were, without buttons by which any but a vernacular

wild bore can seize me. Is it not possible that the Shakers may intend

to convey a quiet reproof and hint, in fastening their outer garments

with hooks and eyes?

This reflection concerning Babel, which I find in no Commentary, was

first thrown upon my mind when an excellent deacon of my congregation

(being infected with the Second Advent delusion) assured me that he had

received a first instalment of the gift of tongues as a small earnest of

larger possessions in the like kind to follow. For, of a truth, I could

not reconcile it with my ideas of the Divine justice and mercy that the

single wall which protected people of other languages from the

incursions of this otherwise well-meaning propagandist should be broken

down.

In reading Congressional debates, I have fancied, that, after the

subsidence of those painful buzzings in the brain which result from such

exercises, I detected a slender residuum of valuable information. I made

the discovery that \_nothing\_ takes longer in the saying than anything

else, for as \_ex nihilo nihil fit\_, so from one polypus \_nothing\_ any

number of similar ones may be produced. I would recommend to the

attention of \_viva voce\_ debaters and controversialists the admirable

example of the monk Copres, who, in the fourth century, stood for half

an hour in the midst of a great fire, and thereby silenced a ManichÃ¦an

antagonist who had less of the salamander in him. As for those who

quarrel in print, I have no concern with them here, since the eyelids

are a divinely granted shield against all such. Moreover, I have

observed in many modern books that the printed portion is becoming

gradually smaller, and the number of blank or fly-leaves (as they are

called) greater. Should this fortunate tendency of literature continue,

books will grow more valuable from year to year, and the whole Serbonian

bog yield to the advances of firm arable land.

The sagacious LacedÃ¦monians, hearing that Tesephone had bragged that he

could talk all day long on any given subject, made no more ado, but

forthwith banished him, whereby they supplied him a topic and at the

same time took care that his experiment upon it should be tried out of

earshot.

I have wondered, in the Representatives' Chamber of our own

Commonwealth, to mark how little impression seemed to be produced by

that emblematic fish suspended over the heads of the members. Our wiser

ancestors, no doubt, hung it there as being the animal which the

Pythagoreans reverenced for its silence, and which certainly in that

particular does not so well merit the epithet \_cold blooded\_, by which

naturalists distinguish it, as certain bipeds, afflicted with

ditch-water on the brain, who take occasion to tap themselves in Faneuil

Halls, meeting-houses, and other places of public resort.--H.W.]

No. V

THE DEBATE IN THE SENNIT

SOT TO A NUSRY RHYME

[The incident which gave rise to the debate satirized in the following

verses was the unsuccessful attempt of Drayton and Sayres to give

freedom to seventy men and women, fellow-beings and fellow-Christians.

Had Tripoli, instead of Washington, been the scene of this undertaking,

the unhappy leaders in it would have been as secure of the theoretic as

they now are of the practical part of martyrdom. I question whether the

Dey of Tripoli is blessed with a District Attorney so benighted as ours

at the seat of government. Very fitly is he named Key, who would allow

himself to be made the instrument of locking the door of hope against

sufferers in such a cause. Not all the waters of the ocean can cleanse

the vile smutch of the jailer's fingers from off that little Key.

\_Ahenea clavis\_, a brazen Key indeed!

Mr. Calhoun, who is made the chief speaker in this burlesque, seems to

think that the light of the nineteenth century is to be put out as soon

as he tinkles his little cow-bell curfew. Whenever slavery is touched,

he sets up his scarecrow of dissolving the Union. This may do for the

North, but I should conjecture that something more than a

pumpkin-lantern is required to scare manifest and irretrievable Destiny

out of her path. Mr. Calhoun cannot let go the apron-string of the Past.

The Past is a good nurse, but we must be weaned from her sooner or

later, even though, like Plotinus, we should run home from school to ask

the breast, after we are tolerably well-grown youths. It will not do for

us to hide our faces in her lap, whenever the strange Future holds out

her arms and asks us to come to her.

But we are all alike. We have all heard it said, often enough, that

little boys must not play with fire; and yet, if the matches be taken

away from us, and put out of reach upon the shelf, we must needs get

into our little corner, and scowl and stamp and threaten the dire

revenge of going to bed without our supper. The world shall stop till we

get our dangerous plaything again. Dame Earth, meanwhile, who has more

than enough household matters to mind, goes bustling hither and thither

as a hiss or a sputter tells her that this or that kettle of hers is

boiling over, and before bedtime we are glad to eat our porridge cold,

and gulp down our dignity along with it.

Mr. Calhoun has somehow acquired the name of a great statesman, and, if

it be great statesmanship to put lance in rest and run a tilt at the

Spirit of the Age with the certainty of being next moment hurled neck

and heels into the dust amid universal laughter, he deserves the title.

He is the Sir Kay of our modern chivalry. He should remember the old

Scandinavian mythus. Thor was the strongest of gods, but he could not

wrestle with Time, nor so much as lift up a fold of the great snake

which bound the universe together; and when he smote the Earth, though

with his terrible mallet, it was but as if a leaf had fallen. Yet all

the while it seemed to Thor that he had only been wrestling with an old

woman, striving to lift a cat, and striking a stupid giant on the head.

And in old times, doubtless, the giants \_were\_ stupid, and there was no

better sport for the Sir Launcelots and Sir Gawains than to go about

cutting off their great blundering heads with enchanted swords. But

things have wonderfully changed. It is the giants, nowadays, that have

the science and the intelligence, while the chivalrous Don Quixotes of

Conservatism still cumber themselves with the clumsy armor of a bygone

age. On whirls the restless globe through unsounded time, with its

cities and its silences, its births and funerals, half light, half

shade, but never wholly dark, and sure to swing round into the happy

morning at last. With an involuntary smile, one sees Mr. Calhoun letting

slip his pack-thread cable with a crooked pin at the end of it to anchor

South Carolina upon the bank and shoal of the Past.--H.W.]

TO MR. BUCKENAM

MR. EDITER, As i wuz kinder prunin round, in a little nussry sot out a

year or 2 a go, the Dbait in the sennit cum inter my mine An so i took &

Sot it to wut I call a nussry rime. I hev made sum onnable Gentlemun

speak thut dident speak in a Kind uv Poetikul lie sense the seeson is

dreffle backerd up This way

ewers as ushul

HOSEA BIGLOW.

'Here we stan' on the Constitution, by thunder!

It's a fact o' wich ther's bushils o' proofs;

Fer how could we trample on 't so, I wonder,

Ef 't worn't thet it's ollers under our hoofs?'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he:--

'Human rights haint no more

Right to come on this floor,

No more 'n the man in the moon,' sez he.

'The North haint no kind o' bisness with nothin,'

An' you've no idee how much bother it saves; 10

We aint none riled by their frettin' an' frothin',

We're \_used\_ to layin' the string on our slaves,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

Sez Mister Foote,

'I should like to shoot

The holl gang, by the gret horn spoon!' sez he.

'Freedom's Keystone is Slavery, thet ther's no doubt on,

It's sutthin' thet's--wha' d' ye call it?--divine,--

An' the slaves thet we ollers \_make\_ the most out on

Air them north o' Mason an' Dixon's line,' 20

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

'Fer all that,' sez Mangum,

''Twould be better to hang 'em

An' so git red on 'em soon,' sez he.

'The mass ough' to labor an' we lay on soffies,

Thet's the reason I want to spread Freedom's aree;

It puts all the cunninest on us in office,

An' reelises our Maker's orig'nal idee,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

'Thet's ez plain,' sez Cass, 30

'Ez thet some one's an ass,

It's ez clear ez the sun is at noon,' sez he.

'Now don't go to say I'm the friend of oppression,

But keep all your spare breath fer coolin' your broth,

Fer I ollers hev strove (at least thet's my impression)

To make cussed free with the rights o' the North,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

'Yes,' sez Davis o' Miss.,

'The perfection o' bliss

Is in skinnin' thet same old coon,' sez he. 40

'Slavery's a thing thet depends on complexion,

It's God's law thet fetters on black skins don't chafe;

Ef brains wuz to settle it (horrid reflection!)

Wich of our onnable body 'd be safe?'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

Sez Mister Hannegan,

Afore he began agin,

'Thet exception is quite oppertoon,' sez he.

'Gennle Cass, Sir, you needn't be twitchin' your collar,

\_Your\_ merit's quite clear by the dut on your knees, 50

At the North we don't make no distinctions o' color;

You can all take a lick at our shoes wen you please,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

Sez Mister Jarnagin,

'They wun't hev to larn agin,

They all on 'em know the old toon,' sez he.

'The slavery question aint no ways bewilderin,'

North an' South hev one int'rest, it's plain to a glance;

No'thern men, like us patriarchs, don't sell their childrin,

But they \_du\_ sell themselves, ef they git a good chance,' 60

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

Sez Atherton here,

'This is gittin' severe,

I wish I could dive like a loon,' sez he.

'It'll break up the Union, this talk about freedom,

An' your fact'ry gals (soon ez we split) 'll make head,

An' gittin' some Miss chief or other to lead 'em,

'll go to work raisin' permiscoous Ned,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

'Yes, the North,' sez Colquitt, 70

'Ef we Southeners all quit,

Would go down like a busted balloon,' sez he.

'Jest look wut is doin', wut annyky's brewin'

In the beautiful clime o' the olive an' vine,

All the wise aristoxy's atumblin' to ruin,

An' the sankylots drorin' an' drinkin' their wine,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

'Yes,' sez Johnson, 'in France

They're beginnin' to dance

BeÃ«lzebub's own rigadoon,' sez he. 80

'The South's safe enough, it don't feel a mite skeery,

Our slaves in their darkness an' dut air tu blest

Not to welcome with proud hallylugers the ery

Wen our eagle kicks yourn from the naytional nest,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

'Oh,' sez Westcott o' Florida,

'Wut treason is horrider

Then our priv'leges tryin' to proon?' sez he.

'It's 'coz they're so happy, thet, wen crazy sarpints

Stick their nose in our bizness, we git so darned riled; 90

We think it's our dooty to give pooty sharp hints,

Thet the last crumb of Edin on airth sha'n't be spiled,'

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;--

'Ah,' sez Dixon H. Lewis,

'It perfectly true is

Thet slavery's airth's grettest boon,' sez he.

[It was said of old time, that riches have wings; and, though this be

not applicable in a literal strictness to the wealth of our patriarchal

brethren of the South, yet it is clear that their possessions have legs,

and an unaccountable propensity for using them in a northerly direction.

I marvel that the grand jury of Washington did not find a true bill

against the North Star for aiding and abetting Drayton and Sayres. It

would have been quite of a piece with the intelligence displayed by the

South on other questions connected with slavery. I think that no ship of

state was ever freighted with a more veritable Jonah than this same

domestic institution of ours. Mephistopheles himself could not feign so

bitterly, so satirically sad a sight as this of three millions of human

beings crushed beyond help or hope by this one mighty argument,--\_Our

fathers knew no better!\_ Nevertheless, it is the unavoidable destiny of

Jonahs to be cast overboard sooner or later. Or shall we try the

experiment of hiding our Jonah in a safe place, that none may lay hands

on him to make jetsam of him? Let us, then, with equal forethought and

wisdom, lash ourselves to the anchor, and await, in pious confidence,

the certain result. Perhaps our suspicious passenger is no Jonah after

all, being black. For it is well known that a superintending Providence

made a kind of sandwich of Ham and his descendants, to be devoured by

the Caucasian race.

In God's name, let all, who hear nearer and nearer the hungry moan of

the storm and the growl of the breakers, speak out! But, alas! we have

no right to interfere. If a man pluck an apple of mine, he shall be in

danger of the justice; but if he steal my brother, I must be silent. Who

says this? Our Constitution, consecrated by the callous consuetude of

sixty years, and grasped in triumphant argument by the left hand of him

whose right hand clutches the clotted slave-whip. Justice, venerable

with the undethronable majesty of countless Ã¦ons, says,--SPEAK! The

Past, wise with the sorrows and desolations of ages, from amid her

shattered fanes and wolf-housing palaces, echoes,--SPEAK! Nature,

through her thousand trumpets of freedom, her stars, her sunrises, her

seas, her winds, her cataracts, her mountains blue with cloudy pines,

blows jubilant encouragement, and cries,--SPEAK! From the soul's

trembling abysses the still, small voice not vaguely murmurs,--SPEAK!

But, alas! the Constitution and the Honorable Mr. Bagowind, M.C.,

say--BE DUMB!

It occurs to me to suggest, as a topic of inquiry in this connection,

whether, on that momentous occasion when the goats and the sheep shall

be parted, the Constitution and the Honorable Mr. Bagowind, M.C., will

be expected to take their places on the left as our hircine vicars.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?

Quem patronum rogaturus?

There is a point where toleration sinks into sheer baseness and

poltroonery. The toleration of the worst leads us to look on what is

barely better as good enough, and to worship what is only moderately

good. Woe to that man, or that nation, to whom mediocrity has become an

ideal!

Has our experiment of self-government succeeded, if it barely manage to

\_rub and go?\_ Here, now, is a piece of barbarism which Christ and the

nineteenth century say shall cease, and which Messrs. Smith, Brown, and

others say shall \_not\_ cease. I would by no means deny the eminent

respectability of these gentlemen, but I confess, that, in such a

wrestling match, I cannot help having my fears for them.

\_Discite justitiam, moniti, et non temnere divos\_.

H.W.]

No. VI

THE PIOUS EDITOR'S CREED

[At the special instance of Mr. Biglow, I preface the following satire

with an extract from a sermon preached during the past summer, from

Ezekiel xxxiv. 2: 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of

Israel.' Since the Sabbath on which this discourse was delivered, the

editor of the 'Jaalam Independent Blunderbuss' has unaccountably

absented himself from our house of worship.

'I know of no so responsible position as that of the public journalist.

The editor of our day bears the same relation to his time that the clerk

bore to the age before the invention of printing. Indeed, the position

which he holds is that which the clergyman should hold even now. But the

clergyman chooses to walk off to the extreme edge of the world, and to

throw such seed as he has clear over into that darkness which he calls

the Next Life. As if \_next\_ did not mean \_nearest\_, and as if any life

were nearer than that immediately present one which boils and eddies all

around him at the caucus, the ratification meeting, and the polls! Who

taught him to exhort men to prepare for eternity, as for some future era

of which the present forms no integral part? The furrow which Time is

even now turning runs through the Everlasting, and in that must he

plant, or nowhere. Yet he would fain believe and teach that we are

\_going\_ to have more of eternity than we have now. This \_going\_ of his

is like that of the auctioneer, on which \_gone\_ follows before we have

made up our minds to bid,--in which manner, not three months back, I

lost an excellent copy of Chappelow on Job. So it has come to pass that

the preacher, instead of being a living force, has faded into an

emblematic figure at christenings, weddings, and funerals. Or, if he

exercise any other function, it is as keeper and feeder of certain

theologic dogmas, which, when occasion offers, he unkennels with a

\_staboy!\_ "to bark and bite as 'tis their nature to," whence that

reproach of \_odium theologicum\_ has arisen.

'Meanwhile, see what a pulpit the editor mounts daily, sometimes with a

congregation of fifty thousand within reach of his voice, and never so

much as a nodder, even, among them! And from what a Bible can he choose

his text,--a Bible which needs no translation, and which no priestcraft

can shut and clasp from the laity,--the open volume of the world, upon

which, with a pen of sunshine or destroying fire, the inspired Present

is even now writing the annals of God! Methinks the editor who should

understand his calling, and be equal thereto, would truly deserve that

title of [Greek: poimaen laon], which Homer bestows upon princes. He

would be the Moses of our nineteenth century; and whereas the old Sinai,

silent now, is but a common mountain stared at by the elegant tourist

and crawled over by the hammering geologist, he must find his tables of

the new law here among factories and cities in this Wilderness of Sin

(Numbers xxxiii. 12) called Progress of Civilization, and be the captain

of our Exodus into the Canaan of a truer social order.

'Nevertheless, our editor will not come so far within even the shadow of

Sinai as Mahomet did, but chooses rather to construe Moses by Joe Smith.

He takes up the crook, not that the sheep may be fed, but that he may

never want a warm woollen suit and a joint of mutton.

\_Immemor, O, fidei, pecorumque oblite tuorum!\_

For which reason I would derive the name \_editor\_ not so much from

\_edo\_, to publish, as from \_edo\_, to eat, that being the peculiar

profession to which he esteems himself called. He blows up the flames of

political discord for no other occasion than that he may thereby handily

boil his own pot. I believe there are two thousand of these

mutton-loving shepherds in the United States, and of these, how many

have even the dimmest perception of their immense power, and the duties

consequent thereon? Here and there, haply, one. Nine hundred and

ninety-nine labor to impress upon the people the great principles of

\_Tweedledum\_, and other nine hundred and ninety-nine preach with equal

earnestness the gospel according to \_Tweedledee\_.'--H.W.]

I du believe in Freedom's cause,

Ez fur away ez Payris is;

I love to see her stick her claws

In them infarnal Phayrisees;

It's wal enough agin a king

To dror resolves an' triggers,--

But libbaty's a kind o' thing

Thet don't agree with niggers.

I du believe the people want

A tax on teas an' coffees, 10

Thet nothin' aint extravygunt,--

Purvidin' I'm in office;

For I hev loved my country sence

My eye-teeth filled their sockets,

An' Uncle Sam I reverence,

Partic'larly his pockets.

I du believe in \_any\_ plan

O' levyin' the texes,

Ez long ez, like a lumberman,

I git jest wut I axes; 20

I go free-trade thru thick an' thin,

Because it kind o' rouses

The folks to vote,--an' keeps us in

Our quiet custom-houses.

I du believe it's wise an' good

To sen' out furrin missions,

Thet is, on sartin understood

An' orthydox conditions;--

I mean nine thousan' dolls. per ann.,

Nine thousan' more fer outfit, 30

An' me to recommend a man

The place 'ould jest about fit.

I du believe in special ways

O' prayin' an' convartin';

The bread comes back in many days,

An' buttered, tu, fer sartin;

I mean in preyin' till one busts

On wut the party chooses,

An' in convartin' public trusts

To very privit uses. 40

I du believe hard coin the stuff

Fer 'lectioneers to spout on;

The people's ollers soft enough

To make hard money out on;

Dear Uncle Sam pervides fer his,

An' gives a good-sized junk to all,--

I don't care \_how\_ hard money is,

Ez long ez mine's paid punctooal.

I du believe with all my soul

In the gret Press's freedom, 50

To pint the people to the goal

An' in the traces lead 'em;

Palsied the arm thet forges yokes

At my fat contracts squintin',

An' withered be the nose thet pokes

Inter the gov'ment printin'!

I du believe thet I should give

Wut's his'n unto CÃ¦sar,

Fer it's by him I move an' live,

Frum him my bread an' cheese air; 60

I du believe thet all o' me

Doth bear his superscription,--

Will, conscience, honor, honesty,

An' things o' thet description.

I du believe in prayer an' praise

To him that hez the grantin'

O' jobs,--in every thin' thet pays,

But most of all in CANTIN';

This doth my cup with marcies fill,

This lays all thought o' sin to rest,-- 70

I \_don't\_ believe in princerple,

But oh, I \_du\_ in interest.

I du believe in bein' this

Or thet, ez it may happen

One way or t'other hendiest is

To ketch the people nappln';

It aint by princerples nor men

My preudunt course is steadied,--

I scent wich pays the best, an' then

Go into it baldheaded. 80

I du believe thet holdin' slaves

Comes nat'ral to a Presidunt,

Let 'lone the rowdedow it saves

To hev a wal-broke precedunt:

Fer any office, small or gret,

I couldn't ax with no face,

'uthout I'd ben, thru dry an' wet,

Th' unrizzest kind o' doughface.

I du believe wutever trash

'll keep the people in blindness,-- 90

Thet we the Mexicuns can thrash

Right inter brotherly kindness,

Thet bombshells, grape, an' powder 'n' ball

Air good-will's strongest magnets,

Thet peace, to make it stick at all,

Must be druv in with bagnets.

In short, I firmly du believe

In Humbug generally,

Fer it's a thing thet I perceive

To hev a solid vally; 100

This heth my faithful shepherd ben,

In pasturs sweet heth led me,

An' this'll keep the people green

To feed ez they hev fed me.

[I subjoin here another passage from my before-mentioned discourse.

'Wonderful, to him that has eyes to see it rightly, is the newspaper. To

me, for example, sitting on the critical front bench of the pit, in my

study here in Jaalam, the advent of my weekly journal is as that of a

strolling theatre, or rather of a puppet-show, on whose stage, narrow as

it is, the tragedy, comedy, and farce of life are played in little.

Behold the whole huge earth sent to me hebdomadally in a brown-paper

wrapper!

'Hither, to my obscure corner, by wind or steam, on horseback or

dromedary-back, in the pouch of the Indian runner, or clicking over the

magnetic wires, troop all the famous performers from the four quarters

of the globe. Looked at from a point of criticism, tiny puppets they

seem all, as the editor sets up his booth upon my desk and officiates as

showman. Now I can truly see how little and transitory is life. The

earth appears almost as a drop of vinegar, on which the solar microscope

of the imagination must be brought to bear in order to make out

anything distinctly. That animalcule there, in the pea-jacket, is Louis

Philippe, just landed on the coast of England. That other, in the gray

surtout and cocked hat, is Napoleon Bonaparte Smith, assuring France

that she need apprehend no interference from him in the present alarming

juncture. At that spot, where you seem to see a speck of something in

motion, is an immense mass-meeting. Look sharper, and you will see a

mite brandishing his mandibles in an excited manner. That is the great

Mr. Soandso, defining his position amid tumultuous and irrepressible

cheers. That infinitesimal creature, upon whom some score of others, as

minute as he, are gazing in open-mouthed admiration, is a famous

philosopher, expounding to a select audience their capacity for the

Infinite. That scarce discernible pufflet of smoke and dust is a

revolution. That speck there is a reformer, just arranging the lever

with which he is to move the world. And lo, there creeps forward the

shadow of a skeleton that blows one breath between its grinning teeth,

and all our distinguished actors are whisked off the slippery stage into

the dark Beyond.

'Yes, the little show-box has its solemner suggestions. Now and then we

catch a glimpse of a grim old man, who lays down a scythe and hour-glass

in the corner while he shifts the scenes. There, too, in the dim

background, a weird shape is ever delving. Sometimes he leans upon his

mattock, and gazes, as a coach whirls by, bearing the newly married on

their wedding jaunt, or glances carelessly at a babe brought home from

christening. Suddenly (for the scene grows larger and larger as we look)

a bony hand snatches back a performer in the midst of his part, and him,

whom yesterday two infinities (past and future) would not suffice, a

handful of dust is enough to cover and silence forever. Nay, we see the

same fleshless fingers opening to clutch the showman himself, and guess,

not without a shudder, that they are lying in wait for spectator also.

'Think of it: for three dollars a year I buy a season-ticket to this

great Globe Theatre, for which God would write the dramas (only that we

like farces, spectacles, and the tragedies of Apollyon better), whose

scene-shifter is Time, and whose curtain is rung down by Death.

'Such thoughts will occur to me sometimes as I am tearing off the

wrapper of my newspaper. Then suddenly that otherwise too often vacant

sheet becomes invested for me with a strange kind of awe. Look! deaths

and marriages, notices of inventions, discoveries, and books, lists of

promotions, of killed, wounded, and missing, news of fires, accidents,

of sudden wealth and as sudden poverty;--I hold in my hand the ends of

myriad invisible electric conductors, along which tremble the joys,

sorrows, wrongs, triumphs, hopes, and despairs of as many men and women

everywhere. So that upon that mood of mind which seems to isolate me

from mankind as a spectator of their puppet-pranks, another supervenes,

in which I feel that I, too, unknown and unheard of, am yet of some

import to my fellows. For, through my newspaper here, do not families

take pains to send me, an entire stranger, news of a death among them?

Are not here two who would have me know of their marriage? And,

strangest of all, is not this singular person anxious to have me

informed that he has received a fresh supply of Dimitry Bruisgins? But

to none of us does the Present continue miraculous (even if for a moment

discerned as such). We glance carelessly at the sunrise, and get used to

Orion and the Pleiades. The wonder wears off, and to-morrow this sheet,

(Acts x. 11, 12) in which a vision was let down to me from Heaven, shall

be the wrappage to a bar of soap or the platter for a beggar's broken

victuals.'--H.W.]

No. VII

A LETTER

FROM A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN ANSWER TO SUTTIN QUESTIONS

PROPOSED BY MR. HOSEA BIGLOW, INCLOSED IN A NOTE FROM MR. BIGLOW TO S.H.

GAY, ESQ., EDITOR OF THE NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY STANDARD

[Curiosity may be said to be the quality which preeminently

distinguishes and segregates man from the lower animals. As we trace the

scale of animated nature downward, we find this faculty (as it may truly

he called) of the mind diminished in the savage, and wellnigh extinct

in the brute. The first object which civilized man proposes to himself I

take to be the finding out whatsoever he can concerning his neighbors.

\_Nihil humanum a me alienum puto;\_ I am curious about even John Smith.

The desire next in strength to this (an opposite pole, indeed, of the

same magnet) is that of communicating the unintelligence we have

carefully picked up.

Men in general may be divided into the inquisitive and the

communicative. To the first class belong Peeping Toms, eaves-droppers,

navel-contemplating Brahmins, metaphysicians, travellers, Empedocleses,

spies, the various societies for promoting Rhinothism, Columbuses,

Yankees, discoverers, and men of science, who present themselves to the

mind as so many marks of interrogation wandering up and down the world,

or sitting in studies and laboratories. The second class I should again

subdivide into four. In the first subdivision I would rank those who

have an itch to tell us about themselves,--as keepers of diaries,

insignificant persons generally, Montaignes, Horace Walpoles,

autobiographers, poets. The second includes those who are anxious to

impart information concerning other people,--as historians, barbers, and

such. To the third belong those who labor to give us intelligence about

nothing at all,--as novelists, political orators, the large majority of

authors, preachers, lecturers, and the like. In the fourth come those

who are communicative from motives of public benevolence,--as finders of

mares'-nests and bringers of ill news. Each of us two-legged fowls

without feathers embraces all these subdivisions in himself to a greater

or less degree, for none of us so much as lays an egg, or incubates a

chalk one, but straightway the whole barnyard shall know it by our

cackle or our cluck. \_Omnibus hoc vitium est\_. There are different

grades in all these classes. One will turn his telescope toward a

back-yard, another toward Uranus; one will tell you that he dined with

Smith, another that he supped with Plato. In one particular, all men may

be considered as belonging to the first grand division, inasmuch as they

all seem equally desirous of discovering the mote in their neighbor's eye.

To one or another of these species every human being may safely be

referred. I think it beyond a peradventure that Jonah prosecuted some

inquiries into the digestive apparatus of whales, and that Noah sealed

up a letter in an empty bottle, that news in regard to him might not be

wanting in case of the worst. They had else been super or subter human.

I conceive, also, that, as there are certain persons who continually

peep and pry at the keyhole of that mysterious door through which,

sooner or later, we all make our exits, so there are doubtless ghosts

fidgeting and fretting on the other side of it, because they have no

means of conveying back to this world the scraps of news they have

picked up in that. For there is an answer ready somewhere to every

question, the great law of \_give and take\_ runs through all nature, and

if we see a hook, we may be sure that an eye is waiting for it. I read

in every face I meet a standing advertisement of information wanted in

regard to A.B., or that the friends of C.D. can hear something to his

disadvantage by application to such a one.

It was to gratify the two great passions of asking and answering that

epistolary correspondence was first invented. Letters (for by this

usurped title epistles are now commonly known) are of several kinds.

First, there are those which are not letters at all--as letters-patent,

letters dismissory, letters enclosing bills, letters of administration,

Pliny's letters, letters of diplomacy, of Cato, of Mentor, of Lords

Lyttelton, Chesterfield, and Orrery, of Jacob Behmen, Seneca (whom St.

Jerome includes in his list of sacred writers), letters from abroad,

from sons in college to their fathers, letters of marque, and letters

generally, which are in no wise letters of mark. Second, are real

letters, such as those of Gray, Cowper, Walpole, Howell, Lamb, D.Y., the

first letters from children (printed in staggering capitals), Letters

from New York, letters of credit, and others, interesting for the sake

of the writer or the thing written. I have read also letters from Europe

by a gentleman named Pinto, containing some curious gossip, and which I

hope to see collected for the benefit of the curious. There are,

besides, letters addressed to posterity,--as epitaphs, for example,

written for their own monuments by monarchs, whereby we have lately

become possessed of the names of several great conquerors and kings of

kings, hitherto unheard of and still unpronounceable, but valuable to

the student of the entirely dark ages. The letter of our Saviour to King

Abgarus, that which St. Peter sent to King Pepin in the year of grace

755, that of the Virgin to the magistrates of Messina, that of the

Sanhedrim of Toledo to Annas and Caiaphas, A.D. 35, that of Galeazzo

Sforza's spirit to his brother Lodovico, that of St. Gregory

Thaumaturgus to the D----l, and that of this last-mentioned active

police-magistrate to a nun of Girgenti, I would place in a class by

themselves, as also the letters of candidates, concerning which I shall

dilate more fully in a note at the end of the following poem. At present

\_sat prata biberunt\_. Only, concerning the shape of letters, they are

all either square or oblong, to which general figures circular letters

and round-robins also conform themselves.--H.W.]

Deer Sir its gut to be the fashun now to rite letters to the candid 8s

and i wus chose at a publick Meetin in Jaalam to du wut wus nessary fur

that town. i writ to 271 ginerals and gut ansers to 209. tha air called

candid 8s but I don't see nothin candid about 'em. this here 1 wich I

send wus thought satty's factory. I dunno as it's ushle to print

Poscrips, but as all the ansers I got hed the saim, I sposed it wus

best. times has gretly changed. Formaly to knock a man into a cocked hat

wus to use him up, but now it ony gives him a chance fur the cheef

madgustracy.--H.B.

Dear Sir,--You wish to know my notions

On sartin pints thet rile the land;

There's nothin' thet my natur so shuns

Ez bein' mum or underhand;

I'm a straight-spoken kind o' creetur

Thet blurts right out wut's in his head.

An' ef I've one pecooler feetur,

It is a nose thet wunt be led.

So, to begin at the beginnin'

An' come direcly to the pint, 10

I think the country's underpinnin'

Is some consid'ble out o' jint;

I aint agoin' to try your patience

By tellin' who done this or thet,

I don't make no insinooations,

I jest let on I smell a rat.

Thet is, I mean, it seems to me so,

But, ef the public think I'm wrong,

I wunt deny but wut I be so,--

An' fact, it don't smell very strong; 20

My mind's tu fair to lose its balance

An' say wich party hez most sense;

There may be folks o' greater talence

Thet can't set stiddier on the fence.

I'm an eclectic; ez to choosin'

'Twixt this an' thet, I'm plaguy lawth;

I leave a side thet looks like losin',

But (wile there's doubt) I stick to both;

I stan' upon the Constitution,

Ez preudunt statesman say, who've planned 30

A way to git the most profusion

O' chances ez to \_ware\_ they'll stand.

Ez fer the war, I go agin it,--

I mean to say I kind o' du,--

Thet is, I mean thet, bein' in it,

The best way wuz to fight it thru';

Not but wut abstract war is horrid,

I sign to thet with all my heart,--

But civlyzation \_doos\_ git forrid 39

Sometimes upon a powder-cart.

About thet darned Proviso matter

I never hed a grain o' doubt.

Nor I aint one my sense to scatter

So 'st no one couldn't pick it out;

My love fer North an' South is equil,

So I'll jest answer plump an' frank,

No matter wut may be the sequil,--

Yes, Sir, I \_am\_ agin a Bank.

Ez to the answerin' o' questions,

I'm an off ox at bein' druv, 50

Though I ain't one thet ary test shuns

'll give our folks a helpin' shove;

Kind o' permiscoous I go it

Fer the holl country, an' the ground

I take, ez nigh ez I can show it,

Is pooty gen'ally all round.

I don't appruve o' givin' pledges;

You'd ough' to leave a feller free,

An' not go knockin' out the wedges

To ketch his fingers in the tree;

Pledges air awfle breachy cattle 61

Thet preudunt farmers don't turn out,--

Ez long 'z the people git their rattle,

Wut is there fer 'em to grout about?

Ez to the slaves, there's no confusion

In \_my\_ idees consarnin' them,--

\_I\_ think they air an Institution,

A sort of--yes, jest so,--ahem:

Do \_I\_ own any? Of my merit

On thet pint you yourself may jedge; 70

All is, I never drink no sperit,

Nor I haint never signed no pledge.

Ez to my princerples, I glory

In hevin' nothin' o' the sort;

I aint a Wig, I aint a Tory,

I'm jest a canderdate, in short;

Thet's fair an' square an' parpendicler

But, ef the Public cares a fig

To hev me an'thin' in particler,

Wy, I'm a kind o' peri-Wig. 80

P.S.

Ez we're a sort o' privateerin',

O' course, you know, it's sheer an' sheer,

An' there is sutthin' wuth your hearin'

I'll mention in \_your\_ privit ear;

Ef you git \_me\_ inside the White House,

Your head with ile I'll kin' o' 'nint

By gittin' \_you\_ inside the Lighthouse

Down to the eend o' Jaalam Pint.

An' ez the North hez took to brustlin'

At bein' scrouged frum off the roost, 90

I'll tell ye wut'll save all tusslin'

An' give our side a harnsome boost,--

Tell 'em thet on the Slavery question

I'm RIGHT, although to speak I'm lawth;

This gives you a safe pint to rest on,

An' leaves me frontin' South by North.

[And now of epistles candidatial, which are of two kinds,--namely,

letters of acceptance, and letters definitive of position. Our republic,

on the eve of an election, may safely enough be called a republic of

letters. Epistolary composition becomes then an epidemic, which seizes

one candidate after another, not seldom cutting short the thread of

political life. It has come to such a pass, that a party dreads less the

attacks of its opponents than a letter from its candidate. \_Litera

scripta manet\_, and it will go hard if something bad cannot be made of

it. General Harrison, it is well understood, was surrounded, during his

candidacy, with the \_cordon sanitaire\_ of a vigilance committee. No

prisoner in Spielberg was ever more cautiously deprived of writing

materials. The soot was scraped carefully from the chimney-places;

outposts of expert rifle-shooters rendered it sure death for any goose

(who came clad in feathers) to approach within a certain limited

distance of North Bend; and all domestic fowls about the premises were

reduced to the condition of Plato's original man. By these precautions

the General was saved. \_Parva componere magnis\_, I remember, that, when

party-spirit once ran high among my people, upon occasion of the choice

of a new deacon, I, having my preferences, yet not caring too openly to

express them, made use of an innocent fraud to bring about that result

which I deemed most desirable. My stratagem was no other than the

throwing a copy of the Complete Letter-Writer in the way of the

candidate whom I wished to defeat. He caught the infection, and

addressed a short note to his constituents, in which the opposite party

detected so many and so grave improprieties (he had modelled it upon the

letter of a young lady accepting a proposal of marriage), that he not

only lost his election, but, falling under a suspicion of Sabellianism

and I know not what (the widow Endive assured me that he was a

Paralipomenon, to her certain knowledge), was forced to leave the town.

Thus it is that the letter killeth.

The object which candidates propose to themselves in writing is to

convey no meaning at all. And here is a quite unsuspected pitfall into

which they successively plunge headlong. For it is precisely in such

cryptographies that mankind are prone to seek for and find a wonderful

amount and variety of significance. \_Omne ignotum pro mirifico\_. How do

we admire at the antique world striving to crack those oracular nuts

from Delphi, Hammon, and elsewhere, in only one of which can I so much

as surmise that any kernel had ever lodged; that, namely, wherein Apollo

confessed that he was mortal. One Didymus is, moreover, related to have

written six thousand books on the single subject of grammar, a topic

rendered only more tenebrific by the labors of his successors, and which

seems still to possess an attraction for authors in proportion as they

can make nothing of it. A singular loadstone for theologians, also, is

the Beast in the Apocalypse, whereof, in the course of my studies, I

have noted two hundred and three several interpretations, each

lethiferal to all the rest. \_Non nostrum est tantas componere lites\_,

yet I have myself ventured upon a two hundred and fourth, which I

embodied in a discourse preached on occasion of the demise of the late

usurper, Napoleon Bonaparte, and which quieted, in a large measure, the

minds of my people. It is true that my views on this important point

were ardently controverted by Mr. Shearjashub Holden, the then preceptor

of our academy, and in other particulars a very deserving and sensible

young man, though possessing a somewhat limited knowledge of the Greek

tongue. But his heresy struck down no deep root, and, he having been

lately removed by the hand of Providence, I had the satisfaction of

reaffirming my cherished sentiments in a sermon preached upon the Lord's

day immediately succeeding his funeral. This might seem like taking an

unfair advantage, did I not add that he had made provision in his last

will (being celibate) for the publication of a posthumous tractate in

support of his own dangerous opinions.

I know of nothing in our modern times which approaches so nearly to the

ancient oracle as the letter of a Presidential candidate. Now, among the

Greeks, the eating of beans was strictly forbidden to all such as had it

in mind to consult those expert amphibologists, and this same

prohibition on the part of Pythagoras to his disciples is understood to

imply an abstinence from politics, beans having been used as ballots.

That other explication, \_quod videlicet sensus eo cibo obtundi

existimaret\_, though supported \_pugnis et calcibus\_ by many of the

learned, and not wanting the countenance of Cicero, is confuted by the

larger experience of New England. On the whole, I think it safer to

apply here the rule of interpretation which now generally obtains in

regard to antique cosmogonies, myths, fables, proverbial expressions,

and knotty points generally, which is, to find a common-sense meaning,

and then select whatever can be imagined the most opposite thereto. In

this way we arrive at the conclusion, that the Greeks objected to the

questioning of candidates. And very properly, if, as I conceive, the

chief point be not to discover what a person in that position is, or

what he will do, but whether he can be elected. \_Vos exemplaria GrÃ¦ca

nocturna versate manu, versate diurna\_.

But, since an imitation of the Greeks in this particular (the asking of

questions being one chief privilege of freemen) is hardly to be hoped

for, and our candidates will answer, whether they are questioned or not,

I would recommend that these ante-electionary dialogues should be

carried on by symbols, as were the diplomatic correspondences of the

Scythians an Macrobii, or confined to the language of signs, like the

famous interview of Panurge and Goatsnose. A candidate might then

convey a suitable reply to all committees of inquiry by closing one eye,

or by presenting them with a phial of Egyptian darkness to be speculated

upon by their respective constituencies. These answers would be

susceptible of whatever retrospective construction the exigencies of the

political campaign might seem to demand, and the candidate could take

his position on either side of the fence with entire consistency. Or, if

letters must be written, profitable use might be made of the Dighton

rock hieroglyphic or the cuneiform script, every fresh decipherer of

which is enabled to educe a different meaning, whereby a sculptured

stone or two supplies us, and will probably continue to supply

posterity, with a very vast and various body of authentic history. For

even the briefest epistle in the ordinary chirography is dangerous.

There is scarce any style so compressed that superfluous words may not

be detected in it. A severe critic might curtail that famous brevity of

CÃ¦sar's by two thirds, drawing his pen through the supererogatory

\_veni\_ and \_vidi\_. Perhaps, after all, the surest footing of hope is to

be found in the rapidly increasing tendency to demand less and less of

qualification in candidates. Already have statesmanship, experience, and

the possession (nay, the profession, even) of principles been rejected

as superfluous, and may not the patriot reasonably hope that the ability

to write will follow? At present, there may be death in pothooks as well

as pots, the loop of a letter may suffice for a bowstring, and all the

dreadful heresies of Antislavery may lurk in a flourish.--H.W.]

No. VIII

A SECOND LETTER FROM B. SAWIN, ESQ.

[In the following epistle, we behold Mr. Sawin returning, a \_miles

emeritus\_, to the bosom of his family. \_Quantum mutatus!\_ The good

Father of us all had doubtless intrusted to the keeping of this child of

his certain faculties of a constructive kind. He had put in him a share

of that vital force, the nicest economy of every minute atom of which is

necessary to the perfect development of Humanity. He had given him a

brain and heart, and so had equipped his soul with the two strong wings

of knowledge and love, whereby it can mount to hang its nest under the

eaves of heaven. And this child, so dowered, he had intrusted to the

keeping of his vicar, the State. How stands the account of that

stewardship? The State, or Society (call her by what name you will), had

taken no manner of thought of him till she saw him swept out into the

street, the pitiful leavings of last night's debauch, with cigar-ends,

lemon-parings, tobacco-quids, slops, vile stenches, and the whole

loathsome next-morning of the bar-room,--an own child of the Almighty

God! I remember him as he was brought to be christened, a ruddy, rugged

babe; and now there he wallows, reeking, seething,--the dead corpse, not

of a man, but of a soul,--a putrefying lump, horrible for the life that

is in it. Comes the wind of heaven, that good Samaritan, and parts the

hair upon his forehead, nor is too nice to kiss those parched, cracked

lips; the morning opens upon him her eyes full of pitying sunshine, the

sky yearns down to him,--and there he lies fermenting. O sleep! let me

not profane thy holy name by calling that stertorous unconsciousness a

slumber! By and by comes along the State, God's vicar. Does she say, 'My

poor, forlorn foster-child! Behold here a force which I will make dig

and plant and build for me'? Not so, but, 'Here is a recruit ready-made

to my hand, a piece of destroying energy lying unprofitably idle.' So

she claps an ugly gray suit on him, puts a musket in his grasp, and

sends him off, with Gubernatorial and other godspeeds, to do duty as a

destroyer.

I made one of the crowd at the last Mechanics' Fair, and, with the rest,

stood gazing in wonder at a perfect machine, with its soul of fire, its

boiler-heart that sent the hot blood pulsing along the iron arteries,

and its thews of steel. And while I was admiring the adaptation of means

to end, the harmonious involutions of contrivance, and the

never-bewildered complexity, I saw a grimed and greasy fellow, the

imperious engine's lackey and drudge, whose sole office was to let fall,

at intervals, a drop or two of oil upon a certain joint. Then my soul

said within me, See there a piece of mechanism to which that other you

marvel at is but as the rude first effort of a child,--a force which not

merely suffices to set a few wheels in motion, but which can send an

impulse all through the infinite future,--a contrivance, not for turning

out pins, or stitching button-holes, but for making Hamlets and Lears.

And yet this thing of iron shall be housed, waited on, guarded from rust

and dust, and it shall be a crime but so much as to scratch it with a

pin; while the other, with its fire of God in it, shall be buffeted

hither and thither, and finally sent carefully a thousand miles to be

the target for a Mexican cannon-ball. Unthrifty Mother State! My heart

burned within me for pity and indignation, and I renewed this covenant

with my own soul,--\_In aliis mansuetus ero, at, in blasphemiis contra

Christum, non ita.\_.--H.W.]

I spose you wonder ware I be; I can't tell, fer the soul o' me,

Exacly ware I be myself,--meanin' by thet the holl o' me.

Wen I left hum, I hed two legs, an' they worn't bad ones neither,

(The scaliest trick they ever played wuz bringin' on me hither,)

Now one on 'em's I dunno ware;--they thought I wuz adyin',

An' sawed it off because they said 'twuz kin' o' mortifyin';

I'm willin' to believe it wuz, an' yit I don't see, nuther,

Wy one shoud take to feelin' cheap a minnit sooner 'n t'other,

Sence both wuz equilly to blame; but things is ez they be;

It took on so they took it off, an' thet's enough fer me: 10

There's one good thing, though, to be said about my wooden new one,--

The liquor can't git into it ez 't used to in the true one;

So it saves drink; an' then, besides, a feller couldn't beg

A gretter blessin' then to hev one ollers sober peg;

It's true a chap's in want o' two fer follerin' a drum,

But all the march I'm up to now is jest to Kingdom Come.

I've lost one eye, but thet's a loss it's easy to supply

Out o' the glory thet I've gut, fer thet is all my eye;

An' one is big enough, I guess, by diligently usin' it,

To see all I shall ever git by way o' pay fer losin' it; 20

Off'cers I notice, who git paid fer all our thumps an' kickins,

Du wal by keepin' single eyes arter the fattest pickins;

So, ez the eye's put fairly out, I'll larn to go without it,

An' not allow \_myself\_ to be no gret put out about it.

Now, le' me see, thet isn't all; I used, 'fore leavin' Jaalam,

To count things on my finger-eends, but sutthin' seems to ail 'em:

Ware's my left hand? Oh, darn it, yes, I recollect wut's come on 't;

I haint no left arm but my right, an' thet's gut jest a thumb on 't;

It aint so bendy ez it wuz to cal'late a sum on 't.

I've hed some ribs broke,--six (I b'lieve),--I haint kep' no account on

'em; 30

Wen pensions git to be the talk, I'll settle the amount on 'em.

An' now I'm speakin' about ribs, it kin' o' brings to mind

One thet I couldn't never break,--the one I lef' behind;

Ef you should see her, jest clear out the spout o' your invention

An' pour the longest sweetnin' in about an annooal pension,

An' kin' o' hint (in case, you know, the critter should refuse to be

Consoled) I aint so 'xpensive now to keep ez wut I used to be;

There's one arm less, ditto one eye, an' then the leg thet's wooden

Can be took off an' sot away wenever ther's a puddin'.

I spose you think I'm comin' back ez opperlunt ez thunder, 40

With shiploads o' gold images an' varus sorts o' plunder;

Wal, 'fore I vullinteered, I thought this country wuz a sort o'

Canaan, a reg'lar Promised Land flowin' with rum an' water,

Ware propaty growed up like time, without no cultivation,

An' gold wuz dug ez taters be among our Yankee nation,

Ware nateral advantages were pufficly amazin',

Ware every rock there wuz about with precious stuns wuz blazin'.

Ware mill-sites filled the country up ez thick ez you could cram 'em,

An' desput rivers run about a beggin' folks to dam 'em;

Then there were meetinhouses, tu, chockful o' gold an' silver 50

Thet you could take, an' no one couldn't hand ye in no bill fer;--

Thet's wut I thought afore I went, thet's wut them fellers told us

Thet stayed to hum an' speechified an' to the buzzards sold us;

I thought thet gold-mines could be gut cheaper than Chiny asters,

An' see myself acomin' back like sixty Jacob Astors;

But sech idees soon melted down an' didn't leave a grease-spot;

I vow my holl sheer o' the spiles wouldn't come nigh a V spot;

Although, most anywares we've ben, you needn't break no locks,

Nor run no kin' o' risks, to fill your pocket full o' rocks.

I 'xpect I mentioned in my last some o' the nateral feeturs 60

O' this all-fiered buggy hole in th' way o' awfle creeturs,

But I fergut to name (new things to speak on so abounded)

How one day you'll most die o' thust, an' 'fore the next git drownded.

The clymit seems to me jest like a teapot made o' pewter

Our Preudence hed, thet wouldn't pour (all she could du) to suit her;

Fust place the leaves 'ould choke the spout, so's not a drop 'ould dreen

out,

Then Prude 'ould tip an' tip an' tip, till the holl kit bust clean out,

The kiver-hinge-pin bein' lost, tea-leaves an' tea an' kiver

'ould all come down \_kerswosh!\_ ez though the dam bust in a river.

Jest so 'tis here; holl months there aint a day o' rainy weather, 70

An' jest ez th' officers 'ould be a layin' heads together

Ez t' how they'd mix their drink at sech a milingtary deepot,--

'Twould pour ez though the lid wuz off the everlastin' teapot.

The cons'quence is, thet I shall take, wen I'm allowed to leave here,

One piece o' propaty along, an' thet's the shakin' fever;

It's reggilar employment, though, an' thet aint thought to harm one,

Nor 'taint so tiresome ez it wuz with t'other leg an' arm on;

An' it's a consolation, tu, although it doosn't pay,

To hev it said you're some gret shakes in any kin' o' way.

'Tworn't very long, I tell ye wut, I thought o' fortin-makin',-- 80

One day a reg'lar shiver-de-freeze, an' next ez good ez bakin',--

One day abrilin' in the sand, then smoth'rin' in the mashes,--

Git up all sound, be put to bed a mess o' hacks an' smashes.

But then, thinks I, at any rate there's glory to be hed,--

Thet's an investment, arter all, thet mayn't turn out so bad;

But somehow, wen we'd fit an' licked, I ollers found the thanks

Gut kin' o' lodged afore they come ez low down ez the ranks;

The Gin'rals gut the biggest sheer, the Cunnles next, an' so on,--

\_We\_ never gat a blasted mite o' glory ez I know on;

An' spose we hed, I wonder how you're goin' to contrive its 90

Division so's to give a piece to twenty thousand privits;

Ef you should multiply by ten the portion o' the brav'st one,

You wouldn't git more 'n half enough to speak of on a grave-stun;

We git the licks,--we're jest the grist thet's put into War's hoppers;

Leftenants is the lowest grade thet helps pick up the coppers.

It may suit folks thet go agin a body with a soul in 't,

An' aint contented with a hide without a bagnet hole in 't;

But glory is a kin' o' thing \_I\_ sha'n't pursue no furder,

Coz thet's the off'cers' parquisite,--yourn's on'y jest the murder.

Wal, arter I gin glory up, thinks I at least there's one 100

Thing in the bills we aint bed yit, an' thet's the GLORIOUS FUN;

Ef once we git to Mexico, we fairly may persume we

All day an' night shall revel in the halls o' Montezumy.

I'll tell ye wut \_my\_ revels wuz, an' see how you would like 'em;

\_We\_ never gut inside the hall: the nighest ever \_I\_ come

Wuz stan'in' sentry in the sun (an', fact, it \_seemed\_ a cent'ry)

A ketchin' smells o' biled an' roast thet come out thru the entry,

An' hearin' ez I sweltered thru my passes an' repasses,

A rat-tat-too o' knives an' forks, a clinkty-clink o' glasses:

I can't tell off the bill o' fare the Gin'rals hed inside; 110

All I know is, thet out o' doors a pair o' soles wuz fried,

An' not a hunderd miles away from ware this child wuz posted,

A Massachusetts citizen wuz baked an' biled an' roasted;

The on'y thing like revellin' thet ever come to me

Wuz bein' routed out o' sleep by thet darned revelee.

They say the quarrel's settled now; for my part I've some doubt on 't,

't'll take more fish-skin than folks think to take the rile clean on 't;

At any rate I'm so used up I can't do no more fightin',

The on'y chance thet's left to me is politics or writin';

Now, ez the people's gut to hev a milingtary man, 120

An' I aint nothin' else jest now, I've hit upon a plan;

The can'idatin' line, you know, 'ould suit me to a T,

An' ef I lose, 'twunt hurt my ears to lodge another flea;

So I'll set up ez can'idate fer any kin' o' office,

(I mean fer any thet includes good easy-cheers an' soffies;

Fer ez tu runnin' fer a place ware work's the time o' day,

You know thet's wut I never did,--except the other way;)

Ef it's the Presidential cheer fer wich I'd better run,

Wut two legs anywares about could keep up with my one?

There aint no kin' o' quality in can'idates, it's said, 130

So useful eza wooden leg,--except a wooden head;

There's nothin' aint so poppylar--(wy, it 's a parfect sin

To think wut Mexico hez paid fer Santy Anny's pin;)--

Then I haint gut no princerples, an', sence I wuz knee-high,

I never \_did\_ hev any gret, ez you can testify;

I'm a decided peace-man, tu, an' go agin the war,--

Fer now the holl on 't's gone an' past, wut is there to go \_for\_?

Ef, wile you're 'lectioneerin' round, some curus chaps should beg

To know my views o' state affairs, jest answer WOODEN LEG!

Ef they aint settisfied with thet, an' kin' o' pry an' doubt 140

An' ax fer sutthin' deffynit, jest say ONE EYE PUT OUT!

Thet kin' o' talk I guess you'll find'll answer to a charm,

An' wen you're druv tu nigh the wall, hol' up my missin' arm;

Ef they should nose round fer a pledge, put on a vartoous look

An' tell 'em thet's precisely wut I never gin nor--took!

Then you can call me 'Timbertoes,'--thet's wut the people likes;

Sutthin' combinin' morril truth with phrases sech ez strikes;

Some say the people's fond o' this, or thet, or wut you please,--

I tell ye wut the people want is jest correct idees;

'Old Timbertoes,' you see, 's a creed it's safe to be quite bold

on, 150

There's nothin' in 't the other side can any ways git hold on;

It's a good tangible idee, a sutthin' to embody

Thet valooable class o' men who look thru brandy-toddy;

It gives a Party Platform, tu, jest level with the mind

Of all right-thinkin', honest folks thet mean to go it blind;

Then there air other good hooraws to dror on ez you need 'em,

Sech ez the ONE-EYED SLARTERER, the BLOODY BIRDOFREDUM:

Them's wut takes hold o' folks thet think, ez well ez o' the masses,

An' makes you sartin o' the aid o' good men of all classes.

There's one thing I'm in doubt about: in order to be Presidunt, 160

It's absolutely ne'ssary to be a Southern residunt;

The Constitution settles thet, an' also thet a feller

Must own a nigger o' some sort, jet black, or brown, or yeller.

Now I haint no objections agin particklar climes,

Nor agin ownin' anythin' (except the truth sometimes),

But, ez I haint no capital, up there among ye, maybe,

You might raise funds enough fer me to buy a low-priced baby,

An' then to suit the No'thern folks, who feel obleeged to say

They hate an' cus the very thing they vote fer every day,

Say you're assured I go full butt fer Libbaty's diffusion 170

An' make the purchis on'y jest to spite the Institootion;--

But, golly! there's the currier's hoss upon the pavement pawin'!

I'll be more 'xplicit in my next.

Yourn, BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

[We have now a tolerably fair chance of estimating how the balance-sheet

stands between our returned volunteer and glory. Supposing the entries

to be set down on both sides of the account in fractional parts of one

hundred, we shall arrive at something like the following result:--

B. SAWIN, Esq., \_in account with\_ (BLANK) GLORY.

\_Cr.\_

By loss of one leg............................................... 20

" do. one arm................................................ 15

" do. four fingers............................................ 5

" do. one eye................................................ 10

" the breaking of six ribs........................................ 6

" having served under Colonel Cushing one month.................. 44

-------

100

\_Dr.\_

To one 675th three cheers in Faneuil Hall......................... 30

" do. do. on occasion of presentation of sword to Colonel Wright.. 25

To one suit of gray clothes (ingeniously unbecoming).............. 15

" musical entertainments (drum and fife six months)............... 5

" one dinner after return......................................... 1

" chance of pension............................................... 1

" privilege of drawing longbow during rest of natural life....... 23

------

100

E.E.

It should appear that Mr. Sawin found the actual feast curiously the

reverse of the bill of fare advertised in Faneuil Hall and other places.

His primary object seems to have been the making of his fortune.

\_QuÃ¦renda pecunia primum, virtus post nummos\_. He hoisted sail for

Eldorado, and shipwrecked on Point Tribulation. \_Quid, non mortalia

pectora cogis, auri sacra fames?\_ The speculation has sometimes crossed

my mind, in that dreary interval of drought which intervenes between

quarterly stipendiary showers, that Providence, by the creation of a

money-tree, might have simplified wonderfully the sometimes perplexing

problem of human life. We read of bread-trees, the butter for which lies

ready-churned in Irish bogs. Milk-trees we are assured of in South

America, and stout Sir John Hawkins testifies to water-trees in the

Canaries. Boot-trees bear abundantly in Lynn and elsewhere; and I have

seen, in the entries of the wealthy, hat-trees with a fair show of

fruit. A family-tree I once cultivated myself, and found therefrom but a

scanty yield, and that quite tasteless and innutritious. Of trees

bearing men we are not without examples; as those in the park of Louis

the Eleventh of France. Who has forgotten, moreover, that olive-tree,

growing in the Athenian's back-garden, with its strange uxorious crop,

for the general propagation of which, as of a new and precious variety,

the philosopher Diogenes, hitherto uninterested in arboriculture, was so

zealous? In the \_sylva\_ of our own Southern States, the females of my

family have called my attention to the china-tree. Not to multiply

examples, I will barely add to my list the birch-tree, in the smaller

branches of which has been implanted so miraculous a virtue for

communicating the Latin and Greek languages, and which may well,

therefore, be classed among the trees producing necessaries of

life,--\_venerabile donum fatalis virgÃ¦\_. That money-trees existed in

the golden age there want not prevalent reasons for our believing. For

does not the old proverb, when it asserts that money does not grow on

\_every\_ bush, imply \_a fortiori\_ that there were certain bushes which

did produce it? Again, there is another ancient saw to the effect that

money is the \_root\_ of all evil. From which two adages it may be safe to

infer that the aforesaid species of tree first degenerated into a shrub,

then absconded underground, and finally, in our iron age, vanished

altogether. In favorable exposures it may be conjectured that a specimen

or two survived to a great age, as in the garden of the Hesperides; and,

indeed, what else could that tree in the Sixth Ãneid have been with a

branch whereof the Trojan hero procured admission to a territory, for

the entering of which money is a surer passport than to a certain other

more profitable and too foreign kingdom? Whether these speculations of

mine have any force in them, or whether they will not rather, by most

readers, be deemed impertinent to the matter in hand, is a question

which I leave to the determination of an indulgent posterity. That there

were, in more primitive and happier times, shops where money was

sold,--and that, too, on credit and at a bargain,--I take to be matter

of demonstration. For what but a dealer in this article was that Ãolus

who supplied Ulysses with motive-power for his fleet in bags? what that

Ericus, King of Sweden, who is said to have kept the winds in his cap?

what, in more recent times, those Lapland Nornas who traded in favorable

breezes? All which will appear the more clearly when we consider, that,

even to this day, \_raising the wind\_ is proverbial for raising money,

and that brokers and banks were invented by the Venetians at a later

period.

And now for the improvement of this digression. I find a parallel to Mr.

Sawin's fortune in an adventure of my own. For, shortly after I had

first broached to myself the before-stated natural-historical and

archÃ¦ological theories, as I was passing, \_haec negotia penitus mecum

revolvens\_, through one of the obscure suburbs of our New England

metropolis, my eye was attracted by these words upon a signboard,--CHEAP

CASH-STORE. Here was at once the confirmation of my speculations, and

the substance of my hopes. Here lingered the fragment of a happier past,

or stretched out the first tremulous organic filament of a more

fortunate future. Thus glowed the distant Mexico to the eyes of Sawin,

as he looked through the dirty pane of the recruiting-office window, or

speculated from the summit of that mirage-Pisgah which the imps of the

bottle are so cunning to raise up. Already had my Alnaschar-fancy (even

during that first half-believing glance) expended in various useful

directions the funds to be obtained by pledging the manuscript of a

proposed volume of discourses. Already did a clock ornament the tower of

the Jaalam meeting-house, a gift appropriately, but modestly,

commemorated in the parish and town records, both, for now many years,

kept by myself. Already had my son Seneca completed his course at the

University. Whether, for the moment, we may not be considered as

actually lording it over those Baratarias with the viceroyalty of which

Hope invests us, and whether we are ever so warmly housed as in our

Spanish castles, would afford matter of argument. Enough that I found

that signboard to be no other than a bait to the trap of a decayed

grocer. Nevertheless, I bought a pound of dates (getting short weight by

reason of immense flights of harpy flies who pursued and lighted upon

their prey even in the very scales), which purchase I made not only with

an eye to the little ones at home, but also as a figurative reproof of

that too frequent habit of my mind, which, forgetting the due order of

chronology, will often persuade me that the happy sceptre of Saturn is

stretched over this AstrÃ¦a-forsaken nineteenth century.

Having glanced at the ledger of Glory under the title \_Sawin, B.\_, let

us extend our investigations, and discover if that instructive volume

does not contain some charges more personally interesting to ourselves.

I think we should be more economical of our resources, did we thoroughly

appreciate the fact, that, whenever Brother Jonathan seems to be

thrusting his hand into his own pocket, he is, in fact, picking ours. I

confess that the late \_muck\_ which the country has been running has

materially changed my views as to the best method of raising revenue.

If, by means of direct taxation, the bills for every extraordinary

outlay were brought under our immediate eye, so that, like thrifty

housekeepers, we could see where and how fast the money was going, we

should be less likely to commit extravagances. At present, these things

are managed in such a hugger-mugger way, that we know not what we pay

for; the poor man is charged as much as the rich; and, while we are

saving and scrimping at the spigot, the government is drawing off at the

bung. If we could know that a part of the money we expend for tea and

coffee goes to buy powder and balls, and that it is Mexican blood which

makes the clothes on our backs more costly, it would set some of us

athinking. During the present fall, I have often pictured to myself a

government official entering my study and handing me the following

bill:--

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30, 1848,

REV. HOMER WILBUR to \_Uncle Samuel\_,

\_Dr.\_

To his share of work done in Mexico

on partnership account, sundry

jobs, as below.

"killing, maiming and wounding

about 5000 Mexicans. . . . . . . . $2.00

"slaughtering one woman carrying

water to wounded. . . . . . . . . . .10

"extra work on two different Sabbaths

(one bombardment and one assault),

whereby the Mexicans were prevented

from defiling themselves with the

idolatries of high mass . . . . . . 3.50

"throwing an especially fortunate and

Protestant bomb-shell into the

Cathedral at Vera Cruz, whereby

several female Papists were slain

at the altar. . . . . . . . . . . . .50

"his proportion of cash paid for

conquered territory. . . . . . . . 1.75

"do. do. for conquering do . . . . . 1.50

"manuring do. with new superior

compost called 'American Citizen'. .50

"extending the area of freedom and

Protestantism. . . . . . . . . . . .01

"glory. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .01

\_\_\_\_\_

$9.87

\_Immediate payment is requested.\_

N.B. Thankful for former favors, U.S. requests a continuance of

patronage. Orders executed with neatness and despatch. Terms as low as

those of any other contractor for the same kind and style of work.

I can fancy the official answering my look of horror with--'Yes, Sir, it

looks like a high charge. Sir; but in these days slaughtering is

slaughtering.' Verily, I would that every one understood that it was;

for it goes about obtaining money under the false pretence of being

glory. For me, I have an imagination which plays me uncomfortable

tricks. It happens to me sometimes to see a slaughterer on his way home

from his day's work, and forthwith my imagination puts a cocked-hat upon

his head and epaulettes upon his shoulders, and sets him up as a

candidate for the Presidency. So, also, on a recent public occasion, as

the place assigned to the 'Reverend Clergy' is just behind that of

'Officers of the Army and Navy' in processions, it was my fortune to be

seated at the dinner-table over against one of these respectable

persons. He was arrayed as (out of his own profession) only kings,

court-officers, and footmen are in Europe, and Indians in America. Now

what does my over-officious imagination but set to work upon him, strip

him of his gay livery, and present him to me coatless, his trousers

thrust into the tops of a pair of boots thick with clotted blood, and a

basket on his arm out of which lolled a gore-smeared axe, thereby

destroying my relish for the temporal mercies upon the board before me!

--H.W.]

No. IX

A THIRD LETTER FROM B. SAWIN, ESQ.

[Upon the following letter slender comment will be needful. In what

river Selemnus has Mr. Sawin bathed, that he has become so swiftly

oblivious of his former loves? From an ardent and (as befits a soldier)

confident wooer of that coy bride, the popular favor, we see him subside

of a sudden into the (I trust not jilted) Cincinnatus, returning to his

plough with a goodly sized branch of willow in his hand; figuratively

returning, however, to a figurative plough, and from no profound

affection for that honored implement of husbandry (for which, indeed,

Mr. Sawin never displayed any decided predilection), but in order to be

gracefully summoned therefrom to more congenial labors. It should seem

that the character of the ancient Dictator had become part of the

recognized stock of our modern political comedy, though, as our term of

office extends to a quadrennial length, the parallel is not so minutely

exact as could be desired. It is sufficiently so, however, for purposes

of scenic representation. An humble cottage (if built of logs, the

better) forms the Arcadian background of the stage. This rustic paradise

is labelled Ashland, Jaalam, North Bend, Marshfield, Kinderhook, or

BÃ¢ton Rouge, as occasion demands. Before the door stands a something

with one handle (the other painted in proper perspective), which

represents, in happy ideal vagueness, the plough. To this the defeated

candidate rushes with delirious joy, welcomed as a father by appropriate

groups of happy laborers, or from it the successful one is torn with

difficulty, sustained alone by a noble sense of public duty. Only I have

observed, that, if the scene be laid at BÃ¢ton Rouge or Ashland, the

laborers are kept carefully in the backgrouud, and are heard to shout

from behind the scenes in a singular tone resembling ululation, and

accompanied by a sound not unlike vigorous clapping. This, however, may

be artistically in keeping with the habits of the rustic population of

those localities. The precise connection between agricultural pursuits

and statesmanship I have not been able, after diligent inquiry, to

discover. But, that my investigations may not be barren of all fruit, I

will mention one curious statistical fact, which I consider thoroughly

established, namely, that no real farmer ever attains practically beyond

a seat in the General Court, however theoretically qualified for more

exalted station.

It is probable that some other prospect has been opened to Mr. Sawin,

and that he has not made this great sacrifice without some definite

understanding in regard to a seat in the cabinet or a foreign mission.

It may be supposed that we of Jaalam were not untouched by a feeling of

villatic pride in beholding our townsman occupying so large a space in

the public eye. And to me, deeply revolving the qualifications necessary

to a candidate in these frugal times, those of Mr. S. seemed peculiarly

adapted to a successful campaign. The loss of a leg, an arm, an eye, and

four fingers reduced him so nearly to the condition of a \_vox et

prÃ¦terea nihil\_ that I could think of nothing but the loss of his head

by which his chance could have been bettered. But since he has chosen to

balk our suffrages, we must content ourselves with what we can get,

remembering \_lactucas non esse dandas, dum cardui sufficiant\_,--H.W.]

I spose you recollect thet I explained my gennle views

In the last billet thet I writ, 'way down frum Veery Cruze,

Jest arter I'd a kin' o' ben spontanously sot up

To run unannermously fer the Preserdential cup;

O' course it worn't no wish o' mine, 'twuz ferflely distressin',

But poppiler enthusiasm gut so almighty pressin'

Thet, though like sixty all along I fumed an' fussed an' sorrered,

There didn't seem no ways to stop their bringin' on me forrerd:

Fact is, they udged the matter so, I couldn't help admittin'

The Father o' his Country's shoes no feet but mine 'ould fit in, 10

Besides the savin' o' the soles fer ages to succeed,

Seein' thet with one wannut foot, a pair'd be more 'n I need;

An', tell ye wut, them shoes'll want a thund'rin sight o' patchin',

Ef this ere fashion is to last we've gut into o' hatchin'

A pair o' second Washintons fer every new election,--

Though, fer ez number one's consarned, I don't make no objection.

I wuz agoin' on to say thet wen at fust I saw

The masses would stick to 't I wuz the Country's father-'n-law,

(They would ha' hed it \_Father\_, but I told 'em 'twouldn't du,

Coz thet wuz sutthin' of a sort they couldn't split in tu, 20

An' Washinton hed hed the thing laid fairly to his door,

Nor darsn't say 'tworn't his'n, much ez sixty year afore,)

But 'taint no matter ez to thet; wen I wuz nomernated,

'Tworn't natur but wut I should feel consid'able elated,

An' wile the hooraw o' the thing wuz kind o' noo an' fresh,

I thought our ticket would ha' caird the country with a resh.

Sence I've come hum, though, an' looked round, I think I seem to find

Strong argimunts ez thick ez fleas to make me change my mind;

It's clear to any one whose brain aint fur gone in a phthisis,

Thet hail Columby's happy land is goin' thru a crisis, 30

An' 'twouldn't noways du to hev the people's mind distracted

By bein' all to once by sev'ral pop'lar names attackted;

'Twould save holl haycartloads o' fuss an' three four months o' jaw,

Ef some illustrous paytriot should back out an' withdraw;

So, ez I aint a crooked stick, jest like--like ole (I swow,

I dunno ez I know his name)--I'll go back to my plough.

Wenever an Amerikin distinguished politishin

Begins to try et wut they call definin' his posishin,

Wal, I, fer one, feel sure he ain't gut nothin' to define;

It's so nine cases out o' ten, but jest thet tenth is mine; 40

An' 'taint no more 'n proper 'n' right in sech a sitooation

To hint the course you think'll be the savin' o' the nation;

To funk right out o' p'lit'cal strife aint thought to be the thing,

Without you deacon off the toon you want your folks should sing;

So I edvise the noomrous friends thet's in one boat with me

To jest up killick, jam right down their hellum hard alee,

Haul the sheets taut, an', layin' out upon the Suthun tack,

Make fer the safest port they can, wich, \_I\_ think, is Ole Zack.

Next thing you'll want to know, I spose, wut argimunts I seem

To see thet makes me think this ere'll be the strongest team; 50

Fust place, I've ben consid'ble round in bar-rooms an' saloons

Agetherin' public sentiment, 'mongst Demmercrats and Coons,

An' 'taint ve'y offen thet I meet a chap but wut goes in

Fer Rough an' Ready, fair an' square, hufs, taller, horns, an' skin;

I don't deny but wut, fer one, ez fur ez I could see,

I didn't like at fust the Pheladelphy nomernee:

I could ha' pinted to a man thet wuz, I guess, a peg

Higher than him,--a soger, tu, an' with a wooden leg;

But every day with more an' more o' Taylor zeal I'm burnin',

Seein' wich way the tide thet sets to office is aturnin'; 60

Wy, into Bellers's we notched the votes down on three sticks,--

'Twuz Birdofredum \_one\_, Cass \_aught\_ an Taylor

\_twenty-six\_,

An' bein' the on'y canderdate thet wuz upon the ground,

They said 'twuz no more 'n right thet I should pay the drinks all round;

Ef I'd expected sech a trick, I wouldn't ha' cut my foot

By goin' an' votin' fer myself like a consumed coot;

It didn't make no deff'rence, though; I wish I may be cust,

Ef Bellers wuzn't slim enough to say he wouldn't trust!

Another pint thet influences the minds o' sober jedges

Is thet the Gin'ral hezn't gut tied hand an' foot with pledges; 70

He hezn't told ye wut he is, an' so there aint no knowin'

But wut he may turn out to be the best there is agoin';

This, at the on'y spot thet pinched, the shoe directly eases,

Coz every one is free to 'xpect percisely wut he pleases:

I want free-trade; you don't; the Gin'ral isn't bound to neither;--

I vote my way; you, yourn; an' both air sooted to a T there.

Ole Rough an' Ready, tu, 's a Wig, but without bein' ultry;

He's like a holsome hayin' day, thet's warm, but isn't sultry;

He's jest wut I should call myself, a kin' of \_scratch\_ ez 'tware,

Thet aint exacly all a wig nor wholly your own hair; 80

I 've ben a Wig three weeks myself, jest o' this mod'rate sort,

An' don't find them an' Demmercrats so defferent ez I thought;

They both act pooty much alike, an' push an' scrouge an' cus;

They're like two pickpockets in league fer Uncle Samwells pus;

Each takes a side, an' then they squeeze the ole man in between 'em,

Turn all his pockets wrong side out an' quick ez lightnin' clean 'em;

To nary one on 'em I'd trust a secon'-handed rail

No furder off 'an I could sling a bullock by the tail.

Webster sot matters right in thet air Mashfiel' speech o' his'n;

'Taylor,' sez he, 'aint nary ways the one thet I'd a chizzen, 90

Nor he aint fittin' fer the place, an' like ez not he aint

No more 'n a tough ole bullethead, an' no gret of a saint;

But then,' sez he, 'obsarve my pint, he's jest ez good to vote fer

Ez though the greasin' on him worn't a thing to hire Choate fer;

Aint it ez easy done to drop a ballot in a box

Fer one ez 'tis fer t'other, fer the bull-dog ez the fox?'

It takes a mind like Dannel's, fact, ez big ez all ou' doors,

To find out thet it looks like rain arter it fairly pours;

I 'gree with him, it aint so dreffle troublesome to vote

Fer Taylor arter all,--it's jest to go an' change your coat; 100

Wen he's once greased, you'll swaller him an' never know on 't, scurce,

Unless he scratches, goin' down, with them 'ere Gin'ral's spurs.

I've ben a votin' Demmercrat, ez reg'lar as a clock,

But don't find goin' Taylor gives my narves no gret 'f a shock;

Truth is, the cutest leadin' Wigs, ever sence fust they found

Wich side the bread gut buttered on, hev kep' a edgin' round;

They kin' o' slipt the planks frum out th' ole platform one by one

An' made it gradooally noo, 'fore folks khow'd wut wuz done,

Till, fur 'z I know, there aint an inch thet I could lay my han' on,

But I, or any Demmercrat, feels comf'table to stan' on, 110

An' ole Wig doctrines act'lly look, their occ'pants bein' gone,

Lonesome ez steddies on a mash without no hayricks on.

I spose it's time now I should give my thoughts upon the plan,

Thet chipped the shell at Buffalo, o' settin' up ole Van.

I used to vote fer Martin, but, I swan, I'm clean disgusted,--

He aint the man thet I can say is fittin' to be trusted;

He aint half antislav'ry 'nough, nor I aint sure, ez some be,

He'd go in fer abolishin' the Deestrick o' Columby;

An', now I come to recollec', it kin' o' makes me sick 'z

A horse, to think o' wut he wuz in eighteen thirty-six. 120

An' then, another thing;--I guess, though mebby I am wrong,

This Buff'lo plaster aint agoin' to dror almighty strong;

Some folks, I know, hev gut th' idee thet No'thun dough'll rise,

Though, 'fore I see it riz an 'baked, I wouldn't trust my eyes;

'Twill take more emptins, a long chalk, than this noo party's gut,

To give sech heavy cakes ez them a start, I tell ye wut.

But even ef they caird the day, there wouldn't be no endurin'

To stan' upon a platform with sech critters ez Van Buren;--

An' his son John, tu, I can't think how thet 'ere chap should dare

To speak ez he doos; wy, they say he used to cuss an' swear! 130

I spose he never read the hymn thet tells how down the stairs

A feller with long legs wuz throwed thet wouldn't say his prayers.

This brings me to another pint: the leaders o' the party

Aint jest sech men ez I can act along with free an' hearty;

They aint not quite respectable, an' wen a feller's morrils

Don't toe the straightest kin' o' mark, wy, him an' me jest quarrils.

I went to a free soil meetin' once, an' wut d'ye think I see?

A feller was aspoutin' there thet act'lly come to me,

About two year ago last spring, ez nigh ez I can jedge,

An' axed me ef I didn't want to sign the Temprunce pledge! 140

He's one o' them that goes about an' sez you hedn't oughter

Drink nothin', mornin', noon, or night, stronger 'an Taunton water.

There's one rule I've ben guided by, in settlin' how to vote, ollers,--

I take the side thet \_isn't\_ took by them consarned teetotallers.

Ez fer the niggers, I've ben South, an' thet hez changed my min';

A lazier, more ongrateful set you couldn't nowers fin',

You know I mentioned in my last thet I should buy a nigger,

Ef I could make a purchase at a pooty mod'rate figger;

So, ez there's nothin' in the world I'm fonder of 'an gunnin',

I closed a bargain finally to take a feller runnin'. 150

I shou'dered queen's-arm an' stumped out, an' wen I come t' th' swamp,

'Tworn't very long afore I gut upon the nest o' Pomp;

I come acrost a kin' o' hut, an', playin' round the door,

Some little woolly-headed cubs, ez many 'z six or more.

At fust I thought o' firin', but \_think twice\_ is safest ollers;

There aint, thinks I, not one on 'em but's wuth his twenty dollars,

Or would be, ef I hed 'em back into a Christian land,--

How temptin' all on 'em would look upon an auction-stand!

(Not but wut \_I\_ hate Slavery, in th' abstract, stem to starn,--

I leave it ware our fathers did, a privit State consarn.) 160

Soon 'z they see me, they yelled an' run, but Pomp wuz out ahoein'

A leetle patch o' corn he hed, or else there aint no knowin'

He wouldn't ha' took a pop at me; but I hed gut the start,

An' wen he looked, I vow he groaned ez though he'd broke his heart;

He done it like a wite man, tu, ez nat'ral ez a pictur,

The imp'dunt, pis'nous hypocrite! wus 'an a boy constrictur.

'You can't gum \_me\_, I tell ye now, an' so you needn't try,

I 'xpect my eye-teeth every mail, so jest shet up,' sez I.

'Don't go to actin' ugly now, or else I'll let her strip,

You'd best draw kindly, seein' 'z how I've gut ye on the hip; 170

Besides, you darned ole fool, it aint no gret of a disaster

To be benev'lently druv back to a contented master,

Ware you hed Christian priv'ledges you don't seem quite aware on,

Or you'd ha' never run away from bein' well took care on;

Ez fer kin' treatment, wy, he wuz so fond on ye, he said,

He'd give a fifty spot right out, to git ye, 'live or dead;

Wite folks aint sot by half ez much; 'member I run away,

Wen I wuz bound to Cap'n Jakes, to Mattysqumscot Bay;

Don' know him, likely? Spose not; wal, the mean old codger went

An' offered--wut reward, think? Wal, it worn't no \_less\_ 'n

a cent.' 180

Wal, I jest gut 'em into line, an' druv 'em on afore me;

The pis'nous brutes, I'd no idee o' the ill-will they bore me;

We walked till som'ers about noon, an' then it grew so hot

I thought it best to camp awile, so I chose out a spot

Jest under a magnoly tree, an' there right down I sot;

Then I unstrapped my wooden leg, coz it begun to chafe,

An' laid it down 'longside o' me, supposin' all wuz safe;

I made my darkies all set down around me in a ring,

An' sot an' kin' o' ciphered up how much the lot would bring;

But, wile I drinked the peaceful cup of a pure heart an' min' 190

(Mixed with some wiskey, now an' then), Pomp he snaked up behin',

An' creepin' grad'lly close tu, ez quiet ez a mink,

Jest grabbed my leg, an' then pulled foot, quicker 'an you could wink,

An', come to look, they each on' em hed gut behin' a tree,

An' Pomp poked out the leg a piece, jest so ez I could see,

An' yelled to me to throw away my pistils an' my gun,

Or else thet they'd cair off the leg, an' fairly cut an' run.

I vow I didn't b'lieve there wuz a decent alligatur

Thet hed a heart so destitoot o' common human natur;

However, ez there worn't no help, I finally give in 200

An' heft my arms away to git my leg safe back agin.

Pomp gethered all the weapins up, an' then he come an' grinned,

He showed his ivory some, I guess, an' sez, 'You're fairly pinned;

Jest buckle on your leg agin, an' git right up an' come,

'T wun't du fer fammerly men like me to be so long frum hum.'

At fust I put my foot right down an' swore I wouldn't budge.

'Jest ez you choose,' sez he, quite cool, 'either be shot or trudge.'

So this black-hearted monster took an' act'lly druv me back

Along the very feetmarks o' my happy mornin' track,

An' kep' me pris'ner 'bout six months, an' worked me, tu, like sin, 210

Till I hed gut his corn an' his Carliny taters in;

He made me larn him readin', tu (although the crittur saw

How much it hut my morril sense to act agin the law),

So'st he could read a Bible he'd gut; an' axed ef I could pint

The North Star out; but there I put his nose some out o' jint,

Fer I weeled roun' about sou'west, an', lookin' up a bit,

Picked out a middlin' shiny one an' tole him thet wuz it.

Fin'lly he took me to the door, an' givin' me a kick,

Sez, 'Ef you know wut's best fer ye, be off, now, double-quick;

The winter-time's a comin' on, an' though I gut ye cheap, 220

You're so darned lazy, I don't think you're hardly woth your keep;

Besides, the childrin's growin' up, an' you aint jest the model

I'd like to hev 'em immertate, an' so you'd better toddle!'

Now is there anythin' on airth'll ever prove to me

Thet renegader slaves like him air fit fer bein' free?

D' you think they'll suck me in to jine the Buff'lo chaps, an' them

Rank infidels thet go agin the Scriptur'l cus o' Shem?

Not by a jugfull! sooner 'n thet, I'd go thru fire an' water;

Wen I hev once made up my mind, a meet'nhus aint sotter; 229

No, not though all the crows thet flies to pick my bones wuz cawin',--

I guess we're in a Christian land,--

Yourn,

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

[Here, patient reader, we take leave of each other, I trust with some

mutual satisfaction. I say \_patient\_, for I love not that kind which

skims dippingly over the surface of the page, as swallows over a pool

before rain. By such no pearls shall be gathered. But if no pearls there

be (as, indeed the world is not without example of books wherefrom the

longest-winded diver shall bring up no more than his proper handful of

mud), yet let us hope that an oyster or two may reward adequate

perseverance. If neither pearls nor oysters, yet is patience itself a

gem worth diving deeply for.

It may seem to some that too much space has been usurped by my own

private lucubrations, and some may be fain to bring against me that old

jest of him who preached all his hearers out of the meeting-house save

only the sexton, who, remaining for yet a little space, from a sense of

official duty, at last gave out also, and, presenting the keys, humbly

requested our preacher to lock the doors, when he should have wholly

relieved himself of his testimony. I confess to a satisfaction in the

self act of preaching, nor do I esteem a discourse to be wholly thrown

away even upon a sleeping or unintelligent auditory. I cannot easily

believe that the Gospel of Saint John, which Jacques Cartier ordered to

be read in the Latin tongue to the Canadian savages, upon his first

meeting with them, fell altogether upon stony ground. For the

earnestness of the preacher is a sermon appreciable by dullest

intellects and most alien ears. In this wise did Episcopius convert many

to his opinions, who yet understood not the language in which he

discoursed. The chief thing is that the messenger believe that he has an

authentic message to deliver. For counterfeit messengers that mode of

treatment which Father John de Plano Carpini relates to have prevailed

among the Tartars would seem effectual, and, perhaps, deserved enough.

For my own part, I may lay claim to so much of the spirit of martyrdom

as would have led me to go into banishment with those clergymen whom

Alphonso the Sixth of Portugal drave out of his kingdom for refusing to

shorten their pulpit eloquence. It is possible, that, I having been

invited into my brother Biglow's desk, I may have been too little

scrupulous in using it for the venting of my own peculiar doctrines to a

congregation drawn together in the expectation and with the desire of

hearing him.

I am not wholly unconscious of a peculiarity of mental organization

which impels me, like the railroad-engine with its train of cars, to run

backward for a short distance in order to obtain a fairer start. I may

compare myself to one fishing from the rocks when the sea runs high,

who, misinterpreting the suction of the undertow for the biting of some

larger fish, jerks suddenly, and finds that he has \_caught bottom\_,

hauling in upon the end of his line a trail of various \_algÃ¦\_, among

which, nevertheless, the naturalist may haply find somewhat to repay the

disappointment of the angler. Yet have I conscientiously endeavored to

adapt myself to the impatient temper of the age, daily degenerating more

and more from the high standard of our pristine New England. To the

catalogue of lost arts I would mournfully add also that of listening to

two-hour sermons. Surely we have been abridged into a race of pygmies.

For, truly, in those of the old discourses yet subsisting to us in

print, the endless spinal column of divisions and subdivisions can be

likened to nothing so exactly as to the vertebrÃ¦ of the saurians,

whence the theorist may conjecture a race of Anakim proportionate to the

withstanding of these other monsters. I say Anakim rather than Nephelim,

because there seem reasons for supposing that the race of those whose

heads (though no giants) are constantly enveloped in clouds (which that

name imports) will never become extinct. The attempt to vanquish the

innumerable \_heads\_ of one of those aforementioned discourses may supply

us with a plausible interpretation of the second labor of Hercules, and

his successful experiment with fire affords us a useful precedent.

But while I lament the degeneracy of the age in this regard, I cannot

refuse to succumb to its influence. Looking out through my study-window,

I see Mr. Biglow at a distance busy in gathering his Baldwins, of which,

to judge by the number of barrels lying about under the trees, his crop

is more abundant than my own,--by which sight I am admonished to turn to

those orchards of the mind wherein my labors may be more prospered, and

apply myself diligently to the preparation of my next Sabbath's

discourse.--H.W.]

MELIBOEUS-HIPPONAX

\* \* \* \* \*

THE

Biglow Papers

SECOND SERIES

[Greek: 'Estin ar o idiotismos eniote tou kosmou parapolu

emphanistkoteron.']

LONGIXUS.

'J'aimerois mieulx que mon fils apprinst aux tavernes Ã  parler, qu'aux

escholes de la parlerie.'

MONTAIGNE.

"Unser Sprach ist auch ein Sprach und fan so wohl ein Sad nennen als

die Lateiner saccus."

FISCHART.

'Vim rebus aliquando ipsa verborum humilitas affert.'

QUINTILIANUS.

'O ma lengo,

PlantarÃ¨y une estÃ¨lo Ã  toun froun encrumit!'

JASMIN.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Multos enim, quibus loquendi ratio non desit, invenias, quos curiose

potius loqui dixeris quam Latine; quomodo et illa Attica anus

Theophrastum, hominem alioqui disertissimum, annotata unius affectatione

verbi, hospitem dixit, nec alio se id deprehendisse interrogata

respondit, quam quod nimium Attice loqueretur.'--QUINTILIANUS.

'Et Anglice sermonicari solebat populo, sed secundum linguam Norfolchie

ubi natus et nutritus erat.'--CRONICA JOCELINI.

'La politique est une pierre attachÃ©e an cou de la littÃ©rature, et qui en

moins de six mois la submerge.... Cette politique va offenser mortellement

une moitiÃ© des lecteurs, et ennuyer l'autre qui l'a trouvÃ©e bien autrement

spÃ©ciale et Ã©nergique dans le journal du matin.'--HENRI BEYLE.

[When the book appeared it bore a dedication to E.R. Hoar, and was

introduced by an essay of the Yankee form of English speech. This

Introduction is so distinctly an essay that it has been thought best to

print it as an appendix to this volume, rather than allow it to break in

upon the pages of verse. There is, however, one passage in it which may

be repeated here, since it bears directly upon the poem which serves as

a sort of prelude to the series.]

'The only attempt I had ever made at anything like a pastoral (if that

may be called an attempt which was the result almost of pure accident)

was in \_The Courtin'\_. While the introduction to the First Series was

going through the press, I received word from the printer that there was

a blank page left which must be filled. I sat down at once and

improvised another fictitious "notice of the press," in which, because

verse would fill up space more cheaply than prose, I inserted an extract

from a supposed ballad of Mr. Biglow. I kept no copy of it, and the

printer, as directed, cut it off when the gap was filled. Presently I

began to receive letters asking for the rest of it, sometimes for the

\_balance\_ of it. I had none, but to answer such demands, I patched a

conclusion upon it in a later edition. Those who had only the first

continued to importune me. Afterward, being asked to write it out as an

autograph for the Baltimore Sanitary Commission Fair, I added other

verses, into some of which I infused a little more sentiment in a homely

way, and after a fashion completed it by sketching in the characters and

making a connected story. Most likely I have spoiled it, but I shall put

it at the end of this Introduction, to answer once for all those kindly

importunings.'

THE COURTIN'

God makes sech nights, all white an' still

Fur 'z you can look or listen,

Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,

All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown

An' peeked in thru' the winder,

An' there sot Huldy all alone,

'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side

With half a cord o' wood in--

There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)

To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out

Towards the pootiest, bless her,

An' leetle flames danced all about

The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,

An' in amongst 'em rusted

The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young

Fetched back f'om Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,

Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',

An' she looked full ez rosy agin

Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom come to look

On sech a blessed cretur,

A dogrose blushin' to a brook

Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,

Clear grit an' human natur',

None couldn't quicker pitch a ton

Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,

Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,

Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells--

All is, he couldn't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run

All crinkly like curled maple,

The side she breshed felt full o' sun

Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing

Ez hisn in the choir;

My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,

She \_knowed\_ the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,

When her new meetin'-bunnet

Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair

O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked \_some!\_

She seemed to've gut a new soul,

For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,

Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,

A-raspin' on the scraper,--

All ways to once, her feelins flew

Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,

Some doubtfle o' the sekle,

His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,

But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk

Ez though she wished him furder,

An' on her apples kep' to work,

Parin' away like murder.

'You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?'

'Wal ... no ... I come dasignin'--

'To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es

Agin to-morrer's i'nin'.'

To say why gals acts so or so,

Or don't, 'ould be persumin';

Mebby to mean \_yes\_ an' say \_no\_

Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,

Then stood a spell on t'other,

An' on which one he felt the wust

He couldn't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, 'I'd better call agin:'

Says she, 'Think likely, Mister:'

Thet last word pricked him like a pin,

An' ... Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,

Huldy sot pale ez ashes,

All kin' o' smily roun' the lips

An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind

Whose naturs never vary,

Like streams that keep a summer mind

Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued

Too tight for all expressin',

Tell mother see how metters stood,

An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide

Down to the Bay o' Fundy,

An' all I know is they was cried

In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

THE BIGLOW PAPERS

SECOND SERIES

No. I

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN, ESQ.,

TO MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

LETTER FROM THE REVEREND HOMER WILBUR, M.A., ENCLOSING THE EPISTLE

AFORESAID

JAALAM, 15th Nov., 1861.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is not from any idle wish to obtrude my humble person with undue

prominence upon the publick view that I resume my pen upon the present

occasion. \_Juniores ad labores\_. But having been a main instrument in

rescuing the talent of my young parishioner from being buried in the

ground, by giving it such warrant with the world as could be derived

from a name already widely known by several printed discourses (all of

which I may be permitted without immodesty to state have been deemed

worthy of preservation in the Library of Harvard College by my esteemed

friend Mr. Sibley), it seemed becoming that I should not only testify to

the genuineness of the following production, but call attention to it,

the more as Mr. Biglow had so long been silent as to be in danger of

absolute oblivion. I insinuate no claim to any share in the authorship

(\_vix ea nostra voco\_) of the works already published by Mr. Biglow, but

merely take to myself the credit of having fulfilled toward them the

office of taster (\_experto crede\_), who, having first tried, could

afterward bear witness (\_credenzen\_ it was aptly named by the Germans),

an office always arduous, and sometimes even dangerous, as in the case

of those devoted persons who venture their lives in the deglutition of

patent medicines (\_dolus latet in generalibus\_, there is deceit in the

most of them) and thereafter are wonderfully preserved long enough to

append their signatures to testimonials in the diurnal and hebdomadal

prints. I say not this as covertly glancing at the authors of certain

manuscripts which have been submitted to my literary judgment (though an

epick in twenty-four books on the 'Taking of Jericho' might, save for

the prudent forethought of Mrs. Wilbur in secreting the same just as I

had arrived beneath the walls and was beginning a catalogue of the

various horns and their blowers, too ambitiously emulous in longanimity

of Homer's list of ships, might, I say, have rendered frustrate any hope

I could entertain \_vacare Musis\_ for the small remainder of my days),

but only the further to secure myself against any imputation of unseemly

forthputting. I will barely subjoin, in this connexion, that, whereas

Job was left to desire, in the soreness of his heart, that his adversary

had written a book, as perchance misanthropically wishing to indite a

review thereof, yet was not Satan allowed so far to tempt him as to send

Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar each with an unprinted work in his wallet to

be submitted to his censure. But of this enough. Were I in need of other

excuse, I might add that I write by the express desire of Mr. Biglow

himself, whose entire winter leisure is occupied, as he assures me, in

answering demands for autographs, a labor exacting enough in itself, and

egregiously so to him, who, being no ready penman, cannot sign so much

as his name without strange contortions of the face (his nose, even,

being essential to complete success) and painfully suppressed

Saint-Vitus-dance of every muscle in his body. This, with his having

been put in the Commission of the Peace by our excellent Governor (\_O,

si sic omnes!\_) immediately on his accession to office, keeps him

continually employed. \_Haud inexpertus loquor\_, having for many years

written myself J.P., and being not seldom applied to for specimens of my

chirography, a request to which I have sometimes over weakly assented,

believing as I do that nothing written of set purpose can properly be

called an autograph, but only those unpremeditated sallies and lively

runnings which betray the fireside Man instead of the hunted Notoriety

doubling on his pursuers. But it is time that I should bethink me of St.

Austin's prayer, \_libera me a meipso\_, if I would arrive at the matter

in hand.

Moreover, I had yet another reason for taking up the pen myself. I am

informed that 'The Atlantic Monthly' is mainly indebted for its success

to the contributions and editorial supervision of Dr. Holmes, whose

excellent 'Annals of America' occupy an honored place upon my shelves.

The journal itself I have never seen; but if this be so, it might seem

that the recommendation of a brother-clergyman (though \_par magis quam

similis\_) should carry a greater weight. I suppose that you have a

department for historical lucubrations, and should be glad, if deemed

desirable, to forward for publication my 'Collections for the

Antiquities of Jaalam,' and my (now happily complete) pedigree of the

Wilbur family from its \_fons et origo\_, the Wild Boar of Ardennes.

Withdrawn from the active duties of my profession by the settlement of a

colleague-pastor, the Reverend Jeduthun Hitchcock, formerly of Brutus

Four-Corners, I might find time for further contributions to general

literature on similar topicks. I have made large advances towards a

completer genealogy of Mrs. Wilbur's family, the Pilcoxes, not, if I

know myself, from any idle vanity, but with the sole desire of rendering

myself useful in my day and generation. \_Nulla dies sine lineÃ¢\_. I

inclose a meteorological register, a list of the births, deaths, and

marriages, and a few \_memorabilia\_ of longevity in Jaalam East Parish

for the last half-century. Though spared to the unusual period of more

than eighty years, I find no diminution of my faculties or abatement of

my natural vigor, except a scarcely sensible decay of memory and a

necessity of recurring to younger eyesight or spectacles for the finer

print in Cruden. It would gratify me to make some further provision for

declining years from the emoluments of my literary labors. I had

intended to effect an insurance on my life, but was deterred therefrom

by a circular from one of the offices, in which the sudden death of so

large a proportion of the insured was set forth as an inducement, that

it seemed to me little less than a tempting of Providence. \_Neque in

summÃ¢ inopiÃ¢ levis esse senectus potest, ne sapienti quidem\_.

Thus far concerning Mr. Biglow; and so much seemed needful (\_brevis esse

laboro\_) by way of preliminary, after a silence of fourteen years. He

greatly fears lest he may in this essay have fallen below himself, well

knowing that, if exercise be dangerous on a full stomach, no less so is

writing on a full reputation. Beset as he has been on all sides, he

could not refrain, and would only imprecate patience till he shall again

have 'got the hang' (as he calls it) of an accomplishment long disused.

The letter of Mr. Sawin was received some time in last June, and others

have followed which will in due season be submitted to the publick. How

largely his statements are to be depended on, I more than merely

dubitate. He was always distinguished for a tendency to

exaggeration,--it might almost be qualified by a stronger term.

\_Fortiter mentire, aliquid hÃ¦ret\_ seemed to be his favorite rule of

rhetoric. That he is actually where he says he is the postmark would

seem to confirm; that he was received with the publick demonstrations he

describes would appear consonant with what we know of the habits of

those regions; but further than this I venture not to decide. I have

sometimes suspected a vein of humor in him which leads him to speak by

contraries; but since, in the unrestrained intercourse of private life,

I have never observed in him any striking powers of invention, I am the

more willing to put a certain qualified faith in the incidents and the

details of life and manners which give to his narratives some portion of

the interest and entertainment which characterizes a Century Sermon.

It may be expected of me that I should say something to justify myself

with the world for a seeming inconsistency with my well-known principles

in allowing my youngest son to raise a company for the war, a fact known

to all through the medium of the publick prints. I did reason with the

young man, but \_expellas naturam furcÃ¢ tamen usque recurrit\_. Having

myself been a chaplain in 1812, I could the less wonder that a man of

war had sprung from my loins. It was, indeed, grievous to send my

Benjamin, the child of my old age; but after the discomfiture of

Manassas, I with my own hands did buckle on his armor, trusting in the

great Comforter and Commander for strength according to my need. For

truly the memory of a brave son dead in his shroud were a greater staff

of my declining years than a living coward (if those may be said to have

lived who carry all of themselves into the grave with them), though his

days might be long in the land, and he should get much goods. It is not

till our earthen vessels are broken that we find and truly possess the

treasure that was laid up in them. \_Migravi in animam meam\_, I have

sought refuge in my own soul; nor would I be shamed by the heathen

comedian with his \_Neqwam illud verbum, bene vult, nisi bene facit\_.

During our dark days, I read constantly in the inspired book of Job,

which I believe to contain more food to maintain the fibre of the soul

for right living and high thinking than all pagan literature together,

though I would by no means vilipend the study of the classicks. There I

read that Job said in his despair, even as the fool saith in his heart

there is no God,--'The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that

provoke God are secure.' (Job xii. 6.) But I sought farther till I found

this Scripture also, which I would have those perpend who have striven

to turn our Israel aside to the worship of strange gods.--'If I did

despise the cause of my manservant or of my maid-servant, when they

contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he

visiteth, what shall I answer him?' (Job xxxi. 13, 14.) On this text I

preached a discourse on the last day of Fasting and Humiliation with

general acceptance, though there were not wanting one or two Laodiceans

who said that I should have waited till the President announced his

policy. But let us hope and pray, remembering this of Saint Gregory,

\_Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quÃ¢dam importunitate vinci\_.

We had our first fall of snow on Friday last. Frosts have been unusually

backward this fall. A singular circumstance occurred in this town on the

20th October, in the family of Deacon Pelatiah Tinkham. On the previous

evening, a few moments before family prayers,

\* \* \* \* \*

[The editors of the 'Atlantic' find it necessary here to cut short the

letter of their valued correspondent, which seemed calculated rather on

the rates of longevity in Jaalam than for less favored localities. They

have every encouragement to hope that he will write again.]

With esteem and respect, Your obedient servant, Homer Wilbur, A.M.

It's some consid'ble of a spell sence I hain't writ no letters,

An' ther' 's gret changes hez took place in all polit'cle metters:

Some canderdates air dead an' gone, an' some hez ben defeated,

Which 'mounts to pooty much the same; fer it's ben proved repeated

A betch o' bread thet hain't riz once ain't goin' to rise agin,

An' it's jest money throwed away to put the emptins in:

But thet's wut folks wun't never larn; they dunno how to go,

Arter you want their room, no more 'n a bullet-headed bean;

Ther' 's ollers chaps a-hangin' roun' thet can't see peatime's past,

Mis'ble as roosters in a rain, heads down an' tails half-mast: 10

It ain't disgraceful bein' beat, when a holl nation doos it,

But Chance is like an amberill,--it don't take twice to lose it.

I spose you're kin' o' cur'ous, now, to know why I hain't writ.

Wal, I've ben where a litt'ry taste don't somehow seem to git

Th' encouragement a feller'd think, thet's used to public schools,

An' where sech things ez paper 'n' ink air clean agin the rules:

A kind o' vicyvarsy house, built dreffle strong an' stout,

So 's 't honest people can't get in, ner t'other sort git out.

An' with the winders so contrived, you'd prob'ly like the view

Better alookin' in than out, though it seems sing'lar, tu; 20

But then the landlord sets by ye, can't bear ye out o' sight,

And locks ye up ez reg'lar ez an outside door at night.

This world is awfle contrary: the rope may stretch your neck

Thet mebby kep' another chap frum washin' off a wreck;

An' you may see the taters grow in one poor feller's patch,

So small no self-respectin' hen thet vallied time 'ould scratch,

So small the rot can't find 'em out, an' then agin, nex' door,

Ez big ez wut hogs dream on when they're 'most too fat to snore.

But groutin' ain't no kin' o' use; an' ef the fust throw fails,

Why, up an' try agin, thet's all,--the coppers ain't all tails, 30

Though I \_hev\_ seen 'em when I thought they hedn't no more head

Than 'd sarve a nussin' Brigadier thet gits some Ink to shed.

When I writ last, I'd ben turned loose by thet blamed nigger, Pomp,

Ferlorner than a musquash, ef you'd took an' dreened his swamp;

But I ain't o' the meechin' kind, thet sets an' thinks fer weeks

The bottom's out o' th' univarse coz their own gillpot leaks.

I hed to cross bayous an' criks, (wal, it did beat all natur',)

Upon a kin' o' corderoy, fust log, then alligator;

Luck'ly, the critters warn't sharp-sot; I guess 'twuz overruled

They 'd done their mornin's marketin' an' gut their hunger cooled; 40

Fer missionaries to the Creeks an' runaways are viewed

By them an' folks ez sent express to be their reg'lar food;

Wutever 'twuz, they laid an' snoozed ez peacefully ez sinners,

Meek ez disgestin' deacons be at ordination dinners;

Ef any on 'em turned an' snapped, I let 'em kin' o' taste

My live-oak leg, an' so, ye see, ther' warn't no gret o' waste;

Fer they found out in quicker time than ef they'd ben to college

'Twarn't heartier food than though 'twuz made out o' the tree o'

knowledge.

But I tell \_you\_ my other leg hed larned wut pizon-nettle meant,

An' var'ous other usefle things, afore I reached a settlement, 50

An' all o' me thet wuzn't sore an' sendin' prickles thru me

Wuz jest the leg I parted with in lickin' Montezumy:

A useful limb it's ben to me, an' more of a support

Than wut the other hez ben,--coz I dror my pension for 't.

Wal, I gut in at last where folks wuz civerlized an' white,

Ez I diskivered to my cost afore 'twarn't hardly night;

Fer 'z I wuz settin' in the bar a-takin' sunthin' hot,

An' feelin' like a man agin, all over in one spot,

A feller thet sot oppersite, arter a squint at me,

Lep' up an' drawed his peacemaker, an', 'Dash it, Sir,' suz he, 60

'I'm doubledashed ef you ain't him thet stole my yaller chettle,

(You're all the stranger thet's around,) so now you've gut to settle;

It ain't no use to argerfy ner try to cut up frisky,

I know ye ez I know the smell of ole chain-lightnin' whiskey;

We're lor-abidin' folks down here, we'll fix ye so's 't a bar

Wouldn' tech ye with a ten-foot pole; (Jedge, you jest warm the tar;)

You'll think you'd better ha' gut among a tribe o' Mongrel Tartars,

'fore we've done showin' how we raise our Southun prize tar-martyrs;

A moultin' fallen cherubim, ef he should see ye, 'd snicker,

Thinkin' he warn't a suckemstance. Come, genlemun, le' 's liquor; 70

An', Gin'ral, when you've mixed the drinks an' chalked 'em up, tote roun'

An' see ef ther' 's a feather-bed (thet's borryable) in town.

We'll try ye fair, ole Grafted-Leg, an' ef the tar wun't stick,

Th' ain't not a juror here but wut'll 'quit ye double-quick,'

To cut it short, I wun't say sweet, they gi' me a good dip,

(They ain't \_perfessin'\_ Bahptists here,) then give the bed a rip,--

The jury'd sot, an' quicker 'n a flash they hetched me out, a livin'

Extemp'ry mammoth turkey-chick fer a Fejee Thanksgivin'.

Thet I felt some stuck up is wut it's nat'ral to suppose,

When poppylar enthusiasm hed funnished me sech clo'es; 80

(Ner 'tain't without edvantiges, this kin' o' suit, ye see,

It's water-proof, an' water's wut I like kep' out o' me;)

But nut content with thet, they took a kerridge from the fence

An' rid me roun' to see the place, entirely free 'f expense,

With forty-'leven new kines o' sarse without no charge acquainted me,

Gi' me three cheers, an' vowed thet I wuz all their fahncy painted me;

They treated me to all their eggs; (they keep 'em I should think,

Fer sech ovations, pooty long, for they wuz mos' distinc');

They starred me thick 'z the Milky-Way with indiscrim'nit cherity,

Fer wut we call reception eggs air sunthin' of a rerity; 90

Green ones is plentifle anough, skurce wuth a nigger's getherin',

But your dead-ripe ones ranges high fer treatin' Nothun bretherin;

A spotteder, ring-streakeder child the' warn't in Uncle Sam's

Holl farm,--a cross of striped pig an' one o' Jacob's lambs;

'Twuz Dannil in the lions' den, new an' enlarged edition,

An' everythin' fust-rate o' 'ts kind; the' warn't no impersition.

People's impulsiver down here than wut our folks to home be,

An' kin' o' go it 'ith a resh in raisin' Hail Columby:

Thet's \_so:\_ an' they swarmed out like bees, for your real Southun men's

Time isn't o' much more account than an ole settin' hen's; 100

(They jest work semioccashnally, or else don't work at all,

An' so their time an' 'tention both air at saci'ty's call.)

Talk about hospatality! wut Nothun town d' ye know

Would take a totle stranger up an' treat him gratis so?

You'd better b'lleve ther' 's nothin' like this spendin' days an' nights

Along 'ith a dependent race fer civerlizin' whites.

But this wuz all prelim'nary; it's so Gran' Jurors here

Fin' a true bill, a hendier way than ourn, an' nut so dear;

So arter this they sentenced me, to make all tight 'n' snug,

Afore a reg'lar court o' law, to ten years in the Jug. 110

I didn't make no gret defence: you don't feel much like speakin',

When, ef you let your clamshells gape, a quart o' tar will leak in:

I \_hev\_ hearn tell o' winged words, but pint o' fact it tethers

The spoutin' gift to hev your words \_tu\_ thick sot on with feathers,

An' Choate ner Webster wouldn't ha' made an A 1 kin' o' speech

Astride a Southun chestnut horse sharper 'n a baby's screech.

Two year ago they ketched the thief, 'n' seein' I wuz innercent,

They jest uncorked an' le' me run, an' in my stid the sinner sent

To see how \_he\_ liked pork 'n' pone flavored with wa'nut saplin',

An' nary social priv'ledge but a one-hoss, starn-wheel chaplin. 120

When I come out, the folks behaved mos' gen'manly an' harnsome;

They 'lowed it wouldn't be more 'n right, ef I should cuss 'n' darn some:

The Cunnle he apolergized; suz he, 'I'll du wut's right,

I'll give ye settisfection now by shootin' ye at sight,

An' give the nigger (when he's caught), to pay him fer his trickin'

In gittin' the wrong man took up, a most H fired lickin',--

It's jest the way with all on 'em, the inconsistent critters,

They're 'most enough to make a man blaspheme his mornin' bitters;

I'll be your frien' thru thick an' thin an' in all kines o' weathers,

An' all you'll hev to pay fer's jest the waste o' tar an'

feathers: 130

A lady owned the bed, ye see, a widder, tu, Miss Shennon;

It wuz her mite; we would ha' took another, ef ther' 'd ben one:

We don't make \_no\_ charge for the ride an' all the other fixins.

Le' 's liquor; Gin'ral, you can chalk our friend for all the mixins.'

A meetin' then wuz called, where they 'RESOLVED, Thet we respec'

B.S. Esquire for quallerties o' heart an' intellec'

Peculiar to Columby's sile, an' not to no one else's,

Thet makes European tyrans scringe in all their gilded pel'ces,

An' doos gret honor to our race an' Southun institootions:'

(I give ye jest the substance o' the leadin' resolootions:) 140

'RESOLVED, Thet we revere In him a soger 'thout a flor,

A martyr to the princerples o' libbaty an' lor:

RESOLVED, Thet other nations all, ef sot 'longside o' us,

For vartoo, larnin', chivverlry, ain't noways wuth a cuss.'

They got up a subscription, tu, but no gret come o' \_thet;\_

I 'xpect in cairin' of it roun' they took a leaky hat;

Though Southun genelmun ain't slow at puttin' down their name,

(When they can write,) fer in the eend it comes to jes' the same,

Because, ye see, 't 's the fashion here to sign an' not to think

A critter'd be so sordid ez to ax 'em for the chink: 150

I didn't call but jest on one, an' \_he\_ drawed tooth-pick on me,

An' reckoned he warn't goin' to stan' no sech dog-gauned econ'my:

So nothin' more wuz realized, 'ceptin' the good-will shown,

Than ef 't had ben from fust to last a regular Cotton Loan.

It's a good way, though, come to think, coz ye enjy the sense

O' lendin' lib'rally to the Lord, an' nary red o' 'xpense:

Sence then I've gut my name up for a gin'rous-hearted man

By jes' subscribin' right an' left on this high-minded plan;

I've gin away my thousans so to every Southun sort

O' missions, colleges, an' sech, ner ain't no poorer for 't. 160

I warn't so bad off, arter all; I needn't hardly mention

That Guv'ment owed me quite a pile for my arrears o' pension,--

I mean the poor, weak thing we \_hed:\_ we run a new one now,

Thet strings a feller with a claim up ta the nighes' bough,

An' \_prectises\_ the rights o' man, purtects down-trodden debtors,

Ner wun't hev creditors about ascrougin' o' their betters:

Jeff's gut the last idees ther' is, poscrip', fourteenth edition,

He knows it takes some enterprise to run an oppersition;

Ourn's the fust thru-by-daylight train, with all ou'doors for deepot;

Yourn goes so slow you'd think 'twuz drawed by a las' cent'ry

teapot;-- 170

Wal, I gut all on 't paid in gold afore our State seceded,

An' done wal, for Confed'rit bonds warn't jest the cheese I needed:

Nut but wut they're ez \_good\_ ez gold, but then it's hard a-breakin'

on 'em,

An' ignorant folks is ollers sot an' wun't git used to takin' on 'em;

They're wuth ez much ez wut they wuz afore ole Mem'nger signed 'em,

An' go off middlin' wal for drinks, when ther' 's a knife behind 'em;

We \_du\_ miss silver, jes' fer thet an' ridin' in a bus,

Now we've shook off the desputs thet wuz suckin' at our pus;

An' it's \_because\_ the South's so rich; 'twuz nat'ral to expec'

Supplies o' change wuz jes' the things we shouldn't recollec'; 180

We'd ough' to ha' thought aforehan', though, o' thet good rule o'

Crockett's,

For 't 's tiresome cairin' cotton-bales an' niggers in your pockets,

Ner 'tain't quite hendy to pass off one o' your six-foot Guineas

An' git your halves an' quarters back in gals an' pickaninnies:

Wal, 'tain't quite all a feller'd ax, but then ther's this to say,

It's on'y jest among ourselves thet we expec' to pay;

Our system would ha' caird us thru in any Bible cent'ry,

'fore this onscripterl plan come up o' books by double entry;

We go the patriarkle here out o' all sight an' hearin',

For Jacob warn't a suckemstance to Jeff at financierin'; 190

\_He\_ never'd thought o' borryin' from Esau like all nater

An' then cornfiscatin' all debts to sech a small pertater;

There's p'litickle econ'my, now, combined 'ith morril beauty

Thet saycrifices privit eends (your in'my's, tu) to dooty!

Wy, Jeff 'd ha' gin him five an' won his eye-teeth 'fore he knowed it,

An', stid o' wastin' pottage, he'd ha' eat it up an' owed it.

But I wuz goin' on to say how I come here to dwall;--

'Nough said, thet, arter lookin' roun', I liked the place so wal,

Where niggers doos a double good, with us atop to stiddy 'em,

By bein' proofs o' prophecy an' suckleatin' medium, 200

Where a man's sunthin' coz he's white, an' whiskey's cheap ez fleas,

An' the financial pollercy jes' sooted my idees,

Thet I friz down right where I wuz, merried the Widder Shennon,

(Her thirds wuz part in cotton-land, part in the curse o' Canaan,)

An' here I be ez lively ez a chipmunk on a wall,

With nothin' to feel riled about much later 'n Eddam's fall.

Ez fur ez human foresight goes, we made an even trade:

She gut an overseer, an' I a fem'ly ready-made,

The youngest on 'em 's 'mos' growed up, rugged an' spry ez weazles,

So 's 't ther' 's no resk o' doctors' bills fer hoopin'-cough an' measles.

Our farm's at Turkey-Buzzard Roost, Little Big Boosy River, 211

Wal located in all respex,--fer 'tain't the chills 'n' fever

Thet makes my writin' seem to squirm; a Southuner'd allow I'd

Some call to shake, for I've jest hed to meller a new cowhide.

Miss S. is all 'f a lady; th' ain't no better on Big Boosy

Ner one with more accomplishmunts 'twist here an' Tuscaloosy;

She's an F.F., the tallest kind, an' prouder 'n the Gran' Turk,

An' never hed a relative thet done a stroke o' work;

Hern ain't a scrimpin' fem'ly sech ez \_you\_ git up Down East,

Th' ain't a growed member on 't but owes his thousuns et the least:

She \_is\_ some old; but then agin ther' 's drawbacks in my sheer: 221

Wut's left o' me ain't more 'n enough to make a Brigadier:

Wust is, thet she hez tantrums; she's like Seth Moody's gun

(Him thet wuz nicknamed from his limp Ole Dot an' Kerry One);

He'd left her loaded up a spell, an' hed to git her clear,

So he onhitched,--Jeerusalem! the middle o' last year

Wuz right nex' door compared to where she kicked the critter tu

(Though \_jest\_ where he brought up wuz wut no human never knew);

His brother Asaph picked her up an' tied her to a tree,

An' then she kicked an hour 'n' a half afore she'd let it be: 230

Wal, Miss S. \_doos\_ hev cuttins-up an' pourins-out o' vials,

But then she hez her widder's thirds, an' all on us hez trials.

My objec', though, in writin' now warn't to allude to sech,

But to another suckemstance more dellykit to tech,--

I want thet you should grad'lly break my merriage to Jerushy,

An' there's a heap of argymunts thet's emple to indooce ye:

Fust place, State's Prison,--wal, it's true it warn't fer crime,

o' course,

But then it's jest the same fer her in gittin' a disvorce;

Nex' place, my State's secedin' out hez leg'lly lef' me free

To merry any one I please, pervidin' it's a she; 240

Fin'lly, I never wun't come back, she needn't hev no fear on 't,

But then it's wal to fix things right fer fear Miss S. should hear on 't;

Lastly, I've gut religion South, an' Rushy she's a pagan

Thet sets by th' graven imiges o' the gret Nothun Dagon;

(Now I hain't seen one in six munts, for, sence our Treashry Loan,

Though yaller boys is thick anough, eagles hez kind o' flown;)

An' ef J wants a stronger pint than them thet I hev stated,

Wy, she's an aliun in'my now, an' I've been cornfiscated,--

For sence we've entered on th' estate o' the late nayshnul eagle,

She hain't no kin' o' right but jes' wut I allow ez legle: 250

Wut \_doos\_ Secedin' mean, ef 'tain't thet nat'rul rights hez riz, 'n'

Thet wut is mine's my own, but wut's another man's ain't his'n?

Besides, I couldn't do no else; Miss S. suz she to me,

'You've sheered my bed,' [thet's when I paid my interduction fee

To Southun rites,] 'an' kep' your sheer,' [wal, I allow it sticked

So 's 't I wuz most six weeks in jail afore I gut me picked,]

'Ner never paid no demmiges; but thet wun't do no harm,

Pervidin' thet you'll ondertake to oversee the farm;

(My eldes' boy he's so took up, wut with the Ringtail Rangers

An' settin' in the Jestice-Court for welcomin' o' strangers;') 260

[He sot on \_me;\_] 'an' so, ef you'll jest ondertake the care

Upon a mod'rit sellery, we'll up an' call it square;

But ef you \_can't\_ conclude,' suz she, an' give a kin' o' grin,

'Wy, the Gran' Jurymen, I 'xpect, 'll hev to set agin.'

That's the way metters stood at fust; now wut wuz I to du,

But jes' to make the best on 't an' off coat an' buckle tu?

Ther' ain't a livin' man thet finds an income necessarier

Than me,--bimeby I'll tell ye how I fin'lly come to merry her.

She hed another motive, tu: I mention of it here

T' encourage lads thet's growin' up to study 'n' persevere, 270

An' show 'em how much better 't pays to mind their winter-schoolin'

Than to go off on benders 'n' sech, an' waste their time in foolin';

Ef 'twarn't for studyin' evenins, why, I never 'd ha' ben here

A orn'ment o' saciety, in my approprut spear:

She wanted somebody, ye see, o' taste an' cultivation,

To talk along o' preachers when they stopt to the plantation;

For folks in Dixie th't read an' rite, onless it is by jarks,

Is skurce ez wut they wuz among th' origenle patriarchs;

To fit a feller f' wut they call the soshle higherarchy,

All thet you've gut to know is jes' beyond an evrage darky; 280

Schoolin' 's wut they can't seem to stan', they 're tu consarned

high-pressure,

An' knowin' t' much might spile a boy for hem' a Secesher.

We hain't no settled preachin' here, ner ministeril taxes;

The min'ster's only settlement's the carpet-bag he packs his

Razor an' soap-brush intu, with his hym-book an' his Bible,--

But they \_du\_ preach, I swan to man, it's puf'kly indescrib'le!

They go it like an Ericsson's ten-hoss-power coleric ingine,

An' make Ole Split-Foot winch an' squirm, for all he's used to singein';

Hawkins's whetstone ain't a pinch o' primin' to the innards

To hearin' on 'em put free grace t' a lot o' tough old sinhards! 290

But I must eend this letter now: 'fore long I'll send a fresh un;

I've lots o' things to write about, perticklerly Seceshun:

I'm called off now to mission-work, to let a leetle law in

To Cynthy's hide: an' so, till death,

Yourn,

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

No. II

MASON AND SLIDELL: A YANKEE IDYLL

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 6th Jan., 1862.

Gentlemen,--I was highly gratified by the insertion of a portion of my

letter in the last number of your valuable and entertaining Miscellany,

though in a type which rendered its substance inaccessible even to the

beautiful new spectacles presented to me by a Committee of the Parish on

New Year's Day. I trust that I was able to bear your very considerable

abridgment of my lucubrations with a spirit becoming a Christian. My

third granddaughter, Rebekah, aged fourteen years, and whom I have

trained to read slowly and with proper emphasis (a practice too much

neglected in our modern systems of education), read aloud to me the

excellent essay upon 'Old Age,' the author of which I cannot help

suspecting to be a young man who has never yet known what it was to have

snow (\_canities morosa\_) upon his own roof. \_Dissolve frigus, large

super foco ligna reponens\_, is a rule for the young, whose woodpile is

yet abundant for such cheerful lenitives. A good life behind him is the

best thing to keep an old man's shoulders from shivering at every

breath of sorrow or ill-fortune. But methinks it were easier for an old

man to feel the disadvantages of youth than the advantages of age. Of

these latter I reckon one of the chiefest to be this: that we attach a

less inordinate value to our own productions, and, distrusting daily

more and more our own wisdom (with the conceit whereof at twenty we wrap

ourselves away from knowledge as with a garment), do reconcile ourselves

with the wisdom of God. I could have wished, indeed, that room might

have been made for the residue of the anecdote relating to Deacon

Tinkham, which would not only have gratified a natural curiosity on the

part of the publick (as I have reason to know from several letters of

inquiry already received), but would also, as I think, have largely

increased the circulation of your Magazine in this town. \_Nihil humani

alienum\_, there is a curiosity about the affairs of our neighbors which

is not only pardonable, but even commendable. But I shall abide a more

fitting season.

As touching the following literary effort of Esquire Biglow, much might

be profitably said on the topick of Idyllick and Pastoral Poetry, and

concerning the proper distinctions to be made between them, from

Theocritus, the inventor of the former, to Collins, the latest authour I

know of who has emulated the classicks in the latter style. But in the

time of a Civil War worthy a Milton to defend and a Lucan to sing, it

may be reasonably doubted whether the publick, never too studious of

serious instruction, might not consider other objects more deserving of

present attention. Concerning the title of Idyll, which Mr. Biglow has

adopted at my suggestion, it may not be improper to animadvert, that the

name properly signifies a poem somewhat rustick in phrase (for, though

the learned are not agreed as to the particular dialect employed by

Theocritus, they are universanimous both as to its rusticity and its

capacity of rising now and then to the level of more elevated sentiments

and expressions), while it is also descriptive of real scenery and

manners. Yet it must be admitted that the production now in question

(which here and there bears perhaps too plainly the marks of my

correcting hand) does partake of the nature of a Pastoral, inasmuch as

the interlocutors therein are purely imaginary beings, and the whole is

little better than [Greek: kapnou skias onar]. The plot was, as I

believe, suggested by the 'Twa Brigs' of Robert Burns, a Scottish poet

of the last century, as that found its prototype in the 'Mutual

Complaint of Plainstanes and Causey' by Fergusson, though, the metre of

this latter be different by a foot in each verse. Perhaps the Two Dogs

of Cervantes gave the first hint. I reminded my talented young

parishioner and friend that Concord Bridge had long since yielded to the

edacious tooth of Time. But he answered me to this effect: that there

was no greater mistake of an authour than to suppose the reader had no

fancy of his own; that, if once that faculty was to be called into

activity, it were \_better\_ to be in for the whole sheep than the

shoulder; and that he knew Concord like a book,--an expression

questionable in propriety, since there are few things with which he is

not more familiar than with the printed page. In proof of what he

affirmed, he showed me some verses which with others he had stricken

out as too much delaying the action, but which I communicate in this

place because they rightly define 'punkin-seed' (which Mr. Bartlett

would have a kind of perch,--a creature to which I have found a rod or

pole not to be so easily equivalent in our inland waters as in the books

of arithmetic) and because it conveys an eulogium on the worthy son of

an excellent father, with whose acquaintance (\_eheu, fugaces anni!\_) I

was formerly honoured.

'But nowadays the Bridge ain't wut they show,

So much ez Em'son, Hawthorne, an' Thoreau.

I know the village, though; was sent there once

A-schoolin', 'cause to home I played the dunce;

An' I 've ben sence a visitin' the Jedge,

Whose garding whispers with the river's edge,

Where I 've sot mornin's lazy as the bream,

Whose on'y business is to head upstream,

(We call 'em punkin-seed,) or else in chat

Along 'th the Jedge, who covers with his hat

More wit an' gumption an' shrewd Yankee sense

Than there is mosses on an ole stone fence.'

Concerning the subject-matter of the verses. I have not the leisure at

present to write so fully as I could wish, my time being occupied with

the preparation of a discourse for the forthcoming bicentenary

celebration of the first settlement of Jaalam East Parish. It may

gratify the publick interest to mention the circumstance, that my

investigations to this end have enabled me to verify the fact (of much

historick importance, and hitherto hotly debated) that Shearjashub

Tarbox was the first child of white parentage born in this town, being

named in his father's will under date August 7th, or 9th, 1662. It is

well known that those who advocate the claims of Mehetable Goings are

unable to find any trace of her existence prior to October of that year.

As respects the settlement of the Mason and Slidell question, Mr. Biglow

has not incorrectly stated the popular sentiment, so far as I can judge

by its expression in this locality. For myself, I feel more sorrow than

resentment: for I am old enough to have heard those talk of England who

still, even after the unhappy estrangement, could not unschool their

lips from calling her the Mother-Country. But England has insisted on

ripping up old wounds, and has undone the healing work of fifty years;

for nations do not reason, they only feel, and the \_spretÃ¦ injuria

formÃ¦\_ rankles in their minds as bitterly as in that of a woman. And

because this is so, I feel the more satisfaction that our Government has

acted (as all Governments should, standing as they do between the people

and their passions) as if it had arrived at years of discretion. There

are three short and simple words, the hardest of all to pronounce in any

language (and I suspect they were no easier before the confusion of

tongues), but which no man or nation that cannot utter can claim to have

arrived at manhood. Those words are, \_I was wrong;\_ and I am proud that,

while England played the boy, our rulers had strength enough from the

People below and wisdom enough from God above to quit themselves like

men.

The sore points on both sides have been skilfully exasperated by

interested and unscrupulous persons, who saw in a war between the two

countries the only hope of profitable return for their investment in

Confederate stock, whether political or financial. The always

supercilious, often insulting, and sometimes even brutal tone of British

journals and publick men has certainly not tended to soothe whatever

resentment might exist in America.

'Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,

But why did you kick me down stairs?'

We have no reason to complain that England, as a necessary consequence

of her clubs, has become a great society for the minding of other

people's business, and we can smile good-naturedly when she lectures

other nations on the sins of arrogance and conceit: but we may justly

consider it a breach of the political \_convenances\_ which are expected

to regulate the intercourse of one well-bred government with another,

when men holding places in the ministry allow themselves to dictate our

domestic policy, to instruct us in our duty, and to stigmatize as unholy

a war for the rescue of whatever a high-minded people should hold most

vital and most sacred. Was it in good taste, that I may use the mildest

term, for Earl Russell to expound our own Constitution to President

Lincoln, or to make a new and fallacious application of an old phrase

for our benefit, and tell us that the Rebels were fighting for

independence and we for empire? As if all wars for independence were by

nature just and deserving of sympathy, and all wars for empire ignoble

and worthy only of reprobation, or as if these easy phrases in any way

characterized this terrible struggle,--terrible not so truly in any

superficial sense, as from the essential and deadly enmity of the

principles that underlie it. His Lordship's bit of borrowed rhetoric

would justify Smith O'Brien, Nana Sahib, and the Maori chieftains, while

it would condemn nearly every war in which England has ever been

engaged. Was it so very presumptuous in us to think that it would be

decorous in English statesmen if they spared time enough to acquire some

kind of knowledge, though of the most elementary kind, in regard to this

country and the questions at issue here, before they pronounced so

off-hand a judgment? Or is political information expected to come

Dogberry-fashion in England, like reading and writing, by nature?

And now all respectable England is wondering at our irritability, and

sees a quite satisfactory explanation of it in our national vanity.

\_Suave mari magno\_, it is pleasant, sitting in the easy-chairs of

Downing Street, to sprinkle pepper on the raw wounds of a kindred people

struggling for life, and philosophical to find in self-conceit the cause

of our instinctive resentment. Surely we were of all nations the least

liable to any temptation of vanity at a time when the gravest anxiety

and the keenest sorrow were never absent from our hearts. Nor is conceit

the exclusive attribute of any one nation. The earliest of English

travellers, Sir John Mandeville, took a less provincial view of the

matter when he said, 'For fro what partie of the erthe that men duellen,

other aboven or beneathen, it semethe alweys to hem that duellen that

thei gon more righte than any other folke.' The English have always had

their fair share of this amiable quality. We may say of them still, as

the authour of the 'Lettres Cabalistiques' said of them more than a

century ago, \_'Ces derniers disent naturellement qu'il n'y a qu'eux qui

soient estimables\_'. And, as he also says,\_'J'aimerois presque autant

tomber entre les mains d'un Inquisiteur que d'un Anglois qui me fait

sentir sans cesse combien il s'estime plus que moi, et qui ne daigne me

parler que pour injurier ma Nation et pour m'ennuyer du rÃ©cit des

grandes qualitÃ©s de la sienne\_.' Of \_this\_ Bull we may safely say with

Horace, \_habet fÃ¦num in cornu.\_ What we felt to be especially insulting

was the quiet assumption that the descendants of men who left the Old

World for the sake of principle, and who had made the wilderness into a

New World patterned after an Idea, could not possibly be susceptible of

a generous or lofty sentiment, could have no feeling of nationality

deeper than that of a tradesman for his shop. One would have thought, in

listening to England, that we were presumptuous in fancying that we were

a nation at all, or had any other principle of union than that of booths

at a fair, where there is no higher notion of government than the

constable, or better image of God than that stamped upon the current

coin.

It is time for Englishmen to consider whether there was nothing in the

spirit of their press and of their leading public men calculated to

rouse a just indignation, and to cause a permanent estrangement on the

part of any nation capable of self-respect, and sensitively jealous, as

ours then was, of foreign interference. Was there nothing in the

indecent haste with which belligerent rights were conceded to the

Rebels, nothing in the abrupt tone assumed in the Trent case, nothing in

the fitting out of Confederate privateers, that might stir the blood of

a people already overcharged with doubt, suspicion, and terrible

responsibility? The laity in any country do not stop to consider points

of law, but they have an instinctive perception of the \_animus\_ that

actuates the policy of a foreign nation; and in our own case they

remembered that the British authorities in Canada did not wait till

diplomacy could send home to England for her slow official tinder-box to

fire the 'Caroline.' Add to this, what every sensible American knew,

that the moral support of England was equal to an army of two hundred

thousand men to the Rebels, while it insured us another year or two of

exhausting war. It was not so much the spite of her words (though the

time might have been more tastefully chosen) as the actual power for

evil in them that we felt as a deadly wrong. Perhaps the most immediate

and efficient cause of mere irritation was, the sudden and unaccountable

change of manner on the other side of the water. Only six months before,

the Prince of Wales had come over to call us cousins; and everywhere it

was nothing but 'our American brethren,' that great offshoot of British

institutions in the New World, so almost identical with them in laws,

language, and literature,--this last of the alliterative compliments

being so bitterly true, that perhaps it will not be retracted even now.

To this outburst of long-repressed affection we responded with genuine

warmth, if with something of the awkwardness of a poor relation

bewildered with the sudden tightening of the ties of consanguinity when

it is rumored that he has come into a large estate. Then came the

Rebellion, and, \_presto!\_ a flaw in our titles was discovered, the plate

we were promised at the family table is flung at our head, and we were

again the scum of creation, intolerably vulgar, at once cowardly and

overbearing,--no relations of theirs, after all, but a dreggy hybrid of

the basest bloods of Europe. Panurge was not quicker to call Friar John

his \_former\_ friend. I cannot help thinking of Walter Mapes's jingling

paraphrase of Petronius,--

'Dummodo sim splendidis vestibus ornatus,

Et multa familia sim circumvallatus,

Prudens sum et sapiens et morigeratus,

Et tuus nepos sum et tu meus cognatus,'--

which I may freely render thus:--

So long as I was prosperous, I'd dinners by the dozen,

Was well-bred, witty, virtuous, and everybody's cousin;

If luck should turn, as well she may, her fancy is so flexile,

Will virtue, cousinship, and all return with her from exile?

There was nothing in all this to exasperate a philosopher, much to make

him smile rather; but the earth's surface is not chiefly inhabited by

philosophers, and I revive the recollection of it now in perfect

good-humour, merely by way of suggesting to our \_ci-devant\_ British

cousins, that it would have been easier for them to hold their tongues

than for us to keep our tempers under the circumstances.

The English Cabinet made a blunder, unquestionably, in taking it so

hastily for granted that the United States had fallen forever from their

position as a first-rate power, and it was natural that they should vent

a little of their vexation on the people whose inexplicable obstinacy in

maintaining freedom and order, and in resisting degradation, was likely

to convict them of their mistake. But if bearing a grudge be the sure

mark of a small mind in the individual, can it be a proof of high spirit

in a nation? If the result of the present estrangement between the two

countries shall be to make us more independent of British twaddle

(\_Indomito nec dira ferens stipendia Tauro\_), so much the better; but if

it is to make us insensible to the value of British opinion in matters

where it gives us the judgment of an impartial and cultivated outsider,

if we are to shut ourselves out from the advantages of English culture,

the loss will be ours, and not theirs. Because the door of the old

homestead has been once slammed in our faces, shall we in a huff reject

all future advances of conciliation, and cut ourselves foolishly off

from any share in the humanizing influences of the place, with its

ineffable riches of association, its heirlooms of immemorial culture,

its historic monuments, ours no less than theirs, its noble gallery of

ancestral portraits? We have only to succeed, and England will not only

respect, but, for the first time, begin to understand us. And let us

not, in our justifiable indignation at wanton insult, forget that

England is not the England only of snobs who dread the democracy they do

not comprehend, but the England of history, of heroes, statesmen, and

poets, whose names are dear, and their influence as salutary to us as to

her.

Let us strengthen the hands of those in authority over us, and curb our

own tongues, remembering that General Wait commonly proves in the end

more than a match for General Headlong, and that the Good Book ascribes

safety to a multitude, indeed, but not to a mob, of counsellours. Let us

remember and perpend the words of Paulus Emilius to the people of Rome;

that, 'if they judged they could manage the war to more advantage by any

other, he would willingly yield up his charge; but if they confided in

him, \_they were not to make themselves his colleagues in his office, or

raise reports, or criticise his actions, but, without talking, supply

him with means and assistance necessary to the carrying on of the war;

for, if they proposed to command their own commander, they would render

this expedition more ridiculous than the former.' (Vide Plutarchum in

VitÃ¢ P.E.\_) Let us also not forget what the same excellent authour says

concerning Perseus's fear of spending money, and not permit the

covetousness of Brother Jonathan to be the good fortune of Jefferson

Davis. For my own part, till I am ready to admit the Commander-in-Chief

to my pulpit, I shall abstain from planning his battles. If courage be

the sword, yet is patience the armour of a nation; and in our desire for

peace, let us never be willing to surrender the Constitution bequeathed

us by fathers at least as wise as ourselves (even with Jefferson Davis

to help us), and, with those degenerate Romans, \_tuta et prÃ¦sentia quam

vetera et periculosa malle\_.

And not only should we bridle our own tongues, but the pens of others,

which are swift to convey useful intelligence to the enemy. This is no

new inconvenience; for, under date, 3d June, 1745, General Pepperell

wrote thus to Governor Shirley from Louisbourg: 'What your Excellency

observes of the \_army's being made acquainted with any plans proposed,

until ready to be put in execution\_, has always been disagreeable to me,

and I have given many cautions relating to it. But when your Excellency

considers that \_our Council of War consists of more than twenty

members\_, I am persuaded you will think it \_impossible for me to hinder

it\_, if any of them will persist in communicating to inferior officers

and soldiers what ought to be kept secret. I am informed that the Boston

newspapers are filled with paragraphs from private letters relating to

the expedition. Will your Excellency permit me to say I think it may be

of ill consequence? Would it not be convenient, if your Excellency

should forbid the Printers' inserting such news?' Verily, if \_tempora

mutantur\_, we may question the \_et nos mutamur in illis;\_ and if tongues

be leaky, it will need all hands at the pumps to save the Ship of State.

Our history dotes and repeats itself. If Sassycus (rather than

Alcibiades) find a parallel in Beauregard, so Weakwash, as he is called

by the brave Lieutenant Lion Gardiner, need not seek far among our own

Sachems for his anti-type.

With respect,

Your ob't humble serv't

Homer Wilbur, A.M.

I love to start out arter night's begun,

An' all the chores about the farm are done,

The critters milked an' foddered, gates shet fast,

Tools cleaned aginst to-morrer, supper past.

An' Nancy darnin' by her ker'sene lamp,--

I love, I say, to start upon a tramp,

To shake the kinkles out o' back an' legs,

An' kind o' rack my life off from the dregs

Thet's apt to settle in the buttery-hutch

Of folks thet foller in one rut too much: 10

Hard work is good an' wholesome, past all doubt;

But 't ain't so, ef the mind gits tuckered out.

Now, bein' born in Middlesex, you know,

There's certin spots where I like best to go:

The Concord road, for instance (I, for one,

Most gin'lly ollers call it \_John Bull's Run\_).

The field o' Lexin'ton where England tried

The fastest colours thet she ever dyed,

An' Concord Bridge, thet Davis, when he came,

Found was the bee-line track to heaven an' fame, 20

Ez all roads be by natur', ef your soul

Don't sneak thru shun-pikes so's to save the toll.

They're 'most too fur away, take too much time

To visit of'en, ef it ain't in rhyme;

But the' 's a walk thet's hendier, a sight,

An' suits me fust-rate of a winter's night,--

I mean the round whale's-back o' Prospect Hill.

I love to l'iter there while night grows still,

An' in the twinklin' villages about,

Fust here, then there, the well-saved lights goes out, 30

An' nary sound but watch-dogs' false alarms,

Or muffled cock-crows from the drowsy farms,

Where some wise rooster (men act jest thet way)

Stands to 't thet moon-rise is the break o' day;

(So Mister Seward sticks a three-months' pin

Where the war'd oughto eend, then tries agin:

My gran'ther's rule was safer 'n 'tis to crow:

\_Don't never prophesy--onless ye know\_.)

I love to muse there till it kind o' seems

Ez ef the world went eddyin' off in dreams; 40

The northwest wind thet twitches at my baird

Blows out o' sturdier days not easy scared,

An' the same moon thet this December shines

Starts out the tents an' booths o' Putnam's lines;

The rail-fence posts, acrost the hill thet runs,

Turn ghosts o' sogers should'rin' ghosts o' guns;

Ez wheels the sentry, glints a flash o' light,

Along the firelock won at Concord Fight,

An', 'twixt the silences, now fur, now nigh,

Rings the sharp chellenge, hums the low reply. 50

Ez I was settin' so, it warn't long sence,

Mixin' the puffict with the present tense,

I heerd two voices som'ers in the air,

Though, ef I was to die, I can't tell where:

Voices I call 'em: 'twas a kind o' sough

Like pine-trees thet the wind's ageth'rin' through;

An', fact, I thought it \_was\_ the wind a spell,

Then some misdoubted, couldn't fairly tell,

Fust sure, then not, jest as you hold an eel,

I knowed, an' didn't,--fin'lly seemed to feel 60

'Twas Concord Bridge a talkin' off to kill

With the Stone Spike thet's druv thru Bunker's Hill;

Whether 'twas so, or ef I on'y dreamed,

I couldn't say; I tell it ez it seemed.

THE BRIDGE

Wal, neighbor, tell us wut's turned up thet's new?

You're younger 'n I be,--nigher Boston, tu:

An' down to Boston, ef you take their showin',

Wut they don't know ain't hardly wuth the knowin'.

There's \_sunthin'\_ goin' on, I know: las' night

The British sogers killed in our gret fight 70

(Nigh fifty year they hedn't stirred nor spoke)

Made sech a coil you'd thought a dam hed broke:

Why, one he up an' beat a revellee

With his own crossbones on a holler tree,

Till all the graveyards swarmed out like a hive

With faces I hain't seen sence Seventy-five.

Wut \_is\_ the news? 'T ain't good, or they'd be cheerin'.

Speak slow an' clear, for I'm some hard o' hearin'.

THE MONIMENT

I don't know hardly ef it's good or bad,--

THE BRIDGE

At wust, it can't be wus than wut we've had. 80

THE MONIMENT

You know them envys thet the Rebbles sent,

An' Cap'n Wilkes he borried o' the Trent?

THE BRIDGE

Wut! they ha'n't hanged 'em?

Then their wits is gone!

Thet's the sure way to make a goose a swan!

THE MONIMENT

No: England she \_would\_ hev 'em, \_Fee, Faw, Fum!\_

(Ez though she hedn't fools enough to home,)

So they've returned 'em--

THE BRIDGE

\_Hev\_ they? Wal, by heaven,

Thet's the wust news I've heerd sence Seventy-seven!

\_By George\_, I meant to say, though I declare

It's 'most enough to make a deacon swear. 90

THE MONIMENT

Now don't go off half-cock: folks never gains

By usin' pepper-sarse instid o' brains.

Come, neighbor, you don't understan'--

THE BRIDGE

How? Hey?

Not understan'? Why, wut's to hender, pray?

Must I go huntin' round to find a chap

To tell me when my face hez hed a slap?

THE MONIMENT

See here: the British they found out a flaw

In Cap'n Wilkes's readin' o' the law:

(They \_make\_ all laws, you know, an' so, o' course,

It's nateral they should understan' their force:) 100

He'd oughto ha' took the vessel into port,

An' hed her sot on by a reg'lar court;

She was a mail-ship, an' a steamer, tu,

An' thet, they say, hez changed the pint o' view,

Coz the old practice, bein' meant for sails,

Ef tried upon a steamer, kind o' fails;

You \_may\_ take out despatches, but you mus'n't

Take nary man--

THE BRIDGE

You mean to say, you dus'n't!

Changed pint o'view! No, no,--it's overboard

With law an' gospel, when their ox is gored! 110

I tell ye, England's law, on sea an' land,

Hez ollers ben, '\_I've gut the heaviest hand\_.'

Take nary man? Fine preachin' from \_her\_ lips!

Why, she hez taken hunderds from our ships,

An' would agin, an' swear she had a right to,

Ef we warn't strong enough to be perlite to.

Of all the sarse thet I can call to mind,

England \_doos\_ make the most onpleasant kind:

It's you're the sinner ollers, she's the saint;

Wut's good's all English, all thet isn't ain't; 120

Wut profits her is ollers right an' just,

An' ef you don't read Scriptur so, you must;

She's praised herself ontil she fairly thinks

There ain't no light in Natur when she winks;

Hain't she the Ten Comman'ments in her pus?

Could the world stir 'thout she went, tu, ez nus?

She ain't like other mortals, thet's a fact:

\_She\_ never stopped the habus-corpus act,

Nor specie payments, nor she never yet

Cut down the int'rest on her public debt; 130

\_She\_ don't put down rebellions, lets 'em breed,

An' 's ollers willin' Ireland should secede;

She's all thet's honest, honnable, an' fair,

An' when the vartoos died they made her heir.

THE MONIMENT

Wal, wal, two wrongs don't never make a right;

Ef we're mistaken, own up, an' don't fight:

For gracious' sake, ha'n't we enough to du

'thout gettin' up a fight with England, tu?

She thinks we're rabble-rid--

THE BRIDGE

An' so we can't

Distinguish 'twixt \_You oughtn't\_ an' \_You shan't!\_ 140

She jedges by herself; she's no idear

How 't stiddies folks to give 'em their fair sheer:

The odds 'twixt her an' us is plain's a steeple,--

Her People's turned to Mob, our Mob's turned People.

THE MONIMENT

She's riled jes' now--

THE BRIDGE

Plain proof her cause ain't strong,--

The one thet fust gits mad's 'most ollers wrong.

Why, sence she helped in lickin' Nap the Fust,

An' pricked a bubble jest agoin' to bust,

With Rooshy, Prooshy, Austry, all assistin',

Th' ain't nut a face but wut she's shook her fist in, 150

Ez though she done it all, an' ten times more,

An' nothin' never hed gut done afore,

Nor never could agin, 'thout she wuz spliced

On to one eend an' gin th' old airth a hoist.

She \_is\_ some punkins, thet I wun't deny,

(For ain't she some related to you 'n' I?)

But there's a few small intrists here below

Outside the counter o' John Bull an' Co,

An' though they can't conceit how 't should be so,

I guess the Lord druv down Creation's spiles 160

'thout no \_gret\_ helpin' from the British Isles,

An' could contrive to keep things pooty stiff

Ef they withdrawed from business in a miff;

I ha'n't no patience with sech swellin' fellers ez

Think God can't forge 'thout them to blow the bellerses.

THE MONIMENT

You're ollers quick to set your back aridge,

Though 't suits a tom-cat more 'n a sober bridge:

Don't you get het: they thought the thing was planned;

They'll cool off when they come to understand.

THE BRIDGE

Ef \_thet\_'s wut you expect, you'll \_hev\_ to wait; 170

Folks never understand the folks they hate:

She'll fin' some other grievance jest ez good,

'fore the month's out, to git misunderstood.

England cool off! She'll do it, ef she sees

She's run her head into a swarm o' bees.

I ain't so prejudiced ez wut you spose:

I hev thought England was the best thet goes;

Remember (no, you can't), when \_I\_ was reared,

\_God save the King\_ was all the tune you heerd:

But it's enough to turn Wachuset roun' 180

This stumpin' fellers when you think they're down.

THE MONIMENT

But, neighbor, ef they prove their claim at law,

The best way is to settle, an' not jaw.

An' don't le' 's mutter 'bout the awfle bricks

We'll give 'em, ef we ketch 'em in a fix:

That 'ere's most frequently the kin' o' talk

Of critters can't be kicked to toe the chalk;

Your 'You'll see \_nex'\_ time!' an' 'Look out bumby!'

'Most ollers ends in eatin' umble-pie.

'Twun't pay to scringe to England: will it pay 190

To fear thet meaner bully, old 'They'll say'?

Suppose they \_du\_ say; words are dreffle bores,

But they ain't quite so bad ez seventy-fours.

Wut England wants is jest a wedge to fit

Where it'll help to widen out our split:

She's found her wedge, an' 'tain't for us to come

An' lend the beetle thet's to drive it home.

For growed-up folks like us 'twould be a scandle,

When we git sarsed, to fly right off the handle.

England ain't \_all\_ bad, coz she thinks us blind: 200

Ef she can't change her skin, she can her mind;

An' we shall see her change it double-quick.

Soon ez we've proved thet we're a-goin' to lick.

She an' Columby's gut to be fas' friends:

For the world prospers by their privit ends:

'Twould put the clock back all o' fifty years

Ef they should fall together by the ears.

THE BRIDGE

I 'gree to thet; she's nigh us to wut France is;

But then she'll hev to make the fust advances;

We've gut pride, tu, an' gut it by good rights, 210

An' ketch \_me\_ stoopin' to pick up the mites

O' condescension she'll be lettin' fall

When she finds out we ain't dead arter all!

I tell ye wut, it takes more'n one good week

Afore \_my\_ nose forgits it's hed a tweak.

THE MONIMENT

She'll come out right bumby, thet I'll engage,

Soon ez she gits to seein' we're of age;

This talkin' down o' hers ain't wuth a fuss;

It's nat'ral ez nut likin' 'tis to us; 220

Ef we're agoin' to prove we \_be\_ growed-up.

'Twun't be by barkin' like a tarrier pup,

But turnin' to an' makin' things ez good

Ez wut we're ollers braggin' that we could;

We're boun' to be good friends, an' so we'd oughto,

In spite of all the fools both sides the water.

THE BRIDGE

I b'lieve thet's so; but hearken in your ear,--

I'm older'n you,--Peace wun't keep house with Fear;

Ef you want peace, the thing you've gut tu du

Is jes' to show you're up to fightin', tu.

\_I\_ recollect how sailors' rights was won, 230

Yard locked in yard, hot gun-lip kissin' gun;

Why, afore thet, John Bull sot up thet he

Hed gut a kind o' mortgage on the sea;

You'd thought he held by Gran'ther Adam's will,

An' ef you knuckle down, \_he\_'ll think so still.

Better thet all our ships an' all their crews

Should sink to rot in ocean's dreamless ooze,

Each torn flag wavin' chellenge ez it went,

An' each dumb gun a brave man's moniment,

Than seek sech peace ez only cowards crave: 240

Give \_me\_ the peace of dead men or of brave!

THE MONIMENT

I say, ole boy, it ain't the Glorious Fourth:

You'd oughto larned 'fore this wut talk wuz worth.

It ain't \_our\_ nose thet gits put out o' jint;

It's England thet gives up her dearest pint.

We've gut, I tell ye now, enough to du

In our own fem'ly fight, afore we're thru.

I hoped, las' spring, jest arter Sumter's shame,

When every flag-staff flapped its tethered flame,

An' all the people, startled from their doubt, 250

Come must'rin' to the flag with sech a shout,--

I hoped to see things settled 'fore this fall,

The Rebbles licked, Jeff Davis hanged, an' all;

Then come Bull Run, an' \_sence\_ then I've ben waitin'

Like boys in Jennooary thaw for skatin',

Nothin' to du but watch my shadder's trace

Swing, like a ship at anchor, roun' my base,

With daylight's flood an' ebb: it's gittin' slow,

An' I 'most think we'd better let 'em go.

I tell ye wut, this war's a-goin' to cost-- 260

THE BRIDGE

An' I tell \_you\_ it wun't be money lost;

Taxes milks dry, but, neighbor, you'll allow

Thet havin' things onsettled kills the cow:

We've gut to fix this thing for good an' all;

It's no use buildin' wut's a-goin' to fall.

I'm older'n you, an' I've seen things an' men,

An' \_my\_ experunce,--tell ye wut it's ben:

Folks thet worked thorough was the ones thet thriv,

But bad work follers ye ez long's ye live;

You can't git red on 't; jest ez sure ez sin, 270

It's ollers askin' to be done agin:

Ef we should part, it wouldn't be a week

'Fore your soft-soddered peace would spring aleak.

We've turned our cuffs up, but, to put her thru,

We must git mad an' off with jackets, tu;

'Twun't du to think thet killin' ain't perlite,--

You've gut to be to airnest, ef you fight;

Why, two thirds o' the Rebbles 'ould cut dirt,

Ef they once thought thet Guv'ment meant to hurt;

An' I \_du\_ wish our Gin'rals hed in mind 280

The folks in front more than the folks behind;

You wun't do much ontil you think it's God,

An' not constitoounts, thet holds the rod;

We want some more o' Gideon's sword, I jedge,

For proclamations ha'n't no gret of edge;

There's nothin' for a cancer but the knife,

Onless you set by 't more than by your life.

\_I\_'ve seen hard times; I see a war begun

Thet folks thet love their bellies never'd won;

Pharo's lean kine hung on for seven long year; 290

But when 'twas done, we didn't count it dear;

Why, law an' order, honor, civil right,

Ef they \_ain't\_ wuth it, wut \_is\_ wuth a fight?

I'm older'n you: the plough, the axe, the mill,

All kin's o' labor an' all kin's o' skill,

Would be a rabbit in a wile-cat's claw,

Ef 'twarn't for thet slow critter, 'stablished law;

Onsettle \_thet\_, an' all the world goes whiz,

A screw's gut loose in eyerythin' there is:

Good buttresses once settled, don't you fret 300

An' stir 'em; take a bridge's word for thet!

Young folks are smart, but all ain't good thet's new;

I guess the gran'thers they knowed sunthin', tu.

THE MONIMENT

Amen to thet! build sure in the beginnin':

An' then don't never tech the underpinnin':

Th' older a guv'ment is, the better 't suits;

New ones hunt folks's corns out like new boots:

Change jes' for change, is like them big hotels

Where they shift plates, an' let ye live on smells.

THE BRIDGE

Wal, don't give up afore the ship goes down: 310

It's a stiff gale, but Providence wun't drown;

An' God wun't leave us yit to sink or swim,

Ef we don't fail to du wut's right by Him,

This land o' ourn, I tell ye, 's gut to be

A better country than man ever see.

I feel my sperit swellin' with a cry

Thet seems to say, 'Break forth an' prophesy!'

O strange New World, thet yit wast never young,

Whose youth from thee by gripin' need was wrung,

Brown foundlin' o' the woods, whose baby-bed 320

Was prowled roun' by the Injun's cracklin' tread,

An' who grew'st strong thru shifts an' wants an' pains,

Nussed by stern men with empires in their brains,

Who saw in vision their young Ishmel strain

With each hard hand a vassal ocean's mane,

Thou, skilled by Freedom an' by gret events

To pitch new States ez Old-World men pitch tents,

Thou, taught by Fate to know Jehovah's plan

Thet man's devices can't unmake a man,

An' whose free latch-string never was drawed in 330

Against the poorest child of Adam's kin,--

The grave's not dug where traitor hands shall lay

In fearful haste thy murdered corse away!

I see--

Jest here some dogs begun to bark,

So thet I lost old Concord's last remark:

I listened long, but all I seemed to hear

Was dead leaves gossipin' on some birch-trees near;

But ez they hedn't no gret things to say,

An' sed 'em often, I come right away,

An', walkin' home'ards, jest to pass the time, 340

I put some thoughts thet bothered me in rhyme;

I hain't hed time to fairly try 'em on,

But here they be--it's

JONATHAN TO JOHN

It don't seem hardly right, John,

When both my hands was full,

To stump me to a fight, John,--

Your cousin, tu, John Bull!

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess

We know it now,' sez he,

'The lion's paw is all the law,

Accordin' to J.B.,

Thet's fit for you an' me!' 9

You wonder why we're hot, John?

Your mark wuz on the guns,

The neutral guns, thet shot, John,

Our brothers an' our sons:

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess

There's human blood,' sez he,

'By fits an' starts, in Yankee hearts,

Though't may surprise J.B.

More 'n it would you an' me.'

Ef \_I\_ turned mad dogs loose, John,

On \_your\_ front-parlor stairs, 20

Would it jest meet your views, John,

To wait an' sue their heirs?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,

I on'y guess,' sez he,

'Thet ef Vattel on \_his\_ toes fell,

'Twould kind o' rile J.B.,

Ez wal ez you an' me!'

Who made the law thet hurts, John,

\_Heads I win,--ditto tails?\_

'J.B.' was on his shirts, John, 30

Onless my memory fails.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess

(I'm good at thet),' sez he,

'Thet sauce for goose ain't \_jest\_ the juice

For ganders with J.B.,

No more 'n with you or me!'

When your rights was our wrongs, John,

You didn't stop for fuss,--

Britanny's trident prongs, John,

Was good 'nough law for us. 40

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,

Though physic's good,' sez he,

'It doesn't foller thet he can swaller

Prescriptions signed "J.B.,"

Put up by you an' me!'

We own the ocean, tu, John:

You mus'n' take it hard,

Ef we can't think with you, John,

It's jest your own back-yard. 49

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,

Ef \_thet's\_ his claim,' sez he,

'The fencin' stuff'll cost enough

To bust up friend J.B.,

Ez wal ez you an' me!'

Why talk so dreffle big, John,

Of honor when it meant

You didn't care a fig, John,

But jest for \_ten per cent?\_

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess

He's like the rest,' sez he: 60

'When all is done, it's number one

Thet's nearest to J.B.,

Ez wal ez t' you an' me!'

We give the critters back, John,

Cos Abram thought 'twas right;

It warn't your bullyin' clack, John,

Provokin' us to fight.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess

We've a hard row,' sez he,

'To hoe jest now; but thet, somehow, 70

May happen to J.B.,

Ez wal ez you an' me!'

We ain't so weak an' poor, John,

With twenty million people.

An' close to every door, John,

A school-house an' a steeple.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,

It is a fact,' sez he,

'The surest plan to make a Man

Is, think him so, J.B., 80

Ez much ez you or me!'

Our folks believe in Law, John;

An' it's for her sake, now,

They've left the axe an' saw, John,

The anvil an' the plough.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,

Ef 'twarn't for law,' sez he,

'There'd be one shindy from here to Indy;

An' thet don't suit J.B.

(When't ain't 'twixt you an' me!) 90

We know we've got a cause, John,

Thet's honest, just, an' true;

We thought 'twould win applause, John,

Ef nowheres else, from you.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess

His love of right,' sez he,

'Hangs by a rotten fibre o' cotton:

There's natur' in J.B.,

Ez wal 'z in you an' me!'

The South says, '\_Poor folks down!\_' John, 100

An' '\_All men up!\_' say we,--

White, yaller, black, an' brown, John:

Now which is your idee?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,

John preaches wal,' sez he;

'But, sermon thru, an' come to \_du\_,

Why, there's the old J.B.

A-crowdin' you an' me!'

Shall it be love, or hate, John?

It's you thet's to decide; 110

Ain't \_your\_ bonds held by Fate, John,

Like all the world's beside?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess

Wise men forgive,' sez he,

'But not forgit; an' some time yit

Thet truth may strike J.B.,

Ez wal ez you an' me!'

God means to make this land, John,

Clear thru, from sea to sea,

Believe an' understand, John, 120

The \_wuth\_ o' bein' free.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,

God's price is high,' sez he;

'But nothin' else than wut He sells

Wears long, an' thet J.B.

May larn, like you an' me!'

No. III

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN, ESQ., TO MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

\_With the following Letter from the\_ REVEREND HOMER WILBUR, A.M.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 7th Feb., 1862.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,--If I know myself,--and surely a man can hardly be

supposed to have overpassed the limit of fourscore years without

attaining to some proficiency in that most useful branch of learning (\_e

coelo descendit\_, says the pagan poet),--I have no great smack of that

weakness which would press upon the publick attention any matter

pertaining to my private affairs. But since the following letter of Mr.

Sawin contains not only a direct allusion to myself, but that in

connection with a topick of interest to all those engaged in the publick

ministrations of the sanctuary, I may be pardoned for touching briefly

thereupon. Mr. Sawin was never a stated attendant upon my

preaching,--never, as I believe, even an occasional one, since the

erection of the new house (where we now worship) in 1845. He did,

indeed, for a time, supply a not unacceptable bass in the choir; but,

whether on some umbrage (\_omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus\_) taken

against the bass-viol, then, and till his decease in 1850 (\_Ã¦t.\_ 77,)

under the charge of Mr. Asaph Perley, or, as was reported by others, on

account of an imminent subscription for a new bell, he thenceforth

absented himself from all outward and visible communion. Yet he seems to

have preserved (\_altÃ¢ mente repostum\_), as it were, in the pickle of a

mind soured by prejudice, a lasting \_scunner\_, as he would call it,

against our staid and decent form of worship; for I would rather in that

wise interpret his fling, than suppose that any chance tares sown by my

pulpit discourses should survive so long, while good seed too often

fails to root itself. I humbly trust that I have no personal feeling in

the matter; though I know that, if we sound any man deep enough, our

lead shall bring up the mud of human nature at last. The Bretons believe

in an evil spirit which they call \_ar c'houskezik\_, whose office it is

to make the congregation drowsy; and though I have never had reason to

think that he was specially busy among my flock, yet have I seen enough

to make me sometimes regret the hinged seats of the ancient

meeting-house, whose lively clatter, not unwillingly intensified by boys

beyond eyeshot of the tithing-man, served at intervals as a wholesome

\_rÃ©veil\_. It is true, I have numbered among my parishioners some who are

proof against the prophylactick fennel, nay, whose gift of somnolence

rivalled that of the Cretan Rip Van Winkle, Epimenides, and who,

nevertheless, complained not so much of the substance as of the length

of my (by them unheard) discourses. Some ingenious persons of a

philosophick turn have assured us that our pulpits were set too high,

and that the soporifick tendency increased with the ratio of the angle

in which the hearer's eye was constrained to seek the preacher. This

were a curious topick for investigation. There can be no doubt that some

sermons are pitched too high, and I remember many struggles with the

drowsy fiend in my youth. Happy Saint Anthony of Padua, whose finny

acolytes, however they might profit, could never murmur! \_Quare

fremuerunt gentes?\_ Who is he that can twice a week be inspired, or has

eloquence (\_ut ita dicam\_) always on tap? A good man, and, next to

David, a sacred poet (himself, haply, not inexpert of evil in this

particular), has said,--

'The worst speak something good: if all want sense,

God takes a text and preacheth patience.'

There are one or two other points in Mr. Sawin's letter which I would

also briefly animadvert upon. And first, concerning the claim he sets up

to a certain superiority of blood and lineage in the people of our

Southern States, now unhappily in rebellion against lawful authority and

their own better interests. There is a sort of opinions, anachronisms at

once and anachorisms, foreign both to the age and the country, that

maintain a feeble and buzzing existence, scarce to be called life, like

winter flies, which in mild weather crawl out from obscure nooks and

crannies to expatiate in the sun, and sometimes acquire vigor enough to

disturb with their enforced familiarity the studious hours of the

scholar. One of the most stupid and pertinacious of these is the theory

that the Southern States were settled by a class of emigrants from the

Old World socially superior to those who founded the institutions of New

England. The Virginians especially lay claim to this generosity of

lineage, which were of no possible account, were it not for the fact

that such superstitions are sometimes not without their effect on the

course of human affairs. The early adventurers to Massachusetts at least

paid their passages; no felons were ever shipped thither; and though it

be true that many deboshed younger brothers of what are called good

families may have sought refuge in Virginia, it is equally certain that

a great part of the early deportations thither were the sweepings of the

London streets and the leavings of the London stews. It was this my Lord

Bacon had in mind when he wrote: 'It is a shameful and unblessed thing

to take the scum of people and wicked condemned men to be the people

with whom you plant.' That certain names are found there is nothing to

the purpose, for, even had an \_alias\_ been beyond the invention of the

knaves of that generation, it is known that servants were often called

by their masters' names, as slaves are now. On what the heralds call the

spindle side, some, at least, of the oldest Virginian families are

descended from matrons who were exported and sold for so many hogsheads

of tobacco the head. So notorious was this, that it became one of the

jokes of contemporary playwrights, not only that men bankrupt in purse

and character were 'food for the Plantations' (and this before the

settlement of New England), but also that any drab would suffice to wive

such pitiful adventurers. 'Never choose a wife as if you were going to

Virginia,' says Middleton in one of his comedies. The mule is apt to

forget all but the equine side of his pedigree. How early the

counterfeit nobility of the Old Dominion became a topick of ridicule in

the Mother Country may be learned from a play of Mrs. Behn's, founded on

the Rebellion of Bacon: for even these kennels of literature may yield a

fact or two to pay the raking. Mrs. Flirt, the keeper of a Virginia

ordinary, calls herself the daughter of a baronet, 'undone in the late

rebellion,'--her father having in truth been a tailor,--and three of the

Council, assuming to themselves an equal splendor of origin, are shown

to have been, one 'a broken exciseman who came over a poor servant,'

another a tinker transported for theft, and the third 'a common

pickpocket often flogged at the cart's tail.' The ancestry of South

Carolina will as little pass muster at the Herald's Visitation, though I

hold them to have been more reputable, inasmuch as many of them were

honest tradesmen and artisans, in some measure exiles for conscience'

sake, who would have smiled at the high-flying nonsense of their

descendants. Some of the more respectable were Jews. The absurdity of

supposing a population of eight millions all sprung from gentle loins in

the course of a century and a half is too manifest for confutation. But

of what use to discuss the matter? An expert genealogist will provide

any solvent man with a \_genus et pro avos\_ to order. My Lord Burleigh

used to say, with Aristotle and the Emperor Frederick II. to back him,

that 'nobility was ancient riches,' whence also the Spanish were wont to

call their nobles \_ricos hombres\_, and the aristocracy of America are

the descendants of those who first became wealthy, by whatever means.

Petroleum will in this wise be the source of much good blood among our

posterity. The aristocracy of the South, such as it is, has the

shallowest of all foundations, for it is only skin-deep,--the most

odious of all, for, while affecting to despise trade, it traces its

origin to a successful traffick in men, women, and children, and still

draws its chief revenues thence. And though, as Doctor Chamberlayne

consolingly says in his 'Present State of England,' 'to become a

Merchant of Foreign Commerce, without serving any Apprentisage, hath

been allowed no disparagement to a Gentleman born, especially to a

younger Brother,' yet I conceive that he would hardly have made a like

exception in favour of the particular trade in question. Oddly enough

this trade reverses the ordinary standards of social respectability no

less than of morals, for the retail and domestick is as creditable as

the wholesale and foreign is degrading to him who follows it. Are our

morals, then, no better than \_mores\_ after all? I do not believe that

such aristocracy as exists at the South (for I hold with Marius,

\_fortissimum quemque generosissimum\_) will be found an element of

anything like persistent strength in war,--thinking the saying of Lord

Bacon (whom one quaintly called \_inductionis dominus et Verulamii\_) as

true as it is pithy, that 'the more gentlemen, ever the lower books of

subsidies.' It is odd enough as an historical precedent, that, while the

fathers of New England were laying deep in religion, education, and

freedom the basis of a polity which has substantially outlasted any then

existing, the first work of the founders of Virginia, as may be seen in

Wingfield's 'Memorial,' was conspiracy and rebellion,--odder yet, as

showing the changes which are wrought by circumstance, that the first

insurrection, in South Carolina was against the aristocratical scheme of

the Proprietary Government. I do not find that the cuticular aristocracy

of the South has added anything to the refinements of civilization

except the carrying of bowie-knives and the chewing of tobacco,--a

high-toned Southern gentleman being commonly not only \_quadrumanous\_ but

\_quidruminant\_.

I confess that the present letter of Mr. Sawin increases my doubts as to

the sincerity of the convictions which he professes, and I am inclined

to think that the triumph, of the legitimate Government, sure sooner or

later to take place, will find him and a large majority of his newly

adopted fellow-citizens (who hold with DÃ¦dalus, the primal

sitter-on-the-fence, that \_medium tenere tutissimum\_) original Union

men. The criticisms towards the close of his letter on certain of our

failings are worthy to be seriously perpended; for he is not, as I

think, without a spice of vulgar shrewdness. \_Fas est et ab hoste

doceri\_: there is no reckoning without your host. As to the good-nature

in us which he seems to gird at, while I would not consecrate a chapel,

as they have not scrupled to do in France, to \_Notre Dame de la Haine\_

(Our Lady of Hate), yet I cannot forget that the corruption of

good-nature is the generation of laxity of principle. Good-nature is our

national characteristick; and though it be, perhaps, nothing more than a

culpable weakness or cowardice, when it leads us to put up tamely with

manifold impositions and breaches of implied contracts (as too

frequently in our publick conveyances) it becomes a positive crime when

it leads us to look unresentfully on peculation, and to regard treason

to the best Government that ever existed as something with which a

gentleman may shake hands without soiling his fingers. I do not think

the gallows-tree the most profitable member of our \_Sylva;\_ but, since

it continues to be planted, I would fain see a Northern limb ingrafted

on it, that it may bear some other fruit than loyal Tennesseeans.

A relick has recently been discovered on the east bank of Bushy Brook in

North Jaalam, which I conceive to be an inscription in Runick characters

relating to the early expedition of the Northmen to this continent. I

shall make fuller investigations, and communicate the result in due

season.

Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

HOMER WILBUR, A.M.

P.S.--I inclose a year's subscription from Deacon Tinkham.

I hed it on my min' las' time, when I to write ye started,

To tech the leadin' featurs o' my gittin' me convarted;

But, ez my letters hez to go clearn roun' by way o' Cuby,

'Twun't seem no staler now than then, by th' time it gits where you be.

You know up North, though secs an' things air plenty ez you please,

Ther' warn't nut one on 'em thet come jes' square with my idees:

They all on 'em wuz too much mixed with Covenants o' Works,

An' would hev answered jest ez wal for Afrikins an' Turks,

Fer where's a Christian's privilege an' his rewards eusuin',

Ef 'taint perfessin' right and eend 'thout nary need o' doin'? 10

I dessay they suit workin'-folks thet ain't noways pertic'lar,

But nut your Southun gen'leman thet keeps his parpendic'lar;

I don't blame nary man thet casts his lot along o' \_his\_ folks,

But ef you cal'late to save \_me\_, 't must be with folks thet \_is\_ folks;

Cov'nants o' works go 'ginst my grain, but down here I've found out

The true fus'-fem'ly A 1 plan,--here's how it come about.

When I fus' sot up with Miss S., sez she to me, sez she,

'Without you git religion, Sir, the thing can't never be;

Nut but wut I respeck,' sez she, 'your intellectle part,

But you wun't noways du for me athout a change o' heart; 20

Nothun religion works wal North, but it's ez soft ez spruce,

Compared to ourn, for keepin' sound,' sez she, 'upon the goose;

A day's experunce 'd prove to ye, ez easy 'z pull a trigger.

It takes the Southun pint o' view to raise ten bales a nigger;

You'll fin' thet human natur', South, ain't wholesome more 'n skin-deep,

An' once 't a darkie's took with it, he wun't be wuth his keep,'

'How \_shell\_ I git it, Ma'am?'--sez I, 'Attend the nex' camp-meetin','

Sez she, 'an' it'll come to ye ez cheap ez onbleached sheetin'.'

Wal, so I went along an' hearn most an impressive sarmon

About besprinklin' Afriky with fourth-proof dew o' Harmon: 30

He didn't put no weaknin' in, but gin it tu us hot,

'Z ef he an' Satan 'd ben two bulls in one five-acre lot:

I don't purtend to foller him, but give ye jes' the heads;

For pulpit ellerkence, you know, 'most ollers kin' o' spreads.

Ham's seed wuz gin to us in chairge, an' shouldn't we be li'ble

In Kingdom Come, ef we kep' back their priv'lege in the Bible?

The cusses an' the promerses make one gret chain, an' ef

You snake one link out here, one there, how much on 't ud be lef'?

All things wuz gin to man for 's use, his sarvice, an' delight; 39

An' don't the Greek an' Hebrew words thet mean a Man mean White?

Ain't it belittlin' the Good Book in all its proudes' featurs

To think 'twuz wrote for black an' brown an' 'lasses-colored creaturs,

Thet couldn' read it, ef they would, nor ain't by lor allowed to,

But ough' to take wut we think suits their naturs, an' be proud to?

Warn't it more prof'table to bring your raw materil thru

Where you can work it inta grace an' inta cotton, tu,

Than sendin' missionaries out where fevers might defeat 'em,

An' ef the butcher didn' call, their p'rishioners might eat 'em?

An' then, agin, wut airthly use? Nor 'twarn't our fault, in so fur

Ez Yankee skippers would keep on atotin' on 'em over. 50

'T improved the whites by savin' 'em from ary need o' workin',

An' kep' the blacks from bein' lost thru idleness an' shirkin';

We took to 'em ez nat'ral ez a barn-owl doos to mice,

An' hed our hull time on our hands to keep us out o' vice;

It made us feel ez pop'lar ez a hen doos with one chicken,

An' fill our place in Natur's scale by givin' 'em a lickin':

For why should CÃ¦sar git his dues more 'n Juno, Pomp, an' Cuffy?

It's justifyin' Ham to spare a nigger when he's stuffy.

Where'd their soles go tu, like to know, ef we should let 'em ketch

Freeknowledgism an' Fourierism an' Speritoolism an' sech? 60

When Satan sets himself to work to raise his very bes' muss,

He scatters roun' onscriptur'l views relatin' to Ones'mus.

You'd ough' to seen, though, how his facs an' argymunce an' figgers

Drawed tears o' real conviction from a lot o' pen'tent niggers!

It warn't like Wilbur's meetin', where you're shet up in a pew,

Your dickeys sorrin' off your ears, an' bilin' to be thru;

Ther' wuz a tent clost by thet hed a kag o' sunthin' in it,

Where you could go, ef you wuz dry, an' damp ye in a minute;

An' ef you did dror off a spell, ther' wuzn't no occasion

To lose the thread, because, ye see, he bellered like all Bashan. 70

It's dry work follerin' argymunce an' so, 'twix' this an' thet,

I felt conviction weighin' down somehow inside my hat;

It growed an' growed like Jonah's gourd, a kin' o' whirlin' ketched me,

Ontil I fin'lly clean gin out an' owned up thet he'd fetched me;

An' when nine tenths o' th' perrish took to tumblin' roun' an' hollerin',

I didn' fin' no gret in th' way o' turnin' tu an' follerin'.

Soon ez Miss S. see thet, sez she, '\_Thet\_'s wut I call wuth seein'!

\_Thet\_'s actin' like a reas'nable an' intellectle bein'!'

An' so we fin'lly made it up, concluded to hitch hosses,

An' here I be 'n my ellermunt among creation's bosses; 80

Arter I'd drawed sech heaps o' blanks, Fortin at last hez sent a prize,

An' chose me for a shinin' light o' missionary entaprise.

This leads me to another pint on which I've changed my plan

O' thinkin' so's't I might become a straight-out Southun man.

Miss S. (her maiden name wuz Higgs, o' the fus' fem'ly here)

On her Ma's side's all Juggernot, on Pa's all Cavileer,

An' sence I've merried into her an' stept into her shoes,

It ain't more 'n nateral thet I should modderfy my views:

I've ben a-readin' in Debow ontil I've fairly gut

So 'nlightened thet I'd full ez lives ha' ben a Dook ez nut; 90

An' when we've laid ye all out stiff, an' Jeff hez gut his crown,

An' comes to pick his nobles out, \_wun't\_ this child be in town!

We'll hev an Age o' Chivverlry surpassin' Mister Burke's,

Where every fem'ly is fus'-best an' nary white man works:

Our system's sech, the thing'll root ez easy ez a tater;

For while your lords in furrin parts ain't noways marked by natur',

Nor sot apart from ornery folks in featurs nor in figgers,

Ef ourn'll keep their faces washed, you'll know 'em from their niggers.

Ain't \_sech\_ things wuth secedin' for, an' gittin' red o' you

Thet waller in your low idees, an' will tell all is blue? 100

Fact is, we \_air\_ a diff'rent race, an' I, for one, don't see,

Sech havin' ollers ben the case, how w'ever \_did\_ agree.

It's sunthin' thet you lab'rin'-folks up North hed ough' to think on,

Thet Higgses can't bemean themselves to rulin' by a Lincoln,--

Thet men, (an' guv'nors, tu,) thet hez sech Normal names ez Pickens,

Accustomed to no kin' o' work, 'thout 'tis to givin' lickins,

Can't measure votes with folks thet get their living from their farms,

An' prob'ly think thet Law's ez good ez hevin' coats o' arms.

Sence I've ben here, I've hired a chap to look about for me

To git me a transplantable an' thrifty fem'ly-tree, 110

An' he tells \_me\_ the Sawins is ez much o' Normal blood

Ez Pickens an' the rest on 'em, an' older 'n Noah's flood.

Your Normal schools wun't turn ye into Normals, for it's clear,

Ef eddykatin' done the thing, they'd be some skurcer here.

Pickenses, Boggses, Pettuses, Magoffins, Letchers, Polks,--

Where can you scare up names like them among your mudsill folks?

Ther's nothin' to compare with 'em, you'd fin', ef you should glance,

Among the tip-top femerlies in Englan', nor in France:

I've hearn frum 'sponsible men whose word wuz full ez good's their note,

Men thet can run their face for drinks, an' keep a Sunday coat, 120

That they wuz all on 'em come down, an' come down pooty fur,

From folks thet, 'thout their crowns wuz on, ou' doors wouldn' never stir,

Nor thet ther' warn't a Southun man but wut wuz \_primy fashy\_

O' the bes' blood in Europe, yis, an' Afriky an' Ashy:

Sech bein' the case, is 't likely we should bend like cotton wickin',

Or set down under anythin' so low-lived ez a lickin'?

More 'n this,--hain't we the literatoor an science, tu, by gorry?

Hain't we them intellectle twins, them giants, Simms an' Maury,

Each with full twice the ushle brains, like nothin' thet I know,

'thout 'twuz a double-headed calf I see once to a show? 130

For all thet, I warn't jest at fust in favor o' secedin';

I wuz for layin' low a spell to find out where 'twuz leadin',

For hevin' South-Carliny try her hand at sepritnationin',

She takin' resks an' findin' funds, an' we co-operationin',--

I mean a kin' o' hangin' roun' an' settin' on the fence,

Till Prov'dunce pinted how to jump an' save the most expense;

I recollected thet 'ere mine o' lead to Shiraz Centre

Thet bust up Jabez Pettibone, an' didn't want to ventur'

'Fore I wuz sartin wut come out ud pay for wut went in,

For swappin' silver off for lead ain't the sure way to win; 140

(An', fact, it \_doos\_ look now ez though--but folks must live an' larn--

We should git lead, an' more 'n we want, out o' the Old Consarn;)

But when I see a man so wise an' honest ez Buchanan

A-lettin' us hev all the forts an' all the arms an' cannon,

Admittin' we wuz nat'lly right an' you wuz nat'lly wrong,

Coz you wuz lab'rin'-folks an' we wuz wut they call \_bong-tong\_,

An' coz there warn't no fight in ye more 'n in a mashed potater,

While two o' \_us\_ can't skurcely meet but wut we fight by natur',

An' th' ain't a bar-room here would pay for openin' on 't a night;

Without it giv the priverlege o' bein' shot at sight, 150

Which proves we're Natur's noblemen, with whom it don't surprise

The British aristoxy should feel boun' to sympathize,--

Seein' all this, an' seein', tu, the thing wuz strikin' roots

While Uncle Sam sot still in hopes thet some one'd bring his boots,

I thought th' ole Union's hoops wuz off, an' let myself be sucked in

To rise a peg an' jine the crowd thet went for reconstructin',--

Thet is to hev the pardnership under th' ole name continner

Jest ez it wuz, we drorrin' pay, you findin' bone an' sinner,--

On'y to put it in the bond, an' enter 't in the journals,

Thet you're the nat'ral rank an' file, an' we the nat'ral

kurnels. 160

Now this I thought a fees'ble plan, thet 'ud work smooth ez grease,

Suitin' the Nineteenth Century an' Upper Ten idees,

An' there I meant to stick, an' so did most o' th' leaders, tu,

Coz we all thought the chance wuz good o' puttin' on it thru;

But Jeff he hit upon a way o' helpin' on us forrard

By bein' unannermous,--a trick you ain't quite up to, Norrard.

A Baldin hain't no more 'f a chance with them new apple-corers

Than folks's oppersition views aginst the Ringtail Roarers;

They'll take 'em out on him 'bout east,--one canter on a rail

Makes a man feel unannermous ez Jonah in the whale: 170

Or ef he's a slow-moulded cuss thet can't seem quite t' 'gree,

He gits the noose by tellergraph upon the nighes' tree:

Their mission-work with Afrikins hez put 'em up, thet's sartin,

To all the mos' across-lot ways o' preachin' an' convartin';

I'll bet my hat th' ain't nary priest, nor all on 'em together;

Thet cairs conviction to the min' like Reveren' Taranfeather;

Why, he sot up with me one night, an' labored to sech purpose,

Thet (ez an owl by daylight 'mongst a flock o' teazin' chirpers

Sees clearer 'n mud the wickedness o' eatin' little birds)

I see my error an' agreed to shen it arterwurds; 180

An' I should say, (to jedge our folks by facs in my possession,)

Thet three's Unannermous where one's a 'Riginal Secession;

So it's a thing you fellers North may safely bet your chink on,

Thet we're all water-proofed agin th' usurpin' reign o' Lincoln.

Jeff's \_some\_. He's gut another plan thet hez pertic'lar merits,

In givin' things a cheerfle look an' stiffnin' loose-hung sperits;

For while your million papers, wut with lyin' an' discussin',

Keep folks's tempers all on eend a-fumin' an' a-fussin',

A-wondrin' this an' guessin' thet, an' dreadin' every night

The breechin' o' the Univarse'll break afore it's light, 190

Our papers don't purtend to print on'y wut Guv'ment choose,

An' thet insures us all to git the very best o' noose:

Jeff hez it of all sorts an' kines, an' sarves it out ez wanted,

So's't every man gits wut he likes an' nobody ain't scanted;

Sometimes it's vict'ries (they're 'bout all ther' is that's cheap

down here,)

Sometimes it's France an' England on the jump to interfere.

Fact is, the less the people know o' wut ther' is a-doin',

The hendier 'tis for Guv'ment, sence it henders trouble brewin';

An' noose is like a shinplaster,--it's good, ef you believe it,

Or, wut's all same, the other man thet's goin' to receive it: 200

Ef you've a son in th' army, wy, it's comfortin' to hear

He'll hev no gretter resk to run than seein' th' in'my's rear,

Coz, ef an F.F. looks at 'em, they ollers break an' run,

Or wilt right down ez debtors will thet stumble on a dun,

(An' this, ef an'thin', proves the wuth o' proper fem'ly pride,

Fer sech mean shucks ez creditors are all on Lincoln's side);

Ef I hev scrip thet wun't go off no more 'n a Belgin rifle,

An' read thet it's at par on 'Change, it makes me feel deli'fle;

It's cheerin', tu, where every man mus' fortify his bed,

To hear thet Freedom's the one thing our darkies mos'ly dread, 210

An' thet experunce, time 'n' agin, to Dixie's Land hez shown

Ther' 's nothin' like a powder-cask fer a stiddy corner-stone;

Ain't it ez good ez nuts, when salt is sellin' by the ounce

For its own weight in Treash'ry-bons, (ef bought in small amounts,)

When even whiskey's gittin' skurce an' sugar can't be found,

To know thet all the ellerments o' luxury abound?

An' don't it glorify sal'-pork, to come to understand

It's wut the Richmon' editors call fatness o' the land!

Nex' thing to knowin' you're well off is \_nut\_ to know when y' ain't;

An' ef Jeff says all's goin' wal, who'll ventur' t' say it

ain't? 220

This cairn the Constitooshun roun' ez Jeff doos in his hat

Is hendier a dreffle sight, an' comes more kin' o' pat.

I tell ye wut, my jedgment is you're pooty sure to fail,

Ez long 'z the head keeps turnin' back for counsel to the tail:

Th' advantiges of our consarn for bein' prompt air gret,

While, 'long o' Congress, you can't strike, 'f you git an iron het;

They bother roun' with argooin', an' var'ous sorts o' foolin',

To make sure ef it's leg'lly het, an' all the while it's coolin',

So's't when you come to strike, it ain't no gret to wish ye j'y on,

An' hurts the hammer 'z much or more ez wut it doos the iron, 239

Jeff don't allow no jawin'-sprees for three mouths at a stretch,

Knowin' the ears long speeches suits air mostly made to metch;

He jes' ropes in your tonguey chaps an' reg'lar ten-inch bores

An' lets 'em play at Congress, ef they'll du it with closed doors;

So they ain't no more bothersome than ef we'd took an' sunk 'em,

An' yit enj'y th' exclusive right to one another's Buncombe

'thout doin' nobody no hurt, an' 'thout its costin' nothin',

Their pay bein' jes' Confedrit funds, they findin' keep an' clothin';

They taste the sweets o' public life, an' plan their little jobs,

An' suck the Treash'ry (no gret harm, for it's ez dry ez cobs,) 240

An' go thru all the motions jest ez safe ez in a prison,

An' hev their business to themselves, while Buregard hez hisn:

Ez long 'z he gives the Hessians fits, committees can't make bother

'bout whether 't's done the legle way or whether 't's done tother.

An' \_I\_ tell \_you\_ you've gut to larn thet War ain't one long teeter

Betwixt \_I wan' to\_ an' \_'Twun't du\_, debatin' like a skeetur

Afore he lights,--all is, to give the other side a millin',

An' arter thet's done, th' ain't no resk but wut the lor'll be willin';

No metter wut the guv'ment is, ez nigh ez I can hit it,

A lickin' 's constitooshunal, pervidin' \_We\_ don't git it. 250

Jeff don't stan' dilly-dallyin', afore he takes a fort,

(With no one in,) to git the leave o' the nex' Soopreme Court,

Nor don't want forty-'leven weeks o' jawin' an' expoundin',

To prove a nigger hez a right to save him, ef he's drowndin';

Whereas ole Abe 'ud sink afore he'd let a darkie boost him,

Ef Taney shouldn't come along an' hedn't interdooced him.

It ain't your twenty millions thet'll ever block Jeff's game,

But one Man thet wun't let 'em jog jest ez he's takin' aim:

Your numbers they may strengthen ye or weaken ye, ez 't heppens

They're willin' to be helpin' hands or wuss-'n-nothin' cap'ns. 260

I've chose my side, an' 'tain't no odds ef I wuz drawed with magnets,

Or ef I thought it prudenter to jine the nighes' bagnets;

I've made my ch'ice, an' ciphered out, from all I see an' heard,

Th' ole Constitooshun never'd git her decks for action cleared,

Long 'z you elect for Congressmen poor shotes thet want to go

Coz they can't seem to git their grub no otherways than so,

An' let your bes' men stay to home coz they wun't show ez talkers,

Nor can't be hired to fool ye an' sof'-soap ye at a caucus,--

Long 'z ye set by Rotashun more 'n ye do by folks's merits, 269

Ez though experunce thriv by change o' sile, like corn an' kerrits,--

Long 'z you allow a critter's 'claims' coz, spite o' shoves an' tippins,

He's kep' his private pan jest where 'twould ketch mos' public

drippin's,--

Long 'z A.'ll turn tu an' grin' B.'s exe, ef B.'ll help him grin' hisn,

(An' thet's the main idee by which your leadin' men hev risen,)--

Long 'z you let \_ary\_ exe be groun', 'less 'tis to cut the weasan'

O' sneaks thet dunno till they're told wut is an' wut ain't Treason,--

Long 'z ye give out commissions to a lot o' peddlin' drones

Thet trade in whiskey with their men an' skin 'em to their bones,--

Long 'z ye sift out 'safe' canderdates thet no one ain't afeared on

Coz they're so thund'rin' eminent for bein' never heard on, 280

An' hain't no record, ez it's called, for folks to pick a hole in,

Ez ef it hurt a man to hev a body with a soul in,

An' it wuz ostentashun to be showin' on 't about,

When half his feller-citizens contrive to du without,--

Long 'z you suppose your votes can turn biled kebbage into brain,

An' ary man thet's pop'lar's fit to drive a lightnin'-train,--

Long 'z you believe democracy means \_I'm ez good ez you be,\_

An' that a feller from the ranks can't be a knave or booby,--

Long 'z Congress seems purvided, like yer street-cars an' yer 'busses,

With ollers room for jes' one more o' your spiled-in-bakin'

cusses, 290

Dough 'thout the emptins of a soul, an' yit with means about 'em

(Like essence-peddlers[23]) thet'll make folks long to be without 'em,

Jes heavy 'nough to turn a scale thet's doubtfle the wrong way,

An' make their nat'ral arsenal o' bein' nasty pay.--

Long 'z them things last, (an' \_I\_ don't see no gret signs of improvin',)

I sha'n't up stakes, not hardly yit, nor 'twouldn't pay for movin':

For, 'fore you lick us, it'll be the long'st day ever \_you\_ see.

Yourn, (ez I 'xpec' to be nex' spring,)

B., MARKISS O' BIG BOOSY.

No. IV

A MESSAGE OF JEFF DAVIS IN SECRET SESSION

\_Conjecturally reported by\_ H. BIGLOW

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 10th March, 1862.

GENTLEMEN,--My leisure has been so entirely occupied with the hitherto

fruitless endeavour to decypher the Runick inscription whose fortunate

discovery I mentioned in my last communication, that I have not found

time to discuss, as I had intended, the great problem of what we are to

do with slavery,--a topick on which the publick mind in this place is at

present more than ever agitated. What my wishes and hopes are I need not

say, but for safe conclusions I do not conceive that we are yet in

possession of facts enough on which to bottom them with certainty.

Acknowledging the hand of Providence, as I do, in all events, I am

sometimes inclined to think that they are wiser than we, and am willing

to wait till we have made this continent once more a place where freemen

can live in security and honour, before assuming any further

responsibility. This is the view taken by my neighbour Habakkuk

Sloansure, Esq., the president of our bank, whose opinion in the

practical affairs of life has great weight with me, as I have generally

found it to be justified by the event, and whose counsel, had I followed

it, would have saved me from an unfortunate investment of a considerable

part of the painful economies of half a century in the Northwest-Passage

Tunnel. After a somewhat animated discussion with this gentleman a few

days since, I expanded, on the \_audi alteram partem\_ principle,

something which he happened to say by way of illustration, into the

following fable.

FESTINA LENTE

Once on a time there was a pool

Fringed all about with flag-leaves cool

And spotted with cow-lilies garish,

Of frogs and pouts the ancient parish.

Alders the creaking redwings sink on,

Tussocks that house blithe Bob o' Lincoln

Hedged round the unassailed seclusion,

Where muskrats piled their cells Carthusian;

And many a moss-embroidered log,

The watering-place of summer frog,

Slept and decayed with patient skill,

As watering-places sometimes will.

Now in this Abbey of Theleme,

Which realized the fairest dream

That ever dozing bull-frog had,

Sunned on a half-sunk lily-pad,

There rose a party with a mission

To mend the polliwogs' condition,

Who notified the selectmen

To call a meeting there and then.

'Some kind of steps,' they said, 'are needed;

They don't come on so fast as we did:

Let's dock their tails; if that don't make 'em

Frogs by brevet, the Old One take 'em!

That boy, that came the other day

To dig some flag-root down this way,

His jack-knife left, and 'tis a sign

That Heaven approves of our design:

'Twere wicked not to urge the step on,

When Providence has sent the weapon.'

Old croakers, deacons of the mire,

That led the deep batrachian choir,

\_Uk! Uk! Caronk!\_ with bass that might

Have left Lablache's out of sight,

Shook nobby heads, and said, 'No go!

You'd better let 'em try to grow:

Old Doctor Time is slow, but still

He does know how to make a pill.'

But vain was all their hoarsest bass,

Their old experience out of place,

And spite of croaking and entreating,

The vote was carried in marsh-meeting.

'Lord knows,' protest the polliwogs,

'We're anxious to be grown-up frogs;

But don't push in to do the work

Of Nature till she prove a shirk;

'Tis not by jumps that she advances,

But wins her way by circumstances;

Pray, wait awhile, until you know

We're so contrived as not to grow;

Let Nature take her own direction,

And she'll absorb our imperfection;

\_You\_ mightn't like 'em to appear with,

But we must have the things to steer with.'

'No,' piped the party of reform,

'All great results are ta'en by storm;

Fate holds her best gifts till we show

We've strength to make her let them go;

The Providence that works in history,

And seems to some folks such a mystery,

Does not creep slowly on \_incog.\_,

But moves by jumps, a mighty frog;

No more reject the Age's chrism,

Your queues are an anachronism;

No more the Future's promise mock,

But lay your tails upon the block,

Thankful that we the means have voted

To have you thus to frogs promoted.'

The thing was done, the tails were cropped.

And home each philotadpole hopped,

In faith rewarded to exult,

And wait the beautiful result.

Too soon it came; our pool, so long

The theme of patriot bull-frog's song,

Next day was reeking, fit to smother,

With heads and tails that missed each other,--

Here snoutless tails, there tailless snouts;

The only gainers were the pouts.

MORAL

From lower to the higher next,

Not to the top, is Nature's text;

And embryo Good, to reach full stature,

Absorbs the Evil in its nature.

I think that nothing will ever give permanent peace and security to this

continent but the extirpation of Slavery therefrom, and that the

occasion is nigh; but I would do nothing hastily or vindictively, nor

presume to jog the elbow of Providence. No desperate measures for me

till we are sure that all others are hopeless,--\_flectere si nequeo\_

SUPEROS, \_Acheronta movebo\_. To make Emancipation a reform instead of a

revolution is worth a little patience, that we may have the Border

States first, and then the non-slaveholders of the Cotton States, with

us in principle,--a consummation that seems to be nearer than many

imagine. \_Fiat justitia, ruat coelum\_, is not to be taken in a literal

sense by statesmen, whose problem is to get justice done with as little

jar as possible to existing order, which has at least so much of heaven

in it that it is not chaos. Our first duty toward our enslaved brother

is to educate him, whether he be white or black. The first need of the

free black is to elevate himself according to the standard of this

material generation. So soon as the Ethiopian goes in his chariot, he

will find not only Apostles, but Chief Priests and Scribes and Pharisees

willing to ride with him.

'Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se

Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.'

I rejoice in the President's late Message, which at last proclaims the

Government on the side of freedom, justice, and sound policy.

As I write, comes the news of our disaster at Hampton Roads. I do not

understand the supineness which, after fair warning, leaves wood to an

unequal conflict with iron. It is not enough merely to have the right on

our side, if we stick to the old flint-lock of tradition. I have

observed in my parochial experience (\_haud ignarus mali\_) that the Devil

is prompt to adopt the latest inventions of destructive warfare, and may

thus take even such a three-decker as Bishop Butler at an advantage. It

is curious, that, as gunpowder made armour useless on shore, so armour

is having its revenge by baffling its old enemy at sea; and that, while

gunpowder robbed land warfare of nearly all its picturesqueness to give

even greater stateliness and sublimity to a sea-fight, armour bids fair

to degrade the latter into a squabble between two iron-shelled turtles.

Yours, with esteem and respect,

HOMER WILBUR, A.M.

P.S.--I had wellnigh forgotten to say that the object of this letter is

to enclose a communication from the gifted pen of Mr. Biglow.

I sent you a messige, my friens, t'other day,

To tell you I'd nothin' pertickler to say:

'twuz the day our new nation gut kin' o' stillborn,

So 'twuz my pleasant dooty t' acknowledge the corn,

An' I see clearly then, ef I didn't before,

Thet the \_augur\_ in inauguration means \_bore\_.

I needn't tell \_you\_ thet my messige wuz written

To diffuse correc' notions in France an' Gret Britten,

An' agin to impress on the poppylar mind

The comfort an' wisdom o' goin' it blind,-- 10

To say thet I didn't abate not a hooter

O' my faith in a happy an' glorious futur',

Ez rich in each soshle an' p'litickle blessin'

Ez them thet we now hed the joy o' possessin',

With a people united, an' longin' to die

For wut \_we\_ call their country, without askin' why,

An' all the gret things we concluded to slope for

Ez much within reach now ez ever--to hope for.

We've gut all the ellerments, this very hour,

Thet make up a fus'-class, self-governin' power: 20

We've a war, an' a debt, an' a flag; an' ef this

Ain't to be inderpendunt, why, wut on airth is?

An' nothin' now henders our takin' our station

Ez the freest, enlightenedest, civerlized nation,

Built up on our bran'-new politickle thesis

Thet a Gov'ment's fust right is to tumble to pieces,--

I say nothin' henders our takin' our place

Ez the very fus'-best o' the whole human race,

A spittin' tobacker ez proud ez you please

On Victory's bes' carpets, or loaf-in' at ease 30

In the Tool'ries front-parlor, discussin' affairs

With our heels on the backs o' Napoleon's new chairs,

An' princes a-mixin' our cocktails an' slings,--

Excep', wal, excep' jest a very few things,

Sech ez navies an' armies an' wherewith to pay,

An' gettin' our sogers to run t'other way,

An' not be too over-pertickler in tryin'

To hunt up the very las' ditches to die in.

Ther' are critters so base thet they want it explained

Jes' wut is the totle amount thet we've gained, 40

Ez ef we could maysure stupenjious events

By the low Yankee stan'ard o' dollars an' cents:

They seem to forgit, thet, sence last year revolved,

We've succeeded in gittin' seceshed an' dissolved,

An' thet no one can't hope to git thru dissolootion

'thout some kin' o' strain on the best Constitootion.

Who asks for a prospec' more flettrin' an' bright,

When from here clean to Texas it's all one free fight?

Hain't we rescued from Seward the gret leadin' featurs

Thet makes it wuth while to be reasonin' creators? 50

Hain't we saved Habus Coppers, improved it in fact,

By suspendin' the Unionists 'stid o' the Act?

Ain't the laws free to all? Where on airth else d' ye see

Every freeman improvin' his own rope an' tree?

Ain't our piety sech (in our speeches an' messiges)

Ez t' astonish ourselves in the bes'-composed pessiges,

An' to make folks thet knowed us in th' ole state o' things

Think convarsion ez easy ez drinkin' gin-slings?

It's ne'ssary to take a good confident tone

With the public; but here, jest amongst us, I own 60

Things look blacker 'n thunder. Ther' 's no use denyin'

We're clean out o' money, an' 'most out o' lyin';

Two things a young nation can't mennage without,

Ef she wants to look wal at her fust comin' out;

For the fust supplies physickle strength, while the second

Gives a morril advantage thet's hard to be reckoned:

For this latter I'm willin' to du wut I can;

For the former you'll hev to consult on a plan,--

Though our \_fust\_ want (an' this pint I want your best views on)

Is plausible paper to print I.O.U.s on. 70

Some gennlemen think it would cure all our cankers

In the way o' finance, ef we jes' hanged the bankers;

An' I own the proposle 'ud square with my views,

Ef their lives wuzn't all thet we'd left 'em to lose.

Some say thet more confidence might be inspired,

Ef we voted our cities an' towns to be fired,--

A plan thet 'ud suttenly tax our endurance,

Coz 'twould be our own bills we should git for th' insurance;

But cinders, no matter how sacred we think 'em,

Mightn't strike furrin minds ez good sources of income, 80

Nor the people, perhaps, wouldn't like the eclaw

O' bein' all turned into paytriots by law.

Some want we should buy all the cotton an' burn it,

On a pledge, when we've gut thru the war, to return it,--

Then to take the proceeds an' hold \_them\_ ez security

For an issue o' bonds to be met at maturity

With an issue o' notes to be paid in hard cash

On the fus' Monday follerin' the 'tarnal Allsmash:

This hez a safe air, an', once hold o' the gold,

'ud leave our vile plunderers out in the cold, 90

An' \_might\_ temp' John Bull, ef it warn't for the dip he

Once gut from the banks o' my own Massissippi.

Some think we could make, by arrangin' the figgers,

A hendy home-currency out of our niggers;

But it wun't du to lean much on ary sech staff,

For they're gittin' tu current a'ready, by half.

One gennleman says, ef we lef' our loan out

Where Floyd could git hold on 't \_he\_'d take it, no doubt;

But 'tain't jes' the takin', though 't hez a good look,

We mus' git sunthin' out on it arter it's took, 100

An' we need now more'n ever, with sorrer I own,

Thet some one another should let us a loan,

Sence a soger wun't fight, on'y jes' while he draws his

Pay down on the nail, for the best of all causes,

'thout askin' to know wut the quarrel's about,--

An' once come to thet, why, our game is played out.

It's ez true ez though I shouldn't never hev said it,

Thet a hitch hez took place in our system o' credit;

I swear it's all right in my speeches an' messiges,

But ther's idees afloat, ez ther' is about sessiges: 110

Folks wun't take a bond ez a basis to trade on,

Without nosin' round to find out wut it's made on,

An' the thought more an' more thru the public min' crosses

Thet our Treshry hez gut 'mos' too many dead hosses.

Wut's called credit, you see, is some like a balloon,

Thet looks while it's up 'most ez harnsome 'z a moon,

But once git a leak in 't, an' wut looked so grand

Caves righ' down in a jiffy ez flat ez your hand.

Now the world is a dreffle mean place, for our sins,

Where ther' ollus is critters about with long pins 120

A-prickin' the bubbles we've blowed with sech care,

An' provin' ther' 's nothin' inside but bad air:

They're all Stuart Millses, poor-white trash, an' sneaks,

Without no more chivverlry 'n Choctaws or Creeks,

Who think a real gennleman's promise to pay

Is meant to be took in trade's ornery way:

Them fellers an' I couldn' never agree;

They're the nateral foes o' the Southun Idee;

I'd gladly take all of our other resks on me

To be red o' this low-lived politikle 'con'my! 130

Now a dastardly notion is gittin' about

Thet our bladder is bust an' the gas oozin' out,

An' onless we can mennage in some way to stop it,

Why, the thing's a gone coon, an' we might ez wal drop it.

Brag works wal at fust, but it ain't jes' the thing

For a stiddy inves'ment the shiners to bring,

An' votin' we're prosp'rous a hundred times over

Wun't change bein' starved into livin' in clover.

Manassas done sunthin' tow'rds drawin' the wool

O'er the green, antislavery eyes o' John Bull: 140

Oh, \_warn't\_ it a godsend, jes' when sech tight fixes

Wuz crowdin' us mourners, to throw double-sixes!

I wuz tempted to think, an' it wuzn't no wonder,

Ther' wuz really a Providence,--over or under,--

When, all packed for Nashville, I fust ascertained

From the papers up North wut a victory we'd gained.

'twuz the time for diffusin' correc' views abroad

Of our union an' strength an' relyin' on God;

An', fact, when I'd gut thru my fust big surprise,

I much ez half b'lieved in my own tallest lies, 150

An' conveyed the idee thet the whole Southun popperlace

Wuz Spartans all on the keen jump for Thermopperlies,

Thet set on the Lincolnites' bombs till they bust,

An' fight for the priv'lege o' dyin' the fust;

But Roanoke, Bufort, Millspring, an' the rest

Of our recent starn-foremost successes out West,

Hain't left us a foot for our swellin' to stand on,--

We've showed \_too\_ much o' wut Buregard calls \_abandon\_,

For all our Thermopperlies (an' it's a marcy

We hain't hed no more) hev ben clean vicy-varsy, 160

An' wut Spartans wuz lef' when the battle wuz done

Wuz them thet wuz too unambitious to run.

Oh, ef we hed on'y jes' gut Reecognition,

Things now would ha' ben in a different position!

You'd ha' hed all you wanted: the paper blockade

Smashed up into toothpicks; unlimited trade

In the one thing thet's needfle, till niggers, I swow,

Hed ben thicker'n provisional shin-plasters now;

Quinine by the ton 'ginst the shakes when they seize ye;

Nice paper to coin into C.S.A. specie; 170

The voice of the driver'd be heerd in our land,

An' the univarse scringe, ef we lifted our hand:

Wouldn't \_thet\_ be some like a fulfillin' the prophecies,

With all the fus' fem'lies in all the fust offices?

'twuz a beautiful dream, an' all sorrer is idle,--

But \_ef\_ Lincoln \_would\_ ha' hanged Mason an' Slidell!

For wouldn't the Yankees hev found they'd ketched Tartars,

Ef they'd raised two sech critters as them into martyrs?

Mason \_wuz\_ F.F.V., though a cheap card to win on,

But t'other was jes' New York trash to begin on; 180

They ain't o' no good in European pellices,

But think wut a help they'd ha' ben on their gallowses!

They'd ha' felt they wuz truly fulfillin' their mission,

An' oh, how dog-cheap we'd ha' gut Reecognition!

But somehow another, wutever we've tried,

Though the the'ry's fust-rate, the facs \_wun't\_ coincide:

Facs are contrary 'z mules, an' ez hard in the mouth,

An' they allus hev showed a mean spite to the South.

Sech bein' the case, we hed best look about

For some kin' o' way to slip \_our\_ necks out: 190

Le's vote our las' dollar, ef one can be found,

(An', at any rate, votin' it hez a good sound,)--

Le''s swear thet to arms all our people is flyin',

(The critters can't read, an' wun't know how we're lyin',)--

Thet Toombs is advancin' to sack Cincinnater,

With a rovin' commission to pillage an' slahter,--

Thet we've throwed to the winds all regard for wut's lawfle,

An' gone in for sunthin' promiscu'sly awfle.

Ye see, hitherto, it's our own knaves an' fools

Thet we've used, (those for whetstones, an' t'others ez tools,) 200

An' now our las' chance is in puttin' to test

The same kin' o' cattle up North an' out West,--

Your Belmonts, Vallandighams, Woodses, an' sech,

Poor shotes thet ye couldn't persuade us to tech,

Not in ornery times, though we're willin' to feed 'em

With a nod now an' then, when we happen to need 'em;

Why, for my part, I'd ruther shake hands with a nigger

Than with cusses that load an' don't darst dror a trigger;

They're the wust wooden nutmegs the Yankees perdooce,

Shaky everywheres else, an' jes' sound on the goose; 210

They ain't wuth a cuss, an' I set nothin' by 'em,

But we're in sech a fix thet I s'pose we mus' try 'em.

I--But, Gennlemen, here's a despatch jes' come in

Which shows thet the tide's begun turnin' agin',--

Gret Cornfedrit success! C'lumbus eevacooated!

I mus' run down an' hev the thing properly stated,

An' show wut a triumph it is, an' how lucky

To fin'lly git red o' thet cussed Kentucky,--

An' how, sence Fort Donelson, winnin' the day

Consists in triumphantly gittin' away. 220

No. V

SPEECH OF HONOURABLE PRESERVED DOE IN SECRET CAUCUS

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 12th April, 1862.

GENTLEMEN,--As I cannot but hope that the ultimate, if not speedy,

success of the national arms is now sufficiently ascertained, sure as I

am of the righteousness of our cause and its consequent claim on the

blessing of God, (for I would not show a faith inferior to that of the

Pagan historian with his \_Facile evenit quod Dis cordi est\_,) it seems

to me a suitable occasion to withdraw our minds a moment from the

confusing din of battle to objects of peaceful and permanent interest.

Let us not neglect the monuments of preterite history because what shall

be history is so diligently making under our eyes. \_Cras ingens

iterabimus Ã¦quor;\_ to-morrow will be time enough for that stormy sea;

to-day let me engage the attention of your readers with the Runick

inscription to whose fortunate discovery I have heretofore alluded. Well

may we say with the poet, \_Multa renascuntur quÃ¦ jam cecidere\_. And I

would premise, that, although I can no longer resist the evidence of my

own senses from the stone before me to the ante-Columbian discovery of

this continent by the Northmen, \_gens inclytissima\_, as they are called

in a Palermitan inscription, written fortunately in a less debatable

character than that which I am about to decipher, yet I would by no

means be understood as wishing to vilipend the merits of the great

Genoese, whose name will never be forgotten so long as the inspiring

strains of 'Hail Columbia' shall continue to be heard. Though he must be

stripped also of whatever praise may belong to the experiment of the

egg, which I find proverbially attributed by Castilian authors to a

certain Juanito or Jack, (perhaps an offshoot of our giant-killing

mythus,) his name will still remain one of the most illustrious of

modern times. But the impartial historian owes a duty likewise to

obscure merit, and my solicitude to render a tardy justice is perhaps

quickened by my having known those who, had their own field of labour

been less secluded, might have found a readier acceptance with the

reading publick, I could give an example, but I forbear: \_forsitan

nostris ex ossibus oritur ultor\_.

Touching Runick inscriptions, I find that they may lie classed under

three general heads; 1Âº. Those which are understood by the Danish Royal

Society of Northern Antiquaries, and Professor Rafn, their Secretary;

2Âº. Those which are comprehensible only by Mr. Rafn; and 3Âº. Those

which neither the Society, Mr. Rafn, nor anybody else can be said in any

definite sense to understand, and which accordingly offer peculiar

temptations to enucleating sagacity. These last are naturally deemed the

most valuable by intelligent antiquaries, and to this class the stone

now in my possession fortunately belongs. Such give a picturesque

variety to ancient events, because susceptible oftentimes of as many

interpretations as there are individual archÃ¦ologists; and since facts

are only the pulp in which the Idea or event-seed is softly imbedded

till it ripen, it is of little consequence what colour or flavour we

attribute to them, provided it be agreeable. Availing myself of the

obliging assistance of Mr. Arphaxad Bowers, an ingenious photographick

artist, whose house-on-wheels has now stood for three years on our

Meeting-House Green, with the somewhat contradictory inscription,--'\_our

motto is onward\_,'--I have sent accurate copies of my treasure to many

learned men and societies, both native and European. I may hereafter

communicate their different and (\_me judice\_) equally erroneous

solutions. I solicit also, Messrs. Editors, your own acceptance of the

copy herewith enclosed. I need only premise further, that the stone

itself is a goodly block of metamorphick sandstone, and that the Runes

resemble very nearly the ornithichnites or fossil bird-tracks of Dr.

Hitchcock, but with less regularity or apparent design than is displayed

by those remarkable geological monuments. These are rather the \_non bene

junctarum discordia semina rerum\_. Resolved to leave no door open to

cavil, I first of all attempted the elucidation of this remarkable

example of lithick literature by the ordinary modes, but with no

adequate return for my labour. I then considered myself amply justified

in resorting to that heroick treatment the felicity of which, as applied

by the great Bentley to Milton, had long ago enlisted my admiration.

Indeed, I had already made up my mind, that, in case good fortune should

throw any such invaluable record in my way, I would proceed with it in

the following simple and satisfactory method. Alter a cursory

examination, merely sufficing for an approximative estimate of its

length, I would write down a hypothetical inscription based upon

antecedent probabilities, and then proceed to extract from the

characters engraven on the stone a meaning as nearly as possible

conformed to this \_a priori\_ product of my own ingenuity. The result

more than justified my hopes, inasmuch as the two inscriptions were made

without any great violence to tally in all essential particulars. I then

proceeded, not without some anxiety, to my second test, which was, to

read the Runick letters diagonally, and again with the same success.

With an excitement pardonable under the circumstances, yet tempered with

thankful humility, I now applied my last and severest trial, my

\_experimentum crucis\_. I turned the stone, now doubly precious in my

eyes, with scrupulous exactness upside down. The physical exertion so

far displaced my spectacles as to derange for a moment the focus of

vision. I confess that it was with some tremulousness that I readjusted

them upon my nose, and prepared my mind to bear with calmness any

disappointment that might ensue. But, \_O albo dies notanda lapillo!\_

what was my delight to find that the change of position had effected

none in the sense of the writing, even by so much as a single letter! I

was now, and justly, as I think, satisfied of the conscientious

exactness of my interpretation. It is as follows:

HERE

BJARNA GRIMOLFSSON

FIRST DRANK CLOUD-BROTHER

THROUGH CHILD-OF-LAND-AND-WATER:

that is, drew smoke through a reed stem. In other words, we have here a

record of the first smoking of the herb \_Nicotiana Tabacum\_ by an

European on this continent. The probable results of this discovery are

so vast as to baffle conjecture. If it be objected, that the smoking of

a pipe would hardly justify the setting up of a memorial stone, I

answer, that even now the Moquis Indian, ere he takes his first whiff,

bows reverently toward the four quarters of the sky in succession, and

that the loftiest monuments have been read to perpetuate fame, which is

the dream of the shadow of smoke. The \_Saga\_, it will be remembered,

leaves this Bjarna to a fate something like that of Sir Humphrey

Gilbert, on board a sinking ship in the 'wormy sea,' having generously

given up his place in the boat to a certain Icelander. It is doubly

pleasant, therefore, to meet with this proof that the brave old man

arrived safely in Vinland, and that his declining years were cheered by

the respectful attentions of the dusky denizens of our then uninvaded

forest. Most of all was I gratified, however, in thus linking forever

the name of my native town with one of the most momentous occurrences of

modern times. Hitherto Jalaam, though in soil, climate, and geographical

position as highly qualified to be the theatre of remarkable historical

incidents as any spot on the earth's surface, has been, if I may say it

without seeming to question the wisdom of Providence, almost maliciously

neglected, as it might appear, by occurrences of world-wide interest in

want of a situation. And in matters of this nature it must be confessed

that adequate events are as necessary as the \_vates sacer\_ to record

them. Jaalam stood always modestly ready, but circumstances made no

fitting response to her generous intentions. Now, however, she assumes

her place on the historick roll. I have hitherto been a zealous opponent

of the Circean herb, but I shall now reÃ«xamine the question without

bias.

I am aware that the Rev. Jonas Tutchel, in a recent communication to the

'Bogus Four Corners Weekly Meridian,' has endeavored to show that this

is the sepulchral inscription of Thorwald Eriksson, who, as is

well-known, was slain in Vinland by the natives. But I think he has been

misled by a preconceived theory, and cannot but feel that he has thus

made an ungracious return for my allowing him to inspect the stone with

the aid of my own glasses (he having by accident left his at home) and

in my own study. The heathen ancients might have instructed this

Christian minister in the rites of hospitality; but much is to be

pardoned to the spirit of self-love. He must indeed be ingenious who can

make out the words \_hÃ¨r hvilir\_ from any characters in the inscription

in question, which, whatever else it may be, is certainly not mortuary.

And even should the reverend gentleman succeed in persuading some

fantastical wits of the soundness of his views, I do not see what useful

end he will have gained. For if the English Courts of Law hold the

testimony of gravestones from the burial-grounds of Protestant

dissenters to be questionable, even where it is essential in proving a

descent, I cannot conceive that the epitaphial assertions of heathens

should be esteemed of more authority by any man of orthodox sentiments.

At this moment, happening to cast my eyes upon the stone, whose

characters a transverse light from my southern window brings out with

singular distinctness, another interpretation has occurred to me,

promising even more interesting results. I hasten to close my letter in

order to follow at once the clue thus providentially suggested.

I inclose, as usual, a contribution from Mr. Biglow, and remain,

Gentlemen, with esteem and respect,

Your Obedient Humble Servant,

HOMER WILBUR, A.M.

I thank ye, my frien's, for the warmth o' your greetin':

Ther' 's few airthly blessin's but wut's vain an' fleetin';

But ef ther' is one thet hain't \_no\_ cracks an' flaws,

An' is wuth goin' in for, it's pop'lar applause;

It sends up the sperits ez lively ez rockets,

An' I feel it--wal, down to the eend o' my pockets.

Jes' lovin' the people is Canaan in view,

But it's Canaan paid quarterly t' hev 'em love you;

It's a blessin' thet's breakin' out ollus in fresh spots;

It's a-follerin' Moses 'thout losin' the flesh-pots. 10

But, Gennlemen, 'scuse me, I ain't sech a raw cus

Ez to go luggin' ellerkence into a caucus,--

Thet is, into one where the call comprehen's

Nut the People in person, but on'y their frien's;

I'm so kin' o' used to convincin' the masses

Of th' edvantage o' bein' self-governin' asses,

I forgut thet \_we\_'re all o' the sort thet pull wires

An' arrange for the public their wants an' desires,

An' thet wut we hed met for wuz jes' to agree

Wut the People's opinions in futur' should be. 20

Now, to come to the nub, we've ben all disappinted,

An' our leadin' idees are a kind o' disjinted,

Though, fur ez the nateral man could discern,

Things ough' to ha' took most an oppersite turn.

But The'ry is jes' like a train on the rail,

Thet, weather or no, puts her thru without fail,

While Fac' 's the ole stage thet gits sloughed in the ruts,

An' hez to allow for your darned efs an' buts,

An' so, nut intendin' no pers'nal reflections,

They don't--don't nut allus, thet is,--make connections: 30

Sometimes, when it really doos seem thet they'd oughter

Combine jest ez kindly ez new rum an' water,

Both'll be jest ez sot in their ways ez a bagnet,

Ez otherwise-minded ez th' eends of a magnet,

An' folks like you 'n' me, thet ain't ept to be sold,

Git somehow or 'nother left out in the cold.

I expected 'fore this, 'thout no gret of a row,

Jeff D. would ha' ben where A. Lincoln is now,

With Taney to say 'twuz all legle an' fair,

An' a jury o' Deemocrats ready to swear 40

Thet the ingin o' State gut throwed into the ditch

By the fault o' the North in misplacin' the switch.

Things wuz ripenin' fust-rate with Buchanan to nuss 'em;

But the People--they wouldn't be Mexicans, cuss 'em!

Ain't the safeguards o' freedom upsot, 'z you may say,

Ef the right o' rev'lution is took clean away?

An' doosn't the right primy-fashy include

The bein' entitled to nut be subdued?

The fect is, we'd gone for the Union so strong,

When Union meant South ollus right an' North wrong, 50

Thet the People gut fooled into thinkin' it might

Worry on middlin' wal with the North in the right.

We might ha' ben now jest ez prosp'rous ez France,

Where p'litikle enterprise hez a fair chance,

An' the People is heppy an' proud et this hour,

Long ez they hev the votes, to let Nap hey the power;

But \_our\_ folks they went an' believed wut we'd told 'em

An', the flag once insulted, no mortle could hold 'em.

'Twuz pervokin' jest when we wuz cert'in to win,--

And I, for one, wun't trust the masses agin: 60

For a People thet knows much ain't fit to be free

In the self-cockin', back-action style o' J.D.

I can't believe now but wut half on 't is lies;

For who'd thought the North wuz agoin' to rise,

Or take the pervokin'est kin' of a stump,

'thout 'twuz sunthin' ez pressin' ez Gabr'el's las' trump?

Or who'd ha' supposed, arter \_sech\_ swell an' bluster

'bout the lick-ary-ten-on-ye fighters they'd muster,

Raised by hand on briled lightnin', ez op'lent 'z you please

In a primitive furrest ol femmily-trees,-- 70

Who'd ha' thought thet them Southuners ever 'ud show

Starns with pedigrees to 'em like theirn to the foe,

Or, when the vamosin' come, ever to find

Nat'ral masters in front an' mean white folks behind?

By ginger, ef I'd ha' known half I know now,

When I wuz to Congress, I wouldn't, I swow,

Hey let 'em cair on so high-minded an' sarsy,

'thout \_some\_ show o' wut you may call vicy-varsy.

To be sure, we wuz under a contrac' jes' then

To be dreffle forbearin' towards Southun men; 80

We hed to go sheers in preservin' the bellance;

An' ez they seemed to feel they wuz wastin' their tellents

'thout some un to kick, 'twarn't more 'n proper, you know,

Each should furnish his part; an' sence they found the toe,

An' we wuzn't cherubs--wal, we found the buffer,

For fear thet the Compromise System should suffer.

I wun't say the plan hedn't onpleasant featurs,--

For men are perverse an' onreasonin' creaturs,

An' forgit thet in this life 'tain't likely to heppen

Their own privit fancy should ollus be cappen,-- 90

But it worked jest ez smooth ez the key of a safe,

An' the gret Union bearin's played free from all chafe.

They warn't hard to suit, ef they hed their own way,

An' we (thet is, some on us) made the thing pay:

'twuz a fair give-an'-take out of Uncle Sam's heap;

Ef they took wut warn't theirn, wut we give come ez cheap;

The elect gut the offices down to tide-waiter,

The people took skinnin' ez mild ez a tater.

Seemed to choose who they wanted tu, footed the bills,

An' felt kind o' 'z though they wuz havin' their wills, 100

Which kep' 'em ez harmless an' cherfle ez crickets,

While all we invested wuz names on the tickets;

Wal, ther' 's nothin', for folks fond o' lib'ral consumption

Free o' charge, like democ'acy tempered with gumption!

Now warn't thet a system wuth pains in presarvin',

Where the people found jints an' their frien's done the carvin',--

Where the many done all o' their thinkin' by proxy,

An' were proud on 't ez long ez 'twuz christened Democ'cy,--

Where the few let us sap all o' Freedom's foundations,

Ef you call it reformin' with prudence an' patience, 110

An' were willin' Jeff's snake-egg should hetch with the rest,

Ef you writ 'Constitootional' over the nest?

But it's all out o' kilter, ('twuz too good to last,)

An' all jes' by J.D.'s perceedin' too fast;

Ef he'd on'y hung on for a month or two more,

We'd ha' gut things fixed nicer 'n they hed ben before:

Afore he drawed off an' lef all in confusion,

We wuz safely entrenched in the ole Constitootion,

With an outlyin', heavy-gun, case-mated fort

To rake all assailants,--I mean th' S.J. Court. 120

Now I never'll acknowledge (nut ef you should skin me)

'twuz wise to abandon sech works to the in'my,

An' let him fin' out thet wut scared him so long,

Our whole line of argyments, lookin' so strong,

All our Scriptur an' law, every the'ry an' fac',

Wuz Quaker-guns daubed with Pro-slavery black.

Why, ef the Republicans ever should git

Andy Johnson or some one to lend 'em the wit

An' the spunk jes' to mount Constitootion an' Court

With Columbiad guns, your real ekle-rights sort, 130

Or drill out the spike from the ole Declaration

Thet can kerry a solid shot clearn roun' creation,

We'd better take maysures for shettin' up shop,

An' put off our stock by a vendoo or swop.

But they wun't never dare tu; you'll see 'em in Edom

'fore they ventur' to go where their doctrines 'ud lead 'em:

They've ben takin' our princerples up ez we dropt 'em,

An' thought it wuz terrible 'cute to adopt 'em;

But they'll fin' out 'fore long thet their hope's ben deceivin' 'em,

An' thet princerples ain't o' no good, ef you b'lieve in 'em;

It makes 'em tu stiff for a party to use, 141

Where they'd ough' to be easy 'z an ole pair o' shoes.

If \_we\_ say 'n our pletform thet all men are brothers,

We don't mean thet some folks ain't more so 'n some others;

An' it's wal understood thet we make a selection,

An' thet brotherhood kin' o' subsides arter 'lection.

The fust thing for sound politicians to larn is,

Thet Truth, to dror kindly in all sorts o' harness,

Mus' be kep' in the abstract,--for, come to apply it,

You're ept to hurt some folks's interists by it. 150

Wal, these 'ere Republicans (some on 'em) ects

Ez though gineral mexims 'ud suit speshle facts;

An' there's where we'll nick 'em, there's where they'll be lost;

For applyin' your princerple's wut makes it cost,

An' folks don't want Fourth o' July t' interfere

With the business-consarns o' the rest o' the year,

No more 'n they want Sunday to pry an' to peek

Into wut they are doin' the rest o' the week.

A ginooine statesman should be on his guard,

Ef he \_must\_ hev beliefs, nut to b'lieve 'em tu hard; 160

For, ez sure ez he does, he'll be blartin' 'em out

'thout regardin' the natur' o' man more 'n a spout,

Nor it don't ask much gumption to pick out a flaw

In a party whose leaders are loose in the jaw:

An' so in our own case I ventur' to hint

Thet we'd better nut air our perceedin's in print,

Nor pass resserlootions ez long ez your arm

Thet may, ez things heppen to turn, du us harm;

For when you've done all your real meanin' to smother,

The darned things'll up an' mean sunthin' or 'nother. 170

Jeff'son prob'ly meant wal with his 'born free an' ekle,'

But it's turned out a real crooked stick in the sekle;

It's taken full eighty-odd year--don't you see?--

From the pop'lar belief to root out thet idee,

An', arter all, suckers on 't keep buddin' forth

In the nat'lly onprincipled mind o' the North.

No, never say nothin' without you're compelled tu,

An' then don't say nothin' thet you can be held tu,

Nor don't leave no friction-idees layin' loose

For the ign'ant to put to incend'ary use. 180

You know I'm a feller thet keeps a skinned eye

On the leetle events thet go skurryin' by,

Coz it's of'ner by them than by gret ones you'll see

Wut the p'litickle weather is likely to be.

Now I don't think the South's more 'n begun to be licked,

But I \_du\_ think, ez Jeff says, the wind-bag's gut pricked;

It'll blow for a spell an' keep puffin' an' wheezin',

The tighter our army an' navy keep, squeezin'--

For they can't help spread-eaglein' long 'z ther's a mouth

To blow Enfield's Speaker thru lef' at the South. 190

But it's high time for us to be settin' our faces

Towards reconstructin' the national basis,

With an eye to beginnin' agin on the jolly ticks

We used to chalk up 'hind the back-door o' politics;

An' the fus' thing's to save wut of Slav'ry ther's lef'

Arter this (I mus' call it) imprudence o' Jeff:

For a real good Abuse, with its roots fur an' wide,

Is the kin' o' thing \_I\_ like to hev on my side;

A Scriptur' name makes it ez sweet ez a rose,

An' it's tougher the older an' uglier it grows-- 200

(I ain't speakin' now o' the righteousness of it,

But the p'litickle purchase it gives an' the profit).

Things look pooty squally, it must be allowed,

An' I don't see much signs of a bow in the cloud:

Ther's too many Deemocrats--leaders wut's wuss--

Thet go for the Union 'thout carin' a cuss

Ef it helps ary party thet ever wuz heard on,

So our eagle ain't made a split Austrian bird on.

But ther's still some consarvative signs to be found

Thet shows the gret heart o' the People is sound: 210

(Excuse me for usin' a stump-phrase agin,

But, once in the way on 't, they \_will\_ stick like sin:)

There's Phillips, for instance, hez jes' ketched a Tartar

In the Law-'n'-Order Party of ole Cincinnater;

An' the Compromise System ain't gone out o' reach,

Long 'z you keep the right limits on freedom o' speech.

'Twarn't none too late, neither, to put on the gag,

For he's dangerous now he goes in for the flag.

Nut thet I altogether approve o' bad eggs,

They're mos' gin'ly argymunt on its las' legs,-- 220

An' their logic is ept to be tu indiscriminate,

Nor don't ollus wait the right objecs to 'liminate;

But there is a variety on 'em, you'll find,

Jest ez usefle an' more, besides bein' refined,--

I mean o' the sort thet are laid by the dictionary,

Sech ez sophisms an' cant, thet'll kerry conviction ary

Way thet you want to the right class o' men,

An' are staler than all 't ever come from a hen:

'Disunion' done wal till our resh Southun friends

Took the savor all out on 't for national ends; 230

But I guess 'Abolition' 'll work a spell yit,

When the war's done, an' so will 'Forgive-an'-forgit.'

Times mus' be pooty thoroughly out o' all jint,

Ef we can't make a good constitootional pint;

An' the good time'll come to be grindin' our exes,

When the war goes to seed in the nettle o' texes:

Ef Jon'than don't squirm, with sech helps to assist him,

I give up my faith in the free-suffrage system;

Democ'cy wun't be nut a mite interestin',

Nor p'litikle capital much wuth investin'; 240

An' my notion is, to keep dark an' lay low

Till we see the right minute to put in our blow.--

But I've talked longer now 'n I hed any idee,

An' ther's others you want to hear more 'n you du me;

So I'll set down an' give thet 'ere bottle a skrimmage,

For I've spoke till I'm dry ez a real graven image.

No. VI

SUNTHIN' IN THE PASTORAL LINE

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 17th May, 1862.

GENTLEMEN,--At the special request of Mr. Biglow, I intended to

inclose, together with his own contribution, (into which, at my

suggestion, he has thrown a little more of pastoral sentiment than

usual,) some passages from my sermon on the day of the National Fast,

from the text, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them,'

Heb. xiii, 3. But I have not leisure sufficient at present for the

copying of them, even were I altogether satisfied with the production as

it stands. I should prefer, I confess, to contribute the entire

discourse to the pages of your respectable miscellany, if it should be

found acceptable upon perusal, especially as I find the difficulty in

selection of greater magnitude than I had anticipated. What passes

without challenge in the fervour of oral delivery, cannot always stand

the colder criticism of the closet. I am not so great an enemy of

Eloquence as my friend Mr. Biglow would appear to be from some passages

in his contribution for the current month. I would not, indeed, hastily

suspect him of covertly glancing at myself in his somewhat caustick

animadversions, albeit some of the phrases he girds at are not entire

strangers to my lips. I am a more hearty admirer of the Puritans than

seems now to be the fashion, and believe, that, if they Hebraized a

little too much in their speech, they showed remarkable practical

sagacity as statesmen and founders. But such phenomena as Puritanism are

the results rather of great religious than of merely social convulsions,

and do not long survive them. So soon as an earnest conviction has

cooled into a phrase, its work is over, and the best that can be done

with it is to bury it. \_Ite, missa est\_. I am inclined to agree with Mr.

Biglow that we cannot settle the great political questions which are now

presenting themselves to the nation by the opinions of Jeremiah or

Ezekiel as to the wants and duties of the Jews in their time, nor do I

believe that an entire community with their feelings and views would be

practicable or even agreeable at the present day. At the same time I

could wish that their habit of subordinating the actual to the moral,

the flesh to the spirit, and this world to the other, were more common.

They had found out, at least, the great military secret that soul weighs

more than body.--But I am suddenly called to a sick-bed in the household

of a valued parishioner.

With esteem and respect,

Your obedient servant,

HOMER WILBUR.

Once git a smell o' musk into a draw,

An' it clings hold like precerdents in law:

Your gra'ma'am put it there,--when, goodness knows,--

To jes' this-worldify her Sunday-clo'es;

But the old chist wun't sarve her gran'son's wife,

(For, 'thout new funnitoor, wut good in life?)

An' so ole clawfoot, from the precinks dread

O' the spare chamber, slinks into the shed,

Where, dim with dust, it fust or last subsides

To holdin' seeds an' fifty things besides; 10

But better days stick fast in heart an' husk,

An' all you keep in 't gits a scent o' musk.

Jes' so with poets: wut they've airly read

Gits kind o' worked into their heart an' head,

So's't they can't seem to write but jest on sheers

With furrin countries or played-out ideers,

Nor hev a feelin', ef it doosn't smack

O' wut some critter chose to feel 'way back:

This makes 'em talk o' daisies, larks, an' things,

Ez though we'd nothin' here that blows an' sings,-- 20

(Why, I'd give more for one live bobolink

Than a square mile o' larks in printer's ink,)--

This makes 'em think our fust o' May is May,

Which 'tain't, for all the almanicks can say.

O little city-gals, don't never go it

Blind on the word o' noospaper or poet!

They're apt to puff, an' May-day seldom looks

Up in the country ez it doos in books;

They're no more like than hornets'-nests an' hives,

Or printed sarmons be to holy lives. 30

I, with my trouses perched on cowhide boots,

Tuggin' my foundered feet out by the roots,

Hev seen ye come to fling on April's hearse

Your muslin nosegays from the milliner's,

Puzzlin' to find dry ground your queen to choose,

An' dance your throats sore in morocker shoes:

I've seen ye an' felt proud, thet, come wut would,

Our Pilgrim stock wuz pethed with hardihood.

Pleasure doos make us Yankees kind o' winch,

Ez though 'twuz sunthin' paid for by the inch; 40

But yit we du contrive to worry thru,

Ef Dooty tells us thet the thing's to du,

An' kerry a hollerday, ef we set out,

Ez stiddily ez though 'twuz a redoubt.

I, country-born an' bred, know where to find

Some blooms thet make the season suit the mind,

An' seem to metch the doubtin' bluebird's notes,--

Half-vent'rin' liverworts in furry coats,

Bloodroots, whose rolled-up leaves ef you oncurl,

Each on 'em's cradle to a baby-pearl,-- 50

But these are jes' Spring's pickets; sure ez sin,

The rebble frosts'll try to drive 'em in;

For half our May's so awfully like Mayn't,

'twould rile a Shaker or an evrige saint;

Though I own up I like our back'ard springs

Thet kind o' haggle with their greens an' things,

An' when you 'most give up, 'uthout more words

Toss the fields full o' blossoms, leaves, an' birds;

Thet's Northun natur', slow an' apt to doubt,

But when it \_doos\_ git stirred, ther' 's no gin-out! 60

Fust come the blackbirds clatt'rin' in tall trees,

An' settlin' things in windy Congresses,--

Queer politicians, though, for I'll be skinned

Ef all on 'em don't head aginst the wind,

'fore long the trees begin to show belief,--

The maple crimsons to a coral-reef.

Then saffern swarms swing off from all the willers

So plump they look like yaller caterpillars,

Then gray hossches'nuts leetle hands unfold

Softer 'n a baby's be at three days old: 70

Thet's robin-redbreast's almanick; he knows

Thet arter this ther's only blossom-snows;

So, choosin' out a handy crotch an' spouse,

He goes to plast'rin' his adobe house.

Then seems to come a hitch,--things lag behind.

Till some fine mornin' Spring makes up her mind,

An' ez, when snow-swelled rivers cresh their dams

Heaped-up with ice thet dovetails in an' jams,

A leak comes spirtin' thru some pin-hole cleft,

Grows stronger, fercer, tears out right an' left, 80

Then all the waters bow themselves an' come,

Suddin, in one gret slope o' shedderin' foam,

Jes' so our Spring gits eyerythin' in tune

An' gives one leap from Aperl into June;

Then all comes crowdin' in; afore you think,

Young oak-leaves mist the side-hill woods with pink;

The catbird in the laylock-bush is loud;

The orchards turn to heaps o' rosy cloud;

Red--cedars blossom tu, though few folks know it,

An' look all dipt in sunshine like a poet; 90

The lime-trees pile their solid stacks o'shade

An' drows'ly simmer with the bees' sweet trade;

In ellum-shrouds the flashin' hangbird clings

An' for the summer vy'ge his hammock slings;

All down the loose-walled lanes in archin' bowers

The barb'ry droops its strings o' golden flowers,

Whose shrinkin' hearts the school-gals love to try,

With pins,--they'll worry yourn so, boys, bimeby!

But I don't love your cat'logue style,--do you?--

Ez ef to sell off Natur' by vendoo; 100

One word with blood in 't's twice ez good ez two:

'nuff sed, June's bridesman, poet o' the year,

Gladness on wings, the bobolink, is here;

Half-hid in tip-top apple-blooms he swings,

Or climbs aginst the breeze with quiverin' wings,

Or, givin' way to 't in a mock despair,

Runs down, a brook o' laughter, thru the air.

I ollus feel the sap start in my veins

In Spring, with curus heats an' prickly pains

Thet drive me, when I git a chance to walk 110

Off by myself to hev a privit talk

With a queer critter thet can't seem to 'gree

Along o' me like most folks,--Mister Me.

Ther' 's times when I'm unsoshle ez a stone,

An' sort o' suffercate to be alone,--

I'm crowded jes' to think thet folks are nigh,

An' can't bear nothin' closer than the sky;

Now the wind's full ez shifty in the mind

Ez wut it is ou'-doors, ef I ain't blind,

An' sometimes, in the fairest sou'west weather, 120

My innard vane pints east for weeks together,

My natur' gits all goose-flesh, an' my sins

Come drizzlin' on my conscience sharp ez pins:

Wal, et sech times I jes' slip out o' sight

An' take it out in a fair stan'-up fight

With the one cuss I can't lay on the shelf,

The crook'dest stick in all the heap,--Myself.

'Twuz so las' Sabbath arter meetin'-time:

Findin' my feelin's wouldn't noways rhyme

With nobody's, but off the hendle flew 130

An' took things from an east-wind pint o' view,

I started off to lose me in the hills

Where the pines be, up back o' 'Siah's Mills:

Pines, ef you're blue, are the best friends I know,

They mope an' sigh an' sheer your feelin's so,--

They hesh the ground beneath so, tu, I swan,

You half-forgit you've gut a body on.

Ther' 's a small school'us' there where four roads meet,

The door-steps hollered out by little feet,

An' side-posts carved with names whose owners grew 140

To gret men, some on 'em, an' deacons, tu;

'tain't used no longer, coz the town hez gut

A high-school, where they teach the Lord knows wut:

Three-story larnin' 's pop'lar now: I guess

We thriv' ez wal on jes' two stories less,

For it strikes me ther' 's sech a thing ez sinnin'

By overloadin' children's underpinnin':

Wal, here it wuz I larned my ABC,

An' it's a kind o' favorite spot with me.

We're curus critters: Now ain't jes' the minute 150

Thet ever fits us easy while we're in it;

Long ez 'twuz futur', 'twould be perfect bliss,--

Soon ez it's past, \_thet\_ time's wuth ten o' this;

An' yit there ain't a man thet need be told

Thet Now's the only bird lays eggs o' gold.

A knee-high lad, I used to plot an' plan

An' think 'twuz life's cap-sheaf to be a man:

Now, gittin' gray, there's nothin' I enjoy

Like dreamin' back along into a boy:

So the ole school'us' is a place I choose 160

Afore all others, ef I want to muse;

I set down where I used to set, an' git

My boyhood back, an' better things with it,--

Faith, Hope, an' sunthin', ef it isn't Cherrity,

It's want o' guile, an' thet's ez gret a rerrity,--

While Fancy's cushin', free to Prince and Clown,

Makes the hard bench ez soft ez milk-weed-down.

Now, 'fore I knowed, thet Sabbath arternoon

When I sot out to tramp myself in tune,

I found me in the school'us' on my seat, 170

Drummin' the march to No-wheres with my feet.

Thinkin' o' nothin', I've heerd ole folks say

Is a hard kind o' dooty in its way:

It's thinkin' everythin' you ever knew,

Or ever hearn, to make your feelin's blue.

I sot there tryin' thet on for a spell:

I thought o' the Rebellion, then o' Hell,

Which some folks tell ye now is jest a metterfor

(A the'ry, p'raps, it wun't \_feel\_ none the better for);

I thought o' Reconstruction, wut we'd win 180

Patchin' our patent self-blow-up agin:

I thought ef this 'ere milkin' o' the wits,

So much a month, warn't givin' Natur' fits,--

Ef folks warn't druv, findin' their own milk fail,

To work the cow thet hez an iron tail,

An' ef idees 'thout ripenin' in the pan

Would send up cream to humor ary man:

From this to thet I let my worryin' creep.

Till finally I must ha' fell asleep.

Our lives in sleep are some like streams thet glide 190

'twixt flesh an' sperrit boundin' on each side,

Where both shores' shadders kind o' mix an' mingle

In sunthin' thet ain't jes' like either single;

An' when you cast off moorin's from To-day,

An' down towards To-morrer drift away,

The imiges thet tengle on the stream

Make a new upside-down'ard world o' dream:

Sometimes they seem like sunrise-streaks an' warnin's

O' wut'll be in Heaven on Sabbath-mornin's,

An', mixed right in ez ef jest out o' spite, 200

Sunthin' thet says your supper ain't gone right.

I'm gret on dreams, an' often when I wake,

I've lived so much it makes my mem'ry ache.

An' can't skurce take a cat-nap in my cheer

'thout hevin' 'em, some good, some bad, all queer.

Now I wuz settin' where I'd ben, it seemed,

An' ain't sure yit whether I r'ally dreamed,

Nor, ef I did, how long I might ha' slep',

When I hearn some un stompin' up the step,

An' lookin' round, ef two an' two make four, 210

I see a Pilgrim Father in the door.

He wore a steeple-hat, tall boots, an' spurs

With rowels to 'em big ez ches'nut-burrs,

An' his gret sword behind him sloped away

Long 'z a man's speech thet dunno wut to say.--

'Ef your name's Biglow, an' your given-name

Hosee,' sez he, 'it's arter you I came:

I'm your gret-gran'ther multiplied by three.'--

'My \_wut?\_' sez I.--'Your gret-gret-gret,' sez he:

'You wouldn't ha' never ben here but for me. 220

Two hundred an' three year ago this May

The ship I come in sailed up Boston Bay;

I'd been a cunnle in our Civil War,--

But wut on airth hev \_you\_ gut up one for?

Coz we du things in England, 'tain't for you

To git a notion you can du 'em tu:

I'm told you write in public prints: ef true,

It's nateral you should know a thing or two.'--

'Thet air's an argymunt I can't endorse,--

'twould prove, coz you wear spurs, you kep' a horse: 230

For brains,' sez I, 'wutever you may think,

Ain't boun' to cash the drafs o' pen-an'-ink,--

Though mos' folks write ez ef they hoped jes' quickenin'

The churn would argoo skim-milk into thickenin';

But skim-milk ain't a thing to change its view

O' wut it's meant for more 'n a smoky flue.

But du pray tell me, 'fore we furder go,

How in all Natur' did you come to know

'bout our affairs,' sez I, 'in Kingdom-Come?'--

'Wal, I worked round at sperrit-rappin' some, 240

An' danced the tables till their legs wuz gone,

In hopes o' larnin' wut wuz goin' on,'

Sez he, 'but mejums lie so like all-split

Thet I concluded it wuz best to quit.

But, come now, ef you wun't confess to knowin',

You've some conjectures how the thing's a-goin'.'--

'Gran'ther,' sez I, 'a vane warn't never known

Nor asked to hev a jedgment of its own;

An' yit, ef 'tain't gut rusty in the jints.

It's safe to trust its say on certin pints: 250

It knows the wind's opinions to a T,

An' the wind settles wut the weather'll be.'

'I never thought a scion of our stock

Could grow the wood to make a weather-cock;

When I wuz younger 'n you, skurce more 'n a shaver,

No airthly wind,' sez he, 'could make me waver!'

(Ez he said this, he clinched his jaw an' forehead,

Hitchin' his belt to bring his sword-hilt forrard.)--

'Jes so it wuz with me,' sez I, 'I swow.

When \_I\_ wuz younger 'n wut you see me now,-- 260

Nothin' from Adam's fall to Huldy's bonnet,

Thet I warn't full-cocked with my jedgment on it;

But now I'm gittin' on in life, I find

It's a sight harder to make up my mind,--

Nor I don't often try tu, when events

Will du it for me free of all expense.

The moral question's ollus plain enough,--

It's jes' the human-natur' side thet's tough;

'Wut's best to think mayn't puzzle me nor you,--

The pinch comes in decidin' wut to \_du;\_ 270

Ef you \_read\_ History, all runs smooth ez grease,

Coz there the men ain't nothin' more 'n idees,--

But come to \_make\_ it, ez we must to-day,

Th' idees hev arms an' legs an' stop the way;

It's easy fixin' things in facts an' figgers,--

They can't resist, nor warn't brought up with niggers;

But come to try your the'ry on,--why, then

Your facts and figgers change to ign'ant men

Actin' ez ugly--'--'Smite 'em hip an' thigh!'

Sez gran'ther, 'and let every man-child die! 280

Oh for three weeks o' Crommle an' the Lord!

Up, Isr'el, to your tents an' grind the sword!'--

'Thet kind o' thing worked wal in ole Judee,

But you forgit how long it's ben A.D.;

You think thet's ellerkence,--I call it shoddy,

A thing,' sez I, 'wun't cover soul nor body;

I like the plain all-wool o' common-sense,

Thet warms ye now, an' will a twelvemonth hence,

\_You\_ took to follerin' where the Prophets beckoned,

An', fust you knowed on, back come Charles the Second;

Now wut I want's to hev all \_we\_ gain stick, 291

An' not to start Millennium too quick;

We hain't to punish only, but to keep,

An' the cure's gut to go a cent'ry deep.'

'Wall, milk-an'-water ain't the best o' glue,'

Sez he, 'an' so you'll find afore you're thru;

Ef reshness venters sunthin', shilly-shally

Loses ez often wut's ten times the vally.

Thet exe of ourn, when Charles's neck gut split,

Opened a gap thet ain't bridged over yit: 300

Slav'ry's your Charles, the Lord hez gin the exe'--

'Our Charles,' sez I, 'hez gut eight million necks.

The hardest question ain't the black man's right,

The trouble is to 'mancipate the white;

One's chained in body an' can be sot free,

But t'other's chained in soul to an idee:

It's a long job, but we shall worry thru it;

Ef bagnets fail, the spellin'-book must du it.'

'Hosee,' sez he, 'I think you're goin' to fail:

The rettlesnake ain't dangerous in the tail; 310

This 'ere rebellion's nothing but the rettle,--

You'll stomp on thet an' think you've won the bettle:

It's Slavery thet's the fangs an' thinkin' head,

An' ef you want selvation, cresh it dead,--

An' cresh it suddin, or you'll larn by waitin'

Thet Chance wun't stop to listen to debatin'!'--

'God's truth!' sez I,--'an' ef \_I\_ held the club,

An' knowed jes' where to strike,--but there's the rub!'--

'Strike soon,' sez he, 'or you'll be deadly ailin',--

Folks thet's afeared to fail are sure o' failin'; 320

God hates your sneakin' creturs thet believe

He'll settle things they run away an' leave!'

He brought his foot down fiercely, ez he spoke,

An' give me sech a startle thet I woke.

No. VII

LATEST VIEWS OF MR. BIGLOW

PRELIMINARY NOTE

[It is with feelings of the liveliest pain that we inform our readers of

the death of the Reverend Homer Wilbur, A.M., which took place suddenly,

by an apoplectic stroke, on the afternoon of Christmas day, 1862. Our

venerable friend (for so we may venture to call him, though we never

enjoyed the high privilege of his personal acquaintance) was in his

eighty-fourth year, having been born June 12, 1779, at Pigsgusset

Precinct (now West Jerusha) in the then District of Maine. Graduated

with distinction at Hubville College in 1805, he pursued his theological

studies with the late Reverend Preserved Thacker, D.D., and was called

to the charge of the First Society in Jaalam in 1809, where he remained

till his death.

'As an antiquary he has probably left no superior, if, indeed, an

equal,' writes his friend and colleague, the Reverend Jeduthun

Hitchcock, to whom we are indebted for the above facts; 'in proof of

which I need only allude to his "History of Jaalam, Genealogical,

Topographical, and Ecclesiastical," 1849, which has won him an eminent

and enduring place in our more solid and useful literature. It is only

to be regretted that his intense application to historical studies

should have so entirely withdrawn him from the pursuit of poetical

composition, for which he was endowed by Nature with a remarkable

aptitude. His well-known hymn, beginning "With clouds of care

encompassed round," has been attributed in some collections to the late

President Dwight, and it is hardly presumptuous to affirm that the

simile of the rainbow in the eighth stanza would do no discredit to that

polished pen.'

We regret that we have not room at present for the whole of Mr.

Hitchcock's exceedingly valuable communication. We hope to lay more

liberal extracts from it before our readers at an early day. A summary

of its contents will give some notion of its importance and interest. It

contains: 1st, A biographical sketch of Mr. Wilbur, with notices of his

predecessors in the pastoral office, and of eminent clerical

contemporaries; 2d, An obituary of deceased, from the Punkin-Falls

'Weekly Parallel;' 3d, A list of his printed and manuscript productions

and of projected works; 4th, Personal anecdotes and recollections, with

specimens of table-talk; 5th, A tribute to his relict, Mrs. Dorcas

(Pilcox) Wilbur; 6th, A list of graduates fitted for different colleges

by Mr. Wilbur, with biographical memoranda touching the more

distinguished; 7th, Concerning learned, charitable, and other

societies, of which Mr. Wilbur was a member, and of those with which,

had his life been prolonged, he would doubtless have been associated,

with a complete catalogue of such Americans as have been Fellows of the

Royal Society; 8th, A brief summary of Mr. Wilbur's latest conclusions

concerning the Tenth Horn of the Beast in its special application to

recent events, for which the public, as Mr. Hitchcock assures us, have

been waiting with feelings of lively anticipation; 9th, Mr. Hitchcock's

own views on the same topic; and, 10th, A brief essay on the importance

of local histories. It will be apparent that the duty of preparing Mr.

Wilbur's biography could not have fallen into more sympathetic hands.

In a private letter with which the reverend gentleman has since favored

us, he expresses the opinion that Mr. Wilbur's life was shortened by our

unhappy civil war. It disturbed his studies, dislocated all his habitual

associations and trains of thought, and unsettled the foundations of a

faith, rather the result of habit than conviction, in the capacity of

man for self-government. 'Such has been the felicity of my life,' he

said to Mr. Hitchcock, on the very morning of the day he died, 'that,

through the divine mercy, I could always say, \_Summum nec metuo diem,

nec opto\_. It has been my habit, as you know, on every recurrence of

this blessed anniversary, to read Milton's "Hymn of the Nativity" till

its sublime harmonies so dilated my soul and quickened its spiritual

sense that I seemed to hear that other song which gave assurance to the

shepherds that there was One who would lead them also in green pastures

and beside the still waters. But to-day I have been unable to think of

anything but that mournful text, "I came not to send peace, but a

sword," and, did it not smack of Pagan presumptuousness, could almost

wish I had never lived to see this day.'

Mr. Hitchcock also informs us that his friend 'lies buried in the Jaalam

graveyard, under a large red-cedar which he specially admired. A neat

and substantial monument is to be erected over his remains, with a Latin

epitaph written by himself; for he was accustomed to say, pleasantly,

"that there was at least one occasion in a scholar's life when he might

show the advantages of a classical training."'

The following fragment of a letter addressed to us, and apparently

intended to accompany Mr. Biglow's contribution to the present number,

was found upon his table after his decease.--EDITORS ATLANTIC MONTHLY.]

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 24th Dec., 1862.

RESPECTED SIRS,--- The infirm state of my bodily health would be a

sufficient apology for not taking up the pen at this time, wholesome as

I deem it for the mind to apricate in the shelter of epistolary

confidence, were it not that a considerable, I might even say a large,

number of individuals in this parish expect from their pastor some

publick expression of sentiment at this crisis. Moreover, \_Qui tacitus

ardet magis uritur\_. In trying times like these, the besetting sin of

undisciplined minds is to seek refuge from inexplicable realities in the

dangerous stimulant of angry partisanship or the indolent narcotick of

vague and hopeful vaticination: \_fortunamque suo temperat arbitrio\_.

Both by reason of my age and my natural temperament, I am unfitted for

either. Unable to penetrate the inscrutable judgments of God, I am more

than ever thankful that my life has been prolonged till I could in some

small measure comprehend His mercy. As there is no man who does not at

some time render himself amenable to the one,--\_quum vix justus sit

securus\_,--so there is none that does not feel himself in daily need of

the other.

I confess I cannot feel, as some do, a personal consolation for the

manifest evils of this war in any remote or contingent advantages that

may spring from it. I am old and weak, I can bear little, and can scarce

hope to see better days; nor is it any adequate compensation to know

that Nature is young and strong and can bear much. Old men philosophize

over the past, but the present is only a burthen and a weariness. The

one lies before them like a placid evening landscape; the other is full

of vexations and anxieties of housekeeping. It may be true enough that

\_miscet hÃ¦c illis, prohibetque Clotho fortunam stare\_, but he who said

it was fain at last to call in Atropos with her shears before her time;

and I cannot help selfishly mourning that the fortune of our Republick

could not at least stay till my days were numbered.

Tibullus would find the origin of wars in the great exaggeration of

riches, and does not stick to say that in the days of the beechen

trencher there was peace. But averse as I am by nature from all wars,

the more as they have been especially fatal to libraries, I would have

this one go on till we are reduced to wooden platters again, rather than

surrender the principle to defend which it was undertaken. Though I

believe Slavery to have been the cause of it, by so thoroughly

demoralizing Northern politicks for its own purposes as to give

opportunity and hope to treason, yet I would not have our thought and

purpose diverted from their true object,--the maintenance of the idea of

Government. We are not merely suppressing an enormous riot, but

contending for the possibility of permanent order coexisting with

democratical fickleness; and while I would not superstitiously venerate

form to the sacrifice of substance, neither would I forget that an

adherence to precedent and prescription can alone give that continuity

and coherence under a democratical constitution which are inherent in

the person of a despotick monarch and the selfishness of an

aristocratieal class. \_Stet pro ratione voluntas\_ is as dangerous in a

majority as in a tyrant.

I cannot allow the present production of my young friend to go out

without a protest from me against a certain extremeness in his views,

more pardonable in the poet than in the philosopher. While I agree with

him, that the only cure for rebellion is suppression by force, yet I

must animadvert upon certain phrases where I seem to see a coincidence

with a popular fallacy on the subject of compromise. On the one hand

there are those who do not see that the vital principle of Government

and the seminal principle of Law cannot properly be made a subject of

compromise at all, and on the other those who are equally blind to the

truth that without a compromise of individual opinions, interests, and

even rights, no society would be possible. \_In medio tutissimus\_. For my

own part, I would gladly--

Ef I a song or two could make

Like rockets druv by their own burnin',

All leap an' light, to leave a wake

Men's hearts an' faces skyward turnin'!--

But, it strikes me, 'tain't jest the time

Fer stringin' words with settisfaction:

Wut's wanted now's the silent rhyme

'Twixt upright Will an' downright Action.

Words, ef you keep 'em, pay their keep,

But gabble's the short cut to ruin; 10

It's gratis, (gals half-price,) but cheap

At no rate, ef it henders doin';

Ther' 's nothin' wuss, 'less 'tis to set

A martyr-prem'um upon jawrin':

Teapots git dangerous, ef you shet

Their lids down on 'em with Fort Warren.

'Bout long enough it's ben discussed

Who sot the magazine afire,

An' whether, ef Bob Wickliffe bust,

'Twould scare us more or blow us higher. 20

D' ye spose the Gret Foreseer's plan

Wuz settled fer him in town-meetin'?

Or thet ther'd ben no Fall o' Man,

Ef Adam'd on'y bit a sweetin'?

Oh, Jon'than, ef you want to be

A rugged chap agin an' hearty,

Go fer wutever'll hurt Jeff D.,

Nut wut'll boost up ary party.

Here's hell broke loose, an' we lay flat

With half the univarse a-singe-in', 30

Till Sen'tor This an' Gov'nor Thet

Stop squabblin' fer the gardingingin.

It's war we're in, not politics;

It's systems wrastlin' now, not parties;

An' victory in the eend'll fix

Where longest will an' truest heart is,

An' wut's the Guv'ment folks about?

Tryin' to hope ther' 's nothin' doin',

An' look ez though they didn't doubt

Sunthin' pertickler wuz a-brewin'. 40

Ther' 's critters yit thet talk an' act

Fer wut they call Conciliation;

They'd hand a buff'lo-drove a tract

When they wuz madder than all Bashan.

Conciliate? it jest means \_be kicked\_,

No metter how they phrase an' tone it;

It means thet we're to set down licked,

Thet we're poor shotes an' glad to own it!

A war on tick's ez dear 'z the deuce,

But it wun't leave no lastin' traces, 50

Ez 'twould to make a sneakin' truce

Without no moral specie-basis:

Ef greenbacks ain't nut jest the cheese,

I guess ther' 's evils thet's extremer,--

Fer instance,--shinplaster idees

Like them put out by Gov'nor Seymour.

Last year, the Nation, at a word,

When tremblin' Freedom cried to shield her,

Flamed weldin' into one keen sword

Waitin' an' longin' fer a wielder:

A splendid flash!--but how'd the grasp 61

With sech a chance ez thet wuz tally?

Ther' warn't no meanin' in our clasp,--

Half this, half thet, all shilly-shally.

More men? More man! It's there we fail;

Weak plans grow weaker yit by lengthenin':

Wut use in addin' to the tail,

When it's the head's in need o' strengthenin'?

We wanted one thet felt all Chief

From roots o' hair to sole o' stockin', 70

Square-sot with thousan'-ton belief

In him an' us, ef earth went rockin'!

Ole Hick'ry wouldn't ha' stood see-saw

'Bout doin' things till they wuz done with,--

He'd smashed the tables o' the Law

In time o' need to load his gun with;

He couldn't see but jest one side,--

Ef his, 'twuz God's, an' thet wuz plenty;

An' so his '\_Forrards!\_' multiplied

An army's fightin' weight by twenty. 80

But this 'ere histin', creak, creak, creak,

Your cappen's heart up with a derrick,

This tryin' to coax a lightnin'-streak

Out of a half-discouraged hayrick,

This hangin' on mont' arter mont'

Fer one sharp purpose 'mongst the twitter,--

I tell ye, it doos kind o' stunt

The peth and sperit of a critter.

In six months where'll the People be,

Ef leaders look on revolution 90

Ez though it wuz a cup o' tea,--

Jest social el'ments in solution?

This weighin' things doos wal enough

When war cools down, an' comes to writin';

But while it's makin', the true stuff

Is pison-mad, pig-headed fightin'.

Democ'acy gives every man

The right to be his own oppressor;

But a loose Gov'ment ain't the plan,

Helpless ez spilled beans on a dresser: 100

I tell ye one thing we might larn

From them smart critters, the Seceders,--

Ef bein' right's the fust consarn,

The 'fore-the-fust's cast-iron leaders.

But 'pears to me I see some signs

Thet we're a-goin' to use our senses:

Jeff druv us into these hard lines,

An' ough' to bear his half th' expenses;

Slavery's Secession's heart an' will,

South, North, East, West, where'er you find it, 110

An' ef it drors into War's mill,

D'ye say them thunder-stones sha'n't grind it?

D' ye s'pose, ef Jeff giv \_him\_ a lick,

Ole Hick'ry'd tried his head to sof'n

So's 'twouldn't hurt thet ebony stick

Thet's made our side see stars so of'n?

'No!' he'd ha' thundered, 'on your knees,

An' own one flag, one road to glory!

Soft-heartedness, in times like these,

Shows sof'ness in the upper story!' 120

An' why should we kick up a muss

About the Pres'dunt's proclamation?

It ain't a-goin' to lib'rate us,

Ef we don't like emancipation:

The right to be a cussed fool

Is safe from all devices human,

It's common (ez a gin'l rule)

To every critter born o' woman.

So \_we're\_ all right, an' I, fer one,

Don't think our cause'll lose in vally 130

By rammin' Scriptur' in our gun,

An' gittin' Natur' fer an ally:

Thank God, say I, fer even a plan

To lift one human bein's level,

Give one more chance to make a man,

Or, anyhow, to spile a devil!

Not thet I'm one thet much expec'

Millennium by express to-morrer;

They \_will\_ miscarry,--I rec'lec'

Tu many on 'em, to my sorrer:

Men ain't made angels in a day, 141

No matter how you mould an' labor 'em,

Nor 'riginal ones, I guess, don't stay

With Abe so of'n ez with Abraham.

The'ry thinks Fact a pooty thing,

An' wants the banns read right ensuin';

But fact wun't noways wear the ring,

'Thout years o' settin' up an' wooin':

Though, arter all, Time's dial-plate

Marks cent'ries with the minute-finger, 150

An' Good can't never come tu late,

Though it does seem to try an' linger.

An' come wut will, I think it's grand

Abe's gut his will et last bloom-furnaced

In trial-flames till it'll stand

The strain o' bein' in deadly earnest:

Thet's wut we want,--we want to know

The folks on our side hez the bravery

To b'lieve ez hard, come weal, come woe,

In Freedom ez Jeff doos in Slavery. 160

Set the two forces foot to foot,

An' every man knows who'll be winner,

Whose faith in God hez ary root

Thet goes down deeper than his dinner:

\_Then\_ 'twill be felt from pole to pole,

Without no need o' proclamation,

Earth's biggest Country's gut her soul

An' risen up Earth's Greatest Nation!

No. VIII

KETTELOPOTOMACHIA

PRELIMINARY MOTE

[In the month of February, 1866, the editors of the 'Atlantic Monthly'

received from the Rev. Mr. Hitchcock of Jaalam a letter enclosing the

macaronic verses which follow, and promising to send more, if more

should be communicated. 'They were rapped out on the evening of Thursday

last past,' he says, 'by what claimed to be the spirit of my late

predecessor in the ministry here, the Rev. Dr. Wilbur, through the

medium of a young man at present domiciled in my family. As to the

possibility of such spiritual manifestations, or whether they be

properly so entitled, I express no opinion, as there is a division of

sentiment on that subject in the parish, and many persons of the highest

respectability in social standing entertain opposing views. The young

man who was improved as a medium submitted himself to the experiment

with manifest reluctance, and is still unprepared to believe in the

authenticity of the manifestations. During his residence with me his

deportment has always been exemplary; he has been constant in his

attendance upon our family devotions and the public ministrations of the

Word, and has more than once privately stated to me, that the latter had

often brought him under deep concern of mind. The table is an ordinary

quadrupedal one, weighing about thirty pounds, three feet seven inches

and a half in height, four feet square on the top, and of beech or

maple, I am not definitely prepared to say which. It had once belonged

to my respected predecessor, and had been, so far as I can learn upon

careful inquiry, of perfectly regular and correct habits up to the

evening in question. On that occasion the young man previously alluded

to had been sitting with his hands resting carelessly upon it, while I

read over to him at his request certain portions of my last Sabbath's

discourse. On a sudden the rappings, as they are called, commenced to

render themselves audible, at first faintly, but in process of time more

distinctly and with violent agitation of the table. The young man

expressed himself both surprised and pained by the wholly unexpected,

and, so far as he was concerned, unprecedented occurrence. At the

earnest solicitation, however, of several who happened to be present, he

consented to go on with the experiment, and with the assistance of the

alphabet commonly employed in similar emergencies, the following

communication was obtained and written down immediately by myself.

Whether any, and if so, how much weight should be attached to it, I

venture no decision. That Dr. Wilbur had sometimes employed his leisure

in Latin versification I have ascertained to be the case, though all

that has been discovered of that nature among his papers consists of

some fragmentary passages of a version into hexameters of portions of

the Song of Solomon. These I had communicated about a week or ten days

previous[ly] to the young gentleman who officiated as medium in the

communication afterwards received. I have thus, I believe, stated all

the material facts that have any elucidative bearing upon this

mysterious occurrence.'

So far Mr. Hitchcock, who seems perfectly master of Webster's

unabridged quarto, and whose flowing style leads him into certain

farther expatiations for which we have not room. We have since learned

that the young man he speaks of was a sophomore, put under his care

during a sentence of rustication from ---- College, where he had

distinguished himself rather by physical experiments on the comparative

power of resistance in window-glass to various solid substances, than in

the more regular studies of the place. In answer to a letter of inquiry,

the professor of Latin says, 'There was no harm in the boy that I know

of beyond his loving mischief more than Latin, nor can I think of any

spirits likely to possess him except those commonly called animal. He

was certainly not remarkable for his Latinity, but I see nothing in the

verses you enclose that would lead me to think them beyond his capacity,

or the result of any special inspiration whether of beech or maple. Had

that of \_birch\_ been tried upon him earlier and more faithfully, the

verses would perhaps have been better in quality and certainly in

quantity.' This exact and thorough scholar then goes on to point out

many false quantities and barbarisms. It is but fair to say, however,

that the author, whoever he was, seems not to have been unaware of some

of them himself, as is shown by a great many notes appended to the

verses as we received them, and purporting to be by Scaliger, Bentley,

and others,--among them the \_Esprit de Voltaire\_! These we have omitted

as clearly meant to be humorous and altogether failing therein.

Though entirely satisfied that the verses are altogether unworthy of Mr.

Wilbur, who seems to Slave been a tolerable Latin scholar after the

fashion of his day, yet we have determined to print them here, partly as

belonging to the \_res gestÃ¦\_ of this collection, and partly as a

warning to their putative author which may keep him from such indecorous

pranks for the future.]

KETTELOPOTOMACHIA

P. Ovidii Nasonis carmen heroicum macaronicum perplexametrum, inter

Getas getico moro compostum, denuo per medium ardentispiritualem

adjuvante mensÃ¢ diabolice obsessÃ¢, recuperatum, curÃ¢que Jo. Conradi

Schwarzii umbrÃ¦, allis necnon plurimis adjuvantibus, restitutum.

LIBER I

Punctorum garretos colens et cellara Quinque,

Gutteribus quÃ¦ et gaudes sunday-am abstingere frontem,

Plerumque insidos solita fluitare liquore

Tanglepedem quem homines appellant Di quoque rotgut,

Pimpliidis, rubicundaque, Musa, O, bourbonolensque,

Fenianas rixas procul, alma, brogipotentis

Patricii cyathos iterantis et horrida bella,

Backos dum virides viridis Brigitta remittit,

Linquens, eximios celebrem, da, Virginienses

Rowdes, prÃ¦cipue et TE, heros alte, Polarde! 10

Insignes juvenesque, illo certamine lictos,

Colemane, Tylere, nec vos oblivione relinquam.

Ampla aquilÃ¦ invictÃ¦ fausto est sub tegmine terra,

Backyfer, ooiskeo pollens, ebenoque bipede,

Socors prÃ¦sidum et altrix (denique quidruminantium),

Duplefveorum uberrima; illis et integre cordi est

Deplere assidue et sine proprio incommodo fiscum;

Nunc etiam placidum hoc opus invictique secuti,

Goosam aureos ni eggos voluissent immo necare

QuÃ¦ peperit, saltem ac de illis meliora merentem. 20

Condidit hanc Smithius Dux, Captinus inclytus ille

Regis UlyssÃ¦ instar, docti arcum intendere longum;

Condidit ille Johnsmith, Virginiamque vocavit,

Settledit autem Jacobus rex, nomine primus,

Rascalis implens ruptis, blagardisque deboshtis,

Militibusque ex Falstaffi legione fugatis

Wenchisque illi quas poterant seducere nuptas;

Virgineum, ah, littus matronis talibus impar!

Progeniem stirpe ex hoc non sine stigmate ducunt

Multi sese qui jactant regum esse nepotes: 30

Haud omnes, Mater, genitos quÃ¦ nuper habebas

Bello fortes, consilio cautos, virtute decoros,

Jamque et habes, sparso si patrio in sanguine virtus,

Mostrabisque iterum, antiquis sub astris reducta!

De illis qui upkikitant, dicebam, rumpora tanta,

Letcheris et Floydis magnisque Extra ordine Billis;

Est his prisca fides jurare et breakere wordum:

Poppere fellerum a tergo, aut stickere clam bowiknifo,

Haud sane facinus, dignum sed victrice lauro;

Larrupere et nigerum, factum prÃ¦stantius ullo: 40

Ast chlamydem piciplumatam, Icariam, flito et ineptam,

Yanko gratis induere, illum et valido railo

Insuper acri equitare docere est hospitio uti.

Nescio an ille Polardus duplefveoribus ortus,

Sed reputo potius de radice poorwitemanorum;

Fortuiti proles, ni fallor, Tylerus erat

PrÃ¦sidis, omnibus ab Whiggis nominatus a poor cuss;

Et nobilem tertium evincit venerabile nomen.

Ast animosi omnes bellique ad tympana ha! ha!

Vociferant lÃ¦ti, procul et si proelia, sive 50

Hostem incautum atsito possint shootere salvi;

Imperiique capaces, esset si stylus agmen,

Pro dulci spoliabant et sine dangere fito.

PrÃ¦ ceterisque Polardus: si Secessia licta,

Se nunquam licturum jurat res et unheardof,

Verbo hÃ¦sit, similisque audaci roosteri invicto,

Dunghilli solitus rex pullos whoppere molles,

Grantum, hirelingos stripes quique et splendida tollunt

Sidera, et Yankos, territum et omnem sarsuit orbem.

Usque dabant operam isti omnes, noctesque diesque, 60

Samuelem demulgere avunculum, id vero siccum;

Uberibus sed ejus, et horum est culpa, remotis,

Parvam domi vaccam, nec mora minima, quÃ¦runt,

Lacticarentem autem et droppam vix in die dantem;

Reddite avunculi, et exclamabant, reddite pappam!

Polko ut consule, gemens, Billy immurmurat Extra;

Echo respondit, thesauro ex vacuo, pappam!

Frustra explorant pocketa, ruber nare repertum;

Officia expulsi aspiciunt rapta, et Paradisum

Occlusum, viridesque Laud illis nascere backos; 70

Stupent tunc oculis madidis spittantque silenter.

Adhibere usu ast longo vires prorsus inepti,

Si non ut qui grindeat axve trabemve reuolvat,

Virginiam excruciant totis nunc mightibu' matrem;

Non melius, puta, nono panis dimidiumne est?

Readere ibi non posse est casus commoner ullo;

Tanto intentius imprimere est opus ergo statuta;

Nemo propterea pejor, melior, sine doubto,

Obtineat qui contractum, si et postea rhino;

Ergo Polardus, si quis, inexsuperabilis heros, 80

Colemanus impavidus nondum, atque in purpure natus

Tylerus Iohanides celerisque in flito Nathaniel,

Quisque optans digitos in tantum stickere pium,

Adstant accincti imprimere aut perrumpere leges:

Quales os miserum rabidi tres Ã¦gre molossi,

Quales aut dubium textum atra in veste ministri,

Tales circumstabant nunc nostri inopes hoc job.

Hisque Polardus voce canoro talia fatus:

Primum autem, veluti est mos, prÃ¦ceps quisque liquorat,

Quisque et Nicotianum ingens quid inserit atrum, 90

HeroÃ»m nitidum decus et solamen avitum,

Masticat ac simul altisonans, spittatque profuse:

Quis de Virginia meruit prÃ¦stantius unquam?

Quis se pro patria curavit impigre tutum?

Speechisque articulisque hominum quis fortior ullus,

Ingeminans pennÃ¦ lickos et vulnera vocis?

Quisnam putidius (hic) sarsuit Yankinimicos,

SÃ¦pius aut dedit ultro datam et broke his parolam?

Mente inquassatus solidÃ¢que, tyranno minante,

Horrisonis (hic) bombis moenia et alta quatente, 100

Sese promptum (hic) jactans Yankos lickere centum,

Atque ad lastum invictus non surrendidit unquam?

Ergo haud meddlite, posco, mique relinquite (hic) hoc job,

Si non--knifumque enormem mostrat spittatque tremendus.

Dixerat: ast alii reliquorant et sine pauso

Pluggos incumbunt maxillis, uterque vicissim

Certamine innocuo valde madidam inquinat assem:

Tylerus autem, dumque liquorat aridus hostis,

Mirum aspicit duplumque bibentem, astante LyÃ¦o;

Ardens impavidusque edidit tamen impia verba; 110

Duplum quamvis te aspicio, esses atque viginti,

Mendacem dicerem totumque (hic) thrasherem acervum;

Nempe et thrasham, doggonatus (hic) sim nisi faxem;

Lambastabo omnes catawompositer-(hic) que chawam!

Dixit et impulsus Ryeo ruitur bene titus,

Illi nam gravidum caput et laterem habet in hatto.

Hunc inhiat titubansque Polardus, optat et illum

Stickere inermem, protegit autem rite LyÃ¦us,

Et pronos geminos, oculis dubitantibus, heros

Cernit et irritus hostes, dumque excogitat utrum 120

Primum inpitchere, corruit, inter utrosque recumbit,

Magno asino similis nimio sub pondere quassus:

Colemanus hos moestus, triste ruminansque solamen,

Inspicit hiccans, circumspittat terque cubantes;

Funereisque his ritibus humidis inde solutis,

Sternitur, invalidusque illis superincidit infans;

Hos sepelit somnus et snorunt cornisonantes,

Watchmanus inscios ast calybooso deinde reponit.

No. IX

[The Editors of the 'Atlantic' have received so many letters of inquiry

concerning the literary remains of the late Mr. Wilbur, mentioned by his

colleague and successor, Rev. Jeduthun Hitchcock, in a communication

from which we made some extracts in our number for February, 1863, and

have been so repeatedly urged to print some part of them for the

gratification of the public, that they felt it their duty at least to

make some effort to satisfy so urgent a demand. They have accordingly

carefully examined the papers intrusted to them, but find most of the

productions of Mr. Wilbur's pen so fragmentary, and even chaotic,

written as they are on the backs of letters in an exceedingly cramped

chirography,--here a memorandum for a sermon; there an observation of

the weather; now the measurement of an extraordinary head of cabbage,

and then of the cerebral capacity of some reverend brother deceased; a

calm inquiry into the state of modern literature, ending in a method of

detecting if milk be impoverished with water, and the amount thereof;

one leaf beginning with a genealogy, to be interrupted halfway down with

an entry that the brindle cow had calved,--that any attempts at

selection seemed desperate. His only complete work, 'An Enquiry

concerning the Tenth Horn of the Beast,' even in the abstract of it

given by Mr. Hitchcock, would, by a rough computation of the printers,

fill five entire numbers of our journal, and as he attempts, by a new

application of decimal fractions, to identify it with the Emperor

Julian, seems hardly of immediate concern to the general reader. Even

the Table-Talk, though doubtless originally highly interesting in the

domestic circle, is so largely made up of theological discussion and

matters of local or preterite interest, that we have found it hard to

extract anything that would at all satisfy expectation. But, in order to

silence further inquiry, we subjoin a few passages as illustrations of

its general character.]

I think I could go near to be a perfect Christian if I were always a

visitor, as I have sometimes been, at the house of some hospitable

friend. I can show a great deal of self-denial where the best of

everything is urged upon me with kindly importunity. It is not so very

hard to turn the other cheek for a kiss. And when I meditate upon the

pains taken for our entertainment in this life, on the endless variety

of seasons, of human character and fortune, on the costliness of the

hangings and furniture of our dwelling here, I sometimes feel a singular

joy in looking upon myself as God's guest, and cannot but believe that

we should all be wiser and happier, because more grateful, if we were

always mindful of our privilege in this regard. And should we not rate

more cheaply any honor that men could pay us, if we remembered that

every day we sat at the table of the Great King? Yet must we not forget

that we are in strictest bonds His servants also; for there is no

impiety so abject as that which expects to be \_deadheaded (ut ita

dicam)\_ through life, and which, calling itself trust in Providence, is

in reality asking Providence to trust us and taking up all our goods on

false pretences. It is a wise rule to take the world as we find it, not

always to leave it so.

It has often set me thinking when I find that I can always pick up

plenty of empty nuts under my shagbark-tree. The squirrels know them by

their lightness, and I have seldom seen one with the marks of their

teeth in it. What a school-house is the world, if our wits would only

not play truant! For I observe that men set most store by forms and

symbols in proportion as they are mere shells. It is the outside they

want and not the kernel. What stores of such do not many, who in

material things are as shrewd as the squirrels, lay up for the spiritual

winter-supply of themselves and their children! I have seen churches

that seemed to me garners of these withered nuts, for it is wonderful

how prosaic is the apprehension of symbols by the minds of most men. It

is not one sect nor another, but all, who, like the dog of the fable,

have let drop the spiritual substance of symbols for their material

shadow. If one attribute miraculous virtues to mere holy water, that

beautiful emblem of inward purification at the door of God's house,

another cannot comprehend the significance of baptism without being

ducked over head and ears in the liquid vehicle thereof.

[Perhaps a word of historical comment may be permitted here. My late

reverend predecessor was, I would humbly affirm, as free from prejudice

as falls to the lot of the most highly favored individuals of our

species. To be sure, I have heard Him say that 'what were called strong

prejudices were in fact only the repulsion of sensitive organizations

from that moral and even physical effluvium through which some natures

by providential appointment, like certain unsavory quadrupeds, gave

warning of their neighborhood. Better ten mistaken suspicions of this

kind than one close encounter.' This he said somewhat in heat, on being

questioned as to his motives for always refusing his pulpit to those

itinerant professors of vicarious benevolence who end their discourses

by taking up a collection. But at another time I remember his saying,

'that there was one large thing which small minds always found room for,

and that was great prejudices.' This, however, by the way. The statement

which I purposed to make was simply this. Down to A.D. 1830, Jaalam had

consisted of a single parish, with one house set apart for religions

services. In that year the foundations of a Baptist Society were laid by

the labors of Elder Joash Q. Balcom, 2d. As the members of the new body

were drawn from the First Parish, Mr. Wilbur was for a time considerably

exercised in mind. He even went so far as on one occasion to follow the

reprehensible practice of the earlier Puritan divines in choosing a

punning text, and preached from Hebrews xiii, 9: 'Be not carried about

with \_divers\_ and strange doctrines.' He afterwards, in accordance with

one of his own maxims,--'to get a dead injury out of the mind as soon as

is decent, bury it, and then ventilate,'--in accordance with this maxim,

I say, he lived on very friendly terms with Rev. Shearjashub Scrimgour,

present pastor of the Baptist Society in Jaalam. Yet I think it was

never unpleasing to him that the church edifice of that society (though

otherwise a creditable specimen of architecture) remained without a

bell, as indeed it does to this day. So much seemed necessary to do away

with any appearance of acerbity toward a respectable community of

professing Christians, which might be suspected in the conclusion of the

above paragraph.--J.H.]

In lighter moods he was not averse from an innocent play upon words.

Looking up from his newspaper one morning, as I entered his study, he

said, 'When I read a debate in Congress, I feel as if I were sitting at

the feet of Zeno in the shadow of the Portico.' On my expressing a

natural surprise, he added, smiling, 'Why, at such times the only view

which honorable members give me of what goes on in the world is through

their intercalumniations.' I smiled at this after a moment's reflection,

and he added gravely, 'The most punctilious refinement of manners is the

only salt that will keep a democracy from stinking; and what are we to

expect from the people, if their representatives set them such lessons?

Mr. Everett's whole life has been a sermon from this text. There was, at

least, this advantage in duelling, that it set a certain limit on the

tongue. When Society laid by the rapier, it buckled on the more subtle

blade of etiquette wherewith to keep obtrusive vulgarity at bay.' In

this connection, I may be permitted to recall a playful remark of his

upon another occasion. The painful divisions in the First Parish, A.D.

1844, occasioned by the wild notions in respect to the rights of (what

Mr. Wilbur, so far as concerned the reasoning faculty, always called)

the unfairer part of creation, put forth by Miss Parthenia Almira Fitz,

are too well known to need more than a passing allusion. It was during

these heats, long since happily allayed, that Mr. Wilbur remarked that

'the Church had more trouble in dealing with one \_she\_resiarch than with

twenty \_he\_resiarchs,' and that the men's \_conscia recti\_, or certainty

of being right, was nothing to the women's.

When I once asked his opinion of a poetical composition on which I had

expended no little pains, he read it attentively, and then remarked

'Unless one's thought pack more neatly in verse than in prose, it is

wiser to refrain. Commonplace gains nothing by being translated into

rhyme, for it is something which no hocus-pocus can transubstantiate

with the real presence of living thought. You entitle your piece, "My

Mother's Grave," and expend four pages of useful paper in detailing your

emotions there. But, my dear sir, watering does not improve the quality

of ink, even though you should do it with tears. To publish a sorrow to

Tom, Dick, and Harry is in some sort to advertise its unreality, for I

have observed in my intercourse with the afflicted that the deepest

grief instinctively hides its face with its hands and is silent. If your

piece were printed, I have no doubt it would be popular, for people like

to fancy that they feel much better than the trouble of feeling. I would

put all poets on oath whether they have striven to say everything they

possibly could think of, or to leave out all they could not help saying.

In your own case, my worthy young friend, what you have written is

merely a deliberate exercise, the gymnastic of sentiment. For your

excellent maternal relative is still alive, and is to take tea with me

this evening, D.V. Beware of simulated feeling; it is hypocrisy's first

cousin; it is especially dangerous to a preacher; for he who says one

day, "Go to, let me seem to be pathetic," may be nearer than he thinks

to saying, "Go to, let me seem to be virtuous, or earnest, or under

sorrow for sin." Depend upon it, Sappho loved her verses more sincerely

than she did Phaon, and Petrarch his sonnets better than Laura, who was

indeed but his poetical stalking-horse. After you shall have once heard

that muffled rattle of clods on the coffin-lid of an irreparable loss,

you will grow acquainted with a pathos that will make all elegies

hateful. When I was of your age, I also for a time mistook my desire to

write verses for an authentic call of my nature in that direction. But

one day as I was going forth for a walk, with my head full of an "Elegy

on the Death of Flirtilla," and vainly groping after a rhyme for \_lily\_

that should not be \_silly\_ or \_chilly\_, I saw my eldest boy Homer busy

over the rain-water hogshead, in that childish experiment at

parthenogenesis, the changing a horse-hair into a water-snake. All

immersion of six weeks showed no change in the obstinate filament. Here

was a stroke of unintended sarcasm. Had I not been doing in my study

precisely what my boy was doing out of doors? Had my thoughts any more

chance of coming to life by being submerged in rhyme than his hair by

soaking in water? I burned my elegy and took a course of Edwards on the

Will. People do not make poetry; it is made out of \_them\_ by a process

for which I do not find myself fitted. Nevertheless, the writing of

verses is a good rhetorical exercitation, as teaching us what to shun

most carefully in prose. For prose bewitched is like window-glass with

bubbles in it, distorting what it should show with pellucid veracity.'

It is unwise to insist on doctrinal points as vital to religion. The

Bread of Life is wholesome and sufficing in itself, but gulped down with

these kickshaws cooked up by theologians, it is apt to produce an

indigestion, nay, eyen at last an incurable dyspepsia of scepticism.

One of the most inexcusable weaknesses of Americans is in signing their

names to what are called credentials. But for my interposition, a person

who shall be nameless would have taken from this town a recommendation

for an office of trust subscribed by the selectmen and all the voters of

both parties, ascribing to him as many good qualities as if it had been

his tombstone. The excuse was that it would be well for the town to be

rid of him, as it would erelong be obliged to maintain him. I would not

refuse my name to modest merit, but I would be as cautious as in signing

a bond. [I trust I shall be subjected to no imputation of unbecoming

vanity, if I mention the fact that Mr. W. indorsed my own qualifications

as teacher of the high-school at Pequash Junction. J.H.] When I see a

certificate of character with everybody's name to it, I regard it as a

letter of introduction from the Devil. Never give a man your name unless

you are willing to trust him with your reputation.

There seem nowadays to be two sources of literary inspiration,--fulness

of mind and emptiness of pocket.

I am often struck, especially in reading Montaigne, with the obviousness

and familiarity of a great writer's thoughts, and the freshness they

gain because said by him. The truth is, we mix their greatness with all

they say and give it our best attention. Johannes Faber sic cogitavit

would be no enticing preface to a book, but an accredited name gives

credit like the signature to a note of hand. It is the advantage of fame

that it is always privileged to take the world by the button, and a

thing is weightier for Shakespeare's uttering it by the whole amount of

his personality.

It is singular how impatient men are with overpraise of others, how

patient with overpraise of themselves; and yet the one does them no

injury while the other may he their ruin.

People are apt to confound mere alertness of mind with attention. The

one is but the flying abroad of all the faculties to the open doors and

windows at every passing rumor; the other is the concentration of every

one of them in a single focus, as in the alchemist over his alembic at

the moment of expected projection. Attention is the stuff that memory is

made of, and memory is accumulated genius.

Do not look for the Millennium as imminent. One generation is apt to get

all the wear it can out of the cast clothes of the last, and is always

sure to use up every paling of the old fence that will hold a nail in

building the new.

You suspect a kind of vanity in my genealogical enthusiasm. Perhaps you

are right; but it is a universal foible. Where it does not show itself

in a personal and private way, it becomes public and gregarious. We

flatter ourselves in the Pilgrim Fathers, and the Virginian offshoot of

a transported convict swells with the fancy ef a cavalier ancestry.

Pride of birth, I have noticed, takes two forms. One complacently traces

himself up to a coronet; another, defiantly, to a lapstone. The

sentiment is precisely the same in both cases, only that one is the

positive and the other the negative pole of it.

Seeing a goat the other day kneeling in order to graze with less

trouble, it seemed to me a type of the common notion of prayer. Most

people are ready enough to go down on their knees for material

blessings, but how few for those spiritual gifts which alone are an

answer to our orisons, if we but knew it!

Some people, nowadays, seem to have hit upon a new moralization of the

moth and the candle. They would lock up the light of Truth, lest poor

Psyche should put it out in her effort to draw nigh, to it.

No. X

MR. HOSEA BIGLOW TO THE EDITOR OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

DEAR SIR,--Your letter come to han'

Requestin' me to please be funny;

But I ain't made upon a plan

Thet knows wut's comin', gall or honey:

Ther' 's times the world does look so queer,

Odd fancies come afore I call 'em;

An' then agin, for half a year,

No preacher 'thout a call's more solemn.

You're 'n want o' sunthin' light an' cute,

Rattlin' an' shrewd an' kin' o' jingleish, 10

An' wish, pervidin' it 'ould suit,

I'd take an' citify my English.

I \_ken\_ write long-tailed, ef I please,--

But when I'm jokin', no, I thankee;

Then, fore I know it, my idees

Run helter-skelter into Yankee.

Sence I begun to scribble rhyme,

I tell ye wut, I hain't ben foolin';

The parson's books, life, death, an' time

Hev took some trouble with my schoolin'; 20

Nor th' airth don't git put out with me,

Thet love her 'z though she wuz a woman;

Why, th' ain't a bird upon the tree

But half forgives my bein' human.

An' yit I love th' unhighschooled way

Ol' farmers hed when I wuz younger;

Their talk wuz meatier, an' 'ould stay,

While book-froth seems to whet your hunger;

For puttin' in a downright lick

'twixt Humbug's eyes, ther' 's few can metch it, 30

An' then it helves my thoughts ez slick

Ez stret-grained hickory does a hetchet.

But when I can't, I can't, thet's all,

For Natur' won't put up with gullin';

Idees you hev to shove an' haul

Like a druv pig ain't wuth a mullein:

Live thoughts ain't sent for; thru all rifts

O' sense they pour an' resh ye onwards,

Like rivers when south-lyin' drifts

Feel thet th' old arth's a-wheelin' sunwards. 40

Time wuz, the rhymes come crowdin' thick

Ez office-seekers arter 'lection,

An' into ary place 'ould stick

Without no bother nor objection;

But sence the war my thoughts hang back

Ez though I wanted to enlist 'em,

An' subs'tutes,--\_they\_ don't never lack,

But then they'll slope afore you've mist 'em.

Nothin' don't seem like wut it wuz;

I can't see wut there is to hender, 50

An' yit my brains jes' go buzz, buzz,

Like bumblebees agin a winder;

'fore these times come, in all airth's row,

Ther' wuz one quiet place, my head in,

Where I could hide an' think,--but now

It's all one teeter, hopin', dreadin'.

Where's Peace? I start, some clear-blown night,

When gaunt stone walls grow numb an' number,

An' creakin' 'cross the snow-crus' white,

Walk the col' starlight into summer; 60

Up grows the moon, an' swell by swell

Thru the pale pasturs silvers dimmer

Than the last smile thet strives to tell

O' love gone heavenward in its shimmer.

I hev been gladder o' sech things

Than cocks o' spring or bees o' clover,

They filled my heart with livin' springs,

But now they seem to freeze 'em over;

Sights innercent ez babes on knee,

Peaceful ez eyes o' pastur'd cattle, 70

Jes' coz they be so, seem to me

To rile me more with thoughts o' battle.

Indoors an' out by spells I try;

Ma'am Natur' keeps her spin-wheel goin',

But leaves my natur' stiff and dry

Ez fiel's o' clover arter mowin';

An' her jes' keepin' on the same,

Calmer 'n a clock, an' never carin'

An' findin' nary thing to blame,

Is wus than ef she took to swearin'. 80

Snow-flakes come whisperin' on the pane

The charm makes blazin' logs so pleasant,

But I can't hark to wut they're say'n',

With Grant or Sherman ollers present;

The chimbleys shudder in the gale,

Thet lulls, then suddin takes to flappin'

Like a shot hawk, but all's ez stale

To me ez so much sperit-rappin'.

Under the yaller-pines I house,

When sunshine makes 'em all sweet-scented, 90

An' hear among their furry boughs

The baskin' west-wind purr contented,

While 'way o'erhead, ez sweet an' low

Ez distant bells thet ring for meetin',

The wedged wil' geese their bugles blow,

Further an' further South retreatin'.

Or up the slippery knob I strain

An' see a hundred hills like islan's

Lift their blue woods in broken chain

Out o' the sea o' snowy silence; 100

The farm-smokes, sweetes' sight on airth,

Slow thru the winter air a-shrinkin'

Seem kin' o' sad, an' roun' the hearth

Of empty places set me thinkin'.

Beaver roars hoarse with meltin' snows,

An' rattles di'mon's from his granite;

Time wuz, he snatched away my prose,

An' into psalms or satires ran it;

But he, nor all the rest thet once

Started my blood to country-dances, 110

Can't set me goin' more 'n a dunce

Thet hain't no use for dreams an' fancies.

Rat-tat-tat-tattle thru the street

I hear the drummers makin' riot,

An' I set thinkin' o' the feet

Thet follered once an' now are quiet,--

White feet ez snowdrops innercent,

Thet never knowed the paths o' Satan,

Whose comin' step ther' 's ears thet won't,

No, not lifelong, leave off awaitin', 120

Why, hain't I held 'em on my knee?

Didn't I love to see 'em growin',

Three likely lads ez wal could be,

Hahnsome an' brave an' not tu knowin'?

I set an' look into the blaze

Whose natur', jes' like theirn, keeps climbin',

Ez long 'z it lives, in shinin' ways,

An' half despise myself for rhymin'.

Wut's words to them whose faith an' truth

On War's red techstone rang true metal, 130

Who ventered life an' love an' youth

For the gret prize o' death in battle?

To him who, deadly hurt, agen

Flashed on afore the charge's thunder,

Tippin' with fire the bolt of men

Thet rived the Rebel line asunder?

'Tain't right to hev the young go fust,

All throbbin' full o' gifts an' graces,

Leavin' life's paupers dry ez dust

To try an' make b'lieve fill their places: 140

Nothin' but tells us wut we miss,

Ther' 's gaps our lives can't never fay in,

An' \_thet\_ world seems so fur from this

Lef' for us loafers to grow gray in!

My eyes cloud up for rain; my mouth

Will take to twitchin' roun' the corners;

I pity mothers, tu, down South,

For all they sot among the scorners:

I'd sooner take my chance to stan'

At Jedgment where your meanest slave is, 150

Than at God's bar hol' up a han'

Ez drippin' red ez yourn, Jeff Davis!

Come, Peace! not like a mourner bowed

For honor lost an' dear ones wasted,

But proud, to meet a people proud,

With eyes thet tell o' triumph tasted!

Come, with han' grippin' on the hilt,

An' step thet proves ye Victory's daughter!

Longin' for you, our sperits wilt

Like shipwrecked men's on raf's for water. 160

Come, while our country feels the lift

Of a gret instinct shoutin' 'Forwards!'

An' knows thet freedom ain't a gift

Thet tarries long in han's o' cowards!

Come, sech ez mothers prayed for, when

They kissed their cross with lips thet quivered,

An' bring fair wages for brave men,

A nation saved, a race delivered!

No. XI

MR. HOSEA BIGLOW'S SPEECH IN MARCH MEETING

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, April 5, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR,--

(an' noticin' by your kiver thet you're some dearer than wut you wuz, I

enclose the deffrence) I dunno ez I know Jest how to interdoose this

las' perduction of my mews, ez Parson Wilber allus called 'em, which is

goin' to \_be\_ the last an' \_stay\_ the last onless sunthin' pertikler

sh'd interfear which I don't expec' ner I wun't yield tu ef it wuz ez

pressin' ez a deppity Shiriff. Sence Mr. Wilbur's disease I hevn't hed

no one thet could dror out my talons. He ust to kind o' wine me up an'

set the penderlum agoin' an' then somehow I seemed to go on tick as it

wear tell I run down, but the noo minister ain't of the same brewin' nor

I can't seem to git ahold of no kine of huming nater in him but sort of

slide rite off as you du on the eedge of a mow. Minnysteeril natur is

wal enough an' a site better'n most other kines I know on, but the other

sort sech as Welbor hed wuz of the Lord's makin' an' naterally more

wonderfle an' sweet tastin' leastways to me so fur as heerd from. He

used to interdooce 'em smooth ez ile athout sayin' nothin' in pertickler

an' I misdoubt he didn't set so much by the sec'nd Ceres as wut he done

by the Fust, fact, he let on onct thet his mine misgive him of a sort of

fallin' off in spots. He wuz as outspoken as a norwester \_he\_ wuz, but I

tole him I hoped the fall wuz from so high up thet a feller could ketch

a good many times fust afore comin' bunt onto the ground as I see Jethro

C. Swett from the meetin' house steeple up to th' old perrish, an' took

up for dead but he's alive now an' spry as wut you be. Turnin' of it

over I recelected how they ust to put wut they called Argymunce onto the

frunts of poymns, like poorches afore housen whare you could rest ye a

spell whilst you wuz concludin' whether you'd go in or nut espeshully

ware tha wuz darters, though I most allus found it the best plen to go

in fust an' think afterwards an' the gals likes it best tu. I dno as

speechis ever hez any argimunts to 'em, I never see none thet hed an' I

guess they never du but tha must allus be a B'ginnin' to everythin'

athout it is Etarnity so I'll begin rite away an' anybody may put it

afore any of his speeches ef it soots an' welcome. I don't claim no

paytent.

THE ARGYMUNT

Interducshin, w'ich may be skipt. Begins by talkin' about himself:

thet's jest natur an' most gin'ally allus pleasin', I b'leeve I've

notist, to \_one\_ of the cumpany, an' thet's more than wut you can say of

most speshes of talkin'. Nex' comes the gittin' the goodwill of the

orjunce by lettin' 'em gether from wut you kind of ex'dentally let drop

thet they air about East, A one, an' no mistaik, skare 'em up an' take

'em as they rise. Spring interdooced with a fiew approput flours. Speach

finally begins witch nobuddy needn't feel obolygated to read as I never

read 'em an' never shell this one ag'in. Subjick staited; expanded;

delayted; extended. Pump lively. Subjick staited ag'in so's to avide all

mistaiks. Ginnle remarks; continooed; kerried on; pushed furder; kind o'

gin out. Subjick \_re\_staited; dielooted; stirred up permiscoous. Pump

ag'in. Gits back to where he sot out. Can't seem to stay thair. Ketches

into Mr. Seaward's hair. Breaks loose ag'in an' staits his subjick;

stretches it; turns it; folds it; onfolds it; folds it ag'in so's't, no

one can't find it. Argoos with an imedginary bean thet ain't aloud to

say nothin' in replye. Gives him a real good dressin' an' is settysfide

he's rite. Gits into Johnson's hair. No use tryin' to git into his head.

Gives it up. Hez to stait his subjick ag'in; doos it back'ards,

sideways, eendways, criss-cross, bevellin', noways. Gits finally red on

it. Concloods. Concloods more. Reads some xtrax. Sees his subjick

a-nosin' round arter him ag'in. Tries to avide it. Wun't du. \_Mis\_states

it. Can't conjectur' no other plawsable way of staytin' on it. Tries

pump. No fx. Finely concloods to conclood. Yeels the flore.

You kin spall an' punctooate thet as you please. I allus do, it kind of

puts a noo soot of close onto a word, thisere funattick spellin' doos

an' takes 'em out of the prissen dress they wair in the Dixonary. Ef I

squeeze the cents out of 'em it's the main thing, an' wut they wuz made

for: wut's left's jest pummis.

Mistur Wilbur sez he to me onct, sez he, 'Hosee,' sez he, 'in

litterytoor the only good thing is Natur. It's amazin' hard to come at,'

sez he, 'but onct git it an' you've gut everythin'. Wut's the sweetest

small on airth?' sez he. 'Noomone hay,' sez I, pooty bresk, for he wuz

allus hankerin' round in hayin'. 'Nawthin' of the kine,' sez he. 'My

leetle Huldy's breath,' sez I ag'in. 'You're a good lad,' sez he, his

eyes sort of ripplin' like, for he lost a babe onct nigh about her

age,--'you're a good lad; but 'tain't thet nuther,' sez he. 'Ef you want

to know,' sez he, 'open your winder of a mornin' et ary season, and

you'll larn thet the best of perfooms is jest fresh air, \_fresh air\_,'

sez he, emphysizin', 'athout no mixtur. Thet's wut \_I\_ call natur in

writin', and it bathes my lungs and washes 'em sweet whenever I git a

whiff on 't.' sez he. I often think o' thet when I set down to write but

the winders air so ept to git stuck, an' breakin' a pane costs sunthin'.

Yourn for the last time,

\_Nut\_ to be continooed,

HOSEA BIGLOW.

I don't much s'pose, hows'ever I should plen it,

I could git boosted into th' House or Sennit,--

Nut while the twolegged gab-machine's so plenty,

'nablin' one man to du the talk o' twenty;

I'm one o' them thet finds it ruther hard

To mannyfactur' wisdom by the yard,

An' maysure off, accordin' to demand,

The piece-goods el'kence that I keep on hand,

The same ole pattern runnin' thru an' thru,

An' nothin' but the customer thet's new. 10

I sometimes think, the furder on I go,

Thet it gits harder to feel sure I know,

An' when I've settled my idees, I find

'twarn't I sheered most in makin' up my mind;

'twuz this an' thet an' t'other thing thet done it,

Sunthin' in th' air, I couldn' seek nor shun it.

Mos' folks go off so quick now in discussion,

All th' ole flint-locks seems altered to percussion,

Whilst I in agin' sometimes git a hint,

Thet I'm percussion changin' back to flint; 20

Wal, ef it's so, I ain't agoin' to werrit,

For th' ole Queen's-arm hez this pertickler merit,--

It gives the mind a hahnsome wedth o' margin

To kin' o make its will afore dischargin':

I can't make out but jest one ginnle rule,--

No man need go an' \_make\_ himself a fool,

Nor jedgment ain't like mutton, thet can't bear

Cookin' tu long, nor be took up tu rare.

Ez I wuz say'n', I hain't no chance to speak

So's't all the country dreads me onct a week, 30

But I've consid'ble o' thet sort o' head

Thet sets to home an' thinks wut \_might\_ be said,

The sense thet grows an' werrits underneath,

Comin' belated like your wisdom-teeth,

An' git so el'kent, sometimes, to my gardin

Thet I don' vally public life a fardin'.

Our Parson Wilbur (blessin's on his head!)

'mongst other stories of ole times he hed,

Talked of a feller thet rehearsed his spreads

Beforehan' to his rows o' kebbige-heads, 40

(Ef 'twarn't Demossenes, I guess 'twuz Sisro,)

Appealin' fust to thet an' then to this row,

Accordin' ez he thought thet his idees

Their diff'runt ev'riges o' brains 'ould please;

'An',' sez the Parson, 'to hit right, you must

Git used to maysurin' your hearers fust;

For, take my word for 't, when all's come an' past,

The kebbige-heads'll cair the day et last;

Th' ain't ben a meetin' sence the worl' begun

But they made (raw or biled ones) ten to one.' 50

I've allus foun' 'em, I allow, sence then

About ez good for talkin' tu ez men;

They'll take edvice, like other folks, to keep,

(To use it 'ould be holdin' on 't tu cheap,)

They listen wal, don' kick up when you scold 'em,

An' ef they've tongues, hev sense enough to hold 'em;

Though th' ain't no denger we shall lose the breed,

I gin'lly keep a score or so for seed,

An' when my sappiness gits spry in spring,

So's't my tongue itches to run on full swing, 60

I fin' 'em ready-planted in March-meetin',

Warm ez a lyceum-audience in their greetin',

An' pleased to hear my spoutin' frum the fence,--

Comin', ez 't doos, entirely free 'f expense.

This year I made the follerin' observations

Extrump'ry, like most other tri'ls o' patience,

An', no reporters bein' sent express

To work their abstrac's up into a mess

Ez like th' oridg'nal ez a woodcut pictur'

Thet chokes the life out like a boy-constrictor, 70

I've writ 'em out, an' so avide all jeal'sies

'twixt nonsense o' my own an' some one's else's.

(N.B. Reporters gin'lly git a hint

To make dull orjunces seem 'live in print,

An', ez I hev t' report myself, I vum,

I'll put th' applauses where they'd \_ough' to\_ come!)

MY FELLER KEBBIGE-HEADS, who look so green,

I vow to gracious thet ef I could dreen

The world of all its hearers but jest you,

'twould leave 'bout all tha' is wuth talkin' to, 80

An' you, my ven'able ol' frien's, thet show

Upon your crowns a sprinklin' o' March snow,

Ez ef mild Time had christened every sense

For wisdom's church o' second innocence.

Nut Age's winter, no, no sech a thing,

But jest a kin' o' slippin'-back o' spring,--

[Sev'ril noses blowed.]

We've gathered here, ez ushle, to decide

Which is the Lord's an' which is Satan's side,

Coz all the good or evil thet can heppen

Is 'long o' which on 'em you choose for Cappen.

[Cries o' 'Thet's so.']

Aprul's come back; the swellin' buds of oak 91

Dim the fur hillsides with a purplish smoke;

The brooks are loose an', singing to be seen,

(Like gals,) make all the hollers soft an' green;

The birds are here, for all the season's late;

They take the sun's height an' don' never wait;

Soon 'z he officially declares it's spring

Their light hearts lift 'em on a north'ard wing,

An' th' ain't an acre, fur ez you can hear,

Can't by the music tell the time o' year; 100

But thet white dove Carliny seared away,

Five year ago, jes' sech an Aprul day;

Peace, that we hoped 'ould come an' build last year

An' coo by every housedoor, isn't here,--

No, nor wun't never be, for all our jaw,

Till we're ez brave in pol'tics ez in war!

O Lord, ef folks wuz made so's't they could see

The begnet-pint there is to an idee! [Sensation.]

Ten times the danger in 'em th' is in steel;

They run your soul thru an' you never feel, 110

But crawl about an' seem to think you're livin',

Poor shells o' men, nut wuth the Lord's forgivin',

Tell you come bunt ag'in a real live feet,

An' go to pieces when you'd ough' to ect!

Thet kin' o' begnet's wut we're crossin' now,

An' no man, fit to nevvigate a scow,

'ould stan' expectin' help from Kingdom Come,

While t'other side druv their cold iron home.

My frien's, you never gethered from my mouth,

No, nut one word ag'in the South ez South, 120

Nor th' ain't a livin' man, white, brown, nor black,

Gladder 'n wut I should be to take 'em back;

But all I ask of Uncle Sam is fust

To write up on his door, 'No goods on trust';

[Cries o' 'Thet's the ticket!']

Give us cash down in ekle laws for all,

An' they'll be snug inside afore nex' fall.

Give wut they ask, an' we shell hev Jamaker,

Wuth minus some consid'able an acre;

Give wut they need, an' we shell git 'fore long

A nation all one piece, rich, peacefle, strong; 130

Make 'em Amerikin, an' they'll begin

To love their country ez they loved their sin;

Let 'em stay Southun, an' you've kep' a sore

Ready to fester ez it done afore.

No mortle man can boast of perfic' vision,

But the one moleblin' thing is Indecision,

An' th' ain't no futur' for the man nor state

Thet out of j-u-s-t can't spell great.

Some folks 'ould call thet reddikle, do you?

'Twas commonsense afore the war wuz thru; 140

\_Thet\_ loaded all our guns an' made 'em speak

So's't Europe heared 'em clearn acrost the creek;

'They're drivin' o' their spiles down now,' sez she,

'To the hard grennit o' God's fust idee;

Ef they reach thet, Democ'cy needn't fear

The tallest airthquakes \_we\_ can git up here.'

Some call 't insultin' to ask \_ary\_ pledge,

An' say 'twill only set their teeth on edge,

But folks you've jest licked, fur 'z I ever see,

Are 'bout ez mad 'z they wal know how to be; 150

It's better than the Rebs themselves expected

'fore they see Uncle Sam wilt down henpected;

Be kind 'z you please, but fustly make things fast,

For plain Truth's all the kindness thet'll last;

Ef treason is a crime, ez \_some\_ folks say,

How could we punish it in a milder way

Than sayin' to 'em, 'Brethren, lookee here,

We'll jes' divide things with ye, sheer an' sheer,

An' sence both come o' pooty strong-backed daddies,

You take the Darkies, ez we've took the Paddies; 160

Ign'ant an' poor we took 'em by the hand,

An' they're the bones an' sinners o' the land,'

I ain't o' them thet fancy there's a loss on

Every inves'ment thet don't start from Bos'on;

But I know this: our money's safest trusted

In sunthin', come wut will, thet \_can't\_ be busted,

An' thet's the old Amerikin idee,

To make a man a Man an' let him be. [Gret applause.]

Ez for their l'yalty, don't take a goad to 't,

But I do' want to block their only road to 't 170

By lettin' 'em believe thet they can git

Mor'n wut they lost, out of our little wit:

I tell ye wut, I'm 'fraid we'll drif' to leeward

'thout we can put more stiffenin' into Seward;

He seems to think Columby'd better ect

Like a scared widder with a boy stiff-necked

Thet stomps an' swears he wun't come in to supper;

She mus' set up for him, ez weak ez Tupper,

Keepin' the Constitootion on to warm,

Tell he'll eccept her 'pologies in form: 180

The neighbors tell her he's a cross-grained cuss

Thet needs a hidin' 'fore he comes to wus;

'No,' sez Ma Seward, 'he's ez good 'z the best,

All he wants now is sugar-plums an' rest;'

'He sarsed my Pa,' sez one; 'He stoned my son,'

Another edds, 'Oh wal, 'twuz jes' his fun.'

'He tried to shoot our Uncle Samwell dead.'

''Twuz only tryin' a noo gun he hed.'

'Wal, all we ask's to hev it understood

You'll take his gun away from him for good; 190

We don't, wal, nut exac'ly, like his play,

Seem' he allus kin' o' shoots our way.

You kill your fatted calves to no good eend,

'thout his fust sayin', "Mother, I hev sinned!"'

['Amen!' frum Deac'n Greenleaf]

The Pres'dunt \_he\_ thinks thet the slickest plan

'ould be t' allow thet he's our on'y man,

An' thet we fit thru all thet dreffle war

Jes' for his private glory an' eclor;

'Nobody ain't a Union man,' sez he,

''thout he agrees, thru thick an' thin, with me; 200

Warn't Andrew Jackson's 'nitials jes' like mine?

An' ain't thet sunthin' like a right divine

To cut up ez kentenkerous ez I please,

An' treat your Congress like a nest o' fleas?'

Wal, I expec' the People wouldn' care, if

The question now wuz techin' bank or tariff,

But I conclude they've 'bout made up their min'

This ain't the fittest time to go it blin',

Nor these ain't metters thet with pol'tics swings,

But goes 'way down amongst the roots o' things; 210

Coz Sumner talked o' whitewashin' one day

They wun't let four years' war be throwed away.

'Let the South hev her rights?' They say, 'Thet's you!

But nut greb hold of other folks's tu.'

Who owns this country, is it they or Andy?

Leastways it ough' to be the People \_and\_ he;

Let him be senior pardner, ef he's so,

But let them kin' o' smuggle in ez Co; [Laughter.]

Did he diskiver it? Consid'ble numbers

Think thet the job wuz taken by Columbus. 220

Did he set tu an' make it wut it is?

Ef so, I guess the One-Man-power \_hez\_ riz.

Did he put thru the rebbles, clear the docket,

An' pay th' expenses out of his own pocket?

Ef thet's the case, then everythin' I exes

Is t' hev him come an' pay my ennooal texes.

[Profoun' sensation.]

Was 't he thet shou'dered all them million guns?

Did he lose all the fathers, brothers, sons?

Is this ere pop'lar gov'ment thet we run

A kin' o' sulky, made to kerry one? 230

An' is the country goin' to knuckle down

To hev Smith sort their letters 'stid o'Brown?

Who wuz the 'Nited States 'fore Richmon' fell?

Wuz the South needfle their full name to spell?

An' can't we spell it in thet short-han' way

Till th' underpinnin's settled so's to stay?

Who cares for the Resolves of '61,

Thet tried to coax an airthquake with a bun?

Hez act'ly nothin' taken place sence then

To larn folks they must hendle fects like men? 240

Ain't \_this\_ the true p'int? Did the Rebs accep' 'em?

Ef nut, whose fault is 't thet we hevn't kep 'em?

Warn't there \_two\_ sides? an' don't it stend to reason

Thet this week's 'Nited States ain't las' week's treason?

When all these sums is done, with nothin' missed,

An' nut afore, this school 'll be dismissed.

I knowed ez wal ez though I'd seen 't with eyes

Thet when the war wuz over copper'd rise,

An' thet we'd hev a rile-up in our kettle

'twould need Leviathan's whole skin to settle: 250

I thought 'twould take about a generation

'fore we could wal begin to be a nation,

But I allow I never did imegine

'twould be our Pres'dunt thet 'ould drive a wedge in

To keep the split from closin' ef it could.

An' healin' over with new wholesome wood;

For th' ain't no chance o' healin' while they think

Thet law an' gov'ment's only printer's ink;

I mus' confess I thank him for discoverin'

The curus way in which the States are sovereign; 260

They ain't nut \_quite\_ enough so to rebel,

But, when they fin' it's costly to raise h----,

[A groan from Deac'n G.]

Why, then, for jes' the same superl'tive reason,

They're 'most too much so to be tetched for treason;

They \_can't\_ go out, but ef they somehow \_du\_,

Their sovereignty don't noways go out tu;

The State goes out, the sovereignty don't stir,

But stays to keep the door ajar for her.

He thinks secession never took 'em out,

An' mebby he's correc', but I misdoubt? 270

Ef they warn't out, then why, 'n the name o' sin,

Make all this row 'bout lettin' of 'em in?

In law, p'r'aps nut; but there's a diffurence, ruther,

Betwixt your mother-'n-law an' real mother,

[Derisive cheers.]

An' I, for one, shall wish they'd all ben \_som'eres\_,

Long 'z U.S. Texes are sech reg'lar comers.

But, O my patience! must we wriggle back

Into th' ole crooked, pettyfoggin' track,

When our artil'ry-wheels a road hev cut

Stret to our purpose ef we keep the rut? 280

War's jes' dead waste excep' to wipe the slate

Clean for the cyph'rin' of some nobler fate.

[Applause.]

Ez for dependin' on their oaths an' thet,

'twun't bind 'em more 'n the ribbin roun' my het:

I heared a fable once from Othniel Starns,

That pints it slick ez weathercocks do barns;

Onct on a time the wolves hed certing rights

Inside the fold; they used to sleep there nights,

An' bein' cousins o' the dogs, they took

Their turns et watchin', reg'lar ez a book; 290

But somehow, when the dogs hed gut asleep,

Their love o' mutton beat their love o' sheep,

Till gradilly the shepherds come to see

Things warn't agoin' ez they'd ough' to be;

So they sent off a deacon to remonstrate

Along 'th the wolves an' urge 'em to go on straight;

They didn't seem to set much by the deacon,

Nor preachin' didn' cow 'em, nut to speak on;

Fin'ly they swore thet they'd go out an' stay,

An' hev their fill o' mutton every day; 300

Then dogs an' shepherds, after much hard dammin',

[Groan from Deac'n G.]

Turned tu an' give 'em a tormented lammin',

An' sez, 'Ye sha'n't go out, the murrain rot ye,

To keep us wastin' half our time to watch ye!'

But then the question come, How live together

'thout losin' sleep, nor nary yew nor wether?

Now there wuz some dogs (noways wuth their keep)

Thet sheered their cousins' tastes an' sheered the sheep;

They sez, 'Be gin'rous, let 'em swear right in,

An', ef they backslide, let 'em swear ag'in; 310

Jes' let 'em put on sheep-skins whilst they're swearin';

To ask for more 'ould be beyond all bearin'.'

'Be gin'rous for yourselves, where \_you\_'re to pay,

Thet's the best prectice,' sez a shepherd gray;

'Ez for their oaths they wun't be wuth a button,

Long 'z you don't cure 'em o' their taste for mutton;

Th' ain't but one solid way, howe'er you puzzle:

Tell they're convarted, let 'em wear a muzzle.'

[Cries of 'Bully for you!']

I've noticed thet each half-baked scheme's abetters

Are in the hebbit o' producin' letters 320

Writ by all sorts o' never-heared-on fellers,

'bout ez oridge'nal ez the wind in bellers;

I've noticed, tu, it's the quack med'cine gits

(An' needs) the grettest heaps o' stiffykits;

[Two pothekeries goes out.]

Now, sence I lef off creepin' on all fours,

I hain't ast no man to endorse my course;

It's full ez cheap to be your own endorser,

An' ef I've made a cup, I'll fin' the saucer;

But I've some letters here from t'other side,

An' them's the sort thet helps me to decide; 330

Tell me for wut the copper-comp'nies hanker,

An' I'll tell you jest where it's safe to anchor. [Faint hiss.]

Fus'ly the Hon'ble B.O. Sawin writes

Thet for a spell he couldn't sleep o' nights,

Puzzlin' which side wuz preudentest to pin to,

Which wuz th' ole homestead, which the temp'ry leanto;

Et fust he jedged 'twould right-side-up his pan

To come out ez a 'ridge'nal Union man,

'But now,' he sez, 'I ain't nut quite so fresh;

The winnin' horse is goin' to be Secesh; 340

You might, las' spring, hev eas'ly walked the course,

'fore we contrived to doctor th' Union horse;

Now \_we\_'re the ones to walk aroun' the nex' track:

Jest you take hol' an' read the follerin' extrac',

Out of a letter I received last week

From an ole frien' thet never sprung a leak,

A Nothun Dem'crat o' th' ole Jarsey blue,

Born copper-sheathed an' copper-fastened tu.'

'These four years past it hez ben tough

To say which side a feller went for; 350

Guideposts all gone, roads muddy 'n' rough,

An' nothin' duin' wut 'twuz meant for;

Pickets a-firin' left an' right,

Both sides a lettin' rip et sight,--

Life warn't wuth hardly payin' rent for.

'Columby gut her back up so,

It warn't no use a-tryin' to stop her,--

War's emptin's riled her very dough

An' made it rise an' act improper;

'Twuz full ez much ez I could du 360

To jes' lay low an' worry thru,

'Thout hevin' to sell out my copper.

'Afore the war your mod'rit men,

Could set an' sun 'em on the fences,

Cyph'rin' the chances up, an' then

Jump off which way bes' paid expenses;

Sence, 'twuz so resky ary way,

\_I\_ didn't hardly darst to say

I 'greed with Paley's Evidences.

[Groan from Deac'n G.]

'Ask Mac ef tryin' to set the fence 370

Warn't like bein' rid upon a rail on 't,

Headin' your party with a sense

O' bein' tipjint in the tail on 't,

An' tryin' to think thet, on the whole,

You kin' o' quasi own your soul

When Belmont's gut a bill o' sale on 't?

[Three cheers for Grant and Sherman.]

'Come peace, I sposed thet folks 'ould like

Their pol'tics done ag'in by proxy;

Give their noo loves the bag an' strike

A fresh trade with their reg'lar doxy; 380

But the drag's broke, now slavery's gone,

An' there's gret resk they'll blunder on,

Ef they ain't stopped, to real Democ'cy.

'We've gut an awful row to hoe

In this 'ere job o' reconstructin';

Folks dunno skurce which way to go,

Where th' ain't some boghole to be ducked in;

But one thing's clear; there \_is\_ a crack,

Ef we pry hard, 'twixt white an' black,

Where the ole makebate can be tucked in. 390

'No white man sets in airth's broad aisle

Thet I ain't willin' t' own ez brother,

An' ef he's happened to strike ile,

I dunno, fin'ly, but I'd ruther;

An' Paddies, long 'z they vote all right,

Though they ain't jest a nat'ral white,

I hold one on 'em good 'z another,

[Applause.]

'Wut \_is\_ there lef I'd like to know,

Ef 'tain't the defference o' color,

To keep up self-respec' an' show 400

The human natur' of a fullah?

Wut good in bein' white, onless

It's fixed by law, nut lef' to guess,

We're a heap smarter an' they duller?

'Ef we're to hev our ekle rights,

'twun't du to 'low no competition;

Th' ole debt doo us for bein' whites

Ain't safe onless we stop th' emission

O' these noo notes, whose specie base

Is human natur', thout no trace 410

O' shape, nor color, nor condition.

[Continood applause.]

'So fur I'd writ an' couldn' jedge

Aboard wut boat I'd best take pessige,

My brains all mincemeat, 'thout no edge

Upon 'em more than tu a sessige,

But now it seems ez though I see

Sunthin' resemblin' an idee,

Sence Johnson's speech an' veto message.

'I like the speech best, I confess,

The logic, preudence, an' good taste on 't; 420

An' it's so mad, I ruther guess

There's some dependence to be placed on 't; [Laughter.]

It's narrer, but 'twixt you an' me,

Out o' the allies o' J.D.

A temp'ry party can be based on 't.

'Jes' to hold on till Johnson's thru

An' dug his Presidential grave is,

An' \_then!\_--who knows but we could slew

The country roun' to put in----?

Wun't some folks rare up when we pull 430

Out o' their eyes our Union wool

An' larn 'em wut a p'lit'cle shave is!

'Oh, did it seem 'z ef Providunce

\_Could\_ ever send a second Tyler?

To see the South all back to once,

Reapin' the spiles o' the Free-siler,

Is cute ez though an ingineer

Should claim th' old iron for his sheer

Coz 'twas himself that bust the biler!'

[Gret laughter.]

Thet tells the story! Thet's wut we shall git 440

By tryin' squirtguns on the burnin' Pit;

For the day never comes when it'll du

To kick off Dooty like a worn-out shoe.

I seem to hear a whisperin' in the air,

A sighin' like, of unconsoled despair,

Thet comes from nowhere an' from everywhere,

An' seems to say, 'Why died we? warn't it, then,

To settle, once for all, thet men wuz men?

Oh, airth's sweet cup snetched from us barely tasted,

The grave's real chill is feelin' life wuz wasted! 450

Oh, you we lef', long-lingerin' et the door,

Lovin' you best, coz we loved Her the more,

Thet Death, not we, had conquered, we should feel

Ef she upon our memory turned her heel,

An' unregretful throwed us all away

To flaunt it in a Blind Man's Holiday!'

My frien's, I've talked nigh on to long enough.

I hain't no call to bore ye coz ye're tough;

My lungs are sound, an' our own v'ice delights

Our ears, but even kebbige-heads hez rights. 460

It's the las' time thet I shell e'er address ye,

But you'll soon fin' some new tormentor: bless ye!

[Tumult'ous applause and cries of 'Go on!' 'Don't stop!']

UNDER THE WILLOWS AND OTHER POEMS

TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

AGRO DOLCE

The wind is roistering out of doors,

My windows shake and my chimney roars;

My Elmwood chimneys seem crooning to me,

As of old, in their moody, minor key,

And out of the past the hoarse wind blows,

As I sit in my arm-chair, and toast my toes.

'Ho! ho! nine-and-forty,' they seem to sing,

'We saw you a little toddling thing.

We knew you child and youth and man,

A wonderful fellow to dream and plan,

With a great thing always to come,--who knows?

Well, well! 'tis some comfort to toast one's toes.

'How many times have you sat at gaze

Till the mouldering fire forgot to blaze,

Shaping among the whimsical coals

Fancies and figures and shining goals!

What matters the ashes that cover those?

While hickory lasts you can toast your toes.

'O dream-ship-builder: where are they all,

Your grand three-deckers, deep-chested and tall,

That should crush the waves under canvas piles,

And anchor at last by the Fortunate Isles?

There's gray in your beard, the years turn foes,

While you muse in your arm-chair, and toast your toes.'

I sit and dream that I hear, as of yore,

My Elmwood chimneys' deep-throated roar;

If much be gone, there is much remains;

By the embers of loss I count my gains,

You and yours with the best, till the old hope glows

In the fanciful flame, as I toast my toes.

Instead of a fleet of broad-browed ships,

To send a child's armada of chips!

Instead of the great gun, tier on tier,

A freight of pebbles and grass-blades sere!

'Well, maybe more love with the less gift goes,'

I growl, as, half moody, I toast my toes.

UNDER THE WILLOWS

Frank-hearted hostess of the field and wood,

Gypsy, whose roof is every spreading tree,

June is the pearl of our New England year.

Still a surprisal, though expected long.

Her coming startles. Long she lies in wait,

Makes many a feint, peeps forth, draws coyly back,

Then, from some southern ambush in the sky,

With one great gush of blossom storms the world.

A week ago the sparrow was divine;

The bluebird, shifting his light load of song 10

From post to post along the cheerless fence,

Was as a rhymer ere the poet come;

But now, oh rapture! sunshine winged and voiced,

Pipe blown through by the warm wild breath of the West

Shepherding his soft droves of fleecy cloud,

Gladness of woods, skies, waters, all in one,

The bobolink has come, and, like the soul

Of the sweet season vocal in a bird,

Gurgles in ecstasy we know not what

Save \_June! Dear June! Now God be praised for June\_. 20

May is a pious fraud of the almanac,

A ghastly parody of real Spring

Shaped out of snow and breathed with eastern wind;

Or if, o'er-confident, she trust the date,

And, with her handful of anemones,

Herself as shivery, steal into the sun,

The season need but turn his hour-glass round,

And Winter suddenly, like crazy Lear,

Reels back, and brings the dead May in his arms,

Her budding breasts and wan dislustred front 30

With frosty streaks and drifts of his white beard

All overblown. Then, warmly walled with books,

While my wood-fire supplies the sun's defect,

Whispering old forest-sagas in its dreams,

I take my May down from the happy shelf

Where perch the world's rare song-birds in a row,

Waiting my choice to open with full breast,

And beg an alms of springtime, ne'er denied

Indoors by vernal Chaucer, whose fresh woods

Throb thick with merle and mavis all the year. 40

July breathes hot, sallows the crispy fields,

Curls up the wan leaves of the lilac-hedge,

And every eve cheats us with show of clouds

That braze the horizon's western rim, or hang

Motionless, with heaped canvas drooping idly,

Like a dim fleet by starving men besieged,

Conjectured half, and half descried afar,

Helpless of wind, and seeming to slip back

Adown the smooth curve of the oily sea.

But June is full of invitations sweet, 50

Forth from the chimney's yawn and thrice-read tomes

To leisurely delights and sauntering thoughts

That brook no ceiling narrower than the blue.

The cherry, drest for bridal, at my pane

Brushes, then listens, \_Will he come?\_ The bee,

All dusty as a miller, takes his toll

Of powdery gold, and grumbles. What a day

To sun me and do nothing! Nay, I think

Merely to bask and ripen is sometimes

The student's wiser business; the brain 60

That forages all climes to line its cells,

Ranging both worlds on lightest wings of wish,

Will not distil the juices it has sucked

To the sweet substance of pellucid thought,

Except for him who hath the secret learned

To mix his blood with sunshine, and to take

The winds into his pulses. Hush! 'tis he!

My oriole, my glance of summer fire,

Is come at last, and, ever on the watch,

Twitches the packthread I had lightly wound 70

About the bough to help his housekeeping,--

Twitches and scouts by turns, blessing his luck,

Yet fearing me who laid it in his way,

Nor, more than wiser we in our affairs,

Divines the providence that hides and helps.

\_Heave, ho! Heave, ho!\_ he whistles as the twine

Slackens its hold; \_once more, now!\_ and a flash

Lightens across the sunlight to the elm

Where his mate dangles at her cup of felt.

Nor all his booty is the thread; he trails 80

My loosened thought with it along the air,

And I must follow, would I ever find

The inward rhyme to all this wealth of life.

I care not how men trace their ancestry,

To ape or Adam: let them please their whim;

But I in June am midway to believe

A tree among my far progenitors,

Such sympathy is mine with all the race,

Such mutual recognition vaguely sweet

There is between us. Surely there are times 90

When they consent to own me of their kin,

And condescend to me, and call me cousin,

Murmuring faint lullabies of eldest time,

Forgotten, and yet dumbly felt with thrills

Moving the lips, though fruitless of all words.

And I have many a lifelong leafy friend,

Never estranged nor careful of my soul,

That knows I hate the axe, and welcomes me

Within his tent as if I were a bird,

Or other free companion of the earth, 100

Yet undegenerate to the shifts of men.

Among them one, an ancient willow, spreads

Eight balanced limbs, springing at once all round

His deep-ridged trunk with upward slant diverse,

In outline like enormous beaker, fit

For hand of Jotun, where mid snow and mist

He holds unwieldy revel. This tree, spared,

I know not by what grace,--for in the blood

Of our New World subduers lingers yet

Hereditary feud with trees, they being 110

(They and the red-man most) our fathers' foes,--

Is one of six, a willow Pleiades,

The seventh fallen, that lean along the brink

Where the steep upland dips into the marsh,

Their roots, like molten metal cooled in flowing,

Stiffened in coils and runnels down the bank.

The friend of all the winds, wide-armed he towers

And glints his steely aglets in the sun,

Or whitens fitfully with sudden bloom

Of leaves breeze-lifted, much as when a shoal 120

Of devious minnows wheel from where a pike

Lurks balanced 'neath the lily-pads, and whirl

A rood of silver bellies to the day.

Alas! no acorn from the British oak

'Neath which slim fairies tripping wrought those rings

Of greenest emerald, wherewith fireside life

Did with the invisible spirit of Nature wed,

Was ever planted here! No darnel fancy

Might choke one useful blade in Puritan fields;

With horn and hoof the good old Devil came, 130

The witch's broomstick was not contraband,

But all that superstition had of fair,

Or piety of native sweet, was doomed.

And if there be who nurse unholy faiths,

Fearing their god as if he were a wolf

That snuffed round every home and was not seen,

There should be some to watch and keep alive

All beautiful beliefs. And such was that,--

By solitary shepherd first surmised

Under Thessalian oaks, loved by some maid 140

Of royal stirp, that silent came and vanished,

As near her nest the hermit thrush, nor dared

Confess a mortal name,--that faith which gave

A Hamadryed to each tree; and I

Will hold it true that in this willow dwells

The open-handed spirit, frank and blithe,

Of ancient Hospitality, long since,

With ceremonious thrift, bowed out of doors.

In June 'tis good to lie beneath a tree

While the blithe season comforts every sense, 150

Steeps all the brain in rest, and heals the heart,

Brimming it o'er with sweetness unawares,

Fragrant and silent as that rosy snow

Wherewith the pitying apple-tree fills up

And tenderly lines some last-year robin's nest.

There muse I of old times, old hopes, old friends,--

Old friends! The writing of those words has borne

My fancy backward to the gracious past,

The generous past, when all was possible.

For all was then untried; the years between 160

Have taught some sweet, some bitter lessons, none

Wiser than this,--to spend in all things else,

But of old friends to be most miserly.

Each year to ancient friendships adds a ring,

As to an oak, and precious more and more,

Without deservingness or help of ours,

They grow, and, silent, wider spread, each year,

Their unbought ring of shelter or of shade,

Sacred to me the lichens on the bark,

Which Nature's milliners would scrape away; 170

Most dear and sacred every withered limb!

'Tis good to set them early, for our faith

Pines as we age, and, after wrinkles come,

Few plant, but water dead ones with vain tears.

This willow is as old to me as life;

And under it full often have I stretched,

Feeling the warm earth like a thing alive,

And gathering virtue in at every pore

Till it possessed me wholly, and thought ceased,

Or was transfused in something to which thought 180

Is coarse and dull of sense. Myself was lost.

Gone from me like an ache, and what remained

Become a part of the universal joy.

My soul went forth, and, mingling with the tree,

Danced in the leaves; or, floating in the cloud,

Saw its white double in the stream below;

Or else, sublimed to purer ecstasy,

Dilated in the broad blue over all.

I was the wind that dappled the lush grass,

The tide that crept with coolness to its roots, 190

The thin-winged swallow skating on the air;

The life that gladdened everything was mine.

Was I then truly all that I beheld?

Or is this stream of being but a glass

Where the mind sees its visionary self,

As, when the kingfisher flits o'er his bay,

Across the river's hollow heaven below

His picture flits,--another, yet the same?

But suddenly the sound of human voice

Or footfall, like the drop a chemist pours, 200

Doth in opacous cloud precipitate

The consciousness that seemed but now dissolved

Into an essence rarer than its own.

And I am narrowed to myself once more.

For here not long is solitude secure,

Nor Fantasy left vacant to her spell.

Here, sometimes, in this paradise of shade,

Rippled with western winds, the dusty Tramp,

Seeing the treeless causey burn beyond,

Halts to unroll his bundle of strange food 210

And munch an unearned meal. I cannot help

Liking this creature, lavish Summer's bedesman,

Who from the almshouse steals when nights grow warm,

Himself his large estate and only charge,

To be the guest of haystack or of hedge,

Nobly superior to the household gear

That forfeits us our privilege of nature.

I bait him with my match-box and my pouch,

Nor grudge the uncostly sympathy of smoke,

His equal now, divinely unemployed. 220

Some smack of Robin Hood is in the man,

Some secret league with wild wood-wandering things;

He is our ragged Duke, our barefoot Earl,

By right of birth exonerate from toil,

Who levies rent from us his tenants all,

And serves the state by merely being. Here

The Scissors-grinder, pausing, doffs his hat,

And lets the kind breeze, with its delicate fan,

Winnow the heat from out his dank gray hair,--

A grimy Ulysses, a much-wandered man, 230

Whose feet are known to all the populous ways,

And many men and manners he hath seen,

Not without fruit of solitary thought.

He, as the habit is of lonely men,--

Unused to try the temper of their mind

In fence with others,--positive and shy,

Yet knows to put an edge upon his speech,

Pithily Saxon in unwilling talk.

Him I entrap with my long-suffering knife,

And, while its poor blade hums away in sparks, 240

Sharpen my wit upon his gritty mind,

In motion set obsequious to his wheel,

And in its quality not much unlike.

Nor wants my tree more punctual visitors.

The children, they who are the only rich,

Creating for the moment, and possessing

Whate'er they choose to feign,--for still with them

Kind Fancy plays the fairy godmother,

Strewing their lives with cheap material

For wingÃ¨d horses and Aladdin's lamps, 250

Pure elfin-gold, by manhood's touch profane

To dead leaves disenchanted,--long ago

Between the branches of the tree fixed seats,

Making an o'erturned box their table. Oft

The shrilling girls sit here between school hours,

And play at \_What's my thought like?\_ while the boys,

With whom the age chivalric ever bides,

Pricked on by knightly spur of female eyes,

Climb high to swing and shout on perilous boughs,

Or, from the willow's armory equipped 260

With musket dumb, green banner, edgeless sword,

Make good the rampart of their tree-redoubt

'Gainst eager British storming from below,

And keep alive the tale of Bunker's Hill.

Here, too, the men that mend our village ways,

Vexing Macadam's ghost with pounded slate,

Their nooning take; much noisy talk they spend

On horses and their ills; and, as John Bull

Tells of Lord This or That, who was his friend,

So these make boast of intimacies long 270

With famous teams, and add large estimates,

By competition swelled from mouth to mouth.

Of how much they could draw, till one, ill pleased

To have his legend overbid, retorts:

'You take and stretch truck-horses in a string

From here to Long Wharf end, one thing I know,

Not heavy neither, they could never draw,--

Ensign's long bow!' Then laughter loud and long.

So they in their leaf-shadowed microcosm

Image the larger world; for wheresoe'er 280

Ten men are gathered, the observant eye

Will find mankind in little, as the stars

Glide up and set, and all the heavens revolve

In the small welkin of a drop of dew.

I love to enter pleasure by a postern,

Not the broad popular gate that gulps the mob;

To find my theatres in roadside nooks,

Where men are actors, and suspect it not;

Where Nature all unconscious works her will,

And every passion moves with easy gait, 290

Unhampered by the buskin or the train.

Hating the crowd, where we gregarious men

Lead lonely lives, I love society,

Nor seldom find the best with simple souls

Unswerved by culture from their native bent,

The ground we meet on being primal man,

And nearer the deep bases of our lives.

But oh, half heavenly, earthly half, my soul,

Canst thou from those late ecstasies descend,

Thy lips still wet with the miraculous wine 300

That transubstantiates all thy baser stuff

To such divinity that soul and sense,

Once more commingled in their source, are lost,--

Canst thou descend to quench a vulgar thirst

With the mere dregs and rinsings of the world?

Well, if my nature find her pleasure so,

I am content, nor need to blush; I take

My little gift of being clean from God,

Not haggling for a better, holding it

Good as was ever any in the world, 310

My days as good and full of miracle.

I pluck my nutriment from any bush,

Finding out poison as the first men did

By tasting and then suffering, if I must.

Sometimes my bush burns, and sometimes it is

A leafless wilding shivering by the wall;

But I have known when winter barberries

Pricked the effeminate palate with surprise

Of savor whose mere harshness seemed divine.

Oh, benediction of the higher mood 320

And human-kindness of the lower! for both

I will be grateful while I live, nor question

The wisdom that hath made us what we are,

With such large range as from the ale-house bench

Can reach the stars and be with both at home.

They tell us we have fallen on prosy days,

Condemned to glean the leavings of earth's feast

Where gods and heroes took delight of old;

But though our lives, moving in one dull round

Of repetition infinite, become 330

Stale as a newspaper once read, and though

History herself, seen in her workshop, seem

To have lost the art that dyed those glorious panes,

Rich with memorial shapes of saint and sage,

That pave with splendor the Past's dusky aisles,--

Panes that enchant the light of common day

With colors costly as the blood of kings,

Till with ideal hues it edge our thought,--

Yet while the world is left, while nature lasts,

And man the best of nature, there shall be 340

Somewhere contentment for these human hearts,

Some freshness, some unused material

For wonder and for song. I lose myself

In other ways where solemn guide-posts say,

\_This way to Knowledge, This way to Repose\_,

But here, here only, I am ne'er betrayed,

For every by-path leads me to my love.

God's passionless reformers, influences,

That purify and heal and are not seen,

Shall man say whence your virtue is, or how 350

Ye make medicinal the wayside weed?

I know that sunshine, through whatever rift,

How shaped it matters not, upon my walls

Paints discs as perfect-rounded as its source,

And, like its antitype, the ray divine,

However finding entrance, perfect still,

Repeats the image unimpaired of God.

We, who by shipwreck only find the shores

Of divine wisdom, can but kneel at first;

Can but exult to feel beneath our feet, 360

That long stretched vainly down the yielding deeps,

The shock and sustenance of solid earth;

Inland afar we see what temples gleam

Through immemorial stems of sacred groves,

And we conjecture shining shapes therein;

Yet for a space we love to wander here

Among the shells and seaweed of the beach.

So mused I once within my willow-tent

One brave June morning, when the bluff northwest,

Thrusting aside a dank and snuffling day 370

That made us bitter at our neighbors' sins,

Brimmed the great cup of heaven with sparkling cheer

And roared a lusty stave; the sliding Charles,

Blue toward the west, and bluer and more blue,

Living and lustrous as a woman's eyes

Look once and look no more, with southward curve

Ran crinkling sunniness, like Helen's hair

Glimpsed in Elysium, insubstantial gold;

From blossom-clouded orchards, far away

The bobolink tinkled; the deep meadows flowed 380

With multitudinous pulse of light and shade

Against the bases of the southern hills,

While here and there a drowsy island rick

Slept and its shadow slept; the wooden bridge

Thundered, and then was silent; on the roofs

The sun-warped shingles rippled with the heat;

Summer on field and hill, in heart and brain,

All life washed clean in this high tide of June.

DARA

When Persia's sceptre trembled in a hand

Wilted with harem-heats, and all the land

Was hovered over by those vulture ills

That snuff decaying empire from afar,

Then, with a nature balanced as a star,

Dara arose, a shepherd of the hills.

He who had governed fleecy subjects well

Made his own village by the selfsame spell

Secure and quiet as a guarded fold;

Then, gathering strength by slow and wise degrees 10

Under his sway, to neighbor villages

Order returned, and faith and justice old.

Now when it fortuned that a king more wise

Endued the realm with brain and hands and eyes,

He sought on every side men brave and just;

And having heard our mountain shepherd's praise,

How he refilled the mould of elder days,

To Dara gave a satrapy in trust.

So Dara shepherded a province wide,

Nor in his viceroy's sceptre took more pride 20

Than in his crook before; but envy finds

More food in cities than on mountains bare;

And the frank sun of natures clear and rare

Breeds poisonous fogs in low and marish minds.

Soon it was hissed into the royal ear,

That, though wise Dara's province, year by year,

Like a great sponge, sucked wealth and plenty up,

Yet, when he squeezed it at the king's behest,

Some yellow drops, more rich than all the rest,

Went to the filling of his private cup. 30

For proof, they said, that, wheresoe'er he went,

A chest, beneath whose weight the camel bent,

Went with him; and no mortal eye had seen

What was therein, save only Dara's own;

But, when 'twas opened, all his tent was known

To glow and lighten with heaped jewels' sheen.

The King set forth for Dara's province straight;

There, as was fit, outside the city's gate,

The viceroy met him with a stately train,

And there, with archers circled, close at hand, 40

A camel with the chest was seen to stand:

The King's brow reddened, for the guilt was plain.

'Open me here,' he cried, 'this treasure-chest!'

'Twas done; and only a worn shepherd's vest

Was found therein. Some blushed and hung the head;

Not Dara; open as the sky's blue roof

He stood, and 'O my lord, behold the proof

That I was faithful to my trust,' he said.

'To govern men, lo all the spell I had!'

My soul in these rude vestments ever clad 50

Still to the unstained past kept true and leal,

Still on these plains could breathe her mountain air,

And fortune's heaviest gifts serenely bear,

Which bend men from their truth and make them reel.

'For ruling wisely I should have small skill,

Were I not lord of simple Dara still;

That sceptre kept, I could not lose my way.'

Strange dew in royal eyes grew round and bright,

And strained the throbbing lids; before 'twas night

Two added provinces blest Dara's sway. 60

THE FIRST SNOW-FALL

The snow had begun in the gloaming,

And busily all the night

Had been heaping field and highway

With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock

Wore ermine too dear for an earl,

And the poorest twig on the elm-tree

Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara

Came Chanticleer's muffled crow,

The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,

And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window

The noiseless work of the sky,

And the sudden flurries of snowbirds,

Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn

Where a little headstone stood;

How the flakes were folding it gently,

As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel,

Saying, 'Father, who makes it snow?'

And I told of the good All-father

Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,

And thought of the leaden sky

That arched o'er our first great sorrow,

When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience

That fell from that cloud like snow,

Flake by flake, healing and hiding

The scar that renewed our woe.

And again to the child I whispered,

'The snow that husheth all,

Darling, the merciful Father

Alone can make it fall!'

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her:

And she, kissing back, could not know

That \_my\_ kiss was given to her sister,

Folded close under deepening snow.

THE SINGING LEAVES

A BALLAD

I

'What fairings will ye that I bring?'

Said the King to his daughters three;

'For I to Vanity Fair am bound,

Now say what shall they be?'

Then up and spake the eldest daughter,

That lady tall and grand:

'Oh, bring me pearls and diamonds great,

And gold rings for my hand.'

Thereafter spake the second daughter,

That was both white and red: 10

'For me bring silks that will stand alone,

And a gold comb for my head.'

Then came the turn of the least daughter,

That was whiter than thistle-down,

And among the gold of her blithesome hair

Dim shone the golden crown.

'There came a bird this morning,

And sang 'neath my bower eaves,

Till I dreamed, as his music made me,

"Ask thou for the Singing Leaves."' 20

Then the brow of the King swelled crimson

With a flush of angry scorn:

'Well have ye spoken, my two eldest,

And chosen as ye were born;

'But she, like a thing of peasant race,

That is happy binding the sheaves;'

Then he saw her dead mother in her face,

And said, 'Thou shalt have thy leaves.'

II

He mounted and rode three days and nights

Till he came to Vanity Fair, 30

And 'twas easy to buy the gems and the silk,

But no Singing Leaves were there.

Then deep in the greenwood rode he,

And asked of every tree,

'Oh, if you have ever a Singing Leaf,

I pray you give it me!'

But the trees all kept their counsel,

And never a word said they,

Only there sighed from the pine-tops

A music of seas far away. 40

Only the pattering aspen

Made a sound of growing rain,

That fell ever faster and faster,

Then faltered to silence again.

'Oh, where shall I find a little foot-page

That would win both hose and shoon,

And will bring to me the Singing Leaves

If they grow under the moon?'

Then lightly turned him Walter the page,

By the stirrup as he ran: 50

'Now pledge you me the truesome word

Of a king and gentleman,

'That you will give me the first, first thing

You meet at your castle-gate,

And the Princess shall get the Singing Leaves,

Or mine be a traitor's fate.'

The King's head dropt upon his breast

A moment, as it might be;

'Twill be my dog, he thought, and said,

'My faith I plight to thee.' 60

Then Walter took from next his heart

A packet small and thin,

'Now give you this to the Princess Anne,

The Singing Leaves are therein.'

III

As the King rode in at his castle-gate,

A maiden to meet him ran,

And 'Welcome, father!' she laughed and cried

Together, the Princess Anne.

'Lo, here the Singing Leaves,' quoth he,

'And woe, but they cost me dear!' 70

She took the packet, and the smile

Deepened down beneath the tear.

It deepened down till it reached her heart,

And then gushed up again,

And lighted her tears as the sudden sun

Transfigures the summer rain.

And the first Leaf, when it was opened,

Sang: 'I am Walter the page,

And the songs I sing 'neath thy window

Are my only heritage.' 80

And the second Leaf sang: 'But in the land

That is neither on earth nor sea,

My lute and I are lords of more

Than thrice this kingdom's fee.'

And the third Leaf sang, 'Be mine! Be mine!'

And ever it sang, 'Be mine!'

Then sweeter it sang and ever sweeter,

And said, 'I am thine, thine, thine!'

At the first Leaf she grew pale enough,

At the second she turned aside, 90

At the third, 'twas as if a lily flushed

With a rose's red heart's tide.

'Good counsel gave the bird,' said she,

'I have my hope thrice o'er,

For they sing to my very heart,' she said,

'And it sings to them evermore.'

She brought to him her beauty and truth,

But and broad earldoms three,

And he made her queen of the broader lands

He held of his lute in fee. 100

SEAWEED

Not always unimpeded can I pray,

Nor, pitying saint, thine intercession claim;

Too closely clings the burden of the day,

And all the mint and anise that I pay

But swells my debt and deepens my self-blame.

Shall I less patience have than Thou, who know

That Thou revisit'st all who wait for thee,

Nor only fill'st the unsounded deeps below,

But dost refresh with punctual overflow

The rifts where unregarded mosses be?

The drooping seaweed hears, in night abyssed,

Far and more far the wave's receding shocks,

Nor doubts, for all the darkness and the mist,

That the pale shepherdess will keep her tryst,

And shoreward lead again her foam-fleeced flocks.

For the same wave that rims the Carib shore

With momentary brede of pearl and gold,

Goes hurrying thence to gladden with its roar

Lorn weeds bound fast on rocks of Labrador,

By love divine on one sweet errand rolled.

And, though Thy healing waters far withdraw,

I, too, can wait and feed on hope of Thee

And of the dear recurrence of Thy law,

Sure that the parting grace my morning saw

Abides its time to come in search of me.

THE FINDING OF THE LYRE

There lay upon the ocean's shore

What once a tortoise served to cover;

A year and more, with rush and roar,

The surf had rolled it over,

Had played with it, and flung it by,

As wind and weather might decide it,

Then tossed it high where sand-drifts dry

Cheap burial might provide it.

It rested there to bleach or tan,

The rains had soaked, the suns had burned it;

With many a ban the fisherman

Had stumbled o'er and spurned it;

And there the fisher-girl would stay,

Conjecturing with her brother

How in their play the poor estray

Might serve some use or other.

So there it lay, through wet and dry

As empty as the last new sonnet,

Till by and by came Mercury,

And, having mused upon it,

'Why, here,' cried he, 'the thing of things

In shape, material, and dimension!

Give it but strings, and, lo, it sings,

A wonderful invention!'

So said, so done; the chords he strained,

And, as his fingers o'er them hovered,

The shell disdained a soul had gained,

The lyre had been discovered.

O empty world that round us lies,

Dead shell, of soul and thought forsaken,

Brought we but eyes like Mercury's,

In thee what songs should waken!

NEW-YEAR'S EVE, 1850

This is the midnight of the century,--hark!

Through aisle and arch of Godminster have gone

Twelve throbs that tolled the zenith of the dark,

And mornward now the starry hands move on;

'Mornward!' the angelic watchers say,

'Passed is the sorest trial;

No plot of man can stay

The hand upon the dial;

Night is the dark stem of the lily Day.'

If we, who watched in valleys here below,

Toward streaks, misdeemed of morn, our faces turned

When volcan glares set all the east aglow,

We are not poorer that we wept and yearned;

Though earth swing wide from God's intent,

And though no man nor nation

Will move with full consent

In heavenly gravitation,

Yet by one Sun is every orbit bent.

FOR AN AUTOGRAPH

Though old the thought and oft exprest,

'Tis his at last who says it best,--

I'll try my fortune with the rest.

Life is a leaf of paper white

Whereon each one of us may write

His word or two, and then comes night.

'Lo, time and space enough,' we cry,

'To write an epic!' so we try

Our nibs upon the edge, and die.

Muse not which way the pen to hold,

Luck hates the slow and loves the bold,

Soon come the darkness and the cold.

Greatly begin! though thou have time

But for a line, be that sublime,--

Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

Ah, with what lofty hope we came!

But we forget it, dream of fame,

And scrawl, as I do here, a name.

AL FRESCO

The dandelions and buttercups

Gild all the lawn; the drowsy bee

Stumbles among the clover-tops,

And summer sweetens all but me:

Away, unfruitful lore of books,

For whose vain idiom we reject

The soul's more native dialect,

Aliens among the birds and brooks,

Dull to interpret or conceive

What gospels lost the woods retrieve! 10

Away, ye critics, city-bred,

Who springes set of thus and so,

And in the first man's footsteps tread,

Like those who toil through drifted snow!

Away, my poets, whose sweet spell

Can make a garden of a cell!

I need ye not, for I to-day

Will make one long sweet verse of play.

Snap, chord of manhood's tenser strain!

To-day I will be a boy again; 20

The mind's pursuing element,

Like a bow slackened and unbent,

In some dark corner shall be leant.

The robin sings, as of old, from the limb!

The cat-bird croons in the lilac-bush!

Through the dim arbor, himself more dim,

Silently hops the hermit-thrush,

The withered leaves keep dumb for him;

The irreverent buccaneering bee

Hath stormed and rifled the nunnery 30

Of the lily, and scattered the sacred floor

With haste-dropt gold from shrine to door;

There, as of yore,

The rich, milk-tingeing buttercup

Its tiny polished urn holds up,

Filled with ripe summer to the edge,

The sun in his own wine to pledge;

And our tall elm, this hundredth year

Doge of our leafy Venice here,

Who, with an annual ring, doth wed 40

The blue Adriatic overhead,

Shadows with his palatial mass

The deep canals of flowing grass.

O unestrangÃ¨d birds and bees!

O face of Nature always true!

O never-unsympathizing trees!

O never-rejecting roof of blue,

Whose rash disherison never falls

On us unthinking prodigals,

Yet who convictest all our ill, 50

So grand and unappeasable!

Methinks my heart from each of these

Plucks part of childhood back again,

Long there imprisoned, as the breeze

Doth every hidden odor seize

Of wood and water, hill and plain:

Once more am I admitted peer

In the upper house of Nature here,

And feel through all my pulses run

The royal blood of wind and sun. 60

Upon these elm-arched solitudes

No hum of neighbor toil intrudes;

The only hammer that I hear

Is wielded by the woodpecker,

The single noisy calling his

In all our leaf-hid Sybaris;

The good old time, close-hidden here,

Persists, a loyal cavalier,

While Roundheads prim, with point of fox,

Probe wainscot-chink and empty box; 70

Here no hoarse-voiced iconoclast,

Insults thy statues, royal Past;

Myself too prone the axe to wield,

I touch the silver side of the shield

With lance reversed, and challenge peace,

A willing convert of the trees.

How chanced it that so long I tost

A cable's length from this rich coast,

With foolish anchors hugging close

The beckoning weeds and lazy ooze, 80

Nor had the wit to wreck before

On this enchanted island's shore,

Whither the current of the sea,

With wiser drift, persuaded me?

Oh, might we but of such rare days

Build up the spirit's dwelling-place!

A temple of so Parian stone

Would brook a marble god alone,

The statue of a perfect life,

Far-shrined from earth's bestaining strife. 90

Alas! though such felicity

In our vext world here may not be,

Yet, as sometimes the peasant's hut

Shows stones which old religion cut

With text inspired, or mystic sign

Of the Eternal and Divine,

Torn from the consecration deep

Of some fallen nunnery's mossy sleep,

So, from the ruins of this day

Crumbling in golden dust away, 100

The soul one gracious block may draw,

Carved with, some fragment of the law,

Which, set in life's prosaic wall,

Old benedictions may recall,

And lure some nunlike thoughts to take

Their dwelling here for memory's sake.

MASACCIO

IN THE BRANCACCI CHAPEL

He came to Florence long ago,

And painted here these walls, that shone

For Raphael and for Angelo,

With secrets deeper than his own,

Then shrank into the dark again,

And died, we know not how or when.

The shadows deepened, and I turned

Half sadly from the fresco grand;

'And is this,' mused I, 'all ye earned,

High-vaulted brain and cunning hand,

That ye to greater men could teach

The skill yourselves could never reach?'

'And who were they,' I mused, 'that wrought

Through pathless wilds, with labor long,

The highways of our daily thought?

Who reared those towers of earliest song

That lift us from the crowd to peace

Remote in sunny silences?'

Out clanged the Ave Mary bells,

And to my heart this message came:

Each clamorous throat among them tells

What strong-souled martyrs died in flame

To make it possible that thou

Shouldst here with brother sinners bow.

Thoughts that great hearts once broke for, we

Breathe cheaply in the common air;

The dust we trample heedlessly

Throbbed once in saints and heroes rare,

Who perished, opening for their race

New pathways to the commonplace.

Henceforth, when rings the health to those

Who live in story and in song,

O nameless dead, that now repose,

Safe in Oblivion's chambers strong,

One cup of recognition true

Shall silently be drained to you!

WITHOUT AND WITHIN

My coachman, in the moonlight there,

Looks through the side-light of the door;

I hear him with his brethren swear,

As I could do,--but only more.

Flattening his nose against the pane,

He envies me my brilliant lot,

Breathes on his aching fists in vain,

And dooms me to a place more hot.

He sees me in to supper go,

A silken wonder by my side,

Bare arms, bare shoulders, and a row

Of flounces, for the door too wide.

He thinks how happy is my arm

'Neath its white-gloved and jewelled load;

And wishes me some dreadful harm,

Hearing the merry corks explode.

Meanwhile I inly curse the bore

Of hunting still the same old coon,

And envy him, outside the door,

In golden quiets of the moon.

The winter wind is not so cold

As the bright smile he sees me win,

Nor the host's oldest wine so old

As our poor gabble sour and thin.

I envy him the ungyved prance

With which his freezing feet he warms,

And drag my lady's chains and dance

The galley-slave of dreary forms.

Oh, could he have my share of din,

And I his quiet!--past a doubt

'Twould still be one man bored within,

And just another bored without.

Nay, when, once paid my mortal fee,

Some idler on my headstone grim

Traces the moss-blurred name, will he

Think me the happier, or I him?

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

GODMINSTER CHIMES

WRITTEN IN AID OF A CHIME OF BELLS FOR CHRIST CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE

Godminster? Is it Fancy's play?

I know not, but the word

Sings in my heart, nor can I say

Whether 'twas dreamed or heard;

Yet fragrant in my mind it clings

As blossoms after rain,

And builds of half-remembered things

This vision in my brain.

Through aisles of long-drawn centuries

My spirit walks in thought,

And to that symbol lifts its eyes

Which God's own pity wrought;

From Calvary shines the altar's gleam,

The Church's East is there,

The Ages one great minster seem,

That throbs with praise and prayer.

And all the way from Calvary down

The carven pavement shows

Their graves who won the martyr's crown

And safe in God repose;

The saints of many a warring creed

Who now in heaven have learned

That all paths to the Father lead

Where Self the feet have spurned.

And, as the mystic aisles I pace,

By aureoled workmen built,

Lives ending at the Cross I trace

Alike through grace and guilt;

One Mary bathes the blessed feet

With ointment from her eyes,

With spikenard one, and both are sweet,

For both are sacrifice.

Moravian hymn and Roman chant

In one devotion blend,

To speak the soul's eternal want

Of Him, the inmost friend;

One prayer soars cleansed with martyr fire,

One choked with sinner's tears,

In heaven both meet in one desire,

And God one music hears.

Whilst thus I dream, the bells clash out

Upon the Sabbath air,

Each seems a hostile faith to shout,

A selfish form of prayer:

My dream is shattered, yet who knows

But in that heaven so near

These discords find harmonious close

In God's atoning ear?

O chime of sweet Saint Charity,

Peal soon that Easter morn

When Christ for all shall risen be,

And in all hearts new-born!

That Pentecost when utterance clear

To all men shall be given,

When all shall say \_My Brother\_ here,

And hear \_My Son\_ in heaven!

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

Who hath not been a poet? Who hath not,

With life's new quiver full of wingÃ¨d years,

Shot at a venture, and then, following on,

Stood doubtful at the Parting of the Ways?

There once I stood in dream, and as I paused,

Looking this way and that, came forth to me

The figure of a woman veiled, that said,

'My name is Duty, turn and follow me;'

Something there was that chilled me in her voice;

I felt Youth's hand grow slack and cold in mine, 10

As if to be withdrawn, and I exclaimed:

'Oh, leave the hot wild heart within my breast!

Duty comes soon enough, too soon comes Death;

This slippery globe of life whirls of itself,

Hasting our youth away into the dark;

These senses, quivering with electric heats,

Too soon will show, like nests on wintry boughs

Obtrusive emptiness, too palpable wreck,

Which whistling north-winds line with downy snow

Sometimes, or fringe with foliaged rime, in vain, 20

Thither the singing birds no more return.'

Then glowed to me a maiden from the left,

With bosom half disclosed, and naked arms

More white and undulant than necks of swans;

And all before her steps an influence ran

Warm as the whispering South that opens buds

And swells the laggard sails of Northern May.

'I am called Pleasure, come with me!' she said,

Then laughed, and shook out sunshine from her hair,

Nor only that, but, so it seemed, shook out 30

All memory too, and all the moonlit past,

Old loves, old aspirations, and old dreams,

More beautiful for being old and gone.

So we two went together; downward sloped

The path through yellow meads, or so I dreamed,

Yellow with sunshine and young green, but I

Saw naught nor heard, shut up in one close joy;

I only felt the hand within my own,

Transmuting all my blood to golden fire,

Dissolving all my brain in throbbing mist. 40

Suddenly shrank the hand; suddenly burst

A cry that split the torpor of my brain,

And as the first sharp thrust of lightning loosens

From the heaped cloud its rain, loosened my sense:

'Save me!' it thrilled; 'oh, hide me! there is Death!

Death the divider, the unmerciful,

That digs his pitfalls under Love and Youth,

And covers Beauty up in the cold ground;

Horrible Death! bringer of endless dark;

Let him not see me! hide me in thy breast!' 50

Thereat I strove to clasp her, but my arms

Met only what slipped crumbling down, and fell,

A handful of gray ashes, at my feet.

I would have fled, I would have followed back

That pleasant path we came, but all was changed;

Rocky the way, abrupt, and hard to find;

Yet I toiled on, and, toiling on, I thought,

'That way lies Youth, and Wisdom, and all Good;

For only by unlearning Wisdom comes

And climbing backward to diviner Youth; 60

What the world teaches profits to the world,

What the soul teaches profits to the soul,

Which then first stands erect with Godward face,

When she lets fall her pack of withered facts,

The gleanings of the outward eye and ear,

And looks and listens with her finer sense;

Nor Truth nor Knowledge cometh from without.'

After long, weary days I stood again

And waited at the Parting of the Ways;

Again the figure of a woman veiled 70

Stood forth and beckoned, and I followed now:

Down to no bower of roses led the path,

But through the streets of towns where chattering Cold

Hewed wood for fires whose glow was owned and fenced,

Where Nakedness wove garments of warm wool

Not for itself;--or through the fields it led

Where Hunger reaped the unattainable grain,

Where idleness enforced saw idle lands,

Leagues of unpeopled soil, the common earth,

Walled round with paper against God and Man. 80

'I cannot look,' I groaned, 'at only these;

The heart grows hardened with perpetual wont,

And palters with a feigned necessity,

Bargaining with itself to be content;

Let me behold thy face.'

The Form replied:

'Men follow Duty, never overtake;

Duty nor lifts her veil nor looks behind.'

But, as she spake, a loosened lock of hair

Slipped from beneath her hood, and I, who looked

To see it gray and thin, saw amplest gold; 90

Not that dull metal dug from sordid earth,

But such as the retiring sunset flood

Leaves heaped on bays and capes of island cloud.

'O Guide divine,' I prayed, 'although not yet

I may repair the virtue which I feel

Gone out at touch of untuned things and foul

With draughts of Beauty, yet declare how soon!'

'Faithless and faint of heart,' the voice returned,

'Thou seest no beauty save thou make it first;

Man, Woman, Nature each is but a glass 100

Where the soul sees the image of herself,

Visible echoes, offsprings of herself.

But, since thou need'st assurance of how soon,

Wait till that angel comes who opens all,

The reconciler, he who lifts the veil,

The reuniter, the rest-bringer, Death.'

I waited, and methought he came; but how,

Or in what shape, I doubted, for no sign,

By touch or mark, he gave me as he passed;

Only I knew a lily that I held 110

Snapt short below the head and shrivelled up;

Then turned my Guide and looked at me unveiled,

And I beheld no face of matron stern,

But that enchantment I had followed erst,

Only more fair, more clear to eye and brain,

Heightened and chastened by a household charm;

She smiled, and 'Which is fairer,' said her eyes,

'The hag's unreal Florimel or mine?'

ALADDIN

When I was a beggarly boy

And lived in a cellar damp,

I had not a friend nor a toy,

But I had Aladdin's lamp;

When I could not sleep for the cold,

I had fire enough in my brain,

And builded, with roofs of gold,

My beautiful castles in Spain!

Since then I have toiled day and night,

I have money and power good store,

But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright

For the one that is mine no more;

Take, Fortune, whatever you choose,

You gave, and may snatch again;

I have nothing 'twould pain me to lose,

For I own no more castles in Spain!

AN INVITATION

TO J[OHN] F[RANCIS] H[EATH]

Nine years have slipt like hour-glass sand

From life's still-emptying globe away,

Since last, dear friend, I clasped your hand,

And stood upon the impoverished land,

Watching the steamer down the bay.

I held the token which you gave,

While slowly the smoke-pennon curled

O'er the vague rim 'tween sky and wave,

And shut the distance like a grave,

Leaving me in the colder world; 10

The old, worn world of hurry and heat,

The young, fresh world of thought and scope;

While you, where beckoning billows fleet

Climb far sky-beaches still and sweet,

Sank wavering down the ocean-slope.

You sought the new world in the old,

I found the old world in the new,

All that our human hearts can hold,

The inward world of deathless mould,

The same that Father Adam knew. 20

He needs no ship to cross the tide,

Who, in the lives about him, sees

Fair window-prospects opening wide

O'er history's fields on every side,

To Ind and Egypt, Rome and Greece.

Whatever moulds of various brain

E'er shaped the world to weal or woe,

Whatever empires' wax and wane

To him that hath not eyes in vain,

Our village-microcosm can show. 30

Come back our ancient walks to tread,

Dear haunts of lost or scattered friends,

Old Harvard's scholar-factories red,

Where song and smoke and laughter sped

The nights to proctor-haunted ends.

Constant are all our former loves,

Unchanged the icehouse-girdled pond,

Its hemlock glooms, its shadowy coves,

Where floats the coot and never moves,

Its slopes of long-tamed green beyond. 40

Our old familiars are not laid,

Though snapt our wands and sunk our books;

They beckon, not to be gainsaid,

Where, round broad meads that mowers wade,

The Charles his steel-blue sickle crooks.

Where, as the cloudbergs eastward blow,

From glow to gloom the hillsides shift

Their plumps of orchard-trees arow,

Their lakes of rye that wave and flow,

Their snowy whiteweed's summer drift. 50

There have we watched the West unfurl

A cloud Byzantium newly born,

With flickering spires and domes of pearl,

And vapory surfs that crowd and curl

Into the sunset's Golden Horn.

There, as the flaming occident

Burned slowly down to ashes gray,

Night pitched o'erhead her silent tent,

And glimmering gold from Hesper sprent

Upon the darkened river lay, 60

Where a twin sky but just before

Deepened, and double swallows skimmed,

And from a visionary shore

Hung visioned trees, that more and more

Grew dusk as those above were dimmed.

Then eastward saw we slowly grow

Clear-edged the lines of roof and spire,

While great elm-masses blacken slow,

And linden-ricks their round heads show

Against a flush of widening fire. 70

Doubtful at first and far away,

The moon-flood creeps more wide and wide;

Up a ridged beach of cloudy gray,

Curved round the east as round a bay,

It slips and spreads its gradual tide.

Then suddenly, in lurid mood,

The disk looms large o'er town and field

As upon Adam, red like blood,

'Tween him and Eden's happy wood,

Glared the commissioned angel's shield. 80

Or let us seek the seaside, there

To wander idly as we list,

Whether, on rocky headlands bare,

Sharp cedar-horns, like breakers, tear

The trailing fringes of gray mist,

Or whether, under skies full flown,

The brightening surfs, with foamy din,

Their breeze-caught forelocks backward blown,

Against the beach's yellow zone

Curl slow, and plunge forever in. 90

And, as we watch those canvas towers

That lean along the horizon's rim,

'Sail on,' I'll say; 'may sunniest hours

Convoy you from this land of ours,

Since from my side you bear not him!'

For years thrice three, wise Horace said,

A poem rare let silence bind;

And love may ripen to the shade,

Like ours, for nine long seasons laid

In deepest arches of the mind. 100

Come back! Not ours the Old World's good,

The Old World's ill, thank God, not ours;

But here, far better understood,

The days enforce our native mood,

And challenge all our manlier powers.

Kindlier to me the place of birth

That first my tottering footsteps trod;

There may be fairer spots of earth,

But all their glories are not worth

The virtue in the native sod. 110

Thence climbs an influence more benign

Through pulse and nerve, through heart and brain;

Sacred to me those fibres fine

That first clasped earth. Oh, ne'er be mine

The alien sun and alien rain!

These nourish not like homelier glows

Or waterings of familiar skies,

And nature fairer blooms bestows

On the heaped hush of wintry snows,

In pastures dear to childhood's eyes, 120

Than where Italian earth receives

The partial sunshine's ampler boons,

Where vines carve friezes 'neath the eaves,

And, in dark firmaments of leaves,

The orange lifts its golden moons.

THE NOMADES

What Nature makes in any mood

To me is warranted for good,

Though long before I learned to see

She did not set us moral theses,

And scorned to have her sweet caprices

Strait-waistcoated in you or me.

I, who take root and firmly cling,

Thought fixedness the only thing;

Why Nature made the butterflies,

(Those dreams of wings that float and hover 10

At noon the slumberous poppies over,)

Was something hidden from mine eyes,

Till once, upon a rock's brown bosom,

Bright as a thorny cactus-blossom,

I saw a butterfly at rest;

Then first of both I felt the beauty;

The airy whim, the grim-set duty,

Each from the other took its best.

Clearer it grew than winter sky

That Nature still had reasons why; 20

And, shifting sudden as a breeze,

My fancy found no satisfaction,

No antithetic sweet attraction,

So great as in the Nomades.

Scythians, with Nature not at strife,

Light Arabs of our complex life,

They build no houses, plant no mills

To utilize Time's sliding river,

Content that it flow waste forever,

If they, like it, may have their wills. 30

An hour they pitch their shifting tents

In thoughts, in feelings, and events;

Beneath the palm-trees, on the grass,

They sing, they dance, make love, and chatter,

Vex the grim temples with their clatter,

And make Truth's fount their looking-glass.

A picnic life; from love to love,

From faith to faith they lightly move,

And yet, hard-eyed philosopher,

The flightiest maid that ever hovered 40

To me your thought-webs fine discovered,

No lens to see them through like her.

So witchingly her finger-tips

To Wisdom, as away she trips,

She kisses, waves such sweet farewells

To Duty, as she laughs 'To-morrow!'

That both from that mad contrast borrow

A perfectness found nowhere else.

The beach-bird on its pearly verge

Follows and flies the whispering surge, 50

While, in his tent, the rock-stayed shell

Awaits the flood's star-timed vibrations,

And both, the flutter and the patience,

The sauntering poet loves them well.

Fulfil so much of God's decree

As works its problem out in thee,

Nor dream that in thy breast alone

The conscience of the changeful seasons,

The Will that in the planets reasons

With space-wide logic, has its throne. 60

Thy virtue makes not vice of mine,

Unlike, but none the less divine;

Thy toil adorns, not chides, my play;

Nature of sameness is so chary,

With such wild whim the freakish fairy

Picks presents for the christening-day.

SELF-STUDY

A presence both by night and day,

That made my life seem just begun,

Yet scarce a presence, rather say

The warning aureole of one.

And yet I felt it everywhere;

Walked I the woodland's aisles along,

It seemed to brush me with its hair;

Bathed I, I heard a mermaid's song.

How sweet it was! A buttercup

Could hold for me a day's delight,

A bird could lift my fancy up

To ether free from cloud or blight.

Who was the nymph? Nay, I will see,

Methought, and I will know her near;

If such, divined, her charm can be,

Seen and possessed, how triply dear!

So every magic art I tried,

And spells as numberless as sand,

Until, one evening, by my side

I saw her glowing fulness stand.

I turned to clasp her, but 'Farewell,'

Parting she sighed, 'we meet no more;

Not by my hand the curtain fell

That leaves you conscious, wise, and poor.

'Since you nave found me out, I go;

Another lover I must find,

Content his happiness to know,

Nor strive its secret to unwind.'

PICTURES FROM APPLEDORE

I

A heap of bare and splintery crags

Tumbled about by lightning and frost,

With rifts and chasms and storm-bleached jags,

That wait and growl for a ship to be lost;

No island, but rather the skeleton

Of a wrecked and vengeance-smitten one,

Where, Ã¦ons ago, with half-shut eye,

The sluggish saurian crawled to die,

Gasping under titanic ferns;

Ribs of rock that seaward jut, 10

Granite shoulders and boulders and snags,

Round which, though the winds in heaven be shut,

The nightmared ocean murmurs and yearns,

Welters, and swashes, and tosses, and turns,

And the dreary black seaweed lolls and wags;

Only rock from shore to shore,

Only a moan through the bleak clefts blown,

With sobs in the rifts where the coarse kelp shifts,

Falling and lifting, tossing and drifting,

And under all a deep, dull roar, 20

Dying and swelling, forevermore,--

Rock and moan and roar alone,

And the dread of some nameless thing unknown,

These make Appledore.

These make Appledore by night:

Then there are monsters left and right;

Every rock is a different monster;

All you have read of, fancied, dreamed,

When you waked at night because you screamed,

There they lie for half a mile, 30

Jumbled together in a pile,

And (though you know they never once stir)

If you look long, they seem to be moving

Just as plainly as plain can be,

Crushing and crowding, wading and shoving

Out into the awful sea,

Where you can hear them snort and spout

With pauses between, as if they were listening,

Then tumult anon when the surf breaks glistening

In the blackness where they wallow about. 40

II

All this you would scarcely comprehend,

Should you see the isle on a sunny day;

Then it is simple enough in its way,--

Two rocky bulges, one at each end,

With a smaller bulge and a hollow between;

Patches of whortleberry and bay;

Accidents of open green,

Sprinkled with loose slabs square and gray,

Like graveyards for ages deserted; a few

Unsocial thistles; an elder or two, 50

Foamed over with blossoms white as spray;

And on the whole island never a tree

Save a score of sumachs, high as your knee.

That crouch in hollows where they may,

(The cellars where once stood a village, men say,)

Huddling for warmth, and never grew

Tall enough for a peep at the sea;

A general dazzle of open blue;

A breeze always blowing and playing rat-tat

With the bow of the ribbon round your hat; 60

A score of sheep that do nothing but stare

Up or down at you everywhere;

Three or four cattle that chew the cud

Lying about in a listless despair;

A medrick that makes you look overhead

With short, sharp scream, as he sights his prey,

And, dropping straight and swift as lead,

Splits the water with sudden thud;--

This is Appledore by day.

A common island, you will say; 70

But stay a moment: only climb

Up to the highest rock of the isle,

Stand there alone for a little while,

And with gentle approaches it grows sublime,

Dilating slowly as you win

A sense from the silence to take it in.

So wide the loneness, so lucid the air,

The granite beneath you so savagely bare,

You well might think you were looking down

From some sky-silenced mountain's crown, 80

Whose waist-belt of pines is wont to tear

Locks of wool from the topmost cloud.

Only be sure you go alone,

For Grandeur is inaccessibly proud,

And never yet has backward thrown

Her veil to feed the stare of a crowd;

To more than one was never shown

That awful front, nor is it fit

That she, Cothurnus-shod, stand bowed

Until the self-approving pit 90

Enjoy the gust of its own wit

In babbling plaudits cheaply loud;

She hides her mountains and her sea

From the harriers of scenery,

Who hunt down sunsets, and huddle and bay,

Mouthing and mumbling the dying day.

Trust me, 'tis something to be cast

Face to face with one's Self at last,

To be taken out of the fuss and strife,

The endless clatter of plate and knife, 100

The bore of books and the bores of the street,

From the singular mess we agree to call Life,

Where that is best which the most fools vote is,

And planted firm on one's own two feet

So nigh to the great warm heart of God,

You almost seem to feel it beat

Down from the sunshine and up from the sod;

To be compelled, as it were, to notice

All the beautiful changes and chances

Through which the landscape flits and glances, 110

And to see how the face of common day

Is written all over with tender histories,

When you study it that intenser way

In which a lover looks at his mistress.

Till now you dreamed not what could be done

With a bit of rock and a ray of sun:

But look, how fade the lights and shades

Of keen bare edge and crevice deep!

How doubtfully it fades and fades,

And glows again, yon craggy steep, 120

O'er which, through color's dreamiest grades,

The musing sunbeams pause and creep!

Now pink it blooms, now glimmers gray,

Now shadows to a filmy blue,

Tries one, tries all, and will not stay,

But flits from opal hue to hue,

And runs through every tenderest range

Of change that seems not to be change,

So rare the sweep, so nice the art,

That lays no stress on any part, 130

But shifts and lingers and persuades;

So soft that sun-brush in the west,

That asks no costlier pigments' aids,

But mingling knobs, flaws, angles, dints,

Indifferent of worst or best,

Enchants the cliffs with wraiths and hints

And gracious preludings of tints,

Where all seems fixed, yet all evades,

And indefinably pervades

Perpetual movement with perpetual rest! 140

III

Away northeast is Boone Island light;

You might mistake it for a ship,

Only it stands too plumb upright,

And like the others does not slip

Behind the sea's unsteady brink;

Though, if a cloud-shade chance to dip

Upon it a moment, 'twill suddenly sink,

Levelled and lost in the darkened main,

Till the sun builds it suddenly up again,

As if with a rub of Aladdin's lamp. 150

On the mainland you see a misty camp

Of mountains pitched tumultuously:

That one looming so long and large

Is Saddleback, and that point you see

Over yon low and rounded marge,

Like the boss of a sleeping giant's targe

Laid over his breast, is Ossipee;

That shadow there may be Kearsarge;

That must be Great Haystack; I love these names,

Wherewith the lonely farmer tames 160

Nature to mute companionship

With his own mind's domestic mood,

And strives the surly world to clip

In the arms of familiar habitude.

'Tis well he could not contrive to make

A Saxon of Agamenticus:

He glowers there to the north of us,

Wrapt in his blanket of blue haze,

Unconvertibly savage, and scorns to take

The white man's baptism or his ways. 170

Him first on shore the coaster divines

Through the early gray, and sees him shake

The morning mist from his scalp-lock of pines;

Him first the skipper makes out in the west,

Ere the earliest sunstreak shoots tremulous,

Plashing with orange the palpitant lines

Of mutable billow, crest after crest,

And murmurs \_Agamenticus!\_

As if it were the name of a saint.

But is that a mountain playing cloud, 180

Or a cloud playing mountain, just there, so faint?

Look along over the low right shoulder

Of Agamenticus into that crowd

Of brassy thunderheads behind it;

Now you have caught it, but, ere you are older

By half an hour, you will lose it and find it

A score of times; while you look 'tis gone,

And, just as you've given it up, anon

It is there again, till your weary eyes

Fancy they see it waver and rise, 190

With its brother clouds; it is Agiochook,

There if you seek not, and gone if you look,

Ninety miles off as the eagle flies.

But mountains make not all the shore

The mainland shows to Appledore:

Eight miles the heaving water spreads

To a long, low coast with beaches and heads

That run through unimagined mazes,

As the lights and shades and magical hazes

Put them away or bring them near, 200

Shimmering, sketched out for thirty miles

Between two capes that waver like threads,

And sink in the ocean, and reappear,

Crumbled and melted to little isles

With filmy trees, that seem the mere

Half-fancies of drowsy atmosphere;

And see the beach there, where it is

Flat as a threshing-floor, beaten and packed

With the flashing flails of weariless seas,

How it lifts and looms to a precipice, 210

O'er whose square front, a dream, no more,

The steepened sand-stripes seem to pour,

A murmurless vision of cataract;

You almost fancy you hear a roar,

Fitful and faint from the distance wandering;

But 'tis only the blind old ocean maundering,

Raking the shingle to and fro,

Aimlessly clutching and letting go

The kelp-haired sedges of Appledore,

Slipping down with a sleepy forgetting, 220

And anon his ponderous shoulder setting,

With a deep, hoarse pant against Appledore.

IV

Eastward as far as the eye can see,

Still eastward, eastward, endlessly,

The sparkle and tremor of purple sea

That rises before you, a flickering hill,

On and on to the shut of the sky,

And beyond, you fancy it sloping until

The same multitudinous throb and thrill

That vibrate under your dizzy eye 230

In ripples of orange and pink are sent

Where the poppied sails doze on the yard,

And the clumsy junk and proa lie

Sunk deep with precious woods and nard,

'Mid the palmy isles of the Orient.

Those leaning towers of clouded white

On the farthest brink of doubtful ocean,

That shorten and shorten out of sight,

Yet seem on the selfsame spot to stay,

Receding with a motionless motion, 240

Fading to dubious films of gray,

Lost, dimly found, then vanished wholly,

Will rise again, the great world under,

First films, then towers, then high-heaped clouds,

Whose nearing outlines sharpen slowly

Into tall ships with cobweb shrouds,

That fill long Mongol eyes with wonder,

Crushing the violet wave to spray

Past some low headland of Cathay;--

What was that sigh which seemed so near, 250

Chilling your fancy to the core?

'Tis only the sad old sea you hear,

That seems to seek forevermore

Something it cannot find, and so,

Sighing, seeks on, and tells its woe

To the pitiless breakers of Appledore.

V

How looks Appledore in a storm?

I have seen it when its crags seemed frantic,

Butting against the mad Atlantic,

When surge on surge would heap enorme, 260

Cliffs of emerald topped with snow,

That lifted and lifted, and then let go

A great white avalanche of thunder,

A grinding, blinding, deafening ire

Monadnock might have trembled under;

And the island, whose rock-roots pierce below

To where they are warmed with the central fire,

You could feel its granite fibres racked,

As it seemed to plunge with a shudder and thrill

Right at the breast of the swooping hill, 270

And to rise again snorting a cataract

Of rage-froth from every cranny and ledge,

While the sea drew its breath in hoarse and deep,

And the next vast breaker curled its edge,

Gathering itself for a mightier leap.

North, east, and south there are reefs and breakers

You would never dream of in smooth weather,

That toss and gore the sea for acres,

Bellowing and gnashing and snarling together;

Look northward, where Duck Island lies, 280

And over its crown you will see arise,

Against a background of slaty skies,

A row of pillars still and white,

That glimmer, and then are gone from sight,

As if the moon should suddenly kiss,

While you crossed the gusty desert by night,

The long colonnades of Persepolis;

Look southward for White Island light,

The lantern stands ninety feet o'er the tide;

There is first a half-mile of tumult and fight, 290

Of dash and roar and tumble and fright,

And surging bewilderment wild and wide,

Where the breakers struggle left and right,

Then a mile or more of rushing sea,

And then the lighthouse slim and lone;

And whenever the weight of ocean is thrown

Full and fair on White Island head,

A great mist-jotun you will see

Lifting himself up silently

High and huge o'er the lighthouse top, 300

With hands of wavering spray outspread,

Groping after the little tower,

That seems to shrink and shorten and cower,

Till the monster's arms of a sudden drop,

And silently and fruitlessly

He sinks back into the sea.

You, meanwhile, where drenched you stand,

Awaken once more to the rush and roar,

And on the rock-point tighten your hand,

As you turn and see a valley deep, 310

That was not there a moment before,

Suck rattling down between you and a heap

Of toppling billow, whose instant fall

Must sink the whole island once for all,

Or watch the silenter, stealthier seas

Feeling their way to you more and more;

If they once should clutch you high as the knees,

They would whirl you down like a sprig of kelp,

Beyond all reach of hope or help;--

And such in a storm is Appledore. 320

VI

'Tis the sight of a lifetime to behold

The great shorn sun as you see it now,

Across eight miles of undulant gold

That widens landward, weltered and rolled,

With freaks of shadow and crimson stains;

To see the solid mountain brow

As it notches the disk, and gains and gains,

Until there comes, you scarce know when,

A tremble of fire o'er the parted lips

Of cloud and mountain, which vanishes; then 330

From the body of day the sun-soul slips

And the face of earth darkens; but now the strips

Of western vapor, straight and thin,

From which the horizon's swervings win

A grace of contrast, take fire and burn

Like splinters of touchwood, whose edges a mould

Of ashes o'er feathers; northward turn

For an instant, and let your eye grow cold

On Agamenticus, and when once more

You look, 'tis as if the land-breeze, growing, 340

From the smouldering brands the film were blowing,

And brightening them down to the very core;

Yet, they momently cool and dampen and deaden,

The crimson turns golden, the gold turns leaden,

Hardening into one black bar

O'er which, from the hollow heaven afar,

Shoots a splinter of light like diamond,

Half seen, half fancied; by and by

Beyond whatever is most beyond

In the uttermost waste of desert sky, 350

Grows a star;

And over it, visible spirit of dew,--

Ah, stir not, speak not, hold your breath,

Or surely the miracle vanisheth,--

The new moon, tranced in unspeakable blue!

No frail illusion; this were true,

Rather, to call it the canoe

Hollowed out of a single pearl,

That floats us from the Present's whirl

Back to those beings which were ours, 360

When wishes were wingÃ¨d things like powers!

Call it not light, that mystery tender,

Which broods upon the brooding ocean,

That flush of ecstasied surrender

To indefinable emotion,

That glory, mellower than a mist

Of pearl dissolved with amethyst,

Which rims Square Rock, like what they paint

Of mitigated heavenly splendor

Round the stern forehead of a Saint! 370

No more a vision, reddened, largened,

The moon dips toward her mountain nest,

And, fringing it with palest argent,

Slow sheathes herself behind the margent

Of that long cloud-bar in the West,

Whose nether edge, erelong, you see

The silvery chrism in turn anoint,

And then the tiniest rosy point

Touched doubtfully and timidly

Into the dark blue's chilly strip,

As some mute, wondering thing below, 381

Awakened by the thrilling glow,

Might, looking up, see Dian dip

One lucent foot's delaying tip

In Latmian fountains long ago.

Knew you what silence was before?

Here is no startle of dreaming bird

That sings in his sleep, or strives to sing;

Here is no sough of branches stirred,

Nor noise of any living thing, 390

Such as one hears by night on shore;

Only, now and then, a sigh,

With fickle intervals between,

Sometimes far, and sometimes nigh,

Such as Andromeda might have heard,

And fancied the huge sea-beast unseen

Turning in sleep; it is the sea

That welters and wavers uneasily.

Round the lonely reefs of Appledore.

THE WIND-HARP

I treasure in secret some long, fine hair

Of tenderest brown, but so inwardly golden

I half used to fancy the sunshine there,

So shy, so shifting, so waywardly rare,

Was only caught for the moment and holden

While I could say \_Dearest!\_ and kiss it, and then

In pity let go to the summer again.

I twisted this magic in gossamer strings

Over a wind-harp's Delphian hollow;

Then called to the idle breeze that swings

All day in the pine-tops, and clings, and sings

'Mid the musical leaves, and said, 'Oh, follow

The will of those tears that deepen my words,

And fly to my window to waken these chords.'

So they trembled to life, and, doubtfully

Feeling their way to my sense, sang, 'Say whether

They sit all day by the greenwood tree,

The lover and loved, as it wont to be,

When we--' But grief conquered, and all together

They swelled such weird murmur as haunts a shore

Of some planet dispeopled,--'Nevermore!'

Then from deep in the past, as seemed to me,

The strings gathered sorrow and sang forsaken,

'One lover still waits 'neath the greenwood tree,

But 'tis dark,' and they shuddered, 'where lieth she,

Dark and cold! Forever must one be taken?'

But I groaned, 'O harp of all ruth bereft,

This Scripture is sadder,--"the other left"!'

There murmured, as if one strove to speak,

And tears came instead; then the sad tones wandered

And faltered among the uncertain chords

In a troubled doubt between sorrow and words;

At last with themselves they questioned and pondered,

'Hereafter?--who knoweth?' and so they sighed

Down the long steps that lead to silence and died.

AUF WIEDERSEHEN

SUMMER

The little gate was reached at last,

Half hid in lilacs down the lane;

She pushed it wide, and, as she past,

A wistful look she backward cast,

And said,--'\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

With hand on latch, a vision white

Lingered reluctant, and again

Half doubting if she did aright,

Soft as the dews that fell that night,

She said,--'\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

The lamp's clear gleam flits up the stair;

I linger in delicious pain;

Ah, in that chamber, whose rich air

To breathe in thought I scarcely dare,

Thinks she,--'\_Auf wiedersehen?\_' ...

'Tis thirteen years; once more I press

The turf that silences the lane;

I hear the rustle of her dress,

I smell the lilacs, and--ah, yes,

I hear '\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

Sweet piece of bashful maiden art!

The English words had seemed too fain,

But these--they drew us heart to heart,

Yet held us tenderly apart;

She said, '\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

PALINODE

AUTUMN

Still thirteen years: 'tis autumn now

On field and hill, in heart and brain;

The naked trees at evening sough;

The leaf to the forsaken bough

Sighs not,--'\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

Two watched yon oriole's pendent dome,

That now is void, and dank with rain,

And one,--oh, hope more frail than foam!

The bird to his deserted home

Sings not,--'\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

The loath gate swings with rusty creak;

Once, parting there, we played at pain:

There came a parting, when the weak

And fading lips essayed to speak

Vainly,--'\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

Somewhere is comfort, somewhere faith,

Though thou in outer dark remain;

One sweet sad voice ennobles death,

And still, for eighteen centuries saith

Softly,--'\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

If earth another grave must bear,

Yet heaven hath won a sweeter strain,

And something whispers my despair,

That, from an orient chamber there,

Floats down, '\_Auf wiedersehen!\_'

AFTER THE BURIAL

Yes, faith is a goodly anchor;

When skies are sweet as a psalm,

At the bows it lolls so stalwart,

In its bluff, broad-shouldered calm.

And when over breakers to leeward

The tattered surges are hurled,

It may keep our head to the tempest,

With its grip on the base of the world.

But, after the shipwreck, tell me

What help in its iron thews,

Still true to the broken hawser,

Deep down among sea-weed and ooze?

In the breaking gulfs of sorrow,

When the helpless feet stretch out

And find in the deeps of darkness

No footing so solid as doubt,

Then better one spar of Memory,

One broken plank of the Past,

That our human heart may cling to,

Though hopeless of shore at last!

To the spirit its splendid conjectures,

To the flesh its sweet despair,

Its tears o'er the thin-worn locket

With its anguish of deathless hair!

Immortal? I feel it and know it,

Who doubts it of such as she?

But that is the pang's very secret,--

Immortal away from me.

There's a narrow ridge in the graveyard

Would scarce stay a child in his race,

But to me and my thought it is wider

Than the star-sown vague of Space.

Your logic, my friend, is perfect,

Your moral most drearily true;

But, since the earth clashed on \_her\_ coffin,

I keep hearing that, and not you.

Console if you will, I can bear it;

'Tis a well-meant alms of breath;

But not all the preaching since Adam

Has made Death other than Death.

It is pagan; but wait till you feel it,--

That jar of our earth, that dull shock

When the ploughshare of deeper passion

Tears down to our primitive rock.

Communion in spirit! Forgive me,

But I, who am earthly and weak,

Would give all my incomes from dreamland

For a touch of her hand on my cheek.

That little shoe in the corner,

So worn and wrinkled and brown,

With its emptiness confutes you,

And argues your wisdom down.

THE DEAD HOUSE

Here once my step was quickened,

Here beckoned the opening door,

And welcome thrilled from the threshold

To the foot it had known before.

A glow came forth to meet me

From the flame that laughed in the grate,

And shadows adance on the ceiling,

Danced blither with mine for a mate.

'I claim you, old friend,' yawned the arm-chair,

'This corner, you know, is your seat;'

'Best your slippers on me,' beamed the fender,

'I brighten at touch of your feet.'

'We know the practised finger,'

Said the books, 'that seems like brain;'

And the shy page rustled the secret

It had kept till I came again.

Sang the pillow, 'My down once quivered

On nightingales' throats that flew

Through moonlit gardens of Hafiz

To gather quaint dreams for you.'

Ah me, where the Past sowed heart's-ease.

The Present plucks rue for us men!

I come back: that scar unhealing

Was not in the churchyard then.

But, I think, the house is unaltered,

I will go and beg to look

At the rooms that were once familiar

To my life as its bed to a brook.

Unaltered! Alas for the sameness

That makes the change but more!

'Tis a dead man I see in the mirrors,

'Tis his tread that chills the floor!

To learn such a simple lesson,

Need I go to Paris and Rome,

That the many make the household,

But only one the home?

'Twas just a womanly presence,

An influence unexprest,

But a rose she had worn, on my gravesod

Were more than long life with the rest!

'Twas a smile, 'twas a garment's rustle,

'Twas nothing that I can phrase.

But the whole dumb dwelling grew conscious,

And put on her looks and ways.

Were it mine I would close the shutters,

Like lids when the life is fled,

And the funeral fire should wind it,

This corpse of a home that is dead.

For it died that autumn morning

When she, its soul, was borne

To lie all dark on the hillside

That looks over woodland and corn.

A MOOD

I go to the ridge in the forest

I haunted in days gone by,

But thou, O Memory, pourest

No magical drop in mine eye,

Nor the gleam of the secret restorest

That hath faded from earth and sky:

A Presence autumnal and sober

Invests every rock and tree,

And the aureole of October

Lights the maples, but darkens me.

Pine in the distance,

Patient through sun or rain,

Meeting with graceful persistence,

With yielding but rooted resistance,

The northwind's wrench and strain,

No memory of past existence

Brings thee pain;

Right for the zenith heading,

Friendly with heat or cold,

Thine arms to the influence spreading

Of the heavens, just from of old,

Thou only aspirest the more,

Unregretful the old leaves shedding

That fringed thee with music before,

And deeper thy roots embedding

In the grace and the beauty of yore;

Thou sigh'st not, 'Alas, I am older,

The green of last summer is sear!'

But loftier, hopefuller, bolder,

Winnest broader horizons each year.

To me 'tis not cheer thou art singing:

There's a sound of the sea,

O mournful tree,

In thy boughs forever clinging,

And the far-off roar

Of waves on the shore

A shattered vessel flinging.

As thou musest still of the ocean

On which thou must float at last,

And seem'st to foreknow

The shipwreck's woe

And the sailor wrenched from the broken mast,

Do I, in this vague emotion,

This sadness that will not pass,

Though the air throb with wings,

And the field laughs and sings,

Do I forebode, alas!

The ship-building longer and wearier,

The voyage's struggle and strife,

And then the darker and drearier

Wreck of a broken life?

THE VOYAGE TO VINLAND

I

BIÃRN'S BECKONERS

Now BiÃ¶rn, the son of Heriulf, had ill days

Because the heart within him seethed with blood

That would not be allayed with any toil,

Whether of war or hunting or the oar,

But was anhungered for some joy untried:

For the brain grew not weary with the limbs,

But, while they slept, still hammered like a Troll,

Building all night a bridge of solid dream

Between him and some purpose of his soul,

Or will to find a purpose. With the dawn 10

The sleep-laid timbers, crumbled to soft mist,

Denied all foothold. But the dream remained,

And every night with yellow-bearded kings

His sleep was haunted,--mighty men of old,

Once young as he, now ancient like the gods,

And safe as stars in all men's memories.

Strange sagas read he in their sea-blue eyes

Cold as the sea, grandly compassionless;

Like life, they made him eager and then mocked.

Nay, broad awake, they would not let him be; 20

They shaped themselves gigantic in the mist,

They rose far-beckoning in the lamps of heaven,

They whispered invitation in the winds,

And breath came from them, mightier than the wind,

To strain the lagging sails of his resolve,

Till that grew passion which before was wish,

And youth seemed all too costly to be staked

On the soiled cards wherewith men played their game,

Letting Time pocket up the larger life,

Lost with base gain of raiment, food, and roof. 30

'What helpeth lightness of the feet?' they said,

'Oblivion runs with swifter foot than they;

Or strength of sinew? New men come as strong,

And those sleep nameless; or renown in war?

Swords grave no name on the long-memoried rock

But moss shall hide it; they alone who wring

Some secret purpose from the unwilling gods

Survive in song for yet a little while

To vex, like us, the dreams of later men,

Ourselves a dream, and dreamlike all we did.' 40

II

THORWALD'S LAY

So BiÃ¶rn went comfortless but for his thought,

And by his thought the more discomforted,

Till Erle Thurlson kept his Yule-tide feast:

And thither came he, called among the rest,

Silent, lone-minded, a church-door to mirth;

But, ere deep draughts forbade such serious song

As the grave Skald might chant nor after blush,

Then Eric looked at Thorwald where he sat

Mute as a cloud amid the stormy hall,

And said: 'O Skald, sing now an olden song, 50

Such as our fathers heard who led great lives;

And, as the bravest on a shield is borne

Along the waving host that shouts him king,

So rode their thrones upon the thronging seas!'

Then the old man arose; white-haired he stood,

White-bearded, and with eyes that looked afar

From their still region of perpetual snow,

Beyond the little smokes and stirs of men:

His head was bowed with gathered flakes of years,

As winter bends the sea-foreboding pine, 60

But something triumphed in his brow and eye,

Which whoso saw it could not see and crouch:

Loud rang the emptied beakers as he mused,

Brooding his eyried thoughts; then, as an eagle

Circles smooth-winged above the wind-vexed woods,

So wheeled his soul into the air of song

High o'er the stormy hall; and thus he sang:

'The fletcher for his arrow-shaft picks out

Wood closest-grained, long-seasoned, straight as light;

And from a quiver full of such as these 70

The wary bowman, matched against his peers,

Long doubting, singles yet once more the best.

Who is it needs such flawless shafts as Fate?

What archer of his arrows is so choice,

Or hits the white so surely? They are men,

The chosen of her quiver; nor for her

Will every reed suffice, or cross-grained stick

At random from life's vulgar fagot plucked:

Such answer household ends; but she will have

Souls straight and clear, of toughest fibre, sound 80

Down to the heart of heart; from these she strips

All needless stuff, all sapwood; seasons them;

From circumstance untoward feathers plucks

Crumpled and cheap; and barbs with iron will:

The hour that passes is her quiver-boy:

When she draws bow, 'tis not across the wind,

Nor 'gainst the sun her haste-snatched arrow sings,

For sun and wind have plighted faith to her:

Ere men have heard the sinew twang, behold

In the butt's heart her trembling messenger! 90

'The song is old and simple that I sing;

But old and simple are despised as cheap,

Though hardest to achieve of human things:

Good were the days of yore, when men were tried

By ring of shields, as now by ring of words;

But while the gods are left, and hearts of men,

And wide-doored ocean, still the days are good.

Still o'er the earth hastes Opportunity,

Seeking the hardy soul that seeks for her.

Be not abroad, nor deaf with household cares 100

That chatter loudest as they mean the least;

Swift-willed is thrice-willed; late means nevermore;

Impatient is her foot, nor turns again.'

He ceased; upon his bosom sank his beard

Sadly, as one who oft had seen her pass

Nor stayed her: and forthwith the frothy tide

Of interrupted wassail roared along.

But BiÃ¶rn, the son of Heriulf, sat apart

Musing, and, with his eyes upon the fire,

Saw shapes of arrows, lost as soon as seen. 110

'A ship,' he muttered,'is a wingÃ¨d bridge

That leadeth every way to man's desire,

And ocean the wide gate to manful luck.'

And then with that resolve his heart was bent,

Which, like a humming shaft, through many a stripe

Of day and night, across the unpathwayed seas

Shot the brave prow that cut on Vinland sands

The first rune in the Saga of the West.

III

GUDRIDA'S PROPHECY

Four weeks they sailed, a speck in sky-shut seas,

Life, where was never life that knew itself, 120

But tumbled lubber-like in blowing whales;

Thought, where the like had never been before

Since Thought primeval brooded the abyss;

Alone as men were never in the world.

They saw the icy foundlings of the sea,

White cliffs of silence, beautiful by day,

Or looming, sudden-perilous, at night

In monstrous hush; or sometimes in the dark

The waves broke ominous with paly gleams

Crushed by the prow in sparkles of cold fire. 130

Then came green stripes of sea that promised land

But brought it not, and on the thirtieth day

Low in the west were wooded shores like cloud.

They shouted as men shout with sudden hope;

But BiÃ¶rn was silent, such strange loss there is

Between the dream's fulfilment and the dream,

Such sad abatement in the goal attained.

Then Gudrida, that was a prophetess,

Rapt with strange influence from Atlantis, sang:

Her words: the vision was the dreaming shore's. 140

Looms there the New Land;

Locked in the shadow

Long the gods shut it,

Niggards of newness

They, the o'er-old.

Little it looks there,

Slim as a cloud-streak;

It shall fold peoples

Even as a shepherd

Foldeth his flock. 150

Silent it sleeps now;

Great ships shall seek it,

Swarming as salmon;

Noise of its numbers

Two seas shall hear.

Men from the Northland,

Men from the Southland,

Haste empty-handed;

No more than manhood

Bring they, and hands. 160

Dark hair and fair hair,

Red blood and blue blood,

There shall be mingled;

Force of the ferment

Makes the New Man.

Pick of all kindreds,

Kings' blood shall theirs be,

Shoots of the eldest

Stock upon Midgard,

Sons of the poor. 170

Them waits the New Land;

They shall subdue it,

Leaving their sons' sons

Space for the body,

Space for the soul.

Leaving their sons' sons

All things save song-craft,

Plant long in growing,

Thrusting its tap-root

Deep in the Gone. 180

Here men shall grow up

Strong from self-helping;

Eyes for the present

Bring they as eagles',

Blind to the Past.

They shall make over

Creed, law, and custom:

Driving-men, doughty

Builders of empire,

Builders of men. 190

Here is no singer;

What should they sing of?

They, the unresting?

Labor is ugly,

Loathsome is change.

These the old gods hate,

Dwellers in dream-land,

Drinking delusion

Out of the empty

Skull of the Past. 200

These hate the old gods,

Warring against them;

Fatal to Odin,

Here the wolf Fenrir

Lieth in wait.

Here the gods' Twilight

Gathers, earth-gulfing;

Blackness of battle,

Fierce till the Old World

Flare up in fire. 210

Doubt not, my Northmen;

Fate loves the fearless;

Fools, when their roof-tree

Falls, think it doomsday;

Firm stands the sky.

Over the ruin

See I the promise;

Crisp waves the cornfield,

Peace-walled, the homestead

Waits open-doored. 220

There lies the New Land;

Yours to behold it,

Not to possess it;

Slowly Fate's perfect

Fulness shall come.

Then from your strong loins

Seed shall be scattered,

Men to the marrow,

Wilderness tamers,

Walkers of waves. 230

Jealous, the old gods

Shut it in shadow,

Wisely they ward it,

Egg of the serpent,

Bane to them all.

Stronger and sweeter

New gods shall seek it.

Fill it with man-folk

Wise for the future,

Wise from the past. 240

Here all is all men's,

Save only Wisdom;

King he that wins her;

Him hail they helmsman,

Highest of heart.

Might makes no master

Here any longer;

Sword is not swayer;

Here e'en the gods are

Selfish no more. 250

Walking the New Earth,

Lo, a divine One

Greets all men godlike,

Calls them his kindred,

He, the Divine.

Is it Thor's hammer

Rays in his right hand?

Weaponless walks he;

It is the White Christ,

Stronger than Thor. 260

Here shall a realm rise

Mighty in manhood;

Justice and Mercy

Here set a stronghold

Safe without spear.

Weak was the Old World,

Wearily war-fenced;

Out of its ashes,

Strong as the morning,

Springeth the New. 270

Beauty of promise,

Promise of beauty,

Safe in the silence

Sleep thou, till cometh

Light to thy lids!

Thee shall awaken

Flame from the furnace,

Bath of all brave ones,

Cleanser of conscience,

Welder of will. 280

Lowly shall love thee,

Thee, open-handed!

Stalwart shall shield thee,

Thee, worth their best blood,

Waif of the West!

Then shall come singers,

Singing no swan-song,

Birth-carols, rather,

Meet for the mail child

Mighty of bone. 290

MAHMOOD THE IMAGE-BREAKER

Old events have modern meanings; only that survives

Of past history which finds kindred in all hearts and lives.

Mahmood once, the idol-breaker, spreader of the Faith,

Was at Sumnat tempted sorely, as the legend saith.

In the great pagoda's centre, monstrous and abhorred,

Granite on a throne of granite, sat the temple's lord,

Mahmood paused a moment, silenced by the silent face

That, with eyes of stone unwavering, awed the ancient place.

Then the Brahmins knelt before him, by his doubt made bold,

Pledging for their idol's ransom countless gems and gold.

Gold was yellow dirt to Mahmood, but of precious use,

Since from it the roots of power suck a potent juice.

'Were yon stone alone in question, this would please me well,'

Mahmood said; 'but, with the block there, I my truth must sell.

'Wealth and rule slip down with Fortune, as her wheel turns round;

He who keeps his faith, he only cannot be discrowned.

'Little were a change of station, loss of life or crown,

But the wreck were past retrieving if the Man fell down.'

So his iron mace he lifted, smote with might and main,

And the idol, on the pavement tumbling, burst in twain.

Luck obeys the downright striker; from the hollow core,

Fifty times the Brahmins' offer deluged all the floor.

INVITA MINERVA

The Bardling came where by a river grew

The pennoned reeds, that, as the west-wind blew,

Gleamed and sighed plaintively, as if they knew

What music slept enchanted in each stem,

Till Pan should choose some happy one of them,

And with wise lips enlife it through and through.

The Bardling thought, 'A pipe is all I need;

Once I have sought me out a clear, smooth reed,

And shaped it to my fancy, I proceed

To breathe such strains as, yonder mid the rocks,

The strange youth blows, that tends Admetus' flocks.

And all the maidens shall to me pay heed.'

The summer day he spent in questful round,

And many a reed he marred, but never found

A conjuring-spell to free the imprisoned sound;

At last his vainly wearied limbs he laid

Beneath a sacred laurel's flickering shade,

And sleep about his brain her cobweb wound.

Then strode the mighty Mother through his dreams,

Saying: 'The reeds along a thousand streams

Are mine, and who is he that plots and schemes

To snare the melodies wherewith my breath

Sounds through the double pipes of Life and Death,

Atoning what to men mad discord seems?

'He seeks not me, but I seek oft in vain

For him who shall my voiceful reeds constrain,

And make them utter their melodious pain;

He flies the immortal gift, for well he knows

His life of life must with its overflows

Flood the unthankful pipe, nor come again.

'Thou fool, who dost my harmless subjects wrong,

'Tis not the singer's wish that makes the song:

The rhythmic beauty wanders dumb, how long,

Nor stoops to any daintiest instrument,

Till, found its mated lips, their sweet consent

Makes mortal breath than Time and Fate more strong.'

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

I

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

By no sadder spirit

Than blackbirds and thrushes,

That whistle to cheer it

All day in the bushes.

This woodland is haunted:

And in a small clearing,

Beyond sight or hearing

Of human annoyance,

The little fount gushes, 10

First smoothly, then dashes

And gurgles and flashes,

To the maples and ashes

Confiding its joyance;

Unconscious confiding,

Then, silent and glossy,

Slips winding and hiding

Through alder-stems mossy,

Through gossamer roots

Fine as nerves, 20

That tremble, as shoots

Through their magnetized curves

The allurement delicious

Of the water's capricious

Thrills, gushes, and swerves.

II

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

I am writing no fiction;

And this fount, its sole daughter,

To the woodland was granted

To pour holy water 30

And win benediction;

In summer-noon flushes,

When all the wood hushes,

Blue dragon-flies knitting

To and fro in the sun,

With sidelong jerk flitting

Sink down on the rashes,

And, motionless sitting,

Hear it bubble and run,

Hear its low inward singing, 40

With level wings swinging

On green tasselled rushes,

To dream in the sun.

III

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

The great August noonlight!

Through myriad rifts slanted,

Leaf and bole thickly sprinkles

With flickering gold;

There, in warm August gloaming,

With quick, silent brightenings, 50

From meadow-lands roaming,

The firefly twinkles

His fitful heat-lightnings;

There the magical moonlight

With meek, saintly glory

Steeps summit and wold;

There whippoorwills plain in the solitudes hoary

With lone cries that wander

Now hither, now yonder,

Like souls doomed of old 60

To a mild purgatory;

But through noonlight and moonlight

The little fount tinkles

Its silver saints'-bells,

That no sprite ill-boding

May make his abode in

Those innocent dells.

IV

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

When the phebe scarce whistles

Once an hour to his fellow. 70

And, where red lilies flaunted,

Balloons from the thistles

Tell summer's disasters,

The butterflies yellow,

As caught in an eddy

Of air's silent ocean,

Sink, waver, and steady

O'er goats'-beard and asters,

Like souls of dead flowers,

With aimless emotion 80

Still lingering unready

To leave their old bowers;

And the fount is no dumber,

But still gleams and flashes,

And gurgles and plashes,

To the measure of summer;

The butterflies hear it,

And spell-bound are holden,

Still balancing near it

O'er the goats' beard so golden. 90

V

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

A vast silver willow,

I know not how planted,

(This wood is enchanted,

And full of surprises.)

Stands stemming a billow,

A motionless billow

Of ankle-deep mosses;

Two great roots it crosses

To make a round basin. 100

And there the Fount rises;

Ah, too pure a mirror

For one sick of error

To see his sad face in!

No dew-drop is stiller

In its lupin-leaf setting

Than this water moss-bounded;

But a tiny sand-pillar

From the bottom keeps jetting,

And mermaid ne'er sounded 110

Through the wreaths of a shell,

Down amid crimson dulses

In some cavern of ocean,

A melody sweeter

Than the delicate pulses,

The soft, noiseless metre,

The pause and the swell

Of that musical motion:

I recall it, not see it;

Could vision be clearer? 120

Half I'm fain to draw nearer

Half tempted to flee it;

The sleeping Past wake not,

Beware!

One forward step take not,

Ah! break not

That quietude rare!

By my step unaffrighted

A thrush hops before it,

And o'er it 130

A birch hangs delighted,

Dipping, dipping, dipping its tremulous hair;

Pure as the fountain, once

I came to the place,

(How dare I draw nearer?)

I bent o'er its mirror,

And saw a child's face

Mid locks of bright gold in it;

Yes, pure as this fountain once,--

Since, bow much error! 140

Too holy a mirror

For the man to behold in it

His harsh, bearded countenance!

VI

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

Ah, fly unreturning!

Yet stay;--

'Tis a woodland enchanted,

Where wonderful chances

Have sway;

Luck flees from the cold one, 150

But leaps to the bold one

Half-way;

Why should I be daunted?

Still the smooth mirror glances,

Still the amber sand dances,

One look,--then away!

O magical glass!

Canst keep in thy bosom

Shades of leaf and of blossom

When summer days pass, 160

So that when thy wave hardens

It shapes as it pleases,

Unharmed by the breezes,

Its fine hanging gardens?

Hast those in thy keeping.

And canst not uncover,

Enchantedly sleeping,

The old shade of thy lover?

It is there! I have found it!

He wakes, the long sleeper! 170

The pool is grown deeper,

The sand dance is ending,

The white floor sinks, blending

With skies that below me

Are deepening and bending,

And a child's face alone

That seems not to know me,

With hair that fades golden

In the heaven-glow round it,

Looks up at my own; 180

Ah, glimpse through the portal

That leads to the throne,

That opes the child's olden

Regions Elysian!

Ah, too holy vision

For thy skirts to be holden

By soiled hand of mortal!

It wavers, it scatters,

'Tis gone past recalling!

A tear's sudden falling 190

The magic cup shatters,

Breaks the spell of the waters,

And the sand cone once more,

With a ceaseless renewing,

Its dance is pursuing

On the silvery floor,

O'er and o'er,

With a noiseless and ceaseless renewing.

VII

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

If you ask me, \_Where is it?\_ 200

I can but make answer,

''Tis past my disclosing;'

Not to choice is it granted

By sure paths to visit

The still pool enclosing

Its blithe little dancer;

But in some day, the rarest

Of many Septembers,

When the pulses of air rest,

And all things lie dreaming 210

In drowsy haze steaming

From the wood's glowing embers,

Then, sometimes, unheeding,

And asking not whither,

By a sweet inward leading

My feet are drawn thither,

And, looking with awe in the magical mirror,

I see through my tears,

Half doubtful of seeing,

The face unperverted, 220

The warm golden being

Of a child of five years;

And spite of the mists and the error.

And the days overcast,

Can feel that I walk undeserted,

But forever attended

By the glad heavens that bended

O'er the innocent past;

Toward fancy or truth

Doth the sweet vision win me? 230

Dare I think that I cast

In the fountain of youth

The fleeting reflection

Of some bygone perfection

That still lingers in me?

YUSSOUF

A stranger came one night to Yussouf's tent,

Saying, 'Behold one outcast and in dread,

Against whose life the bow of power is bent,

Who flies, and hath not where to lay his head;

I come to thee for shelter and for food,

To Yussouf, called through all our tribes "The Good."

'This tent is mine,' said Yussouf, 'but no more

Than it is God's come in and be at peace;

Freely shall thou partake of all my store

As I of His who buildeth over these

Our tents his glorious roof of night and day,

And at whose door none ever yet heard Nay.'

So Yussouf entertained his guest that night,

And, waking him ere day, said: 'Here is gold;

My swiftest horse is saddled for thy flight;

Depart before the prying day grow bold.'

As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,

So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

That inward light the stranger's face made grand,

Which shines from all self-conquest; kneeling low,

He bowed his forehead upon Yussouf's hand,

Sobbing: 'O Sheik, I cannot leave thee so;

I will repay thee; all this thou hast done

Unto that Ibrahim who slew thy son!'

'Take thrice the gold,' said Yussouf 'for with thee

Into the desert, never to return,

My one black thought shall ride away from me;

First-born, for whom by day and night I yearn,

Balanced and just are all of God's decrees;

Thou art avenged, my first-born, sleep in peace!'

THE DARKENED MIND

The fire is turning clear and blithely,

Pleasantly whistles the winter wind;

We are about thee, thy friends and kindred,

On us all flickers the firelight kind;

There thou sittest in thy wonted corner

Lone and awful in thy darkened mind.

There thou sittest; now and then thou moanest;

Thou dost talk with what we cannot see,

Lookest at us with an eye so doubtful,

It doth put us very far from thee;

There thou sittest; we would fain be nigh thee,

But we know that it can never be.

We can touch thee, still we are no nearer;

Gather round thee, still thou art alone;

The wide chasm of reason is between us;

Thou confutest kindness with a moan;

We can speak to thee, and thou canst answer,

Like two prisoners through a wall of stone.

Hardest heart would call it very awful

When thou look'st at us and seest--oh, what?

If we move away, thou sittest gazing

With those vague eyes at the selfsame spot,

And thou mutterest, thy hands thou wringest,

Seeing something,--us thou seest not.

Strange it is that, in this open brightness,

Thou shouldst sit in such a narrow cell;

Strange it is that thou shouldst be so lonesome

Where those are who love thee all so well;

Not so much of thee is left among us

As the hum outliving the hushed bell.

WHAT RABBI JEHOSHA SAID

Rabbi Jehosha used to say

That God made angels every day,

Perfect as Michael and the rest

First brooded in creation's nest,

Whose only office was to cry

\_Hosanna!\_ once, and then to die;

Or rather, with Life's essence blent,

To be led home from banishment.

Rabbi Jehosha had the skill

To know that Heaven is in God's will;

And doing that, though for a space

One heart-beat long, may win a grace

As full of grandeur and of glow

As Princes of the Chariot know.

'Twere glorious, no doubt, to be

One of the strong-winged Hierarchy,

To burn with Seraphs, or to shine

With Cherubs, deathlessly divine;

Yet I, perhaps, poor earthly clod,

Could I forget myself in God,

Could I but find my nature's clue

Simply as birds and blossoms do,

And but for one rapt moment know

'Tis Heaven must come, not we must go,

Should win my place as near the throne

As the pearl-angel of its zone.

And God would listen mid the throng

For my one breath of perfect song,

That, in its simple human way,

Said all the Host of Heaven could say.

ALL-SAINTS

One feast, of holy days the crest,

I, though no Churchman, love to keep,

All-Saints,--the unknown good that rest

In God's still memory folded deep;

The bravely dumb that did their deed,

And scorned to blot it with a name,

Men of the plain heroic breed,

That loved Heaven's silence more than fame.

Such lived not in the past alone,

But thread to-day the unheeding street,

And stairs to Sin and Famine known

Sing with the welcome of their feet;

The den they enter grows a shrine,

The grimy sash an oriel burns,

Their cup of water warms like wine,

Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

About their brows to me appears

An aureole traced in tenderest light,

The rainbow-gleam of smiles through tears

In dying eyes, by them made bright,

Of souls that shivered on the edge

Of that chill ford repassed no more,

And in their mercy felt the pledge

And sweetness of the farther shore.

A WINTER-EVENING HYMN TO MY FIRE

I

Beauty on my hearth-stone blazing!

To-night the triple Zoroaster

Shall my prophet be and master;

To-night will I pure Magian be,

Hymns to thy sole honor raising,

While thou leapest fast and faster,

Wild with self-delighted glee,

Or sink'st low and glowest faintly

As an aureole still and saintly,

Keeping cadence to my praising 10

Thee! still thee! and only thee!

II

Elfish daughter of Apollo!

Thee, from thy father stolen and bound

To serve in Vulcan's clangorous smithy,

Prometheus (primal Yankee) found,

And, when he had tampered with thee,

(Too confiding little maid!)

In a reed's precarious hollow

To our frozen earth conveyed:

For he swore I know not what; 20

Endless ease should be thy lot,

Pleasure that should never falter,

Lifelong play, and not a duty

Save to hover o'er the altar,

Vision of celestial beauty,

Fed with precious woods and spices;

Then, perfidious! having got

Thee in the net of his devices,

Sold thee into endless slavery,

Made thee a drudge to boil the pot, 30

Thee, Helios' daughter, who dost bear

His likeness in thy golden hair;

Thee, by nature wild and wavery,

Palpitating, evanescent

As the shade of Dian's crescent,

Life, motion, gladness, everywhere!

III

Fathom deep men bury thee

In the furnace dark and still.

There, with dreariest mockery, 39

Making thee eat, against thy will,

Blackest Pennsylvanian stone;

But thou dost avenge thy doom,

For, from out thy catacomb,

Day and night thy wrath is blown

In a withering simoom,

And, adown that cavern drear,

Thy black pitfall in the floor,

Staggers the lusty antique cheer,

Despairing, and is seen no more!

IV

Elfish I may rightly name thee; 50

We enslave, but cannot tame thee;

With fierce snatches, now and then,

Thou pluckest at thy right again,

And thy down-trod instincts savage

To stealthy insurrection creep

While thy wittol masters sleep,

And burst in undiscerning ravage:

Then how thou shak'st thy bacchant locks!

While brazen pulses, far and near,

Throb thick and thicker, wild with fear 60

And dread conjecture, till the drear

Disordered clangor every steeple rocks!

V

But when we make a friend of thee,

And admit thee to the hall

On our nights of festival,

Then, Cinderella, who could see

In thee the kitchen's stunted thrall?

Once more a Princess lithe and tan,

Thou dancest with a whispering tread,

While the bright marvel of thy head 70

In crinkling gold floats all abroad,

And gloriously dost vindicate

The legend of thy lineage great,

Earth-exiled daughter of the Pythian god!

Now in the ample chimney-place,

To honor thy acknowledged race,

We crown thee high with laurel good,

Thy shining father's sacred wood,

Which, guessing thy ancestral right,

Sparkles and snaps its dumb delight, 80

And, at thy touch, poor outcast one,

Feels through its gladdened fibres go

The tingle and thrill and vassal glow

Of instincts loyal to the sun.

VI

O thou of home the guardian Lar,

And, when our earth hath wandered far,

Into the cold, and deep snow covers

The walks of our New England lovers,

Their sweet secluded evening-star!

'Twas with thy rays the English Muse 90

Ripened her mild domestic hues;

'Twas by thy flicker that she conned

The fireside wisdom that enrings

With light from heaven familiar things;

By thee she found the homely faith

In whose mild eyes thy comfort stay'th

When Death, extinguishing his torch,

Gropes for the latch-string in the porch;

The love that wanders not beyond

His earliest nest, but sits and sings 100

While children smooth his patient wings;

Therefore with thee I love to read

Our brave old poets; at thy touch how stirs

Life in the withered words: how swift recede

Time's shadows; and how glows again

Through its dead mass the incandescent verse,

As when upon the anvils of the brain

It glittering lay, cyclopically wrought

By the fast-throbbing hammers of the poet's thought!

Thou murmurest, too, divinely stirred, 110

The aspirations unattained,

The rhythms so rathe and delicate,

They bent and strained

And broke, beneath the sombre weight

Of any airiest mortal word.

VII

What warm protection dost thou bend

Round curtained talk of friend with friend,

While the gray snow-storm, held aloof,

To softest outline rounds the roof,

Or the rude North with baffled strain 120

Shoulders the frost-starred window-pane!

Now the kind nymph to Bacchus born

By Morpheus' daughter, she that seems

Gifted opon her natal morn

By him with fire, by her with dreams,

Nicotia, dearer to the Muse

Than all the grape's bewildering juice,

We worship, unforbid of thee;

And, as her incense floats and curls

In airy spires and wayward whirls, 130

Or poises on its tremulous stalk

A flower of frailest revery,

So winds and loiters, idly free,

The current of unguided talk,

Now laughter-rippled, and now caught

In smooth, dark pools of deeper thought.

Meanwhile thou mellowest every word,

A sweetly unobtrusive third;

For thou hast magic beyond wine,

To unlock natures each to each; 140

The unspoken thought thou canst divine;

Thou fill'st the pauses of the speech

With whispers that to dream-land reach

And frozen fancy-springs unchain

In Arctic outskirts of the brain:

Sun of all inmost confidences,

To thy rays doth the heart unclose

Its formal calyx of pretences,

That close against rude day's offences,

And open its shy midnight rose! 150

VIII

Thou holdest not the master key

With which thy Sire sets free the mystic gates

Of Past and Future: not for common fates

Do they wide open fling,

And, with a far heard ring,

Swing back their willing valves melodiously;

Only to ceremonial days,

And great processions of imperial song

That set the world at gaze,

Doth such high privilege belong; 160

But thou a postern-door canst ope

To humbler chambers of the selfsame palace

Where Memory lodges, and her sister Hope,

Whose being is but as a crystal chalice

Which, with her various mood, the elder fills

Of joy or sorrow,

So coloring as she wills

With hues of yesterday the unconscious morrow.

IX

Thou sinkest, and my fancy sinks with thee:

For thee I took the idle shell, 170

And struck the unused chords again,

But they are gone who listened well;

Some are in heaven, and all are far from me:

Even as I sing, it turns to pain,

And with vain tears my eyelids throb and swell:

Enough; I come not of the race

That hawk their sorrows in the market-place.

Earth stops the ears I best had loved to please;

Then break, ye untuned chords, or rust in peace!

As if a white-haired actor should come back 180

Some midnight to the theatre void and black,

And there rehearse his youth's great part

Mid thin applauses of the ghosts.

So seems it now: ye crowd upon my heart,

And I bow down in silence, shadowy hosts!

FANCY'S CASUISTRY

How struggles with the tempest's swells

That warning of tumultuous bells!

The fire is loose! and frantic knells

Throb fast and faster,

As tower to tower confusedly tells

News of disaster.

But on my far-off solitude

No harsh alarums can intrude;

The terror comes to me subdued

And charmed by distance,

To deepen the habitual mood

Of my existence.

Are those, I muse, the Easter chimes?

And listen, weaving careless rhymes

While the loud city's griefs and crimes

Pay gentle allegiance

To the fine quiet that sublimes

These dreamy regions.

And when the storm o'erwhelms the shore,

I watch entranced as, o'er and o'er,

The light revolves amid the roar

So still and saintly,

Now large and near, now more and more

Withdrawing faintly.

This, too, despairing sailors see

Flash out the breakers 'neath their lee

In sudden snow, then lingeringly

Wane tow'rd eclipse,

While through the dark the shuddering sea

Gropes for the ships.

And is it right, this mood of mind

That thus, in revery enshrined,

Can in the world mere topics find

For musing stricture,

Seeing the life of humankind

Only as picture?

The events in line of battle go;

In vain for me their trumpets blow

As unto him that lieth low

In death's dark arches,

And through the sod hears throbbing slow

The muffled marches.

O Duty, am I dead to thee

In this my cloistered ecstasy,

In this lone shallop on the sea

That drifts tow'rd Silence?

And are those visioned shores I see

But sirens' islands?

My Dante frowns with lip-locked mien,

As who would say, ''Tis those, I ween,

Whom lifelong armor-chafe makes lean

That win the laurel;'

But where \_is\_ Truth? What does it mean,

The world-old quarrel?

Such questionings are idle air:

Leave what to do and what to spare

To the inspiring moment's care,

Nor ask for payment

Of fame or gold, but just to wear

Unspotted raiment.

TO MR. JOHN BARTLETT

WHO HAD SENT ME A SEVEN-POUND TROUT

Fit for an Abbot of Theleme,

For the whole Cardinals' College, or

The Pope himself to see in dream

Before his lenten vision gleam.

He lies there, the sogdologer!

His precious flanks with stars besprent,

Worthy to swim in Castaly!

The friend by whom such gifts are sent,

For him shall bumpers full be spent,

His health! be Luck his fast ally!

I see him trace the wayward brook

Amid the forest mysteries,

Where at their shades shy aspens look.

Or where, with many a gurgling crook,

It croons its woodland histories.

I see leaf-shade and sun-fleck lend

Their tremulous, sweet vicissitude

To smooth, dark pool, to crinkling bend,--

(Oh, stew him, Ann, as 'twere your friend,

With amorous solicitude!)

I see him step with caution due,

Soft as if shod with moccasins,

Grave as in church, for who plies you,

Sweet craft, is safe as in a pew

From all our common stock o' sins.

The unerring fly I see him cast,

That as a rose-leaf falls as soft,

A flash! a whirl! he has him fast!

We tyros, how that struggle last

Confuses and appalls us oft.

Unfluttered he: calm as the sky

Looks on our tragi-comedies,

This way and that he lets him fly,

A sunbeam-shuttle, then to die

Lands him, with cool \_aplomb\_, at ease.

The friend who gave our board such gust,

Life's care may he o'erstep it half,

And, when Death hooks him, as he must,

He'll do it handsomely, I trust,

And John H---- write his epitaph!

Oh, born beneath the Fishes' sign,

Of constellations happiest,

May he somewhere with Walton dine,

May Horace send him Massic wine,

And Burns Scotch drink, the nappiest!

And when they come his deeds to weigh,

And how he used the talents his,

One trout-scale in the scales he'll lay

(If trout had scales), and 'twill outsway

The wrong side of the balances.

ODE TO HAPPINESS

Spirit, that rarely comest now

And only to contrast my gloom,

Like rainbow-feathered birds that bloom

A moment on some autumn bough

That, with the spurn of their farewell

Sheds its last leaves,--thou once didst dwell

With me year-long, and make intense

To boyhood's wisely vacant days

Their fleet but all-sufficing grace

Of trustful inexperience, 10

While soul could still transfigure sense,

And thrill, as with love's first caress,

At life's mere unexpectedness.

Days when my blood would leap and run

As full of sunshine as a breeze,

Or spray tossed up by Summer seas

That doubts if it be sea or sun!

Days that flew swiftly like the band

That played in Grecian games at strife,

And passed from eager hand to hand 20

The onward-dancing torch of life!

Wing-footed! thou abid'st with him

Who asks it not; but he who hath

Watched o'er the waves thy waning path,

Shall nevermore behold returning

Thy high-heaped canvas shoreward yearning!

Thou first reveal'st to us thy face

Turned o'er the shoulder's parting grace,

A moment glimpsed, then seen no more,--

Thou whose swift footsteps we can trace 30

Away from every mortal door.

Nymph of the unreturning feet,

How may I win thee back? But no,

I do thee wrong to call thee so;

'Tis I am changed, not thou art fleet:

The man thy presence feels again,

Not in the blood, but in the brain,

Spirit, that lov'st the upper air

Serene and passionless and rare,

Such as on mountain heights we find 40

And wide-viewed uplands of the mind;

Or such as scorns to coil and sing

Round any but the eagle's wing

Of souls that with long upward beat

Have won an undisturbed retreat

Where, poised like wingÃ¨d victories,

They mirror in relentless eyes.

The life broad-basking 'neath their feet,--

Man ever with his Now at strife,

Pained with first gasps of earthly air, 50

Then praying Death the last to spare,

Still fearful of the ampler life.

Not unto them dost thou consent

Who, passionless, can lead at ease

A life of unalloyed content,

A life like that of land-locked seas,

Who feel no elemental gush

Of tidal forces, no fierce rush

Of storm deep-grasping scarcely spent

'Twixt continent and continent. 60

Such quiet souls have never known

Thy truer inspiration, thou

Who lov'st to feel upon thy brow

Spray from the plunging vessel thrown

Grazing the tusked lee shore, the cliff

That o'er the abrupt gorge holds its breath,

Where the frail hair-breadth of an \_if\_

Is all that sunders life and death:

These, too, are cared for, and round these

Bends her mild crook thy sister Peace; 70

These in unvexed dependence lie,

Each 'neath his strip of household sky;

O'er these clouds wander, and the blue

Hangs motionless the whole day through;

Stars rise for them, and moons grow large

And lessen in such tranquil wise

As joys and sorrows do that rise

Within their nature's sheltered marge;

Their hours into each other flit

Like the leaf-shadows of the vine 80

And fig-tree under which they sit,

And their still lives to heaven incline

With an unconscious habitude,

Unhistoried as smokes that rise

From happy hearths and sight elude

In kindred blue of morning skies.

Wayward! when once we feel thy lack,

'Tis worse than vain to woo thee back!

Yet there is one who seems to be

Thine elder sister, in whose eyes 90

A faint far northern light will rise

Sometimes, and bring a dream of thee;

She is not that for which youth hoped,

But she hath blessings all her own,

Thoughts pure as lilies newly oped,

And faith to sorrow given alone:

Almost I deem that it is thou

Come back with graver matron brow,

With deepened eyes and bated breath,

Like one that somewhere hath met Death: 100

But 'No,' she answers, 'I am she

Whom the gods love, Tranquillity;

That other whom you seek forlorn

Half earthly was; but I am born

Of the immortals, and our race

Wears still some sadness on its face:

He wins me late, but keeps me long,

Who, dowered with every gift of passion,

In that fierce flame can forge and fashion

Of sin and self the anchor strong; 110

Can thence compel the driving force

Of daily life's mechanic course,

Nor less the nobler energies

Of needful toil and culture wise;

Whose soul is worth the tempter's lure,

Who can renounce, and yet endure,

To him I come, not lightly wooed,

But won by silent fortitude.'

VILLA FRANCA

1859

Wait a little: do \_we\_ not wait?

Louis Napoleon is not Fate,

Francis Joseph is not Time;

There's One hath swifter feet than Crime;

Cannon-parliaments settle naught;

Venice is Austria's,--whose is Thought?

MiniÃ© is good, but, spite of change,

Gutenberg's gun has the longest range.

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!

Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!

In the shadow, year out, year in,

The silent headsman waits forever.

Wait, we say: our years are long;

Men are weak, out Man is strong;

Since the stars first curved their rings,

We have looked on many things:

Great wars come and great wars go,

Wolf-tracks light on polar snow;

We shall see him come and gone,

This second-hand Napoleon.

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!

Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!

In the shadow, year out, year in,

The silent headsman waits forever.

We saw the elder Corsican,

And Clotho muttered as she span,

While crowned lackeys bore the train,

Of the pinchbeck Charlemagne:

'Sister, stint not length of thread!

Sister, stay the scissors dread!

On Saint Helen's granite Weak,

Hark, the vulture whets his beak!'

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!

Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!

In the shadow, year out, year in,

The silent headsman waits forever.

The Bonapartes, we know their bees

That wade in honey red to the knees;

Their patent reaper, its sheaves sleep sound

In dreamless garners underground:

We know false glory's spendthrift race

Pawning nations for feathers and lace;

It may be short, it may be long,

''Tis reckoning-day!' sneers unpaid Wrong.

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!

Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!

In the shadow, year out, year in,

The silent headsman waits forever.

The Cock that wears the Eagle's skin

Can promise what he ne'er could win;

Slavery reaped for fine words sown,

System for all, and rights for none,

Despots atop, a wild clan below,

Such is the Gaul from long ago;

Wash the black from the Ethiop's face,

Wash the past out of man or race!

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!

Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!

In the shadow, year out, year in,

The silent headsman waits forever.

'Neath Gregory's throne a spider swings,

And snares the people for the kings;

'Luther is dead; old quarrels pass:

The stake's black scars are healed with grass;'

So dreamers prate; did man e'er live

Saw priest or woman yet forgive?

But Luther's broom is left, and eyes

Peep o'er their creeds to where it lies.

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!

Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!

In the shadow, year out, year in,

The silent headsman waits forever.

Smooth sails the ship of either realm,

Kaiser and Jesuit at the helm;

We look down the depths, and mark

Silent workers in the dark

Building slow the sharp-tusked reefs,

Old instincts hardening to new beliefs;

Patience a little; learn to wait;

Hours are long on the clock of Fate.

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!

Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!

Darkness is strong, and so is Sin,

But surely God endures forever!

THE MINER

Down 'mid the tangled roots of things

That coil about the central fire,

I seek for that which giveth wings

To stoop, not soar, to my desire.

Sometimes I hear, as 'twere a sigh,

The sea's deep yearning far above,

'Thou hast the secret not,' I cry,

'In deeper deeps is hid my Love.'

They think I burrow from the sun,

In darkness, all alone, and weak;

Such loss were gain if He were won,

For 'tis the sun's own Sun I seek.

'The earth,' they murmur, 'is the tomb

That vainly sought his life to prison;

Why grovel longer in the gloom?

He is not here; he hath arisen.'

More life for me where he hath lain

Hidden while ye believed him dead,

Than in cathedrals cold and vain,

Built on loose sands of \_It is said\_.

My search is for the living gold;

Him I desire who dwells recluse,

And not his image worn and old,

Day-servant of our sordid use.

If him I find not, yet I find

The ancient joy of cell and church,

The glimpse, the surety undefined,

The unquenched ardor of the search.

Happier to chase a flying goal

Than to sit counting laurelled gains,

To guess the Soul within the soul

Than to be lord of what remains.

Hide still, best Good, in subtile wise,

Beyond my nature's utmost scope;

Be ever absent from mine eyes

To be twice present in my hope!

GOLD EGG: A DREAM-FANTASY

HOW A STUDENT IN SEARCH OF THE BEAUTIFUL FELL ASLEEP IN DRESDEN OVER HERR

PROFESSOR DOCTOR VISCHER'S WISSENSCHAFT DES SCHÃNEN, AND WHAT CAME THEREOF

I swam with undulation soft,

Adrift on Vischer's ocean,

And, from my cockboat up aloft,

Sent down my mental plummet oft

In hope to reach a notion.

But from the metaphysic sea

No bottom was forthcoming,

And all the while (how drearily!)

In one eternal note of B

My German stove kept humming. 10

'What's Beauty?' mused I; 'is it told

By synthesis? analysis?

Have you not made us lead of gold?

To feed your crucible, not sold

Our temple's sacred chalices?'

Then o'er my senses came a change;

My book seemed all traditions,

Old legends of profoundest range,

Diablery, and stories strange

Of goblins, elves, magicians. 20

Old gods in modern saints I found,

Old creeds in strange disguises;

I thought them safely underground,

And here they were, all safe and sound,

Without a sign of phthisis.

Truth was, my outward eyes were closed,

Although I did not know it;

Deep into dream-land I had dozed,

And thus was happily transposed

From proser into poet. 30

So what I read took flesh and blood,

And turned to living creatures:

The words were but the dingy bud

That bloomed, like Adam, from the mud,

To human forms and features.

I saw how Zeus was lodged once more

By Baucis and Philemon;

The text said, 'Not alone of yore,

But every day, at every door

Knocks still the masking Demon.' 40

DAIMON 'twas printed in the book

And, as I read it slowly,

The letters stirred and changed, and took

Jove's stature, the Olympian look

Of painless melancholy.

He paused upon the threshold worn:

'With coin I cannot pay you;

Yet would I fain make some return;

The gift for cheapness do not spurn,

Accept this hen, I pray you. 50

'Plain feathers wears my Hemera,

And has from ages olden;

She makes her nest in common hay,

And yet, of all the birds that lay,

Her eggs alone are golden.'

He turned, and could no more be seen;

Old Bancis stared a moment,

Then tossed poor Partlet on the green,

And with a tone, half jest, half spleen,

Thus made her housewife's comment: 60

'The stranger had a queerish face,

His smile was hardly pleasant,

And, though he meant it for a grace,

Yet this old hen of barnyard race

Was but a stingy present.

'She's quite too old for laying eggs,

Nay, even to make a soup of;

One only needs to see her legs,--

You might as well boil down the pegs

I made the brood-hen's coop of! 70

'Some eighteen score of such do I

Raise every year, her sisters;

Go, in the woods your fortunes try,

All day for one poor earthworm pry,

And scratch your toes to blisters!'

Philemon found the rede was good,

And, turning on the poor hen,

He clapt his hands, and stamped, and shooed,

Hunting the exile tow'rd the wood,

To house with snipe and moorhen. 80

A poet saw and cried: 'Hold! hold!

What are you doing, madman?

Spurn you more wealth than can be told,

The fowl that lays the eggs of gold,

Because she's plainly clad, man?'

To him Philemon: 'I'll not balk

Thy will with any shackle;

Wilt add a harden to thy walk?

There! take her without further talk:

You're both but fit to cackle!' 90

But scarce the poet touched the bird,

It swelled to stature regal;

And when her cloud-wide wings she stirred,

A whisper as of doom was heard,

'Twas Jove's bolt-bearing eagle.

As when from far-off cloud-bergs springs

A crag, and, hurtling under,

From cliff to cliff the rumor flings,

So she from flight-foreboding wings

Shook out a murmurous thunder. 100

She gripped the poet to her breast,

And ever, upward soaring,

Earth seemed a new moon in the west,

And then one light among the rest

Where squadrons lie at mooring.

How tell to what heaven-hallowed seat

The eagle bent his courses?

The waves that on its bases beat,

The gales that round it weave and fleet,

Are life's creative forces. 110

Here was the bird's primeval nest,

High on a promontory

Star-pharosed, where she takes her rest

To brood new Ã¦ons 'neath her breast,

The future's unfledged glory.

I know not how, but I was there

All feeling, hearing, seeing;

It was not wind that stirred my hair

But living breath, the essence rare

Of unembodied being. 120

And in the nest an egg of gold

Lay soft in self-made lustre,

Gazing whereon, what depths untold

Within, what marvels manifold,

Seemed silently to muster!

Daily such splendors to confront

Is still to me and you sent?

It glowed as when Saint Peter's front,

Illumed, forgets its stony wont,

And seems to throb translucent. 130

One saw therein the life of man,

(Or so the poet found it,)

The yolk and white, conceive who can,

Were the glad earth, that, floating, span

In the glad heaven around it.

I knew this as one knows in dream,

Where no effects to causes

Are chained as in our work-day scheme,

And then was wakened by a scream

That seemed to come from Baucis. 140

'Bless Zeus!' she cried, 'I'm safe below!'

First pale, then red as coral;

And I, still drowsy, pondered slow,

And seemed to find, but hardly know,

Something like this for moral.

Each day the world is born anew

For him who takes it rightly;

Not fresher that which Adam knew,

Not sweeter that whose moonlit dew

Entranced Arcadia nightly. 150

Rightly? That's simply: 'tis to see

\_Some\_ substance casts these shadows

Which we call Life and History,

That aimless seem to chase and flee

Like wind-gleams over meadows.

Simply? That's nobly: 'tis to know

That God may still be met with,

Nor groweth old, nor doth bestow

These senses fine, this brain aglow,

To grovel and forget with. 160

Beauty, Herr Doctor, trust in me,

No chemistry will win you;

Charis still rises from the sea:

If you can't find her, \_might\_ it be

Because you seek within you?

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE TO A FRIEND

Alike I hate to be your debtor,

Or write a mere perfunctory letter;

For letters, so it seems to me,

Our careless quintessence should be,

Our real nature's truant play

When Consciousness looks t'other way;

Not drop by drop, with watchful skill,

Gathered in Art's deliberate still,

But life's insensible completeness

Got as the ripe grape gets its sweetness, 10

As if it had a way to fuse

The golden sunlight into juice.

Hopeless my mental pump I try,

The boxes hiss, the tube is dry;

As those petroleum wells that spout

Awhile like M.C.'s, then give out,

My spring, once full as Arethusa,

Is a mere bore as dry's Creusa;

And yet you ask me why I'm glum,

And why my graver Muse is dumb. 20

Ah me! I've reasons manifold

Condensed in one,--I'm getting old!

When life, once past its fortieth year,

Wheels up its evening hemisphere,

The mind's own shadow, which the boy

Saw onward point to hope and joy,

Shifts round, irrevocably set

Tow'rd morning's loss and vain regret,

And, argue with it as we will,

The clock is unconverted still. 30

'But count the gains,' I hear you say,

'Which far the seeming loss out-weigh;

Friendships built firm 'gainst flood and wind

On rock foundations of the mind;

Knowledge instead of scheming hope;

For wild adventure, settled scope;

Talents, from surface-ore profuse,

Tempered and edged to tools for use;

Judgment, for passion's headlong whirls;

Old sorrows crystalled into pearls; 40

Losses by patience turned to gains,

Possessions now, that once were pains;

Joy's blossom gone, as go it must,

To ripen seeds of faith and trust;

Why heed a snow-flake on the roof

If fire within keep Age aloof,

Though blundering north-winds push and strain

With palms benumbed against the pane?'

My dear old Friend, you're very wise;

We always are with others' eyes, 50

And see \_so\_ clear! (our neighbor's deck on)

What reef the idiot's sure to wreck on;

Folks when they learn how life has quizzed 'em

Are fain to make a shift with Wisdom,

And, finding she nor breaks nor bends,

Give her a letter to their friends.

Draw passion's torrent whoso will

Through sluices smooth to turn a mill,

And, taking solid toll of grist,

Forget the rainbow in the mist, 60

The exulting leap, the aimless haste

Scattered in iridescent waste;

Prefer who likes the sure esteem

To cheated youth's midsummer dream,

When every friend was more than Damon,

Each quicksand safe to build a fame on;

Believe that prudence snug excels

Youth's gross of verdant spectacles,

Through which earth's withered stubble seen

Looks autumn-proof as painted green,-- 70

I side with Moses 'gainst the masses,

Take you the drudge, give me the glasses!

And, for your talents shaped with practice,

Convince me first that such the fact is;

Let whoso likes be beat, poor fool,

On life's hard stithy to a tool,

Be whoso will a ploughshare made,

Let me remain a jolly blade!

What's Knowledge, with her stocks and lands,

To gay Conjecture's yellow strands? 80

What's watching her slow flock's increase

To ventures for the golden fleece?

What her deep ships, safe under lee,

To youth's light craft, that drinks the sea,

For Flying Islands making sail,

And failing where 'tis gain to fail?

Ah me! Experience (so we're told),

Time's crucible, turns lead to gold;

Yet what's experience won but dross,

Cloud-gold transmuted to our loss? 90

What but base coin the best event

To the untried experiment!

'Twas an old couple, says the poet,

That lodged the gods and did not know it;

Youth sees and knows them as they were

Before Olympus' top was bare;

From Swampscot's flats his eye divine

Sees Venus rocking on the brine,

With lucent limbs, that somehow scatter a

Charm that turns Doll to Cleopatra; 100

Bacchus (that now is scarce induced

To give Eld's lagging blood a boost),

With cymbals' clang and pards to draw him,

Divine as Ariadne saw him,

Storms through Youth's pulse with all his train

And wins new Indies in his brain;

Apollo (with the old a trope,

A sort of finer Mister Pope),

Apollo--but the Muse forbids:

At his approach cast down thy lids, 110

And think it joy enough to hear

Far off his arrows singing clear;

He knows enough who silent knows

The quiver chiming as he goes;

He tells too much who e'er betrays

The shining Archer's secret ways.

Dear Friend, you're right and I am wrong;

My quibbles are not worth a song,

And I sophistically tease

My fancy sad to tricks like these. 120

I could not cheat you if I would;

You know me and my jesting mood,

Mere surface-foam, for pride concealing

The purpose of my deeper feeling.

I have not spilt one drop of joy

Poured in the senses of the boy,

Nor Nature fails my walks to bless

With all her golden inwardness;

And as blind nestlings, unafraid,

Stretch up wide-mouthed to every shade 130

By which their downy dream is stirred,

Taking it for the mother-bird,

So, when God's shadow, which is light,

Unheralded, by day or night,

My wakening instincts falls across,

Silent as sunbeams over moss,

In my heart's nest half-conscious things

Stir with a helpless sense of wings,

Lift themselves up, and tremble long

With premonitions sweet of song. 140

Be patient, and perhaps (who knows?)

These may be winged one day like those;

If thrushes, close-embowered to sing,

Pierced through with June's delicious sting;

If swallows, their half-hour to run

Star-breasted in the setting sun.

At first they're but the unfledged proem,

Or songless schedule of a poem;

When from the shell they're hardly dry

If some folks thrust them forth, must I? 150

But let me end with a comparison

Never yet hit upon by e'er a son

Of our American Apollo,

(And there's where I shall beat them hollow,

If he indeed's no courtly St. John,

But, as West said, a Mohawk Injun.)

A poem's like a cruise for whales:

Through untried seas the hunter sails,

His prow dividing waters known

To the blue iceberg's hulk alone; 160

At last, on farthest edge of day,

He marks the smoky puff of spray;

Then with bent oars the shallop flies

To where the basking quarry lies;

Then the excitement of the strife,

The crimsoned waves,--ah, this is life!

But, the dead plunder once secured

And safe beside the vessel moored,

All that had stirred the blood before

Is so much blubber, nothing more, 170

(I mean no pun, nor image so

Mere sentimental verse, you know,)

And all is tedium, smoke, and soil,

In trying out the noisome oil.

Yes, this \_is\_ life! And so the bard

Through briny deserts, never scarred

Since Noah's keel, a subject seeks,

And lies upon the watch for weeks;

That once harpooned and helpless lying,

What follows is but weary trying. 180

Now I've a notion, if a poet

Beat up for themes, his verse will show it;

I wait for subjects that hunt me,

By day or night won't let me be,

And hang about me like a curse,

Till they have made me into verse,

From line to line my fingers tease

Beyond my knowledge, as the bees

Build no new cell till those before

With limpid summer-sweet run o'er; 190

Then, if I neither sing nor shine,

Is it the subject's fault, or mine?

AN EMBER PICTURE

How strange are the freaks of memory!

The lessons of life we forget,

While a trifle, a trick of color,

In the wonderful web is set,--

Set by some mordant of fancy,

And, spite of the wear and tear

Of time or distance or trouble,

Insists on its right to be there.

A chance had brought us together;

Our talk was of matters-of-course;

We were nothing, one to the other,

But a short half-hour's resource.

We spoke of French acting and actors,

And their easy, natural way:

Of the weather, for it was raining,

As we drove home from the play.

We debated the social nothings

We bore ourselves so to discuss;

The thunderous rumors of battle

Were silent the while for us.

Arrived at her door, we left her

With a drippingly hurried adieu,

And our wheels went crunching the gravel

Of the oak-darkened avenue.

As we drove away through the shadow,

The candle she held in the door

From rain-varnished tree-trunk to tree-trunk

Flashed fainter, and flashed no more;--

Flashed fainter, then wholly faded

Before we had passed the wood;

But the light of the face behind it

Went with me and stayed for good.

The vision of scarce a moment,

And hardly marked at the time,

It comes unbidden to haunt me,

Like a scrap of ballad-rhyme.

Had she beauty? Well, not what they call so;

You may find a thousand as fair;

And yet there's her face in my memory

With no special claim to be there.

As I sit sometimes in the twilight,

And call back to life in the coals

Old faces and hopes and fancies

Long buried, (good rest to their souls!)

Her face shines out in the embers;

I see her holding the light,

And hear the crunch of the gravel

And the sweep of the rain that night.

'Tis a face that can never grow older,

That never can part with its gleam,

'Tis a gracious possession forever,

For is it not all a dream?

TO H.W.L.

ON HIS BIRTHDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1867

I need not praise the sweetness of his song,

Where limpid verse to limpid verse succeeds

Smooth as our Charles, when, fearing lest he wrong

The new moon's mirrored skiff, he slides along,

Full without noise, and whispers in his reeds.

With loving breath of all the winds his name

Is blown about the world, but to his friends

A sweeter secret hides behind his fame,

And Love steals shyly through the loud acclaim

To murmur a \_God bless you!\_ and there ends.

As I muse backward up the checkered years

Wherein so much was given, so much was lost,

Blessings in both kinds, such as cheapen tears,--

But hush! this is not for profaner ears;

Let them drink molten pearls nor dream the cost.

Some suck up poison from a sorrow's core,

As naught but nightshade grew upon earth's ground;

Love turned all his to heart's-ease, and the more

Fate tried his bastions, she but forced a door

Leading to sweeter manhood and more sound.

Even as a wind-waved fountain's swaying shade

Seems of mixed race, a gray wraith shot with sun,

So through his trial faith translucent rayed

Till darkness, halt disnatured so, betrayed

A heart of sunshine that would fain o'errun.

Surely if skill in song the shears may stay

And of its purpose cheat the charmed abyss,

If our poor life be lengthened by a lay,

He shall not go, although his presence may,

And the next age in praise shall double this.

Long days be his, and each as lusty-sweet

As gracious natures find his song to be;

May Age steal on with softly-cadenced feet

Falling in music, as for him were meet

Whose choicest verse is harsher-toned than he!

THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE STUDY

'Come forth!' my catbird calls to me,

'And hear me sing a cavatina

That, in this old familiar tree,

Shall hang a garden of Alcina.

'These buttercups shall brim with wine

Beyond all Lesbian juice or Massic;

May not New England be divine?

My ode to ripening summer classic?

'Or, if to me you will not hark,

By Beaver Brook a thrush is ringing

Till all the alder-coverts dark

Seem sunshine-dappled with his singing.

'Come out beneath the unmastered sky,

With its emancipating spaces,

And learn to sing as well as I,

Without premeditated graces.

'What boot your many-volumed gains,

Those withered leaves forever turning,

To win, at best, for all your pains,

A nature mummy-wrapt to learning?

'The leaves wherein true wisdom lies

On living trees the sun are drinking;

Those white clouds, drowsing through the skies,

Grew not so beautiful by thinking.

'"Come out!" with me the oriole cries,

Escape the demon that pursues you:

And, hark, the cuckoo weather-wise,

Still hiding farther onward, wooes you.'

'Alas, dear friend, that, all my days,

Hast poured from that syringa thicket

The quaintly discontinuous lays

To which I hold a season-ticket.

'A season-ticket cheaply bought

With a dessert of pilfered berries,

And who so oft my soul hast caught

With morn and evening voluntaries,

'Deem me not faithless, if all day

Among my dusty books I linger,

No pipe, like thee, for June to play

With fancy-led, half-conscious finger.

'A bird is singing in my brain

And bubbling o'er with mingled fancies,

Gay, tragic, rapt, right heart of Spain

Fed with the sap of old romances.

'I ask no ampler skies than those

His magic music rears above me,

No falser friends, no truer foes,--

And does not DoÃ±a Clara love me?

'Cloaked shapes, a twanging of guitars,

A rush of feet, and rapiers clashing,

Then silence deep with breathless stars,

And overhead a white hand flashing.

'O music of all moods and climes,

Vengeful, forgiving, sensuous, saintly,

Where still, between the Christian chimes,

The Moorish cymbal tinkles faintly!

'O life borne lightly in the hand,

For friend or foe with grace Castilian!

O valley safe in Fancy's land,

Not tramped to mud yet by the million!

'Bird of to-day, thy songs are stale

To his, my singer of all weathers,

My Calderon, my nightingale,

My Arab soul in Spanish feathers.

'Ah, friend, these singers dead so long,

And still, God knows, in purgatory,

Give its best sweetness to all song,

To Nature's self her better glory.'

IN THE TWILIGHT

Men say the sullen instrument,

That, from the Master's bow,

With pangs of joy or woe,

Feels music's soul through every fibre sent,

Whispers the ravished strings

More than he knew or meant;

Old summers in its memory glow;

The secrets of the wind it sings;

It hears the April-loosened springs;

And mixes with its mood

All it dreamed when it stood

In the murmurous pine-wood

Long ago!

The magical moonlight then

Steeped every bough and cone;

The roar of the brook in the glen

Came dim from the distance blown;

The wind through its glooms sang low,

And it swayed to and fro

With delight as it stood,

In the wonderful wood,

Long ago!

O my life, have we not had seasons

That only said, Live and rejoice?

That asked not for causes and reasons,

But made us all feeling and voice?

When we went with the winds in their blowing,

When Nature and we were peers,

And we seemed to share in the flowing

Of the inexhaustible years?

Have we not from the earth drawn juices

Too fine for earth's sordid uses?

Have I heard, have I seen

All I feel, all I know?

Doth my heart overween?

Or could it have been

Long ago?

Sometimes a breath floats by me,

An odor from Dreamland sent.

That makes the ghost seem nigh me

Of a splendor that came and went,

Of a life lived somewhere, I know not

In what diviner sphere,

Of memories that stay not and go not,

Like music heard once by an ear

That cannot forget or reclaim it,

A something so shy, it would shame it

To make it a show,

A something too vague, could I name it,

For others to know,

As if I had lived it or dreamed it,

As if I had acted or schemed it,

Long ago!

And yet, could I live it over,

This life that stirs in my brain,

Could I be both maiden and lover.

Moon and tide, bee and clover,

As I seem to have been, once again,

Could I but speak it and show it,

This pleasure more sharp than pain,

That baffles and lures me so,

The world should once more have a poet,

Such as it had

In the ages glad,

Long ago!

THE FOOT-PATH

It mounts athwart the windy hill

Through sallow slopes of upland bare,

And Fancy climbs with foot-fall still

Its narrowing curves that end in air.

By day, a warmer-hearted blue

Stoops softly to that topmost swell;

Its thread-like windings seem a clue

To gracious climes where all is well.

By night, far yonder, I surmise

An ampler world than clips my ken,

Where the great stars of happier skies

Commingle nobler fates of men.

I look and long, then haste me home,

Still master of my secret rare;

Once tried, the path would end in Rome,

But now it leads me everywhere.

Forever to the new it guides,

From former good, old overmuch;

What Nature for her poets hides,

'Tis wiser to divine than clutch.

The bird I list hath never come

Within the scope of mortal ear;

My prying step would make him dumb,

And the fair tree, his shelter, sear.

Behind the hill, behind the sky,

Behind my inmost thought, he sings;

No feet avail; to hear it nigh,

The song itself must lend the wings.

Sing on, sweet bird close hid, and raise

Those angel stairways in my brain,

That climb from these low-vaulted days

To spacious sunshines far from pain.

Sing when thou wilt, enchantment fleet,

I leave thy covert haunt untrod,

And envy Science not her feat

To make a twice-told tale of God.

They said the fairies tript no more,

And long ago that Pan was dead;

'Twas but that fools preferred to bore

Earth's rind inch-deep for truth instead.

Pan leaps and pipes all summer long,

The fairies dance each full-mooned night,

Would we but doff our lenses strong,

And trust our wiser eyes' delight.

City of Elf-land, just without

Our seeing, marvel ever new,

Glimpsed in fair weather, a sweet doubt

Sketched-in, mirage-like, on the blue,

I build thee in yon sunset cloud,

Whose edge allures to climb the height;

I hear thy drowned bells, inly-loud,

From still pools dusk with dreams of night.

Thy gates are shut to hardiest will,

Thy countersign of long-lost speech,--

Those fountained courts, those chambers still,

Fronting Time's far East, who shall reach?

I know not, and will never pry,

But trust our human heart for all;

Wonders that from the seeker fly

Into an open sense may fall.

Hide in thine own soul, and surprise

The password of the unwary elves;

Seek it, thou canst not bribe their spies;

Unsought, they whisper it themselves.

POEMS OF THE WAR

THE WASHERS OF THE SHROUD

OCTOBER, 1861

Along a river-side, I know not where,

I walked one night in mystery of dream;

A chill creeps curdling yet beneath my hair,

To think what chanced me by the pallid gleam

Of a moon-wraith that waned through haunted air.

Pale fireflies pulsed within the meadow-mist

Their hales, wavering thistledowns of light;

The loon, that seemed to mock some goblin tryst,

Laughed; and the echoes, huddling in affright,

Like Odin's hounds, fled baying down the night. 10

Then all was silent, till there smote my ear

A movement in the stream that checked my breath:

Was it the slow plash of a wading deer?

But something said, 'This water is of Death!

The Sisters wash a shroud,--ill thing to hear!'

I, looking then, beheld the ancient Three

Known to the Greek's and to the Northman's creed,

That sit in shadow of the mystic Tree,

Still crooning, as they weave their endless brede,

One song: 'Time was, Time is, and Time shall be.' 20

No wrinkled crones were they, as I had deemed,

But fair as yesterday, to-day, to-morrow

To mourner, lover, poet, ever seemed;

Something too high for joy, too deep for sorrow,

Thrilled in their tones, and from their faces gleamed.

'Still men and nations reap as they have strawn,'

So sang they, working at their task the while;

'The fatal raiment must be cleansed ere dawn:

For Austria? Italy? the Sea-Queen's isle?

O'er what quenched grandeur must our shroud be drawn? 30

'Or is it for a younger, fairer corse,

That gathered States like children round his knees,

That tamed the wave to be his posting-horse,

Feller of forests, linker of the seas,

Bridge-builder, hammerer, youngest son of Thor's?

'What make we, murmur'st thou? and what are we?

When empires must be wound, we bring the shroud,

The time-old web of the implacable Three:

Is it too coarse for him, the young and proud?

Earth's mightiest deigned to wear it,--why not he?' 40

'Is there no hope?' I moaned, 'so strong, so fair!

Our Fowler whose proud bird would brook erewhile

No rival's swoop in all our western air!

Gather the ravens, then, in funeral file

For him, life's morn yet golden in his hair?

'Leave me not hopeless, ye unpitying dames!

I see, half seeing. Tell me, ye who scanned

The stars, Earth's elders, still must noblest aims

Be traced upon oblivious ocean-sands?

Must Hesper join the wailing ghosts of names?' 50

'When grass-blades stiffen with red battle-dew,

Ye deem we choose the victor and the slain:

Say, choose we them that shall be leal and true

To the heart's longing, the high faith of brain?

Yet there the victory lies, if ye but knew.

'Three roots bear up Dominion: Knowledge, Will,--

These twain are strong, but stronger yet the third,--

Obedience,--'tis the great tap-root that still,

Knit round the rock of Duty, is not stirred,

Though Heaven-loosed tempests spend their utmost skill. 60

'Is the doom sealed for Hesper? 'Tis not we

Denounce it, but the Law before all time:

The brave makes danger opportunity;

The waverer, paltering with the chance sublime,

Dwarfs it to peril: which shall Hesper be?

'Hath he let vultures climb his eagle's seat

To make Jove's bolts purveyors of their maw?

Hath he the Many's plaudits found more sweet

Than Wisdom? held Opinion's wind for Law?

Then let him hearken for the doomster's feet! 70

'Rough are the steps, slow-hewn in flintiest rock,

States climb to power by; slippery those with gold

Down which they stumble to eternal mock:

No chafferer's hand shall long the sceptre hold,

Who, given a Fate to shape, would sell the block.

'We sing old Sagas, songs of weal and woe,

Mystic because too cheaply understood;

Dark sayings are not ours; men hear and know,

See Evil weak, see strength alone in Good,

Yet hope to stem God's fire with walls of tow. 80

'Time Was unlocks the riddle of Time Is,

That offers choice of glory or of gloom;

The solver makes Time Shall Be surely his.

But hasten, Sisters! for even now the tomb

Grates its slow hinge and calls from the abyss.'

'But not for him,' I cried, 'not yet for him,

Whose large horizon, westering, star by star

Wins from the void to where on Ocean's rim

The sunset shuts the world with golden bar,

Not yet his thews shall fail, his eye grow dim! 90

'His shall be larger manhood, saved for those

That walk unblenching through the trial-fires;

Not suffering, but faint heart, is worst of woes,

And he no base-born son of craven sires,

Whose eye need blench confronted with his foes.

'Tears may be ours, but proud, for those who win

Death's royal purple in the foe-man's lines;

Peace, too, brings tears; and mid the battle-din,

The wiser ear some text of God divines,

For the sheathed blade may rust with darker sin. 100

'God, give us peace! not such as lulls to sleep,

But sword on thigh, and brow with purpose knit!

And let our Ship of State to harbor sweep,

Her ports all up, her battle-lanterns lit,

And her leashed thunders gathering for their leap!'

So cried I with clenched hands and passionate pain,

Thinking of dear ones by Potomac's side;

Again the loon laughed mocking, and again

The echoes bayed far down the night and died,

While waking I recalled my wandering brain. 110

TWO SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF BLONDEL

AUTUMN, 1863

SCENE I.--\_Near a castle in Germany.\_

'Twere no hard task, perchance, to win

The popular laurel for my song;

'Twere only to comply with sin,

And own the crown, though snatched by wrong:

Rather Truth's chaplet let me wear,

Though sharp as death its thorns may sting:

Loyal to Loyalty, I bear

No badge but of my rightful king.

Patient by town and tower I wait,

Or o'er the blustering moorland go; 10

I buy no praise at cheaper rate,

Or what faint hearts may fancy so;

For me, no joy in lady's bower,

Or hall, or tourney, will I sing,

Till the slow stars wheel round the hour

That crowns my hero and my king.

While all the land runs red with strife,

And wealth is won by pedler-crimes,

Let who will find content in life

And tinkle in unmanly rhymes; 20

I wait and seek; through dark and light,

Safe in my heart my hope I bring,

Till I once more my faith may plight

To him my whole soul owns her king.

When power is filched by drone and dolt,

And, with canght breath and flashing eye,

Her knuckles whitening round the bolt,

Vengeance leans eager from the sky,

While this and that the people guess,

And to the skirts of praters cling, 30

Who court the crowd they should compress,

I turn in scorn to seek my king.

Shut in what tower of darkling chance

Or dungeon of a narrow doom,

Dream'st thou of battle-axe and lance

That for the Cross make crashing room?

Come! with hushed breath the battle waits

In the wild van thy mace's swing;

While doubters parley with their fates,

Make thou thine own and ours, my king! 40

O strong to keep upright the old,

And wise to buttress with the new,

Prudent, as only are the bold,

Clear-eyed, as only are the true,

To foes benign, to friendship stern,

Intent to imp Law's broken wing,

Who would not die, if death might earn

The right to kiss thy hand, my king?

SCENE II.--\_An Inn near the ChÃ¢teau of Chalus\_.

Well, the whole thing is over, and here I sit

With one arm in a sling and a milk-score of gashes, 50

And this flagon of Cyprus must e'en warm my wit,

Since what's left of youth's flame is a head flecked with ashes.

I remember I sat in this very same inn,--

I was young then, and one young man thought I was handsome,--

I had found out what prison King Richard was in,

And was spurring for England to push on the ransom.

How I scorned the dull souls that sat guzzling around

And knew not my secret nor recked my derision!

Let the world sink or swim, John or Richard be crowned,

All one, so the beer-tax got lenient revision. 60

How little I dreamed, as I tramped up and down,

That granting our wish one of Fate's saddest Jokes is!

I had mine with a vengeance,--my king got his crown,

And made his whole business to break other folks's.

I might as well join in the safe old \_tum, tum\_:

A hero's an excellent loadstar,--but, bless ye,

What infinite odds 'twixt a hero to come

And your only too palpable hero \_in esse!\_

Precisely the odds (such examples are rife)

'Twixt the poem conceived and the rhyme we make show of, 70

'Twixt the boy's morning dream and the wake-up of life,

'Twixt the Blondel God meant and a Blondel I know of!

But the world's better off, I'm convinced of it now,

Than if heroes, like buns, could be bought for a penny

To regard all mankind as their haltered milch-cow,

And just care for themselves. Well, God cares for the many;

For somehow the poor old Earth blunders along,

Each son of hers adding his mite of unfitness,

And, choosing the sure way of coming out wrong,

Gets to port as the next generation will witness. 80

You think her old ribs have come all crashing through,

If a whisk of Fate's broom snap your cobweb asunder;

But her rivets were clinched by a wiser than you.

And our sins cannot push the Lord's right hand from under.

Better one honest man who can wait for God's mind

In our poor shifting scene here though heroes were plenty!

Better one bite, at forty, of Truth's bitter rind,

Than the hot wine that gushed from the vintage of twenty!

I see it all now: when I wanted a king,

'Twas the kingship that failed in myself I was seeking,-- 90

'Tis so much less easy to do than to sing,

So much simpler to reign by a proxy than \_be\_ king!

Yes, I think I \_do\_ see; after all's said and sung,

Take this one rule of life and you never will rue it,--

'Tis but do your own duty and hold your own tongue

And Blondel were royal himself, if he knew it!

MEMORIAE POSITUM

R.G. SHAW

I

Beneath the trees,

My lifelong friends in this dear spot,

Sad now for eyes that see them not,

I hear the autumnal breeze

Wake the dry leaves to sigh for gladness gone,

Whispering vague omens of oblivion,

Hear, restless as the seas,

Time's grim feet rustling through the withered grace

Of many a spreading realm and strong-stemmed race,

Even as my own through these. 10

Why make we moan

For loss that doth enrich us yet

With upward yearning of regret?

Bleaker than unmossed stone

Our lives were but for this immortal gain

Of unstilled longing and inspiring pain!

As thrills of long-hushed tone

Live in the viol, so our souls grow fine

With keen vibrations from the touch divine

Of noble natures gone. 20

'Twere indiscreet

To vex the shy and sacred grief

With harsh obtrusions of relief;

Yet, Verse, with noiseless feet,

Go whisper: '\_This\_ death hath far choicer ends

Than slowly to impearl to hearts of friends;

These obsequies 'tis meet

Not to seclude in closets of the heart,

But, church-like, with wide doorways, to impart

Even to the heedless street.' 30

II

Brave, good, and true,

I see him stand before me now.

And read again on that young brow,

Where every hope was new,

\_How sweet were life!\_ Yet, by the mouth firm-set,

And look made up for Duty's utmost debt,

I could divine he knew

That death within the sulphurous hostile lines,

In the mere wreck of nobly pitched designs,

Plucks heart's-ease, and not rue. 40

Happy their end

Who vanish down life's evening stream

Placid as swans that drift in dream

Round the next river-bend!

Happy long life, with honor at the close,

Friends' painless tears, the softened thought of foes!

And yet, like him, to spend

All at a gush, keeping our first faith sure

From mid-life's doubt and eld's contentment poor,

What more could Fortune send? 50

Right in the van,

On the red rampart's slippery swell,

With heart that beat a charge, he fell

Foeward, as fits a man;

But the high soul burns on to light men's feet

Where death for noble ends makes dying sweet;

His life her crescent's span

Orbs full with share in their undarkening days

Who ever climbed the battailous steeps of praise

Since valor's praise began. 60

III

His life's expense

Hath won him coeternal youth

With the immaculate prime of Truth;

While we, who make pretence

At living on, and wake and eat and sleep,

And life's stale trick by repetition keep,

Our fickle permanence

(A poor leaf-shadow on a brook, whose play

Of busy idlesse ceases with our day)

Is the mere cheat of sense. 70

We bide our chance,

Unhappy, and make terms with Fate

A little more to let us wait;

He leads for aye the advance,

Hope's forlorn-hopes that plant the desperate good

For nobler Earths and days of manlier mood;

Our wall of circumstance

Cleared at a bound, he flashes o'er the fight,

A saintly shape of fame, to cheer the right

And steel each wavering glance. 80

I write of one,

While with dim eyes I think of three;

Who weeps not others fair and brave as he?

Ah, when the fight is won,

Dear Land, whom triflers now make bold to scorn,

(Thee! from whose forehead Earth awaits her morn,)

How nobler shall the sun

Flame in thy sky, how braver breathe thy air,

That thou bred'st children who for thee could dare

And die as thine have done!

ON BOARD THE '76

WRITTEN FOR MR. BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

NOVEMBER 3, 1884

Our ship lay tumbling in an angry sea,

Her rudder gone, her mainmast o'er the side;

Her scuppers, from the waves' clutch staggering free,

Trailed threads of priceless crimson through the tide;

Sails, shrouds, and spars with pirate cannon torn,

We lay, awaiting morn.

Awaiting morn, such morn as mocks despair;

And she that bare the promise of the world.

Within her sides, now hopeless, helmless, bare,

At random o'er the wildering waters hurled; 10

The reek of battle drifting slow alee

Not sullener than we.

Morn came at last to peer into our woe,

When lo, a sail! Mow surely help was nigh;

The red cross flames aloft, Christ's pledge; but no,

Her black guns grinning hate, she rushes by

And hails us:--'Gains the leak! Ay, so we thought!

Sink, then, with curses fraught!'

I leaned against my gun still angry-hot,

And my lids tingled with the tears held back: 20

This scorn methought was crueller than shot:

The manly death-grip in the battle-wrack,

Yard-arm to yard-arm, were more friendly far

Than such fear-smothered war.

There our foe wallowed, like a wounded brute

The fiercer for his hurt. What now were best?

Once more tug bravely at the peril's root,

Though death came with it? Or evade the test

If right or wrong in this God's world of ours

Be leagued with mightier powers? 30

Some, faintly loyal, felt their pulses lag

With the slow beat that doubts and then despairs;

Some, caitiff, would have struck the starry flag

That knits us with our past, and makes us heirs

Of deeds high-hearted as were ever done

'Neath the all-seeing sun.

But there was one, the Singer of our crew,

Upon whose head Age waved his peaceful sign,

But whose red heart's-blood no surrender knew;

And couchant under brows of massive line, 40

The eyes, like guns beneath a parapet,

Watched, charged with lightnings yet.

The voices of the hills did his obey;

The torrents flashed and tumbled in his song;

He brought our native fields from far away,

Or set us 'mid the innumerable throng

Of dateless woods, or where we heard the calm

Old homestead's evening psalm.

But now he sang of faith to things unseen,

Of freedom's birthright given to us in trust; 50

And words of doughty cheer he spoke between,

That made all earthly fortune seem as dust,

Matched with that duty, old as Time and new,

Of being brave and true.

We, listening, learned what makes the might of words,--

Manhood to back them, constant as a star:

His voice rammed home our cannon, edged our swords,

And sent our boarders shouting; shroud and spar

Heard him and stiffened; the sails heard, and wooed

The winds with loftier mood. 60

In our dark hours he manned our guns again;

Remanned ourselves from his own manhood's stores;

Pride, honor, country, throbbed through all his strain;

And shall we praise? God's praise was his before;

And on our futile laurels he looks down,

Himself our bravest crown.

ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION

JULY 21, 1865

I

Weak-winged is song,

Nor aims at that clear-ethered height

Whither the brave deed climbs for light:

We seem to do them wrong,

Bringing our robin's-leaf to deck their hearse

Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler verse,

Our trivial song to honor those who come

With ears attuned to strenuous trump and drum,

And shaped in squadron-strophes their desire,

Live battle-odes whose lines were steel and fire: 10

Yet sometimes feathered words are strong,

A gracious memory to buoy up and save

From Lethe's dreamless ooze, the common grave

Of the unventurous throng.

II

To-day our Reverend Mother welcomes back

Her wisest Scholars, those who understood

The deeper teaching of her mystic tome,

And offered their fresh lives to make it good:

No lore of Greece or Rome,

No science peddling with the names of things, 20

Or reading stars to find inglorious fates,

Can lift our life with wings

Far from Death's idle gulf that for the many waits,

And lengthen out our dates

With that clear fame whose memory sings

In manly hearts to come, and nerves them and dilates:

Nor such thy teaching, Mother of us all!

Not such the trumpet-call

Of thy diviner mood,

That could thy sons entice 30

From happy homes and toils, the fruitful nest

Of those half-virtues which the world calls best,

Into War's tumult rude;

But rather far that stern device

The sponsors chose that round thy cradle stood

In the dim, unventured wood,

The VERITAS that lurks beneath

The letter's unprolific sheath,

Life of whate'er makes life worth living,

Seed-grain of high emprise, immortal food, 40

One heavenly thing whereof earth hath the giving.

III

Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best oil

Amid the dust of books to find her,

Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,

With the cast mantle she hath left behind her.

Many in sad faith sought for her,

Many with crossed hands sighed for her;

But these, our brothers, fought for her,

At life's dear peril wrought for her,

So loved her that they died for her, 50

Tasting the raptured fleetness

Of her divine completeness:

Their higher instinct knew

Those love her best who to themselves are true,

And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;

They followed her and found her

Where all may hope to find,

Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,

But beautiful, with danger's sweetness round her.

Where faith made whole with deed 60

Breathes its awakening breath

Into the lifeless creed,

They saw her plumed and mailed,

With sweet, stern face unveiled.

And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them in death.

IV

Our slender life runs rippling by, and glides

Into the silent hollow of the past;

What is there that abides

To make the next age better for the last?

Is earth too poor to give us 70

Something to live for here that shall outlive us?

Some more substantial boon

Than such as flows and ebbs with Fortune's fickle moon?

The little that we see

From doubt is never free;

The little that we do

Is but half-nobly true;

With our laborious hiving

What men call treasure, and the gods call dross,

Life seems a fest of Fate's contriving, 80

Only secure in every one's conniving,

A long account of nothings paid with loss,

Where we poor puppets, jerked by unseen wires,

After our little hour of strut and rave,

With all our pasteboard passions and desires,

Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires,

Are tossed pell-mell together in the grave.

But stay! no age was e'er degenerate,

Unless men held it at too cheap a rate,

For in our likeness still we shape our fate. 90

Ah, there is something here

Unfathomed by the cynic's sneer,

Something that gives our feeble light

A high immunity from Night,

Something that leaps life's narrow bars

To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven;

A seed of sunshine that can leaven

Our earthly dullness with the beams of stars,

And glorify our clay

With light from fountains elder than the Day; 100

A conscience more divine than we,

A gladness fed with secret tears,

A vexing, forward-reaching sense

Of some more noble permanence;

A light across the sea,

Which haunts the soul and will not let it be,

Still beaconing from the heights of undegenerate years.

V

Whither leads the path

To ampler fates that leads?

Not down through flowery meads, 110

To reap an aftermath

Of youth's vainglorious weeds,

But up the steep, amid the wrath

And shock of deadly-hostile creeds,

Where the world's best hope and stay

By battle's flashes gropes a desperate way,

And every turf the fierce foot clings to bleeds.

Peace hath her not ignoble wreath,

Ere yet the sharp, decisive word

Light the black lips of cannon, and the sword 120

Dreams in its easeful sheath;

But some day the live coal behind the thought,

Whether from BaÃ¤l's stone obscene,

Or from the shrine serene

Of God's pure altar brought,

Bursts up in flame; the war of tongue and pen

Learns with what deadly purpose it was fraught,

And, helpless in the fiery passion caught,

Shakes all the pillared state with shock of men:

Some day the soft Ideal that we wooed 130

Confronts us fiercely, foe-beset, pursued,

And cries reproachful: 'Was it, then, my praise,

And not myself was loved? Prove now thy truth;

I claim of thee the promise of thy youth;

Give me thy life, or cower in empty phrase,

The victim of thy genius, not its mate!'

Life may be given in many ways,

And loyalty to Truth be sealed

As bravely in the closet as the field,

So bountiful is Fate; 140

But then to stand beside her,

When craven churls deride her,

To front a lie in arms and not to yield,

This shows, methinks, God's plan

And measure of a stalwart man,

Limbed like the old heroic breeds,

Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid earth,

Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,

Fed from within with all the strength he needs.

VI

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief, 150

Whom late the Nation he had led.

With ashes on her head,

Wept with the passion of an angry grief:

Forgive me, if from present things I turn

To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,

And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.

Nature, they say, doth dote,

And cannot make a man

Save on some worn-out plan,

Repeating as by rote: 160

For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,

And, choosing sweet clay from the breast

Of the unexhausted West,

With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,

Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true,

How beautiful to see

Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,

Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;

One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,

Not lured by any cheat of birth, 170

But by his clear-grained human worth,

And brave old wisdom of sincerity!

They knew that outward grace is dust;

They could not choose but trust

In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,

And supple-tempered will

That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.

His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind.

Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,

A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind; 180

Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,

Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,

Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.

Nothing of Europe here,

Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,

Ere any names of Serf and Peer

Could Nature's equal scheme deface

And thwart her genial will;

Here was a type of the true elder race,

And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face. 190

I praise him not; it were too late;

And some innative weakness there must be

In him who condescends to victory

Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,

Safe in himself as in a fate,

So always firmly he:

He knew to bide his time,

And can his fame abide,

Still patient in his simple faith sublime,

Till the wise years decide.

Great captains, with their guns and drums, 201

Disturb our judgment for the hour,

But at last silence comes;

These all are gone, and, standing like a tower.

Our children shall behold his fame,

The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man.

Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,

New birth of our new soil, the first American.

VII

Long as man's hope insatiate can discern

Or only guess some more inspiring goal 210

Outside of Self, enduring as the pole,

Along whose course the flying axles burn

Of spirits bravely pitched, earth's manlier brood,

Long as below we cannot find

The meed that stills the inexorable mind;

So long this faith to some ideal Good,

Under whatever mortal names it masks,

Freedom, Law, Country, this ethereal mood

That thanks the Fates for their severer tasks,

Feeling its challenged pulses leap, 220

While others skulk in subterfuges cheap,

And, set in Danger's van, has all the boon it asks,

Shall win man's praise and woman's love,

Shall be a wisdom that we set above

All other skills and gifts to culture dear,

A virtue round whose forehead we inwreathe

Laurels that with a living passion breathe

When other crowns grow, while we twine them, sear.

What brings us thronging these high rites to pay,

And seal these hours the noblest of our year, 230

Save that our brothers found this better way?

VIII

We sit here in the Promised Land

That flows with Freedom's honey and milk;

But 'twas they won it, sword in hand,

Making the nettle danger soft for us as silk.

We welcome back our bravest and our best;--

Ah me! not all! some come not with the rest,

Who went forth brave and bright as any here!

I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,

But the sad strings complain, 240

And will not please the ear:

I sweep them for a pÃ¦an, but they wane

Again and yet again

Into a dirge, and die away, in pain.

In these brave ranks I only see the gaps,

Thinking of dear ones whom the dumb turf wraps,

Dark to the triumph which they died to gain:

Fitlier may others greet the living,

For me the past is unforgiving;

I with uncovered head 250

Salute the sacred dead,

Who went, and who return not.--Say not so!

'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,

But the high faith that failed not by the way;

Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave;

No ban of endless night exiles the brave;

And to the saner mind

We rather seem the dead that stayed behind.

Blow, trumpets, all your exultations blow!

For never shall their aureoled presence lack: 260

I see them muster in a gleaming row,

With ever-youthful brows that nobler show;

We find in our dull road their shining track;

In every nobler mood

We feel the orient of their spirit glow,

Part of our life's unalterable good,

Of all our saintlier aspiration;

They come transfigured back,

Secure from change in their high-hearted ways,

Beautiful evermore, and with the rays 270

Of morn on their white Shields of Expectation!

IX

But is there hope to save

Even this ethereal essence from the grave?

What ever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle wrong

Save a few clarion names, or golden threads of song?

Before my musing eye

The mighty ones of old sweep by,

DisvoicÃ¨d now and insubstantial things,

As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,

Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust, 280

And many races, nameless long ago,

To darkness driven by that imperious gust

Of ever-rushing Time that here doth blow:

O visionary world, condition strange,

Where naught abiding is but only Change,

Where the deep-bolted stars themselves still shift and range!

Shall we to more continuance make pretence?

Renown builds tombs, a life-estate is Wit;

And, bit by bit,

The cunning years steal all from us but woe; 290

Leaves are we, whose decays no harvest sow.

But, when we vanish hence,

Shall they lie forceless in the dark below,

Save to make green their little length of souls,

Or deepen pansies for a year or two,

Who now to us are shining-sweet as gods?

Was dying all they had the skill to do?

That were not fruitless: but the Soul resents

Such short-lived service, as if blind events

Ruled without her, or earth could so endure; 300

She claims a more divine investiture

Of longer tenure than Fame's airy rents;

Whate'er she touches doth her nature share;

Her inspiration haunts the ennobled air,

Gives eyes to mountains blind,

Ears to the deaf earth, voices to the wind,

And her clear trump slugs succor everywhere

By lonely bivouacs to the wakeful mind;

For soul inherits all that soul could dare:

Yea, Manhood hath a wider span 310

And larger privilege of life than man.

The single deed, the private sacrifice,

So radiant now through proudly-hidden tears,

Is covered up erelong from mortal eyes

With thoughtless drift of the deciduous years;

But that high privilege that makes all men peers,

That leap of heart whereby a people rise

Up to a noble anger's height,

And, flamed on by the Fates, not shrink, but grow more bright,

That swift validity in noble veins, 320

Of choosing danger and disdaining shame,

Of being set on flame

By the pure fire that flies all contact base

But wraps its chosen with angelic might,

These are imperishable gains,

Sure as the sun, medicinal as light,

These hold great futures in their lusty reins

And certify to earth a new imperial race.

X

Who now shall sneer?

Who dare again to say we trace 330

Our lines to a plebeian race?

Roundhead and Cavalier!

Dumb are those names erewhile in battle loud;

Dream-footed as the shadow of a cloud,

They flit across the ear:

That is best blood that hath most iron in 't,

To edge resolve with, pouring without stint

For what makes manhood dear.

Tell us not of Plantagenets,

Hapsburgs, and Guelfs, whose thin bloods crawl 340

Down from some victor in a border-brawl!

How poor their outworn coronets,

Matched with one leaf of that plain civic wreath

Our brave for honor's blazon shall bequeath,

Through whose desert a rescued Nation sets

Her heel on treason, and the trumpet hears

Shout victory, tingling Europe's sullen ears

With vain resentments and more vain regrets!

XI

Not in anger, not in pride,

Pure from passion's mixture rude 350

Ever to base earth allied,

But with far-heard gratitude,

Still with heart and voice renewed,

To heroes living and dear martyrs dead,

The strain should close that consecrates our brave.

Lift the heart and lift the head!

Lofty be its mood and grave,

Not without a martial ring,

Not without a prouder tread

And a peal of exultation: 360

Little right has he to sing

Through whose heart in such an hour

Beats no march of conscious power,

Sweeps no tumult of elation!

'Tis no Man we celebrate,

By his country's victories great,

A hero half, and half the whim of Fate,

But the pith and marrow of a Nation

Drawing force from all her men,

Highest, humblest, weakest, all, 370

For her time of need, and then

Pulsing it again through them,

Till the basest can no longer cower,

Feeling his soul spring up divinely tall,

Touched but in passing by her mantle-hem.

Come back, then, noble pride, for 'tis her dower!

How could poet ever tower,

If his passions, hopes, and fears,

If his triumphs and his tears,

Kept not measure with his people? 380

Boom, cannon, boom to all the winds and waves!

Clash out, glad bells, from every rocking steeple!

Banners, adance with triumph, bend your staves!

And from every mountain-peak

Let beacon-fire to answering beacon speak,

Katahdin tell Monadnock, Whiteface he,

And so leap on in light from sea to sea,

Till the glad news be sent

Across a kindling continent,

Making earth feel more firm and air breathe braver: 390

'Be proud! for she is saved, and all have helped to save her!

She that lifts up the manhood of the poor,

She of the open soul and open door,

With room about her hearth for all mankind!

The fire is dreadful in her eyes no more;

From her bold front the helm she doth unbind,

Sends all her handmaid armies back to spin,

And bids her navies, that so lately hurled

Their crashing battle, hold their thunders in,

Swimming like birds of calm along the unharmful shore. 400

No challenge sends she to the elder world,

That looked askance and hated; a light scorn

Plays o'er her mouth, as round her mighty knees

She calls her children back, and waits the morn

Of nobler day, enthroned between her subject seas.'

XII

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found release!

Thy God, in these distempered days,

Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of his ways,

And through thine enemies hath wrought thy peace!

Bow down in prayer and praise! 410

No poorest in thy borders but may now

Lift to the juster skies a man's enfranchised brow.

O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!

Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair

O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,

And letting thy set lips,

Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,

The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,

What words divine of lover or of poet

Could tell our love and make thee know it, 420

Among the Nations bright beyond compare?

What were our lives without thee?

What all our lives to save thee?

We reck not what we gave thee;

We will not dare to doubt thee,

But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

L'ENVOI

TO THE MUSE

Whither? Albeit I follow fast,

In all life's circuit I but find,

Not where thou art, but where thou wast,

Sweet beckoner, more fleet than wind!

I haunt the pine-dark solitudes,

With soft brown silence carpeted,

And plot to snare thee in the woods:

Peace I o'ertake, but thou art fled!

I find the rock where thou didst rest,

The moss thy skimming foot hath prest; 10

All Nature with thy parting thrills,

Like branches after birds new-flown;

Thy passage hill and hollow fills

With hints of virtue not their own;

In dimples still the water slips

Where thou hast dipt thy finger-tips;

Just, just beyond, forever burn

Gleams of a grace without return;

Upon thy shade I plant my foot,

And through my frame strange raptures shoot; 20

All of thee but thyself I grasp;

I seem to fold thy luring shape,

And vague air to my bosom clasp,

Thou lithe, perpetual Escape!

One mask and then another drops,

And thou art secret as before;

Sometimes with flooded ear I list,

And hear thee, wondrous organist,

From mighty continental stops

A thunder of new music pour; 30

Through pipes of earth and air and stone

Thy inspiration deep is blown;

Through mountains, forests, open downs,

Lakes, railroads, prairies, states, and towns,

Thy gathering fugue goes rolling on

From Maine to utmost Oregon;

The factory-wheels in cadence hum,

From brawling parties concords come;

All this I hear, or seem to hear,

But when, enchanted, I draw near 40

To mate with words the various theme,

Life seems a whiff of kitchen steam,

History an organ-grinder's thrum,

For thou hast slipt from it and me

And all thine organ-pipes left dumb,

Most mutable Perversity!

Not weary yet, I still must seek,

And hope for luck next day, next week;

I go to see the great man ride,

Shiplike, the swelling human tide 50

That floods to bear him into port,

Trophied from Senate-hall and Court;

Thy magnetism, I feel it there,

Thy rhythmic presence fleet and rare,

Making the Mob a moment fine

With glimpses of their own Divine,

As in their demigod they see

Their cramped ideal soaring free;

'Twas thou didst bear the fire about,

That, like the springing of a mine, 60

Sent up to heaven the street-long shout;

Full well I know that thou wast here,

It was thy breath that brushed my ear;

But vainly in the stress and whirl

I dive for thee, the moment's pearl.

Through every shape thou well canst run,

Proteus, 'twixt rise and set of sun,

Well pleased with logger-camps in Maine

As where Milan's pale Duomo lies

A stranded glacier on the plain, 70

Its peaks and pinnacles of ice

Melted in many a quaint device,

And sees, above the city's din,

Afar its silent Alpine kin:

I track thee over carpets deep

To wealth's and beauty's inmost keep;

Across the sand of bar-room floors

Mid the stale reek of boosing boors;

Where browse the hay-field's fragrant heats,

Or the flail-heart of Autumn beats; 80

I dog thee through the market's throngs

To where the sea with myriad tongues

Laps the green edges of the pier,

And the tall ships that eastward steer,

Curtsy their farewells to the town,

O'er the curved distance lessening down:

I follow allwhere for thy sake,

Touch thy robe's hem, but ne'er o'ertake,

Find where, scarce yet unmoving, lies,

Warm from thy limbs, thy last disguise; 90

But thou another shape hast donned,

And lurest still just, just beyond!

But here a voice, I know not whence,

Thrills clearly through my inward sense,

Saying: 'See where she sits at home

While thou in search of her dost roam!

All summer long her ancient wheel

Whirls humming by the open door,

Or, when the hickory's social zeal

Sets the wide chimney in a roar, 100

Close-nestled by the tinkling hearth,

It modulates the household mirth

With that sweet serious undertone

Of duty, music all her own;

Still as of old she sits and spins

Our hopes, our sorrows, and our sins;

With equal care she twines the fates

Of cottages and mighty states;

She spins the earth, the air, the sea,

The maiden's unschooled fancy free, 110

The boy's first love, the man's first grief,

The budding and the fall o' the leaf;

The piping west-wind's snowy care

For her their cloudy fleeces spare,

Or from the thorns of evil times

She can glean wool to twist her rhymes;

Morning and noon and eve supply

To her their fairest tints for dye,

But ever through her twirling thread

There spires one line of warmest red, 120

Tinged from the homestead's genial heart,

The stamp and warrant of her art;

With this Time's sickle she outwears,

And blunts the Sisters' baffled shears.

'Harass her not: thy heat and stir

But greater coyness breed in her;

Yet thou mayst find, ere Age's frost,

Thy long apprenticeship not lost,

Learning at last that Stygian Fate

Unbends to him that knows to wait. 130

The Muse is womanish, nor deigns

Her love to him that pules and plains;

With proud, averted face she stands

To him that wooes with empty hands.

Make thyself free of Manhood's guild;

Pull down thy barns and greater build;

The wood, the mountain, and the plain

Wave breast-deep with the poet's grain;

Pluck thou the sunset's fruit of gold,

Glean from the heavens and ocean old; 140

From fireside lone and trampling street

Let thy life garner daily wheat;

The epic of a man rehearse,

Be something better than thy verse;

Make thyself rich, and then the Muse

Shall court thy precious interviews,

Shall take thy head upon her knee,

And such enchantment lilt to thee,

That thou shalt hear the life-blood flow

From farthest stars to grass-blades low, 150

And find the Listener's science still

Transcends the Singer's deepest skill!'

THE CATHEDRAL

\* \* \* \* \*

To

MR. JAMES T. FIELDS

MY DEAR FIELDS:

Dr. Johnson's sturdy self-respect led him to invent the Bookseller as a

substitute for the Patron. My relations with you have enabled me to

discover how pleasantly the Friend may replace the Bookseller. Let me

record my sense of many thoughtful services by associating your name

with a poem which owes its appearance in this form to your partiality.

Cordially yours,

J.R. LOWELL.

CAMBRIDGE, \_November\_ 29, 1869.

\* \* \* \* \*

Far through the memory shines a happy day,

Cloudless of care, down-shod to every sense,

And simply perfect from its own resource,

As to a bee the new campanula's

Illuminate seclusion swung in air.

Such days are not the prey of setting suns,

Nor ever blurred with mist of afterthought;

Like words made magical by poets dead,

Wherein the music of all meaning is

The sense hath garnered or the soul divined, 10

They mingle with our life's ethereal part,

Sweetening and gathering sweetness evermore,

By beauty's franchise disenthralled of time.

I can recall, nay, they are present still,

Parts of myself, the perfume of my mind,

Days that seem farther off than Homer's now

Ere yet the child had loudened to the boy,

And I, recluse from playmates, found perforce

Companionship in things that not denied

Nor granted wholly; as is Nature's wont, 20

Who, safe in uncontaminate reserve,

Lets us mistake our longing for her love,

And mocks with various echo of ourselves.

These first sweet frauds upon our consciousness,

That blend the sensual with its imaged world,

These virginal cognitions, gifts of morn,

Ere life grow noisy, and slower-footed thought

Can overtake the rapture of the sense,

To thrust between ourselves and what we feel,

Have something in them secretly divine. 30

Vainly the eye, once schooled to serve the brain,

With pains deliberate studies to renew

The ideal vision: second-thoughts are prose;

For beauty's acme hath a term as brief

As the wave's poise before it break in pearl,

Our own breath dims the mirror of the sense,

Looking too long and closely: at a flash

We snatch the essential grace of meaning out,

And that first passion beggars all behind,

Heirs of a tamer transport prepossessed. 40

Who, seeing once, has truly seen again

The gray vague of unsympathizing sea

That dragged his Fancy from her moorings back

To shores inhospitable of eldest time,

Till blank foreboding of earth-gendered powers,

Pitiless seignories in the elements,

Omnipotences blind that darkling smite,

Misgave him, and repaganized the world?

Yet, by some subtler touch of sympathy,

These primal apprehensions, dimly stirred, 50

Perplex the eye with pictures from within.

This hath made poets dream of lives foregone

In worlds fantastical, more fair than ours;

So Memory cheats us, glimpsing half-revealed.

Even as I write she tries her wonted spell

In that continuous redbreast boding rain:

The bird I hear sings not from yonder elm;

But the flown ecstasy my childhood heard

Is vocal in my mind, renewed by him,

Haply made sweeter by the accumulate thrill 60

That threads my undivided life and steals

A pathos from the years and graves between.

I know not how it is with other men,

Whom I but guess, deciphering myself;

For me, once felt is so felt nevermore.

The fleeting relish at sensation's brim

Had in it the best ferment of the wine.

One spring I knew as never any since:

All night the surges of the warm southwest

Boomed intermittent through the wallowing elms, 70

And brought a morning from the Gulf adrift,

Omnipotent with sunshine, whose quick charm

Startled with crocuses the sullen turf

And wiled the bluebird to his whiff of song:

One summer hour abides, what time I perched,

Dappled with noonday, under simmering leaves,

And pulled the pulpy oxhearts, while aloof

An oriole clattered and the robins shrilled,

Denouncing me an alien and a thief:

One morn of autumn lords it o'er the rest, 80

When in the lane I watched the ash-leaves fall,

Balancing softly earthward without wind,

Or twirling with directer impulse down

On those fallen yesterday, now barbed with frost,

While I grew pensive with the pensive year:

And once I learned how marvellous winter was,

When past the fence-rails, downy-gray with rime,

I creaked adventurous o'er the spangled crust

That made familiar fields seem far and strange

As those stark wastes that whiten endlessly 90

In ghastly solitude about the pole,

And gleam relentless to the unsetting sun:

Instant the candid chambers of my brain

Were painted with these sovran images;

And later visions seem but copies pale

From those unfading frescos of the past,

Which I, young savage, in my age of flint,

Gazed at, and dimly felt a power in me

Parted from Nature by the joy in her

That doubtfully revealed me to myself. 100

Thenceforward I must stand outside the gate;

And paradise was paradise the more,

Known once and barred against satiety.

What we call Nature, all outside ourselves,

Is but our own conceit of what we see,

Our own reaction upon what we feel;

The world's a woman to our shifting mood,

Feeling with us, or making due pretence

And therefore we the more persuade ourselves

To make all things our thought's confederates, 110

Conniving with us in whate'er we dream.

So when our Fancy seeks analogies,

Though she have hidden what she after finds,

She loves to cheat herself with feigned surprise.

I find my own complexion everywhere;

No rose, I doubt, was ever, like the first,

A marvel to the bush it dawned upon,

The rapture of its life made visible,

The mystery of its yearning realized,

As the first babe to the first woman born; 120

No falcon ever felt delight of wings

As when, an eyas, from the stolid cliff

Loosing himself, he followed his high heart

To swim on sunshine, masterless as wind;

And I believe the brown earth takes delight

In the new snowdrop looking back at her,

To think that by some vernal alchemy

It could transmute her darkness into pearl;

What is the buxom peony after that,

With its coarse constancy of hoyden blush? 130

What the full summer to that wonder new?

But, if in nothing else, in us there is

A sense fastidious hardly reconciled

To the poor makeshifts of life's scenery,

Where the same slide must double all its parts,

Shoved in for Tarsus and hitched back for Tyre,

I blame not in the soul this daintiness,

Rasher of surfeit than a humming-bird,

In things indifferent by sense purveyed;

It argues her an immortality 140

And dateless incomes of experience,

This unthrift housekeeping that will not brook

A dish warmed-over at the feast of life,

And finds Twice stale, served with whatever sauce.

Nor matters much how it may go with me

Who dwell in Grub Street and am proud to drudge

Where men, my betters, wet their crust with tears;

Use can make sweet the peach's shady side,

That only by reflection tastes of sun.

But she, my Princess, who will sometimes deign 150

My garret to illumine till the walls,

Narrow and dingy, scrawled with hackneyed thought

(Poor Richard slowly elbowing Plato out),

Dilate and drape themselves with tapestries

Nausikaa might have stooped o'er, while, between,

Mirrors, effaced in their own clearness, send

Her only image on through deepening deeps

With endless repercussion of delight,--

Bringer of life, witching each sense to soul,

That sometimes almost gives me to believe 160

I might have been a poet, gives at least

A brain dasaxonized, an ear that makes

Music where none is, and a keener pang

Of exquisite surmise outleaping thought,--

Her will I pamper in her luxury:

No crumpled rose-leaf of too careless choice

Shall bring a northern nightmare to her dreams,

Vexing with sense of exile; hers shall be

The invitiate firstlings of experience,

Vibrations felt but once and felt life long: 170

Oh, more than half-way turn that Grecian front

Upon me, while with self-rebuke I spell,

On the plain fillet that confines thy hair

In conscious bounds of seeming unconstraint,

The \_Naught in overplus\_, thy race's badge!

One feast for her I secretly designed

In that Old World so strangely beautiful

To us the disinherited of eld,--

A day at Chartres, with no soul beside

To roil with pedant prate my joy serene 180

And make the minster shy of confidence.

I went, and, with the Saxon's pious care,

First ordered dinner at the pea-green inn,

The flies and I its only customers.

Eluding these, I loitered through the town,

With hope to take my minster unawares

In its grave solitude of memory.

A pretty burgh, and such as Fancy loves

For bygone grandeurs, faintly rumorous now

Upon the mind's horizon, as of storm 190

Brooding its dreamy thunders far aloof,

That mingle with our mood, but not disturb.

Its once grim bulwarks, tamed to lovers' walks,

Look down unwatchful on the sliding Eure,

Whose listless leisure suits the quiet place,

Lisping among his shallows homelike sounds

At Concord and by Bankside heard before.

Chance led me to a public pleasure-ground,

Where I grew kindly with the merry groups,

And blessed the Frenchman for his simple art 200

Of being domestic in the light of day.

His language has no word, we growl, for Home;

But he can find a fireside in the sun,

Play with his child, make love, and shriek his mind,

By throngs of strangers undisprivacied.

He makes his life a public gallery,

Nor feels himself till what he feels comes back

In manifold reflection from without;

While we, each pore alert with consciousness,

Hide our best selves as we had stolen them, 210

And each bystander a detective were,

Keen-eyed for every chink of undisguise.

So, musing o'er the problem which was best,--

A life wide-windowed, shining all abroad,

Or curtains drawn to shield from sight profane

The rites we pay to the mysterious I,--

With outward senses furloughed and head bowed

I followed some fine instinct in my feet,

Till, to unbend me from the loom of thought,

Looking up suddenly, I found mine eyes 220

Confronted with the minster's vast repose.

Silent and gray as forest-leaguered cliff

Left inland by the ocean's slow retreat,

That hears afar the breeze-borne rote and longs,

Remembering shocks of surf that clomb and fell,

Spume-sliding down the baffled decuman,

It rose before me, patiently remote

From the great tides of life it breasted once,

Hearing the noise of men as in a dream.

I stood before the triple northern port, 230

Where dedicated shapes of saints and kings,

Stern faces bleared with immemorial watch,

Looked down benignly grave and seemed to say,

\_Ye come and go incessant; we remain

Safe in the hallowed quiets of the past;

Be reverent, ye who flit and are forgot,

Of faith so nobly realized as this.\_

I seem to have heard it said by learnÃ¨d folk

Who drench you with Ã¦sthetics till you feel

As if all beauty were a ghastly bore, 240

The faucet to let loose a wash of words,

That Gothic is not Grecian, therefore worse;

But, being convinced by much experiment

How little inventiveness there is in man,

Grave copier of copies, I give thanks

For a new relish, careless to inquire

My pleasure's pedigree, if so it please,

Nobly, I mean, nor renegade to art.

The Grecian gluts me with its perfectness,

Unanswerable as Euclid, self-contained, 250

The one thing finished in this hasty world,

Forever finished, though the barbarous pit,

Fanatical on hearsay, stamp and shout

As if a miracle could be encored.

But ah! this other, this that never ends,

Still climbing, luring fancy still to climb,

As full of morals half-divined as life,

Graceful, grotesque, with ever new surprise

Of hazardous caprices sure to please,

Heavy as nightmare, airy-light as fern, 260

Imagination's very self in stone!

With one long sigh of infinite release

From pedantries past, present, or to come,

I looked, and owned myself a happy Goth.

Your blood is mine, ye architects of dream,

Builders of aspiration incomplete,

So more consummate, souls self-confident,

Who felt your own thought worthy of record

In monumental pomp! No Grecian drop

Rebukes these veins that leap with kindred thrill, 270

After long exile, to the mother-tongue.

Ovid in Pontus, puling for his Rome

Of men invirile and disnatured dames

That poison sucked from the Attic bloom decayed,

Shrank with a shudder from the blue-eyed race

Whose force rough-handed should renew the world,

And from the dregs of Romulus express

Such wine as Dante poured, or he who blew

Roland's vain blast, or sang the Campeador

In verse that clanks like armor in the charge, 280

Homeric juice, though brimmed in Odin's horn.

And they could build, if not the columned fane

That from the height gleamed seaward many-hued,

Something more friendly with their ruder skies:

The gray spire, molten now in driving mist,

Now lulled with the incommunicable blue;

The carvings touched to meaning new with snow,

Or commented with fleeting grace of shade;

The statues, motley as man's memory,

Partial as that, so mixed of true and false, 290

History and legend meeting with a kiss

Across this bound-mark where their realms confine;

The painted windows, freaking gloom with glow,

Dusking the sunshine which they seem to cheer,

Meet symbol of the senses and the soul,

And the whole pile, grim with the Northman's thought

Of life and death, and doom, life's equal fee,--

These were before me: and I gazed abashed,

Child of an age that lectures, not creates,

Plastering our swallow-nests on the awful Past, 300

And twittering round the work of larger men,

As we had builded what we but deface.

Far up the great bells wallowed in delight,

Tossing their clangors o'er the heedless town,

To call the worshippers who never came,

Or women mostly, in loath twos and threes.

I entered, reverent of whatever shrine

Guards piety and solace for my kind

Or gives the soul a moment's truce of God,

And shared decorous in the ancient rite 310

My sterner fathers held idolatrous.

The service over, I was tranced in thought:

Solemn the deepening vaults, and most to me,

Fresh from the fragile realm of deal and paint,

Or brick mock-pious with a marble front;

Solemn the lift of high-embowered roof,

The clustered stems that spread in boughs disleaved,

Through which the organ blew a dream of storm,

Though not more potent to sublime with awe

And shut the heart up to tranquillity, 320

Than aisles to me familiar that o'erarch

The conscious silences of brooding woods,

Centurial shadows, cloisters of the elk:,

Yet here was sense of undefined regret,

Irreparable loss, uncertain what:

Was all this grandeur but anachronism,

A shell divorced of its informing life,

Where the priest housed him like a hermit-crab,

An alien to that faith of elder days

That gathered round it this fair shape of stone? 330

Is old Religion but a spectre now,

Haunting the solitude of darkened minds,

Mocked out of memory by the sceptic day?

Is there no corner safe from peeping Doubt,

Since Gutenberg made thought cosmopolite

And stretched electric threads from mind to mind?

Nay, did Faith build this wonder? or did Fear,

That makes a fetish and misnames it God

(Blockish or metaphysic, matters not),

Contrive this coop to shut its tyrant in, 340

Appeased with playthings, that he might not harm?

I turned and saw a beldame on her knees;

With eyes astray, she told mechanic beads

Before some shrine of saintly womanhood,

Bribed intercessor with the far-off Judge:

Such my first thought, by kindlier soon rebuked,

Pleading for whatsoever touches life

With upward impulse: be He nowhere else,

God is in all that liberates and lifts,

In all that humbles, sweetens, and consoles: 350

Blessed the natures shored on every side

With landmarks of hereditary thought!

Thrice happy they that wander not life long

Beyond near succor of the household faith,

The guarded fold that shelters, not confines!

Their steps find patience In familiar paths,

Printed with hope by loved feet gone before

Of parent, child, or lover, glorified

By simple magic of dividing Time.

My lids were moistened as the woman knelt, 360

And--was it will, or some vibration faint

Of sacred Nature, deeper than the will?--

My heart occultly felt itself in hers,

Through mutual intercession gently leagued.

Or was it not mere sympathy of brain?

A sweetness intellectually conceived

In simpler creeds to me impossible?

A juggle of that pity for ourselves

In others, which puts on such pretty masks

And snares self-love with bait of charity? 370

Something of all it might be, or of none:

Yet for a moment I was snatched away

And had the evidence of things not seen;

For one rapt moment; then it all came back,

This age that blots out life with question-marks,

This nineteenth century with its knife and glass

That make thought physical, and thrust far off

The Heaven, so neighborly with man of old,

To voids sparse-sown with alienated stars.

'Tis irrecoverable, that ancient faith, 380

Homely and wholesome, suited to the time,

With rod or candy for child-minded men:

No theologic tube, with lens on lens

Of syllogism transparent, brings it near,--

At best resolving some new nebula,

Or blurring some fixed-star of hope to mist.

Science was Faith once; Faith were Science now,

Would she but lay her bow and arrows by

And arm her with the weapons of the time.

Nothing that keeps thought out is safe from thought. 390

For there's no virgin-fort but self-respect,

And Truth defensive hath lost hold on God.

Shall we treat Him as if He were a child

That knew not his own purpose? nor dare trust

The Rock of Ages to their chemic tests,

Lest some day the all-sustaining base divine

Should fail from under us, dissolved in gas?

The armÃ¨d eye that with a glance discerns

In a dry blood-speck between ox and man

Stares helpless at this miracle called life, 400

This shaping potency behind the egg,

This circulation swift of deity,

Where suns and systems inconspicuous float

As the poor blood-disks in our mortal veins.

Each age must worship its own thought of God,

More or less earthy, clarifying still

With subsidence continuous of the dregs;

Nor saint nor sage could fix immutably

The fluent image of the unstable Best,

Still changing in their very hands that wrought: 410

To-day's eternal truth To-morrow proved

Frail as frost-landscapes on a window-pane.

Meanwhile Thou smiledst, inaccessible,

At Thought's own substance made a cage for Thought,

And Truth locked fast with her own master-key;

Nor didst Thou reck what image man might make

Of his own shadow on the flowing world;

The climbing instinct was enough for Thee.

Or wast Thou, then, an ebbing tide that left

Strewn with dead miracle those eldest shores, 420

For men to dry, and dryly lecture on,

Thyself thenceforth incapable of flood?

Idle who hopes with prophets to be snatched

By virtue in their mantles left below;

Shall the soul live on other men's report,

Herself a pleasing fable of herself?

Man cannot be God's outlaw if he would,

Nor so abscond him in the caves of sense

But Nature stall shall search some crevice out

With messages of splendor from that Source 430

Which, dive he, soar he, baffles still and lures.

This life were brutish did we not sometimes

Have intimation clear of wider scope,

Hints of occasion infinite, to keep

The soul alert with noble discontent

And onward yearnings of unstilled desire;

Fruitless, except we now and then divined

A mystery of Purpose, gleaming through

The secular confusions of the world,

Whose will we darkly accomplish, doing ours, 440

No man can think nor in himself perceive,

Sometimes at waking, in the street sometimes,

Or on the hillside, always unforwarned.

A grace of being, finer than himself,

That beckons and is gone,--a larger life

Upon his own impinging, with swift glimpse

Of spacious circles luminous with mind,

To which the ethereal substance of his own

Seems but gross cloud to make that visible,

Touched to a sudden glory round the edge, 450

Who that hath known these visitations fleet

Would strive to make them trite and ritual?

I, that still pray at morning and at eve,

Loving those roots that feed us from the past,

And prizing more than Plato things I learned

At that best academe, a mother's knee,

Thrice in my life perhaps have truly prayed,

Thrice, stirred below my conscious self, have felt

That perfect disenthralment which is God;

Nor know I which to hold worst enemy, 460

Him who on speculation's windy waste

Would turn me loose, stript of the raiment warm

By Faith contrived against our nakedness,

Or him who, cruel-kind, would fain obscure,

With painted saints and paraphrase of God,

The soul's east-window of divine surprise,

Where others worship I but look and long;

For, though not recreant to my fathers' faith,

Its forms to me are weariness, and most

That drony vacuum of compulsory prayer, 470

Still pumping phrases for the Ineffable,

Though all the valves of memory gasp and wheeze.

Words that have drawn transcendent meanings up

From the best passion of all bygone time,

Steeped through with tears of triumph and remorse,

Sweet with all sainthood, cleansed in martyr-fires,

Can they, so consecrate and so inspired,

By repetition wane to vexing wind?

Alas! we cannot draw habitual breath

In the thin air of life's supremer heights, 480

We cannot make each meal a sacrament,

Nor with our tailors be disbodied souls,--

We men, too conscious of earth's comedy,

Who see two sides, with our posed selves debate,

And only for great stakes can be sublime!

Let us be thankful when, as I do here,

We can read Bethel on a pile of stones,

And, seeing where God \_has\_ been, trust in Him.

Brave Peter Fischer there in Nuremberg,

Moulding Saint Sebald's miracles in bronze, 490

Put saint and stander-by in that quaint garb

Familiar to him in his daily walk,

Not doubting God could grant a miracle

Then and in Nuremberg, if so He would;

But never artist for three hundred years

Hath dared the contradiction ludicrous

Of supernatural in modern clothes.

Perhaps the deeper faith that is to come

Will see God rather in the strenuous doubt,

Than in the creed held as an infant's hand 500

Holds purposeless whatso is placed therein.

Say it is drift, not progress, none the less,

With the old sextant of the fathers' creed,

We shape our courses by new-risen stars,

And, still lip-loyal to what once was truth,

Smuggle new meanings under ancient names,

Unconscious perverts of the Jesuit, Time.

Change is the mask that all Continuance wears

To keep us youngsters harmlessly amused;

Meanwhile some ailing or more watchful child, 510

Sitting apart, sees the old eyes gleam out,

Stern, and yet soft with humorous pity too.

Whilere, men burnt men for a doubtful point,

As if the mind were quenchable with fire,

And Faith danced round them with her war-paint on,

Devoutly savage as an Iroquois;

Now Calvin and Servetus at one board

Snuff in grave sympathy a milder roast,

And o'er their claret settle Comte unread.

Fagot and stake were desperately sincere: 520

Our cooler martyrdoms are done in types;

And flames that shine in controversial eyes

Burn out no brains but his who kindles them.

This is no age to get cathedrals built:

Did God, then, wait for one in Bethlehem?

Worst is not yet: lo, where his coming looms,

Of earth's anarchic children latest born,

Democracy, a Titan who hath learned

To laugh at Jove's old-fashioned thunder-bolts,--

Could he not also forge them, if he would? 530

He, better skilled, with solvents merciless,

Loosened in air and borne on every wind,

Saps unperceived: the calm Olympian height

Of ancient order feels its bases yield,

And pale gods glance for help to gods as pale.

What will be left of good or worshipful,

Of spiritual secrets, mysteries,

Of fair religion's guarded heritage,

Heirlooms of soul, passed downward unprofaned

From eldest Ind? This Western giant coarse, 540

Scorning refinements which he lacks himself,

Loves not nor heeds the ancestral hierarchies,

Each rank dependent on the next above

In ordinary gradation fixed as fate.

King by mere manhood, nor allowing aught

Of holier unction than the sweat of toil;

In his own strength sufficient; called to solve,

On the rough edges of society,

Problems long sacred to the choicer few,

And improvise what elsewhere men receive 550

As gifts of deity; tough foundling reared

Where every man's his own Melchisedek,

How make him reverent of a King of kings?

Or Judge self-made, executor of laws

By him not first discussed and voted on?

For him no tree of knowledge is forbid,

Or sweeter if forbid. How save the ark,

Or holy of holies, unprofaned a day

From his unscrupulous curiosity

That handles everything as if to buy, 560

Tossing aside what fabrics delicate

Suit not the rough-and-tumble of his ways?

What hope for those fine-nerved humanities

That made earth gracious once with gentler arts,

Now the rude hands have caught the trick of thought

And claim an equal suffrage with the brain?

The born disciple of an elder time,

(To me sufficient, friendlier than the new,)

Who in my blood feel motions of the Past,

I thank benignant nature most for this,-- 570

A force of sympathy, or call it lack

Of character firm-planted, loosing me

From the pent chamber of habitual self

To dwell enlarged in alien modes of thought,

Haply distasteful, wholesomer for that,

And through imagination to possess,

As they were mine, the lives of other men.

This growth original of virgin soil,

By fascination felt in opposites,

Pleases and shocks, entices and perturbs. 580

In this brown-fisted rough, this shirt-sleeved Cid,

This backwoods Charlemagne of empires new,

Whose blundering heel instinctively finds out

The goutier foot of speechless dignities,

Who, meeting CÃ¦sar's self, would slap his back,

Call him 'Old Horse,' and challenge to a drink,

My lungs draw braver air, my breast dilates

With ampler manhood, and I front both worlds,

Of sense and spirit, as my natural fiefs,

To shape and then reshape them as I will. 590

It was the first man's charter; why not mine?

How forfeit? when, deposed in other hands?

Thou shudder'st, Ovid? Dost in him forebode

A new avatar of the large-limbed Goth,

To break, or seem to break, tradition's clue.

And chase to dreamland back thy gods dethroned?

I think man's soul dwells nearer to the east,

Nearer to morning's fountains than the sun;

Herself the source whence all tradition sprang,

Herself at once both labyrinth and clue, 600

The miracle fades out of history,

But faith and wonder and the primal earth

Are born into the world with every child.

Shall this self-maker with the prying eyes,

This creature disenchanted of respect

By the New World's new fiend, Publicity,

Whose testing thumb leaves everywhere its smutch,

Not one day feel within himself the need

Of loyalty to better than himself,

That shall ennoble him with the upward look? 610

Shall he not catch the Voice that wanders earth,

With spiritual summons, dreamed or heard,

As sometimes, just ere sleep seals up the sense,

We hear our mother call from deeps of Time,

And, waking, find it vision,--none the less

The benediction bides, old skies return,

And that unreal thing, preÃ«minent,

Makes air and dream of all we see and feel?

Shall he divine no strength unmade of votes,

Inward, impregnable, found soon as sought, 620

Not cognizable of sense, o'er sense supreme?

Else were he desolate as none before.

His holy places may not be of stone,

Nor made with hands, yet fairer far than aught

By artist feigned or pious ardor reared,

Fit altars for who guards inviolate

God's chosen seat, the sacred form of man.

Doubtless his church will be no hospital

For superannuate forms and mumping shams,

No parlor where men issue policies 630

Of life-assurance on the Eternal Mind,

Nor his religion but an ambulance

To fetch life's wounded and malingerers in,

Scorned by the strong; yet he, unconscious heir

To the Influence sweet of Athens and of Rome,

And old Judaea's gift of secret fire,

Spite of himself shall surely learn to know

And worship some ideal of himself,

Some divine thing, large-hearted, brotherly,

Not nice in trifles, a soft creditor, 640

Pleased with his world, and hating only cant.

And, if his Church be doubtful, it is sure

That, in a world, made for whatever else,

Not made for mere enjoyment, in a world

Of toil but half-requited, or, at best,

Paid in some futile currency of breath,

A world of incompleteness, sorrow swift

And consolation laggard, whatsoe'er

The form of building or the creed professed,

The Cross, bold type of shame to homage turned, 650

Of an unfinished life that sways the world,

Shall tower as sovereign emblem over all.

The kobold Thought moves with us when we shift

Our dwelling to escape him; perched aloft

On the first load of household-stuff he went:

For, where the mind goes, goes old furniture.

I, who to Chartres came to feed my eye

And give to Fancy one clear holiday,

Scarce saw the minster for the thoughts it stirred

Buzzing o'er past and future with vain quest. 660

Here once there stood a homely wooden church,

Which slow devotion nobly changed for this

That echoes vaguely to my modern steps.

By suffrage universal it was built,

As practised then, for all the country came

From far as Rouen, to give votes for God,

Each vote a block of stone securely laid

Obedient to the master's deep-mused plan.

Will what our ballots rear, responsible

To no grave forethought, stand so long as this? 670

Delight like this the eye of after days

Brightening with pride that here, at least, were men

Who meant and did the noblest thing they knew?

Can our religion cope with deeds like this?

We, too, build Gothic contract-shams, because

Our deacons have discovered that it pays,

And pews sell better under vaulted roofs

Of plaster painted like an Indian squaw.

Shall not that Western Goth, of whom we spoke,

So fiercely practical, so keen of eye, 680

Find out, some day, that nothing pays but God,

Served whether on the smoke-shut battle-field,

In work obscure done honestly, or vote

For truth unpopular, or faith maintained

To ruinous convictions, or good deeds

Wrought for good's sake, mindless of heaven or hell?

Shall he not learn that all prosperity,

Whose bases stretch not deeper than the sense,

Is but a trick of this world's atmosphere,

A desert-born mirage of spire and dome, 690

Or find too late, the Past's long lesson missed,

That dust the prophets shake from off their feet

Grows heavy to drag down both tower and wall?

I know not; but, sustained by sure belief

That man still rises level with the height

Of noblest opportunities, or makes

Such, if the time supply not, I can wait.

I gaze round on the windows, pride of France,

Each the bright gift of some mechanic guild

Who loved their city and thought gold well spent 700

To make her beautiful with piety;

I pause, transfigured by some stripe of bloom,

And my mind throngs with shining auguries,

Circle on circle, bright as seraphim,

With golden trumpets, silent, that await

The signal to blow news of good to men.

Then the revulsion came that always comes

After these dizzy elations of the mind:

And with a passionate pang of doubt I cried,

'O mountain-born, sweet with snow-filtered air 710

From uncontaminate wells of ether drawn

And never-broken secrecies of sky,

Freedom, with anguish won, misprized till lost,

They keep thee not who from thy sacred eyes

Catch the consuming lust of sensual good

And the brute's license of unfettered will.

Far from the popular shout and venal breath

Of Cleon blowing the mob's baser mind

To bubbles of wind-piloted conceit,

Thou shrinkest, gathering up thy skirts, to hide 720

In fortresses of solitary thought

And private virtue strong in self-restraint.

Must we too forfeit thee misunderstood,

Content with names, nor inly wise to know

That best things perish of their own excess,

And quality o'er-driven becomes defect?

Nay, is it thou indeed that we have glimpsed,

Or rather such illusion as of old

Through Athens glided menadlike and Rome,

A shape of vapor, mother of vain dreams 730

And mutinous traditions, specious plea

Of the glaived tyrant and long-memoried priest?'

I walked forth saddened; for all thought is sad,

And leaves a bitterish savor in the brain,

Tonic, it may be, not delectable,

And turned, reluctant, for a parting look

At those old weather-pitted images

Of bygone struggle, now so sternly calm.

About their shoulders sparrows had built nests,

And fluttered, chirping, from gray perch to perch, 740

Now on a mitre poising, now a crown,

Irreverently happy. While I thought

How confident they were, what careless hearts

Flew on those lightsome wings and shared the sun,

A larger shadow crossed; and looking up,

I saw where, nesting in the hoary towers,

The sparrow-hawk slid forth on noiseless air,

With sidelong head that watched the joy below,

Grim Norman baron o'er this clan of Kelts.

Enduring Nature, force conservative, 750

Indifferent to our noisy whims! Men prate

Of all heads to an equal grade cashiered

On level with the dullest, and expect

(Sick of no worse distemper than themselves)

A wondrous cure-all in equality;

They reason that To-morrow must be wise

Because To-day was not, nor Yesterday,

As if good days were shapen of themselves,

Not of the very lifeblood of men's souls;

Meanwhile, long-suffering, imperturbable, 760

Thou quietly complet'st thy syllogism,

And from the premise sparrow here below

Draw'st sure conclusion of the hawk above,

Pleased with the soft-billed songster, pleased no less

With the fierce beak of natures aquiline.

Thou beautiful Old Time, now hid away

In the Past's valley of Avilion,

Haply, like Arthur, till thy wound be healed,

Then to reclaim the sword and crown again!

Thrice beautiful to us; perchance less fair 770

To who possessed thee, as a mountain seems

To dwellers round its bases but a heap

Of barren obstacle that lairs the storm

And the avalanche's silent bolt holds back

Leashed with a hair,--meanwhile some far-off clown,

Hereditary delver of the plain,

Sees it an unmoved vision of repose,

Nest of the morning, and conjectures there

The dance of streams to idle shepherds' pipes,

And fairer habitations softly hung 780

On breezy slopes, or hid in valleys cool,

For happier men. No mortal ever dreams

That the scant isthmus he encamps upon

Between two oceans, one, the Stormy, passed,

And one, the Peaceful, yet to venture on,

Has been that future whereto prophets yearned

For the fulfilment of Earth's cheated hope,

Shall be that past which nerveless poets moan

As the lost opportunity of song.

O Power, more near my life than life itself 790

(Or what seems life to us in sense immured),

Even as the roots, shut in the darksome earth,

Share in the tree-top's joyance, and conceive

Of sunshine and wide air and wingÃ¨d things

By sympathy of nature, so do I

Have evidence of Thee so far above,

Yet in and of me! Rather Thou the root

Invisibly sustaining, hid in light,

Not darkness, or in darkness made by us.

If sometimes I must hear good men debate 800

Of other witness of Thyself than Thou,

As if there needed any help of ours

To nurse Thy flickering life, that else must cease,

Blown out, as 'twere a candle, by men's breath,

My soul shall not be taken in their snare,

To change her inward surety for their doubt

Muffled from sight in formal robes of proof:

While she can only feel herself through Thee,

I fear not Thy withdrawal; more I fear,

Seeing, to know Thee not, hoodwinked with dreams 810

Of signs and wonders, while, unnoticed, Thou,

Walking Thy garden still, commun'st with men,

Missed in the commonplace of miracle.

THREE MEMORIAL POEMS

'Coscienza fusca

O della propria o dell' altrui vergogna

Pur sentirÃ  la tua parola brusca.'

If I let fall a word of bitter mirth

When public shames more shameful pardon won,

Some have misjudged me, and my service done,

If small, yet faithful, deemed of little worth:

Through veins that drew their life from Western earth

Two hundred years and more my blood hath run

In no polluted course from sire to son;

And thus was I predestined ere my birth

To love the soil wherewith my fibres own

Instinctive sympathies; yet love it so

As honor would, nor lightly to dethrone

Judgment, the stamp of manhood, nor forego

The son's right to a mother dearer grown

With growing knowledge and more chaste than snow.

\* \* \* \* \*

To

E.L. GODKIN,

IN CORDIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS EMINENT SERVICE IN HEIGHTENING AND

PURIFYING THE TONE OF OUR POLITICAL THOUGHT,

These Three Poems

ARE DEDICATED.

\* \* \* \* \*

\*\*\* Readers, it is hoped, will remember that, by his Ode at the Harvard

Commemoration, the author had precluded himself from many of the natural

outlets of thought and feeling common to such occasions as are

celebrated in these poems.

ODE

READ AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIGHT AT CONCORD BRIDGE

19TH APRIL, 1875

I

Who cometh over the hills,

Her garments with morning sweet,

The dance of a thousand rills

Making music before her feet?

Her presence freshens the air;

Sunshine steals light from her face;

The leaden footstep of Care

Leaps to the tune of her pace,

Fairness of all that is fair,

Grace at the heart of all grace, 10

Sweetener of hut and of hall,

Bringer of life out of naught,

Freedom, oh, fairest of all

The daughters of Time and Thought!

II

She cometh, cometh to-day:

Hark! hear ye not her tread,

Sending a thrill through your clay,

Under the sod there, ye dead,

Her nurslings and champions?

Do ye not hear, as she comes, 20

The bay of the deep-mouthed guns,

The gathering rote of the drums?

The belts that called ye to prayer,

How wildly they clamor on her,

Crying, 'She cometh! prepare

Her to praise and her to honor,

That a hundred years ago

Scattered here in blood and tears

Potent seeds wherefrom should grow

Gladness for a hundred years!' 30

III

Tell me, young men, have ye seen

Creature of diviner mien

For true hearts to long and cry for,

Manly hearts to live and die for?

What hath she that others want?

Brows that all endearments haunt,

Eyes that make it sweet to dare,

Smiles that cheer untimely death,

Looks that fortify despair,

Tones more brave than trumpet's breath; 40

Tell me, maidens, have ye known

Household charm more sweetly rare,

Grace of woman ampler blown,

Modesty more debonair,

Younger heart with wit full grown?

Oh for an hour of my prime,

The pulse of my hotter years,

That I might praise her in rhyme

Would tingle your eyelids to tears,

Our sweetness, our strength, and our star, 50

Our hope, our joy, and our trust,

Who lifted us out of the dust,

And made us whatever we are!

IV

Whiter than moonshine upon snow

Her raiment is, but round the hem

Crimson stained; and, as to and fro

Her sandals flash, we see on them,

And on her instep veined with blue,

Flecks of crimson, on those fair feet,

High-arched, Diana-like, and fleet, 60

Fit for no grosser stain than dew:

Oh, call them rather chrisms than stains,

Sacred and from heroic veins!

For, in the glory-guarded pass,

Her haughty and far-shining head

She bowed to shrive Leonidas

With his imperishable dead;

Her, too, Morgarten saw,

Where the Swiss lion fleshed his icy paw;

She followed Cromwell's quenchless star 70

Where the grim Puritan tread

Shook Marston, Naseby, and Dunbar:

Yea, on her feet are dearer dyes

Yet fresh, nor looked on with untearful eyes.

V

Our fathers found her in the woods

Where Nature meditates and broods,

The seeds of unexampled things

Which Time to consummation brings

Through life and death and man's unstable moods;

They met her here, not recognized, 80

A sylvan huntress clothed in furs,

To whose chaste wants her bow sufficed,

Nor dreamed what destinies were hers:

She taught them bee-like to create

Their simpler forms of Church and State;

She taught them to endue

The past with other functions than it knew,

And turn in channels strange the uncertain stream of Fate;

Better than all, she fenced them in their need

With iron-handed Duty's sternest creed, 90

'Gainst Self's lean wolf that ravens word and deed.

VI

Why cometh she hither to-day

To this low village of the plain

Far from the Present's loud highway,

From Trade's cool heart and seething brain?

Why cometh she? She was not far away.

Since the soul touched it, not in vain,

With pathos of Immortal gain,

'Tis here her fondest memories stay.

She loves yon pine-bemurmured ridge 100

Where now our broad-browed poet sleeps,

Dear to both Englands; near him he

Who wore the ring of Canace;

But most her heart to rapture leaps

Where stood that era-parting bridge,

O'er which, with footfall still as dew,

The Old Time passed into the New;

Where, as your stealthy river creeps,

He whispers to his listening weeds

Tales of sublimest homespun deeds. 110

Here English law and English thought

'Gainst the self-will of England fought;

And here were men (coequal with their fate),

Who did great things, unconscious they were great.

They dreamed not what a die was cast

With that first answering shot; what then?

There was their duty; they were men

Schooled the soul's inward gospel to obey,

Though leading to the lion's den.

They felt the habit-hallowed world give way 120

Beneath their lives, and on went they,

Unhappy who was last.

When Buttrick gave the word,

That awful idol of the unchallenged Past,

Strong in their love, and in their lineage strong,

Fell crashing; if they heard it not,

Yet the earth heard,

Nor ever hath forgot,

As on from startled throne to throne,

Where Superstition sate or conscious Wrong, 130

A shudder ran of some dread birth unknown.

Thrice venerable spot!

River more fateful than the Rubicon!

O'er those red planks, to snatch her diadem,

Man's Hope, star-girdled, sprang with them,

And over ways untried the feet of Doom strode on.

VII

Think you these felt no charms

In their gray homesteads and embowered farms?

In household faces waiting at the door

Their evening step should lighten up no more? 140

In fields their boyish feet had known?

In trees their fathers' hands had set,

And which with them had grown,

Widening each year their leafy coronet?

Felt they no pang of passionate regret

For those unsolid goods that seem so much our own?

These things are dear to every man that lives,

And life prized more for what it lends than gives.

Yea, many a tie, through iteration sweet,

Strove to detain their fatal feet;

And yet the enduring half they chose, 151

Whose choice decides a man life's slave or king,

The invisible things of God before the seen and known:

Therefore their memory inspiration blows

With echoes gathering on from zone to zone;

For manhood is the one immortal thing

Beneath Time's changeful sky,

And, where it lightened once, from age to age,

Men come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,

That length of days is knowing when to die. 160

VIII

What marvellous change of things and men!

She, a world-wandering orphan then,

So mighty now! Those are her streams

That whirl the myriad, myriad wheels

Of all that does, and all that dreams,

Of all that thinks, and all that feels,

Through spaces stretched from sea to sea;

By idle tongues and busy brains,

By who doth right, and who refrains,

Here are our losses and our gains; 170

Our maker and our victim she.

IX

Maiden half mortal, half divine,

We triumphed in thy coming; to the brinks

Our hearts were filled with pride's tumultuous wine;

Better to-day who rather feels than thinks.

Yet will some graver thoughts intrude,

And cares of sterner mood;

They won thee: who shall keep thee? From the deeps

Where discrowned empires o'er their ruins brood, 179

And many a thwarted hope wrings its weak hands and weeps,

I hear the voice as of a mighty wind

From all heaven's caverns rushing unconfined,

'I, Freedom, dwell with Knowledge: I abide

With men whom dust of faction cannot blind

To the slow tracings of the Eternal Mind;

With men by culture trained and fortified,

Who bitter duty to sweet lusts prefer,

Fearless to counsel and obey.

Conscience my sceptre is, and law my sword,

Not to be drawn in passion or in play, 190

But terrible to punish and deter;

Implacable as God's word,

Like it, a shepherd's crook to them that blindly err.

Your firm-pulsed sires, my martyrs and my saints,

Offshoots of that one stock whose patient sense

Hath known to mingle flux with permanence,

Rated my chaste denials and restraints

Above the moment's dear-paid paradise:

Beware lest, shifting with Time's gradual creep,

The light that guided shine into your eyes. 200

The envious Powers of ill nor wink nor sleep;

Be therefore timely wise,

Nor laugh when this one steals, and that one lies,

As if your luck could cheat those sleepless spies,

Till the deaf Fury comes your house to sweep!'

I hear the voice, and unaffrighted bow;

Ye shall not be prophetic now,

Heralds of ill, that darkening fly

Between my vision and the rainbowed sky,

Or on the left your hoarse forebodings croak 210

From many a blasted bough

On Yggdrasil's storm-sinewed oak,

That once was green, Hope of the West, as thou;

Yet pardon if I tremble while I boast;

For I have loved as those who pardon most.

X

Away, ungrateful doubt, away!

At least she is our own to-day.

Break into rapture, my song,

Verses, leap forth in the sun,

Bearing the joyance along 220

Like a train of fire as ye run!

Pause not for choosing of words,

Let them but blossom and sing

Blithe as the orchards and birds

With the new coming of spring!

Dance in your jollity, bells;

Shout, cannon; cease not, ye drums;

Answer, ye hillside and dells;

Bow, all ye people! She comes,

Radiant, calm-fronted, as when 230

She hallowed that April day.

Stay with us! Yes, thou shalt stay.

Softener and strengthener of men,

Freedom, not won by the vain,

Not to be courted in play,

Not to be kept without pain.

Stay with us! Yes, thou wilt stay,

Handmaid and mistress of all,

Kindler of deed and of thought,

Thou that to hut and to hall 240

Equal deliverance brought!

Souls of her martyrs, draw near,

Touch our dull lips with your fire,

That we may praise without fear

Her our delight, our desire,

Our faith's inextinguishable star,

Our hope, our remembrance, our trust,

Our present, our past, our to be,

Who will mingle her life with our dust 249

And makes us deserve to be free!

UNDER THE OLD ELM

POEM READ AT CAMBRIDGE ON THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF WASHINGTON'S

TAKING COMMAND OF THE AMERICAN ARMY, 3D JULY, 1775

I

1.

Words pass as wind, but where great deeds were done

A power abides transfused from sire to son:

The boy feels deeper meanings thrill his ear,

That tingling through his pulse life-long shall run,

With sure impulsion to keep honor clear.

When, pointing down, his father whispers, 'Here,

Here, where we stand, stood he, the purely great,

Whose soul no siren passion could unsphere,

Then nameless, now a power and mixed with fate.'

Historic town, thou holdest sacred dust, 10

Once known to men as pious, learnÃ¨d, just,

And one memorial pile that dares to last:

But Memory greets with reverential kiss

No spot in all thy circuit sweet as this,

Touched by that modest glory as it past,

O'er which yon elm hath piously displayed

These hundred years its monumental shade.

2.

Of our swift passage through this scenery

Of life and death, more durable than we,

What landmark so congenial as a tree 20

Repeating its green legend every spring,

And, with a yearly ring,

Recording the fair seasons as they flee,

Type of our brief but still-renewed mortality?

We fall as leaves: the immortal trunk remains,

Builded with costly juice of hearts and brains

Gone to the mould now, whither all that be

Vanish returnless, yet are procreant still

In human lives to come of good or ill,

And feed unseen the roots of Destiny. 30

II

1.

Men's monuments, grown old, forget their names

They should eternize, but the place

Where shining souls have passed imbibes a grace

Beyond mere earth; some sweetness of their fames

Leaves in the soil its unextinguished trace,

Pungent, pathetic, sad with nobler aims,

That penetrates our lives and heightens them or shames.

This insubstantial world and fleet

Seems solid for a moment when we stand

On dust ennobled by heroic feet 40

Once mighty to sustain a tottering land,

And mighty still such burthen to upbear,

Nor doomed to tread the path of things that merely were:

Our sense, refined with virtue of the spot,

Across the mists of Lethe's sleepy stream

Recalls him, the sole chief without a blot,

No more a pallid image and a dream,

But as he dwelt with men decorously supreme.

2.

Our grosser minds need this terrestrial hint

To raise long-buried days from tombs of print; 50

'Here stood he,' softly we repeat,

And lo, the statue shrined and still

In that gray minster-front we call the Past,

Feels in its frozen veins our pulses thrill,

Breathes living air and mocks at Death's deceit.

It warms, it stirs, comes down to us at last,

Its features human with familiar light,

A man, beyond the historian's art to kill,

Or sculptor's to efface with patient chisel-blight.

3.

Sure the dumb earth hath memory, nor for naught 60

Was Fancy given, on whose enchanted loom

Present and Past commingle, fruit and bloom

Of one fair bough, inseparably wrought

Into the seamless tapestry of thought.

So charmed, with undeluded eye we see

In history's fragmentary tale

Bright clues of continuity,

Learn that high natures over Time prevail,

And feel ourselves a link in that entail

That binds all ages past with all that are to be. 70

III

1.

Beneath our consecrated elm

A century ago he stood,

Famed vaguely for that old fight in the wood

Whose red surge sought, but could not overwhelm

The life foredoomed to wield our rough-hewn helm:--

From colleges, where now the gown

To arms had yielded, from the town,

Our rude self-summoned levies flocked to see

The new-come chiefs and wonder which was he.

No need to question long; close-lipped and tall, 80

Long trained in murder-brooding forests lone

To bridle others' clamors and his own,

Firmly erect, he towered above them all,

The incarnate discipline that was to free

With iron curb that armed democracy.

2.

A motley rout was that which came to stare,

In raiment tanned by years of sun and storm,

Of every shape that was not uniform,

Dotted with regimentals here and there;

An array all of captains, used to pray 90

And stiff in fight, but serious drill's despair,

Skilled to debate their orders, not obey;

Deacons were there, selectmen, men of note

In half-tamed hamlets ambushed round with woods,

Ready to settle Freewill by a vote,

But largely liberal to its private moods;

Prompt to assert by manners, voice, or pen,

Or ruder arms, their rights as Englishmen,

Nor much fastidious as to how and when:

Yet seasoned stuff and fittest to create 100

A thought-staid army or a lasting state:

Haughty they said he was, at first; severe;

But owned, as all men own, the steady hand

Upon the bridle, patient to command,

Prized, as all prize, the justice pure from fear,

And learned to honor first, then love him, then revere.

Such power there is in clear-eyed self-restraint

And purpose clean as light from every selfish taint.

3.

Musing beneath the legendary tree,

The years between furl off: I seem to see 110

The sun-flecks, shaken the stirred foliage through,

Dapple with gold his sober buff and blue

And weave prophetic aureoles round the head

That shines our beacon now nor darkens with the dead.

O man of silent mood,

A stranger among strangers then,

How art thou since renowned the Great, the Good,

Familiar as the day in an the homes of men!

The winged years, that winnow praise and blame,

Blow many names out: they but fan to flame 120

The self-renewing splendors of thy fame.

IV

1.

How many subtlest influences unite,

With spiritual touch of Joy or pain,

Invisible as air and soft as light,

To body forth that image of the brain

We call our Country, visionary shape,

Loved more than woman, fuller of fire than wine,

Whose charm can none define,

Nor any, though he flee it, can escape!

All party-colored threads the weaver Time 130

Sets in his web, now trivial, now sublime,

All memories, all forebodings, hopes and fears,

Mountain and river, forest, prairie, sea,

A hill, a rock, a homestead, field, or tree,

The casual gleanings of unreckoned years,

Take goddess-shape at last and there is She,

Old at our birth, new as the springing hours,

Shrine of our weakness, fortress of our powers,

Consoler, kindler, peerless 'mid her peers,

A force that 'neath our conscious being stirs, 140

A life to give ours permanence, when we

Are borne to mingle our poor earth with hers,

And all this glowing world goes with us on our biers.

2.

Nations are long results, by ruder ways

Gathering the might that warrants length of days;

They may be pieced of half-reluctant shares

Welded by hammer-strokes of broad-brained kings,

Or from a doughty people grow, the heirs

Of wise traditions widening cautious rings;

At best they are computable things, 150

A strength behind us making us feel bold

In right, or, as may chance, in wrong;

Whose force by figures may be summed and told,

So many soldiers, ships, and dollars strong,

And we but drops that bear compulsory part

In the dumb throb of a mechanic heart;

But Country is a shape of each man's mind

Sacred from definition, unconfined

By the cramped walls where daily drudgeries grind;

An inward vision, yet an outward birth 160

Of sweet familiar heaven and earth;

A brooding Presence that stirs motions blind

Of wings within our embryo being's shell

That wait but her completer spell

To make us eagle-natured, fit to dare

Life's nobler spaces and untarnished air.

3.

You, who hold dear this self-conceived ideal,

Whose faith and works alone can make it real,

Bring all your fairest gifts to deck her shrine

Who lifts our lives away from Thine and Mine 170

And feeds the lamp of manhood more divine

With fragrant oils of quenchless constancy.

When all have done their utmost, surely he

Hath given the best who gives a character

Erect and constant, which nor any shock

Of loosened elements, nor the forceful sea

Of flowing or of ebbing fates, can stir

From its deep bases in the living rock

Of ancient manhood's sweet security:

And this he gave, serenely far from pride 180

As baseness, boon with prosperous stars allied,

Part of what nobler seed shall in our loins abide.

4.

No bond of men as common pride so strong,

In names time-filtered for the lips of song,

Still operant, with the primal Forces bound

Whose currents, on their spiritual round,

Transfuse our mortal will nor are gainsaid:

These are their arsenals, these the exhaustless mines

That give a constant heart in great designs;

These are the stuff whereof such dreams are made 190

As make heroic men: thus surely he

Still holds in place the massy blocks he laid

'Neath our new frame, enforcing soberly

The self-control that makes and keeps a people free.

V

1.

Oh, for a drop of that Cornelian ink

Which gave Agricola dateless length of days,

To celebrate him fitly, neither swerve

To phrase unkempt, nor pass discretion's brink,

With him so statue-like in sad reserve,

So diffident to claim, so forward to deserve! 200

Nor need I shun due influence of his fame

Who, mortal among mortals, seemed as now

The equestrian shape with unimpassioned brow,

That paces silent on through vistas of acclaim.

2.

What figure more immovably august

Than that grave strength so patient and so pure,

Calm in good fortune, when it wavered, sure,

That mind serene, impenetrably just,

Modelled on classic lines so simple they endure?

That soul so softly radiant and so white 210

The track it left seems less of fire than light,

Cold but to such as love distemperature?

And if pure light, as some deem, be the force

That drives rejoicing planets on their course,

Why for his power benign seek an impurer source?

His was the true enthusiasm that burns long,

Domestically bright,

Fed from itself and shy of human sight,

The hidden force that makes a lifetime strong,

And not the short-lived fuel of a song. 220

Passionless, say you? What is passion for

But to sublime our natures and control,

To front heroic toils with late return,

Or none, or such as shames the conqueror?

That fire was fed with substance of the soul

And not with holiday stubble, that could burn,

Unpraised of men who after bonfires run,

Through seven slow years of unadvancing war,

Equal when fields were lost or fields were won,

With breath of popular applause or blame, 230

Nor fanned nor damped, unquenchably the same,

Too inward to be reached by flaws of idle fame.

3.

Soldier and statesman, rarest unison;

High-poised example of great duties done

Simply as breathing, a world's honors worn

As life's indifferent gifts to all men born;

Dumb for himself, unless it were to God,

But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent,

Tramping the snow to coral where they trod,

Held by his awe in hollow-eyed content; 240

Modest, yet firm as Nature's self; unblamed

Save by the men his nobler temper shamed;

Never seduced through show of present good

By other than unsetting lights to steer

New-trimmed in Heaven, nor than his steadfast mood

More steadfast, far from rashness as from fear;

Rigid, but with himself first, grasping still

In swerveless poise the wave-beat helm of will;

Not honored then or now because he wooed

The popular voice, but that he still withstood; 250

Broad-minded, higher-souled, there is but one

Who was all this and ours, and all men's,--WASHINGTON.

4.

Minds strong by fits, irregularly great,

That flash and darken like revolving lights,

Catch more the vulgar eye unschooled to wait

On the long curve of patient days and nights

Bounding a whole life to the circle fair

Of orbed fulfilment; and this balanced soul,

So simple in its grandeur, coldly bare

Of draperies theatric, standing there 260

In perfect symmetry of self-control,

Seems not so great at first, but greater grows

Still as we look, and by experience learn

How grand this quiet is, how nobly stern

The discipline that wrought through life-long throes

That energetic passion of repose.

5.

A nature too decorous and severe,

Too self-respectful in its griefs and joys,

For ardent girls and boys

Who find no genius in a mind so clear 270

That its grave depths seem obvious and near,

Nor a soul great that made so little noise.

They feel no force in that calm-cadenced phrase,

The habitual full-dress of his well-bred mind,

That seems to pace the minuet's courtly maze

And tell of ampler leisures, roomier length of days,

His firm-based brain, to self so little kind

That no tumultuary blood could blind,

Formed to control men, not amaze,

Looms not like those that borrow height of haze: 280

It was a world of statelier movement then

Than this we fret in, he a denizen

Of that ideal Rome that made a man for men.

VI

1.

The longer on this earth we live

And weigh the various Qualities of men,

Seeing how most are fugitive,

Or fitful gifts, at best, of now and then,

Wind-wavered corpse-lights, daughters of the fen,

The more we feel the high stern-featured beauty

Of plain devotedness to duty, 290

Steadfast and still, nor paid with mortal praise,

But finding amplest recompense

For life's ungarlanded expense

In work done squarely and unwasted days.

For this we honor him, that he could know

How sweet the service and how free

Of her, God's eldest daughter here below,

And choose in meanest raiment which was she.

2.

Placid completeness, life without a fall

From faith or highest aims, truth's breachless wall, 300

Surely if any fame can bear the touch,

His will say 'Here!' at the last trumpet's call,

The unexpressive man whose life expressed so much.

VII

1.

Never to see a nation born

Hath been given to mortal man,

Unless to those who, on that summer morn,

Gazed silent when the great Virginian

Unsheathed the sword whose fatal flash

Shot union through the incoherent clash

Of our loose atoms, crystallizing them 310

Around a single will's unpliant stem,

And making purpose of emotion rash.

Out of that scabbard sprang, as from its womb,

Nebulous at first but hardening to a star.

Through mutual share of sunburst and of gloom,

The common faith that made us what we are.

2.

That lifted blade transformed our jangling clans,

Till then provincial, to Americans,

And made a unity of wildering plans;

Here was the doom fixed: here is marked the date 320

When this New World awoke to man's estate,

Burnt its last ship and ceased to look behind:

Nor thoughtless was the choice; no love or hate

Could from its poise move that deliberate mind,

Weighing between too early and too late,

Those pitfalls of the man refused by Fate:

His was the impartial vision of the great

Who see not as they wish, but as they find.

He saw the dangers of defeat, nor less

The incomputable perils of success; 330

The sacred past thrown by, an empty rind;

The future, cloud-land, snare of prophets blind;

The waste of war, the ignominy of peace;

On either hand a sullen rear of woes,

Whose garnered lightnings none could guess,

Piling its thunder-heads and muttering 'Cease!'

Yet drew not back his hand, but gravely chose

The seeming-desperate task whence our new nation rose.

3.

A noble choice and of immortal seed!

Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance 340

Or easy were as in a boy's romance;

The man's whole life preludes the single deed

That shall decide if his inheritance

Be with the sifted few of matchless breed,

Our race's sap and sustenance,

Or with the unmotived herd that only sleep and feed.

Choice seems a thing indifferent: thus or so,

What matters it? The Fates with mocking face

Look on inexorable, nor seem to know

Where the lot lurks that gives life's foremost place. 350

Yet Duty's leaden casket holds it still,

And but two ways are offered to our will,

Toil with rare triumph, ease with safe disgrace,

The problem still for us and all of human race.

He chose, as men choose, where most danger showed,

Nor ever faltered 'neath the load

Of petty cares, that gall great hearts the most,

But kept right on the strenuous up-hill road,

Strong to the end, above complaint or boast:

The popular tempest on his rock-mailed coast 360

Wasted its wind-borne spray,

The noisy marvel of a day;

His soul sate still in its unstormed abode.

VIII

Virginia gave us this imperial man

Cast in the massive mould

Of those high-statured ages old

Which into grander forms our mortal metal ran;

She gave us this unblemished gentleman:

What shall we give her back but love and praise

As in the dear old unestrangÃ¨d days 370

Before the inevitable wrong began?

Mother of States and undiminished men,

Thou gavest us a country, giving him,

And we owe alway what we owed thee then:

The boon thou wouldst have snatched from us agen

Shines as before with no abatement dim,

A great man's memory is the only thing

With influence to outlast the present whim

And bind us as when here he knit our golden ring.

All of him that was subject to the hours 380

Lies in thy soil and makes it part of ours:

Across more recent graves,

Where unresentful Nature waves

Her pennons o'er the shot-ploughed sod,

Proclaiming the sweet Truce of God,

We from this consecrated plain stretch out

Our hands as free from afterthought or doubt

As here the united North

Poured her embrownÃ¨d manhood forth

In welcome of our savior and thy son. 390

Through battle we have better learned thy worth,

The long-breathed valor and undaunted will,

Which, like his own, the day's disaster done,

Could, safe in manhood, suffer and be still.

Both thine and ours the victory hardly won;

If ever with distempered voice or pen

We have misdeemed thee, here we take it back,

And for the dead of both don common black.

Be to us evermore as thou wast then,

As we forget thou hast not always been, 400

Mother of States and unpolluted men,

Virginia, fitly named from England's manly queen!

AN ODE

FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1876

I

1.

Entranced I saw a vision in the cloud

That loitered dreaming in yon sunset sky,

Full of fair shapes, half creatures of the eye,

Half chance-evoked by the wind's fantasy

In golden mist, an ever-shifting crowd:

There, 'mid unreal forms that came and went

In air-spun robes, of evanescent dye,

A woman's semblance shone preeminent;

Not armed like Pallas, not like Hera proud,

But, as on household diligence intent, 10

Beside her visionary wheel she bent

Like AretÃ« or Bertha, nor than they

Less queenly in her port; about her knee

Glad children clustered confident in play:

Placid her pose, the calm of energy;

And over her broad brow in many a round

(That loosened would have gilt her garment's hem),

Succinct, as toil prescribes, the hair was wound

In lustrous coils, a natural diadem.

The cloud changed shape, obsequious to the whim 20

Of some transmuting influence felt in me,

And, looking now, a wolf I seemed to see

Limned in that vapor, gaunt and hunger-bold,

Threatening her charge; resolve in every limb,

Erect she flamed in mail of sun-wove gold,

Penthesilea's self for battle dight;

One arm uplifted braced a flickering spear,

And one her adamantine shield made light;

Her face, helm-shadowed, grew a thing to fear,

And her fierce eyes, by danger challenged, took 30

Her trident-sceptred mother's dauntless look.

'I know thee now, O goddess-born!' I cried,

And turned with loftier brow and firmer stride;

For in that spectral cloud-work I had seen

Her image, bodied forth by love and pride,

The fearless, the benign, the mother-eyed,

The fairer world's toil-consecrated queen.

2.

What shape by exile dreamed elates the mind

Like hers whose hand, a fortress of the poor,

No blood in vengeance spilt, though lawful, stains? 40

Who never turned a suppliant from her door?

Whose conquests are the gains of all mankind?

To-day her thanks shall fly on every wind,

Unstinted, unrebuked, from shore to shore,

One love, one hope, and not a doubt behind!

Cannon to cannon shall repeat her praise,

Banner to banner flap it forth in flame;

Her children shall rise up to bless her name,

And wish her harmless length of days,

The mighty mother of a mighty brood, 50

Blessed in all tongues and dear to every blood,

The beautiful, the strong, and, best of all, the good.

3.

Seven years long was the bow

Of battle bent, and the heightening

Storm-heaps convulsed with the throe

Of their uncontainable lightning;

Seven years long heard the sea

Crash of navies and wave-borne thunder;

Then drifted the cloud-rack a-lee,

And new stars were seen, a world's wonder; 60

Each by her sisters made bright,

All binding all to their stations,

Cluster of manifold light

Startling the old constellations:

Men looked up and grew pale:

Was it a comet or star,

Omen of blessing or bale.

Hung o'er the ocean afar?

4.

Stormy the day of her birth: 69

Was she not born of the strong.

She, the last ripeness of earth,

Beautiful, prophesied long?

Stormy the days of her prime:

Hers are the pulses that beat

Higher for perils sublime,

Making them fawn at her feet.

Was she not born of the strong?

Was she not born of the wise?

Daring and counsel belong

Of right to her confident eyes:

Human and motherly they, 81

Careless of station or race:

Hearken! her children to-day

Shout for the joy of her face.

II

1.

No praises of the past are hers,

No fanes by hallowing time caressed,

No broken arch that ministers

To Time's sad instinct in the breast;

She has not gathered from the years

Grandeur of tragedies and tears, 90

Nor from long leisure the unrest

That finds repose in forms of classic grace:

These may delight the coming race

Who haply shall not count it to our crime

That we who fain would sing are here before our time.

She also hath her monuments;

Not such as stand decrepitly resigned

To ruin-mark the path of dead events

That left no seed of better days behind,

The tourist's pensioners that show their scars 100

And maunder of forgotten wars;

She builds not on the ground, but in the mind,

Her open-hearted palaces

For larger-thonghted men with heaven and earth at ease:

Her march the plump mow marks, the sleepless wheel,

The golden sheaf, the self-swayed commonweal;

The happy homesteads hid in orchard trees

Whose sacrificial smokes through peaceful air

Rise lost in heaven, the household's silent prayer;

What architect hath bettered these? 110

With softened eye the westward traveller sees

A thousand miles of neighbors side by side,

Holding by toil-won titles fresh from God

The lands no serf or seigneur ever trod,

With manhood latent in the very sod,

Where the long billow of the wheatfield's tide

Flows to the sky across the prairie wide,

A sweeter vision than the castled Rhine,

Kindly with thoughts of Ruth and Bible-days benign.

2.

O ancient commonwealths, that we revere 120

Haply because we could not know you near,

Your deeds like statues down the aisles of Time

Shine peerless in memorial calm sublime,

And Athens is a trumpet still, and Rome;

Yet which of your achievements is not foam

Weighed with this one of hers (below you far

In fame, and born beneath a milder star),

That to Earth's orphans, far as curves the dome

Of death-deaf sky, the bounteous West means home,

With dear precedency of natural ties 130

That stretch from roof to roof and make men gently wise?

And if the nobler passions wane,

Distorted to base use, if the near goal

Of insubstantial gain

Tempt from the proper race-course of the soul

That crowns their patient breath

Whose feet, song-sandalled, are too fleet for Death,

Yet may she claim one privilege urbane

And haply first upon the civic roll,

That none can breathe her air nor grow humane. 140

3.

Oh, better far the briefest hour

Of Athens self-consumed, whose plastic power

Hid Beauty safe from Death in words or stone;

Of Rome, fair quarry where those eagles crowd

Whose fulgurous vans about the world had blown

Triumphant storm and seeds of polity;

Of Venice, fading o'er her shipless sea,

Last iridescence of a sunset cloud;

Than this inert prosperity,

This bovine comfort in the sense alone! 150

Yet art came slowly even to such as those.

Whom no past genius cheated of their own

With prudence of o'ermastering precedent;

Petal by petal spreads the perfect rose,

Secure of the divine event;

And only children rend the bud half-blown

To forestall Nature in her calm intent:

Time hath a quiver full of purposes

Which miss not of their aim, to us unknown,

And brings about the impossible with ease: 160

Haply for us the ideal dawn shall break

From where in legend-tinted line

The peaks of Hellas drink the morning's wine,

To tremble on our lids with mystic sign

Till the drowsed ichor in our veins awake

And set our pulse in time with moods divine:

Long the day lingered in its sea-fringed nest,

Then touched the Tuscan hills with golden lance

And paused; then on to Spain and France

The splendor flew, and Albion's misty crest: 170

Shall Ocean bar him from his destined West?

Or are we, then, arrived too late,

Doomed with the rest to grope disconsolate,

Foreclosed of Beauty by our modern date?

III

1.

Poets, as their heads grow gray,

Look from too far behind the eyes,

Too long-experienced to be wise

In guileless youth's diviner way;

Life sings not now, but prophesies;

Time's shadows they no more behold, 180

But, under them, the riddle old

That mocks, bewilders, and defies:

In childhood's face the seed of shame,

In the green tree an ambushed flame,

In Phosphor a vaunt-guard of Night,

They, though against their will, divine,

And dread the care-dispelling wine

Stored from the Muse's mintage bright,

By age imbued with second-sight.

From Faith's own eyelids there peeps out, 190

Even as they look, the leer of doubt;

The festal wreath their fancy loads

With care that whispers and forebodes:

Nor this our triumph-day can blunt MegÃ¦ra's goads.

2.

Murmur of many voices in the air

Denounces us degenerate,

Unfaithful guardians of a noble fate,

And prompts indifference or despair:

Is this the country that we dreamed in youth,

Where wisdom and not numbers should have weight, 200

Seed-field of simpler manners, braver truth,

Where shams should cease to dominate

In household, church, and state?

Is this Atlantis? This the unpoisoned soil,

Sea-whelmed for ages and recovered late,

Where parasitic greed no more should coil

Bound Freedom's stem to bend awry and blight

What grew so fair, sole plant of love and light?

Who sit where once in crowned seclusion sate

The long-proved athletes of debate 210

Trained from their youth, as none thinks needful now?

Is this debating club where boys dispute,

And wrangle o'er their stolen fruit,

The Senate, erewhile cloister of the few,

Where Clay once flashed and Webster's cloudy brow

Brooded those bolts of thought that all the horizon knew?

3.

Oh, as this pensive moonlight blurs my pines,

Here while I sit and meditate these lines,

To gray-green dreams of what they are by day,

So would some light, not reason's sharp-edged ray, 220

Trance me in moonshine as before the flight

Of years had won me this unwelcome right

To see things as they are, or shall he soon,

In the frank prose of undissembling noon!

4.

Back to my breast, ungrateful sigh!

Whoever fails, whoever errs,

The penalty be ours, not hers!

The present still seems vulgar, seen too nigh;

The golden age is still the age that's past:

I ask no drowsy opiate 230

To dull my vision of that only state

Founded on faith in man, and therefore sure to last.

For, O my country, touched by thee,

The gray hairs gather back their gold;

Thy thought sets all my pulses free;

The heart refuses to be old;

The love is all that I can see.

Not to thy natal-day belong

Time's prudent doubt or age's wrong,

But gifts of gratitude and song:

Unsummoned crowd the thankful words, 241

As sap in spring-time floods the tree.

Foreboding the return of birds,

For all that thou hast been to me!

IV

1.

Flawless his heart and tempered to the core

Who, beckoned by the forward-leaning wave,

First left behind him the firm-footed shore,

And, urged by every nerve of sail and oar,

Steered for the Unknown which gods to mortals gave.

Of thought and action the mysterious door, 250

Bugbear of fools, a summons to the brave:

Strength found he in the unsympathizing sun,

And strange stars from beneath the horizon won,

And the dumb ocean pitilessly grave:

High-hearted surely he;

But bolder they who first off-cast

Their moorings from the habitable Past

And ventured chartless on the sea

Of storm-engendering Liberty:

For all earth's width of waters is a span, 260

And their convulsed existence mere repose,

Matched with the unstable heart of man,

Shoreless in wants, mist-girt in all it knows,

Open to every wind of sect or clan,

And sudden-passionate in ebbs and flows.

2.

They steered by stars the elder shipmen knew,

And laid their courses where the currents draw

Of ancient wisdom channelled deep in law.

The undaunted few

Who changed the Old World for the New, 270

And more devoutly prized

Than all perfection theorized

The more imperfect that had roots and grew.

They founded deep and well,

Those danger-chosen chiefs of men

Who still believed in Heaven and Hell,

Nor hoped to find a spell,

In some fine flourish of a pen,

To make a better man

Than long-considering Nature will or can, 280

Secure against his own mistakes,

Content with what life gives or takes,

And acting still on some fore-ordered plan,

A cog of iron in an iron wheel,

Too nicely poised to think or feel,

Dumb motor in a clock-like commonweal.

They wasted not their brain in schemes

Of what man might be in some bubble-sphere,

As if he must be other than he seems

Because he was not what he should be here, 290

Postponing Time's slow proof to petulant dreams:

Yet herein they were great

Beyond the incredulous lawgivers of yore,

And wiser than the wisdom of the shelf,

That they conceived a deeper-rooted state,

Of hardier growth, alive from rind to core,

By making man sole sponsor of himself.

3.

God of our fathers, Thou who wast,

Art, and shalt be when those eye-wise who flout

Thy secret presence shall be lost

In the great light that dazzles them to doubt, 301

We, sprung from loins of stalwart men

Whose strength was in their trust

That Thou woudst make thy dwelling in their dust

And walk with those a fellow-citizen

Who build a city of the just,

We, who believe Life's bases rest

Beyond the probe of chemic test,

Still, like our fathers, feel Thee near,

Sure that, while lasts the immutable decree, 310

The land to Human Nature dear

Shall not be unbeloved of Thee.

HEARTSEASE AND RUE

I. FRIENDSHIP

AGASSIZ

Come

Dicesti \_egli ebbe?\_ non viv' egli ancora?

Non fiere gli occhi suoi lo dolce lome?

I

1.

The electric nerve, whose instantaneous thrill

Makes next-door gossips of the antipodes,

Confutes poor Hope's last fallacy of ease,--

The distance that divided her from ill:

Earth sentient seems again as when of old

The horny foot of Pan

Stamped, and the conscious horror ran

Beneath men's feet through all her fibres cold:

Space's blue walls are mined; we feel the throe

From underground of our night-mantled foe: 10

The flame-winged feet

Of Trade's new Mercury, that dry-shod run

Through briny abysses dreamless of the sun,

Are mercilessly fleet,

And at a bound annihilate

Ocean's prerogative of short reprieve;

Surely ill news might wait,

And man be patient of delay to grieve:

Letters have sympathies

And tell-tale faces that reveal, 20

To senses finer than the eyes.

Their errand's purport ere we break the seal;

They wind a sorrow round with circumstance

To stay its feet, nor all unwarned displace

The veil that darkened from our sidelong glance

The inexorable face:

But now Fate stuns as with a mace;

The savage of the skies, that men have caught

And some scant use of language taught,

Tells only what he must,-- 30

The steel-cold fact in one laconic thrust.

2.

So thought I, as, with vague, mechanic eyes,

I scanned the festering news we half despise

Yet scramble for no less,

And read of public scandal, private fraud,

Crime flaunting scot-free while the mob applaud,

Office made vile to bribe unworthiness,

And all the unwholesome mess

The Land of Honest Abraham serves of late

To teach the Old World how to wait, 40

When suddenly,

As happens if the brain, from overweight

Of blood, infect the eye,

Three tiny words grew lurid as I read,

And reeled commingling: \_Agassiz is dead\_.

As when, beneath the street's familiar jar,

An earthquake's alien omen rumbles far,

Men listen and forebode, I hung my head,

And strove the present to recall,

As if the blow that stunned were yet to fall. 50

3.

Uprooted is our mountain oak,

That promised long security of shade

And brooding-place for many a wingÃ¨d thought;

Not by Time's softly cadenced stroke

With pauses of relenting pity stayed,

But ere a root seemed sapt, a bough decayed,

From sudden ambush by the whirlwind caught

And in his broad maturity betrayed!

4.

Well might I, as of old, appeal to you,

O mountains, woods, and streams, 60

To help us mourn him, for ye loved him too;

But simpler moods befit our modern themes,

And no less perfect birth of nature can,

Though they yearn tow'rd him, sympathize with man.

Save as dumb fellow-prisoners through a wall;

Answer ye rather to my call,

Strong poets of a more unconscious day,

When Nature spake nor sought nice reasons why,

Too much for softer arts forgotten since

That teach our forthright tongue to lisp and mince, 70

And drown in music the heart's bitter cry!

Lead me some steps in your directer way,

Teach me those words that strike a solid root

Within the ears of men;

Ye chiefly, virile both to think and feel,

Deep-chested Chapman and firm-footed Ben,

For he was masculine from head to heel.

Nay, let himself stand undiminished by

With those clear parts of him that will not die.

Himself from out the recent dark I claim 80

To hear, and, if I flatter him, to blame;

To show himself, as still I seem to see,

A mortal, built upon the antique plan,

Brimful of lusty blood as ever ran,

And taking life as simply as a tree!

To claim my foiled good-by let him appear,

Large-limbed and human as I saw him near,

Loosed from the stiffening uniform of fame:

And let me treat him largely; I should fear,

(If with too prying lens I chanced to err, 90

Mistaking catalogue for character,)

His wise forefinger raised in smiling blame.

Nor would I scant him with judicial breath

And turn mere critic in an epitaph;

I choose the wheat, incurious of the chaff

That swells fame living, chokes it after death,

And would but memorize the shining half

Of his large nature that was turned to me:

Fain had I joined with those that honored him

With eyes that darkened because his were dim, 100

And now been silent: but it might not be.

II

1.

In some the genius is a thing apart,

A pillared hermit of the brain,

Hoarding with incommunicable art

Its intellectual gain;

Man's web of circumstance and fate

They from their perch of self observe,

Indifferent as the figures on a slate

Are to the planet's sun-swung curve

Whose bright returns they calculate; 110

Their nice adjustment, part to part,

Were shaken from its serviceable mood

By unpremeditated stirs of heart

Or jar of human neighborhood:

Some find their natural selves, and only then,

In furloughs of divine escape from men,

And when, by that brief ecstasy left bare,

Driven by some instinct of desire,

They wander worldward, 'tis to blink and stare,

Like wild things of the wood about a fire, 120

Dazed by the social glow they cannot share;

His nature brooked no lonely lair,

But basked and bourgeoned in co-partnery,

Companionship, and open-windowed glee:

He knew, for he had tried,

Those speculative heights that lure

The unpractised foot, impatient of a guide,

Tow'rd ether too attenuately pure

For sweet unconscious breath, though dear to pride,

But better loved the foothold sure 130

Of paths that wind by old abodes of men

Who hope at last the churchyard's peace secure,

And follow time-worn rules, that them suffice,

Learned from their sires, traditionally wise,

Careful of honest custom's how and when;

His mind, too brave to look on Truth askance,

No more those habitudes of faith could share,

But, tinged with sweetness of the old Swiss manse,

Lingered around them still and fain would spare.

Patient to spy a sullen egg for weeks, 140

The enigma of creation to surprise,

His truer instinct sought the life that speaks

Without a mystery from kindly eyes;

In no self-spun cocoon of prudence wound,

He by the touch of men was best inspired,

And caught his native greatness at rebound

From generosities itself had fired;

Then how the heat through every fibre ran,

Felt in the gathering presence of the man,

While the apt word and gesture came unbid! 150

Virtues and faults it to one metal wrought,

Fined all his blood to thought,

And ran the molten man in all he said or did.

All Tully's rules and all Quintilian's too

He by the light of listening faces knew,

And his rapt audience all unconscious lent

Their own roused force to make him eloquent;

Persuasion fondled in his look and tone;

Our speech (with strangers prudish) he could bring

To find new charm in accents not her own; 160

Her coy constraints and icy hindrances

Melted upon his lips to natural ease,

As a brook's fetters swell the dance of spring.

Nor yet all sweetness: not in vain he wore,

Nor in the sheath of ceremony, controlled

By velvet courtesy or caution cold,

That sword of honest anger prized of old,

But, with two-handed wrath,

If baseness or pretension crossed his path,

Struck once nor needed to strike more. 170

2.

His magic was not far to seek.--

He was so human! Whether strong or weak,

Far from his kind he neither sank nor soared,

But sate an equal guest at every board:

No beggar ever felt him condescend,

No prince presume; for still himself he bare

At manhood's simple level, and where'er

He met a stranger, there he left a friend.

How large an aspect! nobly un-severe,

With freshness round him of Olympian cheer, 180

Like visits of those earthly gods he came;

His look, wherever its good-fortune fell,

Doubled the feast without a miracle,

And on the hearthstone danced a happier flame;

Philemon's crabbed vintage grew benign;

Amphitryon's gold-juice humanized to wine.

III

1.

The garrulous memories

Gather again from all their far-flown nooks,

Singly at first, and then by twos and threes,

Then in a throng innumerable, as the rooks 190

Thicken their twilight files

Tow'rd Tintern's gray repose of roofless aisles:

Once more I see him at the table's head

When Saturday her monthly banquet spread

To scholars, poets, wits,

All choice, some famous, loving things, not names,

And so without a twinge at others' fames;

Such company as wisest moods befits,

Yet with no pedant blindness to the worth

Of undeliberate mirth, 200

Natures benignly mixed of air and earth,

Now with the stars and now with equal zest

Tracing the eccentric orbit of a jest.

2.

I see in vision the warm-lighted hall,

The living and the dead I see again,

And but my chair is empty; 'mid them all

'Tis I that seem the dead: they all remain

Immortal, changeless creatures of the brain:

Wellnigh I doubt which world is real most,

Of sense or spirit to the truly sane; 210

In this abstraction it were light to deem

Myself the figment of some stronger dream;

They are the real things, and I the ghost

That glide unhindered through the solid door,

Vainly for recognition seek from chair to chair,

And strive to speak and am but futile air,

As truly most of us are little more.

3.

Him most I see whom we most dearly miss,

The latest parted thence,

His features poised in genial armistice 220

And armed neutrality of self-defence

Beneath the forehead's walled preeminence,

While Tyro, plucking facts with careless reach,

Settles off-hand our human how and whence;

The long-trained veteran scarcely wincing hears

The infallible strategy of volunteers

Making through Nature's walls its easy breach,

And seems to learn where he alone could teach.

Ample and ruddy, the board's end he fills

As he our fireside were, our light and heat, 230

Centre where minds diverse and various skills

Find their warm nook and stretch unhampered feet;

I see the firm benignity of face,

Wide-smiling champaign, without tameness sweet,

The mass Teutonic toned to Gallic grace,

The eyes whose sunshine runs before the lips

While Holmes's rockets, curve their long ellipse,

And burst in seeds of fire that burst again

To drop in scintillating rain.

4.

There too the face half-rustic, half-divine, 240

Self-poised, sagacious, freaked with humor fine,

Of him who taught us not to mow and mope

About our fancied selves, but seek our scope

In Nature's world and Man's, nor fade to hollow trope,

Content with our New World and timely bold

To challenge the o'ermastery of the Old;

Listening with eyes averse I see him sit

Pricked with the cider of the Judge's wit

(Ripe-hearted homebrew, fresh and fresh again),

While the wise nose's firm-built aquiline 250

Curves sharper to restrain

The merriment whose most unruly moods

Pass not the dumb laugh learned in listening woods

Of silence-shedding pine:

Hard by is he whose art's consoling spell

Hath given both worlds a whiff of asphodel,

His look still vernal 'mid the wintry ring

Of petals that remember, not foretell,

The paler primrose of a second spring.

5.

And more there are: but other forms arise 260

And seen as clear, albeit with dimmer eyes:

First he from sympathy still held apart

By shrinking over-eagerness of heart,

Cloud charged with searching fire, whose shadow's sweep

Heightened mean things with sense of brooding ill,

And steeped in doom familiar field and hill,--

New England's poet, soul reserved and deep,

November nature with a name of May,

Whom high o'er Concord plains we laid to sleep,

While the orchards mocked us in their white array 270

And building robins wondered at our tears,

Snatched in his prime, the shape august

That should have stood unbent 'neath fourscore years,

The noble head, the eyes of furtive trust,

All gone to speechless dust.

And he our passing guest,

Shy nature, too, and stung with life's unrest,

Whom we too briefly had but could not hold,

Who brought ripe Oxford's culture to our board,

The Past's incalculable hoard, 280

Mellowed by scutcheoned panes in cloisters old,

Seclusions ivy-hushed, and pavements sweet

With immemorial lisp of musing feet;

Young head time-tonsured smoother than a friar's,

Boy face, but grave with answerless desires,

Poet in all that poets have of best,

But foiled with riddles dark and cloudy aims,

Who now hath found sure rest,

Not by still Isis or historic Thames,

Nor by the Charles he tried to love with me, 290

But, not misplaced, by Arno's hallowed brim,

Nor scorned by Santa Croce's neighboring fames,

Haply not mindless, wheresoe'er he be,

Of violets that to-day I scattered over him,

He, too, is there,

After the good centurion fitly named,

Whom learning dulled not, nor convention tamed,

Shaking with burly mirth his hyacinthine hair,

Our hearty Grecian of Homeric ways,

Still found the surer friend where least he hoped the praise.

6.

Yea truly, as the sallowing years 301

Fall from us faster, like frost-loosened leaves

Pushed by the misty touch of shortening days,

And that unwakened winter nears,

'Tis the void chair our surest guest receives,

'Tis lips long cold that give the warmest kiss,

'Tis the lost voice comes oftenest to our ears;

We count our rosary by the beads we miss:

To me, at least, it seemeth so,

An exile in the land once found divine, 310

While my starved fire burns low,

And homeless winds at the loose casement whine

Shrill ditties of the snow-roofed Apennine.

IV

1.

Now forth into the darkness all are gone,

But memory, still unsated, follows on,

Retracing step by step our homeward walk,

With many a laugh among our serious talk,

Across the bridge where, on the dimpling tide,

The long red streamers from the windows glide,

Or the dim western moon

Rocks her skiff's image on the broad lagoon, 321

And Boston shows a soft Venetian side

In that Arcadian light when roof and tree,

Hard prose by daylight, dream in Italy;

Or haply in the sky's cold chambers wide

Shivered the winter stars, while all below,

As if an end were come of human ill,

The world was wrapt in innocence of snow

And the cast-iron bay was blind and still;

These were our poetry; in him perhaps 330

Science had barred the gate that lets in dream,

And he would rather count the perch and bream

Than with the current's idle fancy lapse;

And yet he had the poet's open eye

That takes a frank delight in all it sees,

Nor was earth voiceless, nor the mystic sky,

To him the life-long friend of fields and trees:

Then came the prose of the suburban street,

Its silence deepened by our echoing feet,

And converse such as rambling hazard finds; 340

Then he who many cities knew and many minds,

And men once world-noised, now mere Ossian forms

Of misty memory, bade them live anew

As when they shared earth's manifold delight,

In shape, in gait, in voice, in gesture true,

And, with an accent heightening as he warms,

Would stop forgetful of the shortening night,

Drop my confining arm, and pour profuse

Much worldly wisdom kept for others' use,

Not for his own, for he was rash and free, 350

His purse or knowledge all men's, like the sea.

Still can I hear his voice's shrilling might

(With pauses broken, while the fitful spark

He blew more hotly rounded on the dark

To hint his features with a Rembrandt light)

Call Oken back, or Humboldt, or Lamarck,

Or Cuvier's taller shade, and many more

Whom he had seen, or knew from others' sight,

And make them men to me as ne'er before:

Not seldom, as the undeadened fibre stirred 360

Of noble friendships knit beyond the sea,

German or French thrust by the lagging word,

For a good leash of mother-tongues had he.

At last, arrived at where our paths divide,

'Good night!' and, ere the distance grew too wide,

'Good night!' again; and now with cheated ear

I half hear his who mine shall never hear.

2.

Sometimes it seemed as if New England air

For his large lungs too parsimonious were,

As if those empty rooms of dogma drear 370

Where the ghost shivers of a faith austere

Counting the horns o'er of the Beast,

Still scaring those whose faith to it is least,

As if those snaps o' th' moral atmosphere

That sharpen all the needles of the East,

Had been to him like death,

Accustomed to draw Europe's freer breath

In a more stable element;

Nay, even our landscape, half the year morose,

Our practical horizon, grimly pent, 380

Our air, sincere of ceremonious haze,

Forcing hard outlines mercilessly close,

Our social monotone of level days,

Might make our best seem banishment;

But it was nothing so;

Haply this instinct might divine,

Beneath our drift of puritanic snow,

The marvel sensitive and fine

Of sanguinaria over-rash to blow

And trust its shyness to an air malign; 390

Well might he prize truth's warranty and pledge

In the grim outcrop of our granite edge,

Or Hebrew fervor flashing forth at need

In the gaunt sons of Calvin's iron breed,

As prompt to give as skilled to win and keep;

But, though such intuitions might not cheer,

Yet life was good to him, and, there or here,

With that sufficing joy, the day was never cheap;

Thereto his mind was its own ample sphere,

And, like those buildings great that through the year 400

Carry one temperature, his nature large

Made its own climate, nor could any marge

Traced by convention stay him from his bent:

He had a habitude of mountain air;

He brought wide outlook where he went,

And could on sunny uplands dwell

Of prospect sweeter than the pastures fair

High-hung of viny NeufchÃ¢tel;

Nor, surely, did he miss

Some pale, imaginary bliss

Of earlier sights whose inner landscape still was Swiss. 411

V

1.

I cannot think he wished so soon to die

With all his senses full of eager heat,

And rosy years that stood expectant by

To buckle the winged sandals on their feet,

He that was friends with Earth, and all her sweet

Took with both hands unsparingly:

Truly this life is precious to the root,

And good the feel of grass beneath the foot;

To lie in buttercups and clover-bloom, 420

Tenants in common with the bees,

And watch the white clouds drift through gulfs of trees,

Is better than long waiting in the tomb;

Only once more to feel the coming spring

As the birds feel it, when it bids them sing,

Only once more to see the moon

Through leaf-fringed abbey-arches of the elms

Curve her mild sickle in the West

Sweet with the breath of haycocks, were a boon

Worth any promise of soothsayer realms 430

Or casual hope of being elsewhere blest;

To take December by the beard

And crush the creaking snow with springy foot,

While overhead the North's dumb streamers shoot,

Till Winter fawn upon the cheek endeared,

Then the long evening-ends

Lingered by cosy chimney-nooks,

With high companionship of books

Or slippered talk of friends

And sweet habitual looks,

Is better than to stop the ears with dust: 441

Too soon the spectre comes to say, 'Thou must!'

2.

When toil-crooked hands are crost upon the breast,

They comfort us with sense of rest;

They must be glad to lie forever still;

Their work is ended with their day;

Another fills their room; 't is the World's ancient way,

Whether for good or ill;

But the deft spinners of the brain,

Who love each added day and find it gain, 450

Them overtakes the doom

To snap the half-grown flower upon the loom

(Trophy that was to be of life long pain),

The thread no other skill can ever knit again.

'Twas so with him, for he was glad to live,

'Twas doubly so, for he left work begun;

Could not this eagerness of Fate forgive

Till all the allotted flax were spun?

It matters not; for, go at night or noon,

A friend, whene'er he dies, has died too soon, 460

And, once we hear the hopeless \_He is dead,\_

So far as flesh hath knowledge, all is said.

VI

1.

I seem to see the black procession go:

That crawling prose of death too well I know,

The vulgar paraphrase of glorious woe;

I see it wind through that unsightly grove,

Once beautiful, but long defaced

With granite permanence of cockney taste

And all those grim disfigurements we love:

There, then, we leave him: Him? such costly waste 470

Nature rebels at: and it is not true

Of those most precious parts of him we knew:

Could we be conscious but as dreamers be,

'Twere sweet to leave this shifting life of tents

Sunk in the changeless calm of Deity;

Nay, to be mingled with the elements,

The fellow-servants of creative powers,

Partaker in the solemn year's events,

To share the work of busy-fingered hours,

To be night's silent almoner of dew, 480

To rise again in plants and breathe and grow,

To stream as tides the ocean caverns through,

Or with the rapture of great winds to blow

About earth's shaken coignes, were not a fate

To leave us all-disconsolate;

Even endless slumber in the sweetening sod

Of charitable earth

That takes out all our mortal stains,

And makes us cleanlier neighbors of the clod,

Methinks were better worth

Than the poor fruit of most men's wakeful pains, 491

The heart's insatiable ache:

But such was not his faith,

Nor mine: it may be he had trod

Outside the plain old path of \_God thus spake\_,

But God to him was very God

And not a visionary wraith

Skulking in murky corners of the mind,

And he was sure to be

Somehow, somewhere, imperishable as He, 500

Not with His essence mystically combined,

As some high spirits long, but whole and free,

A perfected and conscious Agassiz.

And such I figure him: the wise of old

Welcome and own him of their peaceful fold,

Not truly with the guild enrolled

Of him who seeking inward guessed

Diviner riddles than the rest,

And groping in the darks of thought

Touched the Great Hand and knew it not; 510

Rather he shares the daily light,

From reason's charier fountains won,

Of his great chief, the slow-paced Stagyrite,

And Cuvier clasps once more his long-lost son.

2.

The shape erect is prone: forever stilled

The winning tongue; the forehead's high-piled heap,

A cairn which every science helped to build,

Unvalued will its golden secrets keep:

He knows at last if Life or Death be best:

Wherever he be flown, whatever vest 520

The being hath put on which lately here

So many-friended was, so full of cheer

To make men feel the Seeker's noble zest,

We have not lost him all; he is not gone

To the dumb herd of them that wholly die;

The beauty of his better self lives on

In minds he touched with fire, in many an eye

He trained to Truth's exact severity;

He was a Teacher: why be grieved for him

Whose living word still stimulates the air? 530

In endless file shall loving scholars come

The glow of his transmitted touch to share,

And trace his features with an eye less dim

Than ours whose sense familiar wont makes dumb.

TO HOLMES

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

Dear Wendell, why need count the years

Since first your genius made me thrill,

If what moved then to smiles or tears,

Or both contending, move me still?

What has the Calendar to do

With poets? What Time's fruitless tooth

With gay immortals such as you

Whose years but emphasize your youth?

One air gave both their lease of breath;

The same paths lured our boyish feet;

One earth will hold us safe in death

With dust of saints and scholars sweet.

Our legends from one source were drawn,

I scarce distinguish yours from mine,

And \_don't\_ we make the Gentiles yawn

With 'You remembers?' o'er our wine!

If I, with too senescent air,

Invade your elder memory's pale,

You snub me with a pitying 'Where

Were you in the September Gale?'

Both stared entranced at Lafayette,

Saw Jackson dubbed with LL.D.

What Cambridge saw not strikes us yet

As scarcely worth one's while to see.

Ten years my senior, when my name

In Harvard's entrance-book was writ,

Her halls still echoed with the fame

Of you, her poet and her wit.

'Tis fifty years from then to now;

But your Last Leaf renews its green,

Though, for the laurels on your brow

(So thick they crowd), 'tis hardly seen.

The oriole's fledglings fifty times

Have flown from our familiar elms;

As many poets with their rhymes

Oblivion's darkling dust o'erwhelms.

The birds are hushed, the poets gone

Where no harsh critic's lash can reach,

And still your wingÃ¨d brood sing on

To all who love our English speech.

Nay, let the foolish records he

That make believe you're seventy-five:

You're the old Wendell still to me,--

And that's the youngest man alive.

The gray-blue eyes, I see them still,

The gallant front with brown o'erhung,

The shape alert, the wit at will,

The phrase that stuck, but never stung.

You keep your youth as yon Scotch firs,

Whose gaunt line my horizon hems,

Though twilight all the lowland blurs,

Hold sunset in their ruddy stems.

\_You\_ with the elders? Yes, 'tis true,

But in no sadly literal sense,

With elders and coevals too,

Whose verb admits no preterite tense.

Master alike in speech and song

Of fame's great antiseptic--Style,

You with the classic few belong

Who tempered wisdom with a smile.

Outlive us all! Who else like you

Could sift the seedcorn from our chaff,

And make us with the pen we knew

Deathless at least in epitaph?

IN A COPY OF OMAR KHAYYÃM

These pearls of thought in Persian gulfs were bred,

Each softly lucent as a rounded moon;

The diver Omar plucked them from their bed,

Fitzgerald strung them on an English thread.

Fit rosary for a queen, in shape and hue,

When Contemplation tells her pensive beads

Of mortal thoughts, forever old and new.

Fit for a queen? Why, surely then for you!

The moral? Where Doubt's eddies toss and twirl

Faith's slender shallop till her footing reel,

Plunge: if you find not peace beneath the whirl,

Groping, you may like Omar grasp a pearl.

ON RECEIVING A COPY OF MR. AUSTIN DOBSON'S 'OLD WORLD IDYLLS'

I

At length arrived, your book I take

To read in for the author's sake;

Too gray for new sensations grown,

Can charm to Art or Nature known

This torpor from my senses shake?

Hush! my parched ears what runnels slake?

Is a thrush gurgling from the brake?

Has Spring, on all the breezes blown,

At length arrived?

Long may you live such songs to make,

And I to listen while you wake,

With skill of late disused, each tone

Of the \_Lesboum, barbiton\_,

At mastery, through long finger-ache,

At length arrived.

II

As I read on, what changes steal

O'er me and through, from head to heel?

A rapier thrusts coat-skirt aside,

My rough Tweeds bloom to silken pride,--

Who was it laughed? Your hand, Dick Steele!

Down vistas long of clipt \_charmille\_

Watteau as Pierrot leads the reel;

Tabor and pipe the dancers guide

As I read on.

While in and out the verses wheel

The wind-caught robes trim feet reveal,

Lithe ankles that to music glide,

But chastely and by chance descried;

Art? Nature? Which do I most feel

As I read on?

TO C.F. BRADFORD

ON THE GIFT OF A MEERSCHAUM PIPE

The pipe came safe, and welcome too,

As anything must be from you;

A meerschaum pure, 'twould float as light

As she the girls call Amphitrite.

Mixture divine of foam and clay,

From both it stole the best away:

Its foam is such as crowns the glow

Of beakers brimmed by Veuve Clicquot;

Its clay is but congested lymph

Jove chose to make some choicer nymph;

And here combined,--why, this must be

The birth of some enchanted sea,

Shaped to immortal form, the type

And very Venus of a pipe.

When high I heap it with the weed

From Lethe wharf, whose potent seed

Nicotia, big from Bacchus, bore

And cast upon Virginia's shore,

I'll think,--So fill the fairer bowl

And wise alembic of thy soul,

With herbs far-sought that shall distil,

Not fumes to slacken thought and will,

But bracing essences that nerve

To wait, to dare, to strive, to serve.

When curls the smoke in eddies soft,

And hangs a shifting dream aloft,

That gives and takes, though chance-designed,

The impress of the dreamer's mind,

I'll think,--So let the vapors bred

By Passion, in the heart or head,

Pass off and upward into space,

Waving farewells of tenderest grace,

Remembered in some happier time,

To blend their beauty with my rhyme.

While slowly o'er its candid bowl

The color deepens (as the soul

That burns in mortals leaves its trace

Of bale or beauty on the face),

I'll think,--So let the essence rare

Of years consuming make me fair;

So, 'gainst the ills of life profuse,

Steep me in some narcotic juice;

And if my soul must part with all

That whiteness which we greenness call,

Smooth back, O Fortune, half thy frown,

And make me beautifully brown!

Dream-forger, I refill thy cup

With reverie's wasteful pittance up,

And while the fire burns slow away,

Hiding itself in ashes gray,

I'll think,--As inward Youth retreats,

Compelled to spare his wasting heats,

When Life's Ash-Wednesday comes about,

And my head's gray with fires burnt out,

While stays one spark to light the eye,

With the last flash of memory,

'Twill leap to welcome C.F.B.,

Who sent my favorite pipe to me.

BANKSIDE

(HOME OF EDMUND QUINCY)

DEDHAM, MAY 21, 1877

I

I christened you in happier days, before

These gray forebodings on my brow were seen;

You are still lovely in your new-leaved green;

The brimming river soothes his grassy shore;

The bridge is there; the rock with lichens hoar;

And the same shadows on the water lean,

Outlasting us. How many graves between

That day and this! How many shadows more

Darken my heart, their substance from these eyes

Hidden forever! So our world is made

Of life and death commingled; and the sighs

Outweigh the smiles, in equal balance laid:

What compensation? None, save that the Allwise

So schools us to love things that cannot fade.

II

Thank God, he saw you last in pomp of May,

Ere any leaf had felt the year's regret;

Your latest image in his memory set

Was fair as when your landscape's peaceful sway

Charmed dearer eyes with his to make delay

On Hope's long prospect,--as if They forget

The happy, They, the unspeakable Three, whose debt,

Like the hawk's shadow, blots our brightest day:

Better it is that ye should look so fair.

Slopes that he loved, and ever-murmuring pines

That make a music out of silent air,

And bloom-heaped orchard-trees in prosperous lines;

In you the heart some sweeter hints divines,

And wiser, than in winter's dull despair.

III

Old Friend, farewell! Your kindly door again

I enter, but the master's hand in mine

No more clasps welcome, and the temperate wine,

That cheered our long nights, other lips must stain:

All is unchanged, but I expect in vain

The face alert, the manners free and fine,

The seventy years borne lightly as the pine

Wears its first down of snow in green disdain:

Much did he, and much well; yet most of all

I prized his skill in leisure and the ease

Of a life flowing full without a plan;

For most are idly busy; him I call

Thrice fortunate who knew himself to please,

Learned in those arts that make a gentleman.

IV

Nor deem he lived unto himself alone;

His was the public spirit of his sire,

And in those eyes, soft with domestic fire,

A quenchless light of fiercer temper shone

What time about, the world our shame was blown

On every wind; his soul would not conspire

With selfish men to soothe the mob's desire,

Veiling with garlands Moloch's bloody stone;

The high-bred instincts of a better day

Ruled in his blood, when to be citizen

Rang Roman yet, and a Free People's sway

Was not the exchequer of impoverished men,

Nor statesmanship with loaded votes to play,

Nor public office a tramps' boosing-ken.

JOSEPH WINLOCK

DIED JUNE 11, 1875

Shy soul and stalwart, man of patient will

Through years one hair's-breadth on our Dark to gain,

Who, from the stars he studied not in vain,

Had learned their secret to be strong and still,

Careless of fames that earth's tin trumpets fill;

Born under Leo, broad of build and brain,

While others slept, he watched in that hushed fane

Of Science, only witness of his skill:

Sudden as falls a shooting-star he fell,

But inextinguishable his luminous trace

In mind and heart of all that knew him well.

Happy man's doom! To him the Fates were known

Of orbs dim hovering on the skirts of space,

Unprescient, through God's mercy, of his own!

SONNET

TO FANNY ALEXANDER

Unconscious as the sunshine, simply sweet

And generous as that, thou dost not close

Thyself in art, as life were but a rose

To rumple bee-like with luxurious feet;

Thy higher mind therein finds sure retreat,

But not from care of common hopes and woes;

Thee the dark chamber, thee the unfriended, knows,

Although no babbling crowds thy praise repeat:

Consummate artist, who life's landscape bleak

Hast brimmed with sun to many a clouded eye,

Touched to a brighter hue the beggar's cheek,

Hung over orphaned lives a gracious sky,

And traced for eyes, that else would vainly seek,

Fair pictures of an angel drawing nigh!

JEFFRIES WYMAN

DIED SEPTEMBER 4, 1874

The wisest man could ask no more of Fate

Than to be simple, modest, manly, true,

Safe from the Many, honored by the Few;

To count as naught in World, or Church, or State,

But, inwardly in secret to be great;

To feel mysterious Nature ever new;

To touch, if not to grasp, her endless clue,

And learn by each discovery how to wait.

He widened knowledge and escaped the praise;

He wisely taught, because more wise to learn;

He toiled for Science, not to draw men's gaze,

But for her lore of self-denial stern.

That such a man could spring from our decays

Fans the soul's nobler faith until it burn.

TO A FRIEND

WHO GAVE ME A GROUP OF WEEDS AND GRASSES, AFTER A DRAWING OF DÃRER

True as the sun's own work, but more refined,

It tells of love behind the artist's eye,

Of sweet companionships with earth and sky,

And summers stored, the sunshine of the mind.

What peace! Sure, ere you breathe, the fickle wind

Will break its truce and bend that grass-plume high,

Scarcely yet quiet from the gilded fly

That flits a more luxurious perch to find.

Thanks for a pleasure that can never pall,

A serene moment, deftly caught and kept

To make immortal summer on my wall.

Had he who drew such gladness ever wept?

Ask rather could he else have seen at all,

Or grown in Nature's mysteries an adept?

WITH AN ARMCHAIR

1.

About the oak that framed this chair, of old

The seasons danced their round; delighted wings

Brought music to its boughs; shy woodland things

Shared its broad roof, 'neath whose green glooms grown bold,

Lovers, more shy than they, their secret told;

The resurrection of a thousand springs

Swelled in its veins, and dim imaginings

Teased them, perchance, of life more manifold.

Such shall it know when its proud arms enclose

My Lady Goshawk, musing here at rest,

Careless of him who into exile goes,

Yet, while his gift by those fair limbs is prest,

Through some fine sympathy of nature knows

That, seas between us, she is still his guest.

2.

Yet sometimes, let me dream, the conscious wood

A momentary vision may renew

Of him who counts it treasure that he knew,

Though but in passing, such a priceless good,

And, like an elder brother, felt his mood

Uplifted by the spell that kept her true,

Amid her lightsome compeers, to the few

That wear the crown of serious womanhood:

Were he so happy, think of him as one

Who in the Louvre or Pitti feels his soul

Rapt by some dead face which, till then unseen,

Moves like a memory, and, till life outrun,

Is vexed with vague misgiving past control,

Of nameless loss and thwarted might-have-been.

E.G. DE R.

Why should I seek her spell to decompose

Or to its source each rill of influence trace

That feeds the brimming river of her grace?

The petals numbered but degrade to prose

Summer's triumphant poem of the rose:

Enough for me to watch the wavering chase,

Like wind o'er grass, of moods across her face,

Fairest in motion, fairer in repose.

Steeped in her sunshine, let me, while I may,

Partake the bounty; ample 'tis for me

That her mirth cheats my temples of their gray,

Her charm makes years long spent seem yet to be.

Wit, goodness, grace, swift flash from grave to gay,--

All these are good, but better far is she.

BON VOYAGE

Ship, blest to bear such freight across the blue,

May stormless stars control thy horoscope;

In keel and hull, in every spar and rope,

Be night and day to thy dear office true!

Ocean, men's path and their divider too,

No fairer shrine of memory and hope

To the underworld adown thy westering slope

E'er vanished, or whom such regrets pursue:

Smooth all thy surges as when Jove to Crete

Swam with less costly burthen, and prepare

A pathway meet for her home-coming soon

With golden undulations such as greet

The printless summer-sandals of the moon

And tempt the Nautilus his cruise to dare!

TO WHITTIER

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

New England's poet, rich in love as years,

Her hills and valleys praise thee, her swift brooks

Dance in thy verse; to her grave sylvan nooks

Thy steps allure us, which the wood-thrush hears

As maids their lovers', and no treason fears;

Through thee her Merrimacs and Agiochooks

And many a name uncouth win gracious looks,

Sweetly familiar to both Englands' ears:

Peaceful by birthright, as a virgin lake,

The lily's anchorage, which no eyes behold

Save those of stars, yet for thy brother's sake

That lay in bonds, thou blewst a blast as bold

As that wherewith the heart of Roland brake,

Far heard across the New World and the Old.

ON AN AUTUMN SKETCH OF H.G. WILD

Thanks to the artist, ever on my wall

The sunset stays: that hill in glory rolled,

Those trees and clouds in crimson and in gold,

Burn on, nor cool when evening's shadows fall.

Not round \_these\_ splendors Midnight wraps her pall;

\_These\_ leaves the flush of Autumn's vintage hold

In Winter's spite, nor can the Northwind bold

Deface my chapel's western window small:

On one, ah me! October struck his frost,

But not repaid him with those Tyrian hues;

His naked boughs but tell him what is lost,

And parting comforts of the sun refuse:

His heaven is bare,--ah, were its hollow crost

Even with a cloud whose light were yet to lose!

TO MISS D.T.

ON HER GIVING ME A DRAWING OF LITTLE STREET ARABS

As, cleansed of Tiber's and Oblivion's slime,

Glow Farnesina's vaults with shapes again

That dreamed some exiled artist from his pain

Back to his Athens and the Muse's clime,

So these world-orphaned waifs of Want and Crime,

Purged by Art's absolution from the stain

Of the polluting city-flood, regain

Ideal grace secure from taint of time.

An Attic frieze you give, a pictured song;

For as with words the poet paints, for you

The happy pencil at its labor sings,

Stealing his privilege, nor does him wrong,

Beneath the false discovering the true,

And Beauty's best in unregarded things.

WITH A COPY OF AUCASSIN AND NICOLETE

Leaves fit to have been poor Juliet's cradle-rhyme,

With gladness of a heart long quenched in mould

They vibrate still, a nest not yet grown cold

From its fledged burthen. The numb hand of Time

Vainly his glass turns; here is endless prime;

Here lips their roses keep and locks their gold;

Here Love in pristine innocency bold

Speaks what our grosser conscience makes a crime.

Because it tells the dream that all have known

Once in their lives, and to life's end the few;

Because its seeds o'er Memory's desert blown

Spring up in heartsease such as Eden knew;

Because it hath a beauty all its own,

Dear Friend, I plucked this herb of grace for you.

ON PLANTING A TREE AT INVERARAY

Who does his duty is a question

Too complex to be solved by me,

But he, I venture the suggestion,

Does part of his that plants a tree.

For after he is dead and buried,

And epitaphed, and well forgot,

Nay, even his shade by Charon ferried

To--let us not inquire to what,

His deed, its author long outliving,

By Nature's mother-care increased,

Shall stand, his verdant almoner, giving

A kindly dole to man and beast.

The wayfarer, at noon reposing,

Shall bless its shadow on the grass,

Or sheep beneath it huddle, dozing

Until the thundergust o'erpass.

The owl, belated in his plundering,

Shall here await the friendly night,

Blinking whene'er he wakes, and wondering

What fool it was invented light.

Hither the busy birds shall flutter,

With the light timber for their nests,

And, pausing from their labor, utter

The morning sunshine in their breasts.

What though his memory shall have vanished,

Since the good deed he did survives?

It is not wholly to be banished

Thus to be part of many lives.

Grow, then, my foster-child, and strengthen,

Bough over bough, a murmurous pile,

And, as your stately stem shall lengthen,

So may the statelier of Argyll!

AN EPISTLE TO GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

'De prodome,

Des qu'il s'atorne a grant bonte

Ja n'iert tot dit ne tot conte,

Que leingue ne puet pas retraire

Tant d'enor com prodom set faire.'

CRESTIEN DE TROIES, \_Li Romans dou

Chevalier au Lyon\_, 784-788.

1874

Curtis, whose Wit, with Fancy arm in arm,

Masks half its muscle in its skill to charm,

And who so gently can the Wrong expose

As sometimes to make converts, never foes,

Or only such as good men must expect,

Knaves sore with conscience of their own defect,

I come with mild remonstrance. Ere I start,

A kindlier errand interrupts my heart,

And I must utter, though it vex your ears,

The love, the honor, felt so many years. 10

Curtis, skilled equally with voice and pen

To stir the hearts or mould the minds of men,--

That voice whose music, for I've heard you sing

Sweet as Casella, can with passion ring,

That pen whose rapid ease ne'er trips with haste,

Nor scrapes nor sputters, pointed with good taste,

First Steele's, then Goldsmith's, next it came to you,

Whom Thackeray rated best of all our crew,--

Had letters kept you, every wreath were yours;

Had the World tempted, all its chariest doors 20

Had swung on flattered hinges to admit

Such high-bred manners, such good-natured wit;

At courts, in senates, who so fit to serve?

And both invited, but you would not swerve,

All meaner prizes waiving that you might

In civic duty spend your heat and light,

Unpaid, untrammelled, with a sweet disdain

Refusing posts men grovel to attain.

Good Man all own you; what is left me, then,

To heighten praise with but Good Citizen? 30

But why this praise to make you blush and stare,

And give a backache to your Easy-Chair?

Old Crestien rightly says no language can

Express the worth of a true Gentleman,

And I agree; but other thoughts deride

My first intent, and lure my pen aside.

Thinking of you, I see my firelight glow

On other faces, loved from long ago,

Dear to us both, and all these loves combine

With this I send and crowd in every line; 40

Fortune with me was in such generous mood

That all my friends were yours, and all were good;

Three generations come when one I call,

And the fair grandame, youngest of them all,

In her own Florida who found and sips

The fount that fled from Ponce's longing lips.

How bright they rise and wreathe my hearthstone round,

Divine my thoughts, reply without a sound,

And with them many a shape that memory sees,

As dear as they, but crowned with aureoles these! 50

What wonder if, with protest in my thought,

Arrived, I find 'twas only love I brought?

I came with protest; Memory barred the road

Till I repaid you half the debt I owed.

No, 'twas not to bring laurels that I came,

Nor would you wish it, daily seeing fame,

(Or our cheap substitute, unknown of yore,)

Dumped like a load of coal at every door,

Mime and hetÃ¦ra getting equal weight

With him whose toils heroic saved the State. 60

But praise can harm not who so calmly met

Slander's worst word, nor treasured up the debt,

Knowing, what all experience serves to show,

No mud can soil us but the mud we throw.

You have heard harsher voices and more loud,

As all must, not sworn liegemen of the crowd,

And far aloof your silent mind could keep

As when, in heavens with winter-midnight deep,

The perfect moon hangs thoughtful, nor can know

What hounds her lucent calm drives mad below. 70

But to my business, while you rub your eyes

And wonder how you ever thought me wise.

Dear friend and old, they say you shake your head

And wish some bitter words of mine unsaid:

I wish they might be,--there we are agreed;

I hate to speak, still more what makes the need;

But I must utter what the voice within

Dictates, for acquiescence dumb were sin;

I blurt ungrateful truths, if so they be,

That none may need to say them after me. 80

'Twere my felicity could I attain

The temperate zeal that balances your brain;

But nature still o'erleaps reflection's plan,

And one must do his service as he can.

Think you it were not pleasanter to speak

Smooth words that leave unflushed the brow and cheek?

To sit, well-dined, with cynic smile, unseen

In private box, spectator of the scene

Where men the comedy of life rehearse,

Idly to judge which better and which worse 90

Each hireling actor spoiled his worthless part?

Were it not sweeter with a careless heart,

In happy commune with the untainted brooks,

To dream all day, or, walled with silent books,

To hear nor heed the World's unmeaning noise,

Safe in my fortress stored with lifelong joys?

I love too well the pleasures of retreat

Safe from the crowd and cloistered from the street;

The fire that whispers its domestic joy,

Flickering on walls that knew me still a boy, 100

And knew my saintly father; the full days,

Not careworn from the world's soul-squandering ways,

Calm days that loiter with snow-silent tread,

Nor break my commune with the undying dead;

Truants of Time, to-morrow like to-day,

That come unhid, and claimless glide away

By shelves that sun them in the indulgent Past,

Where Spanish castles, even, were built to last,

Where saint and sage their silent vigil keep,

And wrong hath ceased or sung itself to sleep. 110

Dear were my walks, too, gathering fragrant store

Of Mother Nature's simple-minded lore:

I learned all weather-signs of day or night;

No bird but I could name him by his flight,

No distant tree but by his shape was known,

Or, near at hand, by leaf or bark alone.

This learning won by loving looks I hived

As sweeter lore than all from books derived.

I know the charm of hillside, field, and wood,

Of lake and stream, and the sky's downy brood, 120

Of roads sequestered rimmed with sallow sod,

But friends with hardhack, aster, goldenrod,

Or succory keeping summer long its trust

Of heaven-blue fleckless from the eddying dust:

These were my earliest friends, and latest too,

Still unestranged, whatever fate may do.

For years I had these treasures, knew their worth,

Estate most real man can have on earth.

I sank too deep in this soft-stuffed repose

That hears but rumors of earth's wrongs and woes; 130

Too well these Capuas could my muscles waste,

Not void of toils, but toils of choice and taste;

These still had kept me could I but have quelled

The Puritan drop that in my veins rebelled.

But there were times when silent were my books

As jailers are, and gave me sullen looks,

When verses palled, and even the woodland path,

By innocent contrast, fed my heart with wrath,

And I must twist my little gift of words

Into a scourge of rough and knotted cords 140

Unmusical, that whistle as they swing

To leave on shameless backs their purple sting.

How slow Time comes! Gone who so swift as he?

Add but a year, 'tis half a century

Since the slave's stifled moaning broke my sleep,

Heard 'gainst my will in that seclusion deep,

Haply heard louder for the silence there,

And so my fancied safeguard made my snare.

After that moan had sharpened to a cry,

And a cloud, hand-broad then, heaped all our sky 150

With its stored vengeance, and such thunders stirred

As heaven's and earth's remotest chambers heard,

I looked to see an ampler atmosphere

By that electric passion-gust blown clear.

I looked for this; consider what I see--

But I forbear, 'twould please nor you nor me

To check the items in the bitter list

Of all I counted on and all I mist.

Only three instances I choose from all,

And each enough to stir a pigeon's gall: 160

Office a fund for ballot-brokers made

To pay the drudges of their gainful trade;

Our cities taught what conquered cities feel

By Ã¦diles chosen that they might safely steal;

And gold, however got, a title fair

To such respect as only gold can bear.

I seem to see this; how shall I gainsay

What all our journals tell me every day?

Poured our young martyrs their high-hearted blood

That we might trample to congenial mud 170

The soil with such a legacy sublimed?

Methinks an angry scorn is here well-timed:

Where find retreat? How keep reproach at bay?

Where'er I turn some scandal fouls the way.

Dear friend, if any man I wished to please,

'Twere surely you whose humor's honied ease

Flows flecked with gold of thought, whose generous mind

Sees Paradise regained by all mankind,

Whose brave example still to vanward shines,

Cheeks the retreat, and spurs our lagging lines. 180

Was I too bitter? Who his phrase can choose

That sees the life-blood of his dearest ooze?

I loved my Country so as only they

Who love a mother fit to die for may;

I loved her old renown, her stainless fame,--

What better proof than that I loathed her shame?

That many blamed me could not irk me long,

But, if you doubted, must I not be wrong?

'Tis not for me to answer; this I know.

That man or race so prosperously low 190

Sunk in success that wrath they cannot feel,

Shall taste the spurn of parting Fortune's heel;

For never land long lease of empire won

Whose sons sate silent when base deeds were done.

POSTSCRIPT, 1887

Curtis, so wrote I thirteen years ago,

Tost it unfinished by, and left it so;

Found lately, I have pieced it out, or tried,

Since time for callid juncture was denied.

Some of the verses pleased me, it is true,

And still were pertinent,--those honoring you. 200

These now I offer: take them, if you will,

Like the old hand-grasp, when at Shady Hill

We met, or Staten Island, in the days

When life was its own spur, nor needed praise.

If once you thought me rash, no longer fear;

Past my next milestone waits my seventieth year.

I mount no longer when the trumpets call;

My battle-harness idles on the wall,

The spider's castle, camping-ground of dust,

Not without dints, and all in front, I trust. 210

Shivering sometimes it calls me as it hears

Afar the charge's tramp and clash of spears;

But 'tis such murmur only as might be

The sea-shell's lost tradition of the sea,

That makes me muse and wonder Where? and When?

While from my cliff I watch the waves of men

That climb to break midway their seeming gain,

And think it triumph if they shake their chain.

Little I ask of Fate; will she refuse

Some days of reconcilement with the Muse? 220

I take my reed again and blow it free

Of dusty silence, murmuring, 'Sing to me!'

And, as its stops my curious touch retries,

The stir of earlier instincts I surprise,--

Instincts, if less imperious, yet more strong,

And happy in the toil that ends with song.

Home am I come: not, as I hoped might be,

To the old haunts, too full of ghosts for me,

But to the olden dreams that time endears,

And the loved books that younger grow with years; 230

To country rambles, timing with my tread

Some happier verse that carols in my head,

Yet all with sense of something vainly mist,

Of something lost, but when I never wist.

How empty seems to me the populous street,

One figure gone I daily loved to meet,--

The clear, sweet singer with the crown of snow

Not whiter than the thoughts that housed below!

And, ah, what absence feel I at my side,

Like Dante when he missed his laurelled guide, 240

What sense of diminution in the air

Once so inspiring, Emerson not there!

But life is sweet, though all that makes it sweet

Lessen like sound of friends' departing feet,

And Death is beautiful as feet of friend

Coming with welcome at our journey's end;

For me Fate gave, whate'er she else denied,

A nature sloping to the southern side;

I thank her for it, though when clouds arise

Such natures double-darken gloomy skies. 250

I muse upon the margin of the sea,

Our common pathway to the new To Be,

Watching the sails, that lessen more and more,

Of good and beautiful embarked before;

With bits of wreck I patch the boat shall bear

Me to that unexhausted Otherwhere,

Whose friendly-peopled shore I sometimes see,

By soft mirage uplifted, beckon me,

Nor sadly hear, as lower sinks the sun,

My moorings to the past snap one by one. 260

II. SENTIMENT

ENDYMION

A MYSTICAL COMMENT ON TITIAN'S 'SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE'

I

My day began not till the twilight fell,

And, lo, in ether from heaven's sweetest well,

The New Moon swam divinely isolate

In maiden silence, she that makes my fate

Haply not knowing it, or only so

As I the secrets of my sheep may know;

Nor ask I more, entirely blest if she,

In letting me adore, ennoble me

To height of what the Gods meant making man,

As only she and her best beauty can. 10

Mine be the love that in itself can find

Seed of white thoughts, the lilies of the mind,

Seed of that glad surrender of the will

That finds in service self's true purpose still:

Love that in outward fairness sees the tent

Pitched for an inmate far more excellent;

Love with a light irradiate to the core,

Lit at her lamp, but fed from inborn store;

Love thrice-requited with the single joy

Of an immaculate vision naught could cloy, 20

Dearer because, so high beyond my scope,

My life grew rich with her, unbribed by hope

Of other guerdon save to think she knew

One grateful votary paid her all her due;

Happy if she, high-radiant there, resigned

To his sure trust her image in his mind.

O fairer even than Peace is when she comes

Hushing War's tumult, and retreating drums

Fade to a murmur like the sough of bees

Hidden among the noon-stilled linden-trees, 30

Bringer of quiet, thou that canst allay

The dust and din and travail of the day,

Strewer of Silence, Giver of the dew

That doth our pastures and our souls renew,

Still dwell remote, still on thy shoreless sea

Float unattained in silent empery,

Still light my thoughts, nor listen to a prayer

Would make thee less imperishably fair!

II

Can, then, my twofold nature find content

In vain conceits of airy blandishment? 40

Ask I no more? Since yesterday I task

My storm-strewn thoughts to tell me what I ask:

Faint premenitions of mutation strange

Steal o'er my perfect orb, and, with the change,

Myself am changed; the shadow of my earth

Darkens the disk of that celestial worth

Which only yesterday could still suffice

Upwards to waft my thoughts in sacrifice;

My heightened fancy with its touches warm

Moulds to a woman's that ideal form; 50

Nor yet a woman's wholly, but divine

With awe her purer essence bred in mine.

Was it long brooding on their own surmise,

Which, of the eyes engendered, fools the eyes,

Or have I seen through that translucent air

A Presence shaped in its seclusions bare,

My Goddess looking on me from above

As look our russet maidens when they love,

But high-uplifted, o'er our human heat

And passion-paths too rough for her pearl feet? 60

Slowly the Shape took outline as I gazed

At her full-orbed or crescent, till, bedazed

With wonder-working light that subtly wrought

My brain to its own substance, steeping thought

In trances such as poppies give, I saw

Things shut from vision by sight's sober law,

Amorphous, changeful, but defined at last

Into the peerless Shape mine eyes hold fast.

This, too, at first I worshipt: soon, like wine,

Her eyes, in mine poured, frenzy-philtred mine; 70

Passion put Worship's priestly raiment on

And to the woman knelt, the Goddess gone.

Was I, then, more than mortal made? or she

Less than divine that she might mate with me?

If mortal merely, could my nature cope

With such o'ermastery of maddening hope?

If Goddess, could she feel the blissful woe

That women in their self-surrender know?

III

Long she abode aloof there in her heaven,

Far as the grape-bunch of the Pleiad seven 80

Beyond my madness' utmost leap; but here

Mine eyes have feigned of late her rapture near,

Moulded of mind-mist that broad day dispels,

Here in these shadowy woods and brook-lulled dells.

Have no heaven-habitants e'er felt a void

In hearts sublimed with ichor unalloyed?

E'er longed to mingle with a mortal fate

Intense with pathos of its briefer date?

Could she partake, and live, our human stains?

Even with the thought there tingles through my veins 90

Sense of unwarned renewal; I, the dead,

Receive and house again the ardor fled,

As once Alcestis; to the ruddy brim

Feel masculine virtue flooding every limb,

And life, like Spring returning, brings the key

That sets my senses from their winter free,

Dancing like naked fauns too glad for shame.

Her passion, purified to palest flame,

Can it thus kindle? Is her purpose this?

I will not argue, lest I lose a bliss 100

That makes me dream Tithonus' fortune mine,

(Or what of it was palpably divine

Ere came the fruitlessly immortal gift;)

I cannot curb my hope's imperious drift

That wings with fire my dull mortality;

Though fancy-forged, 'tis all I feel or see.

IV

My Goddess sinks; round Latmos' darkening brow

Trembles the parting of her presence now,

Faint as the perfume left upon the grass

By her limbs' pressure or her feet that pass 110

By me conjectured, but conjectured so

As things I touch far fainter substance show.

Was it mine eyes' imposture I have seen

Flit with the moonbeams on from shade to sheen

Through the wood-openings? Nay, I see her now

Out of her heaven new-lighted, from her brow

The hair breeze-scattered, like loose mists that blow

Across her crescent, goldening as they go

High-kirtled for the chase, and what was shown,

Of maiden rondure, like the rose half-blown. 120

If dream, turn real! If a vision, stay!

Take mortal shape, my philtre's spell obey!

If hags compel thee from thy secret sky

With gruesome incantations, why not I,

Whose only magic is that I distil

A potion, blent of passion, thought, and will,

Deeper in reach, in force of fate more rich,

Than e'er was juice wrung by Thessalian witch

From moon-enchanted herbs,--a potion brewed

Of my best life in each diviner mood? 130

Myself the elixir am, myself the bowl

Seething and mantling with my soul of soul.

Taste and be humanized: what though the cup,

With thy lips frenzied, shatter? Drink it up!

If but these arms may clasp, o'erquited so,

My world, thy heaven, all life means I shall know.

V

Sure she hath heard my prayer and granted half,

As Gods do who at mortal madness laugh.

Yet if life's solid things illusion seem,

Why may not substance wear the mask of dream? 140

In sleep she comes; she visits me in dreams,

And, as her image in a thousand streams,

So in my veins, that her obey, she sees,

Floating and flaming there, her images

Bear to my little world's remotest zone

Glad messages of her, and her alone.

With silence-sandalled Sleep she comes to me,

(But softer-footed, sweeter-browed, than she,)

In motion gracious as a seagull's wing,

And all her bright limbs, moving, seem to sing. 150

Let me believe so, then, if so I may

With the night's bounty feed my beggared day.

In dreams I see her lay the goddess down

With bow and quiver, and her crescent-crown

Flicker and fade away to dull eclipse

As down to mine she deigns her longed-for lips;

And as her neck my happy arms enfold,

Flooded and lustred with her loosened gold,

She whispers words each sweeter than a kiss:

Then, wakened with the shock of sudden bliss, 160

My arms are empty, my awakener fled,

And, silent in the silent sky o'erhead,

But coldly as on ice-plated snow, she gleams,

Herself the mother and the child of dreams.

VI

Gone is the time when phantasms could appease

My quest phantasmal and bring cheated ease;

When, if she glorified my dreams, I felt

Through all my limbs a change immortal melt

At touch of hers illuminate with soul.

Not long could I be stilled with Fancy's dole; 170

Too soon the mortal mixture in me caught

Red fire from her celestial flame, and fought

For tyrannous control in all my veins:

My fool's prayer was accepted; what remains?

Or was it some eidolon merely, sent

By her who rules the shades in banishment,

To mock me with her semblance? Were it thus,

How 'scape I shame, whose will was traitorous?

What shall compensate an ideal dimmed?

How blanch again my statue virgin-limbed, 180

Soiled with the incense-smoke her chosen priest

Poured more profusely as within decreased

The fire unearthly, fed with coals from far

Within the soul's shrine? Could my fallen star

Be set in heaven again by prayers and tears

And quenchless sacrifice of all my years,

How would the victim to the flamen leap,

And life for life's redemption paid hold cheap!

But what resource when she herself descends

From her blue throne, and o'er her vassal bends 190

That shape thrice-deified by love, those eyes

Wherein the Lethe of all others lies?

When my white queen of heaven's remoteness tires,

Herself against her other self conspires,

Takes woman's nature, walks in mortal ways,

And finds in my remorse her beauty's praise?

Yet all would I renounce to dream again

The dream in dreams fulfilled that made my pain,

My noble pain that heightened all my years

With crowns to win and prowess-breeding tears; 200

Nay, would that dream renounce once more to see

Her from her sky there looking down at me!

VII

Goddess, reclimb thy heaven, and be once more

An inaccessible splendor to adore,

A faith, a hope of such transcendent worth

As bred ennobling discontent with earth;

Give back the longing, back the elated mood

That, fed with thee, spurned every meaner good;

Give even the spur of impotent despair

That, without hope, still bade aspire and dare; 210

Give back the need to worship, that still pours

Down to the soul the virtue it adores!

Nay, brightest and most beautiful, deem naught

These frantic words, the reckless wind of thought;

Still stoop, still grant,--I live but in thy will;

Be what thou wilt, but be a woman still!

Vainly I cried, nor could myself believe

That what I prayed for I would fain receive;

My moon is set; my vision set with her;

No more can worship vain my pulses stir. 220

Goddess Triform, I own thy triple spell,

My heaven's queen,--queen, too, of my earth and hell!

THE BLACK PREACHER

A BRETON LEGEND

At Carnac in Brittany, close on the bay,

They show you a church, or rather the gray

Ribs of a dead one, left there to bleach

With the wreck lying near on the crest of the beach,

Roofless and splintered with thunder-stone,

'Mid lichen-blurred gravestones all alone;

'Tis the kind of ruin strange sights to see

That may have their teaching for you and me.

Something like this, then, my guide had to tell,

Perched on a saint cracked across when he fell; 10

But since I might chance give his meaning a wrench,

He talking his \_patois\_ and I English-French,

I'll put what he told me, preserving the tone,

In a rhymed prose that makes it half his, half my own.

An abbey-church stood here, once on a time,

Built as a death-bed atonement for crime:

'Twas for somebody's sins, I know not whose;

But sinners are plenty, and you can choose.

Though a cloister now of the dusk-winged bat,

'Twas rich enough once, and the brothers grew fat, 20

Looser in girdle and purpler in jowl,

Singing good rest to the founder's lost soul.

But one day came Northmen, and lithe tongues of fire

Lapped up the chapter-house, licked off the spire,

And left all a rubbish-heap, black and dreary,

Where only the wind sings \_miserere\_.

No priest has kneeled since at the altar's foot,

Whose crannies are searched by the nightshade's root,

Nor sound of service is ever heard,

Except from throat of the unclean bird, 30

Hooting to unassoiled shapes as they pass

In midnights unholy his witches' mass,

Or shouting 'Ho! ho!' from the belfry high

As the Devil's sabbath-train whirls by.

But once a year, on the eve of All-Souls,

Through these arches dishallowed the organ rolls,

Fingers long fleshless the bell-ropes work,

The chimes peal muffled with sea-mists mirk,

The skeleton windows are traced anew

On the baleful nicker of corpse-lights blue, 40

And the ghosts must come, so the legend saith,

To a preaching of Reverend Doctor Death.

Abbots, monks, barons, and ladies fair

Hear the dull summons and gather there:

No rustle of silk now, no clink of mail,

Nor ever a one greets his church-mate pale;

No knight whispers love in the \_chÃ¢telaine's\_ ear,

His next-door neighbor this five-hundred year;

No monk has a sleek \_benedicite\_

For the great lord shadowy now as he; 50

Nor needeth any to hold his breath,

Lest he lose the least word of Doctor Death.

He chooses his text in the Book Divine,

Tenth verse of the Preacher in chapter nine:

'"Whatsoever thy hand shall find thee to do,

That do with thy whole might, or thou shalt rue;

For no man is wealthy, or wise, or brave,

In that quencher of might-be's and would-be's, the grave."

Bid by the Bridegroom, "To-morrow," ye said,

And To-morrow was digging a trench for your bed; 60

Ye said, "God can wait; let us finish our wine;"

Ye had wearied Him, fools, and that last knock was mine!'

But I can't pretend to give you the sermon,

Or say if the tongue were French, Latin, or German;

Whatever he preached in, I give you my word

The meaning was easy to all that heard;

Famous preachers there have been and be,

But never was one so convincing as he;

So blunt was never a begging friar,

No Jesuit's tongue so barbed with fire, 70

Cameronian never, nor Methodist,

Wrung gall out of Scripture with such a twist.

And would you know who his hearers must be?

I tell you just what my guide told me:

Excellent teaching men have, day and night,

From two earnest friars, a black and a white,

The Dominican Death and the Carmelite Life;

And between these two there is never strife,

For each has his separate office and station,

And each his own work in the congregation; 80

Whoso to the white brother deafens his ears,

And cannot be wrought on by blessings or tears,

Awake In his coffin must wait and wait,

In that blackness of darkness that means \_too late\_,

And come once a year, when the ghost-bell tolls,

As till Doomsday it shall on the eve of All-Souls,

To hear Doctor Death, whose words smart with the brine

Of the Preacher, the tenth verse of chapter nine.

ARCADIA REDIVIVA

I, walking the familiar street,

While a crammed horse-car jingled through it,

Was lifted from my prosy feet

And in Arcadia ere I knew it.

Fresh sward for gravel soothed my tread,

And shepherd's pipes my ear delighted;

The riddle may be lightly read:

I met two lovers newly plighted.

They murmured by in happy care,

New plans for paradise devising, 10

Just as the moon, with pensive stare,

O'er Mistress Craigie's pines was rising.

Astarte, known nigh threescore years,

Me to no speechless rapture urges;

Them in Elysium she enspheres,

Queen, from of old, of thaumaturges.

The railings put forth bud and bloom,

The house-fronts all with myrtles twine them,

And light-winged Loves in every room

Make nests, and then with kisses line them. 20

O sweetness of untasted life!

O dream, its own supreme fulfillment!

O hours with all illusion rife,

As ere the heart divined what ill meant!

'\_Et ego\_', sighed I to myself,

And strove some vain regrets to bridle,

'Though now laid dusty on the shelf,

Was hero once of such an idyl!

'An idyl ever newly sweet,

Although since Adam's day recited, 30

Whose measures time them to Love's feet,

Whose sense is every ill requited.'

Maiden, if I may counsel, drain

Each drop of this enchanted season,

For even our honeymoons must wane,

Convicted of green cheese by Reason.

And none will seem so safe from change,

Nor in such skies benignant hover,

As this, beneath whose witchery strange

You tread on rose-leaves with your lover. 40

The glass unfilled all tastes can fit,

As round its brim Conjecture dances;

For not Mephisto's self hath wit

To draw such vintages as Fancy's.

When our pulse beats its minor key,

When play-time halves and school-time doubles,

Age fills the cup with serious tea,

Which once Dame Clicquot starred with bubbles.

'Fie, Mr. Graybeard! Is this wise?

Is this the moral of a poet, 50

Who, when the plant of Eden dies,

Is privileged once more to sow it!

'That herb of clay-disdaining root,

From stars secreting what it feeds on,

Is burnt-out passion's slag and soot

Fit soil to strew its dainty seeds on?

'Pray, why, if in Arcadia once,

Need one so soon forget the way there?

Or why, once there, be such a dunce

As not contentedly to stay there?' 60

Dear child, 'twas but a sorry jest,

And from my heart I hate the cynic

Who makes the Book of Life a nest

For comments staler than rabbinic.

If Love his simple spell but keep,

Life with ideal eyes to flatter,

The Grail itself were crockery cheap

To Every-day's communion-platter.

One Darby is to me well known,

Who, as the hearth between them blazes, 70

Sees the old moonlight shine on Joan,

And float her youthward in its hazes.

He rubs his spectacles, he stares,--

'Tis the same face that witched him early!

He gropes for his remaining hairs,--

Is this a fleece that feels so curly?

'Good heavens! but now 'twas winter gray,

And I of years had more than plenty;

The almanac's a fool! 'Tis May!

Hang family Bibles! I am twenty! 80

'Come, Joan, your arm; we'll walk the room--

The lane, I mean--do you remember?

How confident the roses bloom,

As if it ne'er could be December!

'Nor more it shall, while in your eyes

My heart its summer heat recovers,

And you, howe'er your mirror lies,

Find your old beauty in your lover's.'

THE NEST

MAY

When oaken woods with buds are pink,

And new-come birds each morning sing,

When fickle May on Summer's brink

Pauses, and knows not which to fling,

Whether fresh bud and bloom again,

Or hoar-frost silvering hill and plain,

Then from the honeysuckle gray

The oriole with experienced quest

Twitches the fibrous bark away,

The cordage of his hammock-nest.

Cheering his labor with a note

Rich as the orange of his throat.

High o'er the loud and dusty road

The soft gray cup in safety swings,

To brim ere August with its load

Of downy breasts and throbbing wings,

O'er which the friendly elm-tree heaves

An emerald roof with sculptured eaves.

Below, the noisy World drags by

In the old way, because it must,

The bride with heartbreak in her eye,

The mourner following hated dust:

Thy duty, wingÃ¨d flame of Spring,

Is but to love, and fly, and sing.

Oh, happy life, to soar and sway

Above the life by mortals led,

Singing the merry months away,

Master, not slave of daily bread,

And, when the Autumn comes, to flee

Wherever sunshine beckons thee!

PALINODE--DECEMBER

Like some lorn abbey now, the wood

Stands roofless in the bitter air;

In ruins on its floor is strewed

The carven foliage quaint and rare,

And homeless winds complain along

The columned choir once thrilled with song.

And thou, dear nest, whence joy and praise

The thankful oriole used to pour,

Swing'st empty while the north winds chase

Their snowy swarms from Labrador:

But, loyal to the happy past,

I love thee still for what thou wast.

Ah, when the Summer graces flee

From other nests more dear than thou,

And, where June crowded once, I see

Only bare trunk and disleaved bough;

When springs of life that gleamed and gushed

Run chilled, and slower, and are hushed;

When our own branches, naked long,

The vacant nests of Spring betray,

Nurseries of passion, love, and song

That vanished as our year grew gray;

When Life drones o'er a tale twice told

O'er embers pleading with the cold,--

I'll trust, that, like the birds of Spring,

Our good goes not without repair,

But only flies to soar and sing

Far off in some diviner air,

Where we shall find it in the calms

Of that fair garden 'neath the palms.

A YOUTHFUL EXPERIMENT IN ENGLISH HEXAMETERS

IMPRESSIONS OF HOMER

Sometimes come pauses of calm, when the rapt bard, holding his heart back,

Over his deep mind muses, as when o'er awe-stricken ocean

Poises a heapt cloud luridly, ripening the gale and the thunder;

Slow rolls onward the verse with a long swell heaving and swinging,

Seeming to wait till, gradually wid'ning from far-off horizons,

Piling the deeps up, heaping the glad-hearted surges before it,

Gathers the thought as a strong wind darkening and cresting the tumult.

Then every pause, every heave, each trough in the waves, has its meaning;

Full-sailed, forth like a tall ship steadies the theme, and around it,

Leaping beside it in glad strength, running in wild glee beyond it,

Harmonies billow exulting and floating the soul where it lists them,

Swaying the listener's fantasy hither and thither like drift-weed.

BIRTHDAY VERSES

WRITTEN IN A CHILD'S ALBUM

'Twas sung of old in hut and hall

How once a king in evil hour

Hung musing o'er his castle wall,

And, lost in idle dreams, let fall

Into the sea his ring of power.

Then, let him sorrow as he might,

And pledge his daughter and his throne

To who restored the jewel bright,

The broken spell would ne'er unite;

The grim old ocean held its own.

Those awful powers on man that wait,

On man, the beggar or the king,

To hovel bare or hall of state

A magic ring that masters fate

With each succeeding birthday bring.

Therein are set four jewels rare:

Pearl winter, summer's ruby blaze,

Spring's emerald, and, than all more fair,

Fall's pensive opal, doomed to bear

A heart of fire bedreamed with haze.

To him the simple spell who knows

The spirits of the ring to sway,

Fresh power with every sunrise flows,

And royal pursuivants are those

That fly his mandates to obey.

But he that with a slackened will

Dreams of things past or things to be,

From him the charm is slipping still,

And drops, ere he suspect the ill,

Into the inexorable sea.

ESTRANGEMENT

The path from me to you that led,

Untrodden long, with grass is grown,

Mute carpet that his lieges spread

Before the Prince Oblivion

When he goes visiting the dead.

And who are they but who forget?

You, who my coming could surmise

Ere any hint of me as yet

Warned other ears and other eyes,

See the path blurred without regret.

But when I trace its windings sweet

With saddened steps, at every spot

That feels the memory in my feet,

Each grass-blade turns forget-me-not,

Where murmuring bees your name repeat.

PHOEBE

Ere pales in Heaven the morning star,

A bird, the loneliest of its kind,

Hears Dawn's faint footfall from afar

While all its mates are dumb and blind.

It is a wee sad-colored thing,

As shy and secret as a maid,

That, ere in choir the robins sing,

Pipes its own name like one afraid.

It seems pain-prompted to repeat

The story of some ancient ill,

But \_Phoebe! Phoebe!\_ sadly sweet

Is all it says, and then is still.

It calls and listens. Earth and sky,

Hushed by the pathos of its fate,

Listen: no whisper of reply

Comes from its doom-dissevered mate.

\_Phoebe!\_ it calls and calls again,

And Ovid, could he but have heard,

Had hung a legendary pain

About the memory of the bird;

A pain articulate so long,

In penance of some mouldered crime

Whose ghost still flies the Furies' thong

Down the waste solitudes of time.

Waif of the young World's wonder-hour,

When gods found mortal maidens fair,

And will malign was joined with power

Love's kindly laws to overbear,

Like Progne, did it feel the stress

And coil of the prevailing words

Close round its being, and compress

Man's ampler nature to a bird's?

One only memory left of all

The motley crowd of vanished scenes,

Hers, and vain impulse to recall

By repetition what it means.

\_Phoebe!\_ is all it has to say

In plaintive cadence o'er and o'er,

Like children that have lost their way,

And know their names, but nothing more.

Is it a type, since Nature's Lyre

Vibrates to every note in man,

Of that insatiable desire,

Meant to be so since life began?

I, in strange lands at gray of dawn,

Wakeful, have heard that fruitless plaint

Through Memory's chambers deep withdrawn

Renew its iterations faint.

So nigh! yet from remotest years

It summons back its magic, rife

With longings unappeased, and tears

Drawn from the very source of life.

DAS EWIG-WEIBLICHE

How was I worthy so divine a loss,

Deepening my midnights, kindling all my morns?

Why waste such precious wood to make my cross,

Such far-sought roses for my crown of thorns?

And when she came, how earned I such a gift?

Why spend on me, a poor earth-delving mole,

The fireside sweetnesses, the heavenward lift,

The hourly mercy, of a woman's soul?

Ah, did we know to give her all her right,

What wonders even in our poor clay were done!

It is not Woman leaves us to our night,

But our brute earth that grovels from her sun.

Our nobler cultured fields and gracious domes

We whirl too oft from her who still shines on

To light in vain our caves and clefts, the homes

Of night-bird instincts pained till she be gone.

Still must this body starve our souls with shade;

But when Death makes us what we were before,

Then shall her sunshine all our depths invade,

And not a shadow stain heaven's crystal floor.

THE RECALL

Come back before the birds are flown,

Before the leaves desert the tree,

And, through the lonely alleys blown,

Whisper their vain regrets to me

Who drive before a blast more rude,

The plaything of my gusty mood,

In vain pursuing and pursued!

Nay, come although the boughs be bare,

Though snowflakes fledge the summer's nest,

And in some far Ausonian air

The thrush, your minstrel, warm his breast.

Come, sunshine's treasurer, and bring

To doubting flowers their faith in spring,

To birds and me the need to sing!

ABSENCE

Sleep is Death's image,--poets tell us so;

But Absence is the bitter self of Death,

And, you away, Life's lips their red forego,

Parched in an air unfreshened by your breath.

Light of those eyes that made the light of mine,

Where shine you? On what happier fields and flowers?

Heaven's lamps renew their lustre less divine,

But only serve to count my darkened hours.

If with your presence went your image too,

That brain-born ghost my path would never cross

Which meets me now where'er I once met you,

Then vanishes, to multiply my loss.

MONNA LISA

She gave me all that woman can,

Nor her soul's nunnery forego,

A confidence that man to man

Without remorse can never show.

Rare art, that can the sense refine

Till not a pulse rebellious stirs,

And, since she never can be mine,

Makes it seem sweeter to be hers!

THE OPTIMIST

Turbid from London's noise and smoke,

Here I find air and quiet too;

Air filtered through the beech and oak,

Quiet by nothing harsher broke

Than wood-dove's meditative coo.

The Truce of God is here; the breeze

Sighs as men sigh relieved from care,

Or tilts as lightly in the trees

As might a robin: all is ease,

With pledge of ampler ease to spare.

Time, leaning on his scythe, forgets

To turn the hour-glass in his hand,

And all life's petty cares and frets,

Its teasing hopes and weak regrets,

Are still as that oblivious sand.

Repose fills all the generous space

Of undulant plain; the rook and crow

Hush; 'tis as if a silent grace,

By Nature murmured, calmed the face

Of Heaven above and Earth below.

From past and future toils I rest,

One Sabbath pacifies my year;

I am the halcyon, this my nest;

And all is safely for the best

While the World's there and I am here.

So I turn tory for the nonce,

And think the radical a bore,

Who cannot see, thick-witted dunce,

That what was good for people once

Must be as good forevermore.

Sun, sink no deeper down the sky;

Earth, never change this summer mood;

Breeze, loiter thus forever by,

Stir the dead leaf or let it lie;

Since I am happy, all is good.

ON BURNING SOME OLD LETTERS

With what odorous woods and spices

Spared for royal sacrifices,

With what costly gums seld-seen,

Hoarded to embalm a queen,

With what frankincense and myrrh,

Burn these precious parts of her,

Full of life and light and sweetness

As a summer day's completeness,

Joy of sun and song of bird

Running wild in every word,

Full of all the superhuman

Grace and winsomeness of woman?

O'er these leaves her wrist has slid,

Thrilled with veins where fire is hid

'Neath the skin's pellucid veil,

Like the opal's passion pale;

This her breath has sweetened; this

Still seems trembling with the kiss

She half-ventured on my name,

Brow and cheek and throat aflame;

Over all caressing lies

Sunshine left there by her eyes;

From them all an effluence rare

With her nearness fills the air,

Till the murmur I half-hear

Of her light feet drawing near.

Rarest woods were coarse and rough,

Sweetest spice not sweet enough,

Too impure all earthly fire

For this sacred funeral-pyre;

These rich relics must suffice

For their own dear sacrifice.

Seek we first an altar fit

For such victims laid on it:

It shall be this slab brought home

In old happy days from Rome,--

Lazuli, once blest to line

Dian's inmost cell and shrine.

Gently now I lay them there.

Pure as Dian's forehead bare,

Yet suffused with warmer hue,

Such as only Latmos knew.

Fire I gather from the sun

In a virgin lens; 'tis done!

Mount the flames, red, yellow, blue,

As her moods were shining through,

Of the moment's impulse born,--

Moods of sweetness, playful scorn,

Half defiance, half surrender,

More than cruel, more than tender,

Flouts, caresses, sunshine, shade,

Gracious doublings of a maid

Infinite in guileless art,

Playing hide-seek with her heart.

On the altar now, alas,

There they lie a crinkling mass,

Writhing still, as if with grief

Went the life from every leaf;

Then (heart-breaking palimpsest!)

Vanishing ere wholly guessed,

Suddenly some lines flash back,

Traced in lightning on the black,

And confess, till now denied,

All the fire they strove to hide.

What they told me, sacred trust,

Stays to glorify my dust,

There to burn through dust and damp

Like a mage's deathless lamp,

While an atom of this frame

Lasts to feed the dainty flame.

All is ashes now, but they

In my soul are laid away,

And their radiance round me hovers

Soft as moonlight over lovers,

Shutting her and me alone

In dream-Edens of our own;

First of lovers to invent

Love, and teach men what it meant.

THE PROTEST

I could not bear to see those eyes

On all with wasteful largess shine,

And that delight of welcome rise

Like sunshine strained through amber wine,

But that a glow from deeper skies,

From conscious fountains more divine,

Is (is it?) mine.

Be beautiful to all mankind,

As Nature fashioned thee to be;

'Twould anger me did all not find

The sweet perfection that's in thee:

Yet keep one charm of charms behind,--

Nay, thou'rt so rich, keep two or three

For (is it?) me!

THE PETITION

Oh, tell me less or tell me more,

Soft eyes with mystery at the core,

That always seem to melt my own

Frankly as pansies fully grown,

Yet waver still 'tween no and yes!

So swift to cavil and deny,

Then parley with concessions shy,

Dear eyes, that make their youth be mine

And through my inmost shadows shine,

Oh, tell me more or tell me less!

FACT OR FANCY?

In town I hear, scarce wakened yet,

My neighbor's clock behind the wall

Record the day's increasing debt,

And \_Cuckoo! Cuckoo!\_ faintly call.

Our senses run in deepening grooves,

Thrown out of which they lose their tact,

And consciousness with effort moves

From habit past to present fact.

So, in the country waked to-day,

I hear, unwitting of the change,

A cuckoo's throb from far away

Begin to strike, nor think it strange.

The sound creates its wonted frame:

My bed at home, the songster hid

Behind the wainscoting,--all came

As long association bid.

Then, half aroused, ere yet Sleep's mist

From the mind's uplands furl away,

To the familiar sound I list,

Disputed for by Night and Day.

I count to learn how late it is,

Until, arrived at thirty-four,

I question, 'What strange world is this

Whose lavish hours would make me poor?'

\_Cuckoo! Cuckoo!\_ Still on it went,

With hints of mockery in its tone;

How could such hoards of time be spent

By one poor mortal's wit alone?

I have it! Grant, ye kindly Powers,

I from this spot may never stir,

If only these uncounted hours

May pass, and seem too short, with Her!

But who She is, her form and face,

These to the world of dream belong;

She moves through fancy's visioned space,

Unbodied, like the cuckoo's song.

AGRO-DOLCE

One kiss from all others prevents me,

And sets all my pulses astir,

And burns on my lips and torments me:

'Tis the kiss that I fain would give her.

One kiss for all others requites me,

Although it is never to be,

And sweetens my dreams and invites me:

'Tis the kiss that she dare not give me.

Ah, could it he mine, it were sweeter

Than honey bees garner in dream,

Though its bliss on my lips were fleeter

Than a swallow's dip to the stream.

And yet, thus denied, it can never

In the prose of life vanish away;

O'er my lips it must hover forever,

The sunshine and shade of my day.

THE BROKEN TRYST

Walking alone where we walked together,

When June was breezy and blue,

I watch in the gray autumnal weather

The leaves fall inconstant as you.

If a dead leaf startle behind me,

I think 'tis your garment's hem,

And, oh, where no memory could find me,

Might I whirl away with them!

CASA SIN ALMA

RECUERDO DE MADRID

Silencioso por la puerta

Voy de su casa desierta

Do siempre feliz entrÃ©,

Y la encuentro en vano abierta

Cual la boca de una muerta

Despues que el alma se fuÃ©.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES

'What means this glory round our feet,'

The Magi mused, 'more bright than morn?'

And voices chanted clear and sweet,

'To-day the Prince of Peace is born!'

'What means that star,' the Shepherds said,

'That brightens through the rocky glen?'

And angels, answering overhead,

Sang, 'Peace on earth, good-will to men!'

'Tis eighteen hundred years and more

Since those sweet oracles were dumb;

We wait for Him, like them of yore;

Alas, He seems so slow to come!

But it was said, in words of gold

No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,

That little children might be bold

In perfect trust to come to Him.

All round about our feet shall shine

A light like that the wise men saw,

If we our loving wills incline

To that sweet Life which is the Law.

So shall we learn to understand

The simple faith of shepherds then,

And, clasping kindly hand in hand,

Sing, 'Peace on earth, good-will to men!'

And they who do their souls no wrong,

But keep at eve the faith of morn,

Shall daily hear the angel-song,

'To-day the Prince of Peace is born!'

MY PORTRAIT GALLERY

Oft round my hall of portraiture I gaze,

By Memory reared, the artist wise and holy,

From stainless quarries of deep-buried days.

There, as I muse in soothing melancholy,

Your faces glow in more than mortal youth,

Companions of my prime, now vanished wholly,

The loud, impetuous boy, the low-voiced maiden,

Now for the first time seen in flawless truth.

Ah, never master that drew mortal breath

Can match thy portraits, just and generous Death,

Whose brush with sweet regretful tints is laden!

Thou paintest that which struggled here below

Half understood, or understood for woe,

And with a sweet forewarning

Mak'st round the sacred front an aureole glow

Woven of that light that rose on Easter morning.

PAOLO TO FRANCESCA

I was with thee in Heaven: I cannot tell

If years or moments, so the sudden bliss,

When first we found, then lost, us in a kiss.

Abolished Time, abolished Earth and Hell,

Left only Heaven. Then from our blue there fell

The dagger's flash, and did not fall amiss,

For nothing now can rob my life of this,--

That once with thee in Heaven, all else is well.

Us, undivided when man's vengeance came,

God's half-forgives that doth not here divide;

And, were this bitter whirl-blast fanged with flame,

To me 'twere summer, we being side by side:

This granted, I God's mercy will not blame,

For, given thy nearness, nothing is denied.

SONNET

SCOTTISH BORDER

As sinks the sun behind yon alien hills

Whose heather-purple slopes, in glory rolled,

Flush all my thought with momentary gold,

What pang of vague regret my fancy thrills?

Here 'tis enchanted ground the peasant tills,

Where the shy ballad dared its blooms unfold,

And memory's glamour makes new sights seem old,

As when our life some vanished dream fulfils.

Yet not to thee belong these painless tears,

Land loved ere seen: before my darkened eyes,

From far beyond the waters and the years,

Horizons mute that wait their poet rise;

The stream before me fades and disappears,

And in the Charles the western splendor dies.

SONNET

ON BEING ASKED FOR AN AUTOGRAPH IN VENICE

Amid these fragments of heroic days

When thought met deed with mutual passion's leap,

There sits a Fame whose silent trump makes cheap

What short-lived rumor of ourselves we raise.

They had far other estimate of praise

Who stamped the signet of their souls so deep

In art and action, and whose memories keep

Their height like stars above our misty ways:

In this grave presence to record my name

Something within me hangs the head and shrinks.

Dull were the soul without some joy in fame;

Yet here to claim remembrance were, methinks,

Like him who, in the desert's awful frame,

Notches his cockney initials on the Sphinx.

THE DANCING BEAR

Far over Elf-land poets stretch their sway,

And win their dearest crowns beyond the goal

Of their own conscious purpose; they control

With gossamer threads wide-flown our fancy's play,

And so our action. On my walk to-day,

A wallowing bear begged clumsily his toll,

When straight a vision rose of Atta Troll,

And scenes ideal witched mine eyes away.

'\_Merci, Mossieu!\_' the astonished bear-ward cried,

Grateful for thrice his hope to me, the slave

Of partial memory, seeing at his side

A bear immortal. The glad dole I gave

Was none of mine; poor Heine o'er the wide

Atlantic welter stretched it from his grave.

THE MAPLE

The Maple puts her corals on in May,

While loitering frosts about the lowlands cling,

To be in tune with what the robins sing,

Plastering new log-huts 'mid her branches gray;

But when the Autumn southward turns away,

Then in her veins burns most the blood of Spring.

And every leaf, intensely blossoming,

Makes the year's sunset pale the set of day.

O Youth unprescient, were it only so

With trees you plant, and in whose shade reclined,

Thinking their drifting blooms Fate's coldest snow,

You carve dear names upon the faithful rind,

Nor in that vernal stem the cross foreknow

That Age shall bear, silent, yet unresigned!

NIGHTWATCHES

While the slow clock, as they were miser's gold,

Counts and recounts the mornward steps of Time,

The darkness thrills with conscience of each crime

By Death committed, daily grown more bold.

Once more the list of all my wrongs is told,

And ghostly hands stretch to me from my prime

Helpless farewells, as from an alien clime;

For each new loss redoubles all the old.

This morn 'twas May; the blossoms were astir

With southern wind; but now the boughs are bent

With snow instead of birds, and all things freeze.

How much of all my past is dumb with her,

And of my future, too, for with her went

Half of that world I ever cared to please!

DEATH OF QUEEN MERCEDES

Hers all that Earth could promise or bestow,--

Youth, Beauty, Love, a crown, the beckoning years,

Lids never wet, unless with joyous tears,

A life remote from every sordid woe,

And by a nation's swelled to lordlier flow.

What lurking-place, thought we, for doubts or fears,

When, the day's swan, she swam along the cheers

Of the AlcalÃ¡, five happy months ago?

The guns were shouting Io Hymen then

That, on her birthday, now denounce her doom;

The same white steeds that tossed their scorn of men

To-day as proudly drag her to the tomb.

Grim jest of fate! Yet who dare call it blind,

Knowing what life is, what our human-kind?

PRISON OF CERVANTES

Seat of all woes? Though Nature's firm decree

The narrowing soul with narrowing dungeon bind,

Yet was his free of motion as the wind,

And held both worlds, of spirit and sense, in fee.

In charmed communion with his dual mind

He wandered Spain, himself both knight and hind,

Redressing wrongs he knew must ever be.

His humor wise could see life's long deceit,

Man's baffled aims, nor therefore both despise;

His knightly nature could ill fortune greet

Like an old friend. Whose ever such kind eyes

That pierced so deep, such scope, save his whose feet

By Avon ceased 'neath the same April's skies?

TO A LADY PLAYING ON THE CITHERN

So dreamy-soft the notes, so far away

They seem to fall, the horns of Oberon

Blow their faint Hunt's-up from the good-time gone;

Or, on a morning of long-withered May,

Larks tinkle unseen o'er Claudian arches gray,

That Romeward crawl from Dreamland; and anon

My fancy flings her cloak of Darkness on,

To vanish from the dungeon of To-day.

In happier times and scenes I seem to be,

And, as her fingers flutter o'er the strings,

The days return when I was young as she,

And my fledged thoughts began to feel their wings

With all Heaven's blue before them: Memory

Or Music is it such enchantment sings?

THE EYE'S TREASURY

Gold of the reddening sunset, backward thrown

In largess on my tall paternal trees,

Thou with false hope or fear didst never tease

His heart that hoards thee; nor is childhood flown

From him whose life no fairer boon hath known

Than that what pleased him earliest still should please:

And who hath incomes safe from chance as these,

Gone in a moment, yet for life his own?

All other gold is slave of earthward laws;

This to the deeps of ether takes its flight,

And on the topmost leaves makes glorious pause

Of parting pathos ere it yield to night:

So linger, as from me earth's light withdraws,

Dear touch of Nature, tremulously bright!

PESSIMOPTIMISM

Ye little think what toil it was to build

A world of men imperfect even as this,

Where we conceive of Good by what we miss,

Of ill by that wherewith best days are filled;

A world whose every atom is self-willed,

Whose corner-stone is propt on artifice,

Whose joy is shorter-lived than woman's kiss,

Whose wisdom hoarded is but to be spilled.

Yet this is better than a life of caves,

Whose highest art was scratching on a bone,

Or chipping toilsome arrowheads of flint;

Better, though doomed to hear while Cleon raves,

To see wit's want eterned in paint or stone,

And wade the drain-drenched shoals of daily print.

THE BRAKES

What countless years and wealth of brain were spent

To bring us hither from our caves and huts,

And trace through pathless wilds the deep-worn ruts

Of faith and habit, by whose deep indent

Prudence may guide if genius be not lent,

Genius, not always happy when it shuts

Its ears against the plodder's ifs and buts,

Hoping in one rash leap to snatch the event.

The coursers of the sun, whose hoofs of flame

Consume morn's misty threshold, are exact

As bankers' clerks, and all this star-poised frame,

One swerve allowed, were with convulsion rackt;

This world were doomed, should Dulness fail, to tame

Wit's feathered heels in the stern stocks of fact.

A FOREBODING

What were the whole void world, if thou wert dead,

Whose briefest absence can eclipse my day,

And make the hours that danced with Time away

Drag their funereal steps with muffled head?

Through thee, meseems, the very rose is red,

From thee the violet steals its breath in May,

From thee draw life all things that grow not gray,

And by thy force the happy stars are sped.

Thou near, the hope of thee to overflow

Fills all my earth and heaven, as when in Spring,

Ere April come, the birds and blossoms know,

And grasses brighten round her feet to cling;

Nay, and this hope delights all nature so

That the dumb turf I tread on seems to sing.

III. FANCY

UNDER THE OCTOBER MAPLES

What mean these banners spread,

These paths with royal red

So gaily carpeted?

Comes there a prince to-day?

Such footing were too fine

For feet less argentine

Than Dian's own or thine,

Queen whom my tides obey.

Surely for thee are meant

These hues so orient

That with a sultan's tent

Each tree invites the sun;

Our Earth such homage pays,

So decks her dusty ways,

And keeps such holidays,

For one and only one.

My brain shapes form and face,

Throbs with the rhythmic grace

And cadence of her pace

To all fine instincts true;

Her footsteps, as they pass,

Than moonbeams over grass

Fall lighter,--but, alas,

More insubstantial too!

LOVE'S CLOCK

A PASTORAL

DAPHNIS \_waiting\_

'O Dryad feet,

Be doubly fleet,

Timed to my heart's expectant beat

While I await her!

"At four," vowed she;

'Tis scarcely three,

Yet by \_my\_ time it seems to be

A good hour later!'

CHLOE

'Bid me not stay!

Hear reason, pray!

'Tis striking six! Sure never day

Was short as this is!'

DAPHNIS

'Reason nor rhyme

Is in the chime!

It can't be five; I've scarce had time

To beg two kisses!'

BOTH

'Early or late,

When lovers wait,

And Love's watch gains, if Time a gait

So snail-like chooses,

Why should his feet

Become more fleet

Than cowards' are, when lovers meet

And Love's watch loses?'

ELEANOR MAKES MACAROONS

Light of triumph in her eyes,

Eleanor her apron ties;

As she pushes back her sleeves,

High resolve her bosom heaves.

Hasten, cook! impel the fire

To the pace of her desire;

As you hope to save your soul,

Bring a virgin casserole,

Brightest bring of silver spoons,--

Eleanor makes macaroons!

Almond-blossoms, now adance

In the smile of Southern France,

Leave your sport with sun and breeze,

Think of duty, not of ease;

Fashion, 'neath their jerkins brown,

Kernels white as thistle-down,

Tiny cheeses made with cream

From the Galaxy's mid-stream,

Blanched in light of honeymoons,--

Eleanor makes macaroons!

Now for sugar,--nay, our plan

Tolerates no work of man.

Hurry, then, ye golden bees;

Fetch your clearest honey, please,

Garnered on a Yorkshire moor,

While the last larks sing and soar,

From the heather-blossoms sweet

Where sea-breeze and sunshine meet,

And the Augusts mask as Junes,--

Eleanor makes macaroons!

Next the pestle and mortar find.

Pure rock-crystal,--these to grind

Into paste more smooth than silk,

Whiter than the milkweed's milk:

Spread it on a rose-leaf, thus,

Cate to please Theocritus;

Then the fire with spices swell,

While, for her completer spell,

Mystic canticles she croons,--

Eleanor makes macaroons!

Perfect! and all this to waste

On a graybeard's palsied taste!

Poets so their verses write,

Heap them full of life and light,

And then fling them to the rude

Mumbling of the multitude.

Not so dire her fate as theirs,

Since her friend this gift declares

Choicest of his birthday boons,--

Eleanor's dear macaroons!

\_February\_ 22, 1884.

TELEPATHY

'And how could you dream of meeting?'

Nay, how can you ask me, sweet?

All day my pulse had been beating

The tune of your coming feet.

And as nearer and ever nearer

I felt the throb of your tread,

To be in the world grew clearer,

And my blood ran rosier red.

Love called, and I could not linger,

But sought the forbidden tryst,

As music follows the finger

Of the dreaming lutanist

And though you had said it and said it,

'We must not be happy to-day,'

Was I not wiser to credit

The fire in my feet than your Nay?

SCHERZO

When the down is on the chin

And the gold-gleam in the hair,

When the birds their sweethearts win

And champagne is in the air,

Love is here, and Love is there,

Love is welcome everywhere.

Summer's cheek too soon turns thin,

Days grow briefer, sunshine rare;

Autumn from his cannekin

Blows the froth to chase Despair:

Love is met with frosty stare,

Cannot house 'neath branches bare.

When new life is in the leaf

And new red is in the rose,

Though Love's Maytlme be as brief

As a dragon-fly's repose,

Never moments come like those,

Be they Heaven or Hell: who knows?

All too soon comes Winter's grief,

Spendthrift Love's false friends turn foes;

Softly comes Old Age, the thief,

Steals the rapture, leaves the throes:

Love his mantle round him throws,--

'Time to say Good-by; it snows.'

'FRANCISCUS DE VERULAMIO SIC COGITAVIT'

That's a rather bold speech, my Lord Bacon,

For, indeed, is't so easy to know

Just how much we from others have taken,

And how much our own natural flow?

Since your mind bubbled up at its fountain,

How many streams made it elate,

While it calmed to the plain from the mountain,

As every mind must that grows great?

While you thought 'twas You thinking as newly

As Adam still wet with God's dew,

You forgot in your self-pride that truly

The whole Past was thinking through you.

Greece, Rome, nay, your namesake, old Roger,

With Truth's nameless delvers who wrought

In the dark mines of Truth, helped to prod your

Fine brain with the goad of their thought.

As mummy was prized for a rich hue

The painter no elsewhere could find,

So 'twas buried men's thinking with which you

Gave the ripe mellow tone to your mind.

I heard the proud strawberry saying,

'Only look what a ruby I've made!'

It forgot how the bees in their maying

Had brought it the stuff for its trade.

And yet there's the half of a truth in it,

And my Lord might his copyright sue;

For a thought's his who kindles new youth in it,

Or so puts it as makes it more true.

The birds but repeat without ending

The same old traditional notes,

Which some, by more happily blending,

Seem to make over new in their throats;

And we men through our old bit of song run,

Until one just improves on the rest,

And we call a thing his, in the long run,

Who utters it clearest and best.

AUSPEX

My heart, I cannot still it,

Nest that had song-birds in it;

And when the last shall go,

The dreary days, to fill it,

Instead of lark or linnet,

Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,

Without the passion stronger

That skyward longs and sings,--

Woe's me, I shall be lonely

When I can feel no longer

The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,

Like birds the brown leaves hover;

But it will not be long

Before their wild confusion

Fall wavering down to cover

The poet and his song.

THE PREGNANT COMMENT

Opening one day a book of mine,

I absent, Hester found a line

Praised with a pencil-mark, and this

She left transfigured with a kiss.

When next upon the page I chance,

Like Poussin's nymphs my pulses dance,

And whirl my fancy where it sees

Pan piping 'neath Arcadian trees,

Whose leaves no winter-scenes rehearse,

Still young and glad as Homer's verse.

'What mean,' I ask, 'these sudden joys?

This feeling fresher than a boy's?

What makes this line, familiar long,

New as the first bird's April song?

I could, with sense illumined thus,

Clear doubtful texts in Ãeschylus!'

Laughing, one day she gave the key,

My riddle's open-sesame;

Then added, with a smile demure,

Whose downcast lids veiled triumph sure,

'If what I left there give you pain,

You--you--can take it off again;

'Twas for \_my\_ poet, not for him,

Your Doctor Donne there!'

Earth grew dim

And wavered in a golden mist,

As rose, not paper, leaves I kissed.

Donne, you forgive? I let you keep

Her precious comment, poet deep.

THE LESSON

I sat and watched the walls of night

With cracks of sudden lightning glow,

And listened while with clumsy might

The thunder wallowed to and fro.

The rain fell softly now; the squall,

That to a torrent drove the trees,

Had whirled beyond us to let fall

Its tumult on the whitening seas.

But still the lightning crinkled keen,

Or fluttered fitful from behind

The leaden drifts, then only seen,

That rumbled eastward on the wind.

Still as gloom followed after glare,

While bated breath the pine-trees drew,

Tiny Salmoneus of the air,

His mimic bolts the firefly threw.

He thought, no doubt, 'Those flashes grand,

That light for leagues the shuddering sky,

Are made, a fool could understand,

By some superior kind of fly.

'He's of our race's elder branch,

His family-arms the same as ours.

Both born the twy-forked flame to launch,

Of kindred, if unequal, powers.'

And is man wiser? Man who takes

His consciousness the law to be

Of all beyond his ken, and makes

God but a bigger kind of Me?

SCIENCE AND POETRY

He who first stretched his nerves of subtile wire

Over the land and through the sea-depths still,

Thought only of the flame-winged messenger

As a dull drudge that should encircle earth

With sordid messages of Trade, and tame

Blithe Ariel to a bagman. But the Muse

Not long will be defrauded. From her foe

Her misused wand she snatches; at a touch,

The Age of Wonder is renewed again,

And to our disenchanted day restores

The Shoes of Swiftness that give odds to Thought,

The Cloak that makes invisible; and with these

I glide, an airy fire, from shore to shore,

Or from my Cambridge whisper to Cathay.

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING

The century numbers fourscore years;

You, fortressed in your teens,

To Time's alarums close your ears,

And, while he devastates your peers,

Conceive not what he means.

If e'er life's winter fleck with snow

Your hair's deep shadowed bowers,

That winsome head an art would know

To make it charm, and wear it so

As 'twere a wreath of flowers.

If to such fairies years must come,

May yours fall soft and slow

As, shaken by a bee's low hum,

The rose-leaves waver, sweetly dumb,

Down to their mates below!

THE DISCOVERY

I watched a moorland torrent run

Down through the rift itself had made,

Golden as honey in the sun,

Of darkest amber in the shade.

In this wild glen at last, methought,

The magic's secret I surprise;

Here Celia's guardian fairy caught

The changeful splendors of her eyes.

All else grows tame, the sky's one blue,

The one long languish of the rose,

But these, beyond prevision new,

Shall charm and startle to the close.

WITH A SEASHELL

Shell, whose lips, than mine more cold,

Might with Dian's ear make bold,

Seek my Lady's; if thou win

To that portal, shut from sin,

Where commissioned angels' swords

Startle back unholy words,

Thou a miracle shalt see

Wrought by it and wrought in thee;

Thou, the dumb one, shalt recover

Speech of poet, speech of lover.

If she deign to lift you there,

Murmur what I may not dare;

In that archway, pearly-pink

As the Dawn's untrodden brink,

Murmur, 'Excellent and good,

Beauty's best in every mood,

Never common, never tame,

Changeful fair as windwaved flame'--

Nay, I maunder; this she hears

Every day with mocking ears,

With a brow not sudden-stained

With the flush of bliss restrained,

With no tremor of the pulse

More than feels the dreaming dulse

In the midmost ocean's caves,

When a tempest heaps the waves.

Thou must woo her in a phrase

Mystic as the opal's blaze,

Which pure maids alone can see

When their lovers constant be.

I with thee a secret share,

Half a hope, and half a prayer,

Though no reach of mortal skill

Ever told it all, or will;

Say, 'He bids me--nothing more--

Tell you what you guessed before!'

THE SECRET

I have a fancy: how shall I bring it

Home to all mortals wherever they be?

Say it or sing it? Shoe it or wing it,

So it may outrun or outfly ME,

Merest cocoon-web whence it broke free?

Only one secret can save from disaster,

Only one magic is that of the Master:

Set it to music; give it a tune,--

Tune the brook sings you, tune the breeze brings you,

Tune the wild columbines nod to in June!

This is the secret: so simple, you see!

Easy as loving, easy as kissing,

Easy as--well, let me ponder--as missing,

Known, since the world was, by scarce two or three.

IV. HUMOR AND SATIRE

FITZ ADAM'S STORY

The next whose fortune 'twas a tale to tell

Was one whom men, before they thought, loved well,

And after thinking wondered why they did,

For half he seemed to let them, half forbid,

And wrapped him so in humors, sheath on sheath,

'Twas hard to guess the mellow soul beneath:

But, once divined, you took him to your heart,

While he appeared to bear with you as part

Of life's impertinence, and once a year

Betrayed his true self by a smile or tear, 10

Or rather something sweetly shy and loath,

Withdrawn ere fully shown, and mixed of both.

A cynic? Not precisely: one who thrust

Against a heart too prone to love and trust,

Who so despised false sentiment he knew

Scarce in himself to part the false and true,

And strove to hide, by roughening-o'er the skin,

Those cobweb nerves he could not dull within.

Gentle by birth, but of a stem decayed,

He shunned life's rivalries and hated trade; 20

On a small patrimony and larger pride,

He lived uneaseful on the Other Side

(So he called Europe), only coming West

To give his Old-World appetite new zest;

Yet still the New World spooked it in his veins,

A ghost he could not lay with all his pains;

For never Pilgrims' offshoot scapes control

Of those old instincts that have shaped his soul.

A radical in thought, he puffed away

With shrewd contempt the dust of usage gray, 30

Yet loathed democracy as one who saw,

In what he longed to love, some vulgar flaw,

And, shocked through all his delicate reserves,

Remained a Tory by his taste and nerves,

His fancy's thrall, he drew all ergoes thence,

And thought himself the type of common sense;

Misliking women, not from cross or whim,

But that his mother shared too much in him,

And he half felt that what in them was grace

Made the unlucky weakness of his race. 40

What powers he had he hardly cared to know,

But sauntered through the world as through a show;

A critic fine in his haphazard way,

A sort of mild La BruyÃ¨re on half-pay.

For comic weaknesses he had an eye

Keen as an acid for an alkali,

Yet you could feel, through his sardonic tone,

He loved them all, unless they were his own.

You might have called him, with his humorous twist,

A kind of human entomologist; 50

As these bring home, from every walk they take,

Their hat-crowns stuck with bugs of curious make,

So he filled all the lining of his head

With characters impaled and ticketed,

And had a cabinet behind his eyes

For all they caught of mortal oddities.

He might have been a poet--many worse--

But that he had, or feigned, contempt of verse;

Called it tattooing language, and held rhymes

The young world's lullaby of ruder times. 60

Bitter in words, too indolent for gall,

He satirized himself the first of all,

In men and their affairs could find no law,

And was the ill logic that he thought he saw.

Scratching a match to light his pipe anew,

With eyes half shut some musing whiffs he drew

And thus began: 'I give you all my word,

I think this mock-Decameron absurd;

Boccaccio's garden! how bring that to pass

In our bleak clime save under double glass? 70

The moral east-wind of New England life

Would snip its gay luxuriance like a knife;

Mile-deep the glaciers brooded here, they say,

Through Ã¦ons numb; we feel their chill to-day.

These foreign plants are but half-hardy still,

Die on a south, and on a north wall chill.

Had we stayed Puritans! \_They\_ had some heat,

(Though whence derived I have my own conceit,)

But you have long ago raked up their fires;

Where they had faith, you've ten sham-Gothic spires. 80

Why more exotics? Try your native vines,

And in some thousand years you \_may\_ have wines;

Your present grapes are harsh, all pulps and skins,

And want traditions of ancestral bins

That saved for evenings round the polished board

Old lava fires, the sun-steeped hillside's hoard.

Without a Past, you lack that southern wall

O'er which the vines of Poesy should crawl;

Still they're your only hope: no midnight oil

Makes up for virtue wanting in the soil; 90

Manure them well and prune them; 'twon't be France,

Nor Spain, nor Italy, but there's your chance.

You have one story-teller worth a score

Of dead Boccaccios,--nay, add twenty more,--

A hawthorn asking spring's most dainty breath,

And him you're freezing pretty well to death.

However, since you say so, I will tease

My memory to a story by degrees,

Though you will cry, "Enough!" I'm wellnigh sure,

Ere I have dreamed through half my overture. 100

Stories were good for men who had no books,

(Fortunate race!) and built their nests like rooks

In lonely towers, to which the Jongleur brought

His pedler's-box of cheap and tawdry thought,

With here and there a fancy fit to see

Wrought in quaint grace in golden filigree,--

Some ring that with the Muse's finger yet

Is warm, like Aucassin and Nicolete;

The morning newspaper has spoilt his trade,

(For better or for worse, I leave unsaid,) 110

And stories now, to suit a public nice,

Must be half epigram, half pleasant vice.

'All tourists know Shebagog County: there

The summer idlers take their yearly stare,

Dress to see Nature In a well-bred way,

As 'twere Italian opera, or play,

Encore the sunrise (if they're out of bed).

And pat the Mighty Mother on the head:

These have I seen,--all things are good to see.--

And wondered much at their complacency. 120

This world's great show, that took in getting-up

Millions of years, they finish ere they sup;

Sights that God gleams through with soul-tingling force

They glance approvingly as things of course.

Say, "That's a grand rock," "This a pretty fall."

Not thinking, "Are we worthy?" What if all

The scornful landscape should turn round and say,

"This is a fool, and that a popinjay"?

I often wonder what the Mountain thinks

Of French boots creaking o'er his breathless brinks, 130

Or how the Sun would scare the chattering crowd,

If some fine day he chanced to think aloud.

I, who love Nature much as sinners can,

Love her where she most grandeur shows,--in man:

Here find I mountain, forest, cloud, and sun,

River and sea, and glows when day is done;

Nay, where she makes grotesques, and moulds in jest

The clown's cheap clay, I find unfading zest.

The natural instincts year by year retire,

As deer shrink northward from the settler's fire, 140

And he who loves the wild game-flavor more

Than city-feasts, where every man's a bore

To every other man, must seek it where

The steamer's throb and railway's iron blare

Have not yet startled with their punctual stir

The shy, wood-wandering brood of Character.

'There is a village, once the county town,

Through which the weekly mail rolled dustily down,

Where the courts sat, it may be, twice a year,

And the one tavern reeked with rustic cheer; 150

Cheeshogquesumscot erst, now Jethro hight,

Red-man and pale-face bore it equal spite.

The railway ruined it, the natives say,

That passed unwisely fifteen miles away,

And made a drain to which, with steady ooze,

Filtered away law, stage-coach, trade, and news.

The railway saved it: so at least think those

Who love old ways, old houses, old repose.

Of course the Tavern stayed: its genial host

Thought not of flitting more than did the post 160

On which high-hung the fading signboard creaks,

Inscribed, "The Eagle Inn, by Ezra Weeks."

'If in life's journey you should ever find

An inn medicinal for body and mind,

'Tis sure to be some drowsy-looking house

Whose easy landlord has a bustling spouse:

He, if he like you, will not long forego

Some bottle deep in cobwebbed dust laid low,

That, since the War we used to call the "Last,"

Has dozed and held its lang-syne memories fast: 170

From him exhales that Indian-summer air

Of hazy, lazy welcome everywhere,

While with her toil the napery is white,

The china dustless, the keen knife-blades bright,

Salt dry as sand, and bread that seems as though

'Twere rather sea-foam baked than vulgar dough.

'In our swift country, houses trim and white

Are pitched like tents, the lodging of a night;

Each on its bank of baked turf mounted high

Perches impatient o'er the roadside dry, 180

While the wronged landscape coldly stands aloof,

Refusing friendship with the upstart roof.

Not so the Eagle; on a grass-green swell

That toward the south with sweet concessions fell

It dwelt retired, and half had grown to be

As aboriginal as rock or tree.

It nestled close to earth, and seemed to brood

O'er homely thoughts in a half-conscious mood,

As by the peat that rather fades than burns

The smouldering grandam nods and knits by turns, 190

Happy, although her newest news were old

Ere the first hostile drum at Concord rolled.

If paint it e'er had known, it knew no more

Than yellow lichens spattered thickly o'er

That soft lead-gray, less dark beneath the eaves

Which the slow brush of wind and weather leaves.

The ample roof sloped backward to the ground,

And vassal lean-tos gathered thickly round,

Patched on, as sire or son had felt the need,

Like chance growths sprouting from the old roofs seed, 200

Just as about a yellow-pine-tree spring

Its rough-barked darlings in a filial ring.

But the great chimney was the central thought

Whose gravitation through the cluster wrought;

For 'tis not styles far-fetched from Greece or Rome,

But just the Fireside, that can make a home;

None of your spindling things of modern style,

Like pins stuck through to stay the card-built pile,

It rose broad-shouldered, kindly, debonair,

Its warm breath whitening in the October air, 210

While on its front a heart in outline showed

The place it filled in that serene abode.

'When first I chanced the Eagle to explore.

Ezra sat listless by the open door;

One chair careened him at an angle meet,

Another nursed his hugely slippered feet;

Upon a third reposed a shirt-sleeved arm,

And the whole man diffused tobacco's charm.

"Are you the landlord?" "Wahl, I guess I be,"

Watching the smoke he answered leisurely. 220

He was a stoutish man, and through the breast

Of his loose shirt there showed a brambly chest;

Streaked redly as a wind-foreboding morn,

His tanned cheeks curved to temples closely shorn;

Clean-shaved he was, save where a hedge of gray

Upon his brawny throat leaned every way

About an Adam's-apple, that beneath

Bulged like a boulder from a brambly heath.

The Western World's true child and nursling he,

Equipt with aptitudes enough for three: 230

No eye like his to value horse or cow,

Or gauge the contents of a stack or mow;

He could foretell the weather at a word,

He knew the haunt of every beast and bird,

Or where a two-pound trout was sure to lie,

Waiting the flutter of his homemade fly;

Nay, once in autumns five, he had the luck

To drop at fair-play range a ten-tined buck;

Of sportsmen true he favored every whim,

But never cockney found a guide in him; 240

A natural man, with all his instincts fresh,

Not buzzing helpless in Reflection's mesh,

Firm on its feet stood his broad-shouldered mind,

As bluffly honest as a northwest wind;

Hard-headed and soft-hearted, you'd scarce meet

A kindlier mixture of the shrewd and sweet;

Generous by birth, and ill at saying "No,"

Yet in a bargain he was all men's foe,

Would yield no inch of vantage in a trade,

And give away ere nightfall all he made. 250

"Can I have lodging here?" once more I said.

He blew a whiff, and, leaning back his head,

"You come a piece through Bailey's woods, I s'pose,

Acrost a bridge where a big swamp-oak grows?

It don't grow, neither; it's ben dead ten year,

Nor th' ain't a livin' creetur, fur nor near,

Can tell wut killed it; but I some misdoubt

'Twas borers, there's sech heaps on 'em about.

You didn' chance to run ag'inst my son,

A long, slab-sided youngster with a gun? 260

He'd oughto ben back more 'n an hour ago,

An' brought some birds to dress for supper--sho!

There he comes now. 'Say, Obed, wut ye got?

(He'll hev some upland plover like as not.)

Wal, them's real nice uns, an'll eat A 1,

Ef I can stop their bein' overdone;

Nothin' riles \_me\_ (I pledge my fastin' word)

Like cookin' out the natur' of a bird;

(Obed, you pick 'em out o' sight an' sound,

Your ma'am don't love no feathers cluttrin' round;) 270

Jes' scare 'em with the coals,--thet's \_my\_ idee."

Then, turning suddenly about on me,

"Wal, Square, I guess so. Callilate to stay?

I'll ask Mis' Weeks; 'bout \_thet\_ it's hern to say."

'Well, there I lingered all October through,

In that sweet atmosphere of hazy blue,

So leisurely, so soothing, so forgiving,

That sometimes makes New England fit for living.

I watched the landscape, erst so granite glum,

Bloom like the south side of a ripening plum, 280

And each rock-maple on the hillside make

His ten days' sunset doubled in the lake;

The very stone walls draggling up the hills

Seemed touched, and wavered in their roundhead wills.

Ah! there's a deal of sugar in the sun!

Tap me in Indian summer, I should run

A juice to make rock-candy of,--but then

We get such weather scarce one year in ten.

'There was a parlor in the house, a room

To make you shudder with its prudish gloom. 290

The furniture stood round with such an air,

There seemed an old maid's ghost in every chair,

Which looked as it had scuttled to its place

And pulled extempore a Sunday face,

Too smugly proper for a world of sin,

Like boys on whom the minister comes in.

The table, fronting you with icy stare,

Strove to look witless that its legs were bare,

While the black sofa with its horse-hair pall

Gloomed like a bier for Comfort's funeral. 300

Each piece appeared to do its chilly best

To seem an utter stranger to the rest,

As if acquaintanceship were deadly sin,

Like Britons meeting in a foreign inn.

Two portraits graced the wall in grimmest truth,

Mister and Mistress W. in their youth,--

New England youth, that seems a sort of pill,

Half wish-I-dared, half Edwards on the Will,

Bitter to swallow, and which leaves a trace

Of Calvinistic colic on the face. 310

Between them, o'er the mantel, hung in state

Solomon's temple, done in copperplate;

Invention pure, but meant, we may presume,

To give some Scripture sanction to the room.

Facing this last, two samplers you might see,

Each, with its urn and stiffly weeping tree,

Devoted to some memory long ago

More faded than their lines of worsted woe;

Cut paper decked their frames against the flies,

Though none e'er dared an entrance who were wise, 320

And bushed asparagus in fading green

Added its shiver to the franklin clean.

'When first arrived, I chilled a half-hour there,

Nor dared deflower with use a single chair;

I caught no cold, yet flying pains could find

For weeks in me,--a rheumatism of mind.

One thing alone imprisoned there had power

To hold me in the place that long half-hour:

A scutcheon this, a helm-surmounted shield,

Three griffins argent on a sable field; 330

A relic of the shipwrecked past was here,

And Ezra held some Old-World lumber dear.

Nay, do not smile; I love this kind of thing,

These cooped traditions with a broken wing,

This freehold nook in Fancy's pipe-blown ball,

This less than nothing that is more than all!

Have I not seen sweet natures kept alive

Amid the humdrum of your business hive,

Undowered spinsters shielded from all harms,

By airy incomes from a coat of arms?' 340

He paused a moment, and his features took

The flitting sweetness of that inward look

I hinted at before; but, scarcely seen,

It shrank for shelter 'neath his harder mien,

And, rapping his black pipe of ashes clear,

He went on with a self-derisive sneer:

'No doubt we make a part of God's design,

And break the forest-path for feet divine;

To furnish foothold for this grand prevision

Is good, and yet--to be the mere transition, 350

That, you will say, is also good, though I

Scarce like to feed the ogre By-and-By.

Raw edges rasp my nerves; my taste is wooed

By things that are, not going to be, good,

Though were I what I dreamed two lustres gone,

I'd stay to help the Consummation on,

Whether a new Rome than the old more fair,

Or a deadflat of rascal-ruled despair;

But \_my\_ skull somehow never closed the suture

That seems to knit yours firmly with the future, 360

So you'll excuse me if I'm sometimes fain

To tie the Past's warm nightcap o'er my brain;

I'm quite aware 'tis not in fashion here,

But then your northeast winds are \_so\_ severe!

'But to my story: though 'tis truly naught

But a few hints in Memory's sketchbook caught,

And which may claim a value on the score

Of calling back some scenery now no more.

Shall I confess? The tavern's only Lar

Seemed (be not shocked!) its homely-featured bar. 370

Here dozed a fire of beechen logs, that bred

Strange fancies in its embers golden-red,

And nursed the loggerhead whose hissing dip,

Timed by nice instinct, creamed the mug of flip

That made from mouth to mouth its genial round,

Nor left one nature wholly winter-bound;

Hence dropt the tinkling coal all mellow-ripe

For Uncle Reuben's talk-extinguished pipe;

Hence rayed the heat, as from an indoor sun,

That wooed forth many a shoot of rustic fun. 380

Here Ezra ruled as king by right divine;

No other face had such a wholesome shine,

No laugh like his so full of honest cheer;

Above the rest it crowed like Chanticleer.

'In this one room his dame you never saw,

Where reigned by custom old a Salic law;

Here coatless lolled he on his throne of oak,

And every tongue paused midway if he spoke.

Due mirth he loved, yet was his sway severe;

No blear-eyed driveller got his stagger here; 390

"Measure was happiness; who wanted more,

Must buy his ruin at the Deacon's store;"

None but his lodgers after ten could stay,

Nor after nine on eves of Sabbath-day.

He had his favorites and his pensioners,

The same that gypsy Nature owns for hers:

Loose-ended souls, whose skills bring scanty gold,

And whom the poor-house catches when they're old;

Rude country-minstrels, men who doctor kine,

Or graft, and, out of scions ten, save nine; 400

Creatures of genius they, but never meant

To keep step with the civic regiment,

These Ezra welcomed, feeling in his mind

Perhaps some motions of the vagrant kind;

These paid no money, yet for them he drew

Special Jamaica from a tap they knew,

And, for their feelings, chalked behind the door

With solemn face a visionary score.

This thawed to life in Uncle Reuben's throat

A torpid shoal of jest and anecdote, 410

Like those queer fish that doze the droughts away,

And wait for moisture, wrapped in sun-baked clay;

This warmed the one-eyed fiddler to his task,

Perched in the corner on an empty cask,

By whose shrill art rapt suddenly, some boor

Rattled a double-shuffle on the floor;

"Hull's Victory" was, indeed, the favorite air,

Though "Yankee Doodle" claimed its proper share.

''Twas there I caught from Uncle Reuben's lips,

In dribbling monologue 'twixt whiffs and sips, 420

The story I so long have tried to tell;

The humor coarse, the persons common,--well,

From Nature only do I love to paint,

Whether she send a satyr or a saint;

To me Sincerity's the one thing good,

Soiled though she be and lost to maidenhood.

Quompegan is a town some ten miles south

From Jethro, at Nagumscot river-mouth,

A seaport town, and makes its title good

With lumber and dried fish and eastern wood. 430

Here Deacon Bitters dwelt and kept the Store,

The richest man for many a mile of shore;

In little less than everything dealt he,

From meeting-houses to a chest of tea;

So dextrous therewithal a flint to skin,

He could make profit on a single pin;

In business strict, to bring the balance true

He had been known to bite a fig in two,

And change a board-nail for a shingle-nail.

All that he had he ready held for sale, 440

His house, his tomb, whate'er the law allows,

And he had gladly parted with his spouse.

His one ambition still to get and get,

He would arrest your very ghost for debt.

His store looked righteous, should the Parson come,

But in a dark back-room he peddled rum,

And eased Ma'am Conscience, if she e'er would scold,

By christening it with water ere he sold.

A small, dry man he was, who wore a queue,

And one white neckcloth all the week-days through,-- 450

On Monday white, by Saturday as dun

As that worn homeward by the prodigal son.

His frosted earlocks, striped with foxy brown,

Were braided up to hide a desert crown;

His coat was brownish, black perhaps of yore;

In summer-time a banyan loose he wore;

His trousers short, through many a season true,

Made no pretence to hide his stockings blue;

A waistcoat buff his chief adornment was,

Its porcelain buttons rimmed with dusky brass. 460

A deacon he, you saw it in each limb,

And well he knew to deacon-off a hymn,

Or lead the choir through all its wandering woes

With voice that gathered unction in his nose,

Wherein a constant snuffle you might hear,

As if with him 'twere winter all the year.

At pew-head sat he with decorous pains,

In sermon-time could foot his weekly gains,

Or, with closed eyes and heaven-abstracted air,

Could plan a new investment in long-prayer. 470

A pious man, and thrifty too, he made

The psalms and prophets partners in his trade,

And in his orthodoxy straitened more

As it enlarged the business at his store;

He honored Moses, but, when gain he planned,

Had his own notion of the Promised Land.

'Soon as the winter made the sledding good,

From far around the farmers hauled him wood,

For all the trade had gathered 'neath his thumb.

He paid in groceries and New England rum, 480

Making two profits with a conscience clear,--

Cheap all he bought, and all he paid with dear.

With his own mete-wand measuring every load,

Each somehow had diminished on the road;

An honest cord in Jethro still would fail

By a good foot upon the Deacon's scale,

And, more to abate the price, his gimlet eye

Would pierce to cat-sticks that none else could spy;

Yet none dared grumble, for no farmer yet

But New Year found him in the Deacon's debt. 490

'While the first snow was mealy under feet,

A team drawled creaking down Quompegan street.

Two cords of oak weighed down the grinding sled,

And cornstalk fodder rustled overhead;

The oxen's muzzles, as they shouldered through,

Were silver-fringed; the driver's own was blue

As the coarse frock that swung below his knee.

Behind his load for shelter waded he;

His mittened hands now on his chest he beat,

Now stamped the stiffened cowhides of his feet, 500

Hushed as a ghost's; his armpit scarce could hold

The walnut whipstock slippery-bright with cold.

What wonder if, the tavern as he past,

He looked and longed, and stayed his beasts at last,

Who patient stood and veiled themselves in steam

While he explored the bar-room's ruddy gleam?

'Before the fire, in want of thought profound,

There sat a brother-townsman weather-bound:

A sturdy churl, crisp-headed, bristly-eared,

Red as a pepper; 'twixt coarse brows and beard 510

His eyes lay ambushed, on the watch for fools,

Clear, gray, and glittering like two bay-edged pools;

A shifty creature, with a turn for fun,

Could swap a poor horse for a better one,--

He'd a high-stepper always in his stall;

Liked far and near, and dreaded therewithal.

To him the in-comer, "Perez, how d' ye do?"

"Jest as I'm mind to, Obed; how do you?"

Then, his eyes twinkling such swift gleams as run

Along the levelled barrel of a gun 520

Brought to his shoulder by a man you know

Will bring his game down, he continued, "So,

I s'pose you're haulin' wood? But you're too late;

The Deacon's off; Old Splitfoot couldn't wait;

He made a bee-line las' night in the storm

To where he won't need wood to keep him warm.

'Fore this he's treasurer of a fund to train

Young imps as missionaries; hopes to gain

That way a contract that he has in view

For fireproof pitchforks of a pattern new, 530

It must have tickled him, all drawbacks weighed,

To think he stuck the Old One in a trade;

His soul, to start with, wasn't worth a carrot.

And all he'd left 'ould hardly serve to swear at."

'By this time Obed had his wits thawed out,

And, looking at the other half in doubt,

Took off his fox-skin cap to scratch his head,

Donned it again, and drawled forth, "Mean he's dead?"

"Jesso; he's dead and t'other \_d\_ that follers

With folks that never love a thing but dollars. 540

He pulled up stakes last evening, fair and square,

And ever since there's been a row Down There.

The minute the old chap arrived, you see,

Comes the Boss-devil to him, and says he,

'What are you good at? Little enough, I fear;

We callilate to make folks useful here.'

'Well,' says old Bitters, 'I expect I can

Scale a fair load of wood with e'er a man.'

'Wood we don't deal in; but perhaps you'll suit,

Because we buy our brimstone by the foot: 550

Here, take this measurin'-rod, as smooth as sin,

And keep a reckonin' of what loads comes in.

You'll not want business, for we need a lot

To keep the Yankees that you send us hot;

At firin' up they're barely half as spry

As Spaniards or Italians, though they're dry;

At first we have to let the draught on stronger,

But, heat 'em through, they seem to hold it longer.'

'"Bitters he took the rod, and pretty soon

A teamster comes, whistling an ex-psalm tune. 560

A likelier chap you wouldn't ask to see,

No different, but his limp, from you or me"--

"No different, Perez! Don't your memory fail?

Why, where in thunder was his horns and tail?"

"They're only worn by some old-fashioned pokes;

They mostly aim at looking just like folks.

Sech things are scarce as queues and top-boots here;

'Twould spoil their usefulness to look too queer.

Ef you could always know 'em when they come,

They'd get no purchase on you: now be mum. 570

On come the teamster, smart as Davy Crockett,

Jinglin' the red-hot coppers in his pocket,

And clost behind, ('twas gold-dust, you'd ha' sworn,)

A load of sulphur yallower 'n seed-corn;

To see it wasted as it is Down There

Would make a Friction-Match Co. tear its hair!

'Hold on!' says Bitters, 'stop right where you be;

You can't go in athout a pass from me.'

'All right,' says t'other, 'only step round smart;

I must be home by noon-time with the cart.' 580

Bitters goes round it sharp-eyed as a rat,

Then with a scrap of paper on his hat

Pretends to cipher. 'By the public staff,

That load scarce rises twelve foot and a half.'

'There's fourteen foot and over,' says the driver,

'Worth twenty dollars, ef it's worth a stiver;

Good fourth-proof brimstone, that'll make 'em squirm,--

I leave it to the Headman of the Firm;

After we masure it, we always lay

Some on to allow for settlin' by the way. 590

Imp and full-grown, I've carted sulphur here,

And gi'n fair satisfaction, thirty year.'

With that they fell to quarrellin' so loud

That in five minutes they had drawed a crowd,

And afore long the Boss, who heard the row,

Comes elbowin' in with 'What's to pay here now?'

Both parties heard, the measurin'-rod he takes,

And of the load a careful survey makes.

'Sence I have bossed the business here,' says he,

'No fairer load was ever seen by me.' 600

Then, turnin' to the Deacon, 'You mean cus.

None of your old Quompegan tricks with us!

They won't do here: we're plain old-fashioned folks,

And don't quite understand that kind o' jokes.

I know this teamster, and his pa afore him,

And the hard-working Mrs. D. that bore him;

He wouldn't soil his conscience with a lie,

Though he might get the custom-house thereby.

Here, constable, take Bitters by the queue.

And clap him into furnace ninety-two, 610

And try this brimstone on him; if he's bright,

He'll find the masure honest afore night.

He isn't worth his fuel, and I'll bet

The parish oven has to take him yet!'"

'This is my tale, heard twenty years ago

From Uncle Reuben, as the logs burned low,

Touching the walls and ceiling with that bloom

That makes a rose's calyx of a room.

I could not give his language, wherethrough ran

The gamy flavor of the bookless man 620

Who shapes a word before the fancy cools,

As lonely Crusoe improvised his tools.

I liked the tale,--'twas like so many told

By Rutebeuf and his Brother TrouvÃ¨res bold;

Nor were the hearers much unlike to theirs,

Men unsophisticate, rude-nerved as bears.

Ezra is gone and his large-hearted kind,

The landlords of the hospitable mind;

Good Warriner of Springfield was the last;

An inn is now a vision of the past; 630

One yet-surviving host my mind recalls,--

You'll find him if you go to Trenton Falls.'

THE ORIGIN OF DIDACTIC POETRY

When wise Minerva still was young

And just the least romantic,

Soon after from Jove's head she flung

That preternatural antic,

'Tis said, to keep from idleness

Or flirting, those twin curses,

She spent her leisure, more or less,

In writing po----, no, verses.

How nice they were! to rhyme with \_far\_

A kind \_star\_ did not tarry;

The metre, too, was regular

As schoolboy's dot and carry;

And full they were of pious plums,

So extra-super-moral,--

For sucking Virtue's tender gums

Most tooth-enticing coral.

A clean, fair copy she prepares,

Makes sure of moods and tenses,

With her own hand,--for prudence spares

A man-(or woman-)-uensis;

Complete, and tied with ribbons proud,

She hinted soon how cosy a

Treat it would be to read them loud

After next day's Ambrosia.

The Gods thought not it would amuse

So much as Homer's Odyssees,

But could not very well refuse

The properest of Goddesses;

So all sat round in attitudes

Of various dejection,

As with a \_hem!\_ the queen of prudes

Began her grave prelection.

At the first pause Zeus said, 'Well sung!--

I mean--ask Phoebus,--\_he\_ knows.'

Says Phoebus, 'Zounds! a wolf's among

Admetus's merinos!

Fine! very fine! but I must go;

They stand in need of me there;

Excuse me!' snatched his stick, and so

Plunged down the gladdened ether.

With the next gap, Mars said, 'For me

Don't wait,--naught could be finer,

But I'm engaged at half past three,--

A fight in Asia Minor!'

Then Venus lisped, 'I'm sorely tried,

These duty-calls are vip'rous;

But I \_must\_ go; I have a bride

To see about in Cyprus.'

Then Bacchus,--'I must say good-by,

Although my peace it jeopards;

I meet a man at four, to try

A well-broke pair of leopards.'

His words woke Hermes. 'Ah!' he said,

'I \_so\_ love moral theses!'

Then winked at Hebe, who turned red,

And smoothed her apron's creases.

Just then Zeus snored,--the Eagle drew

His head the wing from under;

Zeus snored,--o'er startled Greece there flew

The many-volumed thunder.

Some augurs counted nine, some, ten;

Some said 'twas war, some, famine;

And all, that other-minded men

Would get a precious----.

Proud Pallas sighed, 'It will not do;

Against the Muse I've sinned, oh!'

And her torn rhymes sent flying through

Olympus's back window.

Then, packing up a peplus clean,

She took the shortest path thence,

And opened, with a mind serene,

A Sunday-school in Athens.

The verses? Some in ocean swilled,

Killed every fish that bit to 'em;

Some Galen caught, and, when distilled,

Found morphine the residuum;

But some that rotted on the earth

Sprang up again in copies,

And gave two strong narcotics birth,

Didactic verse and poppies.

Years after, when a poet asked

The Goddess's opinion,

As one whose soul its wings had tasked

In Art's clear-aired dominion,

'Discriminate,' she said, 'betimes;

The Muse is unforgiving;

Put all your beauty in your rhymes,

Your morals in your living.'

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Don't believe in the Flying Dutchman?

I've known the fellow for years;

My button I've wrenched from his clutch, man:

I shudder whenever he nears!

He's a Rip van Winkle skipper,

A Wandering Jew of the sea,

Who sails his bedevilled old clipper

In the wind's eye, straight as a bee.

Back topsails! you can't escape him;

The man-ropes stretch with his weight,

And the queerest old toggeries drape him,

The Lord knows how long out of date!

Like a long-disembodied idea,

(A kind of ghost plentiful now,)

He stands there; you fancy you see a

Coeval of Teniers or Douw.

He greets you; would have you take letters:

You scan the addresses with dread,

While he mutters his \_donners\_ and \_wetters\_,--

They're all from the dead to the dead!

You seem taking time for reflection,

But the heart fills your throat with a jam,

As you spell in each faded direction

An ominous ending in \_dam\_.

Am I tagging my rhymes to a legend?

That were changing green turtle to mock:

No, thank you! I've found out which wedge-end

Is meant for the head of a block.

The fellow I have in my mind's eye

Plays the old Skipper's part here on shore,

And sticks like a burr, till he finds I

Have got just the gauge of his bore.

This postman 'twist one ghost and t'other,

With last dates that smell of the mould,

I have met him (O man and brother,

Forgive me!) in azure and gold.

In the pulpit I've known of his preaching,

Out of hearing behind the time,

Some statement of Balaam's impeaching,

Giving Eve a due sense of her crime.

I have seen him some poor ancient thrashing

Into something (God save us!) more dry,

With the Water of Life itself washing

The life out of earth, sea, and sky.

O dread fellow-mortal, get newer

Despatches to carry, or none!

We're as quick as the Greek and the Jew were

At knowing a loaf from a stone.

Till the couriers of God fail in duty,

We sha'n't ask a mummy for news,

Nor sate the soul's hunger for beauty

With your drawings from casts of a Muse.

CREDIDIMUS JOVEM REGNARE

O days endeared to every Muse,

When nobody had any Views,

Nor, while the cloudscape of his mind

By every breeze was new designed,

Insisted all the world should see

Camels or whales where none there be!

O happy days, when men received

From sire to son what all believed,

And left the other world in bliss,

Too busy with bedevilling this! 10

Beset by doubts of every breed

In the last bastion of my creed,

With shot and shell for Sabbath-chime,

I watch the storming-party climb,

Panting (their prey in easy reach),

To pour triumphant through the breach

In walls that shed like snowflakes tons

Of missiles from old-fashioned guns,

But crumble 'neath the storm that pours

All day and night from bigger bores. 20

There, as I hopeless watch and wait

The last life-crushing coil of Fate,

Despair finds solace in the praise

Of those serene dawn-rosy days

Ere microscopes had made us heirs

To large estates of doubts and snares,

By proving that the title-deeds,

Once all-sufficient for men's needs,

Are palimpsests that scarce disguise

The tracings of still earlier lies, 30

Themselves as surely written o'er

An older fib erased before.

So from these days I fly to those

That in the landlocked Past repose,

Where no rude wind of doctrine shakes

From bloom-flushed boughs untimely flakes;

Where morning's eyes see nothing strange,

No crude perplexity of change,

And morrows trip along their ways

Secure as happy yesterdays. 40

Then there were rulers who could trace

Through heroes up to gods their race,

Pledged to fair fame and noble use

By veins from Odin filled or Zeus,

And under bonds to keep divine

The praise of a celestial line.

Then priests could pile the altar's sods,

With whom gods spake as they with gods,

And everywhere from haunted earth

Broke springs of wonder, that had birth 50

In depths divine beyond the ken

And fatal scrutiny of men;

Then hills and groves and streams and seas

Thrilled with immortal presences,

Not too ethereal for the scope

Of human passion's dream or hope.

Now Pan at last is surely dead,

And King No-Credit reigns instead,

Whose officers, morosely strict,

Poor Fancy's tenantry evict, 60

Chase the last Genius from the door,

And nothing dances any more.

Nothing? Ah, yes, our tables do,

Dramming the Old One's own tattoo,

And, if the oracles are dumb,

Have we not mediums! Why be glum?

Fly thither? Why, the very air

Is full of hindrance and despair!

Fly thither? But I cannot fly;

My doubts enmesh me if I try, 70

Each Liliputian, but, combined,

Potent a giant's limbs to bind.

This world and that are growing dark;

A huge interrogation mark,

The Devil's crook episcopal.

Still borne before him since the Fall,

Blackens with its ill-omened sign

The old blue heaven of faith benign.

Whence? Whither? Wherefore? How? Which? Why?

All ask at once, all wait reply. 80

Men feel old systems cracking under 'em;

Life saddens to a mere conundrum

Which once Religion solved, but she

Has lost--has Science found?--the key.

What was snow-bearded Odin, trow,

The mighty hunter long ago,

Whose horn and hounds the peasant hears

Still when the Northlights shake their spears?

Science hath answers twain, I've heard;

Choose which you will, nor hope a third; 90

Whichever box the truth be stowed in,

There's not a sliver left of Odin.

Either he was a pinchbrowed thing,

With scarcely wit a stone to fling,

A creature both in size and shape

Nearer than we are to the ape,

Who hung sublime with brat and spouse

By tail prehensile from the boughs,

And, happier than his maimed descendants,

The culture-curtailed \_in\_dependents, 100

Could pluck his cherries with both paws,

And stuff with both his big-boned jaws;

Or else the core his name enveloped

Was from a solar myth developed,

Which, hunted to its primal shoot,

Takes refuge in a Sanskrit root,

Thereby to instant death explaining

The little poetry remaining.

Try it with Zeus, 'tis just the same;

The thing evades, we hug a name; 110

Nay, scarcely that,--perhaps a vapor

Born of some atmospheric caper.

All Lempriere's fables blur together

In cloudy symbols of the weather,

And Aphrodite rose from frothy seas

But to illustrate such hypotheses.

With years enough behind his back,

Lincoln will take the selfsame track,

And prove, hulled fairly to the cob,

A mere vagary of Old Prob. 120

Give the right man a solar myth,

And he'll confute the sun therewith.

They make things admirably plain,

But one hard question \_will\_ remain:

If one hypothesis you lose,

Another in its place you choose,

But, your faith gone, O man and brother,

Whose shop shall furnish you another?

One that will wash, I mean, and wear,

And wrap us warmly from despair? 130

While they are clearing up our puzzles,

And clapping prophylactic muzzles

On the ActÃ¦on's hounds that sniff

Our devious track through But and If,

Would they'd explain away the Devil

And other facts that won't keep level,

But rise beneath our feet or fail,

A reeling ship's deck in a gale!

God vanished long ago, iwis,

A mere subjective synthesis; 140

A doll, stuffed out with hopes and fears,

Too homely for us pretty dears,

Who want one that conviction carries,

Last make of London or of Paris.

He gone, I felt a moment's spasm,

But calmed myself, with Protoplasm,

A finer name, and, what is more,

As enigmatic as before;

Greek, too, and sure to fill with ease

Minds caught in the Symplegades 150

Of soul and sense, life's two conditions,

Each baffled with its own omniscience.

The men who labor to revise

Our Bibles will, I hope, be wise,

And print it without foolish qualms

Instead of God in David's psalms:

Noll had been more effective far

Could he have shouted at Dunbar,

'Rise, Protoplasm!' No dourest Scot

Had waited for another shot. 160

And yet I frankly must confess

A secret unforgivingness,

And shudder at the saving chrism

Whose best New Birth is Pessimism;

My soul--I mean the bit of phosphorus

That fills the place of what that was for us--

Can't bid its inward bores defiance

With the new nursery-tales of science.

What profits me, though doubt by doubt,

As nail by nail, be driven out, 170

When every new one, like the last,

Still holds my coffin-lid as fast?

Would I find thought a moment's truce,

Give me the young world's Mother Goose

With life and joy in every limb,

The chimney-corner tales of Grimm!

Our dear and admirable Huxley

Cannot explain to me why ducks lay,

Or, rather, how into their eggs

Blunder potential wings and legs 180

With will to move them and decide

Whether in air or lymph to glide.

Who gets a hair's-breadth on by showing

That Something Else set all agoing?

Farther and farther back we push

From Moses and his burning bush;

Cry, 'Art Thou there?' Above, below,

All Nature mutters \_yes\_ and \_no!\_

'Tis the old answer: we're agreed

Being from Being must proceed, 190

Life be Life's source. I might as well

Obey the meeting-house's bell,

And listen while Old Hundred pours

Forth through the summer-opened doors,

From old and young. I hear it yet,

Swelled by bass-viol and clarinet,

While the gray minister, with face

Radiant, let loose his noble bass.

If Heaven it reached not, yet its roll

Waked all the echoes of the soul, 200

And in it many a life found wings

To soar away from sordid things.

Church gone and singers too, the song

Sings to me voiceless all night long,

Till my soul beckons me afar,

Glowing and trembling like a star.

Will any scientific touch

With my worn strings achieve as much?

I don't object, not I, to know

My sires were monkeys, if 'twas so; 210

I touch my ear's collusive tip

And own the poor-relationship.

That apes of various shapes and sizes

Contained their germs that all the prizes

Of senate, pulpit, camp, and bar win

May give us hopes that sweeten Darwin.

Who knows but from our loins may spring

(Long hence) some winged sweet-throated thing

As much superior to us

As we to Cynocephalus? 220

This is consoling, but, alas,

It wipes no dimness from the glass

Where I am flattening my poor nose,

In hope to see beyond my toes,

Though I accept my pedigree,

Yet where, pray tell me, is the key

That should unlock a private door

To the Great Mystery, such no more?

Each offers his, but one nor all

Are much persuasive with the wall 230

That rises now as long ago,

Between I wonder and I know,

Nor will vouchsafe a pin-hole peep

At the veiled Isis in its keep.

Where is no door, I but produce

My key to find it of no use.

Yet better keep it, after all,

Since Nature's economical,

And who can tell but some fine day

(If it occur to her) she may, 240

In her good-will to you and me,

\_Make\_ door and lock to match the key?

TEMPORA MUTANTUR

The world turns mild; democracy, they say,

Rounds the sharp knobs of character away,

And no great harm, unless at grave expense

Of what needs edge of proof, the moral sense;

For man or race is on the downward path

Whose fibre grows too soft for honest wrath,

And there's a subtle influence that springs

From words to modify our sense of things.

A plain distinction grows obscure of late:

Man, if he will, may pardon; but the State 10

Forgets its function if not fixed as Fate.

So thought our sires: a hundred years ago,

If men were knaves, why, people called them so,

And crime could see the prison-portal bend

Its brow severe at no long vista's end.

In those days for plain things plain words would serve;

Men had not learned to admire the graceful swerve

Wherewith the Ãsthetic Nature's genial mood

Makes public duty slope to private good;

No muddled conscience raised the saving doubt; 20

A soldier proved unworthy was drummed out,

An officer cashiered, a civil servant

(No matter though his piety were fervent)

Disgracefully dismissed, and through the land

Each bore for life a stigma from the brand

Whose far-heard hiss made others more averse

To take the facile step from bad to worse.

The Ten Commandments had a meaning then,

Felt in their bones by least considerate men,

Because behind them Public Conscience stood, 30

And without wincing made their mandates good.

But now that 'Statesmanship' is just a way

To dodge the primal curse and make it pay,

Since office means a kind of patent drill

To force an entrance to the Nation's till,

And peculation something rather less

Risky than if you spelt it with an \_s\_;

Now that to steal by law is grown an art,

Whom rogues the sires, their milder sons call smart,

And 'slightly irregular' dilutes the shame 40

Of what had once a somewhat blunter name.

With generous curve we draw the moral line:

Our swindlers are permitted to resign;

Their guilt is wrapped in deferential names,

And twenty sympathize for one that blames.

Add national disgrace to private crime,

Confront mankind with brazen front sublime,

Steal but enough, the world is un-severe,--

Tweed is a statesman, Fisk a financier;

Invent a mine, and he--the Lord knows what; 50

Secure, at any rate, with what you've got.

The public servant who has stolen or lied,

If called on, may resign with honest pride:

As unjust favor put him in, why doubt

Disfavor as unjust has turned him out?

Even it indicted, what is that but fudge

To him who counted-in the elective judge?

Whitewashed, he quits the politician's strife

At ease in mind, with pockets filled for life;

His 'lady' glares with gems whose vulgar blaze 60

The poor man through his heightened taxes pays,

Himself content if one huge Kohinoor

Bulge from a shirt-front ampler than before,

But not too candid, lest it haply tend

To rouse suspicion of the People's Friend.

A public meeting, treated at his cost,

Resolves him back more virtue than he lost;

With character regilt he counts his gains;

What's gone was air, the solid good remains;

For what is good, except what friend and foe 70

Seem quite unanimous in thinking so,

The stocks and bonds which, in our age of loans,

Replace the stupid pagan's stocks and stones?

With choker white, wherein no cynic eye

Dares see idealized a hempen tie,

At parish-meetings he conducts in prayer,

And pays for missions to be sent elsewhere;

On 'Change respected, to his friends endeared,

Add but a Sunday-school class, he's revered,

And his too early tomb will not be dumb 80

To point a moral for our youth to come.

IN THE HALF-WAY HOUSE

I

At twenty we fancied the blest Middle Ages

A spirited cross of romantic and grand,

All templars and minstrels and ladies and pages,

And love and adventure in Outre-Mer land;

But ah, where the youth dreamed of building a minster,

The man takes a pew and sits reckoning his pelf,

And the Graces wear fronts, the Muse thins to a spinster,

When Middle-Age stares from one's glass at oneself!

II

Do you twit me with days when I had an Ideal,

And saw the sear future through spectacles green?

Then find me some charm, while I look round and see all

These fat friends of forty, shall keep me nineteen;

Should we go on pining for chaplets of laurel

Who've paid a perruquier for mending our thatch,

Or, our feet swathed in baize, with our Fate pick a quarrel,

If, instead of cheap bay-leaves, she sent a dear scratch?

III

We called it our Eden, that small patent-baker,

When life was half moonshine and half Mary Jane;

But the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker!--

Did Adam have duns and slip down a back-lane?

Nay, after the Fall did the modiste keep coming

With the last styles of fig-leaf to Madam Eve's bower?

Did Jubal, or whoever taught the girls thrumming,

Make the patriarchs deaf at a dollar the hour?

IV

As I think what I was, I sigh \_Desunt nonnulla!\_

Years are creditors Sheridan's self could not bilk;

But then, as my boy says, 'What right has a fullah

To ask for the cream, when himself spilt the milk?'

Perhaps when you're older, my lad, you'll discover

The secret with which Auld Lang Syne there is gilt,--

Superstition of old man, maid, poet, and lover,--

That cream rises thickest on milk that was spilt!

V

We sailed for the moon, but, in sad disillusion,

Snug under Point Comfort are glad to make fast,

And strive (sans our glasses) to make a confusion

'Twixt our rind of green cheese and the moon of the past.

Ah, Might-have-been, Could-have-been, Would-have-been! rascals,

He's a genius or fool whom ye cheat at two-score,

And the man whose boy-promise was likened to Pascal's

Is thankful at forty they don't call him bore!

VI

With what fumes of fame was each confident pate full!

How rates of insurance should rise on the Charles!

And which of us now would not feel wisely grateful,

If his rhymes sold as fast as the Emblems of Quarles?

E'en if won, what's the good of Life's medals and prizes?

The rapture's in what never was or is gone;

That we missed them makes Helens of plain Ann Elizys,

For the goose of To-day still is Memory's swan.

VII

And yet who would change the old dream for new treasure?

Make not youth's sourest grapes the best wine of our life?

Need he reckon his date by the Almanac's measure

Who is twenty life-long in the eyes of his wife?

Ah, Fate, should I live to be nonagenarian,

Let me still take Hope's frail I.O.U.'s upon trust,

Still talk of a trip to the Islands Macarian,

And still climb the dream-tree for--ashes and dust!

AT THE BURNS CENTENNIAL

JANUARY, 1859

I

A hundred years! they're quickly fled,

With all their joy and sorrow;

Their dead leaves shed upon the dead,

Their fresh ones sprung by morrow!

And still the patient seasons bring

Their change of sun and shadow;

New birds still sing with every spring,

New violets spot the meadow.

II

A hundred years! and Nature's powers

No greater grown nor lessened! 10

They saw no flowers more sweet than ours,

No fairer new moon's crescent.

Would she but treat us poets so,

So from our winter free us,

And set our slow old sap aflow

To sprout in fresh ideas!

III

Alas, think I, what worth or parts

Have brought me here competing,

To speak what starts in myriad hearts

With Burns's memory beating! 20

Himself had loved a theme like this;

Must I be its entomber?

No pen save his but's sure to miss

Its pathos or its humor.

IV

As I sat musing what to say,

And how my verse to number,

Some elf in play passed by that way,

And sank my lids in slumber;

And on my sleep a vision stole.

Which I will put in metre, 30

Of Burns's soul at the wicket-hole

Where sits the good Saint Peter.

V

The saint, methought, had left his post

That day to Holy Willie,

Who swore, 'Each ghost that comes shall toast

In brunstane, will he, nill he;

There's nane need hope with phrases fine

Their score to wipe a sin frae;

I'll chalk a sign, to save their tryin',--

A hand ([Illustration of a hand]) and "\_Vide infra!\_"' 40

VI

Alas! no soil's too cold or dry

For spiritual small potatoes,

Scrimped natures, spry the trade to ply

Of \_diaboli advocatus\_;

Who lay bent pins in the penance-stool

Where Mercy plumps a cushion,

Who've just one rule for knave and fool,

It saves so much confusion!

VII

So when Burns knocked, Will knit his brows,

His window gap made scanter, 50

And said, 'Go rouse the other house;

We lodge no Tam O'Shanter!'

'\_We\_ lodge!' laughed Burns. 'Now well I see

Death cannot kill old nature;

No human flea but thinks that he

May speak for his Creator!

VIII

'But, Willie, friend, don't turn me forth,

Auld Clootie needs no gauger;

And if on earth I had small worth,

You've let in worse I'se wager!' 60

'Na, nane has knockit at the yett

But found me hard as whunstane;

There's chances yet your bread to get

Wi Auld Nick, gaugin' brunstane.'

IX

Meanwhile, the Unco' Guid had ta'en

Their place to watch the process,

Flattening in vain on many a pane

Their disembodied noses.

Remember, please, 'tis all a dream;

One can't control the fancies 70

Through sleep that stream with wayward gleam,

Like midnight's boreal dances.

X

Old Willie's tone grew sharp 's a knife:

'\_In primis\_, I indite ye,

For makin' strife wi' the water o' life,

And preferrin' \_aqua vitÃ¦!\_'

Then roared a voice with lusty din,

Like a skipper's when 'tis blowy,

'If \_that's\_ a sin, \_I\_'d ne'er got in,

As sure as my name's Noah!' 80

XI

Baulked, Willie turned another leaf,--

'There's many here have heard ye,

To the pain and grief o' true belief,

Say hard things o' the clergy!'

Then rang a clear tone over all,--

'One plea for him allow me:

I once heard call from o'er me, "Saul,

Why persecutest thou me?"'

XII

To the next charge vexed Willie turned,

And, sighing, wiped his glasses: 90

'I'm much concerned to find ye yearned

O'er-warmly tow'rd the lasses!'

Here David sighed; poor Willie's face

Lost all its self-possession:

'I leave this case to God's own grace;

It baffles \_my\_ discretion!'

XIII

Then sudden glory round me broke,

And low melodious surges

Of wings whose stroke to splendor woke

Creation's farthest verges; 100

A cross stretched, ladder-like, secure

From earth to heaven's own portal,

Whereby God's poor, with footing sure,

Climbed up to peace immortal.

XIV

I heard a voice serene and low

(With my heart I seemed to hear it,)

Fall soft and slow as snow on snow,

Like grace of the heavenly spirit;

As sweet as over new-born son

The croon of new-made mother, 110

The voice begun, 'Sore tempted one!'

Then, pausing, sighed, 'Our brother!

XV

'If not a sparrow fall, unless

The Father sees and knows it,

Think! recks He less his form express,

The soul his own deposit?

If only dear to Him the strong,

That never trip nor wander,

Where were the throng whose morning song

Thrills his blue arches yonder? 120

XVI

'Do souls alone clear-eyed, strong-kneed,

To Him true service render,

And they who need his hand to lead,

Find they his heart untender?

Through all your various ranks and fates

He opens doors to duty,

And he that waits there at your gates

Was servant of his Beauty.

XVII

'The Earth must richer sap secrete,

(Could ye in time but know it!) 130

Must juice concrete with fiercer heat,

Ere she can make her poet;

Long generations go and come,

At last she bears a singer,

For ages dumb of senses numb

The compensation-bringer!

XVIII

'Her cheaper broods in palaces

She raises under glasses,

But souls like these, heav'n's hostages,

Spring shelterless as grasses: 140

They share Earth's blessing and her bane,

The common sun and shower;

What makes your pain to them is gain,

Your weakness is their power.

XIX

'These larger hearts must feel the rolls

Of stormier-waved temptation;

These star-wide souls between their poles

Bear zones of tropic passion.

He loved much!--that is gospel good,

Howe'er the text you handle; 150

From common wood the cross was hewed,

By love turned priceless sandal.

XX

'If scant his service at the kirk,

He \_paters\_ heard and \_aves\_

From choirs that lurk in hedge and birk,

From blackbird and from mavis;

The cowering mouse, poor unroofed thing,

In him found Mercy's angel;

The daisy's ring brought every spring

To him love's fresh evangel! 160

XXI

'Not he the threatening texts who deals

Is highest 'mong the preachers,

But he who feels the woes and weals

Of all God's wandering creatures.

He doth good work whose heart can find

The spirit 'neath the letter;

Who makes his kind of happier mind,

Leaves wiser men and better.

XXII

'They make Religion be abhorred

Who round with darkness gulf her, 170

And think no word can please the Lord

Unless it smell of sulphur,

Dear Poet-heart, that childlike guessed

The Father's loving kindness,

Come now to rest! Thou didst his hest,

If haply 'twas in blindness!'

XXIII

Then leapt heaven's portals wide apart,

And at their golden thunder

With sudden start I woke, my heart

Still throbbing-full of wonder. 180

'Father,' I said, ''tis known to Thee

How Thou thy Saints preparest;

But this I see,--Saint Charity

Is still the first and fairest!'

XXIV

Dear Bard and Brother! let who may

Against thy faults be railing,

(Though far, I pray, from us be they

That never had a failing!)

One toast I'll give, and that not long,

Which thou wouldst pledge if present, 190

To him whose song, in nature strong,

Makes man of prince and peasant!

IN AN ALBUM

The misspelt scrawl, upon the wall

By some Pompeian idler traced,

In ashes packed (ironic fact!)

Lies eighteen centuries uneffaced,

While many a page of bard and sage,

Deemed once mankind's immortal gain,

Lost from Time's ark, leaves no more mark

Than a keel's furrow through the main.

O Chance and Change! our buzz's range

Is scarcely wider than a fly's;

Then let us play at fame to-day,

To-morrow be unknown and wise;

And while the fair beg locks of hair,

And autographs, and Lord knows what,

Quick! let us scratch our moment's match,

Make our brief blaze, and be forgot!

Too pressed to wait, upon her slate

Fame writes a name or two in doubt;

Scarce written, these no longer please,

And her own finger rubs them out:

It may ensue, fair girl, that you

Years hence this yellowing leaf may see,

And put to task, your memory ask

In vain, 'This Lowell, who was he?'

AT THE COMMENCEMENT DINNER, 1866

IN ACKNOWLEDGING A TOAST TO THE SMITH PROFESSOR

I rise, Mr. Chairman, as both of us know,

With the impromptu I promised you three weeks ago,

Dragged up to my doom by your might and my mane,

To do what I vowed I'd do never again:

And I feel like your good honest dough when possest

By a stirring, impertinent devil of yeast.

'You must rise,' says the leaven. 'I can't,' says the dough;

'Just examine my bumps, and you'll see it's no go.'

'But you must,' the tormentor insists, ''tis all right;

You must rise when I bid you, and, what's more, be light.' 10

'Tis a dreadful oppression, this making men speak

What they're sure to be sorry for all the next week;

Some poor stick requesting, like Aaron's, to bud

Into eloquence, pathos, or wit in cold blood,

As if the dull brain that you vented your spite on

Could be got, like an ox, by mere poking, to Brighton.

They say it is wholesome to rise with the sun,

And I dare say it may be if not overdone;

(I think it was Thomson who made the remark

'Twas an excellent thing in its way--for a lark;) 20

But to rise after dinner and look down the meeting

On a distant (as Gray calls it) prospect of Eating,

With a stomach half full and a cerebrum hollow

As the tortoise-shell ere it was strung for Apollo,

Undercontract to raise anerithmon gelasma

With rhymes so hard hunted they gasp with the asthma,

And jokes not much younger than Jethro's phylacteries,

Is something I leave you yourselves to characterize.

I've a notion, I think, of a good dinner speech,

Tripping light as a sandpiper over the beach, 30

Swerving this way and that as the wave of the moment

Washes out its slight trace with a dash of whim's foam on 't,

And leaving on memory's rim just a sense

Something graceful had gone by, a live present tense;

Not poetry,--no, not quite that, but as good,

A kind of winged prose that could fly if it would.

'Tis a time for gay fancies as fleeting and vain

As the whisper of foam-beads on fresh-poured champagne,

Since dinners were not perhaps strictly designed

For manoeuvring the heavy dragoons of the mind. 40

When I hear your set speeches that start with a pop,

Then wander and maunder, too feeble to stop,

With a vague apprehension from popular rumor

There used to be something by mortals called humor,

Beginning again when you thought they were done,

Respectable, sensible, weighing a ton,

And as near to the present occasions of men

As a Fast Day discourse of the year eighteen ten,

I--well, I sit still, and my sentiments smother,

For am I not also a bore and a brother? 50

And a toast,--what should that, be? Light, airy, and free,

The foam-Aphrodite of Bacchus's sea,

A fancy-tinged bubble, an orbed rainbow-stain,

That floats for an instant 'twixt goblet and brain;

A breath-born perfection, half something, half naught,

And breaks if it strike the hard edge of a thought.

Do you ask me to make such? Ah no, not so simple;

Ask Apelles to paint you the ravishing dimple

Whose shifting enchantment lights Venus's cheek,

And the artist will tell you his skill is to seek; 60

Once fix it, 'tis naught, for the charm of it rises

From the sudden bopeeps of its smiling surprises.

I've tried to define it, but what mother's son

Could ever yet do what he knows should be done?

My rocket has burst, and I watch in the air

Its fast-fading heart's-blood drop back in despair;

Yet one chance is left me, and, if I am quick,

I can palm off, before you suspect me, the stick.

Now since I've succeeded--I pray do not frown--

To Ticknor's and Longfellow's classical gown, 70

And profess four strange languages, which, luckless elf,

I speak like a native (of Cambridge) myself,

Let me beg, Mr. President, leave to propose

A sentiment treading on nobody's toes,

And give, in such ale as with pump-handles \_we\_ brew,

Their memory who saved us from all talking Hebrew,--

A toast that to deluge with water is good,

For in Scripture they come in just after the flood:

I give you the men but for whom, as I guess, sir,

Modern languages ne'er could have had a professor, 80

The builders of Babel, to whose zeal the lungs

Of the children of men owe confusion of tongues;

And a name all-embracing I couple therewith,

Which is that of my founder--the late Mr. Smith.

A PARABLE

An ass munched thistles, while a nightingale

From passion's fountain flooded all the vale.

'Hee-haw!' cried he, 'I hearken,' as who knew

For such ear-largess humble thanks were due.

'Friend,' said the wingÃ¨d pain, 'in vain you bray,

Who tunnels bring, not cisterns, for my lay;

None but his peers the poet rightly hear,

Nor mete we listeners by their length of ear.'

V. EPIGRAMS

SAYINGS

1.

In life's small things be resolute and great

To keep thy muscle trained: know'st thou when Fate

Thy measure takes, or when she'll say to thee,

'I find thee worthy; do this deed for me'?

2.

A camel-driver, angry with his drudge,

Beating him, called him hunchback; to the hind

Thus spake a dervish: 'Friend, the Eternal Judge

Dooms not his work, but ours, the crooked mind.'

3.

Swiftly the politic goes: is it dark?--he borrows a lantern;

Slowly the statesman and sure, guiding his steps by the stars.

4.

'Where lies the capital, pilgrim, seat of who governs the Faithful?'

'Thither my footsteps are bent: it is where Saadi is lodged.'

INSCRIPTIONS

FOR A BELL AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

I call as fly the irrevocable hours,

Futile as air or strong as fate to make

Your lives of sand or granite; awful powers,

Even as men choose, they either give or take.

FOR A MEMORIAL WINDOW TO SIR WALTER RALEIGH, SET UP IN ST. MARGARET'S,

WESTMINSTER, BY AMERICAN CONTRIBUTORS

The New World's sons, from England's breasts we drew

Such milk as bids remember whence we came;

Proud of her Past, wherefrom our Present grew,

This window we inscribe with Raleigh's name.

PROPOSED FOR A SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT IN BOSTON

To those who died for her on land and sea,

That she might have a country great and free,

Boston builds this: build ye her monument

In lives like theirs, at duty's summons spent.

A MISCONCEPTION

B, taught by Pope to do his good by stealth,

'Twixt participle and noun no difference feeling,

In office placed to serve the Commonwealth,

Does himself all the good he can by stealing.

THE BOSS

Skilled to pull wires, he baffles Nature's hope,

Who sure intended him to stretch a rope.

SUN-WORSHIP

If I were the rose at your window,

Happiest rose of its crew,

Every blossom I bore would bend inward,

\_They'd\_ know where the sunshine grew.

CHANGED PERSPECTIVE

Full oft the pathway to her door

I've measured by the selfsame track,

Yet doubt the distance more and more,

'Tis so much longer coming back!

WITH A PAIR OF GLOVES LOST IN A WAGER

We wagered, she for sunshine, I for rain,

And I should hint sharp practice if I dared;

For was not she beforehand sure to gain

Who made the sunshine we together shared?

SIXTY-EIGHTH BIRTHDAY

As life runs on, the road grows strange

With faces new, and near the end

The milestones into headstones change,

'Neath every one a friend.

INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT

In vain we call old notions fudge,

And bend our conscience to our dealing;

The Ten Commandments will not budge,

And stealing will continue stealing.

LAST POEMS

HOW I CONSULTED THE ORACLE OF THE GOLDFISHES

What know we of the world immense

Beyond the narrow ring of sense?

What should we know, who lounge about

The house we dwell in, nor find out,

Masked by a wall, the secret cell

Where the soul's priests in hiding dwell?

The winding stair that steals aloof

To chapel-mysteries 'neath the roof?

It lies about us, yet as far

From sense sequestered as a star 10

New launched its wake of fire to trace

In secrecies of unprobed space,

Whose beacon's lightning-pinioned spears

Might earthward haste a thousand years

Nor reach it. So remote seems this

World undiscovered, yet it is

A neighbor near and dumb as death,

So near, we seem to feel the breath

Of its hushed habitants as they

Pass us unchallenged, night and day. 20

Never could mortal ear nor eye

By sound or sign suspect them nigh,

Yet why may not some subtler sense

Than those poor two give evidence?

Transfuse the ferment of their being

Into our own, past hearing, seeing,

As men, if once attempered so,

Far off each other's thought can know?

As horses with an instant thrill

Measure their rider's strength of will? 30

Comes not to all some glimpse that brings

Strange sense of sense-escaping things?

Wraiths some transfigured nerve divines?

Approaches, premonitions, signs,

Voices of Ariel that die out

In the dim No Man's Land of Doubt?

Are these Night's dusky birds? Are these

Phantasmas of the silences

Outer or inner?--rude heirlooms

From grovellers in the cavern-glooms, 40

Who in unhuman Nature saw

Misshapen foes with tusk and claw,

And with those night-fears brute and blind

Peopled the chaos of their mind,

Which, in ungovernable hours,

Still make their bestial lair in ours?

Were they, or were they not? Yes; no;

Uncalled they come, unbid they go,

And leave us fumbling in a doubt

Whether within us or without 50

The spell of this illusion be

That witches us to hear and see

As in a twi-life what it will,

And hath such wonder-working skill

That what we deemed most solid-wrought

Turns a mere figment of our thought,

Which when we grasp at in despair

Our fingers find vain semblance there,

For Psyche seeks a corner-stone

Firmer than aught to matter known. 60

Is it illusion? Dream-stuff? Show

Made of the wish to have it so?

'Twere something, even though this were all:

So the poor prisoner, on his wall

Long gazing, from the chance designs

Of crack, mould, weather-stain, refines

New and new pictures without cease,

Landscape, or saint, or altar-piece:

But these are Fancy's common brood

Hatched in the nest of solitude; 70

This is Dame Wish's hourly trade,

By our rude sires a goddess made.

Could longing, though its heart broke, give

Trances in which we chiefly live?

Moments that darken all beside,

Tearfully radiant as a bride?

Beckonings of bright escape, of wings

Purchased with loss of baser things?

Blithe truancies from all control

Of HylÃ«, outings of the soul? 80

The worm, by trustful instinct led,

Draws from its womb a slender thread,

And drops, confiding that the breeze

Will waft it to unpastured trees:

So the brain spins itself, and so

Swings boldly off in hope to blow

Across some tree of knowledge, fair

With fruitage new, none else shall share:

Sated with wavering in the Void,

It backward climbs, so best employed, 90

And, where no proof is nor can be,

Seeks refuge with Analogy;

Truth's soft half-sister, she may tell

Where lurks, seld-sought, the other's well,

With metaphysic midges sore,

My Thought seeks comfort at her door,

And, at her feet a suppliant cast,

Evokes a spectre of the past.

Not such as shook the knees of Saul,

But winsome, golden-gay withal,-- 100

Two fishes in a globe of glass,

That pass, and waver, and re-pass,

And lighten that way, and then this,

Silent as meditation is.

With a half-humorous smile I see

In this their aimless industry,

These errands nowhere and returns

Grave as a pair of funeral urns,

This ever-seek and never-find,

A mocking image of my mind. 110

But not for this I bade you climb

Up from the darkening deeps of time:

Help me to tame these wild day-mares

That sudden on me unawares.

Fish, do your duty, as did they

Of the Black Island far away

In life's safe places,--far as you

From all that now I see or do.

You come, embodied flames, as when

I knew you first, nor yet knew men; 120

Your gold renews my golden days,

Your splendor all my loss repays.

'Tis more than sixty years ago

Since first I watched your to-and-fro;

Two generations come and gone

From silence to oblivion,

With all their noisy strife and stress

Lulled in the grave's forgivingness,

While you unquenchably survive

Immortal, almost more alive. 130

I watched you then a curious boy,

Who in your beauty found full joy,

And, by no problem-debts distrest,

Sate at life's board a welcome guest.

You were my sister's pets, not mine;

But Property's dividing line

No hint of dispossession drew

On any map my simplesse knew;

O golden age, not yet dethroned!

What made me happy, that I owned; 140

You were my wonders, you my Lars,

In darkling days my sun and stars,

And over you entranced I hung,

Too young to know that I was young.

Gazing with still unsated bliss,

My fancies took some shape like this:

'I have my world, and so have you,

A tiny universe for two,

A bubble by the artist blown,

Scarcely more fragile than our own, 150

Where you have all a whale could wish,

Happy as Eden's primal fish.

Manna is dropt you thrice a day

From some kind heaven not far away,

And still you snatch its softening crumbs,

Nor, more than we, think whence it comes.

No toil seems yours but to explore

Your cloistered realm from shore to shore;

Sometimes you trace its limits round,

Sometimes its limpid depths you sound, 160

Or hover motionless midway,

Like gold-red clouds at set of day;

Erelong you whirl with sudden whim

Off to your globe's most distant rim,

Where, greatened by the watery lens,

Methinks no dragon of the fens

Flashed huger scales against the sky,

Roused by Sir Bevis or Sir Guy,

And the one eye that meets my view,

Lidless and strangely largening, too, 170

Like that of conscience in the dark,

Seems to make me its single mark.

What a benignant lot is yours

That have an own All-out-of-doors,

No words to spell, no sums to do,

No Nepos and no parlyvoo!

How happy you without a thought

Of such cross things as Must and Ought,--

I too the happiest of boys

To see and share your golden joys!' 180

So thought the child, in simpler words,

Of you his finny flocks and herds;

Now, an old man, I bid you rise

To the fine sight behind the eyes,

And, lo, you float and flash again

In the dark cistern of my brain.

But o'er your visioned flames I brood

With other mien, in other mood;

You are no longer there to please,

But to stir argument, and tease 190

My thought with all the ghostly shapes

From which no moody man escapes.

Diminished creature, I no more

Find Fairyland beside my door,

But for each moment's pleasure pay

With the \_quart d'heure\_ of Rabelais!

I watch you in your crystal sphere,

And wonder if you see and hear

Those shapes and sounds that stir the wide

Conjecture of the world outside; 200

In your pent lives, as we in ours,

Have you surmises dim of powers,

Of presences obscurely shown,

Of lives a riddle to your own,

Just on the senses' outer verge,

Where sense-nerves into soul-nerves merge,

Where we conspire our own deceit

Confederate in deft Fancy's feat,

And the fooled brain befools the eyes

With pageants woven of its own lies? 210

But \_are\_ they lies? Why more than those

Phantoms that startle your repose,

Half seen, half heard, then flit away,

And leave you your prose-bounded day?

The things ye see as shadows I

Know to be substance; tell me why

My visions, like those haunting you,

May not be as substantial too.

Alas, who ever answer heard

From fish, and dream-fish too? Absurd! 220

Your consciousness I half divine,

But you are wholly deaf to mine.

Go, I dismiss you; ye have done

All that ye could; our silk is spun:

Dive back into the deep of dreams,

Where what is real is what, seems!

Yet I shall fancy till my grave

Your lives to mine a lesson gave;

If lesson none, an image, then,

Impeaching self-conceit in men 230

Who put their confidence alone

In what they call the Seen and Known.

How seen? How known? As through your glass

Our wavering apparitions pass

Perplexingly, then subtly wrought

To some quite other thing by thought.

Here shall my resolution be:

The shadow of the mystery

Is haply wholesomer for eyes

That cheat us to be overwise, 240

And I am happy in my right

To love God's darkness as His light.

TURNER'S OLD TÃMÃRAIRE

UNDER A FIGURE SYMBOLIZING THE CHURCH

Thou wast the fairest of all man-made things;

The breath of heaven bore up thy cloudy wings,

And, patient in their triple rank,

The thunders crouched about thy flank,

Their black lips silent with the doom of kings.

The storm-wind loved to rock him in thy pines,

And swell thy vans with breath of great designs;

Long-wildered pilgrims of the main

By thee relaid their course again,

Whose prow was guided by celestial signs.

How didst thou trample on tumultuous seas,

Or, like some basking sea-beast stretched at ease,

Let the bull-fronted surges glide

Caressingly along thy side,

Like glad hounds leaping by the huntsman's knees!

Heroic feet, with fire of genius shod,

In battle's ecstasy thy deck have trod,

While from their touch a fulgor ran

Through plank and spar, from man to man,

Welding thee to a thunderbolt of God.

Now a black demon, belching fire and steam,

Drags thee away, a pale, dismantled dream,

And all thy desecrated bulk

Must landlocked lie, a helpless hulk,

To gather weeds in the regardless stream.

Woe's me, from Ocean's sky-horizoned air

To this! Better, the flame-cross still aflare,

Shot-shattered to have met thy doom

Where thy last lightnings cheered the gloom,

Than here be safe in dangerless despair.

Thy drooping symbol to the flag-staff clings,

Thy rudder soothes the tide to lazy rings,

Thy thunders now but birthdays greet,

Thy planks forget the martyrs' feet,

Thy masts what challenges the sea-wind brings.

Thou a mere hospital, where human wrecks,

Like winter-flies, crawl, those renowned decks,

Ne'er trodden save by captive foes,

And wonted sternly to impose

God's will and thine on bowed imperial necks!

Shall nevermore, engendered of thy fame,

A new sea-eagle heir thy conqueror name.

And with commissioned talons wrench

From thy supplanter's grimy clench

His sheath of steel, his wings of smoke and flame?

This shall the pleased eyes of our children see;

For this the stars of God long even as we;

Earth listens for his wings; the Fates

Expectant lean; Faith cross-propt waits,

And the tired waves of Thought's insurgent sea.

ST. MICHAEL THE WEIGHER

Stood the tall Archangel weighing

All man's dreaming, doing, saying,

All the failure and the pain,

All the triumph and the gain,

In the unimagined years,

Full of hopes, more full of tears,

Since old Adam's hopeless eyes

Backward searched for Paradise,

And, instead, the flame-blade saw

Of inexorable Law.

Waking, I beheld him there,

With his fire-gold, flickering hair,

In his blinding armor stand,

And the scales were in his hand:

Mighty were they, and full well

They could poise both heaven and hell.

'Angel,' asked I humbly then,

'Weighest thou the souls of men?

That thine office is, I know.'

'Nay,' he answered me, 'not so;

But I weigh the hope of Man

Since the power of choice began,

In the world, of good or ill.'

Then I waited and was still.

In one scale I saw him place

All the glories of our race,

Cups that lit Belsbazzar's feast,

Gems, the lightning of the East,

Kublai's sceptre, CÃ¦sar's sword,

Many a poet's golden word,

Many a skill of science, vain

To make men as gods again.

In the other scale he threw

Things regardless, outcast, few,

Martyr-ash, arena sand,

Of St Francis' cord a strand,

Beechen cups of men whose need

Fasted that the poor might feed,

Disillusions and despairs

Of young saints with, grief-grayed hairs,

Broken hearts that brake for Man.

Marvel through my pulses ran

Seeing then the beam divine

Swiftly on this hand decline,

While Earth's splendor and renown

Mounted light as thistle-down.

A VALENTINE

Let others wonder what fair face

Upon their path shall shine,

And, fancying half, half hoping, trace

Some maiden shape of tenderest grace

To be their Valentine.

Let other hearts with tremor sweet

One secret wish enshrine

That Fate may lead their happy feet

Fair Julia in the lane to meet

To be their Valentine.

But I, far happier, am secure;

I know the eyes benign,

The face more beautiful and pure

Than fancy's fairest portraiture

That mark my Valentine.

More than when first I singled, thee,

This only prayer is mine,--

That, in the years I yet shall see.

As, darling, in the past, thou'll be

My happy Valentine.

AN APRIL BIRTHDAY--AT SEA

On this wild waste, where never blossom came,

Save the white wind-flower to the billow's cap,

Or those pale disks of momentary flame,

Loose petals dropped from Dian's careless lap,

What far fetched influence all my fancy fills,

With singing birds and dancing daffodils?

Why, 'tis her day whom jocund April brought,

And who brings April with her in her eyes;

It is her vision lights my lonely thought,

Even as a rose that opes its hushed surprise

In sick men's chambers, with its glowing breath

Plants Summer at the glacier edge of Death.

Gray sky, sea gray as mossy stones on graves;--

Anon comes April in her jollity;

And dancing down the bleak vales 'tween the waves,

Makes them green glades for all her flowers and me.

The gulls turn thrushes, charmed are sea and sky

By magic of my thought, and know not why.

Ah, but I know, for never April's shine,

Nor passion gust of rain, nor all her flowers

Scattered in haste, were seen so sudden fine

As she in various mood, on whom the powers

Of happiest stars in fair conjunction smiled

To bless the birth, of April's darling child.

LOVE AND THOUGHT

What hath Love with Thought to do?

Still at variance are the two.

Love is sudden, Love is rash,

Love is like the levin flash,

Comes as swift, as swiftly goes,

And his mark as surely knows.

Thought is lumpish, Thought is slow,

Weighing long 'tween yes and no;

When dear Love is dead and gone,

Thought comes creeping in anon,

And, in his deserted nest,

Sits to hold the crowner's quest.

Since we love, what need to think?

Happiness stands on a brink

Whence too easy 'tis to fall

Whither's no return at all;

Have a care, half-hearted lover,

Thought would only push her over!

THE NOBLER LOVER

If he be a nobler lover, take him!

You in you I seek, and not myself;

Love with men's what women choose to make him,

Seraph strong to soar, or fawn-eyed elf:

All I am or can, your beauty gave it,

Lifting me a moment nigh to you,

And my bit of heaven, I fain would save it--

Mine I thought it was, I never knew.

What you take of me is yours to serve you,

All I give, you gave to me before;

Let him win you! If I but deserve you,

I keep all you grant to him and more:

You shall make me dare what others dare not,

You shall keep my nature pure as snow,

And a light from you that others share not

Shall transfigure me where'er I go.

Let me be your thrall! However lowly

Be the bondsman's service I can do,

Loyalty shall make it high and holy;

Naught can be unworthy, done for you.

Men shall say, 'A lover of this fashion

Such an icy mistress well beseems.'

Women say, 'Could we deserve such passion,

We might be the marvel that he dreams.'

ON HEARING A SONATA OF BEETHOVEN'S PLAYED IN THE NEXT ROOM

Unseen Musician, thou art sure to please,

For those same notes in happier days I heard

Poured by dear hands that long have never stirred

Yet now again for me delight the keys:

Ah me, to strong illusions such as these

What are Life's solid things? The walls that gird

Our senses, lo, a casual scent or word

Levels, and it is the soul that hears and sees!

Play on, dear girl, and many be the years

Ere some grayhaired survivor sit like me

And, for thy largess pay a meed of tears

Unto another who, beyond the sea

Of Time and Change, perhaps not sadly hears

A music in this verse undreamed by thee!

VERSES

INTENDED TO GO WITH A POSSET DISH TO MY DEAR LITTLE GODDAUGHTER, 1882

In good old times, which means, you know,

The time men wasted long ago,

And we must blame our brains or mood

If that we squander seems less good,

In those blest days when wish was act

And fancy dreamed itself to fact,

Godfathers used to fill with guineas

The cups they gave their pickaninnies,

Performing functions at the chrism

Not mentioned in the Catechism.

No millioner, poor I fill up

With wishes my more modest cup,

Though had I Amalthea's horn

It should be hers the newly born.

Nay, shudder not! I should bestow it

So brimming full she couldn't blow it.

Wishes aren't horses: true, but still

There are worse roadsters than goodwill.

And so I wish my darling health,

And just to round my couplet, wealth,

With faith enough to bridge the chasm

'Twixt Genesis and Protoplasm,

And bear her o'er life's current vext

From this world to a better next,

Where the full glow of God puts out

Poor reason's farthing candle, Doubt.

I've wished her healthy, wealthy, wise,

What more can godfather devise?

But since there's room for countless wishes

In these old-fashioned posset dishes,

I'll wish her from my plenteous store

Of those commodities two more,

Her father's wit, veined through and through

With tenderness that Watts (but whew!

Celia's aflame, I mean no stricture

On his Sir Josh-surpassing picture)--

I wish her next, and 'tis the soul

Of all I've dropt into the bowl,

Her mother's beauty--nay, but two

So fair at once would never do.

Then let her but the half possess,

Troy was besieged ten years for less.

Now if there's any truth in Darwin,

And we from what was, all we are win,

I simply wish the child to be

A sample of Heredity,

Enjoying to the full extent

Life's best, the Unearned Increment

Which Fate her Godfather to flout

Gave \_him\_ in legacies of gout.

Thus, then, the cup is duly filled;

Walk steady, dear, lest all be spilled.

ON A BUST OF GENERAL GRANT

Strong, simple, silent are the [steadfast] laws

That sway this universe, of none withstood,

Unconscious of man's outcries or applause,

Or what man deems his evil or his good;

And when the Fates ally them with a cause

That wallows in the sea-trough and seems lost,

Drifting in danger of the reefs and sands

Of shallow counsels, this way, that way, tost,

Strength, silence, simpleness, of these three strands

They twist the cable shall the world hold fast

To where its anchors clutch the bed-rock of the Past.

Strong, simple, silent, therefore such was he

Who helped us in our need; the eternal law

That who can saddle Opportunity

Is God's elect, though many a mortal flaw

May minish him in eyes that closely see,

Was verified in him: what need we say

Of one who made success where others failed,

Who, with no light save that of common day,

Struck hard, and still struck on till Fortune quailed,

But that (so sift the Norns) a desperate van

Ne'er fell at last to one who was not wholly man.

A face all prose where Time's [benignant] haze

Softens no raw edge yet, nor makes all fair

With the beguiling light of vanished days;

This is relentless granite, bleak and bare,

Roughhewn, and scornful of Ã¦sthetic phrase;

Nothing is here for fancy, naught for dreams,

The Present's hard uncompromising light

Accents all vulgar outlines, flaws, and seams,

Yet vindicates some pristine natural right

O'ertopping that hereditary grace

Which marks the gain or loss of some time-fondled race.

So Marius looked, methinks, and Cromwell so,

Not in the purple born, to those they led

Nearer for that and costlier to the foe,

New moulders of old forms, by nature bred

The exhaustless life of manhood's seeds to show,

Let but the ploughshare of portentous times

Strike deep enough to reach them where they lie;

Despair and danger are their fostering climes,

And their best sun bursts from a stormy sky:

He was our man of men, nor would abate

The utmost due manhood could claim of fate.

Nothing Ideal, a plain-people's man

At the first glance, a more deliberate ken

Finds type primeval, theirs in whose veins ran

Such blood as quelled the dragon In his den,

Made harmless fields, and better worlds began:

He came grim-silent, saw and did the deed

That was to do; in his master-grip

Our sword flashed joy; no skill of words could breed

Such sure conviction as that close-clamped lip;

He slew our dragon, nor, so seemed it, knew

He had done more than any simplest man might do.

Yet did this man, war-tempered, stern as steel

Where steel opposed, prove soft in civil sway;

The hand hilt-hardened had lost tact to feel

The world's base coin, and glozing knaves made prey

Of him and of the entrusted Commonweal;

So Truth insists and will not be denied.

We turn our eyes away, and so will Fame,

As if in his last battle he had died

Victor for us and spotless of all blame,

Doer of hopeless tasks which praters shirk,

One of those still plain men that do the world's rough work.

APPENDIX

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND SERIES OF BIGLOW PAPERS

[Lowell took occasion, when collecting in a book the several numbers of

the second series of 'Biglow Papers,' which had appeared In the

'Atlantic Monthly,' to prefix an essay which not only gave a personal

narrative of the origin of the whole scheme, but particularly dwelt upon

the use in literature of the homely dialect in which the poems were

couched. In this Cabinet Edition it has seemed expedient to print the

Introduction here rather than in immediate connection with the poems

themselves.]

Though prefaces seem of late to have fallen under some reproach, they

have at least this advantage, that they set us again on the feet of our

personal consciousness and rescue us from the gregarious mock-modesty or

cowardice of that \_we\_ which shrills feebly throughout modern literature

like the shrieking of mice in the walls of a house that has passed its

prime. Having a few words to say to the many friends whom the 'Biglow

Papers' have won me, I shall accordingly take the freedom of the first

person singular of the personal pronoun. Let each of the good-natured

unknown who have cheered me by the written communication of their

sympathy look upon this Introduction as a private letter to himself.

When, more than twenty years ago, I wrote the first of the series, I had

no definite plan and no intention of ever writing another. Thinking the

Mexican war, as I think it still, a national crime committed in behoof

of Slavery, our common sin, and wishing to put the feeling of those who

thought as I did in a way that would tell, I imagined to myself such an

up-country man as I had often seen at antislavery gatherings capable of

district-school English, but always instinctively falling back into the

natural stronghold of his homely dialect when heated to the point of

self-forgetfulness. When I began to carry out my conception and to write

in my assumed character, I found myself in a strait between two perils.

On the one hand, I was in danger of being carried beyond the limit of my

own opinions, or at least of that temper with which every man should

speak his mind in print, and on the other I feared the risk of seeming

to vulgarize a deep and sacred conviction. I needed on occasion to rise

above the level of mere \_patois\_, and for this purpose conceived the

Rev. Mr. Wilbur, who should express the more cautious element of the New

England character and its pedantry, as Mr. Biglow should serve for its

homely common-sense vivified and heated by conscience. The parson was to

be the complement rather than the antithesis of his parishioner, and I

felt or fancied a certain humorous element in the real identity of the

two under a seeming incongruity. Mr. Wilbur's fondness for scraps of

Latin, though drawn from the life, I adopted deliberately to heighten

the contrast. Finding soon after that I needed some one as a mouth-piece

of the mere drollery, for I conceive that true humor is never divorced

from moral conviction, I invented Mr. Sawin for the clown of my little

puppet-show. I meant to embody in him that half-conscious \_un\_morality

which I had noticed as the recoil in gross natures from a puritanism

that still strove to keep in its creed the intense savor which had long

gone out of its faith and life. In the three I thought I should find

room enough to express, as it was my plan to do, the popular feeling and

opinion of the time. For the names of two of my characters, since I have

received some remonstrances from very worthy persons who happen to bear

them, I would say that they were purely fortuitous, probably mere

unconscious memories of sign-boards or directories. Mr. Sawin's sprang

from the accident of a rhyme at the end of his first epistle, and I

purposely christened him by the impossible surname of Birdofredum not

more to stigmatize him as the incarnation of 'Manifest Destiny,' in

other words, of national recklessness as to right and wrong, than to

avoid the chance of wounding any private sensitiveness.

The success of my experiment soon began not only to astonish me, but to

make me feel the responsibility of knowing that I held in my hand a

weapon instead of the mere fencing-stick I had supposed. Very far from

being a popular author under my own name, so far, indeed, as to be

almost unread, I found the verses of my pseudonym copied everywhere; saw

them pinned up in workshops; I heard them quoted and their authorship

debated; I once even, when rumor had at length caught up my name in one

of its eddies, had the satisfaction of overhearing it demonstrated, in

the pauses of a concert, that \_I\_ was utterly incompetent to have

written anything of the kind. I had read too much not to know the utter

worthlessness of contemporary reputation, especially as regards satire,

but I knew also that by giving a certain amount of influence it also had

its worth, if that influence were used on the right side. I had learned,

too, that the first requisite of good writing is to have an earnest and

definite purpose, whether Ã¦sthetic or moral, and that even good

writing, to please long, must have more than an average amount either of

imagination or common-sense. The first of these falls to the lot of

scarcely one in several generations; the last is within the reach of

many in every one that passes; and of this an author may fairly hope to

become in part the mouthpiece. If I put on the cap and bells and made

myself one of the court-fools of King Demos, it was less to make his

majesty laugh than to win a passage to his royal ears for certain

serious things which I had deeply at heart. I say this because there is

no imputation that could be more galling to any man's self-respect than

that of being a mere jester. I endeavored, by generalising my satire, to

give it what value \_I\_ could beyond the passing moment and the immediate

application. How far I have succeeded I cannot tell, but I have had

better luck than I ever looked for in seeing my verses survive to pass

beyond their nonage.

In choosing the Yankee dialect, I did not act without forethought. It

had long seemed to me that the great vice of American writing and

speaking was a studied want of simplicity, that we were in danger of

coming to look on our mother-tongue as a dead language, to be sought in

the grammar and dictionary rather than in the heart, and that our only

chance of escape was by seeking it at its living sources among those who

were, as Scottowe says of Major-General Gibbons, 'divinely illiterate.'

President Lincoln, the only really great public man whom these latter

days have seen, was great also in this, that he was master--witness his

speech at Gettysburg--of a truly masculine English, classic, because it

was of no special period, and level at once to the highest and lowest of

his countrymen. I learn from the highest authority that his favorite

reading was in Shakespeare and Milton, to which, of course, the Bible

should be added. But whoever should read the debates in Congress might

fancy himself present at a meeting of the city council of some city of

Southern Gaul in the decline of the Empire, where barbarians with a

Latin varnish emulated each other in being more than Ciceronian. Whether

it be want of culture, for the highest outcome of that is simplicity, or

for whatever reason, it is certain that very few American writers or

speakers wield their native language with the directness, precision, and

force that are common as the day in the mother country. We use it like

Scotsmen, not as if it belonged to us, but as if we wished to prove that

we belonged to it, by showing our intimacy with its written rather than

with its spoken dialect. And yet all the while our popular idiom is racy

with life and vigor and originality, bucksome (as Milton used the word)

to our new occasions, and proves itself no mere graft by sending up new

suckers from the old root in spite of us. It is only from its roots in

the living generations of men that a language can be reinforced with

fresh vigor for its needs; what may be called a literate dialect grows

ever more and more pedantic and foreign, till it becomes at last as

unfitting a vehicle for living thought as monkish Latin. That we should

all be made to talk like books is the danger with which we are

threatened by the Universal Schoolmaster, who does his best to enslave

the minds and memories of his victims to what he esteems the best models

of English composition, that is to say, to the writers whose style is

faultily correct and has no blood-warmth in it. No language after it has

faded into \_diction\_, none that cannot suck up the feeding juices

secreted for it in the rich mother-earth of common folk, can bring forth

a sound and lusty book. True vigor and heartiness of phrase do not pass

from page to page, but from man to man, where the brain is kindled and

the lips suppled by downright living interests and by passion in its

very throe. Language is the soil of thought, and our own especially is a

rich leaf-mould, the slow deposit of ages, the shed foliage of feeling,

fancy, and imagination, which has suffered an earth-change, that the

vocal forest, as Howell called it, may clothe itself anew with living

green. There is death in the dictionary; and, where language is too

strictly limited by convention, the ground for expression to grow in is

limited also; and we get a \_potted\_ literature, Chinese dwarfs

instead of healthy trees.

But while the schoolmaster has been busy starching our language and

smoothing it flat with the mangle of a supposed classical authority, the

newspaper reporter has been doing even more harm by stretching and

swelling it to suit his occasions. A dozen years ago I began a list,

which I have added to from time to time, of some of the changes which

may be fairly laid at his door. I give a few of them as showing their

tendency, all the more dangerous that their effect, like that of some

poisons, is insensibly cumulative, and that they are sure at last of

effect among a people whose chief reading is the daily paper. I give in

two columns the old style and its modern equivalent.

\_Old Style.\_ \_New Style.\_

Was hanged. Was launched into

eternity.

When the halter When the fatal

was put round noose was adjusted

his neck. about the

neck of the unfortunate

victim

of his own unbridled

passions.

A great crowd A vast concourse

came to see. was assembled to

witness.

Great fire. Disastrous conflagration.

The fire spread. The conflagration

extended its devastating

career.

House burned. Edifice consumed.

The fire was got The progress of

under. the devouring

element was arrested.

Man fell. Individual was

precipitated.

A horse and wagon A valuable horse

ran against. attached to a vehicle driven by

J.S., in the employment of J.B.,

collided with.

The frightened The infuriated animal.

horse.

Sent for the doctor. Called into requisition

the services of the family

physician.

The mayor of the The chief magistrate

city in a short of the metropolis, in well-

speech welcomed. chosen and eloquent

language, frequently

interrupted by the

plaudits of the

surging multitude,

officially tendered the

hospitalities.

I shall say a few I shall, with your

words. permission, beg

leave to offer

some brief observations.

Began his answer. Commenced his rejoinder.

Asked him to dine. Tendered him a banquet.

A bystander advised. One of those omnipresent

characters who, as if

in pursuance of some

previous arrangement,

are certain to be

encountered in the

vicinity when an accident

occurs, ventured

the suggestion.

He died. He deceased, he passed

out of existence, his

spirit quitted its

earthly habitation,

winged its way to

eternity, shook off

its burden, etc.

In one sense this is nothing new. The school of Pope in verse ended by

wire-drawing its phrase to such thinness that it could bear no weight of

meaning whatever. Nor is fine writing by any means confined to America.

All writers without imagination fall into it of necessity whenever they

attempt the figurative. I take two examples from Mr. Merivale's 'History

of the Romans under the Empire,' which, indeed, is full of such. 'The

last years of the age familiarly styled the Augustan were singularly

barren of the literary glories from which its celebrity was chiefly

derived. One by one the stars in its firmament had been lost to the

world; Virgil and Horace, etc., had long since died; the charm which the

imagination of Livy had thrown over the earlier annals of Rome had

ceased to shine on the details of almost contemporary history; and if

the flood of his eloquence still continued flowing, we can hardly

suppose that the stream was as rapid, as fresh, and as clear as ever.' I

will not waste time in criticising the bad English or the mixture of

metaphor in these sentences, but will simply cite another from the same

author which is even worse. 'The shadowy phantom of the Republic

continued to flit before the eyes of the CÃ¦sar. There was still, he

apprehended, a germ of sentiment existing, on which a scion of his own

house, or even a stranger, might boldly throw himself and raise the

standard of patrician independence.' Now a ghost may haunt a murderer,

but hardly, I should think, to scare him with the threat of taking a new

lease of its old tenement. And fancy the \_scion\_ of a \_house\_ in the act

of \_throwing itself\_ upon a \_germ of sentiment\_ to \_raise a standard!\_ I

am glad, since we have so much in the same kind to answer for, that this

bit of horticultural rhetoric is from beyond sea. I would not be

supposed to condemn truly imaginative prose. There is a simplicity of

splendor, no less than of plainness, and prose would be poor indeed if

it could not find a tongue for that meaning of the mind which is behind

the meaning of the words. It has sometimes seemed to me that in England

there was a growing tendency to curtail language into a mere

convenience, and to defecate it of all emotion as thoroughly as

algebraic signs. This has arisen, no doubt, in part from that healthy

national contempt of humbug which is characteristic of Englishmen, in

part from that sensitiveness to the ludicrous which makes them so shy of

expressing feeling, but in part also, it is to be feared, from a growing

distrust, one might almost say hatred, of whatever is super-material.

There is something sad in the scorn with which their journalists treat

the notion of there being such a thing as a national ideal, seeming

utterly to have forgotten that even in the affairs of this world the

imagination is as much matter-of-fact as the understanding. If we were

to trust the impression made on us by some of the cleverest and most

characteristic of their periodical literature, we should think England

hopelessly stranded on the good-humored cynicism of well-to-do

middle-age, and should fancy it an enchanted nation, doomed to sit

forever with its feet under the mahogany in that after-dinner mood which

follows conscientious repletion, and which it is ill-manners to disturb

with any topics more exciting than the quality of the wines. But there

are already symptoms that a large class of Englishmen are getting weary

of the dominion of consols and divine common-sense, and to believe that

eternal three per cent. is not the chief end of man, nor the highest and

only kind of interest to which the powers and opportunities of England

are entitled.

The quality of exaggeration has often been remarked on as typical of

American character, and especially oÂ£ American humor. In Dr. Petri's

\_GedrÃ¤ngtes Handbuch der FremdwÃ¶rter\_, we are told that the word

\_humbug\_ is commonly used for the exaggerations of the North-Americans.

To be sure, one would be tempted to think the dream of Columbus half

fulfilled, and that Europe had found in the West a nearer way to

Orientalism, at least in diction. But it seems tome that a great deal of

what is set down as mere extravagance is more fitly to be called

intensity and picturesqueness, symptoms ol the imaginative faculty in

full health and strength, though producing, as yet, only the raw and

formless material in which poetry is to work. By and by, perhaps, the

world will see it fashioned into poem and picture, and Europe, which

will be hard pushed for originality erelong, may have to thank us for a

new sensation. The French continue to find Shakespeare exaggerated

because he treated English just as our country-folk do when they speak

of a 'steep price,' or say that they 'freeze to' a thing. The first

postulate of an original literature is that a people should use their

language instinctively and unconsciously, as if it were a lively part of

their growth and personality, not as the mere torpid boon of education

or inheritance. Even Burns contrived to write very poor verse and prose

in English. Vulgarisms are often only poetry in the egg. The late Mr.

Horace Mann, in one of his public addresses, commented at some length on

the beauty and moral significance ol the French phrase \_s'orienter\_ and

called on his young friends to practise upon it in life. There was not a

Yankee in his audience whose problem had not always been to find out

what was \_about east\_, and to shape his course accordingly. This charm

which a familiar expression gains by being commented, as it were, and.

set in a new light by a foreign language, is curious and instructive. I

cannot help thinking that Mr. Matthew Arnold forgets this a little too

much sometimes when he writes of the beauties of French style. It would

not be hard to find in the works of French Academicians phrases as

coarse as those he cites from Burke, only they are veiled by the

unfamiliarity of the language. But, however this may be, it is certain

that poets and peasants please us in the same way by translating words

back again to their primal freshness, and infusing them with a

delightful strangeness which is anything but alienation. What, for

example, is Milton's '\_edge\_ of battle' but a doing into English of the

Latin \_acies? Was die Gans gedacht das der Schwan vollbracht\_, what the

goose but thought, that the swan full brought (or, to de-Saxonize it a

little, what the goose conceived, that the swan achieved), and it may

well be that the life, invention, and vigor shown by our popular speech,

and the freedom with which it is shaped to the instant want of those who

use it, are of the best omen for our having a swan at last. The part I

have taken on myself is that of the humbler bird.

But it is affirmed that there is something innately vulgar in the Yankee

dialect. M. Sainte-Beuve says, with his usual neatness: '\_Je dÃ©finis un

patois une ancienne langue qui a eu des malheurs, ou encore une langue

toute jeune st qui n'a pas fait fortune.\_' The first part of his

definition applies to a dialect like the ProvenÃ§al, the last to the

Tuscan before Dante had lifted it into a classic, and neither, it seems

to me, will quite fit a \_patois/\_, which is not properly a dialect, but

rather certain archaisms, proverbial phrases, and modes of

pronunciation, which maintain themselves among the uneducated side by

side with the finished and universally accepted language. Norman French,

for example, or Scotch down to the time of James VI., could hardly be

called \_patois\_, while I should be half inclined to name the Yankee a

\_lingo\_ rather than a dialect. It has retained a few words now fallen

into disuse in the mother country, like to \_tarry\_, to \_progress\_,

\_fleshy\_, \_fall\_, and some others; it has changed the meaning of some,

as in \_freshet\_; and it has clung to what I suspect to have been the

broad Norman pronunciation of \_e\_ (which MoliÃ¨re puts into the mouth of

his rustics) in such words as \_sarvant\_, \_parfect\_, \_vartoo\_, and the

like. It maintains something of the French sound of \_a\_ also in words

like \_ch[)a]mber\_, \_d[)a]nger\_ (though the latter had certainly begun to

take its present sound so early as 1636, when I find it sometimes spelt

\_dainger\_). But in general it may be said that nothing can be found in

it which does not still survive in some one or other of the English

provincial dialects. There is, perhaps, a single exception in the verb

to \_sleeve\_. To \_sleeve\_ silk means to divide or ravel out a thread of

silk with the point of a needle till it becomes \_floss\_. (A.S. \_slÃ©fan\_,

to \_cleave\_=divide.) This, I think, explains the '\_sleeveless\_ errand'

in 'Troilus and Cressida' so inadequately, sometimes so ludicrously

darkened by the commentators. Is not a 'sleeveless errand' one that

cannot be unravelled, incomprehensible, and therefore bootless?

I am not speaking now of Americanisms properly so called, that is, of

words or phrases which have grown into use here either through

necessity, invention, or accident, such as a \_carry\_, a \_one-horse

affair\_, a \_prairie\_, to \_vamose\_. Even these are fewer than is

sometimes taken for granted. But I think some fair defence may be made

against the charge of vulgarity. Properly speaking, vulgarity is in the

thought, and not in the word or the way of pronouncing it. Modern

French, the most polite of languages, is barbarously vulgar if compared

with the Latin out of which it has been corrupted, or even with Italian.

There is a wider gap, and one implying greater boorishness, between

\_ministerium\_ and \_mÃ©tier\_, or \_sapiens\_ and \_sachant\_, than between

\_druv\_ and \_drove\_ or \_agin\_ and \_against\_, which last is plainly an

arrant superlative. Our rustic \_coverlid\_ is nearer its French original

than the diminutive cover\_let\_, into which it has been ignorantly

corrupted in politer speech. I obtained from three cultivated Englishmen

at different times three diverse pronunciations of a single

word,--\_cowcumber\_, \_coocumber\_, and \_cucumber\_. Of these the first,

which is Yankee also, comes nearest to the nasality of \_concombre\_. Lord

Ossory assures us that Voltaire saw the best society in England, and

Voltaire tells his countrymen that \_handkerchief\_ was pronounced

\_hankercher\_. I find it so spelt in Hakluyt and elsewhere. This enormity

the Yankee still persists in, and as there is always a reason for such

deviations from the sound as represented by the spelling, may we not

suspect two sources of derivation, and find an ancestor for \_kercher\_

in \_couverture\_ rather than in \_couvrechef\_? And what greater phonetic

vagary (which Dryden, by the way, called \_fegary\_) in our \_lingua

rustica\_ than this \_ker\_ for \_couvre\_? I copy from the fly-leaves of my

books, where I have noted them from time to time, a few examples of

pronunciation and phrase which will show that the Yankee often has

antiquity and very respectable literary authority on his side. My list

might be largely increased by referring to glossaries, but to them eyery

one can go for himself, and I have gathered enough for my purpose.

I will take first those cases in which something like the French sound

has been preserved in certain single letters and diphthongs. And this

opens a curious question as to how long this Gallicism maintained itself

in England. Sometimes a divergence in pronunciation has given as two

words with different meanings, as in \_genteel\_ and \_jaunty\_, which I

find coming in toward the close of the seventeenth century, and wavering

between \_genteel\_ and \_jantee\_. It is usual in America to drop the \_u\_

in words ending in \_our\_--a very proper change recommended by Howell two

centuries ago, and carried out by him so far as his printers would

allow. This and the corresponding changes in \_musique\_, \_musick\_, and

the like, which he also advocated, show that in his time the French

accent indicated by the superfluous letters (for French had once nearly

as strong an accent as Italian) had gone out of use. There is plenty of

French accent down to the end of Elizabeth's reign. In Daniel we have

\_riches'\_ and \_counsel'\_, in Bishop Hall \_comet'\_, \_chapÃ«lain\_, in Donne

\_pictures'\_, \_virtue'\_, \_presence'\_, \_mortal'\_, \_merit'\_, \_hainous'\_,

\_giant'\_, with many more, and Marston's satires are full of them. The

two latter, however, are not to be relied on, as they may be suspected

of Chaucerizing. Herrick writes \_baptime\_. The tendency to throw the

accent backward began early. But the incongruities are perplexing, and

perhaps mark the period of transition. In Warner's 'Albion's England' we

have \_creator'\_ and \_crÃ«ature'\_ side by side with the modern \_creator\_

and \_creature\_. \_E'nvy\_ and \_e'nvying\_ occur in Campion (1602), and yet

\_envy'\_ survived Milton. In some cases we have gone back again nearer to

the French, as in \_rev'enue\_ for \_reven'ue\_, I had been so used to

hearing \_imbecile\_ pronounced with the accent on the first syllable,

which is in accordance with the general tendency in such matters, that I

was surprised to find \_imbec'ile\_ in a verse of Wordsworth. The

dictionaries all give it so. I asked a highly cultivated Englishman, and

he declared for \_imbeceel'\_. In general it may be assumed that accent

will finally settle on the syllable dictated by greater ease and

therefore quickness of utterance. \_Blas'-phemous\_, for example, is more

rapidly pronounced than \_blasphem'ous\_, to which our Yankee clings,

following in this the usage of many of the older poets. \_Amer'ican\_ is

easier than \_Ameri'can\_, and therefore the false quantity has carried

the day, though the true one may be found in George Herbert, and even so

late as Cowley.

To come back to the matter in hand. Our 'uplandish man' retains the soft

or thin sound of the \_u\_ in some words, such as \_rule\_, \_truth\_

(sometimes also pronounced \_tr[)u]th\_, not \_trooth\_), while he says

\_noo\_ for \_new\_, and gives to \_view\_ and \_few\_ so indescribable a

mixture of the two sounds with a slight nasal tincture that it may be

called the Yankee shibboleth. Voltaire says that the English pronounce

\_true\_ as if it rhymed with \_view\_, and this is the sound our rustics

give to it. Spenser writes \_deow\_ (\_dew\_) which can only be pronounced

with the Yankee nasality. In \_rule\_ the least sound of \_a\_ precedes the

\_u\_. I find \_reule\_ in Pecock's 'Repressor.' He probably pronounced it

\_rayoolÃ«\_, as the old French word from which it is derived was very

likely to be sounded at first, with a reminiscence of its original

\_regula\_. Tindal has \_reuler\_, and the Coventry Plays have \_preudent\_.

In the 'Parlyament of Byrdes' I find \_reule\_. As for \_noo\_, may it not

claim some sanction in its derivation, whether from \_nouveau\_ or \_neuf\_,

the ancient sound of which may very well have been \_noof\_, as nearer

\_novus\_? \_Beef\_ would seem more like to have come from \_buffe\_ than from

\_boeuf\_, unless the two were mere varieties of spelling. The Saxon \_few\_

may have caught enough from its French cousin \_peu\_ to claim the benefit

of the same doubt as to sound; and our slang phrase \_a few\_ (as 'I

licked him a few') may well appeal to \_un peu\_ for sense and authority.

Nay, might not \_lick\_ itself turn out to be the good old word \_lam\_ in

an English disguise, it the latter should claim descent as, perhaps, he

fairly might, from the Latin \_lambere\_? The New England \_ferce\_ for

\_fierce\_, and \_perce\_ for \_pierce\_ (sometimes heard as \_fairce\_ and

\_pairce\_), are also Norman. For its antiquity I cite the rhyme of \_verse

and pierce\_ in Chapman and Donne, and in some commendatory verses by a

Mr. Berkenhead before the poems of Francis Beaumont. Our \_pairlous\_ for

\_perilous\_ is of the same kind, and is nearer Shakespeare's \_parlous\_

than the modern pronunciation. One other Gallicism survives in our

pronunciation. Perhaps I should rather call it a semi-Gallicism, for it

is the result of a futile effort to reproduce a French sound with

English lips. Thus for \_joint\_, \_employ\_, \_royal\_, we have \_jynt\_,

\_emply\_, \_r[)y]le\_, the last differing only from \_rile\_ (\_roil\_) in a

prolongation of the \_y\_ sound. I find \_royal\_ so pronounced in the

'Mirror for Magistrates.' In Walter de Biblesworth I find \_solives\_

Englished by \_gistes\_. This, it is true, may have been pronounced

\_jeests\_, but the pronunciation \_jystes\_ must have preceded the present

spelling, which was no doubt adopted after the radical meaning was

forgotten, as analogical with other words in \_oi\_. In the same way after

Norman-French influence had softened the \_l\_ out of \_would\_ (we already

find \_woud\_ for \_veut\_ in N.F. poems), \_should\_ followed the example,

and then an \_l\_ was foisted into \_could\_, where it does not belong, to

satisfy the logic of the eye, which has affected the pronunciation and

even the spelling of English more than is commonly supposed. I meet with

\_eyster\_ for \_oyster\_ as early as the fourteenth century. I find \_viage\_

in Bishop Hall and Middleton the dramatist, \_bile\_ for \_boil\_ in Donne

and Chrononhotonthologos, \_line\_ for \_loin\_ in Hall, \_ryall\_ and \_chyse\_

(for choice) \_dystrye\_ for \_destroy\_, in the Coventry Plays. In

Chapman's 'All Fools' is the misprint of \_employ\_ for \_imply\_, fairly

inferring an identity of sound in the last syllable. Indeed, this

pronunciation was habitual till after Pope, and Rogers tells us that the

elegant Gray said \_naise\_ for \_noise\_ just as our rustics still do. Our

\_cornish\_ (which I find also in Herrick) remembers the French better

than \_cornice\_ does. While clinging more closely to the Anglo-Saxon in

dropping the \_g\_ from the end of the present participle, the Yankee now

and then pleases himself with an experiment in French nasality in words

ending in \_n\_. It is not, so far as my experience goes, very common,

though it may formerly have been more so. \_Capting\_, for instance, I

never heard save in jest, the habitual form being \_kepp'n\_. But at any

rate it is no invention of ours. In that delightful old volume, 'Ane

Compendious Buke of Godly and Spirituall Songs,' in which I know not

whether the piety itself or the simplicity of its expression be more

charming, I find \_burding\_, \_garding\_, and \_cousing\_, and in the State

Trials \_uncerting\_ used by a gentleman. I confess that I like the \_n\_

better than \_ng\_.

Of Yankee preterites I find \_risse\_ and \_rize\_ for \_rose\_ in Beaumont

and Fletcher, Middleton and Dryden, \_clim\_ in Spenser, \_chees\_ (\_chose\_)

in Sir John Mandevil, \_give\_ (\_gave\_) in the Coventry Plays, \_shet\_

(\_shut\_) in Golding's Ovid, \_het\_ in Chapman and in Weever's Epitaphs,

\_thriv\_ and \_smit\_ in Drayton, \_quit\_ in Ben Jonson and Henry More, and

\_pled\_ in the Paston Letters, nay, even in the fastidious Landor. \_Rid\_

for \_rode\_ was anciently common. So likewise was \_see\_ for \_saw\_, but I

find it in no writer of authority (except Golding), unless Chaucer's

\_seie\_ and Gower's \_sigh\_ were, as I am inclined to think, so sounded.

\_Shew\_ is used by Hector Boece, Giles Fletcher, Drummond of Hawthornden,

and in the Paston Letters. Similar strong preterites, like \_snew\_,

\_thew\_, and even \_mew\_, are not without example. I find \_sew\_ for

\_sewed\_ in 'Piers Ploughman.' Indeed, the anomalies in English

preterites are perplexing. We have probably transferred \_flew\_ from

\_flow\_ (as the preterite of which I have heard it) to \_fly\_ because we

had another preterite in \_fled\_. Of weak preterites the Yankee retains

\_growed\_, \_blowed\_, for which he has good authority, and less often

\_knowed\_. His \_sot\_ is merely a broad sounding of \_sat\_, no more

inelegant than the common \_got\_ for \_gat\_, which he further degrades

into \_gut\_. When he says \_darst\_, he uses a form as old as Chaucer.

The Yankee has retained something of the long sound of the \_a\_ in such

words as \_axe\_, \_wax\_, pronouncing them \_exe\_, \_wex\_ (shortened from

\_aix\_, \_waix\_). He also says \_hev\_ and \_hed\_ (\_h[=a]ve\_, \_h[=a]d\_ for

\_have\_ and \_had\_). In most cases he follows an Anglo-Saxon usage. In

\_aix\_ for \_axle\_ he certainly does. I find \_wex\_ and \_aisches\_ (\_ashes\_)

in Pecock, and \_exe\_ in the Paston Letters. Golding rhymes \_wax\_ with

\_wexe\_ and spells \_challenge\_ \_chelenge\_. Chaucer wrote \_hendy\_. Dryden

rhymes \_can\_ with \_men\_, as Mr. Biglow would. Alexander Gill, Milton's

teacher, in his 'Logonomia' cites \_hez\_ for \_hath\_ as peculiar to

Lincolnshire. I find \_hayth\_ in Collier's 'Bibliographical Account of

Early English Literature' under the date 1584, and Lord Cromwell so

wrote it. Sir Christopher Wren wrote \_belcony\_. Our \_fect\_ is only the

O.F. \_faict\_. \_Thaim\_ for \_them\_ was common in the sixteenth century. We

have an example of the same thing in the double form of the verb

\_thrash\_, \_thresh\_. While the New Englander cannot be brought to say

\_instead\_ for \_instid\_ (commonly \_'stid\_ where not the last word in a

sentence), he changes the \_i\_ into \_e\_ in \_red\_ for \_rid\_, \_tell\_ for

\_till\_, \_hender\_ for \_hinder\_, \_rense\_ for \_rinse\_. I find \_red\_ in the

old interlude of 'Thersytes,' \_tell\_ in a letter of Daborne to

Henslowe, and also, I shudder to mention it, in a letter of the great

Duchess of Marlborough, Atossa herself! It occurs twice in a single

verse of the Chester Plays,

'\_Tell\_ the day of dome, \_tell\_ the beames blow.'

From the word \_blow\_ (in another sense) is formed \_blowth\_, which I

heard again this summer after a long interval. Mr. Wright[24] explains it

as meaning 'a blossom.' With us a single blossom is a \_blow\_, while

\_blowth\_ means the blossoming in general. A farmer would say that there

was a good blowth on his fruit-trees. The word retreats farther inland

and away from the railways, year by year. Wither rhymes \_hinder\_ with

\_slender\_, and Shakespeare and Lovelace have \_renched\_ for \_rinsed\_. In

'Gammer Gurton' and 'Mirror for Magistrates' is \_sence\_ for \_since\_;

Marlborough's Duchess so writes it, and Donne rhymes \_since\_ with

\_Amiens\_ and \_patÃ¯ence\_, Bishop Hall and Otway with \_pretence\_, Chapman

with \_citizens\_, Dryden with \_providence\_. Indeed, why should not

\_sithence\_ take that form? Dryden's wife (an earl's daughter) has \_tell\_

for \_till\_, Margaret, mother of Henry VII., writes \_seche\_ for \_such\_,

and our \_ef\_ finds authority in the old form \_yeffe\_.

\_E\_ sometimes takes the place of \_u\_, as \_jedge, tredge, bresh\_. I find

\_tredge\_ in the interlude of 'Jack Jugler,' \_bresh\_ in a citation by

Collier from 'London Cries' of the middle of the seventeenth century,

and \_resche\_ for \_rush\_ (fifteenth century) in the very valuable 'Volume

of Vocabularies' edited by Mr. Wright. \_Resce\_ is one of the Anglo-Saxon

forms of the word in Bosworth's A.-S. Dictionary. Golding has \_shet\_.

The Yankee always shortens the \_u\_ in the ending \_ture\_, making \_ventur,

natur, pictur\_, and so on. This was common, also, among the educated of

the last generation. I am inclined to think it may have been once

universal, and I certainly think it more elegant than the vile \_vencher,

naycher, pickcher\_, that have taken its place, sounding like the

invention of a lexicographer to mitigate a sneeze. Nash in his 'Pierce

Penniless' has \_ventur\_, and so spells it, and I meet it also in

Spenser, Drayton, Ben Jonson, Herrick, and Prior. Spenser has

\_tort'rest\_, which can be contracted only from \_tortur\_ and not from

\_torcher\_. Quarles rhymes \_nature\_ with \_creator\_, and Dryden with

\_satire\_, which he doubtless pronounced according to its older form of

\_satyr\_. Quarles has also \_torture\_ and \_mortar\_. Mary Boleyn writes

\_kreatur\_. I find \_pikter\_ in Izaak Walton's autograph will.

I shall now give some examples which cannot so easily be ranked under

any special head. Gill charges the Eastern counties with \_kiver\_ for

\_cover\_, and \_ta\_, for \_to\_. The Yankee pronounces both \_too\_ and \_to\_

like \_ta\_ (like the \_tou\_ in \_touch\_) where they are not emphatic. When

they are, both become \_tu\_. In old spelling, \_to\_ is the common (and

indeed correct) form of \_too\_, which is only \_to\_ with the sense of \_in

addition\_. I suspect that the sound of our \_too\_ has caught something

from the French \_tout\_, and it is possible that the old \_too too\_ is not

a reduplication, but a reminiscence of the feminine form of the same

word (\_toute\_) as anciently pronounced, with the \_e\_ not yet silenced.

Gill gives a Northern origin to \_geaun\_ for \_gown\_ and \_waund\_ for

\_wound\_ (\_vulnus\_). Lovelace has \_waund\_, but

there is something too dreadful in suspecting Spenser (who \_borealised\_

in his pastorals) of having ever been guilty of \_geaun!\_ And yet some

delicate mouths even now are careful to observe the Hibernicism of

\_ge-ard\_ for \_guard\_, and \_ge-url\_ for \_girl\_. Sir Philip Sidney

(\_credite posteri!\_) wrote \_furr\_ for \_far\_. I would hardly have

believed it had I not seen it in \_facsimile\_. As some consolation, I

find \_furder\_ in Lord Bacon and Donne, and Wittier rhymes \_far\_ with

\_cur\_. The Yankee, who omits the final \_d\_ in many words, as do the

Scotch, makes up for it by adding one in \_geound\_. The purist does not

feel the loss of the \_d\_ sensibly in \_lawn\_ and \_yon\_, from the former

of which it has dropped again after a wrongful adoption (retained in

\_laundry\_), while it properly belongs to the latter. But what shall we

make of \_git, yit\_, and \_yis\_? I find \_yis\_ and \_git\_ in Warner's

'Albion's England,' \_yet\_ rhyming with \_wit, admit\_, and \_fit\_ in Donne,

with \_wit\_ in the 'Revenger's Tragedy,' Beaumont, and Suckling, with

\_writ\_ in Dryden, and latest of all with \_wit\_ in Sir Hanbury Williams.

Prior rhymes \_fitting\_ and \_begetting\_. Worse is to come. Among others,

Donne rhymes \_again\_ with \_sin\_, and Quarles repeatedly with \_in\_. \_Ben\_

for \_been\_, of which our dear Whittier is so fond, has the authority of

Sackville, 'Gammer Gurton' (the work of a bishop), Chapman, Dryden, and

many more, though \_bin\_ seems to have been the common form. Whittier's

accenting the first syllable of \_rom'ance\_ finds an accomplice in

Drayton among others, and, though manifestly wrong, is analogous with

\_Rom'ans\_. Of other Yankeeisms, whether of form or pronunciation, which

I have met with I add a few at random. Pecock writes \_sowdiers (sogers,

soudoyers)\_, and Chapman and Gill \_sodder\_. This absorption of the \_l\_

is common in various dialects, especially in the Scottish. Pecock writes

also \_biyende\_, and the authors of 'Jack Jugler' and 'Gammer Gurton'

\_yender\_. The Yankee includes '\_yon\_' in the same catagory, and says

'hither an' yen,' for 'to and fro.' (Cf. German \_jenseits\_.) Pecock and

plenty more have \_wrastle\_. Tindal has \_agynste, gretter, shett, ondone,

debyte\_, and \_scace\_. 'Jack Jugler' has \_scacely\_ (which I have often

heard, though \_skurce\_ is the common form), and Donne and Dryden make

\_great\_ rhyme with \_set\_. In the inscription on Caxton's tomb I find

\_ynd\_ for \_end\_, which the Yankee more often makes \_eend\_, still using

familiarly the old phrase 'right anend' for 'continuously.' His 'stret

(straight) along' in the same sense, which I thought peculiar to him, I

find in Pecock. Tindal's \_debytÃ«\_ for \_deputy\_ is so perfectly Yankee

that I could almost fancy the brave martyr to have been deacon of the

First Parish at Jaalam Centre. 'Jack Jugler' further gives us \_playsent\_

and \_sartayne\_. Dryden rhymes \_certain\_ with \_parting\_, and Chapman and

Ben Jonson use \_certain\_, as the Yankee always does, for \_certainly\_.

The 'Coventry Mysteries' have \_occapied, massage, nateralle, materal

(material),\_ and \_meracles\_,--all excellent Yankeeisms. In the 'Quatre

fils, Aymon' (1504),[25] is \_vertus\_ for \_virtuous\_. Thomas Fuller called

\_volume vollum\_, I suspect, for he spells it \_volumne\_. However, \_per

contra\_, Yankees habitually say \_colume\_ for \_column\_. Indeed, to

prove that our ancestors brought their pronunciation with them from the

Old Country, and have not wantonly debased their mother tongue, I need

only to cite the words \_scriptur\_, \_Israll\_, \_athists\_, and

\_cherfulness\_ from Governor Bradford's 'History.' So the good man wrote

them, and so the good descendants of his fellow-exiles still pronounce

them. Brampton Gurdon writes \_shet\_ in a letter to Winthrop. \_Purtend\_

(\_pretend\_) has crept like a serpent into the 'Paradise Of Dainty

Devices;' \_purvide\_, which is not so bad, is in Chaucer. These, of

course, are universal vulgarisms, and not peculiar to the Yankee. Butler

has a Yankee phrase, and pronunciation too, in 'To which these

\_carr'ings-on\_ did tend.' Langham or Laneham, who wrote an account of

the festivities at Kenilworth in honor of Queen Bess, and who evidently

tried to spell phonetically, makes \_sorrows\_ into \_sororz\_. Herrick

writes \_hollow\_ for \_halloo\_, and perhaps pronounced it (\_horresco

suggerens\_!) \_hollÃ³\_, as Yankees do. Why not, when it comes from \_holÃ \_?

I find \_ffelaschyppe\_ (fellowship) in the Coventry Plays. Spenser and

his queen neither of them scrupled to write \_afore\_, and the former

feels no inelegance even in \_chaw\_ and \_idee\_. \_'Fore\_ was common till

after Herrick. Dryden has \_do's\_ for \_does\_, and his wife spells \_worse\_

\_wosce\_. \_Afeared\_ was once universal. Warner has \_ery\_ for \_ever a\_;

nay, he also has illy, with which we were once ignorantly reproached by

persons more familiar with Murray's Grammar than with English

literature. And why not \_illy\_? Mr. Bartlett says it is 'a word used by

writers of an inferior class, who do not seem to perceive that \_ill\_ is

itself an adverb, without the termination \_ly\_,' and quotes Dr. Mosser,

President of Brown University, as asking triumphantly, 'Why don't you

say '\_welly\_?' I should like to have had Dr. Messer answer his own

question. It would be truer to say that it was used by people who still

remembered that \_ill\_ was an adjective, the shortened form of \_evil\_,

out of which Shakespeare and the translators of the Bible ventured to

make \_evilly\_. This slurred \_evil\_ is 'the dram of \_eale\_' in 'Hamlet.'

I find, \_illy\_ in Warner. The objection to \_illy\_ is not an etymological

one, but simply that it is contrary to good usage,--a very sufficient

reason. \_Ill\_ as an adverb was at first a vulgarism, precisely like the

rustic's when he says, 'I was treated \_bad\_.' May not the reason of this

exceptional form be looked for in that tendency to dodge what is hard to

pronounce, to which I have already alluded? If the letters were

distinctly uttered, as they should be, it would take too much time to

say \_ill-ly\_, \_well-ly\_, and it is to be observed that we have avoided

\_smally\_[26] and \_tally\_ in the same way, though we add \_ish\_ to them

without hesitation in \_smallish\_ and \_tallish\_. We have, to be sure,

\_dully\_ and \_fully\_, but for the one we prefer \_stupidly\_, and the other

(though this may have come from eliding the \_y\_ before \_a\_s) is giving

way to \_full\_. The uneducated, whose utterance is slower, still make

adverbs when they will by adding \_like\_ to all manner of adjectives. We

have had \_big\_ charged upon us, because we use it where an Englishman

would now use \_great\_. I fully admit that it were better to distinguish

between them, allowing to \_big\_ a certain contemptuous quality; but as

for authority, I want none better than that of Jeremy Taylor, who, in

his noble sermon 'On the Return of Prayer,' speaks of 'Jesus, whose

spirit was meek and gentle up to the greatness of the \_biggest\_

example.' As for our double negative, I shall waste no time in quoting

instances of it, because it was once as universal in English as it still

is in the neo-Latin languages, where it does not strike us as vulgar. I

am not sure that the loss of it is not to be regretted. But surely I

shall admit the vulgarity of slurring or altogether eliding certain

terminal consonants? I admit that a clear and sharp-cut enunciation is

one of the crowning charms and elegances of speech. Words so uttered are

like coins fresh from the mint, compared with the worn and dingy drudges

of long service,--I do not mean American coins, for those look less

badly the more they lose of their original ugliness. No one is more

painfully conscious than I of the contrast between the rifle-crack of an

Englishman's \_yes\_ and \_no\_, and the wet-fuse drawl of the same

monosyllables in the mouths of my countrymen. But I do not find the

dropping of final consonants disagreeable in Allan Ramsay or Burns, nor

do I believe that our literary ancestors were sensible of that

inelegance in the fusing them together of which we are conscious. How

many educated men pronounce the \_t\_ in \_chestnut\_? how many say

\_pentise\_ for \_penthouse\_, as they should. When a Yankee skipper says

that he is "boun' for Gloster" (not Gloucester, with the leave of the

Universal Schoolmaster),[27] he but speaks like Chaucer or an old

ballad-singer, though they would have pronounced it \_boon\_. This is one

of the cases where the \_d\_ is surreptitious, and has been added in

compliment to the verb \_bind\_, with which it has nothing to do. If we

consider the root of the word (though of course I grant that every race

has a right to do what it will with what is so peculiarly its own as its

speech), the \_d\_ has no more right there than at the end of \_gone\_,

where it is often put by children, who are our best guides to the

sources of linguistic corruption, and the best teachers of its

processes. Cromwell, minister of Henry VIII., writes \_worle\_ for world.

Chapman has \_wan\_ for \_wand\_, and \_lawn\_ has rightfully displaced

\_laund\_, though with no thought, I suspect, of etymology. Rogers tells

us that Lady Bathurst sent him some letters written to William III. by

Queen Mary, in which she addresses him as '\_Dear Husban\_.' The old form

\_expoun'\_, which our farmers use, is more correct than the form with a

barbarous \_d\_ tacked on which has taken its place. Of the kind opposite

to this, like our \_gownd\_ for \_gown\_, and the London cockney's \_wind\_

for \_wine\_, I find \_drownd\_ for \_drown\_ in the 'Misfortunes of Arthur'

(1584) and in Swift. And, by the way, whence came the long sound of wind

which our poets still retain, and which survives in 'winding' a horn, a

totally different word from 'winding' a kite-string? We say \_beh[=i]nd\_

and \_h[=i]nder\_ (comparative) and yet to \_h[)i]nder\_. Shakespeare

pronounced \_kind\_ \_k[)i]nd\_, or what becomes of his play on that word

and \_kin\_ in 'Hamlet'? Nay, did he not even (shall I dare to hint it?)

drop the final \_d\_ as the Yankee still does? John Lilly plays in the

same way on \_kindred\_ and \_kindness\_.

But to come to some other ancient instances. Warner rhymes \_bounds\_ with

\_crowns\_, \_grounds\_ with \_towns\_, \_text\_ with \_sex\_, \_worst\_ with

\_crust\_, \_interrupts\_ with \_cups\_; Drayton, \_defects\_ with \_sex\_;

Chapman, \_amends\_ with \_cleanse\_; Webster, \_defects\_ with \_checks\_; Ben

Jonson, \_minds\_ with \_combines\_; Marston, \_trust\_ and \_obsequious\_,

\_clothes\_ and \_shows\_; Dryden gives the same sound to \_clothes\_, and has

also \_minds\_ with \_designs\_. Of course, I do not affirm that their ears

may not have told them that these were imperfect rhymes (though I am by

no means sure even of that), but they surely would never have tolerated

any such had they suspected the least vulgarity in them. Prior has the

rhyme \_first\_ and \_trust\_, but puts it into the mouth of a landlady.

Swift has \_stunted\_ and \_burnt\_ it, an intentionally imperfect rhyme, no

doubt, but which I cite as giving precisely the Yankee pronunciation of

\_burned\_. Donne couples in unhallowed wedlock \_after\_ and \_matter\_, thus

seeming to give to both the true Yankee sound; and it is not uncommon to

find \_after\_ and \_daughter\_. Worse than all, in one of Dodsley's Old

Plays we have \_onions\_ rhyming with \_minions\_,--I have tears in my eyes

while I record it. And yet what is viler than the universal \_Misses\_

(\_Mrs.\_) for \_Mistress\_? This was once a vulgarism, and in 'The Miseries

of Inforced Marriage' the rhyme (printed as prose in Dodsley's Old Plays

by Collier),

'To make my young \_mistress\_

Delighting in \_kisses\_,'

is put into the mouth of the clown. Our people say \_Injun\_ for \_Indian\_.

The tendency to make this change where \_i\_ follows \_d\_ is common. The

Italian \_giorno\_ and French \_jour\_ from \_diurnus\_ are familiar examples.

And yet \_Injun\_ is one of those depravations which the taste challenges

peremptorily, though it have the authority of Charles Cotton--who rhymes

'\_Indies\_' with '\_cringes\_'--and four English lexicographers, beginning

with Dr. Sheridan, bid us say \_invidgeous\_. Yet after all it is no worse

than the debasement which all our terminations in \_tion\_ and \_tience\_

have undergone, which yet we hear with \_resignashun\_ and \_payshunce\_,

though it might have aroused both \_impat-i-ence\_ and \_in-dig-na-ti-on\_

in Shakespeare's time. When George Herbert tells us that if the sermon

be dull,

'God takes a text and preacheth patience,'

the prolongation of the word seems to convey some hint at the

longanimity of the virtue. Consider what a poor curtal we have made of

Ocean. There was something of his heave and expanse in \_o-ce-an\_, and

Fletcher knew how to use it when he wrote so fine a verse as the second

of these, the best deep-sea verse I know,--

'In desperate storms stem with a little rudder

The tumbling ruins of the oceÃ¤n.'

Oceanus was not then wholly shorn of his divine proportions, and our

modern \_oshun\_ sounds like the gush of small-beer in comparison. Some

other contractions of ours have a vulgar air about them. \_More 'n\_ for

\_more than\_, as one of the worst, may stand for a type of such. Yet our

old dramatists are full of such obscurations (elisions they can hardly

be called) of the \_th\_, making \_whe'r\_ of \_whether\_, \_where\_ of

\_whither\_, \_here\_ of \_hither\_, \_bro'r\_ of \_brother\_, \_smo'r\_ of

\_smother\_, \_mo'r\_ of \_mother\_, and so on. And dear Brer Rabbit, can I

forget him? Indeed, it is this that explains the word \_rare\_ (which has

Dryden's support), and which we say of meat where an Englishman would

use \_underdone\_. I do not believe, with the dictionaries, that it had

ever anything to do with the Icelandic \_hrar\_ (\_raw\_), as it plainly has

not in \_rareripe\_, which means earlier ripe,--President Lincoln said of

a precocious boy that 'he was a \_rareripe\_.' And I do not believe it,

for this reason, that the earliest form of the word with us was, and the

commoner now in the inland parts still is, so far as I can discover,

\_raredone\_. Golding has 'egs reere-rosted,' which, whatever else it

mean, cannot mean \_raw\_-roasted, I find \_rather\_ as a monosyllable in

Donne, and still better, as giving the sound, rhyming with \_fair\_ in

Warner. There is an epigram of Sir Thomas Browne in which the words

\_rather than\_ make a monosyllable;--

'What furie is't to take Death's part

And rather than by Nature, die by Art!'

The contraction \_more'n\_ I find in the old play 'Fuimus Troes,' in a

verse where the measure is so strongly accented as to leave it beyond

doubt,--

'A golden crown whose heirs

More than half the world subdue.'

It may be, however, that the contraction is in 'th'orld.' It is

unmistakable in the 'Second Maiden's Tragedy:'--

'It were but folly,

Dear soul, to boast of \_more than\_ I can perform.'

Is our \_gin\_ for \_given\_ more violent than \_mar'l\_ for \_marvel\_, which

was once common, and which I find as late as Herrick? Nay, Herrick has

\_gin\_ (spelling it \_gen\_), too, as do the Scotch, who agree with us

likewise in preferring \_chimly\_ to \_chimney\_.

I will now leave pronunciation and turn to words or phrases which have

been supposed peculiar to us, only pausing to pick up a single dropped

stitch, in the pronunciation of the word \_sÃºpreme\_, which I had thought

native till I found it in the well-languaged Daniel. I will begin with a

word of which I have never met with any example in any English writer of

authority. We express the first stage of withering in a green plant

suddenly cut down by the verb \_to wilt\_. It is, of course, own cousin of

the German \_welken\_, but I have never come upon it in literary use, and

my own books of reference give me faint help. Graff gives \_welhÃ¨n\_,

\_marcescere\_, and refers to \_weih\_ (\_weak\_), and conjecturally to A.-S,

\_hvelan\_. The A.-S. \_wealwian\_ (\_to wither\_) is nearer, but not so near

as two words in the Icelandic, which perhaps put us on the track of its

ancestry,--\_velgi\_, \_tepefacere\_, (and \_velki\_, with the derivative)

meaning \_contaminare\_. \_Wilt\_, at any rate, is a good word, filling, as

it does, a sensible gap between drooping and withering, and the

imaginative phrase 'he wilted right down,' like 'he caved right in,' is

a true Americanism. \_Wilt\_ occurs in English provincial glossaries, but

is explained by \_wither\_, which with us it does not mean. We have a few

words such as \_cache\_, \_cohog\_, \_carry\_ (\_portage\_), \_shoot\_ (\_chute\_),

\_timber\_ (\_forest\_), \_bushwhack\_ (to pull a boat along by the bushes on

the edge of a stream), \_buckeye\_ (a picturesque word for the

horse-chestnut); but how many can we be said to have fairly brought into

the language, as Alexander Gill, who first mentions Americanisms, meant

it when he said, '\_Sed et ab Americanis nonnulla mutuamur ut\_ MAIZ \_et\_

CANOA'? Very few, I suspect, and those mostly by borrowing from the

French, German, Spanish, or Indian.[28] 'The Dipper,' for the 'Great

Bear,' strikes me as having a native air. \_Bogus\_, in the sense of

\_worthless\_, is undoubtedly ours, but is, I more than suspect, a

corruption of the French \_bagasse\_ (from low Latin \_bagasea\_), which

travelled up the Mississippi from New Orleans, where it was used for the

refuse of the sugar-cane. It is true, we have modified the meaning of

some words. We use \_freshet\_ in the sense of \_flood\_, for which I have

not chanced upon any authority. Our New England cross between Ancient

Pistol and Dugald Dalgetty, Captain Underhill, uses the word (1638) to

mean a \_current\_, and I do not recollect it elsewhere in that sense. I

therefore leave it with a? for future explorers. \_Crick\_ for \_creek\_ I

find in Captain John Smith and in the dedication of Fuller's 'Holy

Warre,' and \_run\_, meaning a \_small stream\_, in Waymouth's 'Voyage'

(1605). \_Humans\_ for \_men\_, which Mr. Bartlett includes in his

'Dictionary of Americanisms,' is Chapman's habitual phrase in his

translation of Homer. I find it also in the old play of 'The Hog hath

lost his Pearl.' \_Dogs\_ for \_andirons\_ is still current in New England,

and in Walter de Biblesworth I find \_chiens\_ glossed in the margin by

\_andirons\_. \_Gunning\_ for \_shooting\_ is in Drayton. We once got credit

for the poetical word \_fall\_ for \_autumn\_, but Mr. Bartlett and the last

edition of Webster's Dictionary refer us to Dryden. It is even older,

for I find it in Drayton, and Bishop Hall has \_autumn fall\_. Middleton

plays upon the word: 'May'st thou have a reasonable good \_spring\_, for

thou art like to have many dangerous foul \_falls\_.' Daniel does the

same, and Coleridge uses it as we do. Gray uses the archaism \_picked\_

for \_peaked\_, and the word \_smudge\_ (as our backwoodsmen do) for a

smothered fire. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (more properly perhaps than

even Sidney, the last \_preux chevalier\_) has 'the Emperor's folks' just

as a Yankee would say it. \_Loan\_ for \_lend\_, with which we have hitherto

been blackened, I must retort upon the mother island, for it appears so

long ago as in 'Albion's England.' \_Fleshy\_, in the sense of \_stout\_,

may claim Ben Jonson's warrant, and I find it also so lately as in

Francklin's 'Lucian.' \_Chore\_ is also Jonson's word, and I am inclined

to prefer it to \_chare\_ and \_char\_, because I think that I see a more

natural origin for it in the French \_jour\_--whence it might come to mean

a day's work, and thence a job--than anywhere else.[29] \_At onst\_ for \_at

once\_ I thought a corruption of our own, till I found it in the Chester

Plays. I am now inclined to suspect it no corruption at all, but only an

erratic and obsolete superlative \_at onest\_. \_To progress\_ was flung in

our teeth till Mr. Pickering retorted with Shakespeare's 'doth prÃ³gress

down thy cheeks.' I confess that I was never satisfied with this answer,

because the accent was different, and because the word might here be

reckoned a substantive quite as well as a verb. Mr. Bartlett (in his

dictionary above cited) adds a surrebutter in a verse from Ford's

'Broken Heart.' Here the word is clearly a verb, but with the accent

unhappily still on the first syllable. Mr. Bartlett says that he

'cannot say whether the word was used in Bacon's time or not.' It

certainly was, and with the accent we give to it. Ben Jonson, in the

'Alchemist,' had this verse,

'Progress so from extreme unto extreme,'

and Sir Philip Sidney,

'Progressing then from fair Turias' golden place.'

Surely we may now sleep in peace, and our English cousins will forgive

us, since we have cleared ourselves from any suspicion of originality in

the matter! Even after I had convinced myself that the chances were

desperately against our having invented any of the \_Americanisms\_ with

which we are \_faulted\_ and which we are in the habit of \_voicing\_, there

were one or two which had so prevailingly indigenous an accent as to

stagger me a little. One of these was 'the biggest \_thing out\_.' Alas,

even this slender comfort is denied me. Old Gower has

'So harde an herte was none \_oute\_,'

and

'That such merveile was none \_oute\_.'

He also, by the way, says 'a \_sighte\_ of flowres' as naturally as our

up-country folk would say it. \_Poor\_ for \_lean\_, \_thirds\_ for \_dower\_,

and \_dry\_ for \_thirsty\_ I find in Middleton's plays. \_Dry\_ is also in

Skelton and in the 'World' (1754). In a note on Middleton, Mr. Dyce

thinks it needful to explain the phrase \_I can't tell\_ (universal in

America) by the gloss \_I could not say\_. Middleton also uses \_sneeked\_,

which I had believed an Americanism till I saw it there. It is, of

course, only another form of \_snatch\_, analogous to \_theek\_ and \_thatch\_

(cf. the proper names Dekker and Thacher), \_break\_ (\_brack\_) and

\_breach\_, \_make\_ (still common with us) and \_match\_. \_'Long on\_ for

\_occasioned by\_ ('who is this 'long on?') occurs constantly in Gower and

likewise in Middleton. \_'Cause why\_ is in Chaucer. \_Raising\_ (an English

version of the French \_leaven\_) for \_yeast\_ is employed by Gayton in his

'Festivous Notes on Don Quixote.' I have never seen an instance of our

New England word \_emptins\_ in the same sense, nor can I divine its

original. Gayton has \_limekill\_; also \_shuts\_ for \_shutters\_, and the

latter is used by Mrs. Hutchinson in her 'Life of Colonel Hutchinson.'

Bishop Hall, and Purchas in his 'Pilgrims,' have \_chist\_ for \_chest\_,

and it is certainly nearer \_cista\_, as well as to its form in the

Teutonic languages, whence probably we got it. We retain the old sound

from \_cist\_, but \_chest\_ is as old as Chaucer. Lovelace says \_wropt\_ for

\_wrapt\_. 'Musicianer' I had always associated with the militia-musters

of my boyhood, and too hastily concluded it an abomination of our own,

but Mr. Wright calls it a Norfolk word, and I find it to be as old as

1642 by an extract in Collier. 'Not worth the time of day,' had passed

with me for native till I saw it in Shakespeare's 'Pericles.' For

\_slick\_ (which is only a shorter sound of \_sleek\_, like \_crick\_ and the

now universal \_britches\_ for \_breeches\_) I will only call Chapman and

Jonson. 'That's a sure card!' and 'That's a stinger!' both sound like

modern slang, but you will find the one in the old interlude of

'Thersytes' (1537), and the other in Middleton. 'Right here,' a favorite

phrase with our orators and with a certain class of our editors, turns

up \_passim\_ in the Chester and Coventry plays. Mr. Dickens found

something very ludicrous in what he considered our neologism \_right

away\_. But I find a phrase very like it, and which I would gladly

suspect to be a misprint for it, in 'Gammer Gurton:'--

'Lyght it and bring it \_tite away\_.'

But \_tite\_ is the true word in this case. After all, what is it but

another form of \_straightway\_? \_Cussedness\_, meaning \_wickedness,

malignity\_, and \_cuss\_, a sneaking, ill-natured fellow, in such phrases

as 'He done it out o' pure cussedness,' and 'He is a nateral cuss,' have

been commonly thought Yankeeisms. To vent certain contemptuously

indignant moods they are admirable in their rough-and-ready way. But

neither is our own. \_Cursydnesse\_, in the same sense of malignant

wickedness, occurs in the Coventry Plays, and \_cuss\_ may perhaps claim

to have come in with the Conqueror. At least the term is also French.

Saint Simon uses it and confesses its usefulness. Speaking of the AbbÃ©

Dubois, he says, 'Qui Ã©toit en plein ce qu'un mauvais franÃ§ois appelle

un \_sacre\_, mais qui ne se peut guere exprimer autrement.' 'Not worth a

cuss,' though supported by 'not worth a damn,' may be a mere corruption,

since 'not worth a \_cress\_' is in 'Piers Ploughman.' 'I don't see it,'

was the popular slang a year or two ago, and seemed to spring from the

soil; but no, it is in Cibber's 'Careless Husband.' \_Green sauce\_ for

\_vegetables\_ I meet in Beaumont and Fletcher, Gayton, and elsewhere. Our

rustic pronunciation \_sahce\_ (for either the diphthong \_au\_ was

anciently pronounced \_ah\_, or else we have followed abundant analogy in

changing it to the latter sound, as we have in \_chance, dance\_, and so

many more) may be the older one, and at least gives some hint at its

ancestor \_salsa\_. \_Warn\_, in the sense of \_notify\_, is, I believe, now

peculiar to us, but Pecock so employs it. I find \_primmer\_ (\_primer\_, as

we pronounce it) in Beaumont and Fletcher, and a 'square eater' too

(compare our '\_square\_ meal'), \_heft\_ for \_weight\_, and 'muchness' in

the 'Mirror for Magistrates,' \_bankbill\_ in Swift and Fielding, and \_as\_

for \_that\_ I might say \_passim\_. \_To cotton to\_ is, I rather think, an

Americanism. The nearest approach to it I have found is \_cotton

together\_, in Congreve's 'Love for Love.' To \_cotton\_ or \_cotten\_, in

another sense, is old and common. Our word means to \_cling\_, and its

origin, possibly, is to be sought in another direction, perhaps in A.S.

\_cvead\_, which means \_mud, clay\_ (both proverbially clinging), or better

yet, in the Icelandic \_qvoda\_ (otherwise \_kÃ³d\_), meaning \_resin\_ and

\_glue\_, which are [Greek: kat' exochaen], sticky substances. To \_spit

cotton\_ is, I think, American, and also, perhaps, to \_flax\_ for to

\_beat\_. \_To the halves\_ still survives among us, though apparently

obsolete in England. It means either to let or to hire a piece of land,

receiving half the profit in money or in kind (\_partibus locare\_). I

mention it because in a note by some English editor, to which I have

lost my reference, I have seen it wrongly explained. The editors of

Nares cite Burton. \_To put\_, in the sense of \_to go\_, as \_Put!\_ for

\_Begone!\_ would seem our own, and yet it is strictly analogous to the

French \_se mettre Ã  la voie\_, and the Italian \_mettersi in via\_. Indeed,

Dante has a verse,

'\_Io sarei\_ [for \_mi sarei\_] \_giÃ  messo per lo sentiero\_,'

which, but for the indignity, might be translated,

'I should, ere this, have \_put\_ along the way,'

I deprecate in advance any share in General Banks's notions of

international law, but we may all take a just pride in his exuberant

eloquence as something distinctively American. When he spoke a few years

ago of 'letting the Union slide,' even those who, for political

purposes, reproached him with the sentiment, admired the indigenous

virtue of his phrase. Yet I find 'let the world slide' in Heywood's

Edward IV.;' and in Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Wit without Money,'

Valentine says,

'Will you go drink,

And let the world slide?'

So also in Sidney's 'Arcadia,'

'Let his dominion slide.'

In the one case it is put into the mouth of a clown, in the other, of a

gentleman, and was evidently proverbial. It has even higher sanction,

for Chaucer writes,

'Well nigh all other curÃ«s \_let he slide\_.'

Mr. Bartlett gives 'above one's bend' as an Americanism; but compare

Hamlet's 'to the top of my bent.' \_In his tracks\_ for \_immediately\_ has

acquired an American accent, and passes where he can for a native, but

is an importation nevertheless; for what is he but the Latin \_e

vestigio\_, or at best the Norman French \_eneslespas\_, both which have

the same meaning? \_Hotfoot\_ (provincial also in England), I find in the

old romance of 'Tristan,'

'\_Si s'en parti\_ CHAUT PAS'

\_Like\_ for \_as\_ is never used in New England, but is universal in the

South and West. It has on its side the authority of two kings (\_ego sum

rex Romanorum et supra grammaticam\_), Henry VIII. and Charles I. This

were ample, without throwing into the scale the scholar and poet Daniel.

\_Them\_ was used as a nominative by the majesty of Edward VI., by Sir P.

Hoby, and by Lord Paget (in Froude's 'History'). I have never seen any

passage adduced where \_guess\_ was used as the Yankee uses it. The word

was familiar in the mouths of our ancestors, but with a different shade

of meaning from that we have given it, which is something like \_rather

think\_, though the Yankee implies a confident certainty by it when he

says, 'I guess I \_du!\_' There are two examples in Otway, one of which

('So in the struggle, I guess the note was lost') perhaps might serve

our purpose, and Coleridge's

'I guess 'twas fearful there to see'

certainly comes very near. But I have a higher authority than either in

Selden, who, in one of his notes to the 'Polyolbion,' writes, 'The first

inventor of them (I \_guess\_ you dislike not the addition) was one

Berthold Swartz.' Here he must mean by it, 'I take it for granted.'

Robert Greene, in his 'Quip for an Upstart Courtier,' makes

Cloth-breeches say, 'but I \_gesse\_ your maistership never tried what

true honor meant.' In this case the word seems to be used with a meaning

precisely like that which we give it. Another peculiarity almost as

prominent is the beginning sentences, especially in answer to questions,

with 'well.' Put before such a phrase as 'How d'e do?' it is commonly

short, and has the sound of it \_wul\_, but in reply it is deliberative,

and the various shades of meaning which can be conveyed by difference of

intonation, and by prolonging or abbreviating, I should vainly attempt

to describe. I have heard \_ooa-ahl\_, \_wahl\_, \_ahl\_, \_wal\_ and something

nearly approaching the sound of

the \_le\_ in \_able\_. Sometimes before 'I' it dwindles to a mere \_l\_, as

''l \_I\_ dunno.' A friend of mine (why should I not please myself, though

I displease him, by brightening my page with the initials of the most

exquisite of humorists, J.H.?) told me that he once heard five 'wells,'

like pioneers, precede the answer to an inquiry about the price of land.

The first was the ordinary \_wul\_, in deference to custom; the second,

the long, perpending \_ooahl\_, with a falling inflection of the voice;

the third, the same, but with the voice rising, as if in despair of a

conclusion, into a plaintively nasal whine; the fourth, \_wulh\_, ending

in the aspirate of a sigh; and then, fifth, came a short, sharp \_wal\_,

showing that a conclusion had been reached. I have used this latter form

in the 'Biglow Papers,' because, if enough nasality be added, it

represents most nearly the average sound of what I may call the

interjection.

A locution prevails in the Southern and Middle States which is so

curious that, though never heard in New England, I will give a few lines

to its discussion, the more readily because it is extinct elsewhere. I

mean the use of \_allow\_ in the sense of \_affirm\_, as 'I allow that's a

good horse.' I find the word so used in 1558 by Anthony Jenkinson in

Hakluyt: 'Corne they sowe not, neither doe eate any bread, mocking the

Christians for the same, and disabling our strengthe, saying we live by

eating the toppe of a weede, and drinke a drinke made of the same,

\_allowing\_ theyr great devouring of flesh and drinking of milke to be

the increase of theyr strength.' That is, they undervalued our strength,

and affirmed their own to be the result of a certain diet. In another

passage of the same narrative the word has its more common meaning of

approving or praising: 'The said king, much allowing this declaration,

said.' Ducange quotes Bracton \_sub voce\_ ADLOCARE for the meaning 'to

admit as proved,' and the transition from this to 'affirm,' is by no

means violent. Izaak Walton has 'Lebault \_allows\_ waterfrogs to be good

meat,' and here the word is equivalent to \_affirms\_. At the same time,

when we consider some of the meanings of \_allow\_ in old English, and of

\_allouer\_ in old French, and also remember that the verbs \_prize\_ and

\_praise\_ are from one root, I think we must admit \_allaudare\_ to a share

in the paternity of \_allow\_. The sentence from Hakluyt would read

equally well, 'contemning our strengthe, ... and praising (or valuing)

their great eating of flesh as the cause of their increase in strength.'

After all, if we confine ourselves to \_allocare\_, it may turn out that

the word was somewhere and somewhen used for \_to bet\_, analogously to

\_put up, put down, post\_ (cf. Spanish \_apostar\_), and the like. I hear

boys in the street continually saying, 'I bet that's a good horse,' or

what not, meaning by no means to risk anything beyond their opinion in

the matter.

The word \_improve\_, in the sense of to 'occupy, make use of, employ,' as

Dr. Pickering defines it, he long ago proved to be no neologism. He

would have done better, I think, had he substituted \_profit by\_ for

\_employ\_. He cites Dr. Franklin as saying that the word had never, so

far as he knew, been used in New England before he left it in 1723,

except in Dr. Mather's 'Bemarkable Providences,' which he oddly calls a

'very old book.' Franklin, as Dr. Pickering goes on to show, was

mistaken.

Mr. Bartlett in his 'Dictionary' merely abridges Pickering. Both of them

should have confined the application of the word to material things, its

extension to which is all that is peculiar in the supposed American use

of it. For surely 'Complete Letter-Writers' have been '\_improving\_ this

opportunity' time out of mind. I will illustrate the word a little

further, because Pickering cites no English authorities. Skelton has a

passage in his 'Phyllyp Sparowe,' which I quote the rather as it

contains also the word \_allowed\_ and as it distinguishes \_improve\_ from

\_employ:\_--

'His [Chaucer's] Englysh well alowed,

So as it is \_emprowed\_

For as it is employd,

There is no English voyd.'

Here the meaning is to \_profit by\_. In Fuller's 'Holy Warre' (1647), we

have 'The Egyptians standing on the firm ground, were thereby enabled to

\_improve\_ and enforce their darts to the utmost.' Here the word might

certainly mean \_to make use of\_. Mrs. Hutchison (Life of Colonel H.)

uses the word in the same way: 'And therefore did not \_emproove\_ his

interest to engage the country in the quarrel.' Swift in one of his

letters says: 'There is not an acre of land in Ireland turned to half

its advantage; yet it is better \_improved\_ than the people.' I find it

also in 'Strength out of Weakness' (1652), and Plutarch's

'Morals'(1714), but I know of only one example of its use in the purely

American sense, and that is 'a very good \_improvement\_ for a mill' in

the 'State Trials' (Speech of the Attorney. General in the Lady Ivy's

case, 1864). In the sense of \_employ\_, I could cite a dozen old English

authorities.

In running over the fly-leaves of those delightful folios for this

reference, I find a note which reminds me of another word, for our abuse

of which we have been deservedly ridiculed. I mean \_lady,\_ It is true I

might cite the example of the Italian \_donna\_[30] (\_domina\_), which has

been treated in the same way by a whole nation, and not, as \_lady\_ among

us, by the uncultivated only. It perhaps grew into use in the

half-democratic republics of Italy in the same way and for the same

reasons as with us. But I admit that our abuse of the word is

villainous. I know of an orator who once said in a public meeting where

bonnets preponderated, that 'the ladies were last at the cross and first

at the tomb'! But similar sins were committed before our day and in the

mother country. In the 'Harleian Miscellany' (vol. v. p. 455) I find

'this \_lady\_ is my servant; the hedger's daughter Ioan.' in the 'State

Trials' I learn of 'a \_gentlewoman\_ that lives cook with' such a one,

and I hear the Lord High Steward speaking of the wife of a waiter at a

bagnio as a \_gentlewoman\_! From the same authority, by the way, I can

state that our vile habit of chewing tobacco had the somewhat unsavory

example of Titus Oates, and I know by tradition from an eye-witness that

the elegant General Burgoyne partook of the same vice. Howell, in one of

his letters (dated 26 August, 1623), speaks thus of another

'institution' which many have thought American: 'They speak much of that

boisterous Bishop of Halverstadt (for so they term him here), that,

having taken a place where ther were two Monasteries of Nuns and Friers,

he caus'd divers feather-beds to be rip'd, and all the feathers to be

thrown in a great Hall, whither the Nuns and Friers were thrust naked

with their bodies oil'd and pitch'd, and to tumble among the feathers.'

Howell speaks as if the thing were new to him, and I know not if the

'boisterous' Bishop was the inventor of it, but I find it practised in

England before our Revolution.

Before leaving the subject, I will add a few comments made from time to

time on the margin of Mr. Bartlett's excellent 'Dictionary,' to which I

am glad thus publicly to acknowledge my many obligations. 'Avails' is

good old English, and the \_vails\_ of Sir Joshua Reynolds's porter are

famous. Averse \_from\_, averse \_to\_, and in connection with them the

English vulgarism 'different \_to\_;' the corrupt use of \_to\_ in these

cases, as well as in the Yankee 'he lives to Salem,' 'to home,' and

others, must be a very old one, for in the one case it plainly arose

from confounding the two French prepositions \_Ã \_, (from Latin \_ad\_ and

\_ab\_), and in the other from translating the first of them. I once

thought 'different to' a modern vulgarism, and Mr. Thackeray, on my

pointing it out to him in 'Henry Esmond,' confessed it to be an

anachronism. Mr. Bartlett refers to 'the old writers quoted in

Richardson's Dictionary' for 'different to,' though in my edition of

that work all the examples are with \_from\_. But I find \_to\_ used

invariably by Sir R. Hawkins in Hakluyt. \_Banjo\_ is a negro corruption

of O.E. \_bandore\_. \_Bind-weed\_ can hardly be modern, for \_wood-bind\_ is

old and radically right, intertwining itself through \_bindan\_ and

\_windan\_ with classic stems. \_Bobolink\_: is this a contraction for Bob

o' Lincoln? I find \_bobolynes\_, in one of the poems attributed to

Skelton, where it may be rendered \_giddy-pate\_, a term very fit for the

bird in his ecstasies. \_Cruel\_ for \_great\_ is in Hakluyt.

\_Bowling-alley\_ is in Nash's 'Pierce Pennilesse.' \_Curious\_, meaning

\_nice\_, occurs continually in old writers, and is as old as Pecock's

'Repressor.' \_Droger\_ is O.E. \_drugger\_. \_Educational\_ is in Burke.

\_Feeze\_ is only a form of \_fizz\_. \_To fix\_, in the American sense, I

find used by the Commissioners of the United Colonies so early as 1675,

'their arms well \_fixed\_ and fit for service.' \_To take the foot in the

hand\_ is German; so is to \_go under\_. \_Gundalow\_ is old; I find

\_gundelo\_ in Hakluyt, and \_gundello\_ in Booth's reprint of the folio

Shakespeare of 1623. \_Gonoff\_ is O.E. \_gnoffe\_. \_Heap\_ is in 'Piers

Ploughman' ('and other names \_an heep\_'), and in Hakluyt ('seeing such a

\_heap\_ of their enemies ready to devour them'). \_To liquor\_ is in the

'Puritan' ('call 'em in, and liquor 'em a little'). \_To loaf\_: this, I

think, is unquestionably German. \_Laufen\_ is pronounced \_lofen\_ in some

parts of Germany, and I once heard one German student say to another,

\_Ich lauf\_ (lofe) \_hier bis du wiederkehrest\_, and he began accordingly

to saunter up and down, in short, to \_loaf\_. \_To mull\_, Mr. Bartlett

says, means 'to soften, to dispirit,' and quotes from

'Margaret,'--'There has been a pretty considerable \_mullin\_ going on

among the doctors,'--where it surely cannot mean what he says it does.

We have always heard \_mulling\_ used for \_stirring, bustling\_, sometimes

in an underhand way. It is a metaphor derived probably from \_mulling\_

wine, and the word itself must be a corruption of \_mell\_, from O.F.

\_mesler\_. \_Pair\_ of stairs is in Hakluyt. \_To pull up stakes\_ is in

Curwen's Journal, and therefore pre-Revolutionary. I think I have met

with it earlier. \_Raise\_: under this word Mr. Bartlett omits 'to raise a

house,' that is, the frame of a wooden one, and also the substantive

formed from it, a \_raisin'\_. \_Retire\_ for \_go to bed\_ is in Fielding's

'Amelia.' \_Setting-poles\_ cannot be new, for I find 'some \_set\_ [the

boats] with long \_poles\_' in Hakluyt. \_Shoulder-hitters\_: I find that

\_shoulder-striker\_ is old, though I have lost the reference to my

authority. \_Snag\_ is no new word, though perhaps the Western application

of it is so; but I find in Gill the proverb, 'A bird in the bag is worth

two on the snag.' Dryden has \_swop\_ and \_to rights\_. \_Trail\_: Hakluyt

has 'many wayes \_traled\_ by the wilde beastes.'

I subjoin a few phrases not in Mr. Bartlett's book which I have heard.

\_Bald-headed\_: 'to go it bald-beaded;' in great haste, as where one

rushes out without his hat. \_Bogue\_: 'I don't git much done 'thout I

\_bogue\_ right in along 'th my men.' \_Carry\_: a \_portage\_. \_Cat-nap\_: a

short doze. \_Cat-stick\_: a small stick. \_Chowder-head\_: a muddle-brain.

\_Cling-john\_: a soft cake of rye. \_Cocoanut\_; the head. \_Cohees\_:

applied to the people of certain settlements in Western Pennsylvania,

from their use of the archaic form \_Quo' he\_. \_Dunnow'z I know\_: the

nearest your true Yankee ever comes to acknowledging ignorance.

\_Essence-pedler\_: a skunk. \_First-rate and a half\_. \_Fish flakes\_, for

drying fish: O.E. \_fleck\_ (\_cratis\_). \_Gander-party\_: a social gathering

of men only. \_Gawnicus\_: a dolt. \_Hawkin's whetstone\_: rum; in derision

of one Hawkins, a well-known temperance-lecturer. \_Hyper\_: to bustle: 'I

mus' \_hyper\_ about an' git tea.' \_Keeler-tub\_: one in which dishes are

washed. ('And Greasy Joan doth \_keel\_ the pot.') \_Lap-tea\_: where the

guests are too many to sit at table. \_Last of pea-time\_: to be hard-up.

\_Lose-laid\_ (\_loose-laid\_): a weaver's term, and probably English;

weak-willed. \_Malahack\_: to cut up hastily or awkwardly. \_Moonglade\_: a

beautiful word: for the track of moonlight on the water. \_Off-ox\_: an

unmanageable, cross-grained fellow. \_Old Driver, Old Splitfoot\_: the

Devil. \_On-hitch\_: to pull trigger (cf. Spanish \_disparar\_). \_Popular\_:

conceited, \_Rote\_: sound of surf before a storm. \_Rot-gut\_: cheap

whiskey; the word occurs in Heywood's 'English Traveller' and Addison's

'Drummer,' for a poor kind of drink. \_Seem\_: it is habitual with the

New-Englander to put this verb to strange uses, as 'I can't \_seem\_ to be

suited,' 'I couldn't \_seem\_ to know him.' \_Sidehill\_, for \_hillside\_.

\_State-house\_: this seems an Americanism, whether invented or derived

from the Dutch \_Stad-huys\_, I know not. \_Strike\_ and \_string\_; from the

game of ninepins; to make a \_strike\_ is to knock down all the pins with

one ball, hence it has come to mean fortunate, successful. \_Swampers\_:

men who break out roads for lumberers. \_Tormented\_: euphemism for

damned, as, 'not a tormented cent.' \_Virginia fence, to make a\_: to walk

like a drunken man.

It is always worth while to note down the erratic words or phrases which

one meets with in any dialect. They may throw light on the meaning of

other words, on the relationship of languages, or even on history

itself. In so composite a language as ours they often supply a different

form to express a different shade of meaning, as in \_viol\_ and \_fiddle\_,

\_thrid\_ and \_thread\_, \_smother\_ and \_smoulder\_, where the \_l\_ has crept

in by a false analogy with \_would\_. We have given back to England the

excellent adjective \_lengthy\_, formed honestly like \_earthy, drouthy\_,

and others, thus enabling their journalists to characterize our

President's messages by a word civilly compromising between \_long\_ and

\_tedious\_, so as not to endanger the peace of the two countries by

wounding our national sensitiveness to British criticism. Let me give

two curious examples of the antiseptic property of dialects at which I

have already glanced. Dante has \_dindi\_ as a childish or low word for

\_danari\_ (money), and in Shropshire small Roman coins are still dug up

which the peasants call \_dinders\_. This can hardly be a chance

coincidence, but seems rather to carry the word back to the Roman

soldiery. So our farmers say \_chuk, chuk\_, to their pigs, and \_ciacco\_

is one of the Italian words for \_hog\_. When a countryman tells us that

he 'fell \_all of a heap\_,' I cannot help thinking that he unconsciously

points to an affinity between our word \_tumble\_, and the Latin

\_tumulus\_, that is older than most others. I believe that words, or even

the mere intonation of them, have an astonishing vitality and power of

propagation by the root, like the gardener's pest, quitch-grass,[31]

while the application or combination of them may be new. It is in these

last that my countrymen seem to me full of humor, invention, quickness

of wit, and that sense of subtle analogy which needs only refining to

become fancy and imagination. Prosaic as American life seems in many of

its aspects to a European, bleak and bare as it is on the side of

tradition, and utterly orphaned of the solemn inspiration of antiquity,

I cannot help thinking that the ordinary talk of unlettered men among us

is fuller of metaphor and of phrases that suggest lively images than

that of any other people I have seen. Very many such will be found in

Mr. Bartlett's book, though his short list of proverbs at the end seem

to me, with one or two exceptions, as un-American as possible. Most of

them have no character at all but coarseness, and are quite too

long-skirted for working proverbs, in which language always 'takes off

its coat to it,' as a Yankee would say. There are plenty that have a

more native and puckery flavor, seedlings from the old stock often, and

yet new varieties. One hears such not seldom among us Easterners, and

the West would yield many more. 'Mean enough to steal acorns from a

blind hog;' 'Cold as the north side of a Jenooary gravestone by

starlight;' 'Hungry as a graven image;' 'Pop'lar as a hen with one

chicken;' 'A hen's time ain't much;' 'Quicker 'n greased lightnin';'

'Ther's sech a thing ez bein' \_tu\_' (our Yankee paraphrase of [Greek:

maeden agan]); hence the phrase \_tooin' round\_, meaning a supererogatory

activity like that of flies; 'Stingy enough to skim his milk at both

eends;' 'Hot as the Devil's kitchen;' 'Handy as a pocket in a shirt;'

'He's a whole team and the dog under the wagon;' 'All deacons are good,

but there's odds in deacons' (to \_deacon\_ berries is to put the largest

atop); 'So thievish they hev to take in their stone walls nights;'[32]

may serve as specimens. 'I take my tea \_barfoot\_,' said a backwoodsman

when asked if he would have cream and sugar. (I find \_barfoot\_, by the

way, in the Coventry Plays.) A man speaking to me once of a very rocky

clearing said, 'Stone's got a pretty heavy mortgage on that land,' and I

overheard a guide in the woods say to his companions who were urging him

to sing, 'Wal, I \_did\_ sing once, but toons gut invented, an' thet spilt

my trade.' Whoever has driven over a stream by a bridge made of \_slabs\_

will feel the picturesque force of the epithet \_slab-bridged\_ applied to

a fellow of shaky character. Almost every county has some good

die-sinker in phrase, whose mintage passes into the currency of the

whole neighborhood. Such a one described the county jail (the one stone

building where all the dwellings are of wood) as 'the house whose

underpinnin' come up to the eaves,' and called hell 'the place where

they didn't rake up their fires nights.' I once asked a stage-driver if

the other side of a hill were as steep as the one we were climbing:

'Steep? chain lightnin' couldn' go down it 'thout puttin' the shoe on!'

And this brings me back to the exaggeration of which I spoke before. To

me there is something very taking in the negro 'so black that charcoal

made a chalk-mark on him,' and the wooden shingle 'painted so like

marble that it sank in water,' as if its very consciousness or its

vanity had been overpersuaded by the cunning of the painter. I heard a

man, in order to give a notion of some very cold weather, say to another

that a certain Joe, who had been taking mercury, found a lump of

quicksilver in each boot, when he went home to dinner. This power of

rapidly dramatizing a dry fact into flesh and blood and the vivid

conception of Joe as a human thermometer strike me as showing a poetic

sense that may be refined into faculty. At any rate there is humor here,

and not mere quickness of wit,--the deeper and not the shallower

quality. The \_tendency\_ of humor is always towards overplus of

expression, while the very essence of wit is its logical precision.

Captain Basil Hall denied that our people had any humor, deceived,

perhaps, by their gravity of manner. But this very seriousness is often

the outward sign of that humorous quality of the mind which delights in

finding an element of identity in things seemingly the most incongruous,

and then again in forcing an incongruity upon things identical. Perhaps

Captain Hall had no humor himself, and if so he would never find it. Did

he always feel the point of what was said to himself? I doubt it,

because I happen to know a chance he once had given him in vain. The

Captain was walking up and down the veranda of a country tavern in

Massachusetts while the coach changed horses. A thunder-storm was going

on, and, with that pleasant European air of indirect self-compliment in

condescending to be surprised by American merit, which we find so

conciliating, he said to a countryman lounging against the door, 'Pretty

heavy thunder you have here.' The other, who had divined at a glance his

feeling of generous concession to a new country, drawled gravely, 'Waal,

we \_du\_, considerin' the number of inhabitants.' This, the more I

analyze it, the more humorous does it seem. The same man was capable of

wit also, when he would. He was a cabinet-maker, and was once employed

to make some commandment-tables for the parish meeting-house. The

parson, a very old man, annoyed him by looking into his workshop every

morning, and cautioning him to be very sure to pick out 'clear mahogany

without any \_knots\_ in it.' At last, wearied out, he retorted one day:

'Wal, Dr. B., I guess ef I was to leave the \_nots\_ out o' some o' the

c'man'ments, 't'ould soot you full ez wal!'

If I had taken the pains to write down the proverbial or pithy phrases I

have heard, or if I had sooner thought of noting the Yankeeisms I met

with in my reading, I might have been able to do more justice to my

theme. But I have done all I wished in respect to pronunciation, if I

have proved that where we are vulgar, we have the countenance of very

good company. For, as to the \_jus et norma loquendi\_, I agree with

Horace and those who have paraphrased or commented him, from Boileau to

Gray. I think that a good rule for style is Galiani's definition of

sublime oratory,--'l'art de tout dire sans Ãªtre mis Ã  la Bastille dans

un pays oÃ¹ il est defendu de rien dire.' I profess myself a fanatical

purist, but with a hearty contempt for the speech-gilders who affect

purism without any thorough, or even pedagogic knowledge of the

engendure, growth, and affinities of the noble language about whose

\_mÃ©salliances\_ they profess (like Dean Alford) to be so solicitous. If

\_they\_ had their way--! 'Doch es sey,' says Lessing, 'dass jene

gotbische HÃ¶flichkeit eine unentbehrliche Tugend des heutigen Umganges

ist. Soll sie darum unsere Schriften eben so schaal und falsch machen

als unsern Umgang?' And Drayton was not far wrong in affirming that

'Tis possible to climb,

To kindle, or to slake,

Although in Skelton's rhyme.'

Cumberland in his Memoirs tells us that when, in the midst of Admiral

Rodney's great sea-fight, Sir Charles Douglas said to him, 'Behold, Sir

George, the Greeks and Trojans contending for the body of Patroclus!'

the Admiral answered, peevishly, 'Damn the Greeks and damn the Trojans!

I have other things to think of.' After the battle was won, Rodney thus

to Sir Charles, 'Now, my dear friend, I am at the service of your Greeks

and Trojans, and the whole of Homer's Iliad, or as much of it as you

please!' I had some such feeling of the impertinence of our

pseudo-classicality when I chose our homely dialect to work in. Should

we be nothing, because somebody had contrived to be something (and that

perhaps in a provincial dialect) ages ago? and to be nothing by our very

attempt to be that something, which they had already been, and which

therefore nobody could be again without being a bore? Is there no way

left, then, I thought, of being natural, of being \_naÃ¯f\_, which means

nothing more than native, of belonging to the age and country in which

you are born? The Yankee, at least, is a new phenomenon; let us try to

be \_that\_. It is perhaps a \_pis aller\_, but is not \_No Thoroughfare\_

written up everywhere else? In the literary world, things seemed to me

very much as they were in the latter half of the last century. Pope,

skimming the cream of good sense and expression wherever he could find

it, had made, not exactly poetry, but an honest, salable butter of

worldly wisdom which pleasantly lubricated some of the drier morsels of

life's daily bread, and, seeing this, scores of harmlessly insane people

went on for the next fifty years coaxing his buttermilk with the regular

up and down of the pentameter churn. And in our day do we not scent

everywhere, and even carry away in our clothes against our will, that

faint perfume of musk which Mr. Tennyson has left behind him, or worse,

of Heine's \_patchouli\_? And might it not be possible to escape them by

turning into one of our narrow New England lanes, shut in though it were

by bleak stone walls on either hand, and where no better flowers were to

be gathered than goldenrod and hardhack?

Beside the advantage of getting out of the beaten track, our dialect

offered others hardly inferior. As I was about to make an endeavor to

state them, I remembered something that the clear-sighted Goethe had

said about Hebel's 'Allemannische Gedichte,' which, making proper

deduction for special reference to the book under review, expresses what

I would have said far better than I could hope to do: 'Allen diesen

innern guten Eigenschaften kommt die behagliche naive Sprache sehr zu

statten. Man findet mehrere sinnlich bedeutende and wohlklingende Worte

... von einem, zwei Buchstaben, Abbreviationen, Contractionen, viele

kurze, leichte Sylben, neue Reime, welches, mehr als man glaubt, ein

Vortheil fÃ¼r den Dichter ist. Diese Elemente werden durch glÃ¼ckliche

Constructionen und lebhafte Formen zu einem Styl zusammengedrÃ¤ngt der zu

diesem Zwecke vor unserer BÃ¼chersprache grosse VorzÃ¼ge hat.' Of course I

do not mean to imply that \_I\_ have come near achieving any such success

as the great critic here indicates, but I think the success is \_there\_,

and to be plucked by some more fortunate hand.

Nevertheless, I was encouraged by the approval of many whose opinions I

valued. With a feeling too tender and grateful to be mixed with any

vanity, I mention as one of these the late A.H. Clough, who more than

any one of those I have known (no longer living), except Hawthorne,

impressed me with the constant presence of that indefinable thing we

call genius. He often suggested that I should try my hand at some Yankee

Pastorals, which would admit of more sentiment and a higher tone without

foregoing the advantage offered by the dialect. I have never completed

anything of the kind, but, in this Second Series, both my remembrance of

his counsel and the deeper feeling called up by the great interests at

stake, led me to venture some passages nearer to what is called poetical

than could have been admitted without incongruity into the former

series. The time seemed calling to me, with the old poet,--

'Leave, then, your wonted prattle,

The oaten reed forbear;

For I hear a sound of battle,

And trumpets rend the air!'

The only attempt I had ever made at anything like a pastoral (if that

may be called an attempt which was the result almost of pure accident)

was in 'The Courtin'.' While the introduction to the First Series was

going through the press, I received word from the printer that there was

a blank page left which must be filled. I sat down at once and

improvised another fictitious 'notice of the press,' in which, because

verse would fill up space more cheaply than prose, I inserted an extract

from a supposed ballad of Mr. Biglow. I kept no copy of it, and the

printer, as directed, cut it off when the gap was filled. Presently I

began to receive letters asking for the rest of it, sometimes for the

\_balance\_ of it. I had none, but to answer such demands, I patched a

conclusion upon it in a later edition. Those who had only the first

continued to importune me. Afterward, being asked to write it out as an

autograph for the Baltimore Sanitary Commission Fair, I added other

verses, into some of which I fused a little more sentiment in a homely

way, and after a fashion completed it by sketching in the characters'

and making a connected story. Most likely I have spoiled it, but I shall

put it at the end of this Introduction, to answer once for all those

kindly importunings.

As I have seen extracts from what purported to be writings of Mr.

Biglow, which were not genuine, I may properly take this opportunity to

say, that the two volumes now published contain every line I ever

printed under that pseudonyme, and that I have never, so far as I can

remember, written an anonymous article (elsewhere than in the 'North

American Review' and the 'Atlantic Monthly,' during my editorship of it)

except a review of Mrs. Stowe's 'Minister's Wooing,' and, some twenty

years ago, a sketch of the antislavery movement in America for an

English journal.

A word more on pronunciation. I have endeavored to express this so far

as I could by the types, taking such pains as, I fear, may sometimes

make the reading harder than need be. At the same time, by studying

uniformity I have sometimes been obliged to sacrifice minute exactness.

The emphasis often modifies the habitual sound. For example, \_for\_ is

commonly \_fer\_ (a shorter sound than \_fur\_ for \_far\_), but when emphatic

it always becomes \_for\_, as 'wut \_for!\_' So \_too\_ is pronounced like

\_to\_ (as it was anciently spelt), and \_to\_ like \_ta\_ (the sound as in

the \_tou\_ of \_touch\_), but \_too\_, when emphatic, changes into \_tue\_, and

\_to\_, sometimes, in similar cases, into \_toe\_, as 'I didn' hardly know

wut \_toe\_ du!' Where vowels come together, or one precedes another

following an aspirate, the two melt together, as was common with the

older poets who formed their versification on French or Italian models.

Drayton is thoroughly Yankee when he says 'I 'xpect,' and Pope when he

says, 't' inspire.' \_With\_ becomes sometimes \_'ith\_, \_'[)u]th\_, or

\_'th\_, or even disappears wholly where it comes before \_the\_, as, 'I

went along \_th'\_ Square' (along with the Squire), the \_are\_ sound being

an archaism which I have noticed also in \_choir\_, like the old Scottish

\_quhair\_.[33] (Herrick has, 'Of flowers ne'er sucked by th' theeving

bee.') \_Without\_ becomes \_athout\_ and \_'thout\_. \_Afterwards\_ always

retains its locative \_s\_, and is pronounced always \_ahterwurds'\_, with a

strong accent on the last syllable. This oddity has some support in the

erratic \_towards'\_ instead of \_to'wards\_, which we find in the poets and

sometimes hear. The sound given to the first syllable of \_to'wards\_, I

may remark, sustains the Yankee lengthening of the \_o\_ in \_to\_. At the

beginning of a sentence, \_ahterwurds\_ has the accent on the first

syllable; at the end of one, on the last; as, '\_ah'terwurds\_ he tol'

me,' 'he tol' me \_ahterwurds'\_.' The Yankee never makes a mistake in his

aspirates. \_U\_ changes in many words to \_e\_, always in \_such, brush,

tush, hush, rush, blush\_, seldom in \_much\_, oftener in \_trust\_ and

\_crust\_, never in \_mush, gust, bust, tumble\_, or (?) \_flush\_, in the

latter case probably to avoid confusion with \_flesh\_. I have heard

\_flush\_ with the \_e\_ sound, however. For the same reason, I suspect,

never in \_gush\_ (at least, I never heard it), because we have already

one \_gesh\_ for \_gash\_. \_A\_ and \_i\_ short frequently become \_e\_ short.

\_U\_ always becomes \_o\_ in the prefix \_un\_ (except \_unto\_), and \_o\_ in

return changes to \_u\_ short in \_uv\_ for \_of\_, and in some words

beginning with \_om\_. \_T\_ and \_d\_, \_b\_ and \_p\_, \_v\_ and \_w\_, remain

intact. So much occurs to me in addition to what I said on this head in

the preface to the former volume.

Of course in what I have said I wish to be understood as keeping in mind

the difference between provincialisms properly so called and \_slang\_.

\_Slang\_ is always vulgar, because it is not a natural but an affected

way of talking, and all mere tricks of speech or writing are offensive.

I do not think that Mr. Biglow can be fairly charged with vulgarity, and

I should have entirely failed in my design, if I had not made it appear

that high and even refined sentiment may coexist with the shrewder and

more comic elements of the Yankee character. I believe that what is

essentially vulgar and mean-spirited in politics seldom has its source

in the body of the people, but much rather among those who are made

timid by their wealth or selfish by their love of power. A democracy can

\_afford\_ much better than an aristocracy to follow out its convictions,

and is perhaps better qualified to build those convictions on plain

principles of right and wrong, rather than on the shifting sands of

expediency. I had always thought 'Sam Slick' a libel on the Yankee

character, and a complete falsification of Yankee modes of speech,

though, for aught I know, it may be true in both respects so far as the

British provinces are concerned. To me the dialect was native, was

spoken all about me when a boy, at a time when an Irish day-laborer was

as rare as an American one now. Since then I have made a study of it so

far as opportunity allowed. But when I write in it, it is as in a mother

tongue, and I am carried back far beyond any studies of it to long-ago

noonings in my father's hay-fields, and to the talk of Sam and Job over

their jug of \_blackstrap\_ under the shadow of the ash-tree which still

dapples the grass whence they have been gone so long.

But life is short, and prefaces should be. And so, my good friends, to

whom this introductory epistle is addressed, farewell. Though some of

you have remonstrated with me, I shall never write any more 'Biglow

Papers,' however great the temptation,--great especially at the present

time,--unless it be to complete the original plan of this Series by

bringing out Mr. Sawin as an 'original Union man.' The very favor with

which they have been received is a hindrance to me, by forcing on me a

self-consciousness from which I was entirely free when I wrote the First

Series. Moreover, I am no longer the same careless youth, with nothing

to do but live to myself, my books, and my friends, that I was then. I

always hated politics, in the ordinary sense of the word, and I am not

likely to grow, fonder of them, now that I have learned how rare it is

to find a man who can keep principle clear from party and personal

prejudice, or can conceive the possibility of another's doing so. I feel

as if I could in some sort claim to be an \_emeritus\_, and I am sure that

political satire will have full justice done it by that genuine and

delightful humorist, the Rev. Petroleum V. Nasby. I regret that I killed

off Mr. Wilbur so soon, for he would have enabled me to bring into this

preface a number of learned quotations, which must now go a-begging, and

also enabled me to dispersonalize myself into a vicarious egotism. He

would have helped me likewise in clearing myself from a charge which I

shall briefly touch on, because my friend Mr. Hughes has found it

needful to defend me in his preface to one of the English editions of

the 'Biglow Papers.' I thank Mr. Hughes heartily for his friendly care

of my good name, and were his Preface accessible to my readers here (as

I am glad it is not, for its partiality makes me blush), I should leave

the matter where he left it. The charge is of profanity, brought in by

persons who proclaimed African slavery of Divine institution, and is

based (so far as I have heard) on two passages in the First Series--

'An' you've gut to git up airly,

Ef you want to take in God,'

and,

'God'll send the bill to you,'

and on some Scriptural illustrations by Mr. Sawin.

Now, in the first place, I was writing under an assumed character, and

must talk as the person would whose mouthpiece I made myself. Will any

one familiar with the New England countryman venture to tell me that he

does \_not\_ speak of sacred things familiarly? that Biblical allusions

(allusions, that is, to the single book with whose language, from his

church-going habits, he is intimate) are \_not\_ frequent on his lips? If

so, he cannot have pursued his studies of the character on so many

long-ago muster-fields and at so many cattle-shows as I. But I scorn any

such line of defence, and will confess at once that one of the things I

am proud of in my countrymen is (I am not speaking now of such persons

as I have assumed Mr. Sawin to be) that they do not put their Maker away

far from them, or interpret the fear of God into being afraid of Him.

The Talmudists had conceived a deep truth when they said, that 'all

things were in the power of God, save the fear of God;' and when people

stand in great dread of an invisible power, I suspect they mistake quite

another personage for the Deity. I might justify myself for the passages

criticised by many parallel ones from Scripture, but I need not. The

Reverend Homer Wilbur's note-books supply me with three apposite

quotations. The first is from a Father of the Roman Church, the second

from a Father of the Anglican, and the third from a Father of Modern

English poetry. The Puritan divines would furnish me with many more

such. St. Bernard says, \_Sapiens nummularius est Deus: nummum fictum non

recipiet\_; 'A cunning money-changer is God: he will take in no base

coin.' Latimer says, 'You shall perceive that God, by this example,

shaketh us by the noses and taketh us by the ears.' Familiar enough,

both of them, one would say! But I should think Mr. Biglow had verily

stolen the last of the two maligned passages from Dryden's 'Don

Sebastian,' where I find

'And beg of Heaven to charge the bill on me!'

And there I leave the matter, being willing to believe that the Saint,

the Martyr, and even the Poet, were as careful of God's honor as my

critics are ever likely to be.

II. GLOSSARY TO THE BIGLOW PAPERS

Act'lly, \_actually\_.

Air, \_are\_.

Airth, \_earth\_.

Airy, \_area\_.

Aree, \_area\_.

Arter, \_after\_.

Ax, \_ask\_.

Beller, \_bellow\_.

Bellowses, \_lungs\_.

Ben, \_been\_.

Bile, \_boil\_.

Bimeby, \_by and by\_.

Blurt out, \_to speak bluntly\_.

Bust, \_burst\_.

Buster, \_a roistering blade\_; used also as a general superlative.

Caird, \_carried\_.

Cairn, \_carrying\_.

Caleb, \_a turncoat\_.

Cal'late, \_calculate\_.

Cass, \_a person with two lives\_.

Close, \_clothes\_.

Cockerel, \_a young cock\_.

Cocktail, \_a kind of drink\_; also, \_an ornament peculiar to

soldiers\_.

Convention, \_a place where people are imposed on; a juggler's show\_.

Coons, \_a cant term for a now defunct party\_; derived, perhaps, from

the fact of their being commonly \_up a tree\_.

Cornwallis, \_a sort of muster in masquerade\_; supposed to have had

its origin soon after the Revolution, and to commemorate the surrender

of Lord Cornwallis. It took the place of the old Guy Fawkes procession.

Crooked stick, \_a perverse, froward person\_.

Cunnle, \_a colonel\_.

Cus, \_a curse\_; also, \_a pitiful fellow\_.

Darsn't, used indiscriminately, either in singular or plural number,

for \_dare not, dares not\_, and \_dared not\_.

Deacon off, \_to give the cue to\_; derived from a custom, once

universal, but now extinct, in our New England Congregational churches.

An important part of the office of deacon was to read aloud the hymns

\_given out\_ by the minister, one line at a time, the congregation

singing each line as soon as read.

Demmercrat, leadin', \_one in favor of extending slavery; a free-trade

lecturer maintained in the custom-house\_.

Desput, \_desperate\_.

D[=o]', \_don't\_.

Doos, \_does\_.

Doughface, \_a contented lick-spittle\_; a common variety of Northern

politician.

Dror, \_draw\_.

Du, \_do\_.

Dunno, dno, \_do not\_ or \_does not know\_.

Dut, \_dirt\_.

Eend, \_end\_.

Ef, \_if\_.

Emptins, \_yeast\_.

Env'y, \_envoy\_.

Everlasting, an intensive, without reference to duration.

Ev'y, \_every\_.

Ez, \_as\_.

Fence, on the; said of one who halts between two opinions; a trimmer.

Fer, \_for\_.

Ferfle, ferful, \_fearful\_; also an intensive.

Fin', \_find\_.

Fish-skin, used in New England to clarify coffee.

Fix, \_a difficulty, a nonplus\_.

Foller, folly, \_to follow\_.

Forrerd, \_forward\_.

Frum, \_from\_.

Fur, \_for\_

Furder, \_farther\_.

Furrer, \_furrow\_. Metaphorically, \_to draw a straight furrow\_ is to

live uprightly or decorously.

Fust, \_first\_.

Gin, \_gave\_.

Git, \_get\_.

Gret, \_great\_.

Grit, \_spirit, energy, pluck\_.

Grout, \_to sulk\_.

Grouty, \_crabbed, surly\_.

Gum, \_to impose on\_.

Gump, \_a foolish fellow, a dullard\_.

Gut, \_got\_.

Hed, \_had\_.

Heern, \_heard\_.

Hellum, \_helm\_.

Hendy, \_handy\_.

Het, \_heated\_.

Hev, \_have\_.

Hez, \_has\_.

Holl, \_whole\_.

Holt, \_hold\_.

Huf, \_hoof\_.

Hull, \_whole\_.

Hum, \_home\_.

Humbug, \_General Taylor's antislavery\_.

Hut, \_hurt\_.

Idno, \_I do not know\_.

In'my, \_enemy\_.

Insines, \_ensigns\_; used to designate both the officer who carries the

standard, and the standard itself.

Inter, intu, \_into\_.

Jedge, \_judge\_.

Jest, \_just\_.

Jine, \_join\_.

Jint, \_joint\_.

Junk, \_a fragment of any solid substance\_.

Keer, \_care\_.

Kep', \_kept\_.

Killock, \_a small anchor\_.

Kin', kin' o', kinder, \_kind, kind of\_.

Lawth, \_loath\_.

Less, \_let's, let us\_.

Let daylight into, \_to shoot\_.

Let on, \_to hint, to confess, to own\_.

Lick, \_to beat, to overcome\_.

Lights, \_the bowels\_.

Lily-pads, \_leaves of the water-lily\_.

Long-sweetening, \_molasses\_.

Mash, \_marsh\_.

Mean, \_stingy, ill-natured\_.

Min', \_mind\_.

Nimepunce, \_ninepence, twelve and a half cents\_.

Nowers, \_nowhere\_.

Offen, \_often\_.

Ole, \_old\_.

Ollers, olluz, \_always\_.

On, \_of\_; used before \_it\_ or \_them,\_ or at the end of a

sentence, as \_on 't, on 'em, nut ez ever I heerd on\_.

On'y, \_only\_.

Ossifer, \_officer\_ (seldom heard).

Peaked, \_pointed\_.

Peek, \_to peep\_.

Pickerel, \_the pike, a fish\_.

Pint, \_point\_.

Pocket full of rocks, \_plenty of money\_.

Pooty, \_pretty\_.

Pop'ler, \_conceited, popular\_.

Pus, \_purse\_.

Put out, \_troubled, vexed\_.

Quarter, \_a quarter-dollar\_.

Queen's-arm, \_a musket\_.

Resh, \_rush\_.

Revelee, \_the rÃ©veille\_.

Rile, \_to trouble\_.

Riled, \_angry; disturbed,\_ as the sediment in any liquid.

Riz, \_risen\_.

Row, a long row to hoe, \_a difficult task\_.

Rugged, \_robust\_.

Sarse, \_abuse, impertinence\_.

Sartin, \_certain\_.

Saxon, \_sacristan, sexton\_.

Scaliest, \_worst\_.

Scringe, \_cringe\_.

Scrouge, \_to crowd\_.

Sech, \_such\_.

Set by, \_valued\_.

Shakes, great, \_of considerable consequence\_.

Shappoes, \_chapeaux, cocked-hats\_.

Sheer, \_share\_.

Shet, \_shut\_.

Shut, \_shirt\_.

Skeered, \_scared\_.

Skeeter, \_mosquito\_.

Skooting, \_running,\_ or \_moving swiftly\_.

Slarterin', \_slaughtering\_.

Slim, \_contemptible\_.

Snake, \_crawled like a snake\_; but \_to snake any one out\_

is to track him to his hiding-place; \_to snake a thing out\_ is

to snatch it out.

Soffies, \_sofas\_.

Sogerin', \_soldiering\_; a barbarous amusement common among men

in the savage state.

Som'ers, \_somewhere\_.

So'st, \_so as that\_.

Sot, \_set, obstinate, resolute\_.

Spiles, \_spoils; objects of political ambition\_.

Spry, \_active\_.

Steddles, \_stout stakes driven into the salt marshes\_, on which the

hay-ricks are set, and thus raised out of the reach of high tides.

Streaked, \_uncomfortable, discomfited\_.

Suckle, \_circle\_.

Sutthin', \_something\_.

Suttin, \_certain\_.

Take on, \_to sorrow\_.

Talents, \_talons\_.

Taters, \_potatoes\_.

Tell, \_till\_.

Tetch, \_touch\_.

Tetch tu, \_to be able\_; used always after a negative in this sense.

Tollable, \_tolerable\_.

Toot, used derisively for \_playing on any wind instrument\_.

Thru, \_through\_.

Thundering, a euphemism common in New England for the profane English

expression \_devilish\_. Perhaps derived from the belief, common

formerly, that thunder was caused by the Prince of the Air, for some

of whose accomplishments consult Cotton Mather.

Tu, \_to, too\_; commonly has this sound when used emphatically,

or at the end of a sentence. At other times it has the sound of \_t\_

in \_tough\_, as \_Ware ye gain' tu? Goin' ta Boston\_.

Ugly, \_ill-tempered, intractable\_.

Uncle Sam, \_United States\_; the largest boaster of liberty and

owner of slaves.

Unrizzest, applied to dough or bread; \_heavy, most unrisen, or most

incapable of rising\_.

V-spot, \_a five-dollar bill\_.

Vally, \_value\_.

Wake snakes, \_to get into trouble\_.

Wal, \_well\_; spoken with great deliberation, and sometimes with the

\_a\_ very much flattened, sometimes (but more seldom) very much

broadened.

Wannut, \_walnut (hickory)\_.

Ware, \_where\_.

Ware, \_were\_.

Whopper, \_an uncommonly large lie\_; as, that General Taylor is in

favor of the Wilmot Proviso.

Wig, \_Whig\_; a party now dissolved.

Wunt, \_will not\_.

Wus, \_worse\_.

Wut, \_what\_.

Wuth, \_worth\_; \_as, Antislavery perfessions 'fore 'lection aint

wuth a Bungtown copper\_.

Wuz, \_was\_, sometimes \_were\_.

Yaller, \_yellow\_.

Yeller, \_yellow\_.

Yellers, \_a disease of peach-trees\_.

Zack, Ole, \_a second Washington, an antislavery slaveholder; a humane

buyer and seller of men and women, a Christian hero generally\_.

III. INDEX TO BIGLOW PAPERS

A.

A. wants his axe ground.

A.B., Information wanted concerning.

Abraham (Lincoln), his constitutional scruples.

Abuse, an, its usefulness.

Adam, eldest son of,

respected,

his fall,

how if he had bitten a sweet apple?

Adam, Grandfather, forged will of.

Ãeneas goes to hell.

Ãeolus, a seller of money, as is supposed by some.

Ãeschylus, a saying of.

Alligator, a decent one conjectured to be, in some sort, humane.

Allsmash, the eternal.

Alphonso the Sixth of Portugal, tyrannical act of.

Ambrose, Saint, excellent (but rationalistic) sentiment of.

'American Citizen,' new compost so called.

American Eagle,

a source of inspiration,

hitherto wrongly classed,

long bill of.

Americans bebrothered.

Amos cited.

Anakim, that they formerly existed, shown.

Angels

providentially speak French,

conjectured to be skilled in all tongues.

Anglo-Saxondom, its idea, what.

Anglo-Saxon mask.

Anglo-Saxon race.

Anglo-Saxon verse, by whom carried to perfection.

Antiquaries, Royal Society of Northern.

Antonius,

a speech of,

by whom best reported.

Antony of Padua, Saint, happy in his hearers.

Apocalypse, beast in, magnetic to theologians.

Apollo, confessed mortal by his own oracle.

Apollyon, his tragedies popular.

Appian, an Alexandrian, not equal to Shakespeare as an orator.

Applause, popular, the \_summum bonum\_.

Ararat, ignorance of foreign tongues is an.

Arcadian background.

Ar c'houskezik, an evil spirit.

Ardennes, Wild Boar of, an ancestor of Rev. Mr. Wilbur.

Aristocracy, British, their natural sympathies.

Aristophanes.

Arms, profession of, once esteemed, especially that of gentlemen.

Arnold.

Ashland.

Astor, Jacob, a rich man.

AstrÃ¦a, nineteenth century forsaken by.

Athenians, ancient, an institution of.

Atherton, Senator, envies the loon.

'Atlantic,' editors of. See \_Neptune\_.

Atropos, a lady skilful with the scissors.

Austin, Saint, prayer of.

Austrian eagle split.

Aye-aye, the, an African animal, America supposed to be settled by.

B., a Congressman, \_vide\_ A.

Babel,

probably the first Congress,

gabble-mill.

Baby, a low-priced one.

Bacon, his rebellion.

Bacon, Lord, quoted.

Bagowind, Hon. Mr., whether to be damned.

Balcom, Elder Joash Q., 2d, founds a Baptist society in Jaalam, A.D. 1830.

Baldwin apples.

Baratarias, real or imaginary, which most pleasant.

Barnum, a great natural curiosity recommended to.

Barrels, an inference from seeing.

Bartlett, Mr., mistaken.

BÃ¢ton Rouge,

strange peculiarities of laborers at.

Baxter, R., a saying of,

Bay, Mattysqumscot.

Bay State, singular effect produced on military officers by leaving it.

Beast, in Apocalypse,

a loadstone for whom,

tenth horn of, applied to recent events.

Beaufort.

Beauregard real name Toutant.

Beaver brook.

Beelzebub, his rigadoon.

Behmen, his letters not letters.

Behn, Mrs. Aphra, quoted.

Sellers,

a saloon-keeper,

inhumanly refuses credit to a presidential candidate.

Belmont. See Woods.

Bentley, his heroic method with Milton.

Bible, not composed for use of colored persons.

Biglow, Ezekiel,

his letter to Hon. J.T. Buckingham,

never heard of any one named Mandishes,

nearly fourscore years old,

his aunt Keziah, a notable saying of.

Biglow, Hosea, Esquire,

excited by composition,

a poem by,

his opinion of war,

wanted at home by Nancy,

recommends a forcible enlistment of warlike editors,

would not wonder, if generally agreed with,

versifies letter of Mr. Sawin,

a letter from,

his opinion of Mr. Sawin,

does not deny fun at Cornwallis,

his idea of militia glory,

a pun of,

is uncertain in regard to people of Boston,

had never heard of Mr. John P. Robinson,

\_aliquid sufflaminandus\_,

his poems attributed to a Mr. Lowell,

is unskilled in Latin,

his poetry maligned by some,

his disinterestedness,

his deep share in commonweal,

his claim to the presidency,

his mowing,

resents being called Whig,

opposed to tariff,

obstinate,

infected with peculiar notions,

reports a speech,

emulates historians of antiquity,

his character sketched from a hostile point of view,

a request of his complied with,

appointed at a public meeting in Jaalam,

confesses ignorance, in one minute particular, of propriety,

his opinion of cocked hats,

letter to,

called 'Dear Sir,' by a general,

probably receives same compliment from two hundred and nine,

picks his apples,

his crop of Baldwins conjecturally large,

his labors in writing autographs,

visits the Judge and has a pleasant time,

born in Middlesex County,

his favorite walks,

his gifted pen,

born and bred in the country,

feels his sap start in spring,

is at times unsocial,

the school-house where he learned his a b c,

falls asleep,

his ancestor a Cromwellian colonel,

finds it harder to make up his mind as he grows older,

wishes he could write a song or two,

liable to moods,

loves nature and is loved in return,

describes some favorite haunts of his,

his slain kindred,

his speech in March meeting,

does not reckon on being sent to Congress,

has no eloquence,

his own reporter,

never abused the South,

advises Uncle Sam,

is not Boston-mad,

bids farewell.

Billings, Dea. Cephas.

\_Billy, Extra, demagogus.\_

Birch, virtue of, in instilling certain of the dead languages.

Bird of our country sings hosanna.

Bjarna GrÃ­mÃ³lfsson invents smoking.

Blind, to go it.

Blitz pulls ribbons from his mouth.

Bluenose potatoes, smell of, eagerly desired.

Bobolink, the.

Bobtail obtains a cardinal's hat.

Boggs, a Norman name.

Bogus Four-Corners Weekly Meridian.

Bolles, Mr. Secondary,

author of prize peace essay,

presents sword to Lieutenant-Colonel,

a fluent orator,

found to be in error.

Bonaparte, N., a usurper.

Bonds, Confederate,

their specie basis cutlery,

when payable (attention, British stockholders!).

Boot-trees, productive, where.

Boston, people of,

supposed educated,

has a good opinion of itself.

Bowers, Mr. Arphaxad, an ingenious photographic artist.

Brahmins, navel-contemplating.

Brains, poor substitute for.

Bread-trees.

Bream, their only business.

Brigadier-Generals in militia, devotion of.

Brigadiers, nursing ones, tendency in, to literary composition.

\_Brigitta, viridis\_.

Britannia, her trident.

Brotherhood, subsides after election.

Brown, Mr., engages in an unequal contest.

Browne, Sir T., a pious and wise sentiment of, cited and commended.

Brutus Four-Corners.

Buchanan, a wise and honest man.

Buckingham, Hon. J.T., editor of the Boston Courier,

letters to,

not afraid.

Buffalo,

a plan hatched there,

plaster, a prophecy in regard to.

Buffaloes, herd of, probable influence of tracts upon.

Bull, John,

prophetic allusion to, by Horace,

his 'Run,'

his mortgage,

unfortunate dip of,

wool pulled over his eyes.

Buncombe,

in the other world supposed,

mutual privilege, in.

Bung, the eternal, thought to be loose.

Bungtown Fencibles, dinner of.

Burke, Mr., his age of chivalry surpassed.

Burleigh, Lord, quoted for something said in Latin long before.

Burns, Robert, a Scottish poet.

Bushy Brook.

Butler, Bishop.

Butter in Irish bogs.

C., General,

commended for parts,

for ubiquity,

for consistency,

for fidelity,

is in favor of war,

his curious valuation of principle.

Cabbage-heads, the, always in majority.

Cabinet, English, makes a blunder.

CÃ¦sar,

tribute to,

his veni, vidi, vici, censured for undue prolixity.

Cainites, sect of, supposed still extant.

Caleb, a monopoly of his denied,

curious notions of, as to meaning of 'shelter,'

his definition of Anglo-Saxon,

charges Mexicans (not with bayonets but) with improprieties.

Calhoun, Hon. J.C.,

his cow-bell curfew, light of the nineteenth century to be extinguished

at sound of,

cannot let go apron-string of the Past,

his unsuccessful tilt at Spirit of the Age,

the Sir Kay of modern chivalry,

his anchor made of a crooked pin,

mentioned.

\_Calyboosus, carcer\_.

Cambridge Platform, use discovered for.

Canaan in quarterly instalments.

Canary Islands.

Candidate,

presidential, letter from,

smells a rat,

against a bank,

takes a revolving position,

opinion of pledges,

is a periwig,

fronts south by north,

qualifications of, lessening,

wooden leg (and head) useful to.

Cape Cod clergyman,

what,

Sabbath-breakers, perhaps, reproved by.

Captains, choice of, important.

Carolina, foolish act of.

Caroline, case of.

Carpini, Father John de Piano, among the Tartars.

Cartier, Jacques, commendable zeal of.

Cass,

General,

clearness of his merit,

limited popularity at 'Bellers's.'

Castles, Spanish, comfortable accommodations in.

Cato, letters of, so called, suspended \_naso adunco\_.

C.D., friends of, can hear of him.

Century, nineteenth.

Chalk egg, we are proud of incubation of.

Chamberlayne, Doctor, consolatory citation from.

Chance,

an apothegm concerning,

is impatient.

Chaplain, a one-horse, stern-wheeled variety of.

Chappelow on Job, a copy of, lost.

Charles I., accident to his neck.

Charles II., his restoration, how brought about.

Cherubusco, news of, its effects on English royalty.

Chesterfield no letter-writer.

Chief Magistrate, dancing esteemed sinful by.

Children naturally speak Hebrew.

China-tree.

Chinese, whether they invented gunpowder before the Christian era

not considered.

Choate hired.

Christ,

shuffled into Apocrypha,

conjectured to disapprove of slaughter and pillage,

condemns a certain piece of barbarism.

Christianity, profession of, plebeian, whether.

Christian soldiers, perhaps inconsistent whether.

Cicero,

an opinion of, disputed.

Cilley, Ensign, author of nefarious sentiment.

\_Cimex lectularius\_.

Cincinnati, old, law and order party of.

Cincinnatus, a stock character in modern comedy.

Civilization,

progress of, an alias,

rides upon a powder-cart.

Clergymen,

their ill husbandry,

their place in processions,

some, cruelly banished for the soundness of their lungs.

Clotho, a Grecian lady.

Cocked-hat, advantages of being knocked into.

College of Cardinals, a strange one.

Colman, Dr. Benjamin, anecdote of.

Colored folks, curious national diversion of kicking.

Colquitt,

a remark of,

acquainted with some principles of aerostation.

Columbia, District of,

its peculiar climatic effects,

not certain that Martin is for abolishing it.

Columbiads, the true fifteen-inch ones.

Columbus,

a Paul Pry of genius,

will perhaps be remembered,

thought by some to have discovered America.

Columby.

Complete Letter-Writer, fatal gift of.

Compostella, Saint James of, seen.

Compromise system, the, illustrated.

Conciliation, its meaning.

Congress,

singular consequence of getting into,

a stumbling-block.

Congressional debates found instructive.

Constituents, useful for what, 194.

Constitution,

trampled on,

to stand upon what.

Convention, what.

Convention, Springfield.

Coon, old, pleasure in skinning.

Co-operation defined.

Coppers, \_caste\_ in picking up of.

Copres, a monk, his excellent method of arguing.

Corduroy-road, a novel one.

Corner-stone, patent safety.

Cornwallis,

a,

acknowledged entertaining.

Cotton loan, its imaginary nature.

Cotton Mather, summoned as witness.

Country, our,

its boundaries more exactly defined,

right or wrong, nonsense about, exposed,

lawyers, sent providentially.

Earth's biggest, gets a soul.

Courier, The Boston, an unsafe print.

Court, General, farmers sometimes attain seats in.

Court, Supreme.

Courts of law, English, their orthodoxy.

Cousins, British, our \_ci-devant\_.

Cowper, W., his letters commended.

Credit defined.

Creditors all on Lincoln's side.

Creed, a safe kind of.

Crockett, a good rule of.

Cruden, Alexander, his Concordance.

Crusade, first American.

Cuneiform script recommended.

Curiosity distinguishes man from brutes.

Currency, Ethiopian, inconveniences of.

Cynthia, her hide as a means of conversion.

DÃ¦dalus first taught men to sit on fences.

Daniel in the lion's den.

Darkies dread freedom.

Davis, Captain Isaac, finds out something to his advantage.

Davis, Jefferson (a new species of martyr),

has the latest ideas on all subjects,

superior in financiering to patriarch Jacob,

is \_some\_,

carries Constitution in his hat,

knows how to deal with his Congress,

astonished at his own piety,

packed up for Nashville,

tempted to believe his own lies,

his snake egg,

blood on his hands.

Davis, Mr., of Mississippi, a remark of his.

Day and Martin, proverbially "on hand."

Death, rings down curtain.

De Bow (a famous political economist).

Delphi, oracle of,

surpassed,

alluded to.

Democracy,

false notion of,

its privileges.

Demosthenes.

Destiny, her account.

Devil, the,

unskilled in certain Indian tongues,

letters to and from.

Dey of Tripoli.

Didymus, a somewhat voluminous grammarian.

Dighton rock character might be usefully employed in some emergencies.

Dimitry Bruisgins, fresh supply of.

Diogenes, his zeal for propagating certain variety of olive.

Dioscuri, imps of the pit.

District-Attorney, contemptible conduct of one.

Ditchwater on brain, a too common ailing.

Dixie, the land of.

Doctor, the, a proverbial saying of.

Doe, Hon. Preserved, speech of.

Donatus, profane wish of.

Doughface, yeast-proof.

Downing Street.

Drayton,

a martyr,

north star, culpable for aiding, whether.

Dreams, something about.

Dwight, President, a hymn unjustly attributed to.

D.Y., letter of.

Eagle, national, the late, his estate administered upon.

Earth, Dame, a peep at her housekeeping.

Eating words, habit of, convenient in time of famine.

Eavesdroppers.

EchetlÃ¦us.

Editor,

his position,

commanding pulpit of,

large congregation of,

name derived from what,

fondness for mutton,

a pious one, his creed,

a showman,

in danger of sudden arrest, without bail.

Editors, certain ones who crow like cockerels.

Edwards, Jonathan.

Eggs, bad, the worst sort of.

Egyptian darkness, phial of, use for.

Eldorado, Mr. Sawin sets sail for.

Elizabeth, Queen, mistake of her ambassador.

Emerson.

Emilius, Paulus.

Empedocles.

Employment, regular, a good thing.

Enfield's Speaker, abuse of.

England, late Mother-Country,

her want of tact,

merits as a lecturer,

her real greatness not to be forgotten,

not contented (unwisely) with her own stock of fools,

natural maker of international law,

her theory thereof,

makes a particularly disagreeable kind of sarse,

somewhat given to bullying,

has respectable relations,

ought to be Columbia's friend,

anxious to buy an elephant.

Epaulets, perhaps no badge of saintship.

Epimenides, the Cretan Rip Van Winkle.

Episcopius, his marvellous oratory.

Eric, king of Sweden, his cap.

Ericsson, his caloric engine.

Eriksson, Thorwald, slain by natives.

Essence-peddlers.

Ethiopian, the, his first need.

Evangelists, iron ones.

Eyelids, a divine shield against authors.

Ezekiel, text taken from.

Ezekiel would make a poor figure at a caucus.

Faber, Johannes.

Factory-girls, expected rebellion of.

Facts,

their unamiability,

compared to an old-fashioned stage-coach.

\_Falstaffii, legio\_.

Family-trees,

fruit of jejune,

a primitive forest of.

Faneuil Hall,

a place where persons tap themselves for a species of hydrocephalus,

a bill of fare mendaciously advertised in.

Father of country, his shoes.

Female Papists, cut off in the midst of idolatry.

\_Fenianorum, rixÃ¦\_.

Fergusson, his 'Mutual Complaint,' etc.

F.F., singular power of their looks.

Fire, we all like to play with it.

Fish, emblematic, but disregarded, where.

Fitz, Miss Parthenia Almira, a sheresiarch.

Flam, President, untrustworthy.

Flirt, Mrs.

Flirtilla, elegy on death of.

Floyd, a taking character.

\_Floydus, furcifer\_.

Fly-leaves, providential increase of.

Fool, a cursed, his inalienable rights.

Foote, Mr., his taste for field-sports.

Fourier, a squinting toward.

Fourth of July ought to know its place.

Fourth of Julys, boiling.

France,

a strange dance begun in,

about to put her foot in it.

Friar John.

Fuller, Dr. Thomas, a wise saying of.

Funnel, old, hurraing in.

Gabriel, his last trump, its pressing nature.

Gardiner, Lieutenant Lion.

Gawain, Sir, his amusements.

Gay, S.H., Esquire, editor of National Antislavery Standard, letter to.

Geese, how infallibly to make swans of.

Gentleman, high-toned Southern, scientifically classed.

Getting up early.

Ghosts, some, presumed fidgety, (but see Stilling's Pneumatology.)

Giants formerly stupid.

Gideon, his sword needed.

Gift of tongues, distressing case of.

Gilbert, Sir Humphrey.

Globe Theatre, cheap season-ticket to.

Glory,

a perquisite of officers,

her account with B. Sawin, Esq.

Goatsnose, the celebrated interview with.

God, the only honest dealer.

Goings, Mehetable, unfounded claim of, disproved.

Gomara,

has a vision,

his relationship to the Scarlet Woman.

Governor, our excellent.

Grandfather, Mr. Biglow's, safe advice of.

Grandfathers, the, knew something.

Grand jurors, Southern, their way of finding a true bill.

\_Grantus, Dux\_.

Gravestones, the evidence of Dissenting ones held doubtful.

Gray's letters are letters.

Great horn spoon, sworn by.

Greeks, ancient, whether they questioned candidates.

Green Man, sign of.

Habeas corpus, new mode of suspending it.

Hail Columbia, raised.

Ham,

sandwich, an orthodox (but peculiar) one,

his seed,

their privilege in the Bible,

immoral justification of.

Hamlets, machine for making.

Hammon.

Hampton Roads, disaster in.

Hannegan, Mr., something said by.

Harrison, General, how preserved.

Hat, a leaky one.

Hat-trees in full bearing.

Hawkins, his whetstone.

Hawkins, Sir John, stout, something he saw.

Hawthorne.

Hay-rick, electrical experiments with.

Headlong, General.

Hell,

the opinion of some concerning,

breaks loose.

Henry the Fourth of England, a Parliament of, how named.

Hens, self-respect attributed to.

Herb, the Circean.

Herbert, George, next to David.

Hercules, his second labor probably what.

Hermon, fourth-proof dew of.

Herodotus, story from.

Hesperides, an inference from.

Hessians, native American soldiers.

Hickory, Old, his method.

Higgses, their natural aristocracy of feeling.

Hitchcock, Doctor.

Hitchcock, the Rev. Jeduthun,

colleague of Mr. Wilbur,

letter from, containing notices of Mr. Wilbur,

ditto, enclosing macaronic verses,

teacher of high-school.

Hogs, their dreams.

Holden, Mr. Shearjashub,

Preceptor of Jaalam Academy,

his knowledge of Greek limited,

a heresy of his,

leaves a fund to propagate it.

Holiday, blind man's.

Hollis, Ezra, goes to Cornwallis.

Hollow, why men providentially so constructed.

Holmes, Dr., author of 'Annals of America.,'

Homer, a phrase of, cited.

Homer, eldest son of Mr. Wilbur.

Homers, democratic ones, plums left for.

Hotels, big ones, humbugs.

House, a strange one described.

Howell, James, Esq.,

story told by,

letters of, commended.

Huldah, her bonnet.

Human rights out of order on the floor of Congress.

Humbug,

ascription of praise to,

generally believed in.

Husbandry, instance of bad.

Icarius, Penelope's father.

Icelander, a certain uncertain.

Idea,

the Southern, its natural foes,

the true American.

Ideas, friction ones unsafe.

Idyl defined.

Indecision, mole-blind.

Infants, prattlings of, curious observation concerning.

Information wanted (universally, but especially at page).

Ishmael, young.

Jaalam, unjustly neglected by great events.

Jaalam Centre,

Anglo-Saxons unjustly suspected by the young ladies there

"Independent Blunderbuss," strange conduct of editor of,

public meeting at,

meeting-house ornamented with imaginary clock.

Jaalam, East Parish of.

Jaalam Point, lighthouse on, charge of, prospectively offered

to Mr. H. Biglow.

\_Jacobus, rex\_.

Jakes, Captain, reproved for avarice.

Jamaica.

James the Fourth, of Scots, experiment by.

Jarnagin, Mr., his opinion of the completeness of Northern education.

Jefferson, Thomas, well-meaning, but injudicious.

Jeremiah, hardly the best guide in modern politics.

Jerome, Saint, his list of sacred writers.

Jerusha, ex-Mrs. Sawin.

Job,

Book of,

Chappelow on.

Johnson, Andrew,

as he used to be,

as he is: see Arnold, Benedict.

Johnson, Mr., communicates some intelligence.

Jonah,

the inevitable destiny of,

probably studied internal economy of the cetacea,

his gourd,

his unanimity in the whale.

Jonathan to John.

Jortin, Dr., cited.

Journals, British, their brutal tone.

Juanito.

Judea,

everything not known there,

not identical with A.D.

Judge, the,

his garden,

his hat covers many things.

Juvenal, a saying of.

Kay, Sir, the, of modern chivalry.

Key, brazen one.

Keziah, Aunt, profound observation of.

Kinderhook.

Kingdom Come, march to, easy.

KÃ¶nigsmark, Count.

Lablache surpassed.

LacedÃ¦monians banish a great talker.

Lamb, Charles, his epistolary excellence.

Latimer, Bishop, episcopizes Satan.

Latin tongue, curious information concerning.

Launcelot, Sir, a trusser of giants formerly, perhaps would find less

sport therein now.

Laura, exploited.

Learning, three-story.

Letcher, \_de la vieille roche\_.

\_Letcherus, nebulo\_.

Letters,

classed,

their shape,

of candidates,

often fatal.

Lettres Cabalistiques, quoted.

Lewis, Dixon H., gives his view of slavery.

Lewis Philip,

a scourger of young native Americans,

commiserated (though not deserving it).

Lexington.

Liberator, a newspaper, condemned by implication.

Liberty, unwholesome for men of certain complexions.

Licking, when constitutional.

Lignum vitÃ¦, a gift of this valuable wood proposed.

Lincoln, too shrewd to hang Mason and Slidell.

Literature, Southern, its abundance.

Little Big Boosy River.

Longinus recommends swearing, note (Fuseli did same thing).

Long-sweetening recommended.

Lord, inexpensive way of lending to.

Lords, Southern, prove \_pur sang\_ by ablution.

Lost arts, one sorrowfully added to list of.

Louis the Eleventh of France, some odd trees of his.

Lowell, Mr. J.R., unaccountable silence of.

Luther, Martin, his first appearance as Europa.

LyÃ¦us.

Lyttelton, Lord, his letters an imposition.

Macrobii, their diplomacy.

Magoffin, a name naturally noble.

Mahomet, got nearer Sinai than some.

Mahound, his filthy gobbets.

Mandeville, Sir John, quoted.

Mangum, Mr., speaks to the point.

ManichÃ¦an, excellently confuted.

Man-trees, grow where.

Maori chieftains.

Mapes, Walter,

quoted,

paraphrased.

Mares'-nests, finders of, benevolent.

Marius, quoted.

Marshfield.

Martin, Mr. Sawin used to vote for him.

Mason and Dixon's line, slaves north of.

Mason an F.F.V.

Mason and Slidell, how they might have been made at once useful and

ornamental.

Mass, the, its duty defined.

Massachusetts,

on her knees,

something mentioned in connection with, worthy the attention of

tailors,

citizen of, baked, boiled, and roasted (\_nefandum!\_).

Masses, the, used as butter by some.

Maury, an intellectual giant, twin birth with Simms (which see).

Mayday a humbug.

M.C., an invertebrate animal.

Me, Mister, a queer creature.

Mechanics' Fair, reflections suggested at.

\_Medium, ardentispirituale\_.

Mediums, spiritual, dreadful liars.

Memminger, old.

Mentor, letters of, dreary.

Mephistopheles at a nonplus.

Mexican blood, its effect in raising price of cloth.

Mexican polka.

Mexicans,

charged with various breaches of etiquette,

kind feelings beaten into them.

Mexico, no glory in overcoming.

Middleton, Thomas, quoted.

Military glory spoken disrespectfully of,

militia treated still worse.

Milk-trees, growing still.

Mill, Stuart, his low ideas.

Millenniums apt to miscarry.

Millspring.

Mills for manufacturing gabble, how driven.

Mills, Josiah's.

Milton,

an unconscious plagiary,

a Latin verse of, cited,

an English poet,

his 'Hymn of the Nativity.'

Missionaries,

useful to alligators,

culinary liabilities of.

Missions, a profitable kind of.

Monarch, a pagan, probably not favored in philosophical experiments.

Money-trees,

desirable,

that they once existed shown to be variously probable.

Montaigne.

Montaigne, a communicative old Gascon.

Monterey, battle of, its singular chromatic effect on a species of

two-headed eagle.

Montezuma, licked.

Moody, Seth,

his remarkable gun,

his brother Asaph.

Moquis Indians, praiseworthy custom of.

Moses,

held up vainly as an example,

construed by Joe Smith,

(not, A.J. Moses) prudent way of following.

Muse invoked.

Myths, how to interpret readily.

Naboths, Popish ones, how distinguished.

Nana Sahib.

Nancy, presumably Mrs. Biglow.

Napoleon III., his new chairs.

Nation,

rights of, proportionate to size,

young, its first needs.

National pudding, its effect on the organs of speech, a curious

physiological fact.

Negroes,

their double usefulness,

getting too current.

Nephelim, not yet extinct.

New England,

overpoweringly honored,

wants no more speakers,

done brown by whom,

her experience in beans beyond Cicero's.

Newspaper, the,

wonderful,

a strolling theatre,

thoughts suggested by tearing wrapper of,

a vacant sheet,

a sheet in which a vision was let down,

wrapper to a bar of soap,

a cheap impromptu platter.

New World, apostrophe to.

New York, letters from, commended.

Next life, what.

Nicotiana Tabacum, a weed.

Niggers,

area of abusing, extended,

Mr. Sawin's opinions of.

Ninepence a day low for murder.

No,

a monosyllable,

hard to utter.

Noah enclosed letter in bottle, probably.

Noblemen, Nature's.

Nornas, Lapland, what.

North, the,

has no business,

bristling, crowded off roost,

its mind naturally unprincipled.

North Bend,

geese inhumanly treated at,

mentioned.

North star, a proposition to indict.

Northern Dagon.

Northmen, \_gens inclytissima\_.

NÃ´tre Dame de la Haine.

Now, its merits.

Nowhere, march to.

O'Brien, Smith.

Off ox.

Officers,

miraculous transformation in character of,

Anglo-Saxon, come very near being anathematized.

Old age, an advantage of.

Old One, invoked.

Onesimus made to serve the cause of impiety.

O'Phace, Increase D., Esq., speech of.

Opinion, British, its worth to us.

Opinions, certain ones compared to winter flies.

Oracle of Fools, still respectfully consulted.

Orion becomes commonplace.

Orrery, Lord, his letters (lord!).

Ostracism, curious species of.

\_Ovidii Nasonis, carmen supposititium\_.

Palestine.

Paley, his Evidences.

Palfrey, Hon. J.G., (a worthy representative of Massachusetts).

Pantagruel, recommends a popular oracle.

Panurge,

his interview with Goatsnose.

Paper, plausible-looking, wanted.

Papists, female, slain by zealous Protestant bomb-shell.

Paralipomenon, a man suspected of being.

Paris, liberal principles safe as far away as.

\_Parliamentum Indoctorum\_ sitting in permnence.

Past, the, a good nurse.

Patience, sister, quoted.

Patriarchs, the, illiterate.

\_Patricius, brogipotens\_.

Paynims, their throats propagandistically cut.

Penelope, her wise choice.

People,

soft enough,

want correct ideas,

the, decline to be Mexicanized.

Pepin, King.

Pepperell General, quoted.

Pequash Junction.

Periwig.

Perley, Mr. Asaph, has charge of bass-viol.

Perseus, King, his avarice.

Persius, a pithy saying of.

Pescara, Marquis, saying of.

Peter, Saint, a letter of (\_post-mortem\_).

Petrarch, exploited Laura.

Petronius.

Pettibone, Jabez, bursts up.

Pettus came over with Wilhelmus Conquistor.

Phaon.

Pharaoh, his lean kine.

Pharisees, opprobriously referred to.

Philippe, Louis, in pea-jacket.

Phillips, Wendell, catches a Tartar.

Phlegyas quoted.

Phrygian language, whether Adam spoke it.

Pickens, a Norman name.

Pilcoxes, genealogy of.

Pilgrim Father, apparition of.

Pilgrims, the.

Pillows, constitutional.

Pine-trees, their sympathy.

Pinto, Mr., some letters of his commended.

Pisgah, an impromptu one.

Platform, party, a convenient one.

Plato,

supped with,

his man.

Pleiades, the, not enough esteemed.

Pliny, his letters not admired.

Plotinus, a story of.

Plymouth Rock, Old, a Convention wrecked on.

Poets apt to become sophisticated.

Point Tribulation, Mr. Sawin wrecked on.

Poles, exile, whether crop of beans depends on.

Polk, \_nomen gentile\_.

Polk, President,

synonymous with our country,

censured,

in danger of being crushed.

Polka, Mexican.

Pomp,

a runaway slave, his nest,

hypocritically groans like white man,

blind to Christian privileges,

his society valued at fifty dollars,

his treachery,

takes Mr. Sawin prisoner,

cruelly makes him work,

puts himself illegally under his tuition,

dismisses him with contumelious epithets,

a negro.

Pontifical bull, a tamed one.

Pope, his verse excellent.

Pork, refractory in boiling.

Portico, the.

Portugal, Alphonso the Sixth of, a monster.

Post, Boston,

shaken visibly,

bad guide-post,

too swift,

edited by a colonel,

who is presumed officially in Mexico,

referred to.

Pot-hooks, death in.

Power, a first-class, elements of.

Preacher,

an ornamental symbol,

a breeder of dogmas,

earnestness of, important.

Present,

considered as an annalist,

not long wonderful.

President,

slaveholding natural to,

must be a Southern resident,

must own a nigger,

the, his policy,

his resemblance to Jackson.

Princes mix cocktails.

Principle, exposure spoils it.

Principles, bad,

when less harmful,

when useless.

Professor, Latin, in

College,

Scaliger.

Prophecies, fulfilment of.

Prophecy, a notable one.

Prospect Hill.

Providence has a natural life-preserver.

Proviso, bitterly spoken of.

Prudence, sister, her idiosyncratic teapot.

Psammeticus, an experiment of.

Psyche, poor.

Public opinion,

a blind and drunken guide,

nudges Mr. Wilbur's elbow,

ticklers of.

Punkin Falls 'Weekly Parallel.'

Putnam, General Israel, his lines.

Pythagoras a bean-hater, why.

Pythagoreans, fish reverenced by, why.

\_Quid, ingens nicotianum\_.

Quixote, Don.

Rafn, Professor.

Rag, one of sacred college.

Rantoul, Mr.,

talks loudly,

pious reason for not enlisting.

Recruiting sergeant, Devil supposed the first.

Religion, Southern, its commercial advantages.

Representatives' Chamber.

Rhinothism, society for promoting.

Rhyme, whether natural not considered.

Rib, an infrangible one.

Richard the First of England, his Christian fervor.

Riches conjectured to have legs as well as wings.

Ricos Hombres.

Ringtail Rangers.

Roanoke Island.

Robinson, Mr. John P., his opinions fully stated.

Rocks, pocket full of.

Roosters in rainy weather, their misery.

Rotation insures mediocrity and inexperience.

Rough and ready,

a Wig,

a kind of scratch.

Royal Society, American fellows of.

Rum and water combine kindly.

Runes resemble bird-tracks.

Runic inscriptions, their different grades of unintelligibility and

consequent value.

Russell, Earl, is good enough to expound our Constitution for us.

Russian eagle turns Prussian blue.

\_Ryeus, Bacchi epitheton\_.

Sabbath, breach of.

Sabellianism, one accused of.

Sailors, their rights how won.

Saltillo, unfavorable view of.

Salt-river, in Mexican, what.

\_Samuel, avunculus\_, 271.

Samuel, Uncle,

riotous,

yet has qualities demanding reverence,

a good provider for his family,

an exorbitant bill of,

makes some shrewd guesses,

expects his boots, 245.

Sansculottes, draw their wine before drinking.

Santa Anna, his expensive leg.

Sappho, some human nature in.

Sassycus, an impudent Indian.

Satan,

never wants attorneys,

an expert talker by signs,

a successful fisherman with little or no bait,

cunning fetch of,

dislikes ridicule,

ought not to have credit of ancient oracles,

his worst pitfall.

Satirist, incident to certain dangers.

Savages, Canadian, chance of redemption offered to.

Sawin, B., Esquire,

his letter not written in verse,

a native of Jaalam

not regular attendant on Rev. Mr. Wilbur's preaching,

a fool,

his statements trustworthy,

his ornithological tastes,

letters from,

his curious discovery in regard to bayonets,

displays proper family pride,

modestly confesses himself less wise than the Queen of Sheba,

the old Adam in, peeps out,

a \_miles emeritus\_,

is made text for a sermon,

loses a leg,

an eye,

left hand,

four fingers of right hand,

has six or more ribs broken,

a rib of his infrangible,

allows a certain amount of preterite greenness in himself,

his share of spoil limited,

his opinion of Mexican climate,

acquires property of a certain sort,

his experience of glory,

stands sentry, and puns thereupon,

undergoes martyrdom in some of its most painful forms,

enters the candidating business,

modestly states the (avail) abilities which qualify him for high

political station,

has no principles,

a peace-man,

unpledged,

has no objections to owning peculiar property, but would not like to

monopolize the truth,

his account with glory,

a selfish motive hinted in,

sails for Eldorado,

shipwrecked on a metaphorical promontory,

parallel between, and Rev. Mr. Wilbur (not Plutarchian),

conjectured to have bathed in river Selemnus,

loves plough wisely, but not too well,

a foreign mission probably expected by,

unanimously nominated for presidency,

his country's father-in-law,

nobly emulates Cincinnatus,

is not a crooked stick,

advises his adherents,

views of, on present state of politics,

popular enthusiasm for, at Bellers's, and its disagreeable consequences,

inhuman treatment of, by Bellers,

his opinion of the two parties,

agrees with Mr. Webster,

his antislavery zeal,

his proper self respect,

his unaffected piety,

his not intemperate temperance,

a thrilling adventure of,

his prudence and economy,

bound to Captain Jakes, but regains his freedom,

is taken prisoner,

ignominiously treated,

his consequent resolution.

Sawin, Honorable B. O'F.,

a vein of humor suspected in,

gets into an enchanted castle,

finds a wooden leg better in some respects than a living one,

takes something hot,

his experience of Southern hospitality,

water-proof internally,

sentenced to ten years' imprisonment,

his liberal-handedness,

gets his arrears of pension,

marries the widow Shannon,

confiscated,

finds in himself a natural necessity of income,

his missionary zeal,

never a stated attendant on Mr. Wilbur's preaching,

sang bass in choir,

prudently avoided contribution toward bell,

abhors a covenant of works,

if saved at all, must be saved genteelly,

reports a sermon,

experiences religion,

would consent to a dukedom,

converted to unanimity,

sound views of,

makes himself an extempore marquis,

extract of letter from,

his opinion of Paddies, of Johnson.

Sayres, a martyr.

Scaliger, saying of.

\_ScarabÃ¦us pilularius\_.

Scott, General, his claims to the presidency.

Scrimgour, Rev. Shearjashub.

Scythians, their diplomacy commended.

Sea, the wormy.

Seamen, colored, sold.

\_Secessia, licta\_.

Secession, its legal nature defined.

Secret, a great military.

Selemnus, a sort of Lethean river.

Senate, debate in, made readable.

Seneca,

saying of,

another,

overrated by a saint (but see Lord Bolingbroke's opinion of, in a

letter to Dean Swift),

his letters not commended,

a son of Rev. Mr. Wilbur,

quoted.

Serbonian bog of literature.

Sermons, some pitched too high.

Seward, Mister, the late,

his gift of prophecy,

needs stiffening,

misunderstands parable of fatted calf.

Sextons,

demand for,

heroic official devotion of one.

Seymour, Governor.

Shakespeare,

a good reporter.

Shaking fever, considered as an employment.

Sham, President, honest.

Shannon, Mrs.,

a widow,

her family and accomplishments,

has tantrums,

her religious views,

her notions of a moral and intellectual being,

her maidan name,

her blue blood.

Sheba, Queen of.

Sheep, none of Rev. Mr. Wilbur's turned wolves.

Shem, Scriptural curse of.

Shiraz Centre, lead-mine at.

Shirley, Governor.

Shoddy, poor covering for outer or inner man.

Shot at sight, privilege of being.

Show, natural to love it.

Silver spoon born in Democracy's mouth, what.

Simms, an intellectual giant, twin-birth with Maury (which see).

Sin, wilderness of, modern, what.

Sinai suffers outrages.

Skim-milk has its own opinions.

Skin, hole in, strange taste of some for.

Skippers, Yankee, busy in the slave-trade.

Slaughter, whether God strengthen us for.

Slaughterers and soldiers compared.

Slaughtering nowadays \_is\_ slaughtering.

Slavery,

of no color,

corner-stone of liberty,

also keystone,

last crumb of Eden,

a Jonah,

an institution,

a private State concern.

Slidell, New York trash.

Sloanshure, Habakkuk, Esquire, President of Jaalam Bank.

Smith, Joe, used as a translation.

Smith, John, an interesting character.

Smith, Mr.,

fears entertained for,

dined with.

Smith, N.B., his magnanimity.

\_Smithius, dux\_.

Soandso, Mr., the great, defines his position.

Soft-heartedness, misplaced, is soft-headedness.

Sol,

the fisherman,

soundness of respiratory organs hypothetically attributed to.

Soldiers, British, ghosts of, insubordinate.

Solomon, Song of, portions of it done into Latin verse by Mr. Wilbur.

Solon, a saying of.

Soul, injurious properties of.

South,

its natural eloquence,

facts have a mean spite against.

South Carolina,

futile attempt to anchor,

her pedigrees.

Southern men,

their imperfect notions of labor,

of subscriptions,

too high pressure,

prima facie noble.

Spanish, to walk, what.

Speech-making, an abuse of gift of speech.

Spirit-rapping does not repay the spirits engaged in it.

Split-Foot, Old, made to squirm.

Spring, described.

Star, north, subject to indictment, whether.

Statesman, a genuine, defined.

Stearns, Othniel, fable by.

Stone Spike, the.

Store, cheap cash, a wicked fraud.

Strong, Governor Caleb, a patriot.

Style, the catalogue.

Sumter, shame of.

Sunday should mind its own business.

Swearing commended as a figure of speech.

Swett, Jethro C., his fall.

Swift, Dean, threadbare saying of.

Tag, elevated to the Cardinalate.

Taney, C.J.

Tarandfeather, Rev. Mr.

Tarbox, Shearjashub, first white child born in Jaalam.

Tartars, Mongrel.

Taxes, direct, advantages of.

Taylor, General, greased by Mr. Choate.

Taylor zeal, its origin.

Teapots, how made dangerous.

Ten, the upper.

Tesephone, banished for long-windedness.

Thacker, Rev. Preserved, D.D.

Thanks get lodged.

Thanksgiving, Feejee.

Thaumaturgus, Saint Gregory, letter of, to the Devil.

Theleme, Abbey of.

Theocritus, the inventor of idyllic poetry

Theory, defined.

ThermopylÃ¦s, too many.

'They'll say' a notable bully.

Thirty-nine articles might be made serviceable.

Thor, a foolish attempt of.

Thoreau.

Thoughts, live ones characterized.

Thumb, General Thomas, a valuable member of society.

Thunder, supposed in easy circumstances.

Thynne, Mr., murdered.

Tibullus.

Time,

an innocent personage to swear by,

a scene-shifter.

Tinkham, Deacon Pelatiah,

story concerning, not told,

alluded to,

does a very sensible thing.

Toms, Peeping.

Toombs, a doleful sound from.

Trees, various kinds of extraordinary ones.

Trowbridge, William, mariner, adventure of.

Truth

and falsehood start from same point,

truth invulnerable to satire,

compared to a river,

of fiction sometimes truer than fact,

told plainly, \_passim\_.

Tuileries,

exciting scene at,

front parlor of.

Tully, a saying of.

Tunnel, Northwest-Passage, a poor investment.

Turkey-Buzzard Boost.

Tuscaloosa.

Tutchel, Rev. Jonas, a Sadducee.

Tweedledee, gospel according to.

Tweedledum, great principles of.

\_Tylerus,

juvenis insignis,

porphyrogenitus,

Iohanides, flito celeris,

bene titus\_.

Tyrants, European, how made to tremble.

Ulysses,

husband of Penelope,

borrows money, (for full particulars of, see Homer and Dante)

\_rex\_.

Unanimity, new ways of producing.

Union,

its hoops off,

its good old meaning.

Universe, its breeching.

University, triennial catalogue of.

Us, nobody to be compared with, and see \_World, passim\_.

Van Buren,

fails of gaining Mr. Sawin's confidence,

his son John reproved.

Van, Old, plan to set up.

Vattel, as likely to fall on \_your\_ toes as on mine.

Venetians invented something once.

Vices, cardinal, sacred conclave of.

Victoria, Queen,

her natural terror,

her best carpets.

Vinland.

Virgin, the, letter of, to Magistrates of Messina.

\_Virginia, descripta\_.

Virginians, their false heraldry.

Voltaire, \_esprit de\_.

Vratz, Captain, a Pomeranian, singular views of.

Wachuset Mountain.

Wait, General.

Wales, Prince of,

calls Brother Jonathan \_consanguineus noster\_,

but had not, apparently, consulted the Garter King at Arms.

Walpole, Horace,

classed,

his letters praised.

Waltham Plain, Cornwallis at.

Walton, punctilious in his intercourse with fishes.

War,

abstract, horrid,

its hoppers, grist of, what.

Warren, Fort.

Warton, Thomas, a story of.

Washington, charge brought against.

Washington, city of,

climatic influence of, on coats,

mentioned,

grand jury of.

Washingtons, two hatched at a time by improved machine.

\_Watchmanus, noctivagus\_.

Water, Taunton, proverbially weak.

Water-trees.

Weakwash, a name fatally typical.

Webster, his unabridged quarto, its deleteriousness.

Webster, some sentiments of, commended by Mr. Sawin.

Westcott, Mr., his horror.

Whig party

has a large throat,

but query as to swallowing spurs.

White-house.

Wickliffe, Robert, consequences of his bursting.

Wife-trees.

Wilbur, Mrs. Dorcas (Pilcox),

an invariable rule of,

her profile,

tribute to.

Wilbur, Rev. Homer, A.M.,

consulted,

his instructions to his flock,

a proposition of his for Protestant bomb-shells,

his elbow nudged,

his notions of satire,

some opinions of his quoted with apparent approval by Mr. Biglow,

geographical speculations of,

a justice of the peace,

a letter of,

a Latin pun of,

runs against a post without injury,

does not seek notoriety (whatever some malignants may affirm),

fits youths for college,

a chaplain during late war with England,

a shrewd observation of,

some curious speculations of,

his Martello-tower,

forgets he is not in pulpit,

extracts from sermon of,

interested in John Smith,

his views concerning present state of letters,

a stratagem of,

ventures two hundred and fourth interpretation of Beast in Apocalypse,

christens Hon. B. Sawin, then an infant,

an addition to our \_sylva\_ proposed by,

curious and instructive adventure of,

his account with an unnatural uncle,

his uncomfortable imagination,

speculations concerning Cincinnatus,

confesses digressive tendency of mind,

goes to work on sermon (not without fear that his readers will dub

him with a reproachful epithet like that with which Isaac Allerton,

a Mayflower man, revenges himself on a delinquent debtor of his,

calling him in his will, and thus holding him up to posterity, as

'John Peterson, THE BORE'),

his modesty,

disclaims sole authorship of Mr. Biglow's writings,

his low opinion of prepensive autographs,

a chaplain in 1812,

cites a heathen comedian,

his fondness for the Book of Job,

preaches a Fast-Day discourse,

is prevented from narrating a singular occurrence,

is presented with a pair of new spectacles,

his church services indecorously sketched by Mr. Sawin,

hopes to decipher a Runic inscription,

a fable by,

deciphers Runic inscription,

his method therein,

is ready to reconsider his opinion of tobacco,

his opinion of the Puritans,

his death,

born in Pigsgusset,

letter of Rev. Mr. Hitchcock concerning,

fond of Milton's Christmas hymn,

his monument (proposed),

his epitaph,

his last letter,

his supposed disembodied spirit,

table belonging to,

sometimes wrote Latin verses,

his table-talk,

his prejudices,

against Baptists,

his sweet nature,

his views of style,

a story of his.

Wildbore, a vernacular one, how to escape.

Wilkes, Captain, borrows rashly.

Wind, the, a good Samaritan.

Wingfield, his 'Memorial'.

Wooden leg,

remarkable for sobriety,

never eats pudding.

Woods, the. See \_Belmont\_.

Works, covenants of, condemned.

World, this, its unhappy temper.

Wright, Colonel, providentially rescued.

Writing, dangerous to reputation.

Wrong, abstract, safe to oppose.

Yankees, their worst wooden nutmegs.

Zack, Old.

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

A beggar through the world am I,

A camel-driver, angry with his drudge,

A heap of bare and splintery crags,

A hundred years! they're quickly fled,

A legend that grew in the forest's hush,

A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,

A poet cannot strive for despotism,

A presence both by night and day,

A race of nobles may die out,

A stranger came one night to Yussouf's tent,

About the oak that framed this chair, of old,

Alike I hate to be your debtor,

Along a river-side, I know not where,

Amid these fragments of heroic days,

An ass munched thistles, while a nightingale,

'And how could you dream of meeting?'

Another star 'neath Time's horizon dropped,

Are we, then, wholly fallen? Can it be,

As a twig trembles, which a bird,

As, cleansed of Tiber's and Oblivion's slime,

As, flake by flake, the beetling avalanches,

As life runs on, the road grows strange,

As sinks the sun behind yon alien hills,

As the broad ocean endlessly upheaveth,

At Carnac in Brittany, close on the bay,

At length arrived, your book I take,

At twenty we fancied the blest Middle Ages,

Ay, pale and silent maiden,

B, taught by Pope to do his good by stealth,

Beauty on my hearth-stone blazing!

Beloved, in the noisy city here,

Beneath the trees,

Bowing thyself in dust before a Book,

Can this be thou who, lean and pale,

Come back before the birds are flown,

'Come forth!' my catbird calls to me,

Curtis, whose Wit, with Fancy arm in arm,

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,

Dear M. ---- By way of saving time,

Dear Sir,--You wish to know my notions,

Dear Sir,--Your letter come to han',

Dear Wendell, why need count the years,

Death never came so nigh to me before,

Don't believe in the Flying Dutchman?

Down 'mid the tangled roots of things,

Ef I a song or two could make,

Entranced I saw a vision in the cloud,

Ere pales in Heaven the morning star,

Fair as a summer dream was Margaret,

Far over Elf-land poets stretch their sway,

Far through the memory shines a happy day,

Far up on Katahdin thou towerest,

Far 'yond this narrow parapet of Time,

Fit for an Abbot of Theleme,

For this true nobleness I seek in vain,

Frank-hearted hostess of the field and wood,

From the close-shut windows gleams no spark,

Full oft the pathway to her door,

Giddings, far rougher names than thine have grown,

Go! leave me, Priest; my soul would be,

God! do not let my loved one die,

God makes sech nights, all white an' still,

God sends his teachers unto every age,

Godminster? Is it Fancy's play?

Gold of the reddening sunset, backward thrown,

Gone, gone from us! and shall we see,

Great soul, thou sittest with me in my room,

Great truths are portions of the soul of man,

Guvener B. is a sensible man,

He came to Florence long ago,

He spoke of Burns: men rude and rough,

He stood upon the world's broad threshold; wide,

He who first stretched his nerves of subtile wire,

Heaven's cup held down to me I drain,

Here once my step was quickened,

Here we stan' on the Constitution, by thunder!

Hers all that Earth could promise or bestow,

Hers is a spirit deep, and crystal-clear,

How strange are the freaks of memory!

How struggles with the tempest's swells,

How was I worthy so divine a loss,

Hushed with broad sunlight lies the hill,

I am a man of forty, sirs, a native of East Haddam,

I ask not for those thoughts, that sudden leap,

I call as fly the irrevocable hours,

I cannot think that thou shouldst pass away,

I christened you in happier days, before,

I could not bear to see those eyes,

I did not praise thee when the crowd,

I do not come to weep above thy pall,

I don't much s'pose, hows'ever I should plen it,

I du believe in Freedom's cause,

I go to the ridge in the forest,

I grieve not that ripe knowledge takes away,

I had a little daughter,

I have a fancy: how shall I bring it,

I hed it on my min' las' time, when I to write ye started,

I know a falcon swift and peerless,

I love to start out arter night's begun,

I need not praise the sweetness of his song,

I rise, Mr. Chairman, as both of us know,

I sat and watched the walls of night,

I sat one evening in my room,

I saw a Sower walking slow,

I saw the twinkle of white feet,

I sent you a message, my friens, t'other day,

I spose you recollect thet I explained my gennle views,

I spose you wonder ware I be; I can't tell, fer the soul o' me,

I swam with undulation soft,

I thank ye, my frien's, for the warmth o' your greetin',

I thought our love at full, but I did err,

I treasure in secret some long, fine hair,

I, walking the familiar street,

I was with thee in Heaven: I cannot tell,

I watched a moorland torrent run,

I went to seek for Christ,

I would more natures were like thine,

I would not have this perfect love of ours,

If he be a nobler lover, take him!

If I let fall a word of bitter mirth,

If I were the rose at your window,

In a small chamber, friendless and unseen,

In good old times, which means, you know,

In his tower sat the poet,

In life's small things be resolute and great,

In the old days of awe and keen-eyed wonder,

In town I hear, scarce wakened yet,

In vain we call old notions fudge,

Into the sunshine,

It don't seem hardly right, John,

It is a mere wild rosebud,

It mounts athwart the windy hill,

It was past the hour of trysting,

It's some consid'ble of a spell sence I hain't writ no letters,

Leaves fit to have been poor Juliet's cradle-rhyme,

Let others wonder what fair face,

Light of triumph in her eyes,

Look on who will in apathy, and stifle they who can,

Looms there the New Land,

Maiden, when such a soul as thine is born,

Mary, since first I knew thee, to this hour,

Men say the sullen instrument,

Men! whose boast it is that ye,

My coachman, in the moonlight there,

My day began not till the twilight fell,

My heart, I cannot still it,

My Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die,

My name is Water: I have sped,

My soul was like the sea,

My worthy friend, A. Gordon Knott,

Never, surely, was holier man,

New England's poet, rich in love as years,

Nine years have slipt like hour-glass sand,

No? Hez he? He haint, though? Wut? Voted agin him?

Nor deemed he lived unto himself alone,

Not always unimpeded can I pray,

Not as all other women are,

Now BiÃ¶rn, the son of Heriulf, had ill days,

O days endeared to every Muse,

'O Dryad feet,'

O dwellers in the valley-land,

O Land of Promise! from what Pisgah's height,

O moonlight deep and tender,

O wandering dim on the extremest edge,

Of all the myriad moods of mind,

Oft round my hall of portraiture I gaze,

Oh, tell me less or tell me more,

Old events have modern meanings; only that survives,

Old Friend, farewell! Your kindly door again,

On this wild waste, where never blossom came,

Once git a smell o' musk into a draw,

Once hardly in a cycle blossometh,

Once on a time there was a pool,

One after one the stars have risen and set,

One feast, of holy days the crest,

One kiss from all others prevents me,

Opening one day a book of mine,

Our love is not a fading, earthly flower,

Our ship lay tumbling in an angry sea,

Over his keys the musing organist,

Phoebus, sitting one day in a laurel-tree's shade,

Praisest Law, friend? We, too, love it much as they that love it best,

Propped on the marsh, a dwelling now, I see,

Punctorum garretos colens et cellara Quinque,

Rabbi Jehosha used to say,

Reader! Walk up at once (it will soon be too late),

Rippling through thy branches goes the sunshine,

Said Christ our Lord, I will go and see,

Seat of all woes? Though Nature's firm decree,

She gave me all that woman can,

Shell, whose lips, than mine more cold,

Ship, blest to bear such freight across the blue,

Shy soul and stalwart, man of patient will,

Silencioso por la puerta,

Sisters two, all praise to you,

Skilled to pull wires, he baffles Nature's hope,

Sleep is Death's image,--poets tell us so,

So dreamy-soft the notes, so far away,

Some sort of heart I know is hers,

Sometimes come pauses of calm, when the rapt bard, holding his heart back,

Somewhere in India, upon a time,

Spirit, that rarely comest now,

Still thirteen years: 'tis autumn now,

Stood the tall Archangel weighing,

Strong, simple, silent are the [steadfast] laws,

Swiftly the politic goes: is it dark?--he borrows a lantern,

Thank God, he saw you last in pomp of May,

Thanks to the artist, ever on my wall,

That's a rather bold speech, my Lord Bacon,

The Bardling came where by a river grew,

The century numbers fourscore years,

The cordage creaks and rattles in the wind,

The dandelions and buttercups,

The electric nerve, whose instantaneous thrill,

The fire is burning clear and blithely,

The hope of Truth grows stronger, day by day,

The little gate was reached at last,

The love of all things springs from love of one,

The Maple puts her corals on in May,

The misspelt scrawl, upon the wall,

The moon shines white and silent,

The New World's sons, from England's breasts we drew,

The next whose fortune 'twas a tale to tell,

The night is dark, the stinging sleet,

The old Chief, feeling now wellnigh his end,

The path from me to you that led,

The pipe came safe, and welcome too,

The rich man's son inherits lands,

The same good blood that now refills,

The sea is lonely, the sea is dreary,

The snow had begun in the gloaming,

The tower of old Saint Nicholas soared upward to the skies,

The wind is roistering out of doors,

The wisest man could ask no more of Fate,

The world turns mild; democracy, they say,

There are who triumph in a losing cause,

There came a youth upon the earth,

There lay upon the ocean's shore,

There never yet was flower fair in vain,

Therefore think not the Past is wise alone,

These pearls of thought in Persian gulfs were bred,

These rugged, wintry days I scarce could bear,

They pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,

Thick-rushing, like an ocean vast,

This is the midnight of the century,--hark!

This kind o' sogerin' aint a mite like our October trainin',

This little blossom from afar,

Thou look'dst on me all yesternight,

Thou wast the fairest of all man-made things,

Though old the thought and oft exprest,

Thrash away, you'll \_hev\_ to rattle,

Through suffering and sorrow thou hast passed,

Thy love thou sentest oft to me,

Thy voice is like a fountain,

'Tis a woodland enchanted!

To those who died for her on land and sea,

True as the sun's own work but more refined,

True Love is a humble, low-born thing,

Turbid from London's noise and smoke,

'Twas sung of old in hut and hall,

'Twere no hard task, perchance, to win,

Two brothers once, an ill-matched pair,

Two fellers, Isrel named and Joe,

Unconscious as the sunshine, simply sweet,

Unseen Musician, thou art sure to please,

Untremulous in the river clear,

Violet! sweet violet!

Wait a little: do \_we\_ not wait?

Walking alone where we walked together,

We see but half the causes of our deeds,

We, too, have autumns, when our leaves,

We wagered, she for sunshine, I for rain,

Weak-winged is song,

What boot your houses and your lands?

What countless years and wealth of brain were spent,

'What fairings will ye that I bring?'

What gnarled stretch, what depth of shade, is his!

What hath Love with Thought to do?

What know we of the world immense,

What man would live coffined with brick and stone,

What mean these banners spread,

'What means this glory round our feet,'

What Nature makes in any mood,

What visionary tints the year puts on,

What were I, Love, if I were stripped of thee,

What were the whole void world, if thou wert dead,

When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast,

When I was a beggarly boy,

When oaken woods with buds are pink,

When Persia's sceptre trembled in a hand,

When the down is on the chin,

When wise Minerva still was young,

Where is the true man's fatherland?

'Where lies the capital, pilgrim, seat of who governs the Faithful?'

Whether my heart hath wiser grown or not,

Whether the idle prisoner through his grate,

While the slow clock, as they were miser's gold,

Whither? Albeit I follow fast,

Who cometh over the hills,

Who does his duty is a question,

Who hath not been a poet? Who hath not,

Why should I seek her spell to decompose,

With what odorous woods and spices,

Woe worth the hour when it is crime,

Wondrous and awful are thy silent halls,

Words pass as wind, but where great deeds were done,

Worn and footsore was the Prophet,

Ye little think what toil it was to build,

Ye who, passing graves by night,

Yes, faith is a goodly anchor,

Zekle crep' up, quite unbeknown,

INDEX OF TITLES

The titles of major works and of general divisions are set in SMALL

CAPITALS.

A.C.L., To.

Above and Below.

Absence.

After the Burial.

Agassiz.

Agro-Dolce.

Al Fresco.

Aladdin.

Alexander, Fanny, To.

All-Saints.

Allegra.

Ambrose.

Anti-Apis.

Appledore, Pictures from.

April Birthday, An--at Sea.

Arcadia Rediviva.

At the Burns Centennial.

At the Commencement Dinner, 1866.

Auf Wiedersehen.

Auspex.

Bankside.

Bartlett, Mr. John, To.

Beaver Brook.

Beggar, The.

Bibliolatres.

Biglow, Mr. Hosea, to the Editor of the Atlantic Monthly.

Biglow, Mr., Latest Views of.

BIGLOW PAPERS, THE.

Biglow's, Mr. Hosea, Speech in March Meeting.

Birch-Tree, The.

Birdofredum Sawin, Esq., to Mr. Hosea Biglow.

Birdofredum Sawin, Esq., to Mr. Hosea Biglow.

Birthday Verses.

Black Preacher, The.

Blondel, Two Scenes from the Life of.

Bon Voyage.

Boss, The.

Boston, Letter from.

Bradford, C.F., To.

Brakes, The.

Brittany, A Legend of.

Broken Tryst, The.

Burns Centennial, At the.

Captive, The.

Capture of Fugitive Slaves near Washington, On the.

Casa sin Alma.

CATHEDRAL, THE.

Cervantes, Prison of.

Changed Perspective.

Changeling, The.

Channing, Dr., Elegy on the Death of.

Chippewa Legend, A.

Christmas Carol, A.

Cochituate Water, Ode written for the Celebration of the Introduction

of the, into the City of Boston.

Columbus.

Commemoration, Ode recited at the Harvard.

Concord Bridge, Ode read at the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Fight at.

Contrast, A.

Courtin', The.

Credidimus Jovem regnare.

Curtis, George William, An Epistle to.

Dancing Bear, The.

Dandelion, To the.

Dante, On a Portrait of, by Giotto.

Dara.

Darkened Mind, The.

Dead House, The.

Death of a Friend's Child, On the.

Death of Queen Mercedes.

Debate in the Sennit, The.

Discovery, The.

Dobson's, Mr. Austin, 'Old World Idylls,' Receiving a Copy of.

E.G. de R.

EARLIER POEMS.

Eleanor makes Macaroons.

Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing.

Ember Picture, An.

Endymion.

Epistle to George William Curtis, An.

Estrangement.

Eurydice.

Ewig-Weibliche, Das.

Extreme Unction.

Eye's Treasury, The.

FABLE FOR CRITICS, A.

Fact or Fancy?

Falcon, The.

Familiar Epistle to a Friend, A.

Fancy's Casuistry.

Fatherland, The.

Festina Lente.

Finding of the Lyre, The.

First Snow-Fall, The.

Fitz Adam's Story.

Flying Dutchman, The.

Foot-Path, The.

For an Autograph.

Foreboding, A.

Forlorn, The.

Fountain, The.

Fountain of Youth, The.

Fourth of July, 1876, An Ode for the.

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED POEM.

France, Ode to.

'Franciscus de Verulamio sic cogitavit.'

Freedom.

Future, To the.

Garrison, W.L., To.

Ghost-Seer, The.

Giddings, J.R., To.

Glance behind the Curtain, A.

Godminster Chimes.

Gold Egg: A Dream-Fantasy.

Grant, General, On a Bust of.

Graves of Two English Soldiers on Concord Battle-Ground, Lines

suggested by the.

Growth of the Legend, The.

H.W.L., To.

Hamburg, An Incident of the Fire at.

Happiness, Ode to.

Harvard Commemoration, Ode recited at the.

HEARTSEASE AND RUE.

Hebe.

Heritage, The.

Holmes, To.

Hood, To the Memory of.

How I consulted the Oracle of the Goldfishes.

Hunger and Cold.

In a Copy of Omar Khayydm.

In Absence.

In an Album.

In the Half-Way House.

In the Twilight.

Incident in a Railroad Car, An.

Incident of the Fire at Hamburg, An.

Indian-Summer Reverie, An.

Inscriptions.

For a Bell at Cornell University.

For a Memorial Window to Sir Walter Raleigh, set up in St. Margaret's,

Westminster, by American Contributors.

Proposed for a Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Boston.

International Copyright.

Interview with Miles Standish, An.

Inveraray, On Planting a Tree at.

Invita Minerva.

Invitation, An.

IrenÃ©.

Jonathan to John.

Keats, To the Spirit of.

Kettelopotomachia.

Kossuth.

Lamartine, To.

Landlord, The.

LAST POEMS.

Latest Views of Mr. Biglow.

Leaving the Matter open.

Legend of Brittany, A.

L'ENVOi (To the Muse).

L'Envoi (Whether my heart hath wiser grown or not).

Lesson, The.

Letter, A, from a candidate for the presidency in answer to suttin

questions proposed by Mr. Hosea Biglow, inclosed in a note from Mr.

Biglow to S.H. Gay, Esq., editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard.

Letter, A, from Mr. Ezekiel Biglow of Jaalam to the Hon. Joseph T.

Buckingham, editor of the Boston Courier, inclosing a poem of his

son, Mr. Hosea Biglow.

Letter, A, from Mr. Hosea Biglow to the Hon. J.T. Buckingham, editor

of the Boston Courier, covering a letter from Mr. B. Sawin, private

in the Massachusetts Regiment.

Letter, A Second, from B. Sawin, Esq.

Letter, A Third, from B. Sawin, Esq.

LETTER FROM BOSTON.

Lines (suggested by the Graves of Two English Soldiers on Concord

Battle-Ground).

Longing.

Love.

Love and Thought.

Love's Clock.

M.O.S., To.

Mahmood the Image-Breaker.

Maple, The.

Masaccio.

Mason and Slidell: a Yankee Idyll.

MemoriÃ¦ Positum.

MEMORIAL VERSES.

Message of Jeff Davis in Secret Session, A.

Midnight.

Miner, The.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Misconception, A.

Miss D.T., To.

Monna Lisa.

Mood, A.

Moon, The.

My Love.

My Portrait Gallery.

Nest, The.

New-Year's Eve, 1850.

New Year's Greeting, A.

Nightingale in the Study, The.

Nightwatches.

Nobler Lover, The.

Nomades, The.

Norton, Charles Eliot, To.

Oak, The.

Ode, An (for the Fourth of July, 1876).

Ode (In the old days of awe and keen-eyed wonder).

Ode (read at the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Fight at Concord

Bridge).

Ode recited at the Harvard Commemoration.

Ode to France.

Ode to Happiness.

Ode (written for the Celebration of the Introduction of the

Cochituate Water into the City of Boston).

Omar KhayyÃ¡m, In a Copy of.

On a Bust of General Grant.

On a Portrait of Dante by Giotto.

On an Autumn Sketch of H.G. Wild.

On being asked for an Autograph in Venice.

On Board the '76.

On burning some Old Letters.

On hearing a Sonata of Beethoven's played in the Next Room.

On planting a Tree at Inveraray.

On reading Wordsworth's Sonnets in Defence of Capital Punishment.

On receiving a Copy of Mr. Austin Dobson's 'Old World Idylls.'

On the Capture of Fugitive Slaves near Washington.

On the Death of a Friend's Child.

On the Death of Charles Turner Torrey.

Optimist, The.

Oracle of the Goldfishes, How I consulted the.

ORIENTAL APOLOGUE, AN.

Origin of Didactic Poetry, The.

Palfrey, John Gorham, To.

Palinode.

Paolo to Francesca.

Parable, A (An ass munched thistles, while a nightingale).

Parable, A (Said Christ our Lord, I will go and see).

Parable, A (Worn and footsore was the Prophet).

Parting of the Ways, The.

Past, To the.

Perdita, singing. To.

Pessimoptimism.

Petition, The.

Phillips, Wendell.

Phoebe.

Pictures from Appledore.

Pine-Tree, To a.

Pioneer, The.

Pious Editor's Creed, The.

POEMS OF THE WAR.

Portrait Gallery, My.

Portrait of Dante by Giotto, On a.

Prayer, A.

Pregnant Comment, The.

Present Crisis, The.

Prison of Cervantes.

Prometheus.

Protest, The.

Recall, The.

Remarks of Increase D. O'Phace, Esquire, at an extrumpery caucus in

State Street, reported by Mr. H. Biglow.

Remembered Music.

Requiem, A.

Rhoecus.

Rosaline.

Rose, The: a Ballad.

St. Michael the Weigher.

Sayings.

Scherzo.

Science and Poetry.

Scottish Border.

Search, The.

Seaweed.

Secret, The.

Self-Study.

Serenade.

She came and went.

Shepherd of King Admetus, The.

Si descendero in Infernum, ades.

Singing Leaves, The.

Sirens, The.

Sixty-Eighth Birthday.

Song (O moonlight deep and tender).

Song (to M.L.).

Song (Violet! sweet violet!).

SONNETS.

Bankside.

'Beloved, in the noisy city here'.

Bon Voyage!

Brakes, The.

Dancing Bear, The.

Death of Queen Mercedes.

E.G. de R.

Eye's Treasury, The.

'For this true nobleness I seek in vain.'

Foreboding, A.

'Great truths are portions of the soul of man.'

'I ask not for those thoughts, that sudden leap.'

'I cannot think that thou shouldst pass away.'

'I grieve not that ripe knowledge takes away.'

'I thought our love at full, but I did err.'

'I would not have this perfect love of ours.'

In Absence.

Maple, The.

'My Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die.'

Nightwatches.

On an Autumn Sketch of H.G. Wild.

On being asked for an Autograph in Venice.

On reading Wordsworth's Sonnets in Defence of Capital Punishment.

'Our love is not a fading, earthly flower.'

Paolo to Francesca.

Pessimoptimism.

Phillips, Wendell.

Prison of Cervantes.

Scottish Border.

Street, The.

Sub Pondere crescit.

'There never yet was flower fair in vain.'

To A.C.L.

To a Friend.

To a Lady playing on the Cithern.

To Fanny Alexander.

To J.R. Giddings.

To M.O.S.

To M.W., on her Birthday.

To Miss D.T.

To the Spirit of Keats.

To Whittier.

'What were I, Love, if I were stripped of thee.'

Winlock, Joseph.

With a copy of Aucassin and Nicolete.

With an Armchair.

Wyman, Jeffries.

Sower, The.

Speech of Honourable Preserved Doe in Secret Caucus.

Standish, Miles, An Interview with.

Stanzas on Freedom.

Street, The.

Studies for Two Heads.

Sub Pondere crescit.

Summer Storm.

Sun-Worship.

Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line.

Telepathy.

Tempora Mutantur.

THREE MEMORIAL POEMS.

Threnodia.

To----.

To A.C.L.

To a Friend.

To a Lady playing on the Cithern.

To a Pine-Tree.

To C.F. Bradford.

To Charles Eliot Norton.

To H.W.L.

To Holmes.

To J.R. Giddings.

To John Gorham Palfrey.

To Lamartine.

To M.O.S.

To M.W., on her Birthday.

To Miss D.T.

To Mr. John Bartlett.

To Perdita, singing.

To the Dandelion.

To the Future.

To the Memory of Hood.

To the Past.

To the Spirit of Keats.

To W.L. Garrison.

To Whittier.

Token, The.

Torrey, Charles Turner, On the Death of.

Trial.

Turner's Old TÃ©mÃ©raire.

Two Gunners, The.

Two Scenes from the Life of Blondel.

Under the October Maples.

Under the Old Elm.

UNDER THE WILLOWS, AND OTHER POEMS.

Under the Willows.

UNHAPPY LOT OF MR. KNOTT, THE.

Valentine, A.

Verses, intended to go with a Posset Dish.

Villa Franca.

VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL, THE.

Voyage to Vinland, The.

Washers of the Shroud, The.

What Mr. Robinson thinks.

What Rabbi Jehosha said.

Whittier, To.

Wild, H.G., On an Autumn Sketch of.

Wind-Harp, The.

Winlock, Joseph.

Winter-Evening Hymn to my Fire, A.

With a Copy of Aucassin and Nicolete.

With a Pair of Gloves lost in a Wager.

With a Pressed Flower.

With a Seashell.

With an Armchair.

Without and Within.

Wordsworth's Sonnets in Defence of Capital Punishment, On reading.

Wyman, Jeffries.

Youthful Experiment in English Hexameters, A.

Yussouf.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: The wise Scandinavians probably called their bards by the

queer-looking title of Scald in a delicate way, as it were, just to hint

to the world the hot water they always get into.]

[Footnote 2:

To demonstrate quickly and easily how per-

-versely absurd 'tis to sound this name \_Cowper\_,

As people in general call him named \_super\_,

I remark that he rhymes it himself with horse-trooper.]

[Footnote 3:

(If you call Snooks an owl, he will show by his looks

That he's morally certain you're jealous of Snooks.)]

[Footnote 4:(Cuts rightly called wooden, as all

must admit.)]

[Footnote 5:

That is in most cases we do, but not all,

Past a doubt, there are men who are innately small,

Such as Blank, who, without being 'minished a tittle,

Might stand for a type of the Absolute Little.]

[Footnote 6:

(And at this just conclusion will surely arrive,

That the goodness of earth is more dead than alive.)]

[Footnote 7:

Not forgetting their tea and their toast, though, the while.]

[Footnote 8:

Turn back now to page--goodness only knows what,

And take a fresh hold on the thread of my plot.]

[Footnote 9: The reader curious in such matters may refer (if he can

find them) to \_A sermon preached on the Anniversary of the Dark Day, An

Artillery Election Sermon, A Discourse on the Late Eclipse, Dorcas, A

Funeral Sermon on the Death of Madam Submit Tidd, Relict of the late

Experience Tidd, Esq., &c., &c.\_]

[Footnote 10: Aut insanit, aut versos facit.

--H.W.]

[Footnote 11: In relation to this expression, I cannot but think that Mr.

Biglow has been too hasty in attributing it to me. Though Time be a

comparatively innocent personage to swear by, and though Longinus in his

discourse [Greek: Peri 'Upsous] have commended timely oaths as not only

a useful but sublime figure of speech, yet I have always kept my lips

free from that abomination. \_Odi profanum vulgus\_, I hate your swearing

and hectoring fellows.--H.W.]

[Footnote 12: i hait the Site of a feller with a muskit as I du pizn But

their \_is\_ fun to a cornwallis I aint agoin' to deny it.--H.B.]

[Footnote 13: he means Not quite so fur I guess.--H.B.]

[Footnote 14: the ignerant creeter means Sekketary; but he ollers stuck

to his books like cobbler's wax to an ile-stone.--H.B.]

[Footnote 15: it must be aloud that thare's a streak of nater in lovin'

sho, but it sartinly is 1 of the curusest things in nater to see a

rispecktable dri goods dealer (deekon off a chutch maybe) a riggin'

himself out in the Weigh they du and struttin' round in the Reign

aspilin' his trowsis and makin' wet goods of himself. Ef any thin's

foolisher and moor dicklus than militerry gloary it is milishy

gloary.--H.B.]

[Footnote 16: these fellers are verry proppilly called Rank Heroes, and

the more tha kill the ranker and more Herowick tha becum.--H.B.]

[Footnote 17: it wuz 'tumblebug' as he Writ it, but the parson put the

Latten instid. i sed tother maid better meeter, but he said tha was

eddykated peepl to Boston and tha wouldn't stan' it no how. idnow as tha

\_wood\_ and idnow \_as\_ tha wood.--H.B.]

[Footnote 18: he means human beins, that's wut he means. i spose he

kinder thought tha wuz human beans ware the Xisle Poles comes

from.--H.B.]

[Footnote 19: The speaker is of a different mind from Tully, who, in his

recently discovered tractate \_De Republica\_, tells us, \_Nec vero habere

virtutem satis est, quasi artem aliquam, nisi utare\_, and from our

Milton, who says: 'I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue,

unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her

adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to

be run for, \_not without dust and heat.'--Areop\_. He had taken the words

out of the Roman's mouth, without knowing it, and might well exclaim

with Donatus (if Saint Jerome's tutor may stand sponsor for a curse),

\_Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerint!\_--H.W.]

[Footnote 20: That was a pithy saying of Persius, and fits our

politicians without a wrinkle,--\_Magister artis, ingeniique largitor

venter\_.--H.W.]

[Footnote 21: There is truth yet in this of Juvenal,--

'Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.'--H.W.]

[Footnote 22: Jortin is willing to allow of other miracles besides those

recorded in Holy Writ, and why not of othere prophecies? It is granting

too much to Satan to suppose him, as divers of the learned have done,

the inspirer of the ancient oracles. Wiser, I esteem it, to give chance

the credit of the successful ones. What is said here of Louis Phillippe

was verified in some of its minute particulars within a few months'

time. Enough to have made the fortune of Delphi or Hammon, and no thanks

to Beelzebub neither! That of Seneca in Medea will suit here:--

'Rapida fortuna ac levis

PrÃ¦cepsque regno eripuit, exsilio dedit.'

Let us allow, even to richly deserved misfortune, our commiseration, and

be not over-hasty meanwhile in our censure of the French people, left

for the first time to govern themselves, remembering that wise sentence

of Ãschylus,--

[Greek: Apas de trachus hostis han neon kratae.]

--H.W.]

[Footnote 23: A rustic euphemism for the American variety of the

\_Mephitis\_.--H.W.]

[Footnote 24: \_Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English\_.]

[Footnote 25: Cited in Collier. (I give my authority where I do not quote

from the original book.)]

[Footnote 26: The word occurs in a letter of Mary Boleyn, in Golding, and

Warner. Milton also was fond of the word.]

[Footnote 27: Though I find WorcÃ«ster in the \_Mirror for Magistrates\_.]

[Footnote 28: This was written twenty years ago, and now (1890) I cannot

open an English journal without coming upon an Americanism.]

[Footnote 29: The Rev. A.L. Mayhew of Wadham College, Oxford, has

convinced me that I was astray in this.]

[Footnote 30: \_Dame\_, in English, is a decayed gentlewoman of the same

family.]

[Footnote 31: Which, whether in that form, or under its aliases

\_witch\_-grass and \_cooch\_-grass, points us back to its original Saxon

\_quick\_.]

[Footnote 32: And, by the way, the Yankee never says 'o'nights,' but uses

the older adverbial form, analogous to the German \_nachts\_.]

[Footnote 33: Greene in his \_Quip for an Upstart Courtier\_ says, 'to

\_square\_ it up and downe the streetes before his mistresse.']